

Sunday 5.8.45.
She Flat.

~~Darling~~ So we are home again, and
I've so much to talk about to you &
plenty of time & peace of quiet in
which to do it. I tried hard to
keep some sort of mail flowing out
East to you, honey-mine, but I
reckon that my letters lacked the
usual conversational piece effect.

Now where shall I begin -
that is the question.

I guess you probably know
Hastings pretty well - it differs quite
a bit from Bournemouth in its
layout doesn't it. More or less are

long straight promenade, with the town rising behind it, instead of the chimes & dips & rises of the centre of Lm.

There are not too many signs of the blitz - just an occasional space on the front, and the parish church of St John's which is flat. All along the front are these four-story houses made over to hotels & some of them occupied by the military & R.A.F.

There was one especially which I noted for future holidays - if we ever desire to stay there. It was a hotel with small balconies running along the front on the ground floor & first floor, where one could recline at ease in deck-

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Chairs withiced drives & watch all
the bathers sporting on the beach
below. - it was next door to the
Paritain, & almost opposite the pier, &
before the war must have been ideally
situated - still is, for that matter -
name YELTON.

The first Saturday we were there,
Frank spotted a magnificent blonde
sunning herself in brief swimsuit up
on the balcony - amazing what takes
the male eye - even from several yards
distance. eh?

The beach is pebble & sand &
the tide goes way out, so that one
can play in the waves for quite a
distance, without getting wet higher

than the highs. The pier has a hole in the middle, which they are beginning to bridge, & I did hear Sam that it was hoped they'd open it before the season is over.

One morning when the whole town seemed to be trying to get on our bus we decided to cross over the road & travel in the opposite direction as the route was a circular one, & though it meant a little extra distance we thought we'd enjoy the ride.

It really is a lovely place, & a short distance from the beach found us travelling through a beautifully set out residential quarter, with lovely detached houses & bungalows high up on a rise, with a valley beyond

of fields & woods & the soft rolling downs in the background. I'd have loved to have walked all round & explored that gorgeous countryside, but it couldn't be did in the circumstances. But I had anyway drinks in the beauties of the English scenery all the way down in the car, & that was enough to fill my mind's eye for many a day to come.

Fruit trees are all laden this year with apples & pears & plums and gardens are filled with 'colourful flowers' - I noticed especially that hydrangeas & fuchsia grow here in profusion & look really beautiful. There were a number of places for sale and even a few to let, and I

once again felt the urge to settle by the sea same day. There's something about the seaside atmosphere that keeps one feeling young & on tip-toe.

Honestly there were hundreds of old ladies walking around who looked 70, 80 & 90 years old, still hale & hearty. As mum said, they don't appear to die down here, they probably shoot 'em off in the end.

The weather started off warm & sunny with quite a bit of cloud about for a few days & gave us the chance to get acclimatized without getting burned to a frazzle. But the last three days were real scorches & it was almost uncomfortable even to just recline in bathing costumes.

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As you can guess, we spent our whole time on the beach. Mornings, ~~the~~ immediately after breakfast we set off & didn't come back before 5 minutes to 1.0. pm. After lunch baby used to have a nap, & we took deck chairs into the garden & sunned ourselves on the lawn. It was then that I tried to write my letters, but as you know, I was not ever successful in writing much.

I described the garden to you, & as I say I think a huge lawn & fruit trees is ideal, though when I voiced that opinion the man said I was in for some hard work - apparently grass always is in need

of cutting. I dunno. Do you feel
up to pushing a lawn-mower once
a week, chicken-pie?

There were loads of Ice Cream Parlors
& Lodges - mostly run by Italians, and
we drank innumerable cups of delicious
coffee, and we found a lovely little tea-
shop where they served home-made bread
& jam & cake. Incidentally we
were always served with butter, they
don't appear to know what marger is
in that burgh. At best once a
day we had a fish meal - really
lovely grub. In London there has
been a shortage for so long that it
has almost disappeared from the
meal-table, so that it was a real

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Went to bed on Soles, plaice, haddock
& kippers. Yum, yum.

We went to three dances in all,
and the other evenings we spent
strolling along the promenade taking in
the sea air and breathing in the perfume
of some beds of night-scented stocks
which had been planted in beds
along the front.

You asked about susceptible
young men darling. Well there's no
doubt at all that had I been free
& fancy-free I could have had the
usual series of holiday flirtations
& fun-and-games.

There was dancing in the Pavilion
every evening until 10.0 pm. & Joan & I

popped in there on Tuesday evening for an hour & despite the dreadful preponderance of women, managed to enjoy ourselves very well. The M.C. knew his onions and nearly every dance was an Excuse-me, which gave the girls a chance to grab a man & get in a few steps before another she-wolf cut-in. Honestly, sweet, this male-shortage is grim! Nearly every man I danced with was a leaver & said how good it was to see so many girls out of uniform to choose from.

The first evening two chappies cottoned on to S. & S. for the last few dances & then took us for a cup of coffee before putting us on the bus

" for home. They ~~was~~ reminded me awfully of our gang, both in their early thirties, come straight from the open-air Pool where they had been playing water-polo — apparently they swim for fast ships.

Naturally that gave me a lead & I talked of Jim playing for the rest of Gordon & Freddie ^{the gang} & they began to wonder if they'd ever swim against your boys before the war. Wished I'd know what you called your team. But it was fun to hear the old language spoken, and it made me think of after the war when all your lads will be getting together again, plus wives.

The second dance we went to was
terribly crowded as there were two
bands & it was non-stop to midnight.
One look at the masses of dames
around the place & Joan & I looked
forward to a wall-flower evening.

As one girl remarked, you queue for
tickets, queue for the cloakroom, and
then queue for a dance. So true!
How different from your Bombay dance
honey, when you had to go out
looking for women. Ah me!

However Joan & I must have looked
a bit different from the other lasses -
we had our hair all on top and
surprisingly few others had that style.
Considering how cool it was.

We missed surprisingly few dances, and after the first half of the evening a young lad came up to me for three dances in a row & then stayed with us for the rest of the time. He was about 22, an artist who played the violin in his spare time. You get the type - definitely a little feminine, with long hair, moustachios & would have had a beard, I've no doubt, if he could have grown one.

I found him very amusing to talk to, such a different type from the men I know, & he was an excellent dancer into the bargain. He said that he had been an air-gunner in the RAF & was invalided out

after a crash, but I was not sure that
I believed that. Still if he cared
to spin yarns it was all light frothy
talk that goes down well in a
ball-room & is forgotten before morning.

The last dance I have described
to you in detail - mainly the high-
spot being the wonderful exhibition
dancing.

Altogether, dearie, we managed
to have fun. Though there is a
tremendous lack in a holiday with
no men. Quite apart from the fact
that I missed your letters dreadfully,
& of course, do not even in my own
mind start comparing this holiday
with the wonderful times we have

had together.

None the less, I feel absolutely wonderful - tanned & full of beans, & as though I've been away from the office for months. It was rest, fresh air & exercise that I was mainly needing & these I have had in abundance. Good - oh!

And now I come to the pièce de résistance.

After a day on the beach, we motored home & arrived tired & hungry around 9.30 p.m. I just fell upon all the correspondence on the mat, & though I did not intend to read it until I could be alone, just the feel of the envelopes in my

hand was enough to set my heart
exulting.

Five minutes later there was a
knock on the door, & our next door
neighbour asked for me. You'll never
guess what she had - a canvas
covered huge parcel for me from India.
Yoursir!! Well that was the most
heavenly homecoming present any girl
could ask for & I was just mad to
get it undone & look inside - but I
had to be polite & chat of this &
that for a few minutes.

Then we got it inside & six
willing hands set about getting the
wrappers undone. Gee whizz, darling,
I never in my wildest dreams hoped

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for rugs like those. They are really
super. The colours, the pile & the
weight of them, you simply couldn't
buy them here like it, and they
will wear for ever! The three make
a perfect set, and along with the
green curtains I have made they
will make a spare bedroom look
rich & lovely. You're an angel &
I could just hug you for being so
sweet & thoughtful.

Truly I have never been more
thrilled & excited with anything in
my life.

I expect the burning question
for you is how much duty? and I

will not keep you guessing - 16/-^d.
Pretty good eh sweet? The charges
were 1/- for Post office customs clearance
& 15/- Purchase Tax, and there was
a signed declaration describing the
contents as "1-Indian woolen floor
rug - value in sterling £3.", and the
stamps on it were 6Rs. 3As.

It was marked "Personal Effects
Parcel", and the Post office had dated
the registration No. on 1st June.

They arrived 1st August so that is
two whole months - which in my
opinion is not at all bad.

I thought it best to use them
rather than pack them away sweetheart,
so you can guess that our bedroom

19 looks rather like a carpet showroom at the moment. But gee they are lovely negs!

Frank & Joan were there when I opened them & naturally fell in love with them & wished they could have some. I don't know what the position is, honey, or whether you were limited to the number & weight of these "Personal Effects parcels", so I was non-committal. But in any case I feel that we should concentrate on fixing ourselves up first - after all it is we who are bearing the loneliness of this posting - and nobody who has not experienced it can quite understand - So that if there is any advantage to be reaped from our position then we should grab

it with both hands.

In any case I always feel that
Frank is "on the make" and anybody
with half an eye can see that those
rugs are priceless in England today.

I dunno. Anyway perhaps you'd let
me know what you think about buying
for other people & whether or not there
is any limit imposed upon the number
that you send home.

I don't want to seem selfish,
but on the other hand I don't want
you to be imposed upon. So I
leave it to you to write & give me
your opinion. Oke?

I could go on writing, but the
pages are mounting up, so I shall

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Finish on this sheet & start another
separate one. You'll get 'em both
together & it will be a nice little
packet to make up for last week's
shortage.

Here were two long letters on the mat
from you on Saturday (46 & 47) and
this morning (Monday) number 48
arrived. You really are the sweetest
thing, nothing ever seems to cause
your letters to tail off, darling, and
you've no idea how wonderful it
was to read the old familiar humour
& philosophy battling through the
miasmas of the mud.

There's no one quite like you
anywhere in this world, and I

Thank all my lucky stars for your
love.

Don't go away, Sweet, there's
another budget coming up, but
with this one comes all the love
in the world for you from

Wifey

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6.8.15



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