

June 1943

Crossways Ludham Norfolk
Tues June 1st 1943

Dear Billee

The first of June this year has not been so glorious here. Sharp showers at times and a chill wind and as the weather report was so unfavourable when it was time to get up this morning, I decided to have a bit longer in bed

Your letter came this morning and waited for me to get up. I should say your Sunday morning lay it did you good. I expected you needed it. I know 'M' was about done up after her week – which stretched into nearly a fortnight in her case and yours did as well I expect.

Your sidelight on Freeman sounds intriguing must remember to remind you about it when you come home.

Ralph Lynn does act the fool but I wouldn't that he was one.

You were lucky with the 4 yds of material it should be a bargain at 7/10.

As regards your journey on account of home, I think you are able to decide which way you come but you must let us know beforehand on account of booking up with Brooks.

I think we may take it that Gertie is about normal again, we have had no hint otherwise in their recent letters.

Mattocks got off last Tuesday and judging from Madges letter they had quite a comfortable journey and got to their destination about half past five.

Wed 2.6.43

Got up quite briskly this morning although it did not promise well and developed thunder later on but very little rain although I could see it pouring down in several directions. Had there been more rain I should not have got the lawns done. I finished the side lawns before dinner and started the other one and finished during the afternoon and then gave the potatoes their final earthing up. This took me until about quarter to nine and came in to listen to the mix up of French politics.

Had a letter from Gertie this morning. My Transformer was an excuse to go to London, as C is all day work. I don't suppose he went but she doesn't say who she went with and I don't suppose she went alone.

Ted and Rene have gone to Corton for a few days and has left behind a mix up over killer who wants a rise but don't look like getting it only gets a remission of certain duties.

No one seems to know what is included in his salary and what he is paid extra for and 'M' is searching thro' the Church Council minute book to try and get some light on the subject.

Miss Grimes case for increased salary was refused right away but evidently some of them are more or less afraid of Skillern.

Heard nothing aerial today but thunder.

Thur 3.6.43

Heavy clouds and some scud from the S.W. looks like wind or rain or both. I haven't much to say this morning so will leave some space for 'M'. Cheerio and best love Pa.

Dear Babs

What do you intend to do about the tweed. I have not asked for the money and coupons back yet for if you are having any that can be deducted when you send for yours. They hold 6 coupons. I suppose you will be getting your R.B. before you come home. Ours are to be issued on Sat next. They have got the Wesleyan Chapel for the job. It's a pity Mrs S will not allow herself a holiday. If G and C come in August and they will I expect if they can get here she cannot come then for the Keighley Week. I have not quite finished with the 'Wee' yet. Have been doing a little in the garden. Letter from Madge enclosed, they were lucky to have such a good journey. I expect you will find trains pretty crowded on the Sat. Swe must book Brooks in good time as they are sure to be busy on that day. Have not heard from Annie since before Easter. Hope N. has not been up to anything and she won't say. Arthur is about the same but now that Dick is in 'Brum' I don't have much news about

A. I think I will write to Mrs Miller and ask her to let me know now and then. I hear from Dick that she is having 15/- a week to keep an eye on him and Herbert is thinking of making it up to £1. Well this time next week we shall be looking forward to Sat and seeing you once again.

Much love and a kiss
Mama

Crossways Ludham Norfolk
Tues June 8th 1943

Dear Billee

Your letter came this morning and as you have decided to travel on Saturday this will have to be posted tomorrow in order to reach you before you leave.

I hope you will have a definite time to reach Wroxham otherwise Brooks will have to wait over half an hour if he meets the 5.35 and you don't arrive.

We have not fixed up for the car yet and don't know how they are fixed maybe you have to wait till he arrives and if there is any difficulties I will come to Wroxham to keep you company.

The tweed has arrived and looks very nice indeed 'M' is still in quandary as to what will be the outcome of her venture.

Churchill bobbed up again in the Commons today and gave a heartening speech. Its interesting to note that both our people and the enemy thought the Tunisian Campaign would take longer to finish. I wonder if the Germans morale is severely shaken.

The U boat business is encouraging and if there is any parallel between this war and the last it is a hopeful sign as it was among the U boat crews that the rot first started last time. Also the enemy surface fleet became restive on account of inaction and the rot spread but we mustn't be too sanguine. I'm sorry for the cucumber plants in a Keightley back yard and am afraid the effort will not be too satisfactory.

Your weather it seems has been about the same as here not too warm, but there has usually been enough evening sunshine on the dining room to enable us to eat without a fire. We haven't had enough rain to thoroughly soak the ground and give a fill up to things in the garden and enable me to do some planting.

Sun 6.6.43

Not much of a day today plenty of rain (0.40) with thunder but the evening was nice and bright and we both went to Church but it was quite cool outdoors.

Mon 7.6.43

Have been doing up the borders round the side lawn. There seems no end to it and Evans called in during the morning and delayed me somewhat in the evening. 'M' took up the old Bronplox stocks outside the kitchen window and helped me plant a few surplus Dahlia plants. A few left over I put in the kitchen garden.

Tues 8.6.43

'M' has been having a field day in the kitchen, got up early and washed the ceiling before breakfast and then washed down the walls finished up about 5 and had to go up to the village before tea. I saved her a journey in the morning and at other times got on with the lawn borders.

It has been a variable day and during the afternoon it seemed insufferably close at one time but it soon changed and the evening was cooler. Tomorrow the lawns must have some attention. It's a sad business about the hot water tank which is rusting though in one place. I have painted and stuck 2 layers of fabric over it but that's a very temporary measure and it wants watching very closely. I wonder if a new tank can be obtained in these days.

I'll leave this open w till tomorrow morning but I don't suppose I shall have much to add.

Wed 9.6.43

Nothing more to add so will close this up and give to 'M' to post when she goes up to the village this morn.

Cheerio and best love

Pa

Xways Ludham Norfolk
Mon June 21 1943

Dear Billee

My journey back here after leaving you at Wroxham was quite uneventful. The day remained fine and warm and I was able to get out in the garden.

One thing I did with a double sheet of the Times was to fold it up and produce a paper boat. I did not know how I was going to do it when I started but it came to me as I folded. A contrast to my efforts when sitting on the river bank on Saturday evening.

As there was a long row of leeks at Braemar and they had promised me some I thought it no harm to help myself and get some after ten and planted them straight away.

Did you, but of course not, listen to the news and the postscripts by Priestley. The first of a series he is giving on Mondays and entitles 'Make it Monday'. A most humorous talk in which washing day was the main theme, he really was very good.

Tues 22.6.43

How the summer is slipping away, longest day and now we shall have a decreasing amount of sunshine but there's some time yet when we may enjoy the long evenings.

My first job was to pick the peas whilst 'M' got the remainder of the parcel sent off to you, and I hope it reaches you safely. 'M' went up to the village to post it. 'M' has been busy today cleaning up the drive between the gales and getting rid of a lot of eyesores. We finished off with a short session after supper in order to finish the job with just a few drops of rain to hurry us up. The sky was not very threatening and the rain drops seemed to come almost from nowhere.

Wed 23.6.43

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Wed 23 .6.43

No library books yet, 'M' heard that the post office which suffered with a raid and fire was Mount Pleasant which I fancy is the main London office for parcels, so the books may have gone adrift there.

I've heard from C and the enclosure came along alright, so that was a good job, he said he was writing to you at 23.

Today is 'lawns' day and with M's help both of them were duly attended to but there was not a lot to come off each.

'M' has been having another go at the main drive and I think I must have carried away half a dozen good bucketfuls of trimmings and must have a bonfire shortly.

Have got my celery planted today, a good row right across the kitchen garden.

The tomato position is not too bright for I see that 4 plants have packed up so I have less than half of what I had last year.

I am a bit disappointed in the garden this summer. Turnips went to seed so have done some beetroot which means they go woody and hard.

Brassica is suffering from Cabbage Fly, only one Cauliflower left out of 30 ft row. Cabbage and Savoys being affected too but in a lesser degree.

Peas are a redeeming feature and the first lot have yielded splendidly.

Well its 10.10 pip and I think I'll leave this over till tomorrow morning and see if we get anything from you and some books to read.

The music for 'C' has been packed and posted off to him, with a tin of brown shoe polish. He said they could not get any in Welling, curious to have a shortage of that.

'M' is going ahead with the jumper but we had a good game with winding a skein which she had got into a fine pickle. She says can you get another Parks book as she has nearly got to the end of what she copied out.

Thur 24.6.43

The books and the letter from you came this morning, Glad to know that your journey was not too trying and glad that you were able to get a car up to 23.

I have also taken some cuttings of the Tradescantia; the old plants are getting shabby now.

Have heard nothing definite about Rene yet. Panic is I suppose another way of describing preparations for the trip.

Nothing much of importance to say. We have seen anything of Mattocks yet and although its Thursday 'M' is making it Monday and washing. It's a good day for that and quick drying.

Am going up to the village this morning and will post this when I go but it will not be in time for the morning collection.

Cheerio and best love

Pa

Crossways Ludham Norfolk

Fri 25.6.43

Dear Billee

This has been a pretty poor sample of a summers day and I have spent the best part of it indoors trying to solve a difference between the bank statement and my version. 'M' came to my assistance during the afternoon and it was only after tea that I suddenly thought where to lay my fingers on the spot. I was glad to have done this as I didn't like being done by such. Went out into the garden for a little while but it was not too cheerful.

Mrs. Vidler came just as we had settled down to supper and the 9 o'clock news. She wanted to know if 'M' could put up a young doctor for the weekend. He is interested in one of her daughters and wants to pay a long weekend visit. It was definite as to what he would have here and the question was left over pending a further call by Mrs Vidler.

Sat 26.6.43

Not much better than yesterday but I did a good deal in the way of trimming and tidying the garden and 'M' did a lot of weeding in the evening. I tried some more potatoes but found that they yielded very little more than the first lot so must not be too impatient and let them go a little longer, although I must say that I am a bit disappointed so far. Still, I have not usually dug the food until the middle of July. The peas are doing well though and making up for the potatoes. Very early this morning between midnight and 1am I heard several noises and windows rattled, but as wireless said nothing over this country last night. I suppose it must have been at Thetford or out at sea.

Sun 27.6.43

Had a lazy morning and did not get up until shortly after twelve. 'M' stayed at home and we both went to church this evening and stayed with 5 others to H.C. It's been more sunny today but a cold wind.

Coming home from church we overtook Madge and Sally they had been for a walk of about two miles. Jolly good for Madge but I expect that she was glad to get home again.

Mon 28.6.43

As I was going out this evening I dressed into the suit I had on yesterday so I found some jobs That did not need stooping.

I was sorry to have to do it but I had to clear out all my carrot crop and burn them on the bonfire. Everyone was infected with grubs of Carrot Fly so must try another crop about the middle of next month.

I did not look forward to my evening's job, but I felt that it had to be done so accordingly set off to interview Dr Brown and get his advice. There was no mistake and he confirmed the Hospital Doctors verdict of about 5 years ago that I was troubled with double hernia and a truss would be a

necessity if I wanted to avoid further trouble. He said it was nothing serious yet but might become so under a sudden and perhaps accidental strain. He was quite decided not to recommend any operation although if I had been younger, he might have advised it to get rid of the trouble altogether by that method. Accordingly, the same night I wrote off to Norwich to make an appointment with a surgical appliance maker.

Tues 29.6.43

Naturally it is rather unsettling and although I was in the garden, I confirmed myself to jobs that were not of a strenuous nature, but managed to do a great deal in the way of trimming up etc, which improved the appearance. It was a cold cloudy cheerless (note alliteration) the highest temperature 61 and not a glimpse of the sun.

Wed 30.6.43

I had a quick reply from Norwich and we made up our minds to go on Thursday. The day was a repeat of yesterday and only for an hour or so was the temperature above 60.

After attending to odd things indoors, including the very necessary pension paper for the bank I carried on tidying up in the garden. The lack of rain showing full effect on the ground which is baked hard in places and all kinds of things are drooping. I don't know what it would have been like if there had been much sun, we have scarcely seen it for a week. The wind has stayed in the Northernly quarter and more like the end of March than June – July.

Did you listen to Churchill at the Guildhall. A fine speech and full of encouragement about the war in contrast to his to his earlier ones. I thought that the City Chamberlains reference to magnanimity was good. It's a pity that Churchill was flouted over Germany's preparation for war.