

1061 Manchester Rd
Castleton Lanes

May 15-17

My dear Mary

It seems ages since I wrote to you and what a lot has happened since then more than I like to think of.

I left Hildesheim on the 6 Feb. and arrived here on March 3rd but I have left Arthur behind me and God only knows when he will come now for all exchange seems stopped again. I mean men of over 45 years of age. (he is 47)

He wrote to me on Jan 28, saying 42 men left Ruhlben that day and he was to leave with a lot who had their papers for the 30 Jan but the 42 men ~~who~~ were the last to leave for after that this dreadful under sea boat war commenced and the neutral people let no passenger boats out. So 8 ladies 6 children and 42 men were stranded in Holland for over three weeks. (I was one of them) Then we crossed over with an escort of 10 torpedo boats & I arrived home safe & sound. The ladies were only allowed to cross the frontier on the 6th of the month & I quite expected to meet him in Holland. You can imagine my disappointment.

to hear from these other men that they were likely to be the last batch released. I should not have left Waldersheim if I had known, for I was allowed to visit him for three hours every three months and now even that pleasure is denied him also. I cannot complain of anything. I had every civility and full control of the estate and all moneys until I left, when I had to leave all behind me. They took nothing at all from me, only I was under police supervision, and had to announce myself each morning at the police office, & all my letters were read. It is a big change to me here, homeless & moneyless, and I left my home as it stood, and two servants to care it until I return to sell up. I only wish it was next week, for we shall not settle there again. Arthur was well the last time I saw him, but then he had plenty of good english food in parcels. Now that has stopped for a time & I feel worried over him because of the scarcity there is in the land there. I was very often hungry with a pocket full of money! but the system is very fair & the rich can get no more than the poor for

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The ticket system is a huge success. After they impressed Arthur in Nov 1914. (the 4th) I went to live in the villa in Hildesheim & have let the house on the estate, a cousin of A. came to live with me. She is an Australian, came from Melbourne, and we were very comfortable until I left, Now I have no hope of Arthur coming because since they have raised the military age to 50 it is not likely they let him free.

I was several times ill in the past 2 1/2 years but am now better and helping Ettie in her home life. The man from the shop has been called up & Bob must have help so Ettie goes every day & I look after the house & children & cook meals ready for them to come to, for all come home at different times.

Mum is in the chemist's shop, Dad takes out orders & Ettie keeps books, Bob dispenses & we are all busy. My letters from Arthur are every 2 weeks but are 8 weeks old. If it was not that we expect an event about Sept or Oct. I should have taken a situation, but I should be expected to be here then, so it is better I stayed all together here & pray that these miserable days are over & I free before Xmas

How are you dear Mary & Tom, I have often thought of you & the children. Your mother has given me the latest news from you. She was very distressed when last I saw her about Stephen, it was his last appeal. I went there to tea one Sunday so I could see them all together, such a family! Stephen with his two lovely boys, and Ethel in fine condition, Minnie & her babies, both of them proper gruffins. The baby May is just Maggie griffin over again, hair and all, the boy is a fat sturdy lad & a regular knock out. He & Edward had many a scrap. Minnie is painfully thin. She has her hands full. I can tell you Bertie is just the same, Auntie also, & your dear mother is just the grandman all over. She was delighted to have me all to herself & we had about 1 hour delightful confidences, how I pray God will spare her to us for many years. Mildred is just Ada over again, but she is fatter. My Minnie is not so big, but she also is stouter. I am afraid she will always be small.

How is May, Josephine & George. I expect they have forgotten me, but I shall never forget them & think very very often of you & your little ones. How is the baby, which is

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a stranger to me? You must be proud of her Mary
I would give a deal to see you all for one minute
Our Kittie sent a picture of herself & baby. he is a
bonnie boy, but no Diamond about him. She
says she is coming home for a trip after the war
Her brother in law is over in military training & he
was with us for the weekend. He says their
honeymoon trip is to be here, (rather delayed)
for Kitties husband wants to see us all.

Our James got married last Jan. and has
settled in Calgary. Willie has two of the
daintiest babies I have ever seen. they are just
like dolls. Joan is 3 next year & baby Mary
is seven months. the baby is our Kittie over
again. skin like wax, red nob. & deep blue eyes
I took her for a week while Willie & Joan were
in Wales. (her father was sick) and having the baby
all to myself. for a week. was the happiest week
I have spent since this wretched war began
All our men in the family are on their last
appeal. our Jack got off because he has become
a public slaughterer. but we have not much hope
for a longer term. Bert Gillons is in Egypt
se fatee is on her own with her boy. Wm. Dreyer
has two children & he is exempt from military
duty. (Cyghe)

Kittie's husband also is free. He is working on
ammunitions. They have had no money from J
since the war broke out so the men must work.

Ettie is very comfortable. her two children are
treated so homie & healthy. she is a lucky
girl in every respect. for I do not know a
better husband and father, & he is prospering.

Dad has been with them since Ettie went
away in July 1914 then Mame came here
from school in Dec last & I am here now
on his hearth. it's a bitter pill for me to
swallow I can tell you. I should not have
cared if I had done anything to bring it
about. like most people who loose all

Now I must close. write me how is Tom
getting on, ask him to send a p.c. to Ettie
address so.

British Prisoner of War. Germany

Mr A Droege

Barackes 3. Base 20.

Ruhleben Germany

He will be delighted, Goodbye, dear Mary & Tom
every good wish to yourself & family,
and fond love to you all.

Your old & sincere friend
Annie D.