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The Office.

Tuesday. 29/1/45.

Sweetheart

A nice quiet spell at the office for the next half-hour, so how better could I spend it than scribbling to my beloved? I've so many things buzzing around in my brain to tell you that I really don't know where to begin.

Two subjects near to your heart at the moment I know are demobbing & Westaway Taxes - so I'll start with them.

There really was a blow for us in Saturday's paper concerning demobbing, doing, and I felt very blue for a while. A.V. Alexander before relinquishing his post as first

lord, made a speech praising the Navy for their part in the war, but stating that the demob. plan as such does not apply to the Navy. The idea seems to be to release only the 50 year olds in the Navy & to keep the force at full strength until the end of the Jap war.

As I say, the bottom dropped out of the world for me for awhile, but thinking it over since, I don't think that statement really affects our position very much. In the first place, even in the Army you would not have been released with Group 35 until early next year, and by that time it is fully expected that the Japs will be cracking up - Washington has high hopes that 6 months will see the end of the

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war in the Far East. Then again
there is the possibility that you
may come out under Class B -
I feel sure that with the formation
of the proposed new Govt. Depts.
civil servants will become priority
releases. If the Govt. really intends
to get down to control of land &
housing, which is a terribly vital
question in England at the moment,
I feel they will need all the
experienced staff that is available.
There are also lots of temporary staff
who want to be released from
the Civil Service now to get back
to their own businesses, & that
again will create many vacancies.
You see they can't hope to recruit
any youngsters through examinations
because they are still being

conscripted for the forces. So
you see, honey, there is still every
reason to be optimistic that you'll
be home soon - quite apart from
the fact that I have one of those
feelings that this time next year
will see the Westaway family
united & settled down.

LATER

Now to housing. This is, as
I have said, a terribly vital
question and there is an awful
shortage of accommodation in London
due to the tremendous damage
done by the fly-bombs & rockets.
I'm afraid that it is not going
to be easy to find our new home,
but what I always say is
"where there's a will, there's a way"
or something.

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Mrs Gifford has not a single room to let, and self-contained flats & houses are completely out of the question. Apparently the bombed-out people in Blackheath & Lewisham are still living in the shelters!

However, people are continually on the move, and places fall vacant from time to time, so she asked me to give her a ring once a week & she will keep her eyes open for us. I said that we want if poss. a modern flat with two or three rooms, kitchenette & bathroom. - to serve as a home for two or three years at least.

I mentioned the repairs going on,
& asked what prospects there were of
the conversion of some of those
4-story houses into flats. The
answer is that repair is being
done to all occupied premises,
& when these are completely
habitable work will begin on the
vacant places. So you see
honey the outlook at the moment
is pretty grim - but I am by
no means pessimistic of finding
somewhere this summer.

Your letter tonight again
mentions carpets, & I'm absolutely
killed about it all. Seems to
me we shall have our home
collected by the time we are ready

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to wear in!

One thing I wanted to ask you about. What do you think of the idea of buying a Utility dining room suite? I know we shall want heavier & more solid stuff eventually, but the immediate prospect of getting anything new & seasoned at a reasonable price is pretty thin. We might of course pick up something at an auction sale, but that would not be very likely, until you came home at any rate. Then too, it occurred to me that if we go all out for an infant when you come home sweet, & if he were to

Take after the other Westaway boys
I've heard about, it might be
as well to have some temporary
stuff that he can kick & scratch
to his heart's content. Bless
him! (the little brat).

All things considered, what
do you think honey? I thought
of table, four chairs & sideboard -
I think they'd allow us that
number more points & it would
not run into too much money
- under £20 I should say.

Poppa may have some better
ideas on the subject, eh sweet?
Let me know what you?

9 I don't think I have yet told you about my visits this weekend.

Firstly, I went to Cufley Lane's, a very busy & full household this always these days.

Susan on the floor, with two playmates, surrounded by toys & playing "at homes" with tea service & lots of water. How kids adore getting wet!

Young Roger is getting a whopper. - weighs over a stone, and is getting quite lovely to look at. Vera thinks he is a real Cufley, but he has very long legs, arms & fingers & will undoubtedly outstrip his father one day.

Jim goes off to Greyhounds on
Saturday evenings these days so I
saw very little of him. He is
working tremendously hard at the
office & has even been reduced to
bringing work home to do. That's
one thing I shall bar in our home
darling - though knowing you I
can hardly imagine such an event-
uality. I certainly don't think
there's any virtue attached to it.

"What is this life, if full of
care" &c &c. No sir! Let's hope
that we will always keep a true
perspective on life, and enjoy all
our leisure hours. And I can hear
you heartily agreeing with me.

Once again I missed meeting
young Bill. One of the lads who

II returned with him - made man's
fatal mistake & got married. Tim
, naturally, had to help swallow
some drinks & join in the fun,
so some day no doubt I shall
meet him.

Vera & I & Mr. Green had a
quiet evening round the fire
(Vera I said fire - it was like
mid-winter last weekend) and
listened-in to "Pride & Prejudice."
Very witty that woman Austen.
I must really read that book
from cover to cover. At school
we used to act & read excerpts
from it - but I was consuming
Ethel M. Dell in my leisure hours
& couldn't waste time on such
writing. (See why! Thank

heaven I grew up!

Jim Vera & Bill were going to a 21st birthday party at a neighbor's house on Sunday.

They all send their love to our leg & hope you will somehow soon be home again.

On Sunday I went down to Coribaldi St. & found Nellie, Joyce & Tom there. It was the usual family happy-go-lucky atmosphere - everyone talking at once & how I revelled in it! They all seem to have heard from you in the past two or three weeks, and I'm so glad happy that you are keeping in touch with the family. They all thirst for news of you & I always

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have to tell them what you've
been doing & saying & try to
remember all the little funny
bits from your letters.

Pop looked in - he was on
his way up to the cemetery
with a bunch of lovely red roses.
He said that he had written to
you. Incidentally I asked
Mom about the grave darling, and
she says that we can join in
the planting fee for next year
if we like. It has all been done
this year, and she considers that
the cost of the stone surround was
covered by mums insurance. So
don't worry any more about it
Sweetheart.

I don't like talking about

This side of it much do you sweet?
But now that there are flowers
about again, I will go along there
to help fill the vase. I feel that
mum can watch over you more
nearly than I can nowadays.

You know of course that
Joyce is hoping to have a baby.
It is not yet really definite,
though she has bought several
books & extracts promises from
everybody that they will knit for
her & come & take baby out
occasionally. She kept saying
on Sunday "Oh Clare I wish
you were having one with me."
I wish so too.

Don't & Albert rather hoped

↳ That they would wait awhile, because they are awfully young & have no home & not much money saved. However as Joyce says there are thousands more couples in the same position so why worry.

I rather hope that Doris & Alb. will accept the position & not be too disapproving, because Joyce is inclined to adopt a very defiant attitude & she should lead a quiet & happy life for the next few months. Emotions are strained enough for a woman during pregnancy, that she should have all the love and attention possible.

I was shocked - repeat shocked
- at Blanche's attitude to the happy
event. She referred to it as a
'nuisance'. Sent a box of pills
to Joyce hoping they'd do the
trick; and of course could not
now have Joyce living at the
bungalow, which was "not suitable
for an infant."

I'm not usually queen to
Cathiness, & I have not many
illusions about life in the row,
but I consider her action wicked,
& could not help observing that
by the number in the tin it
looked as though she'd sampled
a few of the pills. herself.

Does that sound like Clare?

Huff said.

17 Thank heaven Joyce had the sense
not to take any.

Sam, needless to say, is very
quiet about it all - very shy
indeed, poor boy! He and Joyce
are on 10 days leave, and are
now at Weymouth.

I rang Beckenham today to
hear all the latest news about
your kid brother. He is at the
moment taking life extremely easily.
Gets up about midday & just
suns himself in the garden and
potters around generally. The
idea seems to be complete rest
& quiet. - as always in nerve
cases.

The nerve in the head which

Caused all the trouble apparently
passed on the optic nerve, and
Caused great strain on the eyes,
and at the moment doctor has
ordered him to wear dark specs.
But he has assured Edgar that
the strain will wear off and
his eyesight will be unimpaired.

Meriel couldn't talk much
because Philip was kicking up
such a din - so she visited
me over on Saturday. She said
they had heard from you, and
talked about flats & carpets and
home life generally - she thinks
it's a grand idea for you to buy
some of the home art in India.

And now to your two
letters 19 & 20 received tonight.

19 There had been a gap of a week & life is always terribly empty until I read more words of wisdom & love from hubby. I nearly knew your last epistle by heart - which is quite an effort seeing that it was more than 20 pages of closely written matter.

I laughed at your imaginary beer of the pub. A hollow laugh - let me add - because there has never been such a beer shortage in the history of London! When you get the papers you will read all about it - but let me tell you that with a guaranteed pint a week you'd a darned sight better off

than loads of people here. Fact!

And not only beer - but also sweets are almost unobtainable. The suppliers blame it on the VE & Whit holidays & the sudden influx of thousands of people to London.

Talking of VE, honey, I had your reactions to my 'snee' as you called it - and there's no doubt you're the sweetest person ever. And I love you.

Afterwards, realising what a tough time our boys had, I felt I may have laid on the celebration side a bit thick. But I so wanted to paint you the picture as I had seen it & I thought the other boys would like to hear

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what London looked like. too.

I was so full of it all,
and so proud to have been in
that beloved town through all
its ^{war} trials. I have never before
been in London on a party night
and I have since been told that
the celebrations were very mild
compared with some past nights
in London. Armistice 1918. was
much gay.

I certainly was impressed by
the soberness & lack of rowdiness.
I think the real peace night will
be something to remember, and
we must celebrate it together
darling.

like you darling, once I

Start withip I could just go
on all night - The sound of
a clock chiming away snips
me back to earth & I think of
all the beauty sleep I need to
keep rosy for my husband.

You're right when you say
that there ain't a man in the
whole wide world who could
take me away from you. And
don't ever let me hear anyone
suggest that our love is capricious.

Together, in our love and
understanding we have touched
heights that are not dreamed
of in some men's philosophy.
I thank God that you waited
for me to come along. Because

if I searched to the ends of the
earth I know I should never
find a truer, more loyal, or
more lovable life-companion.

You are all that I want
in this world, darling.

Clare

35/



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