

The Flat.
Whit Monday.

Dearest

I hope you won't object to the pencil this time, but I left my pen at the office over the weekend, and the pens in this establishment are worse than any that one might meet in the Post Offices!

Well, I've had a wonderful weekend, and I'm all set to write & tell my dear only all about it.

Friday was really hectic at the office. We've been getting busier & busier due to the closing

down of factories & the change -
over of the production in some
places from war to peace goods.
(Sands wonderful, doesn't it).

And R. Lomer has gone off on
two weeks holiday - so you can
bet your truly is having a
grand time.

This being Whitsun, we were
allowed Saturday & Monday as
holidays - so when we closed
down on Friday I looked forward
to three clear days.

Arrived home to find Joan,
Frank & baby here & the place
in the usual state of upheaval
that seems to exist all the time
they are around. They wanted

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me to go with them to a do
which was arranged by the
Blendon Road area to celebrate
VE day. They had hired the
small hall at the Embassy &
a dance band & there were to
be big eats & a general social
evening.

However I had lots to do,
getting ready for my trip to
Shorncliffe & anyway I thought
it would be nice for mum to
go along & enjoy herself instead.
& so it was decided. Baby
was fed & put to bed & the
others fussed around getting ready
until nearly 8.30. Gee did I
want to push them out & get
on with my own plans!

But they finally went & left
me in sole charge. Baby didn't
nurse all evening & it was
grand to have the place to myself.
All the same it was nearly 11.0 pm
when I at last sat down, and
too late to write to you, so I
relaxed with a cup of Ovaltine
& read your last two epistles
before I finally went to bed.

Saturday morning was an
awful scramble again with
everyone milling around as usual,
and there were times when I
didn't think I'd make the train
^{from Wellington}
in time. Still I did & relaxed
in a corner & looked forward
to a nice weekend. Sometimes
I'm a bit too glad to leave my

5 - Family way behind!

The trains were packed with people headed for the country & the seaside & a real peace-time happiness pervaded the air. It is still unbelievable to most people that the war here is over. I had had such a scramble that I caught the train with only a few minutes to spare, and just squeezed myself & case into the corridor. There I sat & stood by turns until we reached Torbridge where the crowd thinned out somewhat.

The country is looking really lovely just now. The grass is carpeted with buttercups & marguerite daisies, & all the trees

are in full leaf and look good enough to eat. I love the Kent countryside because it is so soft & rounded & green. The hop-fields intrigue me. They are laid out so evenly & strong in fantastic designs so that the hops grow up the strings & sticks - just like some gigantic spider webs platted all over the landscape. Did I

tell you how lovely the horse-chestnut trees were looking this Spring? They still retain some of their blossoms even now. Thought you'd like to hear that piece of news in passing.

The train was a bit late, and old Gus was there to meet me, along with a pal of his

1 whose wife should have been on the same train as I.

Aux and Pat have a room of their own in a private house almost on top of the barracks & they seem very comfortably placed & very happy. The woman of the house is about Pat's age, though she looks considerably older, her husband is in Burma & she has a son of $3\frac{1}{2}$ years. She has recently started to go out to work leaving Pat in charge of the house & young boy - and the arrangement seems to be working out fairly well - Pat being used to a family of brothers. Aux lives out completely, & just goes into the barracks for regular office

have, though lately it appears he
has had to stay until late. He
is also hoping to get 7 days leave
shortly as he's had none for 4
months.

He had to go back after
lunch, so Pat & I went into
Golkestone to look around the shops
& see the sea. We bought our
sweet ration in Woolworth's &
walked around the town munching
Chocolate cream. We stood on
the cliff & watched the waves
breaking below, & I looked towards
Dover where until a few months
ago your MTB had its home.
Those days seem far away now
don't they honey? I hear that
a good time was had in that

⁹ quarters on VE night - apparently all the wrens & sailors drank the place dry & themselves merry, and all the ships in the harbor blew their fog horns & whistles to swell the din.

flux bought home some most delicious filleted plaice which we cooked for tea & then we set to work to wash & dress for the evening, which we were to spend in the Officer's Mess. Pat had told me to bring evening-dress, and I had spent all week making mine presentable.

The mess is a lovely place. They have a comfortable lounge, with a bar in one corner & lots of lovely armchairs in a kind of rust colour - and the walls were dis-

tempered the most heavenly greenish-blue color which toned most artistically with the furniture & Carpets. A really lovely room.

The President of the Mess had let himself go in the catering & there was a side buffet weighed down with all the peace-time delicacies that we have missed - lobster patties, crab rolls, egg & cheese & tomato sandwiches, asparagus chips rolled in brown bread, & loads of beautiful iced fancy cakes & the pièce de résistance - ice cream!

I was introduced to so many people in the first few minutes that I got them all hopelessly mixed up. - and everything was very formal & quiet & cliquy for awhile. However after the first drink & couple

" of dances people began to open out.
The dancing was in another
room. - lovely polished parquet
floor + great vase of coloured
lupins in one corner. There was
a three piece band, - piano, drums,
& accordion - which was really
hot stuff.

My first dance was with the
patric - rather a sober sort. eh?
But he was quite a charming
person. Then we all had a Paul
Tares & things began to hum.
I danced with a young Subby
during this Paul Tares ~~at~~ ^{the} boy!
he was a lovely dancer! Very
tall & thin & graceful, and rhythm
in every line. He asked me to
save him the next Slow-foxtrot,

which I took to be a compliment. We had several dances, and oh! I did enjoy them. There's such a different feeling to dance in a long skirt, it seems to add balance, and I really got in the groove. This Subby - named Atkins, & called Tommy by everybody, had gone straight into the army from school & was so young. He kept

ejaculating the word "Smashing" with boyish enthusiasm & a slight drawl on the 'a'. I told him he'd wear the word out. But he certainly knew how to dance.

As the evening progressed & the liquor flowed everybody became hail-fellow-well-met & I hobnobbed with everybody.

13 from the CO. down. One thing
I realized from the start, our
flux is a most popular lad.

The dancing went on till
2 am & afterwards we lingered
in the lounge with drinks and
cigarettes yarning until nearly
3.0. There was a bit of a jam
session going on in the dance
hall which was being reinstated
as a dining room ready for
the morning. The stroll from
the barracks to the residence
was not far & we just fell
into bed & slept late. But I
really had a grand time.

On Sunday afternoon flux
was playing cricket & though
the weather did not look too
promising Pat & I braved the

clouds went along to watch. The
regiment were playing the Folkestone
team & thus, the Captain, was
wondering how his boys would shape
- this being their first match.

I don't know if you know
the Folkestone cricket ground
Dorset. It is most beautifully
situated with a line of wooded
hills in the background. lovely
way of spending an afternoon.

The Folkestone crowd had a
really hot batsman whom I
met afterwards - he made 88 runs.
They declared at 150 & let our
boys go in. Stumps were drawn
at 8.0 pm. & our boys were
137 for 8. - so it was pretty
close & thus was pleased. He,
unfortunately, was run out at 80

but afterwards the wicket told him that he quite definitely was not out' as they & everybody else had believed. However. They put up a very good show.

The Folkestone team had a pair of twins, as like as two peas, one of them being the aforesaid batsman. He, it seems, has played for Kent County with Hammond Ames & the rest. He & they had plenty to talk about. Pat & I & another girl (fiancée of one of the twins) they & the twins then wooched off to Sandgates for a few drinks. We tried two hotels & finished off the evening in a Racing Club. This has just been opened, and we were taken into the boathouse

to see some beautiful new skiffs.
The sea was rough, as I love to
see it & there was a stiff southwest
wind blowing & it was really
exhilarating on the front. We
all walked back up the cliffs
to Shorncliffe - some half hour's
climb & it was really heavenly.
See whiz, what I couldn't have
done under that romantic moon
which was shining through the
trees, if my darling had been
there. Gus & Pat are dears,
& they talked about our absent
Wesley & we laughed over some
of the antics that you got up to
at Joy's wedding. Talking about
you to other people who are fond of
you too seems to lessen the ache

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in my heart. That ache is always
there dozing, and will be, Squen,
until you are home & I am all
more walking beside you. But oh
it grows into an unbearable
longing at times. Whining up
that hill with the sea lapping
far below us, & the moon & trees
creating a weird half-light, the
lighted windows of houses
showing across the small valleys,
I could have wept for yearning
and want of you angel.

One day when you are back
in England will motor down to
the coast & take a glorious stroll
along those white cliffs and
drift along in a dream of love

and happier. Will recapture
the thrill all over again.

I couldn't thank ~~Pat~~ ~~the~~
enough for the lovely time they
had given me. They were very
sweet to think of it. Their love
is to be sent to you & all good
wishes for your speedy return
to England. She ~~gave~~ really
hopes to be back to peacetime
proportions by next summer &
fun will once more be had 'by all.

I'll finish with the words of
a tune that has haunted me all
day - "How I miss your tender kiss
stay to hold you tight, I'm a
little on the lonely side tonight."

All my love & thoughts,

Clare

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