

Missus Mathews

23. 5. 45.

Darling,

I had a letter from you today dated 10th April! It was the ~~to~~ one in which you report no luck in the matter of junior, the one that I waited for for ages - why the heck did they have to go & hold up that letter.

But it really came quite fresh, bursting with the old Clerical Personality &, in general, was a nice Cpt for the day.

I read with amusement of your visit to the D Boat. It's a wonder to me that the neck didn't let you into the engine room - when we had lady visitors aboard it was considered a special favour to stand just at the bottom of the E.L. after hatch ladders - those Askars missed nothing. Of course I wasn't interested in the beggy side of it but I did like to see the Ladies down below because they were always perfectly sweet in complimenting us

on the tiddly brasswork, + it was a  
bit of a change to the eternal oval.  
You say you stood in the bows + felt  
it "rock beneath your feet" - at  
Westminster Pier? After thinking it  
over I'll punch that M.M. note rose  
if I ever meet up with him - who  
does he think he is? - if my wife  
asks for a thing I want to see it  
done.

Whilst on the subject of boats, I  
had a letter from Mike - the one you  
re-addressed - (by the way, honey, if  
another comes to me via Welling  
do please open + read it, Old Mike  
writes nothing that a lady shouldn't  
read + he's very interesting) - +  
he mentioned my first boat, the  
one I operated on at Dover. She's  
been sunk, + hon Barley, my  
chief M.M., went with it - damned  
bad luck. I've certainly had all  
the breaks in this war - when I  
think of all that fighting ship  
went through in English waters

+ now, on a supposed "pleasure cruise",  
 she's 'gats a packet, well, I got a  
 little sad. But that was the way  
 with Coastal Forces, old ships + pals  
 went out like a light overnight, +  
 we got used to the feeling of loss +  
 bitterness. It seems callous to say so,  
 but to forget was the only way to  
 retain one's balance + fighting  
 spirit - it was useless to ponder  
 whether it was worthwhile or not;  
 there's only one person who can judge  
 that. And now, on the last lap, a  
 whole boatload of shipmates gone -  
 yes, for a while I was a little sad.

In this No. 6 letter of yours,  
 angel, you sound much more chocca  
 than the latest. It just shows  
 how you can adjust your mind  
 to bear adversity. I rather think  
 I laid on the glamor a bit too  
 thick in my No. 5 letter - "a film  
 set" - I discuss about that if you  
 mean something in the Denny Kae-

- Dinah More lives. Nothing was laid on top but the ship itself - a peace-time liner stripped for action - & what Hollywood effects there were were rigged & produced by the troops. And those wandering minstrels, & guys & gals - the minstrels faded out soon after because they found they were losing good Raeching time, & the gals were WAAFs who as all the world knows, steer very clear of the Navy. In any case the moon could do what it liked but I never had the slightest inclination to set a course in their direction. As for me letting my love go wrong, argh, you got my heart back in return for yours.

Oh ps - yesterday I got the Daily Mail Weekly - April 7th & believe me she read it through twice so wonderful it is to get an English paper. The Indian newspapers - - - - - Oh ah, I did mention them before, didn't I?

5

Whadya think of the little snap? -  
not much, is it, but it's the first I've  
managed to get taken & others will  
follow as soon as possible. I won't  
trouble to point out Jim & Lpo. etc, because  
I'm sending on a snap taken at  
Breach Candy with the 5 of us in.  
Can you spot me? I'm the one with  
the hat on. The two lads right in  
front have the same issuing utensils -  
we were all just on our way to the  
mess when the lad with the camera  
called us together. (Can't I aint  
we? Uncle Tom Cobley 'n all. There's  
quite a lot of story material  
concerning the boys in that snap,  
& one of these days I'll tell you about  
em - if I can remember.

Car lamma - I aint a't losing  
weight. 14 st  $1\frac{3}{4}$  lbs I go now. When  
I left England I went 15 st 12 lbs.  
A lot of it is coming off me belly so  
maybe it's all for the good but I  
hope I stop sometime. The loss can  
be attributed to the heat and the

short rations in the mess. The men  
who've been out here over a year say  
that they can't eat large helpings  
but us fresh ones from D.K. have  
still got the remnants of our old  
appetite, & it's cruel 'and to have  
to exist in camp on what they give  
us. Begging for second helpings  
does us no good because the beavers  
can't understand you - or, maybe,  
they don't want to. Anyway, down  
& down I go, thinner & thinner I  
go, & your suggestions of a bigger  
& fatter old man will have to be  
revised, honey. But don't you worry,  
baby mine, because I'll keep you  
well supplied with pictorial records  
of the body beautiful, & you'll be able  
to see just what's happening - say,  
the Beach Candy one shows a physique  
that can only be admired.

I now have the complete #10,  
which reminds me that yours of the  
16th Inst. asked me a few questions  
which I haven't answered yet -  
very sorry for me, sweetheart & I'll do

7  
My best to catch up on your queries.

Didn't I tell you that I was elected Vice President? Sure I did - if you haven't heard before then you've a letter missing. I bowed to an older & more experienced man - voluntarily, mind you, because I had the boys rooting for me - but better judgement prevailed. As you suggest, plans for a bigger better & wetter center were drawn up but that's as far as things have progressed. In India nothing moves above a snail's pace, & you'd be surprised to what ridiculous & even dangerous limits dilatoriness goes in this country.

Have ropes and mine, I shan't hold on to letters longer than necessary. If you look forward to my letters as much as I to yours then any delay sends you frantic. I'm afraid they'll shortly be changing colour, but I think I can get some good paper in Bombay.

O.K. sweetie - carry on

converting bank money to H.S.C. - every little helps, as the monkey said when he - ... hm. Don't stint yourself on your summer holiday if the allowance is it enough - have a smashing time honey, & give Mother a good holiday too. (I think I've been awfully bad mannered in not sending my regards to her before now - try & make up for me darling, will you?).

What do I do every work-a-day?  
Well I arise at 7.15 a.m. & wake up the others. I'm the only one with a watch (that goes), & they rely on me to give 'out' with the 'waker-wakey'. I wash, gargle, dab me spots with T.C.P. dress & rip down to breakfast, with or without the others. We're called to the workshops by a whistle at 8.30 & work through to 12.00. The whistle goes again at 1.15 & the end of the working day comes at 4.30. Believe me, by 4.30 I'm washed & so is everybody else - working in the heat



9

is deadly, it says all the energy we've got. Probably the hours will be reduced to 4 p.m. which'll be a help. In the evening we haven't enough incentive to <sup>go to</sup> the canteen - 100 yards down the road - so we stay in the cabin + write or read. Sometimes we argue & I should say that our arguments are the talk of the camp - no holds are barred.

Do I remember our wonderful evenings in the Woffolk? Do I remember our ---? Do ---? DO I.

That sort of memory is potent enough to knock me over - physically I mean - I just flop back on my bed, + puff out a great sigh that defeats me completely. I remember so many things - they all revolve around you - I'm so completely in love with you.

Jan, Jan, Jan,

192.

28

Received  
9.5.45



POST OFFICE

~~MARITIME~~  
MAIL

Mr. Harris

Mrs. Elizabeth

85(A) Bella Grove Rd.

Welling

Kent

England