With Fond Regards

PRIVATE LIVES THROUGH LETTERS
Edited and Introduced by ELIZABETH RIDDELL
With Fond Regards holds many secrets. Some are exposed, others remain inviolate. The letters which comprise this intimate book allow us passage into a private world, a world of love letters in locked drawers and postmarks from afar.

Edited by noted writer Elizabeth Riddell, and drawn exclusively from the National Library's Manuscript collection, With Fond Regards includes letters from famous, as well as ordinary, Australians. Some letters are sad, others inspiring, many are humorous—but all provide a unique and intimate insight into Australia's past.
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Compiled by Yvonne Cramer

National Library of Australia
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What is a letter? A message, that's all, no more serious than the bark of a dog in the night when somebody unfamiliar walks down the street. Or as serious as the insult that starts a war. The message will be a challenge, or a plea, or a threat, or an invitation, or condolences on an untimely death; it will contain reconciliation or it will pull down a blind or close a door. It will ask what went wrong, and is it possible to try again? Or there will be the offer of an absolutely free holiday in the Barrier Reef or the Maldive Islands. It may report the death of a family cat or that Darren (for that will be his increasingly popular name) has won first prize for landscape painting in Year Ten.

One could divagate endlessly on the subject of letters. But what concerns many of us this year of 1995 is that there may soon be no more letters, and as letters cease to punctuate our lives, so will a large piece of history slip away. To put it at its simplest, there will be certain bits
of machinery (push buttons), certain whispery noises transmitted along invisible wires, taking the place of letters. The telephone and the fax have already presaged the death of letters. More elaborate systems are rapidly coming into place, as politicians like to say. As each brilliant piece of technology sparkles away offscreen, get ready for the funeral of the letter. Always remembering, of course, that in the beginning was the word and the word was not something bouncing on a galaxy, but a series of related marks set down on bits of paper.

All this wild speculation, mixed with sober affirmation, should not overlook the fact that the same extraordinary and almost incomprehensible techniques probably spin off into the very same techniques that preserve the letters in a readable, reasonable state in the National Library.

The Library has been collecting personal, that is both public and private, papers for almost 90 years and now has the largest collection in Australia. The opening of the first file must have been a euphoric occasion. The magnitude of the task of coping with the mass of paper accumulated in the years since settlement would not have been envisaged any more than the fact that the material might eventually dry up. It was in fact the start of something great.

A large amount of this store of paper is made up of letters. The range is wide. Some of the writers are, or were, of national importance for one reason or another, other writers belong to that valuable group, 'accidental historians'. It is a comfortable phrase that takes in almost everybody.

You can start with politicians, diplomats, religious leaders, commercial figures, merchant princes, lawyers, doctors, sportsmen, educationists, poets, artists, graziers, actors, journalists and so on, the so on covering men and women who happened to be in a particular place at a particular time. It is their letters, diaries and documents covering domestic experience that provide a valuable record of events that affected the population, such as a gold rush, periodical depressions, droughts, a coalmining strike or a shipping strike, the first stirrings of conservation.

While in any collection categorised as 'papers' there is bound to be a large component of public, that is commercial, legal etc., documents, it is the variety of letters which is especially
valued by historians and biographers. Anybody who works in these fields will understand this, having had experience of a shy family which promises to tell all and then tells not much at all for fear of bruising sensitive feelings.

It is the thought of exposing hitherto secret personal relationships that unnerves members of families, clubs, professional or amateur societies, corporations. Possibility of fractured folklore is what keeps the letters in a locked drawer. What wounds can be opened with the discovery of a postcard from Port Hedland signed ‘love from Joe’ when Joe was supposed to be taking his annual leave exploring McMurdo Sound?

The strategy to be employed acquiring the precious bits of paper is complicated and could be assisted by a bit of low cunning. The Library buys where it can, and where it can afford, at auctions and in Australia and Europe and from antiquarian book dealers everywhere, but most of the items in the collection come from individuals who created and assembled the papers, and from their heirs. These individuals may initiate proceedings, but more often it is the Library that makes the first move. Understandably, as the Library says, people can be hesitant about putting private lives up for scrutiny in a public place, and goodwill on both sides is important.

Negotiations often take a long time, extending over several decades, and may then come to nothing. The Library’s case is that papers are far less likely to be dispersed or destroyed if placed in its archives. Donors have the right to close access, or they may restrict access for a reasonable period, on the understanding that ultimately the papers will be available to all genuine researchers.

On a personal note, however public-spirited one may be on the subject of preservation of letters, there is no avoiding the ‘voyeur’ factor. There would hardly be the number of books of celebrity letters on publishing programs if there was not a devoted reading public. ‘It’s like reading a good novel,’ people say, poring over the marketing schedule of a farmer’s wife somewhere west of Narrabri. Other people’s letters are addictive, though often lacking useful information. They have the trivial charm of the clandestine.
Peering sideways on the bus seat as a neighbour unfolds a letter hot from the postman's (or postgirl's) bag, the voyeur may see only that Aunt Mary should not be invited to Vera's wedding because she always makes trouble. What sort of trouble? No details follow. Does Aunt Mary customarily get drunk at weddings or complain about the number of toasters on view? Anyway, something to think about for the rest of the journey.

The letters in this little book are full of mysteries, or at least of unanswered questions. What, for instance, is the name of 'the one good sweet shop in Sydney' mentioned by Peter Grant Watson's mother when she suggests that his adored Ida should join him in Australia and take on some business where the genteel touch is needed? Did hapless John Grant ever find the bits of his property he was searching for—his cape, the buckles for his britches and his mismatched boots?

Elizabeth Riddell
With
Fond
Regards
Sir Joseph Banks, whom one might irreverently think of as the original Banksia man, a child’s embodiment of the bush, came to Australia with Captain James Cook. It would be a mistake to suppose that he was only interested in, and informed on, matters of plant and animal life.

In 1773, when Banks was in Holland, Count Bentinck asked him to recount some aspect of his travels which might amuse the Prince of Orange. He wrote an 18-page letter headed ‘Thoughts on the manners of the women of Otaheite’.

The regard a European paid by us Europeans to the fair sex is certainly one of the chief reasons why our women so far surpass the inhabitants of this country.

SIR JOSEPH BANKS
The regard and attention paid by us Europeans to the fair sex is certainly one of the chief reasons why our women so far exceed those of climates more favourable to the produce of the human species in beauty as well as those elegant qualifications of the mind, which blending themselves in our manner make the commerce between the sexes so much more delightful to us than to the inhabitants of Africa or America in whose breasts I do not find the refinements of love to hold the least place. Urged by the calls of nature they take themselves wives whom they regard and treat as their servants. Beauty is a qualification by them neither esteemed nor attended to; if it was, the labour the women are obliged to undergo would soon destroy it.

Can a man love who can sit idle and see the object of his affection bearing a burthen of which he can relieve her or can love exist even in countries whose women are beasts of burthen? I think not.

In the Island of Otaheite where love is the chief occupation, the favourite, nay almost the sole, luxury of the inhabitants; both the bodies and souls of the women are models into the utmost perfection for that soft science. Idleness, the father of love, reigns here in almost unmolested ease, while we inhabitants of a changeable climate are obliged to plough, sow, harrow, reap, thresh, grind, knead and bake our daily bread and each revolving year again to plough, sow, etc., etc., subject to famine if the sun should parch or the rain should drench our superficial crop. These happy people whose bread depends not on an annual but on a perennial plant have but to climb up and gather it ready for baking from a tree which deep rooted in the earth, scorning equally the influence of summer heats or winter rains, never fails to produce plenty. What a proportion of spare time must these people have when one of them, by planting 4 breadfruit trees, a work which cannot last more than an hour, does as much for his generation as a European who with yearly returning toil cultivates corn for his family. And this leisure is given up to love.
Except in the article of complexion of which our European ladies certainly excel all inhabitants of the Torrid Zone, I have nowhere seen such elegant women as those of Otaheite. Such the Grecians were, from whose model the Venus of Medicis was copied. Undisturbed by bandages nature has full liberty the growing form into whatever direction she pleases and amply does she repay this indulgence in producing such forms as exist here only in marble or canvas, nay such as might even defy the imitation of the chisel of a Phidias or the pencil of an Apelles.

Nor are these forms a little aided by their dress, not squeezed as our women are by a cincture which scarce less tenacious than iron at best but imitates an exaggerated smallness of waist, an artificial beauty not founded at all on the principles of nature. Not swelled out below by a preposterous mountain of hoop totally concealing that elegant swelling out of the shape: nature's favourite ornament of which it seems only an exaggerated imitation. Their garments, composed of a kind of substance between cloth and paper, are rolled upon their limbs as accident—not fashion—directs, not to conceal but to cover them. [Hanging] down continually in folds of the most elegant and unartificial forms, such drapes are universally to be seen in antique statues and gems, and in the work of the best Italian painters who, conceiving how unbecoming any dress cut out in a regular form must be, clothed their goddesses and angels in loose folds of cloth not shaped to their bodies, exactly as the Otaheiteans now wear theirs.

The luxury of their appearance is also not a little aided by a freedom which their differing from us in their opinion of what constitutes modesty causes. A European thinks nothing of laying bare her breast to a certain point, but a hair's breadth lower no mortal eye must pierce; an Otaheitean on the other hand will by a motion of her dress in a moment lay open an arm, and half her breast the next, maybe the whole, and in another cover herself as close as prudery could contrive, and all this with as much innocence and genuine modesty as an English woman can show her arm
or a woman of the Spanish West Indies her breast, when the first cannot show her breast nor the second her foot without committing the highest indelicacy.

Chastity in this land of liberty is esteemed as a virtue. Those who profess it are respected on that account. They say, we esteem that woman because she is chaste, as we say, we esteem her because she is charitable; yet the want of chastity does not preclude a woman from the esteem of those who have it, no more than the want of charity in this country. The consequence of this is that the proportion of chaste women there is much smaller than here, where the punishments bestowed on a breach of it are so severe; yet are these women there as inviolable in their attachments as here, a virtue which is probably the necessary consequence of mutual and sincere love.

Their amusements are much the same as ours: visiting and conversing with their neighbours in a lively and familiar style in which they excel; pleased by the most trifling stroke of humour if it has only liveliness to recommend it, their repartees and jokes are frequent and always well received.

Musick, tho' theirs is intolerably bad, they are very fond of. In private they sing and play their flutes, in publick they dance to flutes and drums and upon particular occasions even act in company with the men in most dramatick performances somewhat resembling our grand ballets. Gaming, the province of the men, they seldom meddle with and drunkenness, which the men are too much given to, no woman ever attempts till she has arrived at a certain age.

They rise at the earliest dawn of day and soon after get their breakfast which consists generally of small fry of fish. After this the women of good families, who of course have many relations etc. in their houses that must be provided for, spend a great part of their morning in regulating the provision of clothes necessary for their dependants. I have seen them often sitting in the midst of an amphitheatre of cloth surrounded by their maids to whom they gave orders to mend, wash, dye or alter such
pieces as they directed, themselves seldom meddling with any business but perhaps mending some of the finest or dyeing their red colour the brightness of which surpasses [by] far any colour known in Europe. This last business is so creditable that they generally, when they leave off, stain their fingers' ends with the colour as if to show the world how industrious they are.

About noon they dine and after dinner sleep till 4 or 5 o'clock when the cool of the evening invites them to set out at their doors or maybe wander to a neighbour's house where they chat till dark and then return home to supper after which they generally sing and play with their flutes till they go to sleep.

In general they are above the middle size and if they have any fault in their forms it is a disposition to plumpness which by them is valued as a beauty. Their hair is universally jet black, their eyes dark, but their teeth even and whiter than ivory, their hair they wear short and unornamented except upon particular occasions when they cover their heads with a turban made of human hair plaited together, about the size of a thread. Of this the rich have enormous quantities, a common headdress contains at least 2 leagues and I have measured a piece made upon an end without a knot above an English mile and three quarters in length. This turban which is rather wider above than below and is stuck full of the white flowers of Cape Jasmine makes an ornament which I think could not fail to please the nicest and most discerning taste.

Both the men and the women have a singular custom of inlaying under their skin certain figures in black which are forever after indelible on their hands, feet, bodies and more especially on and about their hips, for this custom they give no reason but that they were taught it by their forefathers. The doing it is attended with considerable pain yet so essential is it esteemed to beauty and so disgraceful is the want of it esteemed that every one submits to it. For my own part I am inclined to think that as whiteness of skin is esteemed an essential beauty, these mainly were originally intended
to make that whiteness appear to greater advantage by the contrast, evidently in the same manner as the patches used by our European beauties.

In cleanliness these people excel beyond all compare to all other nations. Dirt of all kinds is looked upon as odious. Every one washes their whole body morning and evening. Nor if you see a hundred together will you find one with dirty or ragged clothes. Purity is also here carried to an inconceivable height; none there are in the Island who will not drink water but what is brought them from the sources of the brooks in the mountains, nor eat any food but fish on account of the ideal filthiness of the food which both their hogs, dogs, and fowls must occasionally partake of.

Fond as the sexes are of each other’s company, the customs of the country will not allow them to eat together and so nice are the women in observing this particularity for which they can give no kind of reason, that I myself have seen them throw away and destroy the very vessels which contained their victuals which one of us had inadvertently touched.

The superior strength of affection which the soft sex are capable of in preference to men is here remarkably conspicuous. For their deceased friends they mourn in tears of blood striking a sharp tooth into the tops of their heads so hard that I have seen more than a pint of blood issue from one such operation, and this they repeat frequently before the scaffold on which the deceased object of their grief is placed. One woman who in our neighbourhood mourned for the death of her mother reduced herself in less than a fortnight from florid health to the very brink of the grave.

The climate in which they live I believe to be without exaggeration the best on the face of the globe. Situated in 17 [gr] of southern lat. they are certainly in the Torrid Zone, but the smallness of their Island not sufficiently large to interrupt the course of the regular trade wind allows them to be eternally fanned with breezes cooled by their passage over the water. They are guarded also from the impetuous waves of the sea by
reefs or rather walls of rocks which surround them at 2 or 3 miles distance out in the
sea. These cause the water which washes their shores to be as smooth as a fresh water
lake. They travel therefore chiefly in canoes which by being fastened 2 and 2 together
are as steady as a ship. On these the principal people have rooms in which they sit and
converse or sleep as they are inclined, while their slaves transport them from place to
place. Their visits are made with the utmost familiarity. A family for instance, when the
weather is fine, set out together to visit their neighbour and after staying a day 'tis ten
to one but they join together and go to a third who with them goes on to a fourth who
now gets notice of the number of guests they are to expect and provides accordingly in
this manner. I have been in company with above 30 canoes whose crews were received
with utmost readiness and ease as one could have been.

In these excursions they give a look to all kinds of jollity, dancing, singing,
publick wrestling and plenty of musick which, as the possessors of it get their
livelihood by travelling from place to place, never fail to attend on these occasions.

Luxury in this island of sensuality carried by the men chiefly to that height
that, difficult as it is to believe, they destroy many children rather than bear the trouble
attending their education. To have children here is looked upon as a dishonour to a
man, nor will those who are free from that burthen as it is called even sit down to meat
with those who have.

Far the largest part of the women, however, I must absolve from any share in
the abovementioned barbarous customs. Some few there may be who consent to the
orders given [by] the men with whom they are connected but far the larger part hold
this usage in the utmost abhorrence and do all in their power, tho' all is frequently too
little, to prevent it.
Poor John Grant. He plucked at the sleeve, and often the pocket, of the passer-by. The Australian Dictionary of Biography calls him 'agitator and minor poet'—which could be said of many an undergraduate working for a Bachelor of Arts and attending demonstrations on the weekend. But Grant, whose date of birth is given as 1776 but whose death is not noted, was different. He was well bred, with a French mother. In the course of wooing a peer’s daughter he shot at a family solicitor and was sentenced to death, but at the intercession of friends and family, particularly his sister, Matilda, Grant was instead sent out to the colony. It did not suit him to be a convict, and he pulled what rank he had, antagonising those who might have helped him. In his first four years he was bundled off to Norfolk Island and Van Diemen’s Land. In the process of rehabilitation he became a clergyman, stationed at Newcastle, and returned to England in 1811.

Defending others whom he saw as wronged, and on his own behalf, he was a courageous man, but his methods were not of the kind to prevail on the establishment.
I thank you, my dearest Mother, for the additional proofs of your anxiety for my
comfort, which your two other boxes, valuables of all kinds, afford—and for my dear
Matilda's clever management in sending me inventories and letters so regularly. I
received the 2 boxes Wednesday; and yesterday the large one, after being altered, was fitted
into the recess. I have been unable to compare their contents with Matilda's inventory
minutely, but I have not seen the domino she speaks of. The black satin waistcoat and
breeches are very beautiful and the shirts I fear very expensive. The white hat also is
handsome, but rather squeezed, as well as the box which contained it. I shall reply to your
hopes of meeting me again, my dearest Mam! by assuring you it is the favourite wish of
my heart, and, that when the opportunity presents itself in 1806, you will not fail to
embrace it by arranging your affairs so as to return with Sam to India. I shall always be
thinking and talking of you, particularly when any produce [from] your present of seeds
appears on my table in New South Wales. I shall endeavour to merit your blessing given in
a few lines on invoice of them, by every possible attention to you in absence, in often
writing and sometimes remitting to you, if fortune favouring me more hereafter, than
hitherto, should enable one so to do. Your promise respecting my infant is a great comfort
to me, but I wish that both it and its Mother could have gone with me. However, perhaps
what is, is for the best, and I must submit to the necessity of the case, both on this subject
and Cockaynes' refusal to apply on my behalf that the mode of my emigration might be
altered. Nor will you, I dare say, my dear Mam! behave unkind to Betty when you chance
to see her, because she has heretofore much contributed to soothe my distress'd state of
mind, at times when ill usage elsewhere, together with my misfortunes, almost made me
desperate. I don't think I have any chance of meeting with any like her in my future
connections with your sex, and I hesitate much about the question of her going out as
Mrs Horner, whenever I weigh the subject in my mind. I confess I wish it was so much.

The 2 boxes of seeds [and glass] are packed away, and leaves me much room in the large box, which now having a lock [...] on, will for years be of infinite utility. As well as the hammock for my cot, as I ask'd for it, more with the idea of sleeping in it on my arrival to avoid vermin, than on the passage for which it is too large. On examining the pair of new boots, I am surprised to find they are 2 odd ones—one pointed, the other round at toe, and different sizes. As I understand, Mr Fielding has written for more articles from his sister, who will call on you to ask if you have aught else for me, pray, either get the man who sold the boots to send the other two very cheap (as they are not serviceable to him) or be good enough to purchase leathers enough, and soles for me to get them made here, as some clever fellows in that line are on board. Pray return my thanks to Mr Aberdeen for his present. I wish he may live to witness me pay off my creditors tell him, and ask him, or rather Mr Gregson, to give up my certificate which is now signed completely, and send it to me. It will be a satisfaction to me to have it, if his giving it up does not occasion you to pay more than if he keeps it, which Mr Aberdeen can inform you—as also, whether in case I ever return, or send property to England, my creditors by right can seize either me, or it? But, I believe, the old Bailey decision entirely does it all away. You may, if you please, also send me a small pair of knee buckles, for it happens that most of my breeches are made to wear them, and not with strings, so that since the loss of my silver pair (which were with my black stocking breeches—in the pocket—in the care of Jnr Manby, Newgate, and I am not sure I ever had either away, as Matilda told me she found them not in my trunk or bundles after I left London. Ask her to enquire for them, and to tell Manby I shall take care of his letter for his Father which I took charge of), I am without any buckles for my knees. Your chocolate is very acceptable; the small knife very useful; the Gazetteer valuable; the letters most important. Return my thanks to Mr Bate, Mrs Grignion, and to my dearest Mrs Mallet for them, and the beautiful spun watch-pocket, and the silver cream jug—I shall keep [them] as
long as I live in proof of my affection for her, and for my dear and only sister Matilda. I don't like the form, nor the colour of the drab great coat, but doubtless it will be serviceable. The blue jacket and pantaloons please me better and I mean to rig out in them first time next Sunday—say tomorrow for now 'tis Saturday night 10 o'clock, and a poor sailor, very ill here generally, I retire to bed at 8 or 9, and live partly on plum pudding taking little meat, which plan I mean to adopt during the voyage as my best protection against the scurvy, eating rice occasionally and often messes of oatmeal. A little raw coffee now (if it could easily be obtained from clerks in the Counting House who have it sometimes for perquisites) would be very acceptable here. Thank you for last Sunday's paper, pray continue it. Buonaparte will certainly be among you soon, or in Ireland. I notice in my dear Matilda's pretty letter to Mr Fielding, her wish that I should write to Sam. I will do so, not by Experiment, but by Earl Mornington, or Cecilia, two India ships now here and going soon, perhaps with us, whose captains Mr Fielding is acquainted with and will send on board with my letter. You had better embrace the opportunity and write a few lines to Sam. I wait for your next letter to see if we can get his box from India Arms to send, if not quite good for nothing. We are to be further from you at Christmas, I imagine, my dear Mam! for there lie here two convoys—the Courageux for the West Indies, the Pylades Sloop War for Africa—and we have necessary instructions from both, and orders to go with her who sails first, and they do say we only wait a wind which, however, may not blow fair for weeks to come.

In this state of things I write to my benevolent friend Mr Pearce—and if he is too engaged to come down here, our stay is too uncertain for him to send anything at the risk of losing it, if we be gone e'er it arrives.

I shall take my Matilda's advice tell her and make another inventory from hers, of all my things. Thank her for her list of creditors. Nothing more to add, but, may Heaven protect you both!!

Affectionately J.G.
Mr Fielding, just now with me, says he is very sorry he refused your large jar of pickles, because [they are] so excellent with salt provisions. I know not what they are, unless some onions or cucumbers Matilda’s pickling. If you can spare them and find room to pack them, we shall thank you. We think to fasten up the looking glass in the hospital. I had almost forgot to say, the screws to my lock which hinges on the harpsichord box are too large for the holes, but we make them do; but three small screws are wanting to fasten the hasp on the lid, and I cannot do without some. Pray send me a few of different sizes, some very small. This is Sunday and everyone compliments me on my smart appearance—your jacket and pantaloons.

There were only 2 parcels for Mr Fielding in the harp’s box, but he expected something more I believe—and has written particulars to his sister. I think I shall try and change my dollars into penny pieces if we remain here for any length of time.
My dearest Mother and Sister!

In the solitude I live, I endeavour to think as little as I can of the past, because so productive of violent anger and sorrow, but when I take up my pen to write to you, I cannot express how these sentiments predominate—torn from you both as I am, perhaps forever, and for checking a villain, whose artifices have blasted my hopes in life, and driven me a wanderer now from social enjoyments and from internal peace as yet—I hope not irrecoverably, because then one step only can be resorted to by me, it is to return home by way of America, and take so dreadful a vengeance, as never yet was known, on all who have opposed me too successfully—and mark the conduct of Governor King! I wrote to you in July [via] SS Coromandel, and SS Albion in August, that I had not yet seen him, and that the only favour I ask'd him on my arrival had been refused—to keep a cask of rum brought from the Brazils—and which refusal was a loss of £60 Stg to me. In October Mr Evans, the Surveyor General here, a neighbour whom I visit, was to breakfast with King one morning at Parramatta. The overnight he stated it to me at his house, and as he had advis'd me to apply to the Governor for an Emancipation—i.e. the Freedom [of] the Colony—I gave to Evans a note to deliver to him, 'requesting that his Excellency would indulge me with a Colonial Emancipation, from the peculiarity of my case, and because, till I had it, I could not, with any comfort to myself, enter into any active concerns in the country; further, that if he had received any letters in my behalf from England (as I was taught to expect) I would beg the favour of his advice as to my future destination in the Colony, being equally unsettled in my mind and in my views'. Evans gave to King the letter, who went out to Prospect
to see my poor friend Captain Bishop (then deranged), and on the Governor's return I waited upon him, surrounded by several gentlemen in his garden, and said my name was 'Grant'. He civilly touch'd his hat, 'Yes, Sir! I received a letter from you today.' 'I request a reply Sir.' But I was so hurt and agitated I spoke low and he did not at first understand what I said. I repeated 'I request a reply Sir.' Governor King then answered 'I always like to take time to consider my replies, Mr Grant.' I very slowly retired, and cannot better express my feelings on maturely weighing Governor King's evasive answer, than by copying the letter I wrote to him the same night upon the occasion—first stating that he had given a Colonial freedom, months before, to one Goulam, a common thief, who had come out in the Coromandel, and who was serviceable on the passage in brushing coats etc. for the officers. This man however had been a Lighthorseman, and King suddenly acted as above, and gave him the command of a few troopers he has round his person—and to finish this favourite's history, as I have noticed him, he was soon after tried by a Criminal Court here and sent to Van Diemen's Land, tho' the charges were not clearly proved against him.

Surely I alone should have been noticed before 199 vagabonds and I instructed the Governor as to my opinions as follows.

Saturday Midnight

[To His Excellency, The Governor. Bishop's Farm. December 1804.]

Why hesitate Governor King to do an act of justice? If you had presented to me the Freedom [of] the Colony the instant I landed, you would only have rescued a much-injured gentleman from highwaymen and housebreakers and have soothed the sorrows of respectable friends at home and his just
resentments. But after near 6 months residence in solitude here, what would you take
time to consider? Is it my case? Or how to get my services? If the latter, spare yourself
the trouble. I could not enter into government service now but with infinite reluctance,
and yet I recollect in March 1803 when the message came down to the Commons of
war again, I happened to be in the House: all was agitation because all felt it the
moment England must struggle hard for her very existence. I flew to offer my services
and I have the Duke of York’s reply by me now somewhere, but my ardour is a good
deal repressed since, and besides commerce is more my track in life, and if you had
given me a Colonial Emancipation, perhaps my services might have been acceptable to
the only respectable merchant here, Mr Campbell, and if now they are not, and you
still decline my request, recall at least, Sir, your arbitrary mandate which fixes your
price upon my property, and give it [cask of rum] back to me to subsist on—a
merchant naturally deems such traffic singular, Sir, and amidst maxims of government
we never read of any which deem it true policy to oppress the poor. As to my case, not
one of the gentlemen standing round you today in your garden, but if so situated,
would not have trod in my steps: ask Captain Wilson if he would suffer another such
dreadful account for it? or if such a base fellow’s cowardice should protect him?
Compare Captain Belassis with my case—both originate in quarrels—in affairs of
feeling—but (as I wrote to Mr Palmer the other day) as a fancied indignity to a sister
can never be allowed to [stack] equal to the loss of a woman one adores, so neither
could Belassis be called irreparably injur’d, tho’ death ensued from his dispute.
Whereas, in my version, an irreparably injur’d gentleman suffers the vengeance of the
law as a criminal, who yet has done no harm! Barbarity shown at home to me took care
that Belassis came not here indiscriminately with the very dregs of the human race—
poor Captain Robinson’s humanity alone rescued me: he did more—his indignation at
oppression wherein himself was made a party, induc’d him to give me a fair opportunity
King was seized with a fit of the gout the same day and went to Sydney very ill.

Evans was sent for there and a few days after, at his house, he introduced what I conceive were the Governor's ideas in conversation—viz: that Captain Belassis did not get his Colonial freedom till three months after his arrival tho' the interest of some of the first people in India was exerted in his favour; that Governor King is a very humane, good man; that not one letter of complaint is addressed to him which he does not conceive it his duty to send home to England to be noticed there. And Captain Belassis' free pardon came from thence in the Experiment last July, dated November 1803, signed by the King—tho' Governor King had given him a pardon and he in consequence left the Colony long before; that the Colonial Emancipation for Goulam never was signed tho' hastily promised (as Mr Atkins could inform me); that it is usual to grant such favours only in January and June [...] the birthdays; that most likely I should be noticed next June, perhaps in January, but that King is Governor, and will not be dictated to by anyone.

John Grant.
Mr Evans asked if I had written to the Governor, as if he did not know of the above letter, to which I then replied 'that without any ideas of dictating to anyone I certainly never would fail to speak or write as I feel tho', for a man's power be ever so great that Governor King is now in possession of all I have to say on the subject. I waited on Major Johnstone and Mr Atkins immediately and inform'd first the one and then the other the contents of my letter to the Governor. The Major is a worthy good man, and advis'd me to retire to the farm again and wait till January when he will intercede for me jointly with the other gentleman to whom I brought letters by a memorial—but as to myself, I cannot apply again on the occasion, and 'tis rather remiss in those I had letters to, that no application was made in my behalf on the 4th June last. Mr Atkins, upon my arrival last May, remarked that my Emancipation must be the first object and applied for in June, but afterwards evaded any steps being taken, saying he had no influence with the Governor. Indeed, I have noticed so much insincerity in his warm professions to serve me, as above, and respecting Mr Campbell, and again about a situation as his own clerk, that I am rather disgusted, which disgust was excited into action, not long prior to this letter to King, by a silly haughtiness, on the part of Mrs Atkins up at Parramatta towards me in one of her tipsy fits—the following is the note I wrote to him at that time, but, on my showing him my letter to the Governor, he coincided with the Major in opinion and saying his signature is at my service, would insist upon my breakfasting with him, but I am no more intimate there:—

"Sir! the bearer will remove from your kitchen my 3 boxes and from your store room the keg of sugar and cask of coffee, which I hope they have not encumber'd too long. I have sent a portmanteau for my books, for alone here I have great need of them, to cheer my solitude. Please present my respect to Mrs Atkins and say misfortune merits not insult. A wounded mind can ill bear it and I must withdraw my offer of services to you, notwithstanding the income be near £200 per annum. Besides I find your professions

JOHN GRANT
to serve me are insincere, else after offering me your office and your table, would you prevaricate after promising to introduce me to Mr Campbell, would you suddenly refuse? But now particularly after confessing to me at your own table that you judg'd my case to be the most cruel you have known since your residence in this Colony would you suffer me to remain 6 months here without once soliciting the Freedom [of] the Colony for me and tho' Governor Hunter's introductory letter was obviously for that purpose.'

Now January is come and perhaps it will pass over without my Emancipation. I shall not apply for it again! Nor will I quietly stay here without it. You must feel with me the cruelty of keeping one thus upon the footing of the highwaymen I came with in the eye of the law, incapable of making engagements of any kind and my hands tied up from all exertion of course—for I feel it is only a proper respect I owe myself, to keep aloof from servitude of every kind as long as I am considered as a prisoner here, and until a solemn act gives me back my liberty. But there is in this Colony a disposition to humble those who come here, on the part of the Civil and Military—but, as I remark to Major Johnstone, 'bred up as an independent English gentleman, no officer in the British Army or Navy has an higher sense of honour than I profess, I will be treated with respect, and, when I recover liberty, I can offer my services'.
To Their Royal Highness's,

The Princesses Augusta, Sophia, Mary, Amélie & Amelia

The Humble Petition of

Matilda Grant

Whereas

That your Petition is Daughter to the
afflicted Parent who on Wednesday last presented a Petition to his
Majesty in the audience Chamber at James, and after to John Grant
the unfortunate Prince, now under the awful sentence of death in
Tanguay and ordered for execution on Wednesday next the 13 Inst.

Your Petitioner entreats you to excuse the unremittable
mercy taken on promising to lay before your Royal Highness's
a few particulars relative to the unfortunate situation of her Brother
of the age of 19 he received a violent attachment for a young Lady
whose relatives were rather to discourage his address than
otherwise, that he is now 27 years of age and lives for this eight
years cherish'd this hopeless Supposition, No Servants who visited the
Everything about Margaret Catchpole is heroic, even her name which lends brilliance to the mean drabness of the convict era.

Farmhand, nurse, servant and stablehand to the rich brewing family of Cobbold in Suffolk, she learned to read and write from the children’s tutors. She acquired an independence that brought her up against the law one night when she stole a horse and rode 70 miles from Ipswich to London in ten hours. She was caught and the magistrate, unimpressed by this extraordinary feat, sentenced her to death. The sentence was commuted to transportation to Australia for seven years. In gad, waiting for her ship to sail, Margaret went over the wall with the aid of a clothesline and when caught was rewarded with transportation for life. She arrived in Sydney in 1801. Margaret went on to become a figure in the community in public and private service and wrote often to the Cobbolds to tell them about her life. She took to the Hawkesbury region—could it have reminded her of Suffolk?—and when she was pardoned in 1814, chose not to return to England.
My dear uncle and aunt this ship have been so long about leaving this colony but it is now about it and I am happy to inform that I am in charming health and happy at this and hoping my dear uncle and aunt this will find you all in good health I hope and all my dear cussones and I pray to God to keep you all from such a wicked country as this for about a fortnight ago a man burnt a poor woman to death. He cut 2 or 3 holes in her head but it did not occasion her death for he burnt the poor creature to death because she said Mary Smith went to see after some things that he had stolen from her sum time ago. It is a very dangerous country but Bliss God I take great care of myself I mind that my company is good, all ways better than myself, and if any thing I go smarter than ever I did. I look pretty well but I have lost one of my front teeth and a good many of them are broken away. All my hopes is to see you and my dear cussones. I give fifteen shillings for a pair of black Spanish shoes and the same for a pair of cotton stockenes. Things are very dear. Our harvest is only one month over and wheat is sold for twenty-five shillings per bushel all ready. I hope things are not so dear with you. Wood is given very dear, five shillings a cart load with one horse, one and six pence for a wheelbarrow load and one can go and get it that like but it is a great way. Some coals are burnt here but they come a great way. A very bad crop of wheat this season times will go very hard with us next winter I am afraid. I hope if I come home any more I shall be worth by this time two years I hope two hundred pound and then I will come by sum herd or another. I am not at a loss in no part of the world I am as suppl [supple] as ever they say I am like a young woman for strewn nimble [nimble]. It is a wonderful country for to have children in. Very old women have them that never had non before. My dear uncle our wrigshen [writing] paper is six pence a sheet.
My dear uncle and aunt and cousins this com with my coin'd [kind] love to you all and happiest to hear you are all well as it lay me at this time thank God for it. and with great joy I received your letters for I was all most like you for I thought you had got me. but when I saw the date [date] that had binn wot a long time they should a com in the Dromedary all most 2 years ago. I received my box on the 20 of August 1811. it made me very happiest to hear my dear cousins are doing so well a great Bless and comfort to you and a sincere [sincere] happiness to me. I was very sorry to hear of my aunt Ledder being dead, and poor Lucey, pray give my love to my uncle Ledder and tell him I am very sorry in ded [indeed] to hear such newes. give my lov to all my cousins Ledders, I should be very glad to hear from my cousin Sarah. [...] to give my love to Susan if you shall see her and tell her I thought she wold not be married [married]. I am not and all most fifty year old nor do not intend. I hop to see hom ones moor and to see dear cousin Charles weay [weigh] me a pound of tea for me and that fine strong young man Samuell to make me a par of shoses [shoes] and poor Lucey to thread my needell for my eyes are not so good as they wear. but thank God I can do so well as I do. I rent a lettell [little] farm a bout fifteen ackers, a bout half of it standan timber and the cleard ground. I hire a min to put in my corn and I work a good deal myself I hav got 30 shep [sheep] and forty goates and 30 piges and 2 doges. they take kear of me for I live all a loon, not one in the house, there is a house with in twenty 2 rood of me. I hav a good maney of my frindes that I goo to see when I think proper such as I haved nurst when they lay in. they cannot do with out me. I am loked [looked] upon very well thank God. I hop to git a few poundes to com hom with. the wight [white] frostey morninges is just laven of us. it hav binn very could in ded this wintear but nothing like your snow, that was very shocken in ded. I am very sorry to hear you hav lorst your frind and I am very sorrey that I hav lorst [a] wothey good
frind as Mrs Sloorgin, for she sent me this time 12 yeardes [yards] of iresh [Irish] cloth, 
3 yeardes of reben [ribbon], 3 good bookes and wrigh [writing] paper and this is sum of it. 
Mrs Cobbold sent me a very hansom present, peces [pieces] for 2 goundes [gowns], nine 
capes [caps], four [of her] last ones and 1 just as it com of har owen head wich i thought 
moor of than a new thing. i put it on dyreckly [directly], and maney moor things to long 
to menchen. my dear aunt your hear [hair] i kist and cried over it and will all wayas keep it 
and i hav the other by me that you sent me. i hop the next time you send you will send me 
sum of Lucesy and Charles hear. dear uncl you must think i can walk well for when i heard 
theear was a box for me i set of [off] and walked fity fifty miles in the 2 dayes. you cannot tell 
the happnes it giv me and all my frindes wear over joyed to hear of it. now this will giv me 
great happiness for a long time and i hop Lucey will all ways be very dutfull [dutiful] to har 
mother as my dear aunt must be a giten [on] into years for i do not grow young my self. 
i hav lorst all my frunt teeth. i can stur [stir] a bout as brisk as ever and in good spirites. dear 
uncle i hop when you right a gain you will send me word of all my frindes. i thank you for 
the newes papears and wich [wish] i could a sent you sum but hear [there] is no tim, the ship 
is going to sail dyreckley so i must con clud with my sencer lov to you all my dear cusones. 
i pray to God to keep his Bliss upon you all and not forgiting my self, a dew [adieu].

Margreat Catchpole

i am very proud of my dear Charles letters and sorrey i had not time to anser it 
but i will the next time. James will soon git a rich man i think if he mind Samell i hop 
will over tak them. by taken keear this places is a gitten very plentfull but every thing 
[is] very dear. beef, mutton and pork 15 to 18 pences par pound, wheat from 12 to 15 
and 18 shillenes par buchell, butter five shillenes par pound. on march the forteen is 
my barth day [birthday], then i am fiftey years.
Pacific Islands have a way of throwing off their own royalty in much the same way as occurred in the German states before the Weimar Republic. As is often the case in history, females proved to be more picturesque, and more practical as well as more domineering than the males. This letter is a translation of a message, originally in French, from the redoubtable Queen Pomare of Otaheite to Admiral Richard Thomas, who was Commander-in-Chief of Britain's Pacific station in the 1840s.
March 4th 1843

O Commodore,

I make known to you that oftentimes I have been troubled by the French Consul, and because of his threatening language I have forsaken my house.

His angry words to me have been very strong, and I have only verbally told you of his ill actions towards me.

But now I clearly make known to you O Commodore my desire, through this letter. Do you shield me so that the French Consul may not at all trouble me again. I look to you to protect me, quickly now, at the present time and yourself will seek the way how. This is my wish, if Mr Moerenhout and all other Foreigners should want to come to me they must first make known to me their wish, that they may be made acquainted whether it is, or it is not, agreeable to me to see them.

Health and peace to you
A servant of the Queen of Britain,

Pomare
The Queen of Tahiti
Granville Ryrie—now there is a name to conjure with, and not only in the Monaro district of New South Wales where 'Ryrie' goes with grazing acreage. In 1900 he went off to the Boer War and from Cape Town wrote in spidery, scratchy paper-conserving handwriting to 'My darling Mick' who was his wife. He was 35 years old, with a lot of life to live. In May 1916 he wrote to darling Mick from another war. He had been wounded in South Africa and twice wounded at Gallipoli. At the beginning of 1918 he wrote from Palestine that he did not know what was to be done about getting himself home. But did he want to leave the changing world of arms? Eventually he relinquished army command and went back into politics. He represented Australia at the League of Nations in Geneva where he was heard to advise certain diplomats to 'Cut the cackle and let's get down to business'.

This was Ryrie's last hurrah. He returned home in 1932 and died five years later, survived by darling Mick, his twin daughters and his son.

Sir Granville Ryrie's three-year-old twin daughters, Dar (Marjorie) and Dee (Gwendolyn).
Photograph courtesy of the Ryrie family.

Sir Granville Ryrie
My darling Mick

I hope you got the Xmas cards I sent and also the letter Mr Vaughan took for me. I am writing on this foolscap in my office in my spare time. I think it very likely that I will get my promotion as Major shortly, and then I will be no end of a swell. I expect I will have to get some more uniforms as mine is getting shabby now. I suppose you got my cable and sent my dress uniform by Mrs Mackay. I wish you were coming too and I don’t know yet whether I couldn’t manage to make arrangements for you to come out, that is if you would like to. I have not so much work now that the Orient has gone but the details will soon muster up again and then we will have another rush until the next boat goes. I like the work right enough but am awfully sick of this country and would give anything to get home, but suppose I must first wait my time. The worst of this place is the wind, it never stops night or day.

It is only five days to Xmas just fancy. I can’t get home for it now anyhow and I don’t think I ever spent a Xmas away from home before. I don’t know in the least what I am going to do on that day. I have not met many people so I can’t be asked out anywhere, so I suppose I’ll stop in my room and carve my emu egg. I have nearly finished one which is most frightfully pretty. Captain Douse offered me £5 for it but of course I couldn’t sell it. I think I will give one to Mrs Mackay when she comes. I would have sent one out to you by Mr Vaughan but couldn’t find any good box to pack it in and was afraid it might get broken. I am in great demand here for concerts for whistling and singing. I went to one at
Claremont Sanatorium the night before last. I think I will go today and call on Sir David Gill at the Observatory and he might ask me there for Xmas. I saw Stanley's signature on some papers yesterday that came from [Pienaars] River so he must be all right. Some of the [Boers] came over into this Colony the other day but I think we have driven them out again. If the people of this Colony were to rise it would be a very serious business but I don't think they will. I had a letter from Dolly and she said they had moved to the new place. I had a letter from the Judge too and he enclosed me yards of newspaper. I went to the theatre the other night and saw *The Streets of London*, it was a rotten Company and plenty blood and thunder. It is a nice theatre. I must go and have a look at the Art Gallery some day, they say it is worth looking at. The gardens in Cape Town are splendid, altho' I haven't seen much of them but I don't know how they keep them so nice with all this wind. I suppose shearing is over and nearly all the wool away. I wonder if you have returned from Braidwood yet, you will have by the time this reaches you anyhow. I have never received any newspapers from you for months and months, in fact I have only received about two altogether, they don't bother about papers in the Post Offices and just stack them up in tons so I suppose there are heaps of yours somewhere. Some days I feel my shoulder a little but it is right enough. I have got the bullet that I think went through it. One of the men saw it hit near an ant heap behind me and when he found I was hit he thought that it must have been the one that hit me, and when the firing stopped he went and found it, or another one like it; anyhow I have got it and have had it mounted with a gold ring so that I can wear it on my chain. The little wrist watch is a very good one and has kept splendid time right through. I commenced this letter yesterday but couldn't finish it as a bit of a rush of work came in. I am fairly busy this morning too as the Persie is coming in today and is to take 25 invalids from Woodstock Hospital to Australia, and I have to see that they are paid and clothed. There is not a scrap of news here, it is the same thing over and over. Old Kitchener is in town somewhere and all the Officers are as frightened as they can be, because he will
pack all off to the front unless they are absolutely unfit or they have work to do here.

The wretched telephone is out of order today and I can't get on to the Colonel's Office at all. I hope I will be able to get this away by the *Persic*. She is not in yet but is due. The wind has dropped today, thank goodness. [Bailey] is all right, but this is not a good place for him to be as he can't keep away from the drink, he never gets very drunk but spends all his money. Well I do hope the little girls are getting on all right. What big girls they will be by the time I come home. I don't suppose I will know them. It is nearly Xmas and I hope you will all have a happy one. I meant to send you some Xmas presents by the *Orient* but was so very busy at the finish that I couldn't well manage it and anyhow it is just as well for me to wait and bring some things out and give them myself. I do hope you got the cards though and the silver leaves.

They are recruiting for all they are worth here. The office is just next [door] and it is very funny to watch the crowds who come to get sworn in. Men who are too old try to look young and smart, boys stand up as straight as possible and try to look big, there is a
crowd of them at this moment outside my window dressed in every conceivable fashion. They are not much to look at and I think there are very few good men amongst them. Everyone speaks so highly of the Australians, there is no doubt they have been by far the most useful troops in the field bar none and I don't know what they would have done without them.

Well, Mick darling, I think I must stop and try and get this away for the boat.

Goodbye and God bless you and give the dear little kids a kiss from their poor old Dad who will come home as soon as he possibly can.

Ever your loving husband

Dan.

Romani

May 14th 1916

My darling Mick

I got a lovely post the other day, 3 letters from you and one each from Dee and Dar and I was very glad you were all well. Your letters were dated 2nd, 9th and 16th. I am glad all the things arrived all right and I am glad you like them. The map of the trenches shows all the work we did on Gallipoli and I am glad it arrived safely.

I will write to Snowy Baker and Mrs Holdship. I had another big reconnaissance to carry out and got back last night. We left on Monday morning and went out to Katia and rested there until 8 o'clock that night when we marched out to go to [Gadaidia] 20 miles out where the Turks were reported to be in some strength, we rode all night except about 1 1/2 hours we rested at Oghratina, and you can't help feeling the responsibility because being
in Enemy Country all the time you never know when you might run into an ambush and
you always feel that they know when you are going as all the Bedouins are spies, however
nothing happened during the night and I sent George Onslow with his 7th Regiment before
daylight to get round a place called Bir el Abd, a place we had been at before, but it is very
hard in the dark to know exactly where you are and where the place is and he got away too
far to the North and as day broke we saw some Turks on camels which should have been
surrounded. As soon as they saw us they bolted and we after them but we found that those
white trotting camels can beat our horses in the sand, and we only caught one and shot
another, they returned our fire but none of our men were hit. We didn't find anything at
[Gadaidia] much, but [burnt] what there was, we were fired on from the distance but no one
hit. We were within about 3 miles of [Salmana] where there are a lot of Turks and Germans
but it was not good enough to attack them as we had no way of dealing with casualties and
our supplies and ammunition wouldn't allow us to put up a big fight. So we just came home
again, a long weary march through the sand and the hot sun made you very sleepy, the
horses were badly off for water. We got back all right and I slept pretty soundly that night
(last night).

Well now for a bit of good news. My leave to go to England has been granted by
General Murray who is Commander-in-Chief here. Six weeks leave to date from date of
embarkation. I don't know whether I am included in the 10 members from Australia, but I
think I will go if I have to pay my own way. Of course it would be better to have all your
expenses paid, but I don't think I ought to miss going in any case. Of course if the Federal
Parliament didn't accept and no members came I wouldn't go. I asked for leave on the
grounds of their going, and after that, as I told you before, I think I'll try and get back. I'm
sick and tired of being away from you and the dear girls and Jim Boy and feel that I must get
home.

I don't think I can stand the heat here if it gets any worse as it is sure to do. It was
120 in the shade the other day and I think I told you 100 of our men and New Zealanders went down with sunstroke and heat exhaustion. Harold was one and he is still away in Hospital. I hate this infernal Desert, it makes me tired to look at the sand, and it is everywhere. I had a note from Hogue he is at Tel el Kebir. I may get him back and let Andy Cunningham go to the Regiment he has had a good spell away. Tell Deed I like the silhouettes very much and think they are very good. I will write to them soon again. I think we will be going on to Hill 70 for a spell as they call it, but I don’t think it is much of a spell, it is a hot shop, not a particle of shade, just plain Desert and plenty fatigues and escorts and things. We would sooner be out here and chance the Turks. The chap we caught yesterday was quite a swell soldier he had a sort of Khaki twill jacket and loose pants and a scarlet Kummabund and shoes and putties fastened at the top with elastic garters and a yellow turban thing twisted round his head. Some of them heard from Jerusalem that Strickland is a prisoner, but they haven’t heard of Lord Elcho.

I have great work sending away the Bedouins. Our patrols bring them in. Women and kids and old men. I let some women go once because they said they had left their babies in the Desert, and now they all have left babies in the Desert, some real old ones, it is very hard to know what to do with some of them. They howl and wail, but most of them are all with the Turks and no doubt give them information of our movements.

Cassie wrote and told me all about things and I am glad the season is so good and prices for stock etc. I think too it is much better to have a stranger as manager and someone who has nothing else to do, he can attend to things much better and Mr Fairbairn seems to be a good man. I must write to him.

Well Mick darling I must stop, it is pretty late.

Much love to you all and give poor old Jim these xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Your loving husband

Dan
My darling Mick

We are back here at this small Jewish village and in the same houses as before, and the kids are still making the same row. We had a terrible time coming from Es Dud yesterday. It was fine when we started but the rain came up and it simply poured in torrents and, as the ground was boggy enough before, it just finished it and our horses were bogging up to their knees. The Transport had a terrible time of it and a lot of the waggons only got here today, they had to remain bogged all night. The men are having a bad time, the ground of course was all soaking wet to pitch their bivvies on, and there is no wood to be had, and to make it worse they are issued with fresh meat instead of bully and have no place to cook it, the authorities always do that.

I had a cable from the National Women of Manly congratulating me, so my CB must have appeared in the papers. I expect there is one on the way from you, but I haven't got it yet. It is wretchedly cold, but I have a Kerosine heater which I have alight now in my room and it makes it nice and warm.

We have brought the Band with us and intended to give the inhabitants a treat but they got bogged and their music is all wet, and two of them have gone to Hospital and another one is drunk, so the music must be postponed until it gets finer, the rain simply pours down all of a sudden like a heavy thunderstorm, of course it must rain heavily here because they say the average is 26 inches per year and it all falls in about 2 1/2 months.

I have got a splendid set of photographs of Jerusalem which I am going to send
you but I think I had better register them. Captain Rhodes, General Chaytors’ A.D.C.,
gave them to me, he took them himself and got them developed in Cairo, he has a
panoramic camera.

I think a big mail for us was sunk on the Aragon just outside Alexandria the
other day. I have just seen a doctor who was on board at the time she was torpedoed
and had over 2000 troops on board, she sank in 20 minutes but most of the men got
off all right, and after a torpedo boat had taken about 500 on board, it was also
torpedoed and sank in 4 minutes and a great many were lost. This doctor says there
was a large mail for the Australians on board, so perhaps some of your letters have gone
down. I think all Australian mail now goes round via England.

I don’t know what the De Salises will think about my not knowing anything
about Eric for so long, but I couldn’t help it. Nothing yet has appeared that I know of
officially about his death and I don’t suppose it ever will, it all comes of taking men
away from their own Brigade and giving them to someone else, and as I said before I
protested strongly against it at the time. I will send Eric’s things out by some officer
going home. There is his disc and pay book, camera, watch, and some notebooks etc.

I haven’t heard any news lately from other fronts. We can’t do much for a time
as the country is simply a quagmire. The oranges are lovely here now, and there are
such millions of them, they are very big with thick skins.

It is pouring now, very dark and thunder and lightning.

Well Mick darling I don’t know what is to be done about getting home, it is
getting too long altogether. There is one chance and that is that I might be made
Minister for Defence. General Anderson thought it should be so, and wrote to me and
said he had mentioned it in high places and it was favourably received, but I don’t
know. I think if they make a Minister in the House of Reps I will get it, Pearce is in
the Senate; however, that is just private between us and perhaps nothing will come of
it, but it would be splendid if it did come off.

There is nothing more I can tell you, it is most depressing weather.
Much love to you and the dear girls and good old son Jim xxxxxxxxxxxxxx
I wrote to him saying I got the wool.
Your loving husband

Dan
Ruby Madden, daughter of Sir John Madden, Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria, was 18 when a family friend, married to an English army officer with good social connections, invited her to join them for the great Durbars of 1903. These were held at Delhi in India, and Ruby Madden was pitched into a climate of luxury and pomp, lodged at the Commander-in-Chief’s Camp, with a pool of fancy-free young officers on which to draw. It is apparent that Ruby had never heard of feminism nor did she want to at that exuberant age in those exuberant times. Her intelligence makes the letters home to Lady Madden, her mother, warm and engaging, but not without acute observation of the grand facade of British imperial behaviour, soon to disappear.
To Lady Madden

My dearest Mother,

I have left my letter so late I am afraid there isn't a chance of catching this mail, but my other letters of last week will come instead. It is almost impossible to find time for writing and there is always someone or other coming in or out. There is any amount to write about this week because of the State Ball and other shows, that it will take me days to write it up.

First of all I must thank you all for your nice budget of letters which came on Thursday. I am so delighted, dear old Sonny has passed in the end. Dear old sweet, how pleased he must be. Congratulate him a thousand times for me. Poor Lell, too, what a narrow escape she had of being killed. It made me quite ill to read about it. What could have broken the tree of the saddle, but of course that would be quite sufficient to make 'Colac' play up. As you say this certainly does not add to her value as a Lady's hack. Dick must be getting shaky now. I think of the dear old thing often and wish I could hear it is all safely over. Perhaps Kerney will send me a wire. It is nice having the news from 3 or 4 of you each mail because Mum dear, nice as your letters are, they rather require a key to them which is generally supplied by Dai, for you often take for granted I have heard some news, for instance I quote one bit: Lady Tennyson came to say goodbye, she will be glad to have the big house but dreads the cold there. Where is There? I presume Marble Hill as I saw by the paper they were going to S.A. The pianola must be rather a mixed pleasure but an excellent way of amusing the idle
members of the family. Perhaps like ping pong, their taste for it will die away. It was so sweet of Clem to think of it, for you must miss my brilliant playing! Poor Tim, I hope the cold was nothing serious [...] About reading my letters, I can't describe everything sufficiently well for them to be any use to papers and I haven't the faintest wish they should get there and as for writing a private sheet, I can't do that because one must just write as it comes and there is nothing actually private in my news only outside people always turn and twist things into impossible shapes and make it unpleasant.

I wish I HAD a ready pen and could describe all the wonderful life here. I have been for a walk this morning along the Ridge taking photos of the monument raised to the soldiers who died at the siege of Delhi and views of different things. There is a column there too which was raised in the 3rd century B.C. by King Asoka and was originally at Meerut, but was removed here and restored, as it was broken during the Mutiny. It is a perfect day and the view from the Ridge was lovely.

I called to say goodbye to Mrs. Tyler on my way as I leave tomorrow with Auntie and Uncle Ted by a special [train] at 12.15 in the day, much to my sorrow. I simply hate leaving and have enjoyed myself more than words can tell. The Functions all end today with the departure of the Viceroy and Co. Claude has just returned from bidding them goodbye, looking a dear in his uniform. We didn't bother to go because it wasn't anything to see. Capt. Cameron is coming to take me riding after lunch. The Cadet Corps are on escort duty so he couldn't go in the morning [...] Ayah is up to her eyes packing at present. I couldn't be bothered, going away is such a different thing to coming to a place. Before I forget, Rose Price wrote me a nice letter saying how sorry he was he couldn't come to see me as he was suddenly ordered away to Quetta on duty of sorts. He wished me to send you and Sylvia his love when I wrote. He has grown such a good-looking boy but I only saw him to speak to at the polo.
Donald and Edith wrote to me too asking me to go to Madras on my way home but I don't think it is feasible and wrote and told them so. It is a five-day journey from here and Capt. Clarke who is going there says he will take me but I don't think my many chaperones would approve. No, but what I would like to do is to go to Jeypore [Jaipur]. We were lunching with Mr. Landon yesterday and I met a charming man, a Mr. H.V. Cobb, who is the Resident at Jeypore who looks after the Rajah of that place, also 2 others one of whom is in the Cadet Corps. He has a lovely place, I believe, and can put you in the way of seeing real India for this is only playing at it, I believe. He was telling me the Hodges were staying with him for some time before they came here and he thought they were quite charming. He was saying it was a perfect sin only to go to Bombay and see no more of India and he would be delighted if [I] would come and stay. The Duke and staff are going there now, but early in February he said he would be delighted to have me. He isn't married, so a chaperone as usual is the bother. I shall broach the subject to Aunt Bea when I go back, but she has lost all her go and is a bad traveller, but Aunt Amy is more sporting, I shall try and persuade her. It would be simply lovely, a beautiful climate and we should see pig sticking and all sorts of sports, so Capt. Cameron says. He is somewhere near in that district I believe and of course is interested in this cadet boy. It's rather funny he was trying to arrange a shikari at his house for me to see if I could have gone, and now this invitation comes which is all ready-made. I know I personally should love it for the riding alone, but then again the chaperone comes in, she would have a dull time driving in a bullock tonga or some weird vehicle.

I shall miss my riding here more than anything. Capt. Cameron is most anxious to send me down one of his ponies, 'Derby Day', for me to hunt on in Bombay. He jumps well and is clever as a cat, but it is rather a large order and I might hurt his pony for him. He has been kind enough as it is.
I ended my last letter to Lesley on Sunday, I think I must start from Monday. It simply poured in the night which made us all very blue as we thought we should be swamped out of our little happy homes, but the tents have double flies and the sun soon dispersed the clouds in the morning so the rain did good, as it laid the dust and made everything sparkle. I wrote letters all the morning of Monday, then dressed for lunch in my tailor dress and green and blue hat and a Mr. Lombard, friend of Mrs. Hob.'s, called for us in his carriage and we drove to the Remount Camp where we were the guests of Capt. Templar and Clarke. It was very cheery and Col. and Mrs. Shaw were the other guests. Isn't the world small, Capt. Templar knows Harry and Pat well, the former was staying with him and Jack Hanwell at their bungalow [in India] and he and Pat stayed in the same country house in England. He was very interested to hear about Harry being married.

After lunch we were very divided what to do. Mrs. Hob. had promised to see her husband's battery in the Assault at Arms at the Durbar Hall and we all wanted to see a game of polo between Jodhpur and Bikanir, so it ended by she and Mrs. Shaw going there in the victoria, and I was handed over to the care of the others till she came on. She offered to send for 'Susan's' and 'Mary's' leads if they thought I would be a trouble. We all drove in the brake to the ground and got excellent seats inside the rails and the game was wonderful, Jodhpur winning 6 to 4. Tuesday morning I had arranged to ride with Col. Parkinson at 9.30 and Capt. Cameron sent me round a mount with a note saying he was a 'pig sticker' supposed to be very good and one of the boys had killed a wolf on him after a 4-mile gallop, so I expected great things but was doomed to disappointment. He was too quiet for words and evidently requires wolves and things to liven him up. I longed for a good spur. We went a good round thro' camps and jungle and got lost and found again, for neither of us could speak a word of the
language and we got mixed as to directions, however with the help of my bush lore and the sight of ‘the Monument’ we got home at last rather hot and cross.

After lunch we walked to the polo ground and watched a most exciting game of football between the Gordons and the Irish Rifles which ended in a draw, 1 goal each. The excitement was intense and was one continuous roar from the Tommies watching, first in Scotch and then in Irish as first one and then the other gained the advantage. One excitable Gordon got up and danced a highland fling and threw his helmet in the air when his side got the goal and the display of ‘leg’ was alarming.

The evening was the State Ball and here comes the difficulty, how will I ever be able to describe it to you. It was like a dream from Fairyland and mere words can never picture it to you. We had to leave here at 8 o’c to avoid the awful crush we expected to have judging by what we went thro’ going to the Investiture. Poor Claude had a shocking cold but would insist upon coming as he didn’t want to disappoint me. I must say I should have been bitterly disappointed if I had [to go without him]. What annoys me now is that I didn’t wear my new white frock, but thought we had to go by train as it had been particularly requested we should do so and it looked like rain and then thinking we should have the long walk thro’ the Fort again, I decided to wear my black dress. I did my hair rather nicely and the black looked well against the uniforms, but all the same I wish I had worn the other but didn’t want to spoil it the very first day I put it on.

We got there without the slightest difficulty thro’ the Lahore Gate. I was wildly excited for it looked such a gorgeous scene as we drove up to the steps. We were early as we got there with so little trouble, so we walked about and stared at everything. We danced in the marvellous red sandstone [granite] hall with rows of columns either side and a space in the middle for dancing nearly the same size as our Govt. House room. The dressing was magnificent and everybody looked lovely and the men divine in their
different uniforms. The Rajahs surpassed themselves in jewels and looked like moving jeweller's shops. Capt. Cameron introduced me to one of his little boys, the Rajah of Rutlam, who was in the Cadet Corps uniform, so he had an attendant with him dressed in yellow satin to wear his jewels, an enormous diamond sun in his pugaree and a ruby and diamond necklace of immense size. Such a quaint idea. He turned the boy round for me to admire them better as if he was a stone. Capt. Cameron said if he had known he had the jewels, he would have given him leave to wear them himself. The latter looked a perfect sweet in his kit, but of course he doesn't wear the pugaree indoors. It was quite the prettiest uniform there and everybody kept stopping him, while we were dancing, to look at it. He is very tall with iron grey hair, dark eyes and moustache altho' he is only 36 and the white, blue and gold and high boots look very effective. I was quite proud to dance with him.

My programme filled almost at once, and when people went to supper one could have some lovely turns, so I hadn't any fear of being a wallflower. The only thing, none of the nice A.D.C.s were allowed to dance as they had to look after things. Claude introduced me to Ld. Suffolk, one of the Viceroy's permanent A.D.C.s. Such a dear and we talked until his Chief arrived which he did about 9 o’c. I got front place to see them come in, much to Claude's and Capt. Cameron's amusement, who stood behind. I was a country cousin come to see the sights and I intended to see them. They processed up the room, with everybody bobbing either side, to the marble throne inlaid with coloured stones which, by the way, they have been taking months to restore, as during the Mutiny all the jade and stones they were done with were picked out and carried away. It must have cost thousands of pounds. It was where the old Peacock Throne was from which the kings used to dispense justice. But that has long since gone. Lady Curzon, who looked perfectly lovely, was dressed to carry out the idea in an entire dress of cloth of gold embroidered in tiny peacocks' feathers with an emerald
sewn on for the eye; all her diamonds and crown and some real creamy lace about the shoulders. You can’t conceive what a dream she looked, moving up this wonderful old hall lit with the softest shades of electric light and then when she stood on the dais of marble with the wonderful canopy of carved and inlaid marble in the most beautiful shades of mauve, green and yellow above her head. I shall never forget it. The uniforms which surrounded her all helped and the Duchess had a lovely silver frock and diamonds, but she is so ordinary looking. Ld. Curzon looked as if he might at any moment say ‘What can I do for you Madame’, he has just the shop-walker air and was dressed in white satin breeches, etc. and the Star of India ribbon. The Duchesses looked very well and others mostly in white to suit the uniforms. Miss Daisy Leiter, I noticed, looking well in white with the tiniest band of diamonds all round her head, such a sweet idea.

Lady Clarke had the most diamonds there, or at least looked as if she had, just one blaze with the nursery fender on her head, with the picket fence round her neck and warming pans all round. Everyone remarking who she was. She looked lovely in her white, silver and green presentation frock. Muriel had a sweet lace frock but had threaded white tulle thro’ her hair and had green maiden hair fern on top of that, until she looked as if she was demented. Rene Hodges looked very handsome too, but decidedly striking in white satin with a stream of white roses and green leaves from her shoulder to the ground in front. Hair dressed very low on the neck and piled up high as well with a band of gold all round and a glittering butterfly of large dimensions in front. The other little girl was in blue but I don’t admire her so much. They seem to have had a lovely time.

I had a talk to Ld. Lamington who arrived too late for the Durbar and lost all his clothes en route. He had been ill, so altogether was depressed. Lady Mary Lygon was so sweet too and looked very pretty. I had a lovely turn with Major Grimston
again. He is such a dear and he introduced me to the Captain in the Body Guard, Holden by name, very good to look at and nice into the bargain. I loved every second of the evening and my only regret was I couldn’t take it all in sufficiently. The most wonderful sight to see was the Dewan-i-Cas where supper was served in the most sumptuous style, it adjoins the Dewan-i-Am where we danced by long passages which were lined by the 5th Dragoon Guards in their tin helmets and plumes and full uniform. It was originally used as the zenana and is entirely of white marble inlaid with precious stones, the same as the Peacock Throne. Capt. Cameron took me to supper about 2 o’clock when it was comparatively empty, so we saw its beauties to perfection. You can’t conceive how beautiful it looked lit with the softest shades of yellow from above which cast a mellow glow over everything, and it is partitioned off with fretwork marble so, as you sat, you saw beyond, the red liveried servants moving about and the lovely frocks and uniforms. It was a sight to dream of always. How good it was of Pap and you to let me come, it was a chance of a lifetime and I am so grateful to think I have got it. Everyone I knew was there, so from a social point of view as well it was a great success. Aunt Bea had on her new white satin with Cluny lace embroidered with turquoises, and looked sweet. I was loathe to go but Claude had such a shocking cold and had been so sweet and unselfish, I couldn’t keep them there any longer, so to the strains of the Galop, No. 22 on the programme, we departed, being seen off by Capt. Cameron. It is sad that everything must have an end and as we drove away I felt that the most brilliant page in my life had been turned over, nothing ever so lovely can come again, I am sure. Dear Claude altho’ he felt so ill he could hardly speak was brimful of delight to think I should have enjoyed it all so much. He says I am a delightful girl to take about because I enjoy everything, but who wouldn’t? I didn’t get to bed till 3.30 and was tired out with so much excitement.
I was awakened next morning by a note from Capt. Cameron asking for orders and if I would like to see the review of native troops at the Durbar Amphitheatre. Mrs. Hob. said she was full up of 'shows' and decided to stay at home and Claude was nursing his cold so I accepted with alacrity, as I wouldn't have missed it for anything and it combined a ride as well. He called round for me at 9.30 and I was honoured with a ride on his especial treasure 'Mousquetaire', a nice brown pony but all the same I like 'Derby Day', so he was sent on with a syce to the Hall so I could ride him home. I took photos of the ponies and Capt. C. who looked a dear in his undress uniform of brown and pale blue, with brown gauze pugaree. It's a most becoming headdress. He gets awfully annoyed when I tell him he looks like a native. My habit has been so comfortable and cool because it gets very hot towards the middle of the day and always I wear my sun hat which is comfortable but unbecoming, but Claude always chases me back if I dare come out in any other to ride. We went across country over the Maidan to the Hall and had a good canter. I just loved it and 'Mousquetaire' was full of life and enjoyed himself too. Capt. C. was riding a lovely chestnut Arab. We had the same seats as for the Durbar, just at the back of the Viceroy's party, and I sat next to Mrs. Watson, wife of Major Watson of the Cadet Corps, and Capt C. introduced me to Sir Pertab Singh, his Colonel, who sat just beyond him. Such a dear old man. Everybody loves him and the men all say he is a real white man except for his skin which seems to be the greatest compliment a white man can pay anybody!!

The 'Show' was absolutely wonderful in its grotesqueness, and every Rajah was represented by so many elephants gorgeously arrayed and so many retainers dressed in their ancient war dress, so it gave you a great idea of what they must have been hundreds of years ago. The Procession was of immense length and they filed past by twos, men dressed in queer chain armour, mounted on lovely Arab horses, draped in all
sorts of coloured ribbons. Others almost covered with yak tail and most gaily caparisoned. Camels of all sorts went past ridden by all sorts of weird men. Then there was a little dwarf about 2 ft. high with a long beard and all dressed in red like the rest of his companions, then 2 Kashmir giants came along. Simply immense. One is 8 ft. 7, the other is 9 ft.; they were dressed in long sort of blue and red coats with high crowned caps. They were big in proportion and really you didn’t notice them till you compared them with other men, who looked like little boys. The Burmese Dancers were so extraordinary, dressed in long flowing robes and with masks of wolves, dogs, dragons and goblins on their heads, and they danced and gesticulated in front of the Viceroy.

The only hitch was when Patiala’s silver coach came by with 4 white horses and postillions, it was beautifully turned out with silver harness and the entire carriage, wheels and all of silver, and lined inside with pale pink silver tissue. It looked like what you would imagine Cinderella’s coach to be, and there was a tiny little native boy seated inside, dressed all in cloth of gold. It wasn’t Patiala, none of the Rajahs were there themselves, as it was essentially a show for their retainers. There was a block just as they came past and when it moved on, one of the leaders refused to move. They foolishly started to hit him which made him worse and he started to back and tangled himself on the traces. People went down to offer suggestions and Bikanir among the number, who started to shove the wheels while somebody pulled the horse, which made him worse and he plunged about, then threw himself on the ground covering his lovely white coat with red dust. As they were delaying the whole show, they did in the end what they should have done at first, take out the leaders and the coach went past shorn of half its glory. Some of the men carried the weirdest musical instruments, huge curled trumpets from which issued the most awful groans. Some of them were so large the end had to be carried by his neighbour.

We were to have met Mrs. Hob. at the Hewitt’s for lunch, but the procession
Next day was the Review, so we rose early and I wore my tailor dress, furs, and green and blue hat as it was very cold and frosty. We left at 8.30 in the victoria, Mrs. Hob. and I taking the 2 dogs as a treat. We were to breakfast at the R.H.A. Camp as it would save going with the crush. They are camped at Budleigh about 4 miles out. It was delicious bowling along in the fresh, frosty air. I expect that remark will make you people moan as you probably are boiling, poor things. Gen. Henry, his wife and daughter, who is to be married on Wednesday, in camp, to Sir George Dashwood’s son, rather a young ass I believe, were there too, as well as her future father-in-law and daughter. He is a dear old man and so are the Henrys, but the daughter I can’t stand, she is such a little fury. Three of the H.A. officers are to drive them back from Church with 6 battery horses à la postillion, Captain Hobson in the lead. It’s to be hoped they won’t kill them.

They gave us an excellent breakfast, then we walked over to the stands about half a mile away, where we had excellent seats just behind the Viceroy’s party. None of them looked very pretty that day. Capt. Mortimer’s Duchess looked the best all in grey. He was there in attendance. Daisy Leiter looked quite plain in a tight fitting white
cloth dress ‘en princesse’, trimmed with beaver, no collar and a long thin neck without even a necklace, and a gathered black velvet hat of enormous proportions with pink roses under the brim.

The Review was wonderful but having seen 2 rehearsals it rather took the novelty of it. Except that the Rajahs led past their own regiments, there was nothing new from last time. Bikanir’s Camel Corps looked splendid, clad in white and red and he looked lovely mounted on a black Arab. His kit is like the Cadet Corps except for red instead of pale blue. He is tall and good looking, with a small brushed up moustache. Patiala looked a sweet dressed in pink silver tissue mounted on a tiny white Arab with gold saddle cloth and green leather bridle studded with jewels and gold, and a small scimitar in an ivory scabbard. He saluted the Viceroy in his best style and got any amount of applause. Mysore looked well too but his uniform is not so effective, dark blue and white facings. He came and sat behind us afterwards. Rather a gloom was cast by a 9th Lancer tommy being killed. He was jostled out of his saddle in ‘the gallop’ and had the base of his skull kicked in. Luckily it happened further down the line than the stands and he was taken away on a stretcher. Several other men came off, but came to no harm. The dust is so terrific they can’t possibly see or their horses either. Lady Curzon and the Duchess sat in a carriage to watch the show dressed in white, each with a white umbrella and another big one being held by a servant at the back. He was relieved at intervals by other men, I saw because I wondered how he was going to stand for hours with his arms up holding a heavy umbrella, for it was a huge thing to cover them both. Lord Curzon was on horseback at the saluting point, just in front of us. He looked for all the world like an undertaker, dressed in a black frock coat, long black trousers, black kid gloves and a white solar topee. I wondered why he wasn’t in uniform and asked Capt. Hood, but he said he isn’t a soldier and can’t wear it and was most astonished to hear the Governors did in Australia. Anyway he was rather
a blot on the scene surrounded by contrast with Ld. K. and staff and the Rajahs and native officers. He is a very poor horseman and Major Lee made us laugh so afterwards, by telling us Lady C. sent for him to know if he hadn't better send a syce to hold His Excellency's horse as it was getting restless, but he put her off by saying it was only flies and he would go and chase them off. He said it would have looked well to see the Viceroy receiving the salutes while a syce held him on. The Cadet Corps were acting as escort as well to the Body Guard and made a brave show as they moved off. Major Grimston makes a very smart soldier and looks awfully well. Capt. Cameron looked conscious he was looking his best on a lovely black horse. After it was over we walked back to camp and lunch, by that means avoiding the crush to get home which we heard afterwards was awful.

They gave us an excellent lunch and I sat next to Mr. Taylor, a nice sub. in the R.H.A. He was with Reggie Clarke at Meerut for some time and we were talking about him, he seems to be a good friend. Afterwards Capt. Hobson drove us as far as the polo ground in the Regimental brake, with me on the box seat. He is an excellent whip. We were disappointed to find no polo but we went on home to tea instead and brought the 2 subs., Taylor and Brown. Nice boys. I found a note from Capt. Cameron which had come after we left, asking if I had any orders for the ponies in the afternoon, but as I was dining out I didn't move in the matter as it was then 4 o'clock. I walked instead to take a photo of the Viceroy's house.

Then I dressed in my black and wore my blue cloak as Capt. Templar was giving us a dinner at the Arts Exhibition. He called for Mrs. Hob. and me in his brake with the rest of his party. Capt. and Mrs. Patterson, such a pretty woman, her brother, I forget his name, Capt. Hobson and Capt. Clarke. 'Wales' as he is called because his name is Albert Edward. He is such a dear good-looking person. I sat next to him and Capt. Paterson at dinner. It was great fun and we went round and saw the Exhibits
after. Some of the carvings were too exquisite. A jewelled carpet too belonging to Baroda was very lovely, all worked with tiny pearls, rubies and diamonds. We drove home about 11 o’c and I was very glad to creep into my little comfy bed.

[Thursday, 8th January]

I dressed for riding before breakfast, and about 9.30 he [Capt. Cameron] came round with ‘Follow On’ for me. I was so glad to see the old dear again. His poor dicky leg was sufficiently cured to give me another ride. The naughty old thing was so full of beans, Capt. C. had to hold him steady till Claude mounted me, then he skipped about for a few minutes not knowing what he would do next. He soon settled down and we had a lovely ride thro’ the jungle and plains, and ‘Derby Day’ came with a syce in case ‘Follow On’ should get lame. Certainly one does things in comfort in India. Capt. C. was riding a dear grey pony. I don’t know how many he has, there seems to be lots, and he sold one or two for £100 just as I got home.

Mr. Landon came round to ask if Mrs. Hob. and I would lunch with him as he had a party, so I fled into my blue dress and flower hat and white furs and we drove round to the Press Camp where he is. It was a delightful party and he made an excellent host. Dear little man, I know you hate him but he is always so nice to me and seems to take especial interest in showing me off as if I belonged to him. Lady Mary Lygon acted as hostess, sweet as ever and at last I met that Miss Douglas-Pennant who was always sending me her love by Violet Mackinnon from Madras. She declares she met me but I haven’t the faintest recollection of her. She is very nice and we talked for some time. At table I sat next to Mr. Cobb the man I told you about who wants me to go to Jaipur, and Capt. Stewart, A.D.C. to Sir Hugh Barnes, future Governor of Burmah. Then came Miss Douglas-Pennant. Mr. Chirrell [Sir Valentine Chirol] Times Correspondent, Lady Mary, a man I didn’t know, several others, a Mrs. Moncrieff,
Mr. Landon, Mrs. Hob. They were old friends and stayed in country houses at home. Wasn’t it funny, Capt. Stewart, who is a nice looking man with a fair moustache, asked me if I knew a girl in Australia called Nita Moore and I said ‘Yes’ and before I waited to think, I said ‘Are you the man she was engaged to?’ and he said, ‘Why did she tell you?’ and then stammered off into something else. I then went on to tell him how she had to earn her own living and had lost good chances because she would stick to this man in India, we moved at that moment and I left him sitting like a sick chicken and with something to think of. I am sure he is the man or knows of it, for he seemed so deeply interested. I wished I could have pursued the subject further. We had to hurry away to polo, as it was a special party given by all the Rajputana Chiefs. They gave us excellent tea and all their retainers lined the roads in their quaint garb and they had bands and the Viceroy gave away the Cups after it was over, to Alwar who beat Jodhpur 6 to 2. There was a weird game of polo the other side between Gilgit and Manipari. The latter played in a boarded-in space the width of a street, on rough ponies and dressed in all sorts of garments, baggy trousers and looked the most awful rag tag and bobtail lot, but they certainly played a fast game and hit like furies, fell off and got on again without being the least upset. They come from near Thibet, I believe, and were the originators of the game of polo. The Gilgits played beyond them again. Quite the opposite in style for they have rather Mongolian types of faces and play on ponies the height of ‘Blackie’ with bridles covered with white pom-poms and huge black shields on the saddle to guard their legs. The men themselves were dressed in yellow and purple. It was so amusing to watch these little ponies pattering about after the ball. I met Capt. Fielden there, Guy’s brother who’s with the I.R. Corps in Sydney. He seemed quite pleased to see me. Also Lady Mary Taggart. Mr. Landon personally conducted her to me and she greeted me as if we were fast friends. You remember they stayed with the Brasseys and one was very delicate. Major Lee brought Mr. Ralli to tea.
when we got back. He is enormously rich and is Ld. K.'s friend and staying with him. A nice little man. Several other members dropped in later, including Capt. Mortimer, and Capt. Farquhar of the *Renown*.

\[Saturday, 10th January\]

That brings me up to this morning's news, Saturday. After lunch I got into my habit and Capt. Cameron called for me at 2.30 with 'Derby Day' to take me for a last ride. It was a perfect sunny day and he said we should go and look for 'pig' as he wanted to get some pig sticking for his boys if I didn't mind getting my feet wet as we had to cross the river 'Jumna'. So off we started. It was most exciting as we had to find the right ford so we skirted along the bank for some distance, asking different natives, or rather he did as he speaks Hindustani like a native and I can just muster a few words [...] We found the ford at last and started across. It was 50 feet wide and up to my pony's girths, but they splashed thro' and got us safely to the open Maidan beyond, covered with low scrub and sandy soil, the image of Australia. We went round by an Indian village which consists of a jumble of mud huts with straw roofs, and thro' crops and saw any amount of pig roots, but not the genuine article, but we saw 2 wolves slinking along in the distance and a hog deer which jumped out of our path. I was so excited. We crossed the river again and got home in time for tea, where we found Mr. Landon and Capt. Mortimer who had come about my girths. They had been changed onto his saddle because they wouldn't fit my pony so I wrote and asked for them again as I was leaving. He promised they would be found for me and so they were, next morning in time to be packed. Capt. Cameron has given me his blue pugaree which 'rode before the King' to make into a blouse or dress or keep. It is lovely gauze and he seems to think would make rather an effective garment. It is 12 yds. long by 1 wide, so there is enough of it. How they wind it on their heads I don't know.
SUNDAY MORNING dawned a sad day for me. I saw the last of the packing but Ayah had really turned out a treasure and packed everything. Then I tipped the servants all round, a thing they don't let you forget as they salaam to you every few minutes. Then as I was preparing to get into the cart Capt. Mortimer rode up to say goodbye and Major Lee came a little later. Nice things, I was very sorry to say goodbye. I was so sorry to say goodbye to Mrs. Hob. for she has been a perfect dear to me. She is going to march to Umballa with the battery about next week. They were starting to pull down the camps even then, and by now I expect Delhi is quite desolate. Claude drove me to the station to catch our special train which was to leave at 12.15 but you never saw such chaos and bustle as there was. Uncle Teddy was a perfect treasure with the luggage and got it safely in while Aunt B. and I sat in the cool and talked to Claude and Capt. Cameron who had come to see us off. They insisted upon giving us biscuits, claret and soda which really saved our lives as we could hardly get any food at all, along the line. The trains ahead wolfed it all. That kind creature Capt. C. had given Ayah a lovely wadded rug for me called a 'Rizai'. So light, yet warm. It is quite an Indian thing. His ward the Nawab of Jowra gave it to him. I didn't want to take it from him but he insisted. However, he is probably coming here for the races so I told him I would return it then. We got off at 1.30 and I was very sorry to see the last of them and Delhi. I had loved it so and been so happy. However it was no use repining, so we settled down to face our journey which ought to take only a night and a day, instead of which it took us nearly 3. We had 2 other women with us but both very nice and Auntie and I had lower berths so I personally slept most of the way. Capt. Weatherby was on the train, a great friend of Jeanie's, and he introduced himself to me as he had called at Delhi but I wasn't in. Such a nice man and is in [Geoff] Sullivan's Regt. but they are moving to Poona. We travelled steadily on in the slowest train until Tuesday night at 10 o'clock when we arrived here with joy to find Mr. Edgerley and
Aunt Amy very pleased to see us and a lovely pile of letters for me from all you dear things [...]. Mr. Hennessy wrote from Suez, the Watts hadn’t joined the Australia as she was too ill, so remained at Colombo. It is to be hoped it is not the usual old story, for her sake. Guy Labertouche also wrote and asked me to send you, Pap, and the family his best wishes saying he would never forget your kindness when he was ill [...]. Lady C. seems ill too, I hope she is better now. Mary was very ill with bronchitis and had to leave Delhi and join Reggie at Muttra. Poor little thing she had a shocking cough when I saw her at polo [...]. Kerney tells me ‘Colac’ has been sold to the Fairbairns for £20! That’s splendid, if it’s true, and I am glad the dear thing gets such a good home. I only hope if they have taken her Mrs. F. will ride her carefully and not get a toss. The 2 aunts both asked me to send their best love when I wrote. They are so sweet to me, and Uncle Ted is an angel. It has been delightfully cool since our return and I haven’t felt sticky once. It would have made it worse after Delhi’s delicious climate. I heard from Capt. Cameron this morning and he says it is a sin we have gone, it is so fresh and full of sunshine there. I wish I was back riding about. We slept without rocking the night we arrived and on Wednesday we washed heads which badly needed it after Delhi dust and wrote while Ayah waded about among clothes. Mine are wonderfully intact after the hard usage and dust they had. We drove to the Yacht Club in the evening and I left 4 rolls of films to be developed at the A.N. Stores! I can’t see the result for a week tho’. Everyone was very pleased to welcome us back to the Club and Capt. Cartwright, Ld. Northcote’s A.D.C., came and talked and brought Capt. Balmain of the 15th Hussars, another Aide. We found we had a good many subjects in common and got on famously. Sir Spencer Lyttelton was coming to dinner, so we had to get back to dress. He is such an interesting man to talk to. You remember he stayed with the Brasseys. Poor Mr. Edgerly has been very ill with fever. He had to leave Delhi before it was over. He looks shocking and never seems to take care of himself.
I did nothing in particular as I felt rather seedy so I stayed quiet and wrote letters. I was to have dined with the Dimmocks but sent a note round asking to be excused and went to bed instead and this morning I am right as rain and feel quite fit once more. The others all dined at Government House and had a delightful party, I believe. Aunt Amy went yachting in the afternoon as well. She is quite sporting. Tell Kerney not to get concerned, I am growing no fatter. The riding kept me down. His letters are full of news, and I hope he doesn't mind not having them answered personally every week. It's so good of him to take so much trouble over 'Colac'. I see by his letter she really is sold. The money will come in useful altho' I still have lots but it is comforting to have some in hand. The cloth, cushions and clothing and rug I hope have been carefully packed from the moth. My dear cart, I should hate it if it got spoilt. My old saddle has been so much admired because of the way it fits every horse. It is a wonder.

With ever so much love to all,

from Bob.
E.L. Grant Watson, known to family and friends as Peter, is an early but little-known figure in the annals of Australian literature. He wrote *The Nun and the Bandit*, a remarkably modern (in tone) story, which was published in London 60 years ago and some time later in America. Grant Watson was, among other things, a naturalist and visited Australia in that capacity. His mother and stepfather had gone there before him, living in Sydney, while he spent most of his time in Western Australia, principally on Bernier Island. He corresponded frequently with family and friends. His fondest friend was Mrs Ida Bedford, with whom he was deeply in love and whom he almost persuaded to join him in Australia.

Watson’s strongly inquiring spirit and intellectual resources seem to have been somewhat modified by his spiritual dependence on his mother, and by his failure to prise Ida permanently from her husband.

In his file at the National Library is this rueful little verse entitled ‘Reincarnation’:

In future lives when we shall meet,
Shall we remember our past pain?
Will bitterness be turned to sweet?
In future lives when we shall meet
How shall we then each other greet?
What then, perchance, will be our gain
In future lives? When we shall meet
Shall we remember our past pain?

Peter and Ida remained amorous friends for the rest of their lives, although they were both married to other people, who apparently suited them quite well. Ida’s letter to Peter, written in 1966 when she was 89, was a St Valentine Day’s wish.

Kathleen Raine is an English poet who was born in 1908. She is deeply serious and far removed from the ‘lads’ of current English poetry. The two letters reproduced here are to Peter, to express her admiration for Ida Bedford, after the latter’s death, and to Katharine, Peter’s widow, after the other principal players in this game of complex but amiable relationships had left the scene.
My dear ones it seems rather mean of me to send but one letter between you after just having received four from you. The sailing boat ‘Shark’ came across today with letters: 4 from you and 2 postcards, and 5 letters from Mrs B. but no buff envelope which I expect has in it a long letter. I am very disappointed at missing it. I am writing to Geraldton and Carnarvon letters of enquiry. The boat sails tomorrow so I am sitting up all night to write letters and dosing myself with caffeine to keep awake after a most strenuous day. The veils I must not forget to say arrived also by the boat. Thank you so much for them; they are not too narrow at all but are rather opaque. The life here dear ones is really delightful. It is very hot, but not unbearably so as there is always a sea breeze, and the sea is so beautiful. There are no mosquitoes on the East side of the island and very few flies. Though it is useful to have the veils when sitting among the natives. There is very little chance indeed I think of getting the disease. In fact I suggest that if you want a cool spot after Christmas you and Jack come to Dorre. You can get board and lodging with the Doctor for £1 a week per head and 10 [shillings] per head to come from Carnarvon across. There is heaps of collecting for me to do here. A great many mice wallaby and bandicoot to be skinned. Will you please find out from Woodward how many known mammals there are on this island. I have already 5 different species not counting bats.

We expect to be back in Perth some time at the end of December. We shall stay here for another fortnight or so and then go to Dorre for a bit. Probably we shall go to Mullewa from Geraldton on the way south. I am sending some prints labelled as to what they are, they will give I hope some idea of the island. I am glad Wickham has called again and has been so good in advice. By all means I should like to invest £50
but my cheque book is at Perth, in my book case, I think. So I think this must wait till I get back at Christmas. Please dear ones go on writing to me here but don’t send on Home letters, I would rather you kept them, the Nor-West posts are so uncertain. You can imagine how I mourn over Mrs Bedford’s lost letter. One of her others was a short note in anticipation of a longer one. Dear Mother I hope you are not working too hard at your needle. I am sure you should make a lot of money at it. I hope to be able to make something on my collections but am getting very few insects here. The skins I hope will make up. I have some very good ones.

Thank you for sending on OBD letter, it was a good one and I’m glad he is going to send Roger out, away. His letter made me feel somehow that I was ever so glad that I had come away from England.

I shall have I hope a week at least with you when I get to Perth and am looking forward to it, though I thoroughly enjoy the present. It will be so nice to be out of the sand and to have a bed. Will you please buy one of those cheap beds for me. I will pay, but a bed and sheets sound like heaven. I am sure the house must be very nice to live in, my recollections of it are altogether nice. Dear ones I do hope you are both happy and well. I think you should be in such a jolly spot if only there was more money. I wish [Moline’s] would come along, it would be good to invest out here. I am glad to think that I am costing little. I have not spent more than £1 I think since leaving Perth. Brown has spent a tremendous lot. He is very lavish and generous. I really quite like him. I exploded at Carnarvon and since then he has been much nicer. He is teaching me all sorts of new and useful things. I have people collecting bugs for me at Carnarvon and Geraldton and if you have sent off the parcel to [Mallandain], at Lake Way also.

Mrs Bates turned up yesterday very talkative. Brown is anxious to be rid of her. Certainly the camp is more comfortable without a woman. I shall never take one on
my expeditions unless it be a wife. Not a Mrs Bates. If I did not think it were mean I should collect a series of Brownisms. Yesterday he talked to me about Kant and told me how he, Kant, had nearly anticipated some of his own theories. I am much more at ease now I have got your letters and know that you are well and happy. I am both and if only I had that letter should I be more so.

I was awfully interested to hear about Jack's time at Harvey. I don't think I should have liked it much. There is nothing in mere manual work without intellectual stimulus that seems to me in the least attractive. When he next goes I hope he may get some really good bugs.

I am only sending along a few photographs just to give you an idea of the place. The others you will see in time.

With best love my dear ones and oh may our ventures prosper.

From your loving son. Peter.

Give my love to [T...]

The proofs I enclose please send on to Mrs B.
I will give you others.
Please send them one and all.
The films are safely packed away in tin so you are sure to get them.
Dear One, we have just received your letters with the postmark of the 2nd or 3rd of November, in which you tell us of your change of address. I hope the rooms at 52 Doughty St Bloomsbury will be alright, but dear one do be sure of the drains, it was in rooms in Bloomsbury that your Father was taken ill—so do look to it.

I wonder what you found at Battle that was any good to you—I am afraid little or nothing—as the things I had put by were only household goods and no usefuls, as of course I never dreamt of you wanting to furnish rooms in England—still there were your pictures, you will have to have them.

About your coming out here in 2 years' time, we quite think, as I said in a previous letter, that there are openings and we hope soon to get to know a man named Hardy-Wilson, an architect and an artist, who has studied at home—and after that, so we hear, spent 8 years on the Continent studying and measuring all the best buildings and saturating himself in all the best classical work of the past. I am not yet acquainted yet with any of his buildings, but his paintings are strong and charming, with a great touch of 'Turner' in them. I have just met him and my first impression is favourable. Out here among the [nuts] I gather that he is considered to be English, and to have a lot of 'side'—that only means he has the manners of a cultivated man.

As to the feasibility of Ida's scheme, I know nothing except that every woman on this side dresses immoderately and that no one can get their work done to time if at all—and that work women are scarce—and more than independent—but I will, in the course of time,
find out all I can and let Ida know. What I think would be a more congenial life would be 'house decorating', supplying curtains, covers—painted and embroidered panels. And to help her in this work I think I could by then put her in touch with quite a number of girls who could do good work under direction—as I have joined a society of women handicraft workers—so I could get to know the girls. A sweet shop like 'Fullers' would also pay—as there is only one good sweet shop in Sydney and I know of several girls making sweets on their own who would be glad to combine. But the shop should be run for the rich—or quite tip top lines—with smart handpainted boxes—French—and start with a splash.

By the way, I should like to know how you and Ida propose to live and by what name she will go in private life—shall you come out as 'married' or do you mean to brave convention? Your fight will be more uphill than ever if this is so—

So far we have only a glimpse of the tragedy of Ida's life, but I gather from Mamie's remark that it must be great and deep. How did she come to marry him—and her poor sister also—how were they so sacrificed?

Dear one, you say you think me 'wonderful'.

Are you not learning that love can do wonderful things. Some poet says—

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling,
pass'd in silence out of sight.
Have I not loved you dear one from the moment you were conceived? And do you still wonder?

I am writing to your Ida this week.

Yours ever,

Mother
Dear Peter,

Thank you for your letter written on your return. I am glad you did not have the journey on that very wet Monday.

I loved hearing about your walks and the messages which come through in their own way, not to be expressed in words. The leaves of the bramble with their background of various weeds was very vivid to me, and reminded me of a tangle of acabious with a mixed background that you once showed me. It is like watching the fallen leaves on the garden path. I find them absorbing, and I don't know why. They are beautiful, full of variety and so real, while the cars and the noise of the never ceasing traffic are all illusory. I am just reading a book called *What I Believe* [by] various writers, including Margaret Cole, who refused to discuss what she had written until I had read her contribution. It is an interesting book. The contributors, though you may like or dislike them, are all intelligent, honest (as far as is possible), straightforward and typical of the way modern people think and act. It is a reflection of the modern world. So far anything supernatural is ruled out of their consideration, so there is no vision but more charity in their reactions. As if ‘human relationships’ had attained a much more important objective in their lives. (Mrs Evershed thought they were the most important thing.) If you read the book please tell me of your reactions.

I liked your account of the division of the frog’s egg, but it leaves the problem of living unresolved. And how is one to know how to provide the security for the child? We make such mistakes. We can only pray for guidance. And if the
slightly damaged part is to survive and make a good thing out of its existence, knowing the cause will not give it (or will it?) a sufficient reason for courage to endure. Eventually it all depends on oneself; how far one can stand on one's own feet. We who have some slight understanding of 'Nature' and its beauty are enormously helped, but there has to be 'vision' to get really helped: at least so it seems to me. 'Meaning' is all.

I was very interested in your description of the tapestry in the Cathedral, since my time. It is very like the book *What I Believe*. A contrast to the two Saxon bas reliefs in the South nave, which are so full of life. And the new pulpit. But perhaps it is better to be quite given over to materialism rather than sentimentalise like some Flaxman carving elsewhere in the Cathedral.

I return [to] you the portrait which I don't think I have seen before. The one you sent me from Australia was a three-quarter view, the first time I had seen you with a beard. I return also the Guardian note. How the battle goes on! and how well worth taking part in the fight. I am glad you saw Elizabeth and her little house.

Our lift is out of order and no one knows how to mend it? Engineers, workmen have all failed to find out what is wrong. So now a 'Lift Specialist' is being hunted for. We have been using it 'at our own risk' but this morning it has stuck midway with all the breakfast trays in it going down to be washed. This means I cannot go into the garden as I am not allowed to walk upstairs; very sad.

Joan is back and glad to be back as Amman was too full of germs and colds. A treacherous climate. All very interesting, especially politically. Marta has made a good recovery from her operation and is going with her mother to Spain for convalescence. Joan could not stop longer at Amman because her first husband was expected on his way back to Australia, but Alan is a wonderful father so the children should be safe enough till Marta's return.
I did not recognise the postcard, the detail [gives] one such a different impression from the whole. I had great difficulty in the figures.

My love to you

Ida
Dear Peter,

Ida's death draws my thoughts to you. You spoke of her to me long before I saw her, and it was through you I had the great privilege and joy of knowing her. Her beauty was of the timeless kind, and she carried with her the aura of a young and beautiful woman to the end, when she also had the no less beautiful wisdom of age. Like some Greek priestess. For when one was with her, at a certain moment she would become inspired and Sibylline, and say wonderful things, deep truths. My grief is quite selfish—I shall never see her again in this life. Perhaps in one of our many others. Indeed I hope so. But if I feel this death as a bereavement, to you it must be a loss of part of yourself. Or do you not find it so, indeed do you feel perhaps that she is nearer to you, in that other state into which we pass, and which is such a mystery, than fettered to an aged body which seemed so inappropriate to that immortal quality of her real being? May it be so, Peter—so I would hope it may be for you, who, like her, have the wisdom of age and the immortal quality of youth.

I may see you on Nov. 4th. I do not know what you plan, but if you would like to lunch with me after, peacefully at the University Women's Club, which is quiet and restful, I'd love to see you, Peter, and to talk with you of Ida.

With deepest sympathy,

Yours,

Kathleen
Dear Katharine,

You have read all the books. I have had Where the Wasteland Ends lying unread for months—the author sent me a copy—and I know I must read it, but always I seem so driven. I am just back from my cottage where I took my youngest grandson (ten) for his half-term holiday. Now I am thinking of my paper for Aseona this summer (the Jungians). The theme is ‘Plurality of Worlds’ and I am to produce something on Blake and Yeats. It should be a wonderful paper, but I wish some other were to write it.

The story of Peter, yourself and Ida takes its quality from your three characters. You were all exceptional people, acting according to what each of you felt, most deeply, to be the highest motives. What was at stake was far more than a conflict of code and convention, you were all in it for life and all life means—vitaly engaged. You must all three have learned profound (though very different) things from those years and years of working on your lives. I am sure you must believe, as I think I do, that we have a long pilgrimage of which this life is only one step on the journey, and that nothing we learn in those deep engagements is ever lost or wasted.
Ida too was, when I knew her, as an old woman, wise and beautiful and serious. Peter never grew stale or dull, I never knew any man more young in mind and spirit than he was to the end. I am sure you should tell the story.

Thank you indeed for inviting me to visit you. I can't think of this or anything else until my paper is written—a month or more’s work.

Always yours,

Kathleen
Rosa Campbell Praed published 40 novels and could have been the heroine of any one of them. She was Rosa Murray-Prior, a teenager (who never went to school but was taught by her mother before lessons by air had been invented), when she began writing stories for the 'Maroon Magazine' which had a strictly family and friends circulation. At 21 she married Arthur Campbell Bulkley Praed (a suitably novelettish name), an Englishman who proposed to make his fortune with cattle on Curtis Island, a part of Queensland the Queensland girl did not care for. (Read all about it in the novels Sister Sorrow and The Romance of a Station.) In 1876 the Praeds settled in London, he in the brewing industry, she to write and to venture into the supernatural world, propelled by Nancy Harward whom she understood to be the reincarnation of a German slave girl kidnapped to ancient Rome.

Rosa and Nancy lived together until the latter died. Rosa's life was pure melodrama: for every high there was a low and she died alone and lonely in 1935, her three sons dead before her, her daughter in an asylum and herself a paragraph or two in essays by academics on Australian literature. The Nora to whom she writes is her father's second wife, Mrs Murray-Prior.
Dearest Nora,

Of course tell Dorothy to keep my letters if she would like an insignificant diary of the war sentiment—it is only when I let my pen go and say things about myself or others in a personal sense that I feel afterwards I had perhaps better not say, that I feel happy to think no record remains. I wish I could give any real news but you seem to have as much as we have. We have been hearing about the Russians coming into Scotland from every source. Before Ruth wrote of it we had been told it by Mrs Kerr who had it from someone who 'ought to know' and were told not to spread it... Then the next person we met also told us. On Sunday evening our cook came in greatly excited because a Lyons Caterer man had told her that he knew it for a fact—Lyons vans having been engaged. So it went on. The fact that none of the papers have mentioned the rumour—except for the *Daily Mail* skit and dark hints from the editor of the *Chronicle* of a coup Lord Kitchener is to make—seems significant of truth. Would the Press have allowed itself to be so muzzled if they had not been told of a good reason. May it be true—but one gets weary of waiting to hear whether it is. Meanwhile I think of those brave men fighting and being driven back inch by inch, and my heart aches.

The strain gets on one's nerves though there is no use in giving way to it. We try not. We even say that we will not buy papers, but we manage to get the *Bulletin* from Smiths at noon and Nancy runs out at 7 to buy the last edition. This evening a disappointment, but she tells me she saw dispatch riders going furiously along and
motor cars also, and the last edition did not come in. So perhaps there is some news after all and we shall know it tomorrow. Nancy and I went out this morning to shop—went first to Smiths shop and read the Bulletin, then looked in at the St Mary [Abbott's] service, being near. We do not often go because we find it too tiring to go out in this heat and pack at home too, but today we did—a pathetic gathering—a very large one, all women except for one or two very old men. Along Kensington High Street an immense procession of recruits was marching to the grounds of Holland House. Some had tried to produce a martial effect with a broad belt fastened over the sloppy serge coat. There must have been two or three hundred. The sight of them made a lump come into my throat—to look at them, after reading the accounts of the superb German military machine! Well poor boys I am glad anyhow that they wakened up to patriotism. There were a number also waiting to be passed and I hear that recruiting has had a boom—but oh how pitiful it is!

The Udnys came in yesterday. They had been to Dieppe but had got back without trouble. There had been uneasy moments at Dieppe before the English declared war—the English flag was torn down and there were cries of 'A Bas les Anglais'—next morning the French were cheering les Anglais and wanting to embrace them. Madame Morel too came the day before—I fancy however that I told you. She had been meeting the Berlin Japanese Legation people who said that Berlin was absolutely calm and absolutely confident of the result.

Did you read a letter in the Globe about the German spies. The letter writer had it from a German who in disgust at his country's methods went about a month ago to America. There to become a naturalised American and change his name. [His] brother has a high military post in Germany. He told the writer what was going to happen—invasion of Belgium and intent to crush France and then England. He also said that there are 150,000 Germans in London—trained soldiers—waiters
[and] clerks, some in a high position, many who have got naturalised and have learned English secrets—that this has been going on for years—200,000 he said were outside London, and that at a given signal when the German transports were near they would all rise against the English. He said the police should search certain districts—naming them—of London and that they should tap walls and take up boards and they would find quantities of arms and ammunition. I gave the letter to my parlour maid, whose brother-in-law [is] a policeman fairly high, and told her to show it to him. She tells me this morning that he said the police know this well, that it is all true and that they are doing their very best and are arresting and searching and watching. Ellen saw yesterday, while she was talking to him on duty, five furniture vans guarded and filled with German prisoners going to Olympiato to be interned.

The Army and Navy people are going to begin here on the 17th and will pack and clear all that is not necessary for us till the 24th, when we go to our lodgings and they finish up.

I have no more news and so will stop—

Will you thank Ruth for me for her letter and ask her to take this as a general answer for the moment.

Your ever affectionate

Rosa
The man who wrote this letter, Ferdinand Henry Wright, died in 1981, aged 92. He had survived two wars, had a wife and five children, and had a notably successful career in insurance and tangential businesses. Yet in many ways he disappears into his background save for this letter with its emotional mixture of reminiscence and hope for a peaceful future, its exhortation to a life of duty and its trust.

The envelope bears an instruction: 'In event of the death of Captain F.H. Wright, this letter to be retained and handed to my son on his 12th birthday, 14th May, 1924, Henry Edmund Wright.'

The History of the 14th Battalion (First World War) reports that the second in command, Captain Wright, took 100 men ashore on the beach at Gallipoli in the dusk of April 25 (Anzac Day).

'The scene ashore was almost indescribable, dead and wounded men ... lying all over the beach.' Captain Wright's lot were relieved on April 30, but just before he could hand over, the battalion history notes, he received 'concussion of the brain from an exploding shell and was incapacitated from further service with the battalion.'
My dear son Henry

In a few days' time, probably next Wednesday, we embark at Alexandria for the Dardanelles, rumour says that Gallipoli is our landing place and we shall probably have to fight our way ashore. This is always a tough sort of job and as casualties must occur, I am just writing a short letter for you to read when you are old enough, if it should be that your dad goes under. I hope sincerely that God will spare me to see you and your two little sisters grow up, if not you must always remember that I gave up all that was dearest to me to come out here, a wife whom I loved far above anything this world could give, three beautiful children, a comfortable home and a business position that it had taken me many years of hard sticking to attain. I mention this in case you might perhaps think I had not quite done the right thing in leaving your mother, the very sweetest and best of girls, at such a time. I was holding a commission as a Captain in the Forces and had to ask the men serving under me to volunteer. Could I do so without first heading the list myself? Would you like to think that your own father stood out at such a time? I do not think so. The fact remains that as the single men did not come forward in sufficient numbers the married men had to go. There are nine married officers in this Battalion. Your mother and I talked the whole matter over well and it was with her full accord that I acted. I have made as full provision as our means will allow but I am afraid that you will not have quite such a good education as we originally...
intended. This you yourself can remedy to a certain extent by strict attention to your studies. At the same time it is the wish of both your brave little mother and myself that you should have as happy a time as possible. I want you to thoroughly realise how fond your mother is of you and how very much you mean to her. Do not forget that there is also a big duty on you to look after Mary and Peggy. I have no fear but that you will conduct yourself as I would wish, for you have been such a bright and brave bonnie little boy up to the present. I do not wish to load you with advice but if you want to have a happy life 'go straight' and avoid all things unclean. Then, when, as I hope you will, you meet some girl, who can give you a clean pure love, you can hold your head straight and have nothing to hide. Be not hurried over affairs of the heart, for lots of young chaps have to pass thro' a coy love stage, and do not be afraid to make your mother your confidant and chum in such matters. Now, my dear boy, one word more, if it should so please God that my own dear father and mother are still alive, when you are old enough to understand such matters, I would very much like that you be as kind and nice to them as you well can be, for I am afraid that I have been at times lacking in my duty towards them and taken too much for granted their great goodness to me. For surely no man could wish for better parents. My mother was the soul of kindness and goodness itself to everyone and a finer and straighter going man never breathed than my father. I feel that I would like you to know that the greatest happiness of my life started when I first met your mother, the prettiest, nicest and very best girl it is possible to imagine. With every day our happiness and love grew, so that you can faintly imagine what our parting meant. Be very good to her, for she is oh so immensely proud and fond of her dear little 'Bonny'. I am writing this from my tent and a night desert dust storm is raging outside, the heat is very trying, but as we are on the move at 3 a.m. your father will now turn in and try for a little sleep.
Good-night, my brave little chap. May God bless and guide you and may you be long spared to cheer and delight your mother's life and be the pride of your sisters' hearts.

With great love
Your father.

P.S. I am directing that this be handed to you on your twelfth birthday.
This horse was generally considered bad," writes Tom Cole in this letter from the Northern Territory. He is recounting how the horse threw the rider to the ground, where he lay with a broken arm, leg and collarbone, three ribs staved in and his stomach lining split. It may be this kind of cool attitude which has led to Cole being accepted as the original Crocodile Dundee.
Dear Norman,

I have several unanswered epistles of yours not to mention the Xmas card (which arrived in March) to hand, so I s'pose I ought to take up my pen and write.

I might mention that until last mail, during the two years I have been in this country, I have received two letters from you. I said until last mail because, when that welcome day arrived, I was completely swamped with correspondence from you.

Two whole letters and a Christmas card.

The Xmas card was rather neat, your colours are rather neat. Re the photo, I didn't see anyone with a halo so I presume you weren't in the picture.

I also received a couple of letters from home, one enclosing a quid beseeching me to cable home for some 'filthy lucre'. Which offer I have declined with thanks. Also a couple of letters from Uncle Tom enclosing some photos of their latest domicile, which is quite an inspiring-looking structure.

These with one or two others, a dozen or so from Australian friends, and sundry parcels, comprised my mail.

I suppose you will be more or less interested in my latest address and, as I have sent a brief description of the run which by this time you have doubtless read, I will give you some idea of the head station.

From the distance it looks like a model township or garden city laid out in the
form of a square several hundred yards across—painted white, it stands out in sharp contrast to the drab surrounding scenery. The manager's residence with its surrounding wealth of vegetation is the most striking building and forms one corner of the square. Between it and the next corner (which is the station store) come two very large buildings—the engineer's shop and the blacksmith's shop easily distinguished by the motley collection of old cars, engines, bodies, wheels, buggies, buckboards, waggons etc. After the store, which I have already mentioned, comes the saddler's shop, butcher's shop, men's hut, men's dining hut, kitchen, jackeroos' dining room, jackeroos' sleeping quarters. Other odd buildings which are used for everything and anything complete the square.

The whole affair is built on the Georgina River, the only water course which has water in all the year round, even then it is usually a string of muddy waterholes and not very inviting. Just recently, however, it has been supplemented by the annual rains, but in this dry climate it will soon go down.

By the way, how long have you signed on for? and when are you due to come out? Also what is necessary to become an officer? do you have to wait the passing of time and become promoted or can you, for a 'small?' consideration, go up to Sandhurst and swat up for it? If the latter course is possible I wouldn't mind helping you as I would like to see the family take a social rise. A commission would be infinitely preferable to selling flowers. I must confess the business has no attractions for me, I don't know how you feel about it.

As you will know by the time this letter reaches you I am coming home in eighteen months. At home they seem to be worrying a [...] lot about me [...] I s'pose eighteen months will seem a long time but it will soon fly. If you write regularly you will receive replies to five letters approximately.

By the way I never received those photos you promised to send me a couple of
years ago. Did you ever send them? If you send me some photos I'll send you some of the branding—some of horsemen, men who ride horses (not dolls with shiny leggings who think they're awfully dashing if their horse gets out of a trot) riding a 'dinkum' buckjumper. A buckjumper not a horse that just rears up and down, but a horse that will leap into the air and come down with its four feet together and with such force that the rider spits blood. Mind you I hope I'm not giving you the impression that horses are bad in the Territory because let me tell you there isn't a bad horse on the 'Lake'.

There was one bad horse here but a good many years ago now (a Winchester 32.40 ended his career). Neither man nor devil could ride him, nor attempted to after he nearly killed the 'breaker'. It was like this, the 'breaker' had about 30 colts and fillies to break in that season with this particular horse amongst them. He got the head rope on him, threw him, side lined him (side lines are hobbles extending to the hind legs to prevent kicking), got the 'jewellery' (breaking in tackle) on, head stall etc. etc. However after days of handling the horse refused to quieten down like the others—above all refused to have a saddle on. He'd snort and squeal, kick, bite, strike, rear up but wouldn't have the saddle on. The breaker however had made up his mind the other way—one morning he roped and threw him and soon had his girth and surcingle buckled up. His offsider, a blackfellow, was on the ropes and was ordered to 'let er go' and as the horse was rising from the ground he leapt on. The horsebreaker was a rider and it was generally supposed that anything that could buck him off 'could throw its own brand off'. Well the first buck loosened him, at the second he knew he was a goner, at the third he was gone. The horse didn't stop at that. As the man's body hit the ground it rushed forward trampling and kicking at the inert form on the ground. Fortunately the black was quickly on the scene (unusual with blacks) and knocked the horse down with a 'waddy'. The man had a fractured leg and broken collar bone, a broken arm, three ribs staved in and the lining of his stomach split. Five hundred miles
to go to a doctor and he lived. It is impossible to describe the speed at which the horse bucked. An eyewitness said that from the time the man first hit the saddle to the time he hit the ground two seconds elapsed and from my own personal experience of just lively horses I can believe it.

This horse was generally considered bad.

Well I will draw this rambling epistle to a close hoping you will have a spare hour or two to unravel it.

I shouldn't show all this letter to Mum or she will have hysterics.

Owing to the haphazard mail arrangements we get a mail when it arrives. Never oftener than once a month. As there has been floods lately we aren't expecting one for two months and so write as often as can.

Your affectionate brother, Thomas
Tom Cole (front row, second from left) on a buffalo hunt, 1937

From the Manuscript collection
Irvine Douglas was a tall, good-looking, well-dressed, sober and intelligent member of the editorial staff of The Age, Melbourne, and naturally the reporter assigned to keep tabs on royal persons making visits to the colonies. It would have been hard for the ordinary citizen to distinguish Douglas from the eminent people he was reporting, unless he was using a notebook. An extremely experienced journalist, with useful connections, he was trusted by the proprietors of serious newspapers to keep them informed of the current government's mind on issues relevant to publishing, and to write significant editorials on whatever suitable subjects.
Dearest Mother,

Well, the Duke and the Duchess have gone and all is peaceful. 'The shouting and the tumult dies' and once again I am back in this city of cold winds, though today it is quite warm and I am on the verandah in a deck chair with the machine on my knee. I am just recovering from a brute of a cold which I contracted as soon as I came back from Canberra on Wednesday. The same thing happened when I came back from Tasmania. However, by taking, before going to bed, hot whisky and lemon, ammoniated tincture of quinine tablets, rubbing my chest with capsolin till it stung, and having a stick of Cure-'em-quick by the bedside I have just about managed to break its back! Wouldn't have minded so much only I am on a very special job which necessitates my working every possible minute. We are bringing out a limited number of copies of all *The Age* reports of the Royal tour, bound in book form, and we have to have them done by tomorrow as to catch the mail to Perth. We are sending one specially bound copy to the Duke and Duchess and have to get them before they leave Fremantle. There are 240 columns, which equal 110 yards or 5 chains or \( \frac{5}{16} \) of a mile, so you can imagine the work involved when it all has to be re-set and sub-edited and 'made-up'. Ellis (editor *The Leader*) and I are doing the work and we spent all yesterday afternoon and evening (I was in bed all the morning) in the composing room with the comps. It's really fascinating work, working out headings, spacing, pictures, etc. I have to go in again this afternoon and tonight. The issue when finished will be the exact size of *The Leader* without of course any advertisements and it will be much more artistically got up. There
will be 48 pages, most of which I wrote myself. If I can obtain a spare copy I will let you have it, but their idea is to limit it so that it will in the future have a certain value on account of its rareness. It will be unique of its kind. Of course we are keeping it all very dark till it is published so you will oblige by not saying anything about it for a day or two.

The office is very pleased with all my work on the tour and Geoffrey sent me a nice little note to that effect on Friday. Nothing more, though ... We hope for the best ...

The enclosed cutting [see opposite] was not written by me and was inserted against my wishes, but the office is frightfully pleased about it, as I was the only Australian pressman to receive the honour. Personally, I cursed the thing at the time as the Duke sent for me at Canberra when I was up to my ears with work and when the telegraph wires were all jammed with copy and when we were all going at fever heat. As a result I was unable to have any dinner and worked from noon till midnight without a bite of food except an apple. From a pressman's point of view Canberra was a terrible place. I shall never forget poor old Erle Cox on the verge of a nervous breakdown, practically unable to speak, flushed and trembling like a leaf. He had had to sleep in a tent without adequate bedding, had had to walk 2 1/2 miles for his meals, and the work altogether had got him down. McCance was almost as bad, and the third night rather than stay in Canberra, he went to Yass, 40 miles away. The Argus always gets hysterical over anything big and they had six men on the job to our two, but they put nothing over us. I was never more glad to leave a place than when in teeming rain we steamed out of Canberra station on Tuesday night. Then I had to get off at Goulburn and fight to get a sleeper to Albury. Wait an hour on the Goulburn station, catch a train at midnight and then get up at 7 a.m. at Albury and change again. Thank goodness I can sleep well in the train. Played bridge with 3 Airforce chaps from Albury to Melbourne and finished about 600 up.

It's all over now and really I'm not looking forward to settling down to routine work again, with someone else to give me orders, when I've been my own boss for over six weeks.
Rather belatedly, I enclose this month’s cheque for a fiver.

My expenses for the trip came to nearly fifty pounds, which I consider rather light. Still, I am out of pocket a considerable amount and I put it up to Austin to pay for my suit etc. and he promised to do what he could, and admitted that it was only a reasonable request. I pointed out that I had saved the office quite a lot—for instance the trip from Sydney to Hobart and from Hobart to Melbourne cost the colossal sum of £1:0:8. I pointed out to him that while I was away I had to pay half board for my room here and that there were many things such as tips I had not kept a record of.

The Smiths asked me to go out for a drive with them today but there’s no hope. By the way, I saw Iris and Geoff while we were driving through Ballarat on the way to Adelaide—we spent an hour there altogether.

I went down to the Renown on Wednesday night to say goodbye to the Duke’s staff—and incidentally to give the Duchess the original of the picture which appeared in The Leader—I am sending you a print. They are a fine lot—Batterbee, Hodgson, Buist and Nugent—and they all told me to be sure to look them up if ever I go to London. Hay, the Scotland Yard man, was the same.

Must get ready to go in to town now. Hope you are still keeping well.
Lots of love to you all,
Your son,
Irvine
It is extraordinary in the light of the political upsets caused by Joseph Lyons and Dame Enid Lyons that both have receded so far into the background wallpaper of federal history. After Lyons, a Premier of Tasmania before he joined the federal scene, defected from Labor to found the United Australia Party, his wife Enid became one of the first two women members of the House of Representatives. She later became, as Vice-President of the Executive Council, the first woman to achieve Cabinet rank.

In addition to her political achievements, Dame Enid was mother to 12 children. Some of her loving and nurturing qualities were obviously inherited from her own mother. In a brief letter, Dame Enid's mother expresses maternal concern over her daughter's health.

It is not known who Emma Robson was. Her letter was found among others which express affection for a woman who behaved as a 'good woman' should.
My own dear Enid

This letter is to get reassurance re this operation. I have been supposing it to be the one Dr Constance D’Arcy suggested as being necessary some time ago. Still, Mother like, I cannot rest until I know if any other trouble has asserted itself. This cannot reach you before Monday, the day set for the operation, according to Advocate. Please Enid, my dear one, if this reaches you before the operation, ask Joe, or someone, to send me a wire soon after the event is over. I shall be on tenterhooks until I hear news.

My darling daughter I will be praying for you

Love and blessings to you my Dear One from your Mother.
To Mrs J.A. Lyons
Private Hospital
Canberra

Dear Mrs Lyons

Thank you very much for your very nice letter this morning (re Miss Marjory Grosvenor). I have been going to write you a few lines all the week, just to cheer you up. But I did not feel quite up to the mark. I have not been out of the house for nearly a month, as I caught a cold when my brother died. But thank God I feel all right again now.

I suppose you miss Mr Lyons very much while you are in Hospital. But you see God is helping him, by giving him and his Government the health and strength to carry on; and may he have as glorious a victory as our Premier, Mr Stevens, did, when he topped the poll as I dreamt he would.

Well we have the sunshine at last and isn't it lovely, it is enough to make anyone feel better, but if it was all sunshine and no rain or clouds we would not be able to appreciate it like we do.

It was a horrid week, all rain and no sunshine, for the poor kiddies with their week's holiday, and I have one married daughter living at the back of my place and she has four kiddies and they all go to school and, of course, they all want to do something and one upsets the other, so as I always have a nice fire, first one of them will come over to me
and says, Granny I am going to stay with you, can I make a boat? And I tell them, Yes if you clean up your mess after you. Then another comes over, as that one had been getting into trouble at home. He wants one of Stanley's books to look at and, before long, the other 2 come over and one will do knitting and the other a book to read, so they all get around Granny's fire and they are all set like a jelly. Then one will say, Granny can I make a piece of toast? And I will say, Get a piece of bread out of the boiler, and then they all want a piece of toast made by the fire. So they get settled for a while again, only sometimes 2 want to make a piece of toast together, so I say, Ron you wait till Allen has finished and then you start, so they are all satisfied. The same if I want a message, they will all rush me and say, O Granny let me go your message for you, so I settle the argument by sending one for one and another for something else.

That is one thing, no matter what I want, there is always a rush to do it for me. And if they are at home and fighting among themselves, they always come over to Granny and tell her their troubles and I always hear both sides and I generally settle their arguments and they get friendly again.

If I happen to want a message and none of them are up, and they hear me over there, there is always a rush to see which one gets dressed first, to go my message. Their Mother often says, O yes if I want a message there is always a fuss about going my message, but if Granny wants a message you all want to go, and their Mother and Father say, O yes Granny is in the [boom]. If any of them is in the middle of a game of marbles or cricket or anything else with their mates and they see me, they leave their game in a moment and go a message for me. So Granny cannot be too bad of a Granny after all. I have 10 grandchildren all together, eldest girl has 5, the one near me has 4, and our son that is married has one lovely little girl going to school, and I have one son at home with me, who will be 21 next Empire Day, and I always have called him my Empire Baby.

I am just telling you all about the kiddies, just to help to brighten you up. So you
see God is good to us. If you were near I would come and see you in Hospital. So when I cannot see anyone I try and write a nice cheery letter. One lady in the Coast Hospital I used to visit, one week I could not go, so I wrote her a long letter and she told me she had read it 7 times then, and could still read it, and always found something else in it to interest her. I called it a book not a letter. I am going to see a lady who was to be operated on Wednesday in the Community Hospital Dowling Street for hydatis, so I hope she is over it all right. This is Thursday, as I started this yesterday, and I am finishing it today. So I do hope and pray dear Mrs Lyons that God is giving you health and strength daily and that you will soon be able to get up and about again. Will you please wish Mr Lyons many and many happy returns of the day for Saturday and give him my very best wishes. And I hope you both have a very happy birthday night with a very substantial win in the election. Those are my very best wishes I can send you both, so with my kindest regards to you both and your family.

I remain

Yours faithfully

Emma E Robson
DAME ENID LYONS

Collingridge Collection, Pictorial collection
Vance and Nettie Palmer have been viewed as the patron saints of Australian literature since the beginning of this century. The Palmers were also prolific letter-writers, especially Nettie. Vance described her as 'punctilious about letters'.

However, in a letter to Vance, Nettie abandons her punctiliousness, opting instead for a more 'spontaneous' approach.

Vance and Nettie were in Europe, with their daughters, Helen and Aileen, during the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Vance writes an enjoyably optimistic if slightly incoherent letter to his daughter Helen in London. She later became a noted essayist, radio writer and worker for left-wing causes (she was expelled from the Communist Party in 1957).
Dearest Matey,

Last night at tea-time I said in a vague way that there was a faint chance of a letter from you today: letters sometimes catch the air mail and come on Thursdays. Aileen said I was funny and I humbly asked why. She said I seemed as excited as if I were just engaged! But I am. Matey, I sometimes feel we haven't made enough of our marvellous, persistent, intact love affair. We've been so sensible, as if love were a means and never an end. It is a means, something that fills and strengthens the days for us: but it is an end, too, or an achievement—a miracle that we can look upon with delight. You must make love to me more, not only for my sake either. No, you mustn't grumble about it and say, 'But when I get home I want to settle down and work hard: I don't want love for breakfast!' If I'm exacting, it's perhaps because in the past I've been too matter-of-fact. We know our love doesn't depend on surface things: but I've neglected surface things too literally. Being a plain woman and knowing you didn't marry me for my looks, I haven't attempted to create any illusions—though I'd like you to have had them without any help from me! There is no way, though, of writing all this down without appearing egoistic, so I suppose there is a good deal of egoism in it: not so much as seems, though. I feel I'd be more use to you if we were both more spontaneous and expressive. Looking back, I seem to have been very clumsy, my sort of gush rather appalling you by its ineptness, causing you yourself to remain silent. You couldn't, wouldn't come halfway to meet me; so I went more than halfway, rather
ridiculously. Yet you loved me, matey: only we didn’t play very well. We’ve been a little too earnest, too literal. Do you see what I mean at all? Heavens, I hope you do, now and then, for I love you more than’s fitting if you don’t.

There wasn’t any letter from Colombo today: it was hardly possible. Instead there was The Bulletin, with A.G.S., in an article on Kendall, drawing an absurd one-smarter-true picture of G.G. McCrae as a patron who instead of giving Kendall a pound reads him one of his own poems and tells the world Kendall looked like an undertaker. Hugh is raging about it. He came with the kiddies and me last night to Eileen O’Keefe’s choir recital and Bernard was there with Marie. Speaking afterwards, Bernard said that A.G. was quite irresponsible as well as pig-headed: that he had said an untruth about Bernard four times, being corrected after the first. But this present attack is deliberate. He is angry with Hugh for refuting an attack he made on Norman Lindsay years ago: he said he’d get Hugh some day. It’s a shame; no one wants to attack A.G. with his glittering journalistic faculty and his veteran’s courage, but— I’ll probably have to be the attacker in this case. Wish you were here to advise. Wish you were here to advise about Hugh’s work, too. He’s planning a book as a sort of expansion of his lecture but has little sense of composition, rather less than I have, if you’ll believe it. I’ve sketched a skeleton for him to use as something to contradict: but you could build up something he could use.

The other evening he was talking about the life he had left in Sydney. Allowing for his spirit of fantastic exaggeration, what remained in sober truth was awful. Mahdi’s husband (she married him last April) is a young waster who has practically lived in the small family flat, day and night, for three years. Mahdi and Nancy think he’s perfect: no one else does, except that they must admire his clothes. Mahdi makes a good deal—sometimes twenty pounds a week—at a school of commercial art; and her husband, ostensibly a wool-buyer in [Wenz] makes very little, being quite irresponsible. Yet there
have been family rows in which Mahdi, in a rage, would turn on Hugh and say, ‘What a he-man you are! Why don’t you earn a living?’ He says he can admit she was in a rage but it sticks in his gizzard. Rose is engaged to another young man whom Hugh mistrusts (all part of the social pack to which they attached themselves when they moved from Balmoral to Darling Point): but she’s only eighteen and they won’t marry for three years so he hopes she’ll outgrow it if he does nothing. Honey’s perfectly happy and her husband is splendid. But what a job it is, what a hair-trigger affair, to be a parent! Hugh was nearly demented by Mahdi’s Ronnie—a young man who never stood up when anyone, visitor or not, entered the room, but might open one languid eye as he lay on a lounge. He had no interest in Mahdi’s art work on any plane, read cinema magazines all day, and the whole life of the crowded flat was made to revolve round his whims. Hugh, of course, wouldn’t have that to face now, since Mahdi is married, but he needs a break. He’s hoping for £100 for his ms [manuscript] and Norman Lindsay’s drawings for ‘Satyrs and Sunlight’: the Mitchell Library is considering it. He needs that before he can budge, and he ought to hear any day. Ted Mulvray wrote asking me to call and sign the documents about those bonds today and Furnley wrote reminding me I’ve promised to read something at an Authors’ Night at the A.L.S. [Australian Literature Society] next Monday. I’ll read some verse of mine and (at his request) of yours. I know you don’t think I do it well enough but you won’t be there.

Goodbye now, dearest: I ought to have been whacking out an article all this time, but somehow I had to see you for a while first. I’m sitting by the study fire; it’s a brilliant, frosty day: you’d like it.

Your own,

Nettie.
Barcelona July 23, 1936

Dear old Helen,

Why haven’t you been here? All sorts of interesting things have been happening, and your ma’s a hero. Also your [sister]. Let me begin somewhere near the beginning. A. [Aileen] had been working in town for the People’s Olympiad, and on Saturday she put some things in her bag saying she might be kept late [and] that she’d stay with some friends, meeting us on Sunday at the train with tickets for the Olympiad opening. On Sunday I awoke to the sound of guns, ‘making a great show for the Olympiad opening’, I thought. I was having a sunbathe on the beach over the railway line when your mother came down the beach. ‘The milkman says there’s a revolution in Barcelona. Do you hear the guns?’ Consternation. Where was your [sister]? I went down to the village in bathing togs. People all standing in groups, talking mysteriously. The village, needless to say, is 100% Red. But this must be a fascist rising. Suddenly two cars marked C.N.J. (Federated Workers Union) came whizzing out from town, [...] up the stones and the road near the bridge, wheeled back again. The youths started building a barricade. Then the wireless began to blare from several cafes and people crowded round with bathing togs in their hands. The whole army had rebelled and was attacking the town from three sides, but ‘the situation was well in hand’. (Boom! Boom! Pananan!) What I didn’t realise then was that the same thing was happening all over Spain. I sat on the headland watching the stadium at [Montjuich] across the water, thinking your [sister] was in it, thinking the guns were pounding it.
After lunch your Ma and I determined to walk in town, about twelve miles around the
curves of the Bay (your Ma's a hero). When we got [to] the village we found young men
with revolvers and shotguns holding up everything. Not a hope even of getting to
[Badalona], the next village. We returned along a trail trying to pick up news from other
people's wireless, but the announcements were all in Catalan. Anyhow the wireless was still
in the hands of the Govt. But—Boom! Boom! Pananan! Luckily your Ma had been deaf all
the week! (She's a hero.) In the evening we sat on the cliff and were relieved to see the
lights gradually come out all over Barcelona. Perhaps it's all over, we thought, but when we
woke in the morning, Boom! Boom! Pananan! But the milkman came with stories of two
patrols who had met about a mile up the road, mistaken each other for enemies and kept
on shooting till they were all dead. And Maria came and sank down in a chair near the
door, nearly weeping. Things were worse than it said on the wireless: Barcelona was a
shambles, two hospitals full of dead and dying, and her old mother and father lived in a
battle street. Off the wireless: 'There wasn't a building in Barcelona left.' But we didn't
altogether believe it. 'Maria's a bit of a scaremonger,' your Ma said. (She's a hero.) During
the day there were incidents. Church burnt down overnight, with the Spanish flag and the
Red flag over it. Shooting down in the road where there's a strongpost of workers' quarters
(we're on the main road to France) but this wasn't serious, mainly a car that tried to get
through the barriers. Then another shooting at the end of the street (a ... youth firing half a
dozens times at no one in particular and missing) but it brought the guards for a house to
house search in our street. A posse of a dozen armed peasants and workers banged at the
door and made an exhaustive but inefficient search for arms or documents, trying to
interpret the [sedition] in your Ma's and your [sister's] [...], but they were decent and didn't
cause unnecessary trouble. In the morning your Ma decided to get into Barcelona somehow
and find out how things were with your [sister]. We walked to the first strongpost and
asked the man in charge how it could be done: he referred us to two officers of the
Revolutionary Committee about a mile on. There we ultimately got a pass and the man in charge said he'd try to get us a lift. When the first lorry filled with soldiers came along he even helped your Ma in and wished us 'Bon Voyage'. A wonderful trip in, past nearly a hundred barricades, and then Barcelona. Exhaustive search for your [sister] at the Stadium, at the Hotel Olympic, at another hotel where the English delegation were, finally we ran her to earth, quite well and happy. Barcelona was a scene of great excitement, thousands of men riding round in lorries, waving their rifles, many churches burned, a good many of the buildings shot to pieces. But your [sister] had been well out of the shooting and was busy acting as liaison between the different foreign Olympic delegations. We stayed at the Hotel del Castro in the middle of the city and then about midday began to walk home again. A dusty but exciting walk (your Ma's a hero) but our pass carried us through. So now we're here home again. Can you believe we enjoyed it all, in spite of alarms and excursions? It's true. The country's pretty unsettled still—and guards every few hundred yards along the road—but a feeling of absolute security, sufficient food, and no worry about anything except getting money through. Lord alone knows when the banks will be open, so we couldn't send a cable. But it's possible to get in to Barcelona fairly easily now and your [sister] and I will try to get some money changed and sent on tomorrow. This letter is not for your Granny; but possibly you might read it to Esmonde to let him know how we're getting on. I can't tell you r10th of the interesting happenings but they'll come out gradually. We're all well and happy and anxious to stay here, but wish you were here, dear old girl. None of us would have missed it for worlds. I've written some of this in articles for the Herald. If you see them would you send them to [...] , 2 Stuart St, Longueville, Sydney.

Your [sister] has written to you, giving you her version of the affairs, but by a separate post. Your Ma has written to Granny giving a suitable account.

Love, dear old girl, we'll send plenty of papers.

Your Dad
The 'dear Pepe to whom Patrick White, the Australian novelist and Nobel Prize winner, unburdened his confusion was Jose Ruiz de Arana y Bauer, Viscount Mamblas. They met in the south of France in 1937 and spent part of the summer and winter together. Pepe, who was partly Jewish, was a small, elegant aristocrat who was sitting it out near the Spanish border until Franco, invader and conquering dictator, was ready to appoint him to a diplomatic post.

When this letter was written, White had spent some months in the American southwest, had visited the D.H. Lawrence house in Taos, and met and fallen in love with Spud Johnson. The letter was posted from an address on the fashionable East Side of New York City.
My dear Pepe,

Your letter already belongs to a different epoch in history and I'm sorry I haven't answered it before. Just the fact that so much has been happening, and crumbling, has got in the way of my writing.

I came over here in March, during that prolonged stalemate. Then the avalanche started, and I have been wondering whether to go or stay, or stay or go, or what. I have never been in such a complete muddle of indecision. As an Australian, I don't get called up in England, but I suppose I ought to be doing something—after all—add myself to the other ants while this nightmare lasts. On the other hand, I have been working here, finishing my new novel, and pulling together the journal of my last year's visit to America. There is also somebody I am extremely fond of. And it seems like exchanging the positive and known for—well, I don't quite know what. It is not the possibility of dying that stops me leaving, but the feeling that after the war one would be shut up in Europe forever, and that there would be no chance of getting back to America.

I'm still dazed by what has been happening in France. I can't believe. In fact, I can't believe or understand anything anymore, except for that small bit of certainty one is able to make in oneself and in a few personal relationships.

I don't know why I haven't referred to your news before. It is very exciting to
think you will be coming to Washington. And I hope I shall still be here when you arrive. It’ll be so strange seeing you again, because you do seem to belong to that other age and life.

*Happy Valley* has had quite a success here in the press, not such a success financially, as nobody is buying or reading books. But I feel I have dug myself in with the publisher and the nucleus of a public, and there will be some chance for my next.

A few weeks ago Robert Levy arrived out of the blue, en route for Trinidad, where Ruth is very ill—some kidney infection—and they only give her a year to live. Robert has gone to see if there is any means of getting her away, and if so, where?

Money, as you know, is the great problem of this refugee existence. I can get none from Australia or England, and am living on the advance from *Happy Valley*, and a little capital that is dwindling alarmingly. God knows if there will be anything left anywhere else afterwards. But it might be worse—there’s always love and literature!

Hope you haven’t left before this arrives. I’ll send it by Clipper to give it an extra chance of catching you.

Yours ever,

Patrick
'The Dunera Boys', with its hint of acceptance, almost of jocularity, has become a term used to describe those Europeans collected by security services during the war and shipped to Australia, many of them to a camp at Hay in New South Wales. Many of the internees were German or Austrian Jews who had fled to Britain from Nazi dictatorship and had been living there for years when categorised as 'risks'. It is reported that the camp commandant knew that many were held illegally, notably the 'free' Czechs who had preempted the 'free' French. He encouraged the Jewish community, both locally and internationally, to support them. Rabbi Falk, representative of the Sydney Jewish community, visited Hay regularly.
Dear Rabbi Falk,

I am sure you will be pleased to learn that the whole camp feels a great satisfaction about your visit and your encouraging words.

You can rest assured that we Rabbis tried and will try to preserve the honour of our religion even in the unusual atmosphere of this camp and at the same time bring to bear all our influence on the community in the direction of hope and cheerfulness. In the same way I acted on H.M.T. Dunera where I was the representative Rabbi for the whole ship towards the Military and Naval Commands. Although I might have had the opportunity to live in slightly better conditions I preferred to stay and live in close contact with the other people in order to keep up their spirit. Thanks to the Almighty my health could always stand this well.
At your repeated request, since indeed I have lost almost everything I took with me when I left my home in Cambridge on the 12th of May, I take the liberty of enclosing the items you asked me for. I need not stress that more important for me is the smallest help you can offer to our community here. We realise that nothing can be done in a hurry and that we are to have patience. We [are] all aware that our Jewish brethren in Australia are alive to our problem.

With best wishes and regards from my colleagues, the whole community and myself, I conclude

Yours cordially

Ernst Ehrentreu

One enclosure! P.S. Re Dr Bach I want to emphasise that deliberately we omitted him from the list presented to you because he himself again and again in his public utterances denounces the orthodox or conservative Judaism in unmistakable terms as it is well-known to the whole camp.
Dear Rabbi Falk,

My father had the pleasure of speaking to you on the occasion of your visit to Hay. You then had a letter from Mr. Saemy Japhet, London, concerning him. Now I take the liberty to approach you in the following matter. Owing to reasons of health my father has been transferred together with 27 other people of this camp to a camp with, we are told, a healthier climate. My father has been in poor health since the last year. I want to mention that he had never made an application for transfer, and my father told the authorities that he did not want to leave if he would be separated from me, because it would be a great hardship for him in many respects. It is in the nature of his illness that my presence is an invaluable help to him. Moreover, our release will most probably be delayed if we are separated since we have one visa for Mexico. It is so cruel after all the hardships endured together and after the promises that families would not be torn apart!

Despite his refusal my father had to go and I had to stay, but we (5 fathers and sons in a similar position) were told we should make an application for permission to join our fathers. This application has been made in the meantime.

But as I doubt the result I live in great anxiety about the life of my father and fear the worst consequences. As I feel responsibility towards my mother, who is in England with 3 children, I apply to you to help me in this matter so that it...
may be possible to be reunited with my father.

I hope that you will give my case your kind consideration and awaiting a favourable reply, I remain

Yours respectfully

Erich G. Freudenstein

P.S. My father's internee number: Georg Freudenstein

My own number: Erich Freudenstein

E 39503 50 years

E 39502 20 years
HMT Dunera,
the ship used to transport European
internees to Australia.
Reproduced courtesy of
the Hay-Tatura Association.
'Could you please send some food, Mum, lots and lots of it! Could you hire a train and send me down something to eat, please?' A social history of the life and times of Andrew Taylor, poet, formerly of Adelaide University, and now Professor of English at Edith Cowan University in Western Australia, would necessarily include food. He writes home from his boarding school, from the national service training camp at Puckapunyal and from Italy.
I'm in a terrible way, Mum and Dad. Honestly, I'm the victim of a terrible craving. It's horrible. I just can't withstand it. Every minute, almost, of the day, and all night that I'm awake I get this horrible craving. For food! Mum, could you hire a train and send me down something to eat, please. At the moment I'm spending all my time and money at the tuckshop and I've just about bought it out. Honestly, it's a terrible state to be in. The meals here have been getting steadily worse and worse and less and less. One day a week we get corned beef, which nobody eats, and another day we get boiled meat of some unidentifiable variety. It's probably dog or camel—anyway, it tastes like the remnants of a massacre at the zoo. Those two days I don't go into dinner. Honestly, the stuff tastes vile, and I just can't eat it. Luckily, they don't give us enough of it for more than about 7 people for a table of 13. Teatime is just as bad, when we get some strange stew which seems to be a mixture of brown ochre and gravel from the drive. But at teatime there is plenty of bread. I don't usually complain about the food, but honestly, some of it I just cannot eat, and so I have to spend money at the tuckshop. So could you please send some food Mum, lots and lots of it!

Friday night I meant to stay in, but 3 other chaps in Arthur Rob—Peter Henderson was one—talked me in to going to see Cyrano de Bergerac by Edmond Rostand, a play we study in English Lit. It was put on by the National Theatre and was
a very good production for them. The two leading actors and actress were very good, altho’ the rest weren’t too hot, and they managed to carry the play along.

Sat a.m. I felt pretty tired, so I slept in right through breakfast. Then we had an extra English Lit class (it was not as cold as last time) until 11.30, when I bought myself something to eat at a stall run by the mothers of the Scouts. They sell terrific big rolls filled with meat, ham, lettuce, tomato etc for only 6d. I got 3 of them I was so hungry, and a couple of buns for dessert.

In the afternoon was the APS versus CHS match. APS won very easily—absolutely trounced CHS by about 8 or 9 goals. It was a terrible day; just before the match it started to rain, altho’ the morning had been lovely and sunny. So when we waited on the field (I was boundary ump) we got soaked to the skin. Then the teams came out, and we continued to get soaked till almost ½ time. As it had rained the night before the ground was very slippery and muddy. I didn’t fall over, but I looked as tho’ I’d been rolling along the ground by the time the match finished. You could hardly tell where my shorts stopped and my legs started, only through the mud that had splashed up while I was running. The annoying part was that the rain wasn’t heavy enough to wash the mud off. After ½ time the rain stopped, but it was pretty cold. I fully expected to wake up on Sun with pneumonia, for altho’ I’d done my best to keep warm it wasn’t too easy when not running round. (That was at ½ and ¾ time, of course. I didn’t waste much time after the match getting into the shower.) But so far there’s nothing wrong with me, and it’s getting a bit late for anything to develop now. And I’m still hungry as ever—even tho’ I just had tea 20 mins ago. Mrs. Dowling and Janet were at the match, and they asked me out to tea afterwards. So I went. After the night before I was terribly tired, and slept like a log (that was after I got back to school, of course. I don’t take after you, Dad!). I didn’t do any work—it would have been impossible, after running round all the afternoon.
Sun at church was Communion, and we had Hector McLean preaching. He's very good, but a bit feeble. Did I tell you the week before we had the admission of new communicants, and Prof. McCaughey was preaching. He was very good, and he's got a terrific Irish voice. All the afternoon I worked, except for an excursion down the street to get some food. In Chapel last night I had to read the N.T. Lesson. Usually a master reads that, and Andy Peacock and I are the only pre's that have read it this year. It was a bit of an ordeal to anticipate, as there is no microphone, but once I got there it was easy. Probably the worst part was standing up and walking out to the lectern. But I'm used to that sort of thing now. It felt terrific standing there with 200 people absolutely soundless before you! I'll probably turn into a megalomaniac! But it's different to Assembly (I read there quite often) somehow.

Sun night was an early night.

Today Ath's started. I wore my spikes for the first time this season, and got down on the main oval and ran round for about an hour with a couple of other chaps. There weren't many there, but the more training I get that they don't the better. I'll need every bit of it this year.

This is a long letter isn't it! I suppose it's because a lot has happened. I also suppose that I'd better do some work—exams—Expression—on Wed, Latin Paper 1 (we have 2) on Friday. So I'll tell you about Exp'n on Thurs,

Yours Affect

Andrew
Dear Family,

Well last weekend was a little more eventful than usual. As you know it was our second weekend leave, and I spent it in College. Left camp by the midday train Friday arriving in town 1.30. Then went out to College and got a key to a bedroom etc, changed into civilian clothes and went into the city. There I spent a bit of money—on books, about £5 in fact. Then after a magnificent tea by Matron—more banana fritters and ice cream than I could manage—I went to see Summer of the 17th Doll at the Comedy. It’s really excellent, all it’s cracked up to be. Have you seen it? It’s well worth seeing. Saturday I met ½ dozen of the chaps in our hut in the city by appointment at 11.30, then came out to College for lunch. Spent most of the morning (and Friday a’noon) in record shops listening to music. You’ve no idea how pleasant it is to listen to classical music after endless hit parades. Sat evening Ian Harrison (an Ormond man) and I went to the new Music Bowl for the night’s concert. It is a magnificent and spectacular thing, like a huge aluminium ½ tent. There was quite a crowd there, but our spirits were somewhat dampened by heavy rain during the first ½. It was rather distracting and rather amusing also; Ian and I crammed in just under the edge of the canopy and escaped the rain. But after an interval the sky cleared and the rain left us until 3.30 the next day. The night was warm and sitting about ½ way back on the grass slope, in the middle, it was absolutely perfect. Acoustics could not possibly be better, it was ideal. And the music was good, I’ve a feeling I may be there a few more times next year.
Sunday I borrowed John Yates’ study and record player (John is the Chemistry tutor) and played records all a’noon. I went to Church and Communion in the morning. After listening [to] the Goon Show (one of the best yet) I left Melbourne with about 300 others for Pucka at 9.15 pm. It was quite an enjoyable weekend. I also finished Ulysses—an excellent book, really the sort of book that could never be written twice.

Today we’ve been throwing grenades. Tomorrow we’re firing The Bren. Yet by now I’m rather tired of the army and its inefficiency. I won’t be sorry when the next five weeks are up. My short taste of College life this weekend has reawakened my civilian tendencies. It was quite refreshing to be picked to pieces by Graham Marshall, the philosophy tutor. There were about 16 or 17 in College, and the meals were good.

Mum there is no need to worry about my nose. It hasn’t bled since the 2nd week of camp, and I hope it stays like that.

Thanks Dad for sending Sir G’s letters to us. Thanks very much for writing to him, even tho' we weren't too successful. Got a nice long letter from Marita last week too with all the latest news.

Also I am now a musician, my recorder having arrived. It’s made of wood, cost 25/- quite a nice little instrument. Now I only have to learn to play it. But it’s fairly simple.

That, I think, is all the news there is. So until next Monday I suppose, goodbye

Yours Affect,

Andrew
Once again Firenze [Florence] 7 i 63

Dear Family,

Well it's quite a time since I last wrote properly to you, but quite a lot has been happening, as I dare say you can guess. And although there may not be many pages to this letter, I think you'll find quite enough in it for a while. Now my typing is terrible, mainly because my fingers are stiff with cold. Which is pretty silly, as I myself am not in the slightest cold, with my heater labouring at miracles beside me. But I've been reading, and my hands have been out of its range, and so they haven't caught up with the rest of me yet. Give them time, give them time; if you can bear the mistakes.

Maybe I should start at the start? I think not, for several reasons; first, I can't remember when last I wrote, and also I can't remember exactly in what order I did things. But roughly, Christmas preceded New Year, so I'll start with that. First, and most important, thank you all again so very much for your cards, letters, gifts, handkerchiefs, calendars, etc, etc. Ian, I don't think I mentioned your letter and much appreciated enclosure before, as I think it came on Boxing Day. I like having my Christmases spread out over a week or more; thank you very much. In fact, this Christmas lasted even longer than that, for when I arrived back from Paris at 1 a.m. this morning there were several cards and letters awaiting me, from friends in England and Aust; also, Marita, one from Buttons, to which I must reply at once. I'll see if I can accommodate them for a few days when they're in Firenze. But the landlady may not appreciate it; still, I'm on good terms with her at the moment—½ hour ago she gave me a glass of wine—and after all, I pay enough to merit a certain
amount of control over what I do with my castle.

Christmas Day here was, as it appears to have been with you, a feast day. Deniss my Scot (that’s the way he spells his name) and Bill and Susan McKenzie, an American couple, and myself all dined here at my place, where Susan cooked a goodly meal. That occupied most of the afternoon, which wasn’t so long anyway in this country, after which we went down for coffee and stood on the pedestrian overpass in the twilight and sang carols, a day, I fear, late. The night before, Deniss and I went to midnight Mass at Chiesa della SS. Annunciata, the high society church of Firenze, where we were regaled with magnificent music. The church was packed to the jowls.

Boxing Day, being something else here, saw the mensa shut, so I ate a pizza at one of the few open places which didn’t try to charge double rates. Then Bill and Susan came back here and kindly helped me clean up the disorder. I got the place looking spotless and all the landlady’s china stacked and ready to return (she lent us half her kitchen). Then packed, went to bed early, and got up early next day, 27th, when I caught an early train to Milan. Spent the afternoon there more or less aimlessly, again studying the Duomo etc, and boarded the night train to Paris. Well, I was prepared for the worst. But I came pretty close to having the best. For half the night there were only two of us in the compartment, so we could recline in couchette comfort and sleep soundly. At Lausanne however two others got in. Still, I slept well, despite continuous visits from customs officials, who did no more than open the door, mutter ‘Douane Suisse’ ‘Dogana Italiana’ ‘Douane Francaise’ [‘Swiss Customs’ ‘Italian Customs’ ‘French Customs’] and withdraw, leaving the light on. I really had a pretty good night’s sleep, and did not feel the least the worse for wear all next day.

Fortunately Batch met me at the station at about 9.15?? and guided me to Cité Universitaire, where I had a room, heated, with limitless hot showers.
O wonder of wonders! How my heart sank at the thought of returning to Firenze and its medieval ideas of comfort. That afternoon we (Batch was on holidays, but she started work again the next week, i.e. last week) went to Notre Dame, which is marvellous, and fascinating to compare with the Duomo at Milano, which was built, I think, slightly later. Hasn't Notre Dame got the most perfect situation, in the middle of the river. That night I met a couple of other Australian girls, one being Cath Berry from Melbourne, whom I know quite well, and who knows lots of my friends from Ormond. So we were able to compare news on absent friends etc. All very informative and pleasant.

Now I'm not going to give a detailed rendering of the next days, as I can't remember them in any order. Or rather, I remember things in any old order, but not necessarily in the right one. But I got round a fair bit, saw some of the Louvre, not too much, as it's so badly displayed that it's impossibly tiring, but I did find Mona Lisa with no trouble, using my head and not my tongue, by hunting out the section of Italian art and just hiking till I came across that certain smile and that certain crowd of tourists clustered round La Joconde. Went to other art museums, including the Mod Art one, but not the Jeu de Paume, which seemed, half way as it is between Trocadero and the Louvre, to always just not fit in. Next time I must hunt it out. I was told it was very disappointing, shockingly displayed etc so I wasn’t burning to go there. (By the way, how was that for a split infinitive 2 lines above?) Went to the pictures twice. Went out to Sceaux, pronounced So, one afternoon, where there is a beautiful little old villa and a most extensive and impressive ‘parc’ complete with a frozen lake and black and white swans to walk on top of it. That was my only venture into the banlieux, as they call the suburbs, and it was a very pleasant one, as we found a bar like Italian ones, where we could consume our coffee in modern and clean comfort. The average Parisian cafe is cream, dirty, drab, built.
in the 20s, too big and costly. Everything is too costly except the metro, which is
marvellous, and my holiday cost half the earth; but I did a bit of shopping, so I
mustn’t complain. Another day we all went out to the fleamarket, where it was
bitterly cold and crowded with old women trying to pick up secondhand furniture
and knicknacks for a price which in Australia we’d pay for the new stuff. Visited
several churches, but as far as architecture goes, Paris has little to offer apart from
the Gothic churches and a few modern buildings. As a city of architecture I found it
depressing with all its C19 buildings. The best part is the roofs, which really are
intriguing, with the chimneys and bonnes' [maids'] rooms peering out between them.
Even their large public buildings like the Madelaine, the Opera, the Assembly, the
Pantheon (a monstrosity) and the Sorbonne are all monuments, not pieces of
architecture. I was little impressed. I find the C15 and C16 preferable, and I don’t
get that taste from Australia, but from Italy I suppose. But the actual city planning,
the wide boulevards, the trees etc are superb. No traffic worries. One doesn’t notice
the traffic in Paris.

Of course I ascended the Eiffel Tour [Tower], and descended again, buying
roast marrons to eat out of a paper cone. They’re very popular here too, of course.
The smell of chestnuts follows one all round P. Libertà. I walked along the banks of
the Seine, and nearly froze. I survived a water strike and a postal strike, in the best
Parisian tradition. I didn’t get lost and didn’t ask a Frenchman to show me the way.
I had a Chinese meal again, after so long a wait. I bought some incense. I woke
early yesterday morning, actually caught the train and sat in it all the way to
Firenze, where it deposited me at midnight, after 16 hours of travel. At Brig I
actually victoriously planted my foot on Swiss snow, but considered one foot
sufficient, as the train was making discouraging noises and seemed to be
impatient for Italy. The journey back was superb. I purposely took the direct
Paris—Lausanne—Milano—Firenze train in order to see the scenery. The French countryside is very beautiful isn’t it, very very beautiful? And after St. Maurice in Switzerland, just as the Alps start, the mist cleared, and the sun came out and stayed out until it set, somewhere along the shore of Lago Maggiore, which looked extraordinarily beautiful at Stresa with the two tiny islands crammed with town. We stopped at Milan for an hour, then off across the Po Valley (my 4th time) to Bologna, then down through the Apennines to home. The Po Valley must be the coldest place on earth. There was not much snow in the Alps except right up top, but the Po Valley is feet thick. Anyway I couldn’t see much, for although the compartment was warm as toast, the inside of the window was covered with a thin layer of ice which I’d have to scratch a hole in now and then to see out. But after Bologna it melted, and Firenze was quite warm. Today is, or was, fine and sunny, and in the sun quite warm, tho’ it’s cold now. But after completing my winter wardrobe in Paris, it looks as though winter has almost finished here. Touch wood. New Year’s Eve we all went out to dinner, then walked the Champs Elysées, where all Paris and his car was. It was deafening, all the car horns, and most amusing.

I bought: apart from meals, metro tickets and one fugitive bus carnet (book of tickets); one cache-nez, i.e. a long, mohair, green-brown scarf which I wind round my neck Ital-Franco style and hide my nose in (hence the name); and a fur hat, which is round, black, flat and furry, in Florence unusual but in Paris just becoming the fashion, it matches my fur boots, and keeps my head warm. It’s good. All my friends reckon my cold weather outfit now is pretty smart. Admittedly, both these latest items cost a fortune, but a) they look smart, b) they are almost commonplace here, and c) most important, they are extremely practical. So, little Andrew has his Parisian wardrobe. Now, mi sembra che non basta la carta [it seems to me that there is not enough paper], so I shall have to stop. As you say Dad, the correspondence on modern art is closed.
I don’t hope to convert you, just as you don’t hope to convert me. We just differ. I think I’ve gone about as far as the typewriter will go. So, folks at home, I’m sorry I wasn’t thinking of you at Xmas while you were thinking of me, but I was, at that time, sound asleep. Europe is that much behind.

Yours Affect—Andrew
Here is one poet, 34 years old, writing to another poet, age 20. Michael Dransfield was a victim, if that is the word, of the drug culture of the late 1960s and early 1970s. He had three volumes of poetry published—Streets of the Long Voyage, The Inspector of Tides, and Drug Poems—and after he died at the age of 24 in 1973, another poet, Rodney Hall, collected much of his unpublished work in another volume.

Thomas Shapcott started as an accountant in Ipswich, Queensland, but took up the literary life as poet, novelist, essayist, anthologist, and arts administrator.
I don’t know this word mad you use, it isn’t in my vocabulary, my dictionary, my range of specimen-pinning-defence-weapons. All I do know about you is you write like a marvel, a lover, a precious thing, and seem to me to be outstanding in your imaginative rightness and your absolute intensity. What more need I have to ask/claim/demand/suck/draw upon from you? The sanest man I ever saw was Frank Webb, in Callan Park a year or so back; so sane and so suffering in the very real there hell that no one has any right to query or ability to relieve that I wanted to get down on my knees before him and certainly would have kissed his feet if I would have made any gesture more than theatre before the real of himself and his suffering, but I went outside with [...], his concert-master the bully psychiatrist, who did indeed weep real theatre tears, just for my benefit, but that was no environment for real tears only for silence and pain pain and perhaps shaking hands and a great pressure under the ribs to squeeze and remind. That is a colossus among men and because he believes in heaven and hell is in hell and that’s natural; because I believe in god—perhaps and not hell I am nowhere. We all define our own planets and planes, and our understanding is not flexible enough even to lead us down the tunnel without the electric shock though we kid ourselves we have our fingers on the switch every time and can control it all. Perhaps I speak only for myself; it is possible to be hurt in an empty room; to be in a room with someone you love is entire torture, and time sees to that in even more cruel
ways if you try for the long duration stuff (if you believe there is more than the ephemeral
thrill and recoil to relationships).

But you must publish a book—see, I am greedy already, I want to leech upon you;
let this be the Possible of the Social Contract, then. The Strangers will not say about your
poems, they will either read your poems and not become strangers, or, remaining
strangers will not be saying anything, though they knit their horrible skeins of thorns and
vinegar as hard as they like. You read and don’t like my past efforts and see they are
failures; you are in a position to be summary, reject the errors/false starts/phony
adolescent hopings for gesture. But I don’t read them that way—I don’t read them. My
first book is as much a stranger to me as I to it. It has launched out its own life, and
though I squirm at the things-I-would-not-do-again I have found (yes, even now, when
it is tumbling back into another decade—past and dated) young people and old people
(probably only these two extreme age groups) come up to me and show belief in the true
things in that book. So your book will be you, be discarded by you, be a signpost of
‘before’ and ‘after’, yes, but it will certainly be itself, and other people will come along the
same journey, or cross that point on different journeys, and it will be able to say, truly and
validly and movingly, This Is a Hereabouts which was a Present Name of Michael
Dransfield. There is nothing any more that any book can say or offer; need there be?

A rambling self-thinking letter. Writing is my only real way of saying. In Adelaide
last year James Dickey came up to me, walking in a park, and said ‘They tell me you are
very shy, almost pathologically shy.’ So I write on my typewriter and the you I think to
write to is closer than reality; it is the you who writes the poems that I think should be
collected into a book. Yes, you see, you are real, not even a shadowy-me-plus-something.

Tom
The home-grown pleasures and pains of writing and getting published are apparent in the letters of Alan Marshall to Frank Huelin, and Frank Huelin to Arthur Howells. These three writers, who belonged to a section of the Melbourne intelligentsia—a term they would have hated—had come through the war with a consciously Australian attitude. Landscape and lifestyle were all the go, and it is a Victorian culture that has persisted. Alan Marshall, who overcame severe disability, is the best known of these three friends for his book *I Can Jump Puddles*, which was later made into a film.
Dear Frank,

Well you've made it at last. It was a long hard battle but I can tell you that the result will be worth it. There is no man in Australia knows more about the difficulties of the Depression years more than you. I'm particularly interested in your book since I followed it from the beginning. I was in at its conception, so to speak. I couldn't have been more pleased had I had a book of my own accepted. I have great faith in this book of yours and I have a great faith in you. The new title, 'The Unwanted', is a stroke of genius and Doris should be congratulated on thinking of it. It is far better than 'Keep Moving', is more intriguing and has greater sales value. At the moment throughout Australia there is an intense interest in the Depression years. More and more extracts from my books about the Depression are being used in school publications. Many writers are trying to have a shot at recreating the period but since none of them lived through it as you did their work lacks conviction. It is important that your book have an attractive jacket and be well publicised before it appears. With publishers nowadays the job of creating interest in a
book is often left to the writer and he has to use every trick he can think of to get his name mentioned in the press. Before your book appears I will give you an idea of a plan to work yourself which I will think will help in the sale. It is too early yet. The publicity should start about a week before the book is to be published. About this time you and Doris should come out to see me and we will discuss the campaign. Good luck Frank and my congratulations.

Alan

Alan Marshall
'Gurrawilla'
13A Potter Street
Black Rock
Victoria, Australia. 3193

20th March, 1974.

Dear Frank,

I leave for Sydney on Friday and now that the cool weather is here I feel remarkably well. My talk at the University was an amazing success. They couldn't get room in the Hall to put the people in. It was a wonderful experience. They are going to print the talk in their magazine.
I can understand your trouble with the Henry Dendy Radio Play. If you can’t make a success of it, this doesn’t mean you are ‘a fifth rate scribbler’. All it means is that you have wandered off the track. To be perfectly honest with you, I’d much rather have seen you dramatising ‘K.M.’ [Keep Moving] and turning it into a play. Your great strength is your understanding of working class people and that’s where you made your name and I am certain that this is where you will continue making your name. There is one rule I have always obeyed throughout my life. I have never attempted to write anything outside my experiences. For some years, because of this, I was ignored. But I still stuck to what I believed in and now it is bearing fruit. I am enclosing a review of my stories that appeared in The Bulletin. It proved to me that there is a swing back to the traditional Australian Short Story. People are getting fed up of tales that fail to ‘ring true’. You were the first writer to give a truthful account of men on the tracks. You broke new ground, but it should only be a beginning. You should write a book describing some character working for a cow cocky during the Depression. There is no place he can bath—he sleeps in a hut away from the house—he is not allowed to eat with the farmer and his wife, he eats in the kitchen. He has a charming daughter who falls for the ‘Bo’ he has employed. You could weave a great plot round this. Not only that—it would make a perfect film. That’s what the people want and that’s what you have got to do later on after you get this radio play out of your system.

I’ll let you know how things go in Sydney.

Your mate.

Alan
Dear Arthur.

Just under a month since I received your letter so this is about due or you’ll believe I’ve gone bush.

Your holiday plans seem to be very disorganised, and for a pair of old time organisers that is almost incredible considering the experience we acquired. What a mess Kisch and Griffin would have been in. The main point that arises from Margaret’s absence for three weeks is ‘how did you manage to survive your own cooking?’

Sorry to learn that ABS rejected ‘Against the Stream’. You are bound to feel disappointed. I know that feeling only too well, but rejections are something a writer must learn to live with as you know. Have you tried Lowden at Kilmore? Write if he is interested before sending ms. Or have a shot at turning the material into radio drama. ABC will send guide material if you ask them, specify exactly what you want—i.e. radio drama, talk, article.

Re publishing on your own; firstly, carry out completely ruthless editing—I chopped fifty per cent out of K.M. [Keep Moving]—then give yourself choice of formats to get most suitable at right price. Decide how many you want printed and shop around, even extending inquiries to Hong Kong.
My recollection of Len Fox’s work is that they are mostly booklets, and these are not good criteria for assessing publishing costs of 200 odd pages book. If you can label it ‘sociology’ or some such, that may help. But it would be a gamble. Don Charlwood once hawked some of his books through the Western District, many years ago, and was satisfied with the result. I cannot advise one way or the other. Frank Hardy did it, but P.W.G. [*Power without Glory*] had a lot going for it at the time.

Yes, A.S.A. [Australian Society of Authors] is a very good org. It has certainly achieved much since it came into existence but there is still a lot to be done before authors get a fair share of the cake for their work. Though now the old itch has re-kindled I’ll stick with my typewriter.

Have completed the final script of the original six as per contract with the Film and TV Board, and consider I’ve earned that $2,400 Grant. I sent off that last script earlier this week to Michael Pate, who is very satisfied with the previous five scripts. Each script has a different central character. All have this in common, they all carry their blueys, but there is enough diversity in their individual stories to make good TV—at least Michael thinks so, as does the Board representative.

Since my last letter I have been invited to speak at the annual meeting of the Gippsland Combined Hist. Societies in Traralgon on 26th Sept. Doris and I will travel by train and they pay exes for our over-night stay at hotel/motel. Jocka is coming along on same conditions. However, the Huelins will stay on in Latrobe valley for some days after 26th as we have friends at Moe and Nth Yall, and we'll be camping on their back verandahs or down the cowshed. The Traralgon society are also trying to arrange a local promotion of K.M. with some bookseller—the author sits in the shop and autographs each book as it is sold—a cow of a caper. I did it here with Alan. He signed more than I did.
Have another date—the 24th Sept.—to talk to Carey Grammar lads who are studying Econ.—Depression era. This is white-anting the Establishment but it comes natural. Again, they pay the bill for Melb. accommodation.

Have been advised by ex-BBC friend to extend ‘Brighton Estate’ to 90 minutes and send it to BBC. Quien sabe. May do. When I find time.

That portrait of me is over in England. All for now, and may your bulbs bloom lavishly.

Regards to that roving wife of yours, from us.
Keep writing and painting.

Frank.
Elizabeth Riddell was born in Napier, New Zealand, in 1907. She came to Australia in her teens and launched into a distinguished writing career, winning the prestigious Walkley Award for journalism. Before becoming a freelance feature writer and book reviewer, she worked on the Daily Mirror, the Australian and the Bulletin.

Invited to Australia initially on the basis of poems written during her school years, Elizabeth Riddell has become one of Australia's most accomplished poets, and has published seven books of poetry.