

Our Bhoys Sam

Family Letters 1901 – 1907

Transcribed and edited by

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The Lintons of Castlewellan

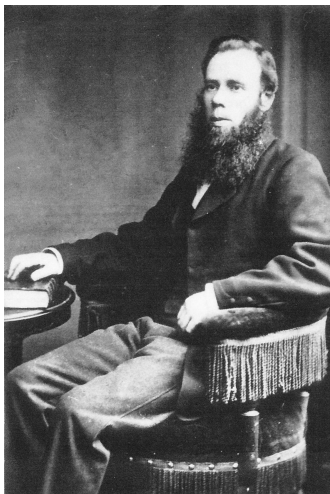
According to Desmond Linton, who is still living (2018) in Castlewellan in his nineties, the Lintons were sent over to County Down by the first Baron, William Annesley, from his family estates in England, along with others, to be the shop keepers and clerks he needed for his new town of Castlewellan and he settled them at Bryansford. This was the nearest village to the Annesley estate, which the Baron bought in 1741. He enlarged the house there, which eventually became his stately home, from 1750 onwards and he began work on the town in the 1760's. To this day it has the look of a planned Georgian town.



Castlewellan in the early twentieth Century

The first documentary evidence of a shop to survive is an account book dated 1791, but unfortunately it is not named. The first Linton to run a shop there was James Linton (he spelt it Linten as his father had baptised all four sons that way) who is listed in the local directory as the grocer in Castlewellan in 1846. His father may have run the shop before him, certainly his brother William and nephew David Linten had smallholdings near Bryansford on the land records of 1863 rather than farms, which may be because they were traders or clerks as well. James had already left the town by then to marry Eliza Magill. They moved to Ballymena where they and their children ran shops.

David Linten, James's nephew, was running a family shop in Castlewellan by 1870 because in that year he is listed as a tailor in Castlewellan in the local directory. It may have remained a grocery as well because in later directories it is both and many years have no surviving records. He married Eliza Shaw in 1869 and it may well be then that he moved into the shop for all their children were registered as Linten of Castlewellan town and this means they lived over the shop and as they grew up they will have assisted out of school hours.



David Linton



Eliza Linton née Shaw

In 1892 David took over a different smallholding called Burrenbridge outside the town boundary in Ballyhaffrey, no doubt to gain more space for their eight sons. William, Wallace, David, Sam (Our Bhoys), Matthew, Robert, Herbert and Ernest.

By 1896 his eldest son William was planning to marry Martha Hall, daughter of the owner of the local shoe merchant and the expectation will have been that, he would be moving into the shop to start his family. All happened quickly. In January 1897, to Eliza's great distress, David died leaving her with instructions in his will to manage the futures and the finances of all eight boys. Her letters show how hard a burden this was – and how little the boys understood it at times.



Castlewellan High Street in 1900. The Linton's shop is the third from the left. It is now a SPAR.

In February 1897 William married his Martha and moved into the shop. David and Wallace started apprenticeships at a grocery in Belfast, and took lodgings at 73 Denmark St. which was run by two sisters: Mary Knight Arthur and Eliza Arthur. Also living there was their niece Elizabeth Baird Kennedy who had been left in their care by their widowed sister Jessie Lemon Arthur Kennedy who sailed to Canada in 1884 with her younger daughter Gracie Kennedy and son John Edward Arthur Kennedy and also a young Dane, Carl Bodtcher who she promptly married. Eliza and the other boys now lived at Burrenbridge but Samuel was soon to join his brothers in Belfast – and what could be better for him than to stay at the same lodging house where his brothers were happily settled?

By 1901 Samuel and Bess Kennedy had clearly started courting and when she went to Dublin for her teaching exams Sam wrote his first letters to her. Within a year he had to leave for London and a longer correspondence began. As well as their letters other letters have survived, written by various relatives to one or the other. Putting them all in order of date makes an interesting and often amusing account of the years they cover which is 1901 to 1907.

Sam's Family

Sam Linton was the fourth of eight brothers, all of whom are pictured below with their mother Eliza outside their house in Burrenbridge on May 24th 1903.



*William and David;
Bob, Sam, Wallace and Matthew;
Ernest, Eliza and Herbert.*

Eliza Linton (née Shaw 1847-1934)

Eliza's father was a local farmer and shoe maker who lived nearby at Clarkhill. Her mother, Agnes Wallace a Gaelic speaking Scot, had died in 1892 but her father was alive in his 80's and figures in the letters as do most of Eliza's 8 siblings. By 1902 Samuel Shaw jnr, another shoemaker, Agnes and Clementina had all left for the United States. Eliza's eldest sister Jane Rea had married and lived near by, running a hat shop. Robert Shaw who ran the family farm, was a regular and helpful visitor. Her three other brothers were in England, all established and well-to-do merchants, Thomas Shaw was a clock and watch jeweller in Liverpool. Matthew and William were in the London tea trade together.



William John Shaw (1869-1929)

A major figure in Sam's letters Eliza's brother William was a tea trader with the Anchor Tea Co.. He married Lizzie Whitaker in Hackney London in 1889 and five of their children were already born before William encouraged Sam Linton to come to London and do business with him. Lizzie's eldest sister Madeleine Priors was a regular visitor at William's house, often mentioned in the letters. She was widowed young before a child was born and their mother Mrs Mary Ann Whitaker lived near to the Shaws in Stoke Newington.



The Linton Boys – in order of age

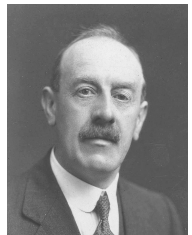
William Linton (1870-1948) followed his father in running the Castlewellan shop but the tailoring side was given up and the grocery business expanded. He was also the bicycle agent in the town. He married Martha Hall in 1897 and his first three children Wallace Linton, Robert Hall Linton, and William junior had already been born when Sam left for London. William ran the shop until he retired and his son Willie ran it after him until his own death in 1964. The shop was then bought out and is now a SPAR shop.



Wallace Linton (1875-1947) worked in an upholsterers shop in Castlewellan before moving to Belfast where in 1901 he was a shopman boarding with the Arthur sisters. In the same year he married Isobel Bailie (Belle) and, with his mother's financial help, he took on a tobacconists shop on the Shankill Rd – not far from Denmark St.



David Linton (1868-1955) was also living at 73 Denmark St. in 1901. He is also described as a shopman but, although he was apprenticed to a grocers up until about this time he soon got work at a mill furnishers establishment. Soon afterwards the owner of the business died and David appealed successfully to his mother for funds to buy into the business, delaying Sam's chance of similar help. In 1904 he married Emily Dalzell.



Samuel James Linton (1880-1942) is the author of about half of the letters, most of those written to his sweetheart Bess. He was the third Linton brother shopman at 73 Denmark St. in 1901. He was apprenticed to The Belfast and Dublin Tea Company about three years before and was working for them as a commercial traveller. He married Bess in 1905 and they immediately moved into 883 Old Kent Rd. where he kept a grocers shop for the remainder of his life. The letters continue long enough to cover the birth of David Leslie Linton in 1906.



Matthew (Matt) Linton (1883-1976) is described as a gardener in 1901 and was working for the Annesley family who were creating an extravagant garden at Castlewellan Castle, their stately home, which was Gothic in style. In 1908 he crossed the Atlantic on the Lusitania and within ten years he was estate manager of the gardens of a wealthy financier at Bernardsville, New Jersey, in an area known as Millionaire's Mountain. He was famous for his chrysanthemums and lived in America for the rest of his life. His descendants still live there.



Robert (Bob) Joseph Linton (1896-1977) was apprenticed to a carpenter at 14 but soon emigrated to Canada where he married Maggie McHarg in 1914. His first daughter was born in Winnipeg but they moved to New Jersey in 1915 where Matthew found him work as a carpenter on the estate. He returned to Canada in 1921, buying a quarter section in Deepdale Manitoba off Jessie Arthur and her second husband Carl Bodtcher. Brothers Sam, William and David helped with the finance. He had a large family and his sons still farmed there in the 1990's. There are descendants in Manitoba and British Columbia.



Herbert Linton (1888-1936) lived at Burrenbridge with his mother all his life and died within two years of her. He was never able to hold down a job despite the efforts of his brothers to employ him. That said, he was invaluable to Eliza on the small holding once his brothers had left. It is highly likely that these days he would be considered autistic.



Ernest Linton (1890-1966): Eliza found the funds to help Ernest gain qualifications at Queen's University Belfast as a result of which he became a successful pharmacist in the city. He married in 1919 and had two sons. Ernest Stanley became a Surgeon Lieutenant in the Royal Navy and died in Hong Kong in 1967 and Eric followed his father's profession.



Bessie's family

John Arthur (1814-1889), a mill furnisher from Lanarkshire married Elizabeth Baird in 1838 in Paisley and had a large family which included the following people:

Annie Campbell Arthur (1840-1916): housekeeper to a wealthy elderly widower in 1901 at Tollymore near Bryansford. Annie never married. It may be through her that the Lintons heard of the boarding house in Belfast.



Margaret Arthur McCluggage (1842-1913): Margaret's first husband died very young and she ran his shoe shop, where she will have met David McCluggage who was a travelling shoe salesman at the time. They married in 1888 and her children Bessie, Arthur and David were all close friends of their cousin Bess Kennedy and are all mentioned in the letters. Bess mentions that she sold shoes in their shop as a girl.



John Arthur (1846-1909) ran a shirt making factory in Strabane and by the time of these letters he had retired and was living in Londonderry with his young wife Helena and son Ian. Like his sister Jessie he knocked ten years off his age when he married in 1894. He was mentioned as living in Londonderry in the Londonderry Sentinel on Nov 12 1903.



Jessie Lemon Arthur (1853-1932) (Bess's mother) was born on the isle of Bute in 1853. She married Edward Todd Kennedy, a farmer's son from Ballynure in County Antrim who died when Bess was seven years old. Jessie married again in 1894 ten years later. Her new husband Carl Bodtcher a Danish piano builder, was born in 1871, which means he was 17 years younger than she was and only 7 years older than Bess. Not surprisingly, Jessie took a leaf out of her brother's book and knocked 10 years off her age as well. She and Carl had emigrated to Canada in 1894, settling in Toronto. Jessie took her younger children with her – Edward John Arthur Kennedy (who Bess calls Arthur) was 14 and Grace Todd Kennedy was 12 but, possibly because the difference in age between Carl and Bess was so small, she decided to leave Bess behind in Belfast with her sisters.



Jessie Lemon Arthur

Mary Knight Arthur (1851-1957) and **Eliza Arthur (1856-1927)** lived at the McCluggage's warehouse in the 1890's where Mary helped with the accounts. Earlier she worked as clerk for her brother John at the Strabane shirt factory. By 1895 they had established the boarding house at 73 Denmark St. Later they moved to Deptford in London to be close to Sam and Bess.



Elisa Arthur



Mary Knight Arthur

Rachael Campbell Arthur (1866-?) was the youngest sister and married linen warehouseman James McEuchran. Her children Mary Arthur and John Richard McEuchran were born in Glasgow but she returned as a widow to Belfast by 1900. There she remarried but the man turned out to be a serial bigamist!

Jessie's children

Elizabeth Baird Kennedy (Bess/Bessie) (1878-1962) was living with her aunts at 73 Denmark St. when she met Sam Linton for the first time. She was two years older than Sam and at the time of Sam's first letter, she was sitting teaching exams in Dublin.



Edward John Arthur Kennedy moved to Canada with his mother in 1901. They started off in Toronto and that was where Arthur (as everyone called him) chose to stay. In 1909 he got married in Dunedin to a lady called Annie Elizabeth Honeywell. He was a biscuit salesman while his wife is a stenographer but she died of pneumonia 9 months later. He remarried twice but had no children.



Grace Todd Kennedy also became a stenographer, but in Winnipeg – which was the Bodtchers second choice of home, and where Jessie and Carl had their daughter Kathleen. When her mother moved out to Gilbert Plains in 1904 Grace stayed in Winnipeg – she was, after all, 21 by then. Her letters to Bessie and Sam after their wedding in 1905 start to show signs that she wants to settle down herself. She married Art Coombe in 1907 and had five daughters, whose many descendants prosper in Canada - and America- to this day.



Mary Kathleen Bodtcher, the only child of Jessie and Carl Bodtcher was born in Toronto in 1896 . She was a school teacher in 1921 when she married James Calder Munro, an electrical engineer, in Winnipeg. Their only child, born in 1928 was Kathleen Ann Munro -always known as Ann who was a long-term friend of Great Aunt Jessie Milton (Linton)



Sam Linton



Elizabeth Baird Kennedy

The letters

May 22, 1901: – Sam's first letter to Bess in Dublin. The heading is of Sam's employer. Sam was a commercial traveller at this point.

The Belfast & Dublin Tea Company, 41 Ann St. Belfast

Dear Miss Kennedy,

Your letter to-hand a few days ago and you are right re flowers I did not think you would have known or remembered the sender. You are rather profuse in your thanks for them. Well, about my visit to the Capital City, there is nothing will give me greater pleasure and you may be sure I will let you know before I start. I am going over to Glasgow on Monday and I will go up to Dublin some Saturday soon after. I have not been so far over the hills as I had not the desired company. If I had I would not mind going every night. When I go out alone I say Sam my Bhoys (*sic*) don't lose yourself and I generally turn up safe. I finished the book and it turned out very well – lived happy ever after style. I read Westwood Ho some years ago and I liked it very well. We have Mr Borland staying here in Denmark St (*lodging house of Bess's aunts*) so I think there is enough of young men in one house. Wallace (*Sam's brother also lodging there*) is in the West at present and all the household are well. Hoping you are coming through your exams with flying colours

Yours Sincerely Sam

June 22, 1901: From Sam to Miss Kennedy headed as above.

Dear Miss Kennedy,

I am dropping you this line in type to let you know that I cannot keep my promise to you, which was to come up to Dublin and I am very sorry that I cannot get away from here on a Saturday evening before you leave

Belfast. No matter how hard I try I cannot get. I suppose you have a few exams to go through yet? I hear you are up very early and working very hard, and hard work is not easy. We are all well at 73 Denmark St Miss Arthur (*either Aunt Mary Knight Arthur or Aunt Eliza*) is gone to Lisburn this evening & it is raining very hard so she might be a little taller when you get home. St Enoch's Sunday school is at Donaghdee today & they wont be dry when they get home.

Business is a bit quiet just now so I thought I would practice a little on this machine and let you know that I cannot have the pleasure of seeing you in Dublin. Hoping you are quite well

yours in sin. Samuel J Linton

Jan 14, 1902: From Uncle Matthew Shaw in London to Sam in Belfast.

Sam has been accused of misbehaviour by Potts (a work mate). Sam vehemently denies the charge and resigns. His mother and his Shaw uncles, who are tea dealers in London, immediately set about trying to find him a place away from Belfast. Eventually Sam was vindicated and the accuser sacked.

Anchor Tea Co. Wholesale Tea Distributors (Walker & West Proprietors)
43, 44 & 45 Great Tower St., London

My Dear Sam,

I received your letter but unfortunately I lost your address. Now let me caution you about making changes without good reason. In the first place let me know what wages you are now getting, your age and your height. Do you think you could travel? And do you think there is chance in Belfast for Packet Tea? Let me know your ideas and I will think it over and see if I can keep you.

Your affectionate Uncle Matthew Shaw.

Jan 1902: From Sam in Burrenbridge to Bess in Belfast

My Dearest Bess,

I think that I am a perfect Beast after the way in which I hurt your feelings the other evening and you forgave me without being asked, which looks like as if the love was all on your side. Well dearest it is not, as I love you better than myself and I feel as life without you would be void. I know you have had to bear a lot with me lately as I have not acted as I intended but you know the cause as the disgrace does worry the life out of me and will until I get a firm footing again. If it had not been for your love I do not know what would have happened. Now dear, what was troubling me this evening was thinking of the bright past I had up until that never to be forgotten Saturday and the uncertain future There is one thing that brightens the future and that is the knowledge of your love and as I have already said I hope to make myself worthy of it. Now dearest I hope you will overlook my conduct as at times I cannot know myself and you may rest assured that you have the whole love of your own Sam.



Near Burrenbridge

Jan 28, 1902: From Sam at home in Burrenbridge to Bess in Belfast

I got home safe and cold but a drop of scald put me right. I had to relate

the dealings with Mr Potts to Mother and she feels very indignant about it and I think if she was near Mr Potts it would trouble her to keep her opinion of him to herself. I feel a bit lonely here as the country is very wet and cold and it has not enticed me far from the fire today so I have sat and talked to Mother and I am nearly talked dry so I will have to find some nonsense to read to her and then she would likely put me out. I would not like to stop here long as everything is so quiet around. I feel there is something wanting and that something is the pleasure of your company. Yes, dear Bess, there is no one to take your place and you may rest assured that you will always have my love and I am not of a changeable nature. And it is far from my wish that anything should ever change our feelings towards each other as you seem to think probable. Well dear, how has things been since. I hope you have not been thinking too long about me. Keep your spirits up as all will come right yet and I am thinking long for the time there won't be so many partings. Mother and all are well here. I will send you some flowers for Sunday as I could not get any today. Hoping to hear from you soon

from your devoted lover Sam

PS I have had no word from London as yet, nor from Eaton (*Herbert Eaton was a grocer in Belfast and Sam's mentor at this time. He was later to act as Sam's best man*), so I have had nothing in the business way to occupy my time and I have been doing a little work, carrying corn etc. I rigged up a ping pong set last night and made the bats, so all it cost was 2d the price of two balls, the cheapest on the market

Feb 2, 1902: From Eliza in Burrenbridge To Sam at 73 Denmark St. Belfast

My Dear Sam

I have just read your letter and I am very sorry. I may tell you I was not so sorry since your father died as since you left. I cannot sleep at night

thinking of the injustice done to you. Have you done anything that you shouldn't have to need to leave Belfast? What does David say now? I hope before now you have Uncle William's letter (*William Shaw*) and that there is good news in it. Goodbye for the present, keep up your heart and do the right.

Fond Love Mother

Feb 3, 1902: from Uncle William Shaw to Sam in Belfast

71 Fairholt Rd. London

My Dear Sam,

I have read your letter and will do my utmost for you. I put it at once before my firm and one of the directors said possibly they might find you a job to represent them in Belfast. However don't depend on this. I will move heaven and earth to find a crib for you. What wages do you want – what would you take? How old are you and how tall? You see before you can travel (*as a commercial traveller that is*) you will have to get a turn in a sales room and find your way about and make your way. It means hard work. But if you come to London you and your mother can depend on me to be a friend to you. London is a fine place for a fellow if he will work hard and keep straight. I will tell you more in another letter. Give your mother my love

Your affectionate William.

Feb 5, 1902: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam at 73 Denmark St. Belfast

I received your letter this morning and it does not supply much comfort to me. I fear you have not conducted yourself as you should or you would have defied the world. You stopped out at night and went where you ought not to have went. If you had taken your pattern from David (*Sam's elder brother*) you would have been better off today but he dare not

advise you. I never thought a child of mine would be blamed for such things. I cannot get it out of my mind do what I will. Grandfather (*Samuel Shaw*) is here so I am a nurse instead of being nursed. I am thinking of going to see you all on Saturday evening if all is well and I am able to get away. Tell Wallace and Bell and I suppose you can meet me. I will come on the train. I hope the snow will be away.

Your Mother

Feb 6, 1902: From Uncle William Shaw to Sam at 73 Denmark St Belfast

My Dear Sam

I have this instant read your letter and I was going to write to you in any case. Well I saw Mr Walker (*of The Anchor Tea Co. Matthew and William Shaw worked for the same tea firm*) and had a long talk with him. and he would be glad to give you a chance and take you on but he won't buy a pig in a poke & the truth I fear is that you will have to come to London before we can fix you up. Mr Walker says that if you could come and work in the showroom a bit and learn all you could about tea and coffee and see what you are made of, if he were favourably impressed he would send you to Liverpool to represent them. Now if you could come there would be a difficulty in this way. You may get very little wages to start with and who is to keep you? Can your mother stand by you for a little? I could make room for you at our other house for a while but in this one we are quite full up. But I would look for digs for you cheap and clean close by me so that we could see one another as often as possible. Now don't be nervous or frightened if I can get you stuck in anywhere I know you will go ahead. I won't bull you but I will be glad to help by telling you how and where to go about London. Now suppose we cant fit you up. You can stay a fortnight and look around and go home none the worse. But come prepared to stay and stay you will. Think this over with your mother and Willie and write again soon and in the meantime I will peg away. Best love to all

your affectionate Uncle William

Feb 11, 1902: From Eliza at Burrenbridge to Sam at 73 Denmark St Belfast

My dear Sam

I have just read Uncle's letter and it lightens my mind greatly and I agree with every word of it and I think if you be a wise boy it is a grand chance for you. Tell Uncle you do not fret about the pay. I will do all in my power for you -I think it would be the very thing to get to learn the tea and coffee business properly. Write to Uncle when you get this and tell him when you will go and let me know for I must see you before you go as I have a lot to say to you I need not write.

It is a great storm with everything blocked up. Matt went through the ice yesterday into the water in the garden pond. He made me laugh. He says it never took a shiver out of him. He bought a song book coming home and read all night at it. How did you spend Sunday? Did you go to church? Your Uncle speaks of it how you have neglected it – turn to God, pray to him and ask his guidance. Goodbye & God bless you

Mother

Feb 16, 1902: From Uncle William Shaw in London to Sam in Belfast

My Dear Sam,

I am glad you have decided to make for London, I firmly believe you will do well. We have made up our minds for you to come to us, at least for the first week and when we get into our new house if you care to come and pay us for your keep we shall be glad to have you. At all events you can try it & we shall remain friends at any event. In any case they are little details compared with getting you a situation. I hope we can fit you up soon. Coming via Fleetwood is child's play, everything is done for you. You simply get off the boat and ask for the train which is waiting and off you go to

London. You can ask about luggage but all is quite easy. Don't go and starve yourself in coming. I will expect you here in London on Wednesday. I will be on the platform when the train comes in and I will start you for our place where you can have a good feed. I will talk about other matters when you come and not in this letter. I shall be very glad to see you here
Best love

your affect. Uncle William

Feb 18, 1902: From Sam at Uncle William Shaw's to Bess

71 Fairholt Rd. Stamford Hill

My dearest Bess

I got over safe and sound and not much the worse for my journey. I had a slight attack of mal-de-mare and it gave me a slight headache. I was in Fleetwood at 4.30 am and started for London 5.45 and arrived at 12. It was a very long railway journey and it took me an hour to get from Euston to here and I met Auntie (*Mrs William Shaw*) and had dinner and have been sleeping for this last two hours, so I am alright now. Now dearest I believe I will like London A.1. as it is a Marvellous Place. I have not seen Uncle yet, he won't be in for some time so I cannot say anything about Business until I see him. Don't be thinking that anything will happen to me over here as I have been able to find my way about very well. With all my love from
your bhoy Sam

Feb 21, 1902: From Sam at Uncle William Shaw's to Bess in Belfast

I have had a rare time since I arrived. I have been round a great part of the City and it is a wonderful place. The traffic is immense, a continual stream of Trams, Buses, Hansoms etc.



London traffic c1900

I travelled about 20 miles round the city this morning. I went from the N. up West, through Regent St, Piccadily Circus, Hyde Park and the shops are magnificent and I need not say anything about the ladies as I thought some of them were dressed to Death and I hope to have the pleasure of showing you round soon. I went from the West in the underground railway to Blackfriars and got a good sit. (*situation*) in one of the largest Retail Shops in London, and I start on Monday. It takes a fair bit of nerve to go into one of these Big offices to look for a sit. and it took all mine to do it. I have decided to leave the wholesale alone for some time and I believe this will be better. I was at a Debate on Tuesday night on Joe Chamberlin and it was good.

This debate will have been about Tariff Reform versus Free Trade In Sept 1903 Joseph Chamberlain resigned his post to campaign for tariffs. The Liberals believed tariffs would cause price rises and unemployment as did the Radical Party (Labour party to be). The debate was heated because some Tories were also in favour of Free Trade. At the next election the Liberals swept into power with a large majority. Sam and Bess are on opposite sides as becomes clear

Uncle and Aunt have been very nice to me since I came over. We were out at some friends of theirs last night playing Ping-Pong and I was not in it and we are going to another house tonight so the fun is not bad. Uncle has

got two passes for the house of commons and we are going some night next week. I must write to Robinson and get the latest, as Bis (*business*) is not on the square in that firm. Now darling one must say that I like London well and I intend to stay in it and make my way and my home in it and I know you would and will like it too. From

Your Bhoys Sam

Feb 24, 1902: From Sam at Uncle William Shaw's to Bess in Belfast

Dear Sweetheart Bess

I suppose you wonder why I went into the retail. I will tell you but no one else knows nor won't know. Well the wholesale would not keep me for another couple of years and it would mean very hard work for another two before I could get a decent salary and Uncle wants to go into the retail and he asked me to go into Partnership with him and I intend to do so. I have got a good sit. for the purpose of learning the London trade and he knows the Tea and Wholesale well and I intend to know the retail well so when it comes off I expect it will be a success. I had to be up at 5am to catch a train and be at Blackfriars at 7am. Imagine travelling 10 miles to and from bis. The Blackfriars shop (*Sainsburys*) is the head one and I am working there for a few days and I expect to be sent to one of their 92 branches in a few days where it will be indoor and as far as salary goes I shall be better off than in Belfast. I was engaged in about two minutes and he would not even look at my references and Uncle called to see him (just like my cheek) and although he had a rule to engage no Irishmen he broke it for me.

Your own bhoys Sam

Feb 24, 1902: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam C/o William Shaw

My dear Sam,

I am sure you are thinking it is time you had a letter from me. Your letters were a great comfort to me and I think you had great fortune in every way. Now we will never think about the past but look forward to the future. I had a nice letter from Aunt Lizzie (*Uncle William's wife*) She speaks well of you and with kindness the both far surpass anything I expected. She says she introduced you to all her friends which was extremely nice of her and showed she was not ashamed of you. She was well pleased with the fowl. I hope you like your place and will get good food, tell me when you write. I am just home from Miss Grundy's's place at Kilmegan, a man and his brother have it taken as a carpenters and I went to see him about Bob and I think I will get him to serve his time with him (*as an apprentice*). One of them is married and they have no children, nice Protestant people. I think it will suit him well. I had a letter from David he says you did not write to him.

I have not heard from Wallace since I came home. Belle is kind and agreeable and thinks a lot of you but she is not the kind to make a man rich. She should mind the shop and he should have a place to earn money but he can please himself. I heard Matt saying "I bet I will get a letter from Sam soon" Poor Aunt Jane (*Rea ,Eliza's sister*) has been very ill. Now Sam write soon and thank God for your good fortune.

With fond love Mother

Mar 2, 1902: From Sam at Uncle Williams to Bess in Belfast

I have had a rather hard week. I was up at five every morning and was at bis at seven and worked until seven or nearer 7.30 and it was near 9pm when I got back here. So I could not stand that long and on Fri night I got a letter which I enclose and Uncle went and saw the people on Sat and got

me the sit, and the manager of this place told Uncle that he had taken a fancy to me as well. So Uncle is fairly delighted over it and I left Sainsburys last night as I was only on trial. I had the option of leaving or being dismissed without notice and Mr Sainsbury told me that he was very well pleased with me and a few other nice remarks. I enclose you the address of the new place it is a very fine house and employs about 50 hands in the one shop and I firmly believe it is better suited to me and I will get more varied experience.

Enclosure

From Everett's stores
43 to 69 St.James St
Walthamstow

To Mr Linton
c/o Mr Shaw
Stamford Hill
Feb 28th 1902.

Dear Sir,

if you are disengaged please call here at 10 o'clock on Monday morning as we think it very possible we may engage you.

Yours truly

For Everett's stores

Written on the letter

This is where in the suburbs I will be working when you get this The hours are long 8.30am to 9 pm about 20 minutes from centre of city and from Uncles.



Taken in 1920. Everetts has become Sainsburys

Mar 10, 1902: From Sam at Everetts Stores Walthamstow to Bess in Belfast

Have you heard what McCombe went back to Potts for. He went back to get the names of Pott's customers as the three brothers are starting in business for themselves and now I firmly believe that Holeston was their medium for libeling me and I don't wish any man ill but I don't believe that either Potts or McCombe will prosper, & I hope & pray that my name will yet be cleared from suspicion & I am convinced that I will.

I must tell you how I got my cold it is a damp bed last Mon night and I gave the landlady a piece of my mind about it and my cold is almost gone. what I mean by sleeping out is that I get my food inside and they pay for a bedroom for me and it is only about 3 minutes from the shop. You are right in thinking it is not much easier than the other but it is a fine shop and does an immense trade. Imagine 12 hands behind one counter serving customers from 9am Sat mng until 11.30 pm at night and the manager doing shop walker, so you can guess the rate things go at. I do not intend to stop too long here as I believe I can get a good sit in one of the big shops in the centre of the city. At least I am in for the next vacancy to suit.

I have had this evening off from 2pm and went up to Uncles and had tea and supper and when I was about to start for the station Auntie opened the door and she could not see the street lamp close by with the fog and she said I could not go home so I went and looked and was astonished.



A London pea-souper

I never saw anything like it before, but I decided I would go and I started for the station with Uncle (*about 10 minutes walk*) and it took us all our time getting there, between running into people, trams etc. We had a time of it, you may guess what it was like when we went to go past a tram and ran against the horses. A good many people were carrying lamps and torches and men with lamps wanting to escort you. At the station I got into a train and then I had to change at Hackney. It was that thick there with the smoke of so many engines passing through and people bumping against each other & enquiring for their train that it was a scene. I got my train and got to St. James St Stn & had a nice job getting round to the house. I had heard many a time about the London fog but it has to be seen to get any idea of it, it was that thick you could cut it with a knife & fork.

Mar 11, 1902: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam in London

Is it the same people you are with or what are you shifted for? Why do you not tell me the name of the people you are employed by? Uncle did not tell me either. I suppose it is very difficult to get a place. Could you not get to learn the tea business or will there be any chance later on? Forgive me for asking so many questions. I suppose you would rather live in Belfast I suppose you three brothers will never live together again and I must say this is a sorrow. I am sure your mind travels often to Belfast but my advice to you is to give up yon girl, you are too young to be bothered with her. You have met far nicer people and you will be able to find plenty when you want them. Wallace never sent me a line since I was there. I never spent a more miserable time in my life. I would have had more of your company if you had come here. Your uncle speaks highly of you and says you will do well and are a credit to me. I am thankful and well pleased to hear it and hope he will always be able to say that about you. Now Sam be kind to your little cousins. Your Uncle says you are happy and well and delighted with what you have seen. I had a great letter the other day from Gwen (*Uncle Matthew Shaw's daughter*) telling me about her dress and all the parties this winter. They had a grand card party the week before last.

I walked to Mrs Grundy's place this evening again to see about Bob. He is to go on Monday week for a month on trial – I do hope he will be able to stop and learn the trade (*carpentry*), he is a great bother to me. He is to serve four years and give £5 in the first and another £5 in two years and he will get his food all the time. Write soon and tell me a lot. Matt is out and the others are sleeping and you look so far away. Good Night and God bless and keep you. Tell your uncle it was good of him to write and ease my mind about you. I will send the little paper about the money and you can send it back to me.

With fondest love Mother.

Mar 14, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess in Belfast

My dearest Bess

It will be my endeavour to gain a good position that will not in any way lower you in the eyes of your friends and as you know we were all handicapped in our start in life through the death of my father.

You should have seen me last Saturday. In the shop there are places for each assistant at the counter so I took one of these places and had worked it for a while when one of the other curates comes up and said it was his place and I said I had it now and meant to keep it so he kicked up a row but he found the Irish was not to be shifted so he took a back seat and on Monday night the manager sent an assistant to sleep with me and I did not like him so I said to the manager on Tues. that if he was to sleep there I would not so he was shifted on Tuesday night. These are only some of the things that I meet with and generally come out on top.

Now dearest I hope you have got that letter written to Canada satisfactory and I know it was no easy one to write and I hope your mother will approve of your choice (*of Sam, that is*). Now love it is rather late as I was working to 10.30 and I must now turn in as tomorrow is a long day and I have got to rest myself to be fit to stand it. With regards to Aunties & love from your Bhoys Sam

Mar 16, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess in Belfast

My Sweetheart,

I am just home from spending the evening with a sister of Auntie's, a Mrs Prior, (*this is Auntie Lizzie Shaws eldest sister Marianne Whitaker the widow of Edward T Prior*) It is well for me as you say in your letter that I had such friends to come to. it would be hard to be in this great city and not have a friend to speak to. I passed through a part of London this

morning and the people were boating on the river Lee and kicking football in the Park and the shops were open and you would see men digging in their little gardens .

You could hardly believe it was Sunday at all. But I didn't go far until things took a turn for the better and everything changed towards Christianity.

At present I would rather have the half day as the evgs because if I had my evgs I would not have time to go to Uncles and the chaps here are all right but when they get out at night it is into the nearest pub and I don't accompany them. I had a letter from Wallace (*Linton, his brother*) and he says he does not need his Bag (*ie a Commercial Traveller's bag*) and I can have it as long as I like and it will do instead of a box until I get more comfortably suited. I have written to Matt (*his brother*) to send you some flowers which I hope will arrive in good condition. Darling I will wait patiently until you lay your head on its own resting place and whisper your little secrets to your own true love

your own Bhoy Sam



The River Lea

Mar 17, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess in Belfast

I received your lovely little box of shamrock today and wore the piece you mentioned and I enclose you a bit I wore this morning which I got from a customer she had it this morning from Dublin. There were a lot of people

wearing shamrock today and several told me I was from Ireland. Uncle is going to see the head of a large retail shop in the centre of the city for to get me in if possible. This place is alright and I have no fault to it only the hours are too long and I want to get a sit in the centre where the hours are shorter and outdoor and if I get it I will go and stay with Uncle and it will be a lot more pleasant as Auntie has promised to give me lessons in Music and on the Piano and I will keep her to her promise. Auntie and I get on very well together she is a very nice woman. I have got on A1 here and it makes me feel more confident so I wont be nervous about changing.

I had a letter from Mother and she has been thinking about Mr Potts and she made some remarks which I did not consider at all fair and that is why I most wish my name to be cleared as I know my mother feels it very keenly and I am sorry she heard it as I believe she thinks I was not living straight in Belfast and I suppose she is afraid I will go the wrong road here but I promised her that I would not, not only for her sake as I remember a wish of my darling to the same effect. Darling I am always glad to hear your wishes for I know they are right. It is easier to keep straight when I have you to think about.

Your own Bhoys Sam

Mar 22, 1902: From Eliza at Burrenbridge to Sam in London

My dear Sam

I do not know whether you would like a letter as my last did not please you but I cannot help it. I was greatly vexed & spoke as I felt and I think it very unkind for you to speak as you do to me for anything that troubled you also troubled me. A boy only loves his mother until he meets some wily young woman after that their share is small. But a mothers love never changes though she meets with plenty to cool it. I am heart glad that the hardest winter I ever spent is drawing to a close. Will you send me Uncle

William's address? I must write to Aunt Lizzie. It is nice that they have got such a fine house and a little garden. Bob went to his new place and likes it, the people are kind and good. He came back last night in the best of heart. We have no crop in yet and we will miss Bob. We have got rid of the wee cow; cattle are very cheap just now. I just got £15 for her. David will be coming home this Saturday and I suppose going back on Monday as his girl could hardly do without him she sees him so rarely. I cannot stop hoping to hear from you soon.

Your Mother

Mar 23, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess in Belfast

My own darling Bess

I was pleased to get your opinion on my Mother's letter and your kindly assurance that she believes in me as much as you do which means a lot. But it has pained her terribly to think of the past and, as I seem from a letter Uncle had from her to be a favourite, she feels it the worse and I answered her letter in a rather hasty fashion and have not heard from her since and I am very sorry I did it.

Yes dear I will treasure that leaf for it comes from the road where I first had the assurance of your love. Do you remember the little gate? That was one of the happiest moments of my life. What would I not give this Sunday aft to go for a walk around that familiar road and clasp the hand and hear the will of my beloved.

Now Darling, I hope you will enjoy your visit at Easter, the change will do you good. I expect to spend Easter with Uncle (*William Shaw*) I believe I will soon get a better situation as Uncle saw the head of a large firm (*Sainsburys*) last week about me and I am to get the next vacancy and the hours will be shorter.

I hear regularly from Wallace (*Sam's younger brother*) as he and I were

friends and I believe Mrs Bailey (*Wallace's mother-in-law*) is going to get better. I do not think David (*Sam's older brother*) and Wallace will pull well together now I am gone for I was always an intermediary between them.

Dear girl I am in good health and fit for work so I don't grumble but how is your health and is your throat better? Now darling I must wish you a Happy Easter

your own sweetheart Sam

Mar 30, 1902: Sam at Everetts to Bess at 73 Denmark St

My own sweetheart Bess

I received your letter on Thursday and would have answered it sooner but I was working late on Thursday night and I went to Uncle's when I had finished and spent Good Friday with him. We all went to the Zoo in Regent's Park and it was well worth a visit as there is a rare collection of animals and when we came back I went for a ride on his cycle and went through some very busy parts and then we played ping-pong till bed time and I am just after my breakfast this Easter Sunday and I feel a bit tired after yesterday. From 8.30 till 12 pm I am going up to Uncle's for dinner and I will stay till Tuesday. I do so wish you were here and I could show you around. I was in Hyde Park last Sunday and the crowds of people that were there was enormous.

I am glad you liked your flowers and I will thank Matt (*his gardening brother*) for you. Now darling don't think I will forget 73 (*Denmark St*) as I remember too well the kindness shown me there and it was my second home. Now darling I must be off to catch the train with fondest love and regards to Aunties

Yours for ever Sam

Apr 2, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess at 73 Denmark St Belfast

My darling Bess

I spent Easter weekend with Uncle and did it very quiet. I just went for a ride on Uncles bike with Auntie for about 10 miles out and 10 miles home and we did not get out of the city and it was rare value with the traffic. The costers were out in their Easter Monday clothes and they enjoy themselves after their own fashion.

I would have enjoyed it more if you were here. It is 6 weeks since I left and it seems a long time. Yes dearest you are right when you say there is love and plenty of it in my heart for you and you are queen. My Dear Bess it makes me sad to see such lovely weather and not be able to spend it with you but duty is stern and must be obeyed, so I do not grumble for I believe it necessary for our future happiness. Hoping to hear from you soon with love from

your own boy Sam



1. LONDON LIFE: Costermonger "Pearly Kings and Queens" in Southwark. Photo: G.P.U.

Pearly Kings and Queens in Southwark

Apr 3, 1902: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam at Everetts in London

I was glad to hear you are well in health and getting along fairly well. David came over on Saturday night and Uncle Tom (*Shaw her brother over from Liverpool*) and grandfather had just left. He met them up the road, they were down for tea. Uncle Tom stopped in Aunt Jane's house (*Jane Rea, Eliza's sister*) this time. He is going over to America in the beginning of next month. He invited David (*Sam's brother*) again to go and spend his holidays with them this summer. I think he will go this time.

David was telling me Potts is getting plenty of bother since you left him and indeed I was not sorry to hear it. Is it very far from where Uncle William lives to where Uncle Matt lives? I suppose you could spend years and never meet them. Uncle Tom says for you to join the YMCA and some church and make plenty of good friends, and that it is a far better place to start in than Belfast. Now Sam I hope you will think of what he says and do it for he is good wishing and watch and do not be hasty with your words I do hope you will get a place with shorter hours and closer to Uncle William's Do be kind to your aunt and your little cousins when they have been so kind to you - I would send them some eggs if I thought I could send them safely. We have no crop in yet and it is snowing this evening. With the fond love

your mother

Apr 4, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess in Belfast

I received your letter today and I am sorry to have kept you waiting so long on my last one. I did not go into work until Thursday and your letter was waiting and I would have replied that night but I was still unwell and so I went to Uncle's for a bath and a rest and was right for work on Saturday. I am better now than I have been since I came and hope to remain so. I hope dearest you have benefited from your visit to the country (*by the*

country he means to her Kennedy relatives around Ballynure) it must be nice now. I would enjoy a few days there alright.

My darling Bess I am glad the way I express myself pleases you. It may not be very grammatical but it comes from honest convictions and when I say I love you I mean it. Well darling it is late as I was working until 10.30 and I must turn in as tomorrow is a long day so I will say goodnight

Yours forever Sam

Apr 9, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess in Belfast

My own Sweetheart Bess,

I received the parcel from David and your letter and socks which are really grand darling. Now my dear Bess do not be uneasy about my health as I am alright. I have not felt better since I came here. I am taking care of myself better now as I have no one to doctor me if I am unwell. It is a change from 73 (*Denmark St*) but such is life. This part has been very free of smallpox although I have served a few who have had it. There are some streets in other parts of the city with a black flag up to indicate the danger and several of Uncles customers had to close up. But darling have no fear for me as I hope to come out safe.

I am getting on very well here and Uncle heard from a friend of the proprietors that he was well pleased with me and I am liking the place better and I am in no hurry to leave it as I will get a better position after I have had some London experience. No doubt darling if I could be in Belfast with the same possibilities as I have here I would be there where I could enjoy life in your company but I have to rough it a bit now in order to enjoy the future more. I am happy in the knowledge of your love and that makes work light. I know you must find it hard to be alone in such nice weather and no walks but as you say Bess dear we will love each other all the more for our separation and I feel assured that whatever may happen

in the future we will love one another until death.

I got a bargain in a bike and will be able to sell again at my own price and have the summer's riding. Are you thinking of getting one? It would pass many an hour and you could use it for going to school. I will be able to see a bit more of this famous city now; will let you know how far I explore.

I am not in the least surprised to hear about Robinson and he will sow his wild oats no matter who tries to turn him. I talked to him for all I knew and he said he would go a bit more straight but he has not the strength of will to give up the company he keeps and instead of improving he has went the other way. If his Uncle Mr Potts when he impeached me with fast living had have put the collar on him he would have been nearer the point and I believe him to be good at heart. He told me that for six months he lived a Christian life and that he met a temptation which was too many for him & he fell & he has went from bad to worse but he will see the folly of his ways before long. I heard from Wallace he has left Mr Potts. I heard from Mother that Uncle (*William*) was over and he told her that in a short time I would be able to start for myself and I have told her I intend to do so and all I want is the capital.

Now Bess it is seven long weeks since I came over here and I think time is moving very slowly until I meet my true love once more. Your own
Sweetheart Sam

Apr 15, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess in Belfast

I was making enquiries about holidays and no one gets holidays here unless they have been in the firm before Xmas so I am going to stay here until the end of the summer and get another sit to start after a week, or fortnight and spend the intervening time with you.

You are right when you say I am in good health and it takes me to be able to hold my own, as I have had a few hot words with some of the assistants

and they will think twice before they tackle me again. It is not all beer and skittles here; we turned out 1200 orders last week so you may guess we have to work, but as Uncle says the training will do me good and bis is done so much quicker and different than in Belfast.

Uncle and Aunt and I went for a ride 'on Bykes' and the roads were grand and suburban London is lovely and Uncle is good company he knows every part and every grocery he would come to he had something to tell me about the owner how he started etc and saying he hoped to see me get on as well and I tell him it wont be long until I have a try and cycling is great exercise and I felt a lot better after my spin as I have call for a breath of fresh air.

One of the wholesale firms was asking Uncle about me and said they did not intend to lose sight of me so I will be better off yet. I have been to church every Sunday since I came over I have not been to any of the famous preachers as yet but will soon.

Your own Bhoy Sam

Apr 21, 1902: From Eliza to Sam in London at Everetts

I sent a box of eggs after I got your letter. I had not Aunt Lizzie's address or I would have sent them to her. I hope you got them and they were not broken. I am very tired as we got all the crop in last week with good weather. Matt and Bob was home for two days and we got on well. Matt is going to get another advance to his pay, the boss told him the other day. David has got another advance to his pay and is promised more so I think he is all right. Willie was saying the other day he was going to London in September. Wallace never invites me now he has all he wants and I suppose it is seldom he thinks of me. My birthday was last Friday but no one remembered it. I am now entered on my 56th year – the age your Father was when he died. I was sorry to hear the report about the London

churches. Go to none of them for the sake of their grand singing, go to the Methodist or where you will be told plainly that you are a sinner needing to be saved and be warned and told to turn to the Lord and pray to God, to keep you on the right way in that great city.

I suppose Uncle's people are nicely placed in their new home by this time .I hope to hear good news next time you write. Are you looking for a new place?

Your Loving Mother E Linton

Apr 25, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess in Belfast

My own Dear Bess

I received your letter and am sorry to hear of your illness and I hope the doctor will allay any fears and put you arright and that your throat will soon be better.

I see by your letter that you are undecided whether I will remain true to you or not. My darling you little know your Sam or you would not doubt for a moment my love for you as I love you above all else in the world. Your love is one of the greatest blessings of my life and Bess dear never let the thought for a moment cross your mind that you will lose my love.

Now my own sweetheart you said in your last letter that it was dreadfully tiring teaching and I never thought it was drudgery to you as you are too earnest at it for it to be a drudgery.

Now darling re my last letter I could hardly explain why I finished it so abrupt but I was not going to post it on Monday mng & I thought you would overlook it for once. It was not until about 10/00 that I started to write and I had been a little annoyed before that at supper & if I had have went on you would have got it all so I stopped so I hope you will forgive me for not enquiring about your Aunties as I am sorry I did so as I will most

assuredly be their guest when I visit Belfast as 73 has too many pleasant memories to be forgotten and I hope to be able to settle on a date before long as I am in for a sit as a manager for a new shop that is being built in High St Stoke Newington and I am to have an interview next Thursday with the owner so if he considers me old enough I will get it but I am afraid my age is against me (*he was 21 at this time*) and if I do get it I will be alright as it is in a good locality. I have seen some misery here today at the GER Station. The train from here to London packed with people going to bus, met with an accident and there were two killed and 40 wounded and the women were running about crying as most of their husbands were on that train and it was a piteous sight so there are troubles and troubles.....

Your own Boy Sam

Apr 27, 1902: From Eliza to Sam in London

I was glad to hear you are in good health. Now Sam you want me to answer you straight about lending you money - sure all I have would be no service to you to buy a business in London. Your Uncle (*probably William Shaw is meant*) bought one once and was glad to get rid of it at great loss. Do you think the little I have to help me to feed and clothe your three brothers and learn them something to earn a living at when I am gone, that I would be right to send it to you to speculate it in London? If ever I live to get any that is left to me I will give you some willingly. You are young work away and save what you can and when Wallace pays me I will give it to you. Now Sam do not think me unhelpful for I would love to help you but I cannot do it. It will be time enough in two or three years to start business and then you can get a girl with money and hers and yours will make a start. (*She is alluding to the fact that Elizabeth Baird Kennedy is penniless!*)

Bob is better. I have to give his master £5 this week. We are going to try to sell the bullock on Thursday at the May fair. If it were not for Matt's

money we would not be so comfortable. Now Sam have patience for the time will soon wear round when we hope to meet again.

With fond love from your Mother.

Apr 29, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess in Belfast

Dearest Bess,

let me know when the Cantata is coming off and I will have you a flower for it. I received the white heather, Bess dear, how I would like to have you with me one of these fine days on the hill where Matt got it.

Thanks darling for your kind wishes for the managementship and I most sincerely hope I get it as it is not all beer and skittles working here and if I get this sit I will be able to tell you when I can come over as the shop will not be ready for a few months so it will be just the thing for me. One of the Wholesale firms was asking Uncle about me and said they did not intend to lose sight of me so I shall be better off yet. I am in good health and I hope you will soon be allright for your welfare means a lot to me. I will let you know the result of the interview on Thursday.

With Regards to your Aunts and my best love Sam

May 3, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess in Belfast

Dearest Bess

I am just in from Stoke Newington and had an interview with Mr Rodgers re managementship and we have come to no final agreement as yet as he says that his shop is not far enough on as it is being built and wont be ready for a few months yet but I did talk to him while I was with him and I believe I will get it so I wont know anything more for another month or so. He is to write to me and arrange another interview so I will wait patiently and hope for a good result. Uncle met Mr Sainsbury (the man I worked a week

for) today and he was asking about me and said he was sorry I left him and that he had a sit for me at anytime, not that I want it but it is well to know.

I had a letter from David yesterday --and he says that he expects to see me at the coronation as he expects to come over, My darling how I would like it if you were coming as it will be a grand affair.

Best love Sam

May 5, 1902: from Matthew Linton from Burrenbridge (Working as gardener on the Annesley Estate) to Sam

Dear Sam

I should have answered your letter before now but I know you have heard ere this that I sent the flowers to your best girl and I hope they did please (*her*). How is she getting along? She will miss the bruse (*sic*) and the xxx (*kisses*). Mother has written to you some days ago but I do not know if she gave you a slating about your girl or not, but if you heard her about mine you would laugh. I take it all and say nothing but still has my girl. She often asks for you and says she would liked to have spoken to you when you were here.

Bob is liking his place well. His Boss was down here on Monday and mother gave him £5 and told him that if he wanted any bail for him that Willie would bail him for as much as he required. (*This is the arranging a of carpenters apprenticeship*) I think he will be alright and get a good trade as they have plenty of work. My boss has given me a rise of 2s per week. I have now £11 4s a fortnight. I am not stopping in the bothey nor won't for some time I think, but it is a place that you never know who will be first to get the run (*ie get made redundant*). The Lord and Lady (*Annesley*) are going to London on the 24th so the good times will be over for some time (*ie no tips!*) if not altogether. Willie was asking after you and how you were getting on. I think there will soon be more young Lintons. I received your

note in Mother's letter and I will be only too glad to send the ferns to Uncle (*William Shaw*) on your account I have now some gathered and I will send them on Tuesday, and I hope they will arrive in good order. Tell Uncle to plant them in pure soil without manure and to make them firm in the ground and then water them for a few days till they recover. They will not be of much account this year but will come alright next. I think Mother will enclose a note for you so I think I have nothing more to say. Hoping that you are in good health and Miss K(*ennedy*) the same.

I remain your affectionate brother Matt.

May 3, 1902: From Eliza to Sam in London

My dear Sam

As Matt was writing to you I would write a few lines. I hope you were successful in settling the place you were going to see about. I think Uncle William is anxious to better your position I had a letter from David today and he has had a letter from Uncle Tom and is going over to Liverpool on 23 June and he will go to see you and I am sure you will be pleased to see him. He was a good brother and a good example to Wallace and you if you profited from it. Now Sam dear Sam be a good boy and try to have an old head on young shoulders. Alls well here. I had Bob's boss here and gave him his money and (*Bob*) has not a fault to him. He has plenty of work and should get a good trade. With fondest love from your mother.

May 8, 1902: From Everetts to Bess

My own sweetheart Bess

I am just in from my uncles where I spent the day and I always enjoy the Sundays I spend there. But darling how I do miss the afternoon walk with the original of the photograph I received yesterday morning and darling it is a really good one of you and you look lovely & I thank you for it for it

does my heart good.

No Bess dear I have almost given up hopes of getting the SN (*Stoke Newington*) sit as the manager thinks I want too much salary for my age and I wont take less so I think that I wont get it and I don't care as I have a shop in view. I have seen the owner & made him an offer and if he accepts it and then I will have a place of my own and then it will depend on myself whether I make it pay or not.

David cannot say yet whether he will make it to the coronation so if not I shall just have to go myself. Now darling I must turn in as it is a bit late, with kindest regards to the Misses Arthur and my best love to my sweetheart

your Sam

May 9, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess in Belfast

I am just in from bis & feel a bit tired as we were very busy tonight. I got your letter and am glad you are convinced of my love and the day will come when I can prove it to you and that is my hope for the future.

Uncle and I talked over business matters for about 2 hrs yesterday evening and he has had a varied experience and through him I expect to get this sit, in Stoke Newington which will do for a time but not for too long. Yes dear I know you would be closer than the fringe of my life and I would like to be able to have you here to tell all but it does look queer when it is written out and would take a lot of explanation and Darling believe that, whatever I do, it will be for our ultimate good. Sometimes in my weak moments I think I would be as well in Belfast and I know I would in a sense but when I think of the future I strangle such thoughts and says to myself that Belfast is not the place to satisfy my ambitions which are pretty high and perhaps too high, but I will get some of them satisfied. David says he will come up to London from Liverpool and I shall be very glad to see him

for I have not seen a face I know since I came over.

Bess dear how I remember the night we sat on the stile & you sang that was a happy time, a foretaste of the future and no matter, darling, what life shall bring I shall be happy if I have your love.

With best love from your own Sam

May 15, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess in Belfast

I received your letter and am glad you are at last getting your earnings. My own you ask me why I feel I am not proving my love just now. Well I am not going ahead as I would like to and I cannot save much money in my present sit. to put me in the way of something for myself as I want to be my own master so that I can use my own abilities for myself, as I feel sure if I had a shop no matter how small I could make more than I will ever do behind a counter for another man, I am tired of being an assistant. I am not a man that can be bossed about as some of the assistants are here and I mean to get out of being an employee and perhaps become an employer. Sometimes I feel as if I am losing my time as I know my abilities and it not easy to bear being under so many bosses, but I wont be under anyone longer than I can help. Uncle is looking out for a shop for me and he says he will have me in one before Xmas. There are plenty of good places for sale, where the owners have ruined themselves by drink etc and I expect to get one of these. You see dear if only I had the chance I don't want you to be the wife of a grocer's assistant and would never ask you to be darling. That is why I am so anxious to be doing more. Darling I do not want you to give up your freedom until I have made a position which will afford to keep us comfortably and, darling, that I will work for with all my energy. Bess do not have any fears for you are my life's hopes. My own I will say goodnight from

yours now and always -Sam.

May 16, 1902: From Eliza to Sam in London

My dear Sam I have just had your letter and it did not satisfy me, I was expecting it these last few days and I never had a word from Uncle or Aunt since you went. Now Sam I hope London will not be too much for your brain, try and keep cool and steady. Are you not happy? Your mind seems disturbed and unsettled. Did your Boss not say how he liked you? How many men are there in your place?



The only surviving photograph of Samuel Shaw snr

Your grandfather (*Sam Shaw*) is not well and he is displeased with both Willie (*Sam's brother at the shop in Castlewellan*) and me. I did not send for him to come down when Robert (*Shaw over from New Jersey*) was here. God knows there is a lot expected of me. Matt went from his work the other day to see him and says he (*Sam Shaw*) is fairly done. He was asking about you and says he may live to see you yet. You should write him a nice little letter, I am troubled about displeasing him. You could tell Uncle if he does not know. Bell (*Wallace's wife*) is in Portadown. She goes to see her people oftentimes and he comes (*here*) to see his mother. Dear Sam take time to write me a long letter next time.

Kind love to Uncle and Aunt and the kindest love of a mother.

May 23, 1902: Sam at Everetts to Bess

I have been up West this evening doing a bit of sight seeing and there are a lot of places worth seeing but unfortunately Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament were closed and Uncle and I could not get in, so I had to be content with seeing the outside. The Government Buildings are massive piles and Westminster Abbey is a marvellous building considering it is nearly 1000 years old. The shops around in Regent St. Bond St, etc are great and I tell you life is lived very fast in that end and you see all nationalities represented. Along the coronation route (*of King Edward VII*) there are a lot of stands being erected and houses along it are being fitted with gas pipes and electric lights for illumination and it promises to be a grand spectacle. I have not had much time to see London but it is a wonderful place and it shall be my permanent home and my love I do long for the time we shall explore it together. I suppose you wonder at me always going out with Uncle, well he is one of the right sort and he does not treat me in a parental way and we get on well together.

Now darling if I do not get this other sit I intend to go over (*to Belfast*) about the latter end of August. Firstly to see my own love and secondly to arrange a bit of business – that is to raise a bit of money. Now my own darling I have my work cut out but with God's help I shall succeed and gain the most precious treasure on earth to me.

With love from your own true love Sam

May 25, 1902: From Eliza to Sam in London

My Dear Sam I received your kind and good letter yesterday morning. I was glad to have the good news that you are in good health and fairly content under the circumstances. It must be a great place to employ so many people and I suppose all kept busy. Now Sam I am sorry to think you have to work hard and make money for other people. If I could help to put

you in a position to make money for yourself is it where you are you would think of starting or in Belfast. You know if you had a house in a good place in Belfast Willie could get you plenty of stuff and you have some friends would deal with you for a start. But I doubt Wallace would be ready to part with the money yet a while but I can get what I have with Uncle Matt (*Matthew Shaw*) if you think you will chance it. It would not be I who would miss it but the children (*ie his siblings*). If you were to start in Belfast you could take Herbert to live with you and he could go to school and be very useful to you as well. But if you get the place you have applied for perhaps you would take it for a time and Wallace could be looking out for a house. I must write to him. I sold the bullock and got £9 5s for him and I do not owe the world a penny and have a good little left and had a new dress a making and am thinking of going down to Belfast to buy a new bonnet. I went to see grandfather and made friends with him. Matt is away, I suppose walking his girl, but he is good and kind. It is very nice you are getting Thursday evenings off. You will have a lot to tell us about when you come back and I would be glad it was tomorrow. Martha (*Willie's wife*) had another young son on Thursday night (*David Ernest*). They are both well. With fond love from your mother.

May 26, 1902: Sam at Everetts to Bess in Belfast

My own Sweetheart Bess,

I had a very nice letter from Mother to-night and she has offered me some money to start in Bis, but she would prefer Belfast, but I do not. Anyhow I will talk the matter over with her when I get over....

Sam

May 30, 1902: Sam at Everetts to Bess

My own sweetheart,

I am sorry you have a cold and I hope it will soon depart. Yes dearest you were thinking right when you thought I had almost given up hope of the SN sit as I had despaired of hearing anything more about it but I have had my hopes renewed again although nothing definite yet. As I have not heard from Mr Rodgers. But he told Uncle he would not hesitate to employ me if I were a little older and might give me the managership yet or another sit and he is to arrange another interview. And Bess dear, if I do get it it will not be for long as, now Mother has promised me her aid, I will not be content until I have a show of my own.

Now Sweetheart I am glad you got the courage to ask the question about Mother, as I would never have thought of telling you as men are different from girls in that respect. I have not told Mother anything as yet (*possibly about their potential engagement*) and at all events it would make no difference as Mother is one of the right sort. At times she may say hard things but she means well. She has had but one thought since Father's death and that was for the welfare of her children and darling you are right when you say that people look on such things differently. I imagine if your Father were living and knew of the love we bear each other he would say "Go sir and make a living for yourself and then come and claim her" and that is what I mind to do.

Now Bess my darling I am very sorry I hurt your feelings as it did not occur to me that it was yourself that you felt would come short of my ideal as such a thought could not cross my mind. So darling I ask you to forgive me.



The Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly, London, was an exhibition hall built in the ancient Egyptian style in 1812, to the designs of Peter Frederick Robinson. The Hall was a considerable success, with exhibitions of artwork and of Napoleonic era relics. The hall was later used for popular entertainments and lectures, and developed an association with magic and spiritualism, becoming known as "England's Home of Mystery". In 1905 the building was demolished to make way for flats and offices. (Wikipedia)

I was at the Egyptian Hall last night, up in the West End, it is a Hall of Mystery and real good value. The West is a wonderful place from 10.30 till 12pm. All the theatres being emptied of their thousands and the crush is terrible for cabs etc and the West End is being decorated for the coronation and Canada is putting up an arch of wheat with the motto 'The future granary of the Empire'. I know you would like to see this production of Canada but David will be able to explain all when he goes back. And I will have a lot to say when I go over which will be as soon as possible as I am thinking long to clasp the girl I love in my arms.

With kindest regards to your aunts and best love to yourself
your own love Sam

Jun 1, 1902: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam in London

I received your grand letter and I agree with every word and I think it would be a good thing for Wallace for I am not satisfied nor never was with his business for the training he got so long in Wallaces (*This must refer to a Wallace family business in Belfast. Agnes Wallace was Eliza's mother – the Wallaces owned both a grocery business and a tailoring business*) to lose his time selling a pipe and tobacco. You and he could live cheap with Bell to cook for you. As you say I know there would be difficulties but with wit and the grace of God I know you would overcome. Wallace does not please me in a lot of ways. I think he can stretch his conscience and tell a lie and I would like a man that would do neither. He told me a lie and he has not enough confidence in himself but together and I think you would do well. I hope you will get the shop you are looking about that you may be able to save a little. I have been better this week than I have been a long time and grandfather is better also.

I did not go to Belfast but wrote to Wallace and Bell to come here. He may have trouble to get rid of the shop and get his own (*money*) out of it. He will never make more than a living out of it. I will tell you after I see him what he and Bell say. It would be very good of Uncle to get you credit. I suppose the shops are a very high rent. I wonder how Uncle Sam (*Shaw*) is getting on in America. Bob gets on right well but needs taking down a bit when he comes home on a Saturday. Herbert & Ernest were delighted to hear you are coming home in 12 weeks. Tomorrow is the Fair day and we are going to try to sell the black bullock and buy two wee heifers.

Jun 12, 1902: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam in London

My Dear Sam

I have just received your letter from Matt and its contents took me rather by surprise, you are in too great a hurry. Wallace was here on Sunday and

says he is going over to London the time of the grocer's holiday to see what he thinks about it. I would have written to you but I was not pleased at you. I asked Wallace did you pay Robert Newel (*a tailor*) and he says not. I thought he was paid long ago and you bought a bicycle to ride and not pay your debt. Your mother would never have done that. Now tell your Uncle not to buy the shop and I would like you not to give him such trouble, mind your work and save money – you are not of my principles. (*when*) I lent Wallace the money he was 26 and had saved a good deal himself. He never mentioned it on Sunday and I would not think it nice to take it from him so soon. I will not take the little I have (*invested*) with Uncle Matt for I can have £5 when I need it. If you had saved what you spent on cigarettes you would have more. I lived all my life and never spent a penny on folly. Now Sam pay for your clothes and save your earnings and be very careful for a year or so. Your Uncle has his business and his wife and family. Do not trouble him any more. You are too proud, be very careful to keep your credit. I will write to your uncle myself. Now Sam do not be angry with me. Write and tell me about the shop your Uncle speaks about and I will do all in my power for you. With the fond love of your mother.

July 3, 1902: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam in London

My dear Sam

I was heartily glad to receive your letter this morning but vexed when I read it. I do not blame you to speak as you feel but try not to be bitter against your own. I never heard a wrong word said about you behind your back and if you had told me what you told Wallace and David (*about the bike*) I never would have been annoyed at you. It is all past now and it has cost me many an hours sorrow. David was wrong in saying anything about your Uncle because he has been a good uncle and he thinks a lot of you. I am not a bit angry for what he said to me for he thought I deserved it all.

He says you are a good boy and he is proud of you and that there is not a better worker or one that knows this business better and that you deserve a chance and you will get a chance before long. Like a good boy make no hasty promises in the first place. I want you to come home, it will do me good – it will do us all good.

If you had seen how struck Matt was when I said you were not coming home. Come when it will suit you and it will be no loss to you. I will pay David for you – I suppose that would bring you to Belfast and I suppose there other people in Belfast will be glad to see you (*She means Bess*). I was telling Willie that you would like to start business for yourself and he said he would go over in September and that your Uncle and him would try to get a shop for you. Have you left Everetts as you have another address at the top of your letter. You did not get the Coronation holiday – what a disappointment. (*The coronation was delayed as Edward V11 fell ill*) Matt says “tell him to come home now” I do hope you will change your mind and come home as soon as you can for you are never long out of my mind,

God Bless you your mother.

Jul 13, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess

My own sweetheart Bess

I had a great letter from Matt and he was telling me about David having Miss D(*alzell*) up at home and about Mrs Rea (*his Aunt Jane*) living in Belfast and that my cousin (*Lily Rea*) is going to stay in 73 & I know she will find a home as it was a home to me (and more). Yes darling I remember some of the bakings in which I was hindering the Baker & I cherish the thoughts of that happy time. I am glad you say you shall never regret my coming into your life as sometimes I feel as if I did wrong not for my own sake but for yours as I feel that I cannot give you the happiness you

deserve.

I have not heard from David lately so I was a bit surprised to hear that McCausland's had changed hands & I wish David every success (*David became a partner in McCausland's Mill Furnishing business after the death of the owner*). The reason I have not written is because I was a bit annoyed with his last letter and tore it up when I had read it. You know he is a bit sarcastic when he likes & if I had have kept his letter & answered it he might have got more than he bargained for and I thought it better to not. It was over the money that mother promised me but I imagine he was interested & if he was he might have told me and I would not have stood in his way. I don't exactly know how things have been going & I surmise a lot & I may be wrong but it won't matter now as I have (as far as help is concerned) done with home altho' our friendship will be the same but on a different basis. (This is an Irish Bull) (*Wikipedia describes an Irish bull as a 'ludicrous, incongruent or logically absurd statement, generally unrecognized as such by its author'.*)

Now sweetheart how did you spend the 12th July? (*The anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne!*) I spent it working from 8:30 untill 12 pm. Just a bit of a change from last year. You remember I went to Douglas and was bit disappointed because you did not come with me. I have not made out yet whether Miss (*Mary Knight*) Arthur would have allowed you or not. I had not known you so well then and I did not think at the time you would get permission so I did not ask you again and I was sorry afterwards.

Now Bess dear, I hope you will be able to get to Whitehead (*Bessie's favourite seaside resort*) as I know the change will do you good & I imagine you would enjoy it. With kindest regard to your Aunts and my best love to yourself,

Your own boy. Sam

July 15, 1902: From Eliza to Sam in London

My dear Sam

I sent your letter to David and he has replied to it. If I had been in your place I would have kept your letter to myself. Your uncle has no need to come between you and me. I did not break my word. You said you would come over and I said if I could not get the money from Wallace I would get the money from Uncle Matt and lend it to you. I was annoyed when I heard you had bought a bike and did not pay for your clothes and do not know what I have said so cruel to put you so much out. I thought you knew me better than to take so much amiss what I said. You have a very cutting tongue. I do not think I needed so much of it. Many a time I said far more to David and he never said an impudent word to me in his life. You seem very unsettled in your mind and unhappy. I am glad to hear your Uncle speak so well of you He says he is proud of you and that you never spend a penny wrong. I think you have done well for the time you are there.

I hope you will get an easier place before long. Your Uncle Matt and his wife are coming to Ireland in a month. I do not know what to tell him about you for I think he wrote to Potts. He could give you a good place if you wished. Now Sam do not think such hard thoughts of me.

From your mother.

Jul 20, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess in Belfast

104 Forest Road, Walthamstowe

My own Bess,

I received your letter and when I read it I longed to be with you in the country and breathe the same atmosphere with you. My longing to see you is at times very great. I hope, darling, that you have enjoyed your visit to the country, I am sure you have and will have written a few poems

during your stay. Bess dear I am sure you look beautiful in your new dress I am sorry I cannot see you in it and compliment you on your appearance but I know you will look pretty as I think you the best in not only Ireland but elsewhere too. It was very nice of Gracie to send you a blouse. I hope they are all well out in Canada. Have you had a letter from your Mother yet?

I had a letter from David telling me about the business being taken over by Mr Wilson and him and I wrote him and congratulated him and wished him success altho I believe he was the means of me not getting Mothers help as he had this in view. He has £500 to put in so Mother could not see her way to start both of us and David said a few things to me which I might now return with interest but I have said all I intend to say and mean to succeed independently of the lot. I have been up having a chat with Uncle and Aunt and it is very nice to have them to call on But Bess my Honeysuckle I miss you more than I can tell. Hoping to hear from you soon your own now and always

Sam

PS The first day I am in the City I will get you "The Honeysuckle and the Bee"

Jul 27, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess

My own Sweetheart Bess,

I had an interview about a managership but as usual I was too young. I have an appointment on Wed morning with the Head of South African firm about a splendid sit out there and he pays a 2nd class passage out and if he makes it worth my while to go I am off. I find it very hard to succeed here and I firmly believe if I was at the Cape I could do a lot better as the salary is £10-£20 a month all found while it would take me 12 months to save that here and darling you know why I am so anxious to make money

it is because I love you darling and I want to be worthy of you.

When I was in the city on Thursday I was in Gt Tower St beside Tower Bridge and London Tower and I went all through the tower which is a wonderful place. The jewel chamber is grand, all the crowns of the Kings and queens. Queen Victoria's is on top and is simply magnificent and the gold sceptres etc make a grand display and the dress of the attendants is very funny to look at.

Now Bess dear your holidays are coming to a close and I hope you have enjoyed them and feel fit to take up your duties again. It is very good of you to take David's part and I am proud of you for it and I am glad to hear he has got started on the road. Did you see Herbert when he was up – he is a rare little chap. So you have Lily Rea with you (*Sam's cousin*) She is a pretty smart young girl and talks a lot for her age.

Bis is much as usual over here, plenty of work and plenty of hours to do it in and little time for recreation. Now my honeysuckle, I am the Bee and I love you dearly as I know you love me.

To my little girlie from her own Sam.

July 27, 1902: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam in London

I received your letter some time ago but I have been busy at the hay and was so tired I had no heart for writing. Wallace brought Herbert home after his long promised visit. Bell has enough visitors from Portadown (*Isabells home town*) without any from this part. She will never be troubled much with her mother-in-law. She was a bad bargain but he deserved it and he has her now.

Herbert has seen your girl and he says she has sore eyes and bad teeth and I would give you my advice without being asked for it to give her up or you will rue it some day. Uncle Matthew is not coming nor won't this year. I am very sorry you are not coming for I would do all in my power to make your

visit happy. The children have holidays, Earnest is a comfort to me but Herbert just a trouble but it could be worse I thank God for his goodness to me and my family. Now Sam in some letters you speak as if you could get on without religion or God's grace. Well the wicked may flourish but what kind of an end have they? Wallace was telling me that the girl that told tales at Potts was burned to death at the time the coronation was to be. May God keep you and preserve you from wrong thinking.

Your Mother

Aug 3, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess in Belfast

My own dear Bess,

I have to apologise for not answering your letter sooner & not sending the Booklet as promised. I had your letter on Thursday before I had my one posted & when I read yours I destroyed it & started again. Re the Booklet I was trying to get the song to send both together. Now my sweetheart I have read & reread your letter & it seems to me that there seems to be a tinge of doubt about me in your mind & if so I hope you will tell me in what way.

As regards South Africa I have not got the sit so I need not say what my intentions were as it would be empty talk but I hope you have enough belief in my honour as to believe that if I did go it would be with a definite plan of action and there is one definite wish I have and I will do all that brings me nearer to it being fulfilled. I am sorry I mentioned the matter as I should not have done so until all was clearer. Now darling, I hoped you enjoyed your week at Whitehead & that you feel fit for the week to come & I am glad your school has got on so remarkably well. Now my only love I hope to hear your thoughts soon with my true love to yourself.

Yours ever, Sam

Aug 6, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess in Belfast

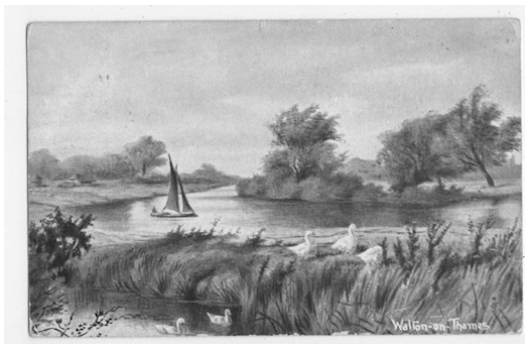
My own sweetheart,

I was very glad to get your letter altho' it was rather hard on me. I am very sorry we have had a misunderstanding & darling it was my fault & now I have read your explanation I ask you to forgive me.

I would not have thought about South Africa if I had not thought it would have been a good way to make money & without I make it I can never expect to call you mine & darling it is with that object firmly fixed that I work. I find it hard to save money at my present salary and the salary in South Africa tempting me. My imagination was playing me false & Bess my love I suppose I am impatient. I only wish I could go over (*ie to Belfast*) and get the scolding & explain a lot. However I may soon.

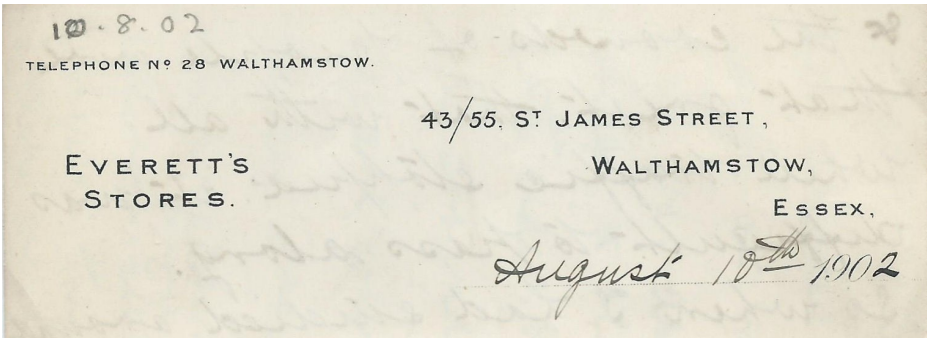
I was down at Walton-on Thames 17 miles from Waterloo on Bis on Friday, even though it was a holiday, it is a lovely spot 17 miles. The Coronation comes off on Saturday. I can write no more now as I have neuralgia & my wits are not in a collected form so my own darling I will conclude with love & I am glad you had not mistrusted me & I hope you never shall have reason to do so.

With kindest regards to all at 73 from your own Sam



Walton-on-Thames

Aug 10, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess in Belfast



My Dear Bess,

This is Sunday afternoon and I am writing this in the office. I feel a bit tired after yesterday, Coronation Day, as I knocked about a lot. I was up at 5 am and went to the West End and got into the Mall, by Buckingham Palace about 7 a.m. and had a long stand until 11 am but I was rewarded I had a splendid view of the Procession and saw their Majesties A1.



The Coronation procession

They were in the state carriage, drawn by eight greys and the dress of the riders was lovely. The Prince and Princess of Wales were in a splendid coach and looked A1, and the Life Guards and the Horse Guards are a sight to be remembered. It was a grand pageant but nothing in comparison to what it would have been. I did not stay to see the return journey from the Abbey as I came home for dinner and had a few hours sleep and went back to the city to see the illuminations which were simply magnificent. The Bank of England, Mansion House and Royal Exchange were just masses of light and the crowds were that great that with all wheel traffic stopped it was difficult to pass along. So when I had studied around that part I went about 3 miles further West up to Whitehall to see the Canadian Arch which is recognised as the best decoration in London.



The Canadian Arch

It was lit with hundreds of Arc lamps It has large photos of the King and Queen and the Prince and Princess of Wales and worked on both sides are

the Mottoes Canada A Free Home for Millions God Save the King. It is a regular masterpiece and was erected by a Glasgow firm. The people that crushed around it last night could be set down at millions. I then went down Parliament St, and it was well illuminated and over to Westminster Bridge and Old Father Thames was well lit on both sides and search lights were lighting it up all round. I went up to Trafalgar Square, where Nelsons Monument is and the Bis. Houses around were quite extravagant in their illuminations. One Place had a crown fitted with different coloured electric incandescent lamps very small to represent the different stones and it was beautiful. I then went up to Leicester Square which is the Theatre Land and Dalys was the best as the coloured lamps were well blended and the Empire and Hippodrome were on a large scale. I went round Piccadilly and it was illuminated to perfection and the clubs were A1. I have never seen anything to equal it and I don't expect I ever shall.

It took me about 5 hrs to get around these places and when I got to Charing Cross to get a train to the Bank it was literally congested. But I was able to push my way so I got off and around the Bank at 12pm the crowd was greater than at 7pm London is a wonderful place, no matter where I turned last night it was packed.

Now Bess there is nothing would have given me greater pleasure than showing you around last night. I had one thought when I was gazing on the different objects – wouldn't Bess like to see this. I am sending you a paper which will give you a fair idea of the Processions and the ceremony in the Abbey.

There will likely be photos for sale of the Canadian arch and if so I will get some as I suppose you would like one and if you send me her address I will send one to Gracie. Is your Mother well out there? And Darling I hope you feel in good health and now my own sweetheart I send you my best love

Sam

Aug 17, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess

My own Sweetheart Bess,

It is just six months since I last saw you and it feels like years and I hope to see you before six more. Yes I will get the song for you and send on the photo to Gracie. I had a letter from Matt telling me all about the General Holiday at Castlewellan and you would laugh if you saw it and he wishes to be remembered to you. (*The coronation led to a spate of local holidays*)

Dear Bess I have tried hard to get a managership of a shop but friends of the manager got it. However Uncle has decided to go into partnership with me as soon as I can raise the money and it is our idea to get a good retail bis and perhaps later on go into the wholesale tea trade. And it is with a fixed object I work now. I am glad I did not get the S.A. Sit as it might not have been up to my specifications. I don't intend to stay much longer here in Everetts as it is too hard and not conducive to good health. I have now six months reference and in that sit I have seen a good many in and out of it so I fancy I have done very well or I would not be here. Stock taking comes on tomorrow and a 6am start what do you think of that for slavery?

Your own Sam

Aug 28, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess

My dear sweetheart,

Things are a bit rough in Everetts at present. In the Drapery dept on Wednesday 2 men got paid off and then six more gave notice to leave and on Friday night the Boss wanted the Grocery hands to work overtime after 10.30pm but he was sadly mistaken as we all walked out. And I would not be surprised to see some of us having to quit and I would not care as I am tired of it. I intend to leave in a month or so at all events. It is worse since they turned it into a company, but they are not going to make a slave of

me. I had two papers from Wallace about the Belfast Protestant Ass. split; it is a pity Arthur Trew got out (*of prison*) as he is a disturber of the peace and gives the protestants a bad name. (*Trew founded the BPA which was an extreme anti-Catholic group. He was imprisoned for disorder in 1901*)

Your own Sam

Sep 2, 1902: From Eliza to Sam in London at Everetts

We have been very busy getting the hay thrashed and brought home and did you know we have flayed it. I know it too well for I am fairly done working at it. We were spreading it on the grass yesterday and I am hardly able to move today. David was here a fortnight since, they are getting on alright. Wallace is with them yet. I had grandfather last Friday, he is looking well. He had a letter from Uncle William - Willie had one (*too*) telling him to come over. I think he will go but it is hard for him to go and leave it all to Martha. I was down at Aunt Jane's (*her sister Jane Rea*) on Friday. Lily (*Rea*) left the Miss Arthurs' a week ago. Miss Kennedy was not nice with her. Friday is your birthday I heartily wish you a happy and prosperous one. Herbert says to tell you he wishes you many happy returns.

With fond love your mother.

Sep 7, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess

I received your letter and my very nice (birthday) present and I thank you dearest for your wishes and hope we both live to see many Sept 5ths.

What a flood you have had in Belfast. The papers here had it as "City under Water". It was a good job it did not last long. I think it was foolish of you to attempt to reach school and I hope you are nothing the worse for your wetting.

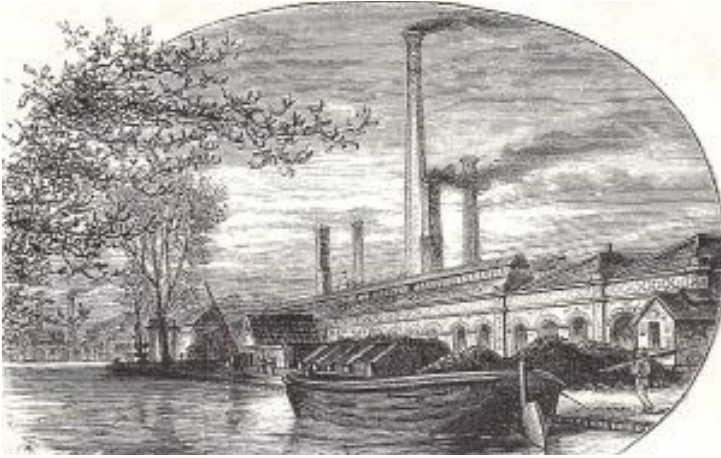


Floods in Belfast, September 1902

I had a letter from Thos Ferguson (*a cousin of Wallace Linton's wife Isabel*) and he says it was rare fun feeding the people through the bedroom windows, I hope David had not such a task in Tennant St.

I am in Everetts still and things have been going a little better this week and the Boss has not had the cheek to ask us to do overtime since. There is a fresh staff in the Drapery and I expect to see a mutiny in the Grocery soon but I hope to be out soon well before that happens I expect to have another interview for a new sit on Thursday. I am pretty industrious at present and have opened an account at the Post Office.

We have had the first dry weather this week since the middle of June and I had a very nice ride on my Byke round New Southgate and Enfield where they make the Enfield Rifle. It is splendid cycling around suburban London as the suburbs are very nice in the north end.



The Rifle factory at Enfield

I have not come across a song yet I would like you to sing especially for me, though I heard the chorus of one the other day which went “come back to Erin the land I adore” and “come back to Erin and kiss me once more”

I am glad the average of the school has improved so well (*they have had an inspection*) and I hope that you will get the credit for it.

Yes it is rather hard on Gracie and Arthur (*Bess's younger brother and sister in Canada*) going into lodgings but a lot depends on what they are like; if they are all as good as 73 Denmark St. they will be alright. Thank Gracie for her sisterly regards and if she had made it love I don't think you would have been jealous and tell her I have no notion of going out at present and give her my brotherly regards and tell her not to be flirting too much now that her mother (*Jessie Lemon Arthur*) is away. It will be a bit of a change for Mother up in Manitoba, I for one should not care to settle out there. Dearest I must go to tea or get none and I will close thanking you again and fondest wishes

your own Sam

Sep 14, 1902: From Eliza at Burrenbridge to Sam at Everetts

My dear Sam I am thankful for your kind words of sympathy and thoughts about me. I am a good deal better. Willie is just away from here and is going to see you Thursday week. He is going to meet you as a brother and I would like you to try to forget the past and meet him as the same. He is better than he used to be, for he has a good advisor. Martha is the best friend I have. She will do anything in her power to advise him to do what he can for any of his brothers for who else should do it when their father is dead? So Sam be kind and agreeable and tell him what you would like to do. Wallace is not going now he has a good place and is wise to mind it and I think he should soon be able to pay me and I will then lend it to you if I can at all. So keep up your heart. Willie will tell you all the news. He needs a change for there is nobody works harder than him. I would like you to send some little present for the little baby called David.

Matt was going over some hymns this evening and he sang the one you used to sing to me in the old kitchen after I was sick when Herbert was born "Simply trusting every day".

With fondest love from your mother.

Sep 28, 1902: From Eliza at Burrenbridge to Sam at Everetts

I would get your uncle to ask Willie could he lend you money to start for yourself and as (*soon as*) Wallace would pay me I would give it to him. The year has marked a great change in Wallace he never writes me a line nor his wife. We had Uncle Tom (*Shaw over from Liverpool*) on Sunday evening but he never asked after you nor I after his son in America (*Samuel Herbert Shaw in New York*). Now dear Sam I am thinking of you all day when I am alone. I hope you will get a few days holiday after 6 months hard work you deserve them.

With fondest love from your mother.

Sep 28, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess

My own darling Bess I am glad you enjoyed those lectures and I hope you shall appreciate your study in science this winter. I should like to know which line you intend to take up. I see your Cantata comes off in about 3 weeks. Be sure to let me know the flowers you would like and I will see that you have them.

Now darling I was very glad to have your opinion as regards my attitude towards my brothers. I may be unjust towards them but I am very sensitive as regards some things and when I am offended I let them know it, not that I believe it is a wise course but I cannot play the hypocrite. As you know I have not spoken to Willie for 3 years but he came to London on Friday and is staying with Uncle so I went up there this evg and I for one met him as a brother. Altho he seemed a bit diffident yet at the same time he was very glad to see me and Uncle, he and I went to St. James Hall to hear Gypsy Smith, but when we got there the hall had been full an hour before so he was disappointed so we took him around Hyde Park and heard a few preachers of the Gospel and I have got four days off this week and I intend to do all I can to make him enjoy his visit. The firm would not give me a week or I would have been over to see my darling sweetheart. You ask me what I would say if you came over. Well Bess I would say plenty and I fancy I would not want you to go back again.

About David, you know him as well as I do and he is very abrupt at times and I know he did not treat me since I left as he promised he would, not that I asked him for much. I owed him 23/- and he wrote me for it and I sent it to him by return and when I did so I had 3/- in hand, and he acknowledged it on a p. card. Do you wonder I did not answer him. He is as honest as they can make them but he is too selfish for my taste. And I intend to find out a few things from Willie before he goes home. Willie told me tonight that when I asked Mother for that money she had none to

lend me but he did not answer the question how she lent David a fair sum afterwards. And as to Wallace he and David never hit it off too well. But I treat them as I find them and Wallace has always treated me well. I know he is not perfection, nor are any of us but as one grows older you know them more.

The Revd Pigott of Clapton has created a great sensation. The church has been visited and it takes a police force to guard his house. There is nothing creditable about the Abode of Love and if a London mob gets at the Revd Pigott they will lynch him. (*Pigott was an advocate of free love and had children by several woman as well as his wife*)



And now my own I will say goodnight,
yours now and ever Sam

Oct 5, 1902: From Sam at Everetts to Bess

My own sweetheart Bess,

I am just in from Stoke Newington (*Uncle Williams*) where I had tea and supper. Willie is going home in the morning and we parted good friends and, altho he has not said anything about lending me money, I fancy he would if I asked him. He enjoyed his visit and thinks well of London. He saw a lot of it in the time. On Friday Uncle he and I did the Tower, the Tate Gallery, where I sent you the postcard from. There are some splendid pictures in it There is one Leighton valued at £25,000 and the whole collection at 1 and a half million. I am fond of pictures but I cannot see the money in them that they are supposed to be worth. We finished up at the hippodrome on Monday which was a splendid entertainment. On Tuesday

we went to Madame Tussauds, the waxwork museum, and it took three hours to see it all. It is a fine show of the noted people of the world. Then the National Gallery. I saw the famous Madonna by Raphael lately purchased by Pierpoint Morgan for £70,000 and other fine pictures and then we went to the London Pavilion (*Theatre*).

On Wednesday Willie went down to Norfolk so I took it easy and on the Thursday we did the Abbey and it is a wonderful place. I saw the chair that the king was crowned in and stood over the graves of many other kings. The memorials to all the famous men are grand and you have to see it for oneself to appreciate it. Then we went to the Earl's Court Exhibition and spent the afternoon there. I was up in the Big Wheel and the postcard I sent you I took out of a penny in the slot machine at the top, about 300ft high. You would have laughed to see me stamping my name with a slot machine and Uncle and Willie telling me how to do it till I had to get them to stand away till I had finished it and I enclose your name which I did also.



The Big Wheel

We were at St James Hall this evng and saw Gypsy Smith, He is a splendid man. The hall was packed. They had an orchestra of about 100 people and the music was grand. (*Gypsy Smith was a famous evangelist and friend of Booth of the Salvation Army*)

By the way on Monday Willie went in to see my Uncle Matt (*brother to Uncle William Shaw*) and he came out and shook hands with me and then started to lecture me because I did not go to see him and I resented his lecture and he told me to go to see him and I refused as I thought he had no right to speak to me as he did. I have got on so far without him and hope to finish without him. He and Uncle William do not pull well together. When Uncle Matt said I would have found a friend in him if I had gone to him I said I had found a good friend in his brother.

I will send the picture to Gracie along with a little basket made out of a peach nut with a shamrock set in it similar, to the one I enclose.



Peach Nut baskets

And now dear it is rather late and I must finish with kindest regards to your Aunts and fondest love to my own true love

Sam.

Oct 26, 1902: From Grace Kennedy 27 Oxford St Toronto to Sam in London

Dear Mr Linton,

Thank you so much for the pretty little souvenir you sent. It is unique and coming from that great Metropolis, it is the more interesting. It was very kind of you to think of me. I thought the picture postcards were very pretty. I like the illuminated one best. Arthur asked me to thank you for him for his card.

I do not mind you calling me Grace at all, I rather like it, coming from one who is to be my brother some time. It places us on a friendly footing at once.

I like Toronto very much but as to comparing it with Belfast I would not be a very fair judge. I was so small when I left it that I only remember some parts of it. I do not think I should care to live in it; I would like to visit it and all the other places of interest to me in the United Kingdom and then take all my dearest friends back with me to Canada. I think Canada is a grand country and Toronto a nice place to live in but I love dear old Ireland for old association's sake. I would like very much to visit London and see all the places of historical interest. I am reading a book now called "When Knighthood was in Flower" by Julia Marlowe which was supposed to be written in the time of Henry VIII but I suppose you have read it as it is very well known.

I feel homesick sometimes for Mother and although I like Toronto so well I suppose it will end with me joining her in Winnipeg.

I hope you will send me a photo of your own next time so that I can form



Grace

some idea of what my future brother-in-law is like. I have a very good one of Bessie's and it would be nice to have the two. Thank you so much for Aunt Eliza's. Please excuse my writing it is a weak point of mine. Arthur is a splendid writer, Bessie is very fair and neat but I never could write decently.

Please don't wait until you make your fortune before you come to Canada, unless you may have visions like Dick Whittington. If you have I will send you a kitten from Toronto. How would you like that? Why not come to Canada to make your fortune. Seriously though, I would be very much interested in your business prospects, if you would care to tell me of them and if you do not think it inquisitive of me to ask.

I must conclude now - with best wishes from your friend,

Grace Kennedy

Nov 2, 1902: From Eliza to Everetts forwarded to 12 Heathland Rd Stamford Hill

My Dear Sam

I received your letter after Willie came home, he told me very little. Have you left Everetts place yet? Willie told me you had made up your mind not to start for yourself, or Uncle and you until next summer all being well. We can not plan too far ahead for we know not what may happen. I never got a day (*free*) since you left but the part of one that Ernest and I walked to Newcastle (*Co Down*) and came home in the postcard. I hear I will soon have another grandchild on the Shankill. (*Wallace and Belle*) I had a nice letter from Aunt Lizzie while Willie was there thanking me for the chickens I sent with him. Willie was well pleased with Uncle William (*Shaw – on his visit to London*) but not so well pleased with Uncle Matt's people (*Matthew Shaw was also a tea merchant in London*). I had a note from Aunt Charlotte, Uncle Tom has a chill. How did you spend Halloween? Is it noticed over there at all? Grandfather is asking about you, his sons and

grandsons did not send him many presents with Willie. I fear it will be a dull Xmas without you.

With fond love, mother.

Nov 2, 1902: From Sam leaving Everetts to Bess

My own Bess,

I am glad you have got the exams (*inspection*) over and it shows the school to be in good condition. You deserve a rest after the worry and excitement and I hope you will take it easy for a while now. I am glad the Cantata went off A1.

Now darling there is one thought pricks me and that is that I am not doing enough in the way of succeeding though I am doing all I can. And darling one question I want you to answer is would you still be true to me if I did not succeed as I have anticipated? Now Bess dear I do not ask this as if I had any doubt in your love, far from it, but because in business things are so uncertain one never knows what may crop up.

I am at present out of a sit as I left Everetts last night "with a good character" and I was not sorry altho' I had nothing to start on for I was tired of it for I did not like being drove. I must say the Directors are anything but gentlemen, though one of them ran after me and wished me every success so I fancy I stood pretty well with them. I will in all probability get another sit this week and a weeks rest will do me no harm. I am going to stay with my uncle until I get suited as he said it would be more comfortable then digs and he would be pleased to have me.

So your mother has not gone out of civilization yet. Well I fancy she will be better in a city (*Winnipeg*) than on a farm in Manitoba as farming there must be very lonely. It would be better for Gracie to be with Mother but that will leave Arthur all alone. How will he get on without Gracie to look after him?

I was in Regent St on Thursday afternoon and some of the big drapers windows were lovely and the people were crushing to get a look at them so I got into the crush too. I was nearly suffocated with perfume.



Regent's Street

My love I should like to have you over here as I know you would enjoy some of the sites of London. Thanks sweetheart for your good wishes and the compliment about keeping the best to the last. This is the last time I will write to you from this address. I hope my next rooms will be as comfortable as this has been. Remember me to your aunts with my fondest love

Sam

P.S. Write to 12 Heathland Road, Stamford Hill, London and that will find your Sam

Nov 17, 1902: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam c/o Uncle William

My dear Sam I was very glad to get your letter and the good news it contained I think you have been very fortunate and so near to Uncle and Aunt it will just be a nice walk and I am glad you will get your food in the house. What time do you have to start in the morning? I hope you will

have a place of your own by next winter.

Wallace was home yesterday week, he has so much company of his wife's friends he does not get time to think of me. He is not bad if he had got the proper sort of wife, but I just asked how she was and said nothing more. He gave me £10 and £2 of interest and said he will give me more after Christmas. I think he has done very well for one year. I had a letter from David and he was glad to hear you have been asking after him. He said you might write to him and is sorry for anything he said to annoy you.

Martha (*Willie's wife*) looks poorly...she has plenty to do and no real help. She will never come through what your Mother done and oh what a difference in Willie and your father. I cannot help crying when I look back on my past life and how I have and has to work hard to keep a home. Willie was talking about the women he saw in London with jewels but I told him I had been a better mother to him than any he saw with jewels and if I had been a selfish mother as he was a son I would not be so tired today but could have a servant and jewellery but I care not for the grandeur of this world it soon passes away. Uncle Robert (*Shaw of Clarkhill her brother*) was here helping to take out the potatoes and asked after you.

Your grandfather ought to have got presents from his rich grandchildren Wallace Shaw and his father. (*This refers to Samuel Francis Shaw a shoemaker in Newark NJ. Wealth is relative here, Samuel had 8 children to support and Wallace was a bank clerk*).

Willie has sent me a ticket to a cinematograph and Music Hall entertainment at the court house on Wednesday night. Now Sam goodnight and God bless you

Mother

Nov 20, 1902: From Sam at Sainsburys 18/20 Seven Sisters Rd Holloway to Bess



The Seven Sisters Road shop in 1900

I was glad to get your letter. Darling I take it I do not write often enough, but dearest I would write oftener if I had more time and Bess dear it is not because I do not think about you for you are my constant thought.

Now Bess dear you do not seem to like the Liberal party, well it is only of late I have taken any interest in politics and as far as my humble judgement goes the Liberals are the right party. What do you think of the Education Bill the Tories are pushing through at present? It is a rotten bill and the people will find it out by and by. It almost knocks Non Conformists out of the Teaching Profession, as no one will be of any use if they are not of the Church of England altho' all creeds will have to pay their share. The Liberals have done their best to oppose it but the conservatives are too many for them. The Liberals are for justice and the Tories in a good many instances against it. Yes the Liberals are for Home Rule and why should Ireland not have it? It is a disgrace to our country not to be let manage our own affairs.

Now darling I am getting along A1 here and I like it very well. I was in Hyde Park on Sunday morning and some fine speakers held forth there on all questions. On Sunday evening I was at St James Hall and heard the Rev H P Hughes preach his last sermon for he died on Monday rather sudden and this evening I have been at Uncle's. It is now about 1am and I must stop performe of the cold. Your own laddie

Sam

Nov 28, 1902: From Sam at Sainsburys Holloway to Bess

My own Darling Bess,

Yes darling you are right that I need a chum but the one I want is not in London and there is none can fill her place.

I hear regularly from Mother now and we are on the best of terms. I am friendly with all now except David and I will write to him shortly. I was sorry to hear Miss E (*Aunt Eliza*) has been unwell, she should see a doctor. I hope she will be well soon. This is just a short note written at Dinner so that you will get it tomorrow. I will write again

ever your Sam

Dec 2, 1902: Eliza to Sam c/o J Sainsbury 18/20 Seven Sisters Rd Holloway

I was glad to hear that you like your change and 2 hours for your meals I was very glad to hear William's employer thinks so much of him; you would have thought by Uncle Matt that he kept him on on his account. I would be glad if you would write to Grandfather for he would be greatly pleased. He has sold a field of land – the top one up at Bidey's -you know that place they are going to bring the water from into Castlewellan. If it goes on he will get £50. Uncle Robert (*Shaw over at Clarkhill*) has another fine horse for sale and he expects big money for him but he is not a good colour. The Lord Lieutenant and his Lady (*Annesley*) arrived last night and

there is a grand time at the castle. Now dear Sam I must finish with fondest love

Mother.

Dec 12, 1902: From Sam at Sainsburys Holloway to Bess

My own Sweetheart Bess,

I hope you will overlook my not writing as I promised, for I have not been well this last week but I am in good health now and dearest you need not have any fear about me not looking after myself for your sake and I hope you are doing the same for my sake.

Darling it is only 3 weeks to Christmas and Darling I want to know what you would like for an Xmas gift as I have been thinking about it but having no sisters of my own I have not come to a satisfactory solution. So I hope you will give me your mind on the subject.

Yes dearest I saw you were visited by royalty in Ireland and I think Belfast gave them a good reception but I did not notice if they called at your house.

How is David behaving himself? I had a letter from Mother and she was saying that he would like to hear from me but he will like for some time yet.

Uncle and I have another shop under consideration and if things go favourably we expect to take it over in April. It is a genuine business and it turns over £35 a week and the man has to go into the country or else he will die and is compelled to give it up. So I may have a start in the right way sooner than I expected.

Now Sweetheart it is late and I must retire. Darling I am sorry if I have caused you anxiety. Remember you are always truly loved by your Sam

Dec 16, 1902: From Sam at Sainsburys Holloway to Bess in Belfast

My own darling,

I was glad to get your letter and to know you had forgiven me once again. It is well my darling you are so good. I feel lonely at times especially on Sundays when I have to go out for my meals in a crowded restaurant and when I think of the happy Sundays I spent in 73 (*Denmark St*).

As regards this business if it comes off I will have the satisfaction of knowing it is a step in the right direction, whether it sinks or swims and there is always that risk. It will be at least three months before anything definite is done and when that happens I will turn up in Belfast so that my little girlie will know I still love her and wish to see her.

I was pleased with Gracie's letter and mean to keep up the correspondence to get to know what I hope will be my sister-in-law better. I suppose she has not joined Mother yet? Glad to hear that Mother was so comfortably settled – she will probably find time to write to you now.

It is late dearest so I will finish with kindest regards to your Aunts and my very best love to yourself

from your Sam

Dec 19, 1902: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam at Sainsburys

My dear Sam,

in regards as to what you tell me about the man and shop that your Uncle knows of, I think well of all you tell me and I think it would be a pity to miss it. I will do all in my power for you and I think you will be able to get the money. Wallace has said he will give me more soon and I am trying to keep what he did give me which is not so easily done. Herbert and Ernest are at home and I would far rather have them at school for they only make work for me. I sent a box off to Aunt Lizzie last night and Willie sent a fine ham

but he did not put Stamford Hill on them so I hope they will receive them alright.

I will miss you and your good Father that I miss and think about at this time. Six years now since he sat at his dinner with us on Xmas day. I hope you will be happy. You will be in a grander place but home is home. Herbert and Ernest join me in wishing you a happy Xmas and a bright and prosperous New Year.

Fondest love Mother



Eliza's Christmas card to Sam

Dec 20, 1902: Card from Mary Knight Arthur at 73 Denmark St to Sam in London

Dear Sam

I had fully made up my mind that you were to eat Christmas dinner with us at No 73. But, as that is not to be, all I can do is wish you many happy returns hoping that we will all be spared to sit down at the one table in Christmas 1903. It seems to me a long year, I don't know how it looks to you. But I am sure you are trying to spend Christmas with those you love and that will be very near to where I am at present. With all good wishes I remain your sincere friend

MKA.



Card from Mary Knight

Dec 21, 1902: From Sam at Sainsburys Holloway to Bess

My own darling Bess,

This is Sunday night and I have spent a most enjoyable evening at Uncles and I am going to Mrs Whitakers (*Uncle William's mother-in-law*) on Xmas Day and to Mrs Priors (*Uncle's sister-in-law*) on Boxing Day so I will do my best to enjoy myself but I know I won't as well as last year as I won't have my sweetheart to see. Dearest do you remember last Xmas morning? I wish I could have the same arms around my neck this one.... I suppose you are going to Lisburn for Xmas (*where Aunt Annie Arthur lives and also the McCluggages*) I will wish you a very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year from

your own Sam.



Card from Sam to Bess

Jan 2, 1903: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam in London

My Dear Sam

We got the parcel of tea on the day after Xmas. It makes good thick tea but I do not like the flavour of it. I am hard to please in tea and in a good many other things as well but I will hardly buy while I have it I suppose you have heard about another Linton in Portadown. (*William J Linton*) It was three days before he let me know and such a letter to write to his mother I

could have cried. I have not written to him since the few lines he wrote me. When he and her works thirty three years for their children as hard as I have done he will write more.

David came home in good form and brought me an armchair but I think he was too soon for it is little time I have to sit in it and I might never need it much. I thank you for your kindness to your brothers, the ties are very nice I am sure Matt will write to you and Herbert, but for Bob and Ernest I think you will see them first. You should have seen Bob when he got a letter they were all well pleased. Willie gave me a sovereign and the boys some money each. Mrs Shaw (*ie Tom's wife Charlotte*) sent me a pretty box of six hankerchiefs which was very kind.

Your loving mother.

Jan 4, 1903: From Sam at Sainsburys Holloway to Bess

My own Sweetheart

I am glad you spent a pleasant time at Lisburn and came back to first foot Aunt Eliza. It was very nice of Arthur and Gracie to send you such a nice present and I am glad to know that Mother and they are well. I had a letter from my Mother and she did not say whether she missed me or not at Xmas. I had a letter from David asking for bygones to be bygones but I have not made up my mind on that yet. I was surprised to hear of his sociability on New Year's morning. Hoping that your aunts are well and that you are in your usual good form.

Sam

Jan 8, 1903: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam in London

My dear Sam

I am sorry you think I am down on your Uncle. I never was, he sent me a

very nice letter and asked me to write to him and Willie never said one word about the £10. I have been telling David to save his money, he thinks too lightly of the debt he has on his head. I gave Matt a talking last night about running after that girl and in all public places he is with her. I told him he had cheek and was making a fool of himself. He did not like to hear it but did not say much. But he is good to me.

Your grandfather says I might be dead before him but it does not matter for all he is going to leave me. Now Sam what about the shop? I thought you would have had some news about it. Wallace did not give me more money yet. I am going down to Belfast when Bell (*Wallace's wife. She is implying she may get some money then*) and the baby come home. I am only feeling middling today oh Sam but youth is a grand thing see and spend it arright. Aggie Rea is in Belfast looking for a place but it is a dull time of year. Aunt Jane (*Rea –her sister*) gave me a lovely white tie at Xmas. I can get money for you from her if Willie and Wallace fails. We have 29 stone of flax to sell and cannot get it sold and Uncle Robert has 100 stone. You are right about Willie he has not the heart. Martha told him quite often to write to you, he is still going to. She sent me some nice fresh fish the other day when I was not too well. Now Sam I must rise, write again soon

your loving Mother

Jan 12, 1902: From Sam at Sainsburys Holloway to Bess

My own sweetheart,

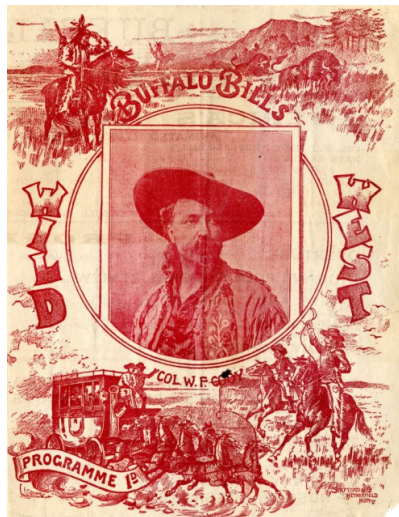
I promised to write last night but I was unable to with the cold and I had no fire. It is very cold here at present but not quite as bad as I see you have it. My sweet your news about the school was not at all trivial to me.

I had a letter from Mother and she is willing to advance me what money she can and if it is not enough she will get me more, so I could not expect

more of her. But it may be some time yet before I require it as the shop owner does not want to give it up until he has another agency for a Laundry and when he gets it we will get the bis.

I was in Finsbury Park yesterday morning and a lecturer was on about the poverty of Ireland and an Irishman with a brogue you could cut with a knife took him up on some points and he gave the Irishman the opportunity to reply and in my opinion our country got the best of it. Then I went up to Regent's Park and a lecturer there was on the equality of man and held that the Black was equal to the White. He did not convince all his audience and I should like your opinion on it. I then went to St James's Hall and the Preacher was very good and then I had a turn round Piccadilly, a rare spot on a Sunday evng and came home. Now Bess this is the general run of my Sunday's that I don't spend at Uncles.

I was at Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show on Thursday at the Olympic which is a great Hall. It took me two hours get there so you may guess from the time the distance one travels here without thinking about it. It was a very fine show something similar to Savage Africa.



As I am writing one of the chaps is playing the mandolin and another singing "Queen of the Earth" It is very good but I would rather have it a bit quieter.

Darling I am as anxious to see you as you me for you are my Queen but I must have something done before I see Belfast. I hope you will bear with my absence as I hope the future will repay you for your love and trust in

me. I must finish as I want to post this in time. Hoping your Aunts are well
your own boy Sam.

Jan 19, 1903: From Sam at Sainsburys Holloway to Bess

My sweetheart Bess

I read your poem and it is really good and darling I know your thoughts were of me as I of you - I thought of you and I as we both greeted the new year in Novello's Studio. (*There wasn't one in Belfast - he means with Bess singing for him*) This time we were a good distance apart but I know our hearts were the same and I am glad you welcomed the New Year with hope and I hope to see you and spend a few weeks in Belfast and then darling we can spend time around our old haunts.

My dear I had a very nice letter from Aunt Eliza and she told me you had been home ill three days. I was sorry to hear it and hope you are quite better now. How is it you never tell me about your health. You know Bess that there is no one more anxious about it than your own Sam.

I had a letter from Mrs Wallace (*ie Isabel Linton his sister in law*) and she and the baby are getting on well and a letter from Matt and he asks to be remembered to you. Give my kind regards to your Aunts and best love

from your own Sam

At about this time William and Sam purchased a shop and house at 17 Chester Rd Highgate. As you can see from the photograph overleaf it occupied a corner location. The shop front has obviously been bricked up. It has since been renumbered (No 49) and converted into flats. It is probably worth the best part of a million pounds today.



17 Chester Road, Highgate (Now No 49)

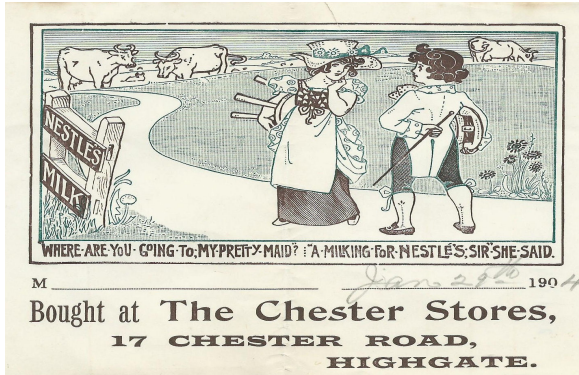
Jan 30, 1903: From Eliza to Sam c/o Sainsbury's 18/20 Seven Sisters R Holloway

My dear Sam,

I am very glad to hear the contents of your letter and I thank God for the way everything has turned out. I do not believe in chance but I believe in a loving heavenly father overruling all for our own good. I am glad Uncle (*William Shaw*) has bought the house and also that the people are going to stop in it. Everything has turned out splendid. You need not have a thought about the £30 you will have it before the end of February and when you come home you will not go back without what you need. I will keep up my heart thinking how soon I will see you I was in Willie's (*shop in Castlewellan*) on Monday and he was sending you a paper. He said he hoped you would not think, because he hasn't written to you yet, that he did not want to do anything for you for he would do all he could.

With fondest love

Mother.



Chester Store Letterhead

Feb 9, 1903: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

My own Sweetheart

I am just in after definitely closing the bargain re shop so I know now where I stand as we have it all in writing. As I told you before we thought we could get the bis at £100 for Goodwill fittings etc & that Uncle could buy the premises at £350 but Uncle had a letter saying we could not have the whole thing for less than £600 which was a surprise to both of us and we could not see our way to go so far so we went up tonight to the shop which is 15 min walk from here and had it out with the man and we fairly knocked him out. Uncle bought the house for £360 and we got the business for £110 and Uncle takes over the house about March 1st and gets £1 a week rent until we take over the bis 1st June and we have paid a deposit so there will be no drawing back. The shop did £33 last week and I hope by next year that will be doubled. *(To get some idea of the value of these sums today, multiply by 100.)*

Now dear I can very nearly tell you definitely when I shall come over but I will leave it open in case I have to vary but I expect to be in Belfast the first week in May (how will that suit you?) I hope to have a very enjoyable time and am hoping it will be so for you. I firmly believe this bis is a real

good thing and I believe I will make money in it for myself and Uncle.

My darling I am sorry I do not write oftener and do not go into detail as I might but it is a failing of mine to be brief in most things and I fancy Auntie must be kidding you by telling you you are very irritable, as far as I know it is not a failing of yours. Oh how I long to be there – neither of us thought this time last year when we were taking our last few walks that we would be parted so long. Fate has not been too kind to me but I hope it will make up for it in the future and my future depends on this deal and if it goes well I hope to claim my hearts desire.

Keep everything to yourself as I hope to surprise the 73 folk when I come over. Hoping your Aunts are well I close

with fondest love your own Bhoy Sam

Feb 15, 1903: From Eliza to Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate

My Dear Sam

I got your letter but I put off writing. I do not care for writing but must do a little at it to let you know we are still alive, thank god, for there are a great many dying. I was at church today and am just revived after a cup of your tea. Now Sam I am very glad to hear you have got your arrangements settled. What money paid the deposit, you did not tell me – will you need the £30 that you said you would at the end of the month? I suppose you have heard I went to Belfast and got on alright but I am sorry for Wallace. He has no help meet but a great drawback and she does not care. She (*Wallace's wife, Belle*) is a lazy careless woman. I showed him your letter to let him know I would want some money. The baby has cost him more money than Willie's three done. Willie was down and he told Wallace to pay me and he would lend him what he wanted. Now Sam be very wise and careful and watch the pence and you will know the pounds.

Love Mother

Feb 24, 1903: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

My own sweetheart

I would have written sooner but I had to write to Mother re money matters, I thought I would have wanted some from her this week but I have enough of my own to go on with. Everything is going smoothly at present. I heard Mother was in Belfast a few weeks ago and she has sent me a photo she had taken. I heard she was up with David to Miss Dalziel's house. (*Emily Dalziel, David's sweetheart*) I am glad you have heard from Canada and I hope they are all well. I have not heard from Gracie yet. I am not going to have a byke this year as I won't have time to make use of it. I think Bess that one would be very useful to you and you would enjoy it.

Darling I am looking forward anxiously until I can come to my own love.

Remember me to your Aunts and accept the fondest love

from your own Sam

Mar 24, 1903: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

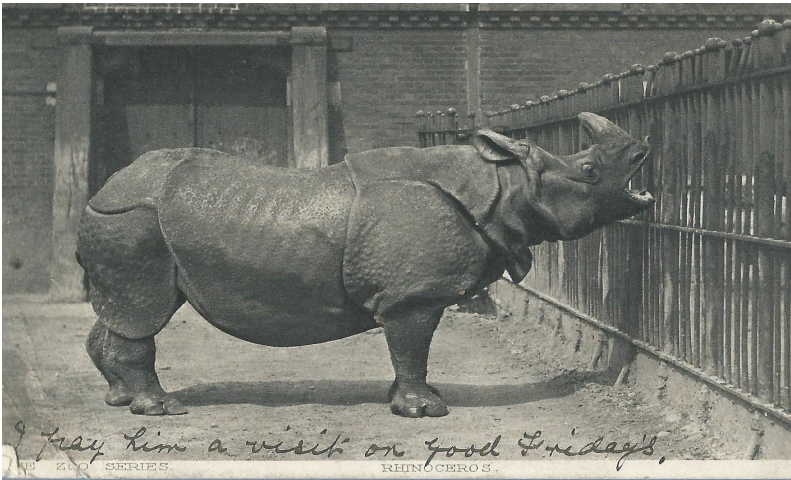
My own Darling

Your ever welcome letter came on Mon morning and I was very glad of it for the assurance it gave me and darling you must not be afraid of bis absorbing my love for you as I don't love bis for itself but as a means to get my hearts desire and I need not tell you what that is.

Thank you for your information re David as I am rather interested in his home visits. I don't think he would do me any harm for I have always acted square with him and I think I can raise enough without Mother so it does not matter.

I have been commissioned to take Uncle's children to the zoo on Good Friday as an annual treat that he gives his children but I don't know how I will go if I receive your London address by wire. Why not come, Bess? I

should be heartily glad to see you and do all in my power to make your visit a happy one. Do accept the invitation and let me know when you intend to arrive and what part of London you are invited to. You know that all the Deeds have not come yet and I cannot come as soon as I expected so instead of looking forward to me coming home just take the thing in your own hands and come over here and give me the opportunity to look forward to your visit. Now dearest you are in dreamland by now so I must stop with kindest regards to your Aunts and best love
from your own Sam.



Postcard from Sam to Bess dated January 1904

Mar 18, 1903: From Eliza to Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate

My Dear Sam

I received your letter but have not much heart to reply. I heard your Uncle's letter to your Grandfather on Monday and he can write a (*good*) letter. I can tell you he speaks highly of you and says you are happy and well. I am delighted to hear that he is coming over to see his father so then we can all see him. We had Grandfather here last week and I can tell you

he kept me busy. It was a great blessing he came round that Sabbath he was so very near gone, but I do not think he will be as well as he was before that happened to him. (*He had a stroke*)

Matt is very good and kind. Bob is still very cross and short-tempered. Matt has 15/- a week this good wee while. He is good at his work. Herbert and Ernest are doing very well at school. Remember me to Aunt Lizzie I should have written to her but I hope to have a good time with Uncle William.

With fond love your mother.

Mar 22, 1903: From Grace Kennedy at 27 Oxford St Toronto to Sam

Dear Sam,

I am very sorry that I neglected to write to you sooner. I wrote just before Xmas, and sent you a souvenir card to convey my Christmas wishes but when I got yours found that you had changed your address, I presume, then, that you never got that letter. I should have written at once and told you of it I know but somehow I thought you would get it anyway and that you would answer it. So I hope you will forgive me this time and I will promise to mend my ways in future. By the way I hope this style of address suits you. It sounds rather strange to me, but I suppose I will get used to it.

I celebrated my birthday two weeks ago and everybody remembered me well. My dear friends in Denmark St sent me a dear little watch, a regular little beauty. And the little peach-stone souvenir you so kindly sent me graces the guard. So you see your present and Bessie's are associated.

I do hope you will be able to go over to Belfast in May. You know Bessie was saying in her last that she hoped you would be. And Bessie has been so shut up all winter that I hope she will be able to get a little outing then. You know what I mean. Not excursions, but she has no-one to go out with and you know one does not care to take a walk when they have no one

with whom to enjoy it.

You must not say I was talking about her in that way but she was telling me how much her time was occupied with work and study. Have you sat for your Photo yet? Wouldn't it be nice for you and Bess to get taken together just for a few special friends, you know?

I must stop this hurried scribble now, with all its poor writing and abbreviations, hoping to hear from you I remain,

Your friend Grace.

PS Your Xmas card was one of the prettiest I got. Thank you so much.

Mar 28, 1903: From Willie Linton in Castlewellan to Sam in London



William Linton, Martha and children Walter, Robert, David and baby William

Dear Sam

I am sure you have almost given up hope of ever receiving a letter from me but better late than never. Of course I hear from mother occasionally how

you are getting on. She was expecting a letter from you today. I was glad to hear you are now first counter hand. When do you expect to get a run over here? Uncle and you are going to make a start in June is that the time? Well I sincerely hope you will do well, and anything I can do financially or otherwise I will be very glad to do. Of course you will be over and tell me all. Did Uncle and you get the shamrocks I sent in time to wear on St Patrick's Day? They were worn pretty generally around here. We had a big day here, a Gaelic procession, bands and banners. It passed off very quietly and I got a few pounds out of it. Business is very quiet with no work going the weather is so dreadfully bad.

I forgot to ask Uncle his opinion of the new Land Purchase Act. It is certainly well thought out and will go a long way toward settling the land question but the landlord in the north will not sell so he will have to be compelled by a no rent campaign. (*The Wyndham Land Purchase Act of 1903 was a big step forward in securing significant rights for tenant farmers.*)

We are pretty well here. I was in Belfast a week ago and Wallace looked a lot better. Hoping to see you soon. With best wishes
your affct. Bro Willie



Mar 31, 1903: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

My own Sweetheart

I am very glad you enjoyed a laugh at my expense I don't mind in the least I knew perfectly well you had no intention of coming over. and dearest when I ask you to come over I shall come over for you which I hope will be

in the near future. But Bess dear as I have not been born with a silver spoon in my mouth I cannot do as I should like. You see Bess that is the worst of being a penniless chap like me, as your Mother would rather I was endowed with more of this world's goods and I admit she is quite correct. I hope I will not be long in this position but there is no royal road to fortune.

I was very pleased to hear from your Mother & it is everything I could wish only it makes me sorry I am not in a better position for your sake. But my love I would rather be as I am and work for all I can get and it makes me love you more darling when I think what a sacrifice you have made through loving me. However dearest the time is coming when I shall be able to claim you for my own as now we have Mother's consent. I had given up all hopes of hearing from her and it has given me new hope so that now I must succeed. I will write your Mother shortly and as for Aunt MK she is a brick and I am under a debt of gratitude to her for expressing so good an opinion of me to your Mother.

Now Bess dear as regards my coming over I cannot give you information on the matter as the purchase of the house is still not completed and until it is settled I am at a stand still. Give my kindest regards to your Aunties and accept my hearts best love.

From yours now and always, Sam

Apr 6, 1903: From Eliza to Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate

My dear Sam

I received your very welcome letter this morning. It was very good of you to think of sending me the money. I would gladly accept if you could spare it and was out of debt. But you know I cannot bear to owe anybody and would be very sorry to hold you back from paying yours. David gave me nothing nor planned to but gave me some of my own money. When he

marries yon big woman and starts to housekeeping he will see if she can do on as little as his Mother is expected to do. It will be a long time before it is in his power to help anyone and I will never live with a daughter-in-law.

I had a nice letter from Uncle William and he says you are a good boy and increasing the trade. He was telling me about his boy. He must be a very clever child. Grandfather is getting very fond of the whiskey and very hard to bear at times. Your Uncle Robert was here on Sunday evening and I can tell you they have their troubles with him. We have not the corn in yet and it is a very wet day. We were never so far behind but I could not get a man and horse as there were many out or we would have had it home. Herbert and Ernest are learning a piece to do at a public meeting next week. Now dear Sam goodbye
your loving mother.

Apr 6, 1903: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

My own sweetheart Bess

I am just in from Uncles. I have been up to see him before he crosses the space between you and I and he is in high form over his expected trip as it is about 7 or 8 years since he was over, but unlike me he has not the idol of his heart in Ireland as I have you Bess.

Things have progressed a little since I last wrote re Bis and the Deeds have been handed over for inspection and it is probable the purchase of the house will be completed in 3 weeks and we will take over the Bis in June. Darling we have tried all we knew to hurry the business and a bit of talking you bet but now we have got to keep quiet until the solicitor has finished. And sweetheart re the money I am sure that Mother will do her bit and I had a very nice letter from Willie saying if he could be of any use to me financially or otherwise he is at my service so I am alright.

I had a letter from Gracie this morning which was a pleasant surprise as I had given up all hope of hearing from her. It appears she wrote to me at Xmas and I never received it. She told me nothing of herself but gave me some useful hints.

Bess I hope you will enjoy your holidays this Easter and I hope to see you shortly after. I get Good Fri Easter Sun and Mon & I will go to the Zoo on Fri and to Crystal Palace on Monday which is one of the prime sights of London I have yet to see.



Crystal Palace at Sydenham

We will have a lot to tell when we meet and I am longing to have the opportunity. This is all my paper so I will conclude

Your own bhoy Sam

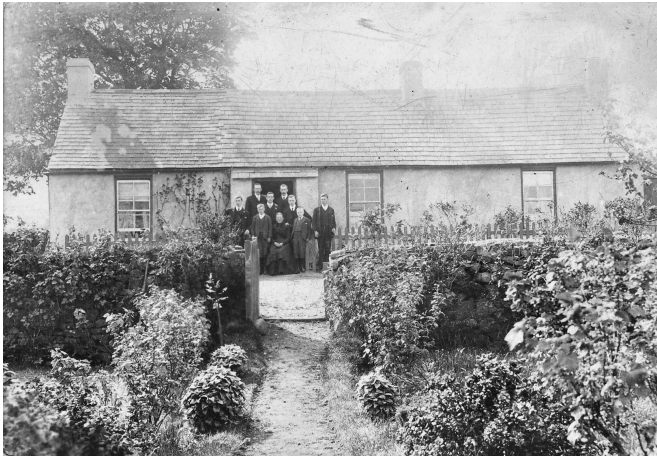
May 25, 1903: Sam from Burrenbridge to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart

I have no need to draw my chair up to the fire today to write but as far away as I can from it. I am using your lovely present (*a pen*) for the first time I have not thanked you for it yet however dearest you will overlook it

and accept my best thanks now. And sweetheart I need not say how I appreciate that rare gift that rarest of all gifts a true woman's love.

Now sweetheart I got home here on Sat Evng and yesterday Wallace came up and we had the whole family photographed twice with Mother in the middle and eight sons around her. I hope it will come out well.

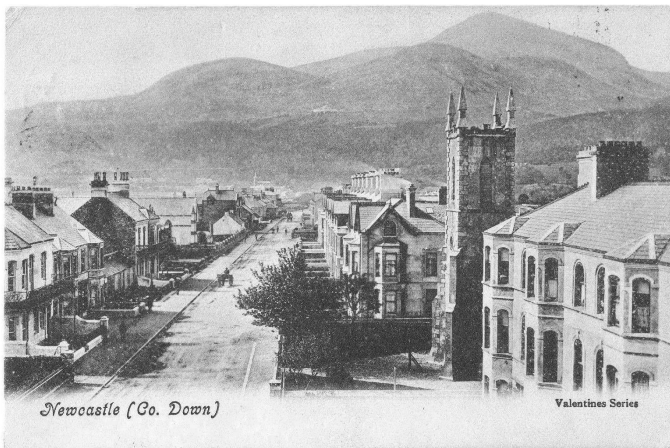


Eliza Linton with her 8 sons at Burrenbridge

The weather has been simply perfect and I have been taking it very easy. Mother is sitting here telling her tale of woe which is nearly all imaginary. I had a letter from Uncle in London on Sat and everything is complete now and he has been offered £50 on the deal. Not bad.

I will be down in Newcastle one of these days & will send you a few postcards. They are not to be had in Castlewellan. Now darling I do not know what to do with myself here – not that I don't enjoy Mother's company but a Mother's and a Sweethearts are different and darling you know which I prefer. I hope you are having a pleasant time at school. I will conclude as ever

your own Sam.



Newcastle, Co. Down

May 29, 1903: From Eliza to Sam in London

My dear Sam

I feel very lonely this morning when I woke and thought you were not in bed but somewhere on your way. I hope you will get this before you leave Belfast. I heard from Matt that you got your cheque from Willie. Tell Wallace not to expect Matt tonight for it is too wet to ride so far. The Lord be with you

your loving Mother

May 31 1903 From Sam at 12 Heathland Rd Stoke Newington to Bess

My own sweetheart Bess,

You will see I am at Uncle's. They were all glad to have me back again which helps to lighten the sorrow of having left earth's greatest treasure behind as best I felt it very much leaving you last evng but I have the consolation of knowing how I am loved and I come here to work for a happy future. I start on a new career tomorrow with all the energy and

strength God has endowed me with. Sweetheart I hope and trust you will not fret too much our compulsory parting as I fully accept it is for our mutual welfare.

I was a little late getting here this mng as we encountered very heavy fog and had to crawl along and it was none too pleasant with the horn blowing. We were 1 & a half hours late arriving in Holyhead and the London train was gone but they ran a special with the passengers of the Greenmore boat and I got here at 10.38 and had a good tuck in and feel in fairly good form now. Uncle & I broke a rule today – not to talk shop on Sunday – and he was full of his subject and from what he said I think all will go well.

Sweetheart I have been wishing myself back in Belfast but I must not allow myself to but look back on the very happy time I have spent and look forward to a happier future. Now Bess mine I will write Auntie in a few days

Your own Sam

Jun 7, 1903: From Eliza at Burrenbridge to Sam in London

I received your letter and am glad you got back safe and well. I had a long letter from Gwen (*Gwen Shaw, Uncle Matthew's daughter in London*) wanting me to invite her over. Such a cheek after slighting you to Aunt (*Lizzie Shaw*). Minnie Hall was married the other day (*Martha's sister*). Matt made her a nice flower (*a floral decoration presumably!*) I gave Herbert a good thrashing yesterday. I will try to teach him to work a little at home before he goes to anyone else.

Jun 10, 1903: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess in Belfast

My own precious sweetheart,

I have just finished working for the day and a feel a little bit tired. I was

getting things a bit square & as the place was a terrible muddle it takes a lot of work. The customers are all passing remarks on the change in the shop and I fancy they are pleased. Business is quiet this week as it always is after holiday week. I took £30 2s last week and this week promises better. Glad David sent you on some post cards. You did not tell me where my "Goodbye Mignonette " came from.

It was very nice of your friend (*Charles Kopacsy a Hungarian student she was teaching*) to present you with an album & now you have one I must see you get it filled, I saw some very good ones on Sunday from Dickens' works but you might prefer views first. (*The album itself has since disintegrated but we still possess the postcards it contained.*)

Glad to hear the ferns are doing so well if you had had a chat with "our gardener" (*ie his brother Matt*) you might have found out if they were properly planted. Dearest you will yet have a chance to thank him for his flowers. I will write him re those leaves for your collection. I have not had time to write anyone save Mother and yourself since I came back but must find time soon.

Now dearest one I thank you sincerely for your kind consideration of me in regard to my infidelity to Christ. And for the kind words you have spoken. I know darling I have been wrong in not confiding in you long ago but, as I have never professed any religion, I knew I was not misleading you. I should have liked to have heard Mr Mac's sermon on the subject, but it is not new to me as Uncle's minister has preached sermons on the same subject. He goes to the parks and listens to some of the agnostic orators and then takes a subject to squash all their sayings. I have listened to both without any visible effect but I have asked myself many times if I take up a stand for Christ can I do it honourably in my business and my answer is I cannot and as I don't like to play the part of a hypocrite I have let all go for I feel that if I went to pray I would only add insult to injury to my maker. At times I doubt the supreme power of Christ. Is he really able to do all



GOOD-BYE, MIGNONETTE (3).

Baby, tell me if he treats you bad,
 Tell me, now won't you ?
 You can write or wire me, if you jes' desire me
 For to fight or to die for the gell that I love.
 Good-bye, Minnie, and I wish you joy,
 B'lieve me, now don't you ?
 You'll be much happier wid him, of course;
 Although I knows you won't!
 Refrain : Good-bye, Mignonette, don't forget I loves you yet,
 If you should want a friend, that friend am I,
 Farewell, little gell,
 Far away I mean to dwell ;
 Kiss me, you won't ? Oh, well !
 Mignonette, good-bye, Mignonette, good-bye.

WORDS BY KIND PERMISSION OF FRANK DEAN & CO.

that is said of him? And again if God is a just God why are the good things of this world so unevenly divided? If I can get any works of Tyndale I will read him from his side of the question but I suppose it would be better to read the bible first and perhaps it might lighten my path a bit. But I cannot pray at the moment as I have lost the belief that all good comes from above, as I believe man holds it within himself to live either a good or a

bad life.

Now dear I have given you a few of my ideas and I hope you will give me some light on my thoughts and sweetheart accept the love of your own laddie Sam

Jun 18, 1903: From Sam at The Chester Store Highgate to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart, The walking competition went off very well. Walking has become a great sport now. At present there is a lady walking on a globe to Brighton for a wager to be done in 6 days (*she won the wager*).

I find plenty of walking without competing. You will have a very good collection of picture postcards. I will send you some Dickens ones by and by. (*He did, but not until August 1904*)

Darling I know you feel for me in my loneliness and I am lonely because I miss you and I work with all my might to bring you nearer. Dearest do not be afraid of my overworking as I have stood 15 months hard training. I have been at it 7.30-10pm today and I don't feel the worse for it so don't worry.

The Bis is going very well. I was in the City yesterday buying some stuff and I got on A1. I am happy enough considering all things. I have no anxiety now about the bis as I feel sure it will pay alright. I have not sent Aunt MK the sample of tea yet as I have none in stock that would suit the Irish palate.

As regards the leaf collection it will take Matt some time to gather them and by that time you will have the book ready (*to press them in*). I am sure



Mlle. Florence walking on a globe to Brighton

Sam Shaw is good fun (*this is Sam son of Robert Shaw of Clarkhill a cousin born 1885 (while his parents were briefly in New Zealand) who emigrated to Winnipeg in 1908*) He is young for his years but he will get old-fashioned soon enough.

Glad to hear the Townsend expedition went off well (*the annual school trip*) your postcard reminded me of our short stay in Kingstown and I for one should not mind another one.



Kingstown near Dublin – now called Dun Laoghaire

Sweetheart I can hardly refuse your earnest appeal for me to have faith in God and I promise you I will try when I have got a few of my doubts dispelled. You know dear one how I would like to have the same faith that you have but it seems all blind faith to me. I have lived my life so far without a God yet I believe in the existence of one but have not yet been able to give myself over to his keeping. I suppose you will think I have too big an opinion of myself and think I can watch over myself without the aid of divine providence. I believe my destiny has been fixed and I must follow the course mapped out. I believe in an after life and should not like to class myself with the lower animals but about the afterlife I have no idea. But I have not enough faith to believe in the raising of the dead for where will some bodies come from that are eaten by cannibals etc? I don't believe

there will be any bodies in the next world.

I believe the writers of the Bible had an inspiration and so do writers today. The early Greeks and Hebrews were very advanced peoples and it seems possible to me that the Bible might have been written by men without the divinity attached to it.

Now Bess don't be too hard on me as my life has been a hard teacher and I have been taught to rely on myself. Darling you are the first one who brought Christ before me in a Christlike spirit and I will do all I can to meet you in your wishes and your counsel shall have my attention. Remember me to your Aunts and sweetheart you have the heart's whole love of your own laddie Sam

Jul 6, 1903: From The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess in Belfast

My own Sweetheart,

I would have written to you last night but I went over to see Auntie (*Lizzie Shaw*) before she went to Eastbourne. They are gone for 3 weeks so I am alone in London except for their dog and cat which they brought up to me to look after. I am going down to see them one of the Sundays they are there. It is near at hand – about 70 miles – just rather far to ride there and back in one day (*on a bicycle*). I had a splendid ride with Uncle on Monday to Hatfield and back which is about 20 miles out and it is all houses for 12 miles. I wish you had a byke Bess as Uncle says they are like tea-drinking in Ireland “a great Institution” and it would be useful to you.

I have not written to David yet as I am waiting for him to send the rest of my postcards. They are very good, would you like another one of the fan shape? I will send one or two to Canada. I do not know how your Mother likes the postcards for she has not said but I am sure she has seen them.

My opinion of Wallace is undergoing a gradual change for the only

unpleasant incident when I came over was brought about by him. I must write to grandfather (*Sam Shaw senior*) as he wrote to Uncle a few weeks ago and gave a good account of me. He is a wonderful old man (*he was 84 at this time and died in 1905*) Did you see him? He does what he likes.

I am glad you are able to dispense with male assistance over stiles but when you come over this side Bess perhaps you might require some which is where I will come in aint it. I hope so. Sweetheart I have little time to read at present but I will do as you wish. And I will try the Gospels first and I will likely want your help darling. I wish we could read them together.

Bis is very quiet after the holiday. It was fair last week £36. The boy is doing A1 and it is more pleasant for me. I have written this on the counter and I must stop and do some work. With kindest regards to your aunts and my hearts best love to yourself

Sam

Jul 8, 1903: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate

My dear Sam

I thought I would have got a letter from you this morning but it did not arrive but it might be on the road.

We had a grand day here yesterday (*at the Castlewellan hill climb car race*) and all was got through without any accident. There were a great many people from all parts. I am not sure who won but you will see in the paper. Grandfather was here on Saturday looking well. He was glad to hear from Matt that you were doing well. Good by with fondest love from

Your Mother E. Linton



On 7 July 1903, the Henry Edmunds Trophy, Castlewellan, Hillclimb one mile motor race took place, the winner was E. Campbell Muir in a 60 HP Mercedes similar to this one.

Jul 14 1903 From Sam at the Chester Stores to Bess in Belfast

My own Sweetheart,

I am glad you had a good time in the country. I suppose by now you are enjoying the sea breezes. How I wish I were with you but I hope, darling, you will enjoy yourself well and hope you will benefit your health by your stay. You have another fortnight yet and I can think of you and it will do me good to know you are at your favourite resort (Whitehead).



Whitehead (Postcard in Bess's collection)

Business was very good last week, I took £37 which is more than my predecessor ever took. The people are mad that he parted with it and my landlady does not want to treat me too well. I have made her sit up once or twice and I think she will improve and if she doesn't I will try elsewhere.

What do you think Bess I have got a new byke through Willie. He sent me an order for one and I went up to Regent St and got a beauty (*probably a Rudge-Whitworth with a free wheel hub*). It will come in very useful for Bis and pleasure.

Thank you very much for your book. It is a very good work. I have not read it all yet what I have just endorses your belief. It is easy to be a Christian when you are surrounded by Christian influence but hard to become one when surrounded by an influence that is totally different and Darling that is why I want you so badly as I know you would keep me on the right path.

I had a letter from Mother telling me about the Motor Race in Castlewellan she is good form. Wallace seems to be offended with me as I wrote him about a month ago but he has not wrote back. It is hard to please everybody.

Now sweetheart I feel tired and sleepy so I will close with kindest regards to your Aunts and my hearts best love to your own sweet self from your own sweetheart Sam.

The Ideal 'SPEED-IRON'

The No. 5 AERO-SPECIAL

RUDGE-WHITWORTH

With Wood Rims, Constrictor Road Racing Tyres, or Aluminium Rims and Detachable Featherweight Tyres. Free or Fixed Wheel.

Weight - 20 to 22 lbs.

Price **£9** Packed Free and Carriage Paid. Or with Two-Speed Gear, **£10.15s.**

In the BATH ROAD TIME TRIAL on 6th May, riders of this Machine secured the 1st, 2nd, and 4th places, and the two fastest times.

Writing in "CYCLING" on 31st May, "The Owl" describes it as "undoubtedly one of the fastest machines for Road work."

NOTE that we have also increased our trade discounts to Dealers, and that we allow commission equal to Full Trade Discount on Easy Payment Orders taken over by us. If you have not received our Trade discount sheet write at once to

RUDGE-WHITWORTH, Ltd., (Dept. R.), COVENTRY.

Bicycle advertisement

Jul 20, 1903: From Sam at The Chester Stores to Bess in Belfast

My own Darling,

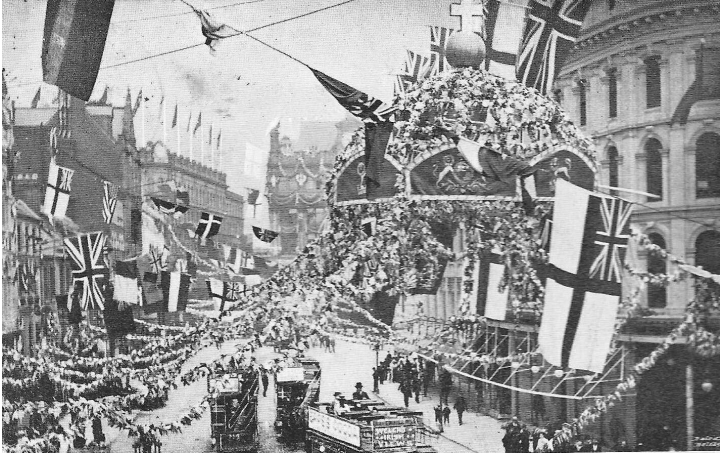
Thanks for your postcards , I have also had one from Gracie which I will enclose because it is not the same picture and will be another one towards your collection. How is it getting along? If there is any particular series you like dear let me know. I was very glad to hear that Mother (*ie Bess's Mother*) will write to me soon and I am glad you told me not to expect it too soon, it will be the more welcome when it arrives. I am glad you have enjoyed your holiday and regained your old colour. Do you think, sweetheart, that it will replenish your stock to last till Christmas?

Bis was not so good last week which gave me a fit of the blues but I shook it off. The assistant I have is no use and no help in working up a bis so I have to do it all myself. I have been trying to get another one and when I find one this one goes and I will have to clear out from the landlady. (*his assistant is her son*)

The byke is a treat as it is a pleasure cycling with a free wheel. I have had a few runs on it and feel in better form for it. My Uncle has a new byke too but his gear is not as high as mine and as I run away from him he gets very cross and I make it worse by teasing him.

You will have a big day in Belfast in Monday (*the King and Queen's visit*) I suppose they won't have time to call for tea. Now Sweetheart I must say goodnight

your own Sam



The Royal visit to Belfast July 1903 (Postcard in Bess's collection)

Jul 26, 1903: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam in London

Willie is in the Isle of Man today. He went away last Thursday with Mr Hall, Minnie and Bena. I think Mr Hall is the one pays for all. Matt is in the garden (*at Annesley Castle*) today instead of Belfast. The rain came down in torrents all yesterday evening and he could not go. He is thinking of going in the morning if he gets away to see the king. Grandfather is in Wallace's (*Wallace Shaw lived in Belfast*) He is very unstayed in his mind, going from place to place. I trust I be spared to be happy in my own place and not trouble my children unless I am very sure they want me. Matt's girl cheeks sending some letters here I think her a bold girl for her age.

Jul 29, 1903: From Sam at The Chester Stores to Bess in Belfast

My own dear sweetheart

I am very sorry dear that you should have been taken ill on your holiday. It must have been severe on you. I hope dear you will take care in future – you see it is my turn to lecture you now. It is hard to know the one you love best is ill and you cannot get to see and hear them. I am glad you liked

the flowers and I will thank Matt. He wished to be remembered to you.

I am glad you liked my choice of postcards so far. I think your album is getting on and I hope you will get another as you have only a small assortment. Bess thanks are unnecessary it is a pleasure to me.

My landlady and I are pulling pretty well together at present but I anticipate an eruption shortly as her son was working for me and I had a big row and cleared him out. He is an insolent languid fellow. I started another lad this mng & I fancy he will do alright. Bis is fairly good.

I have read Dr A's book and the arguments are very good but I cannot give my opinions until I read the passages (*of the Bible*) you refer to. Now sweetheart it is rather late and I must stop. I sincerely hope you will soon be yourself again. Hoping to hear from you soon, ever

your own Bhoy Sam

Aug 2, 1903: From The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess in Belfast

My own dear Sweetheart,

This is Sunday night and I am just in from Uncle's. I went over after dinner and had a very nice evening. Thanks dear for the newspaper and medal. Their Majesties had a very busy day of it and I was very glad to hear you were well enough to go out and fortunate enough to get a seat with a good view. They seem to have left a good impression in Ireland. Belfast gave them a good reception and showed their loyalty A1.

I am glad you are getting better and I suppose you resume your duties this week. I should not work too hard at the start, dearest one, take care of yourself. Dearest my one thought and aspiration is you.

Bis was very good last week and the lad I have now is a very willing lad and gets on A1. I paid the other one a weeks money and settled that though his people would hardly speak to me yesterday. They are mad they parted

with the shop.

Monday Mng. This is Bank Holiday and I have opened for an hour to oblige some customers and after that I will go over to see uncle and if the weather is dry we will go about 40 miles on our bykes and if it rains we will likely amuse ourselves well enough. I never get any real enjoyment here as you are not here but sweetheart I am working for that day for all I am worth and hope it is not far in the future.

I have got to do some work now so I will conclude with kindest regards to your Aunts as always

your own boy Sam.

Aug 10, 1903: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

My own sweetheart Bess

I have been out for a spin to get a little fresh air and the night reminds me of many moonlit nights we have shared together. I miss such now and when I think of them it makes me sad but there is one ray of light which is your letters.

Bis was quick last week on account of the Bank Holiday but withal it came to the average. My boy is doing A1 The mother of the other one started to talk to Uncle about her son and me and Uncle told her he had nothing to do with it, but he was surprised I stood the boy as long as I had. I have just had a letter from Eastbourne from Uncle and he wants me to go down on Sunday....

Sweetheart this matter of believing is a stumbling block between you and I at present and I hope sweetest heart that you will have patience with me and try to bring me to your way of thinking. It is for my own benefit for I am very aware of your words in Dublin that you will never be mine until I believe and sweetheart I cannot bear the thought of losing you but I don't

mean to accept religion on your account but on its merits. Sweetheart perhaps I have said too much if so forgive me for the sake of our mutual love. I must stop now and, to use an Irishism “hit the mail car” Remember me to your Aunts and accept my hearts best love ever

your own boy Sam.

Aug 16, 1903: From Eliza to Sam in London

My dear Sam

It is Sunday evening and I am tired and weary of both heart and life and all the relief I know is to tell someone how I feel I have had it very hard this last week and I tried to go to Church today and I just felt in it as if I would faint and was not there this long time for it is never thought that I should do anything but work and all the work and management I can do. I cannot keep going the demands are so many. We have not one bite nor sup but what we buy but potatoes and all depending on Matt’s 10/-. Grandfather was very ill after he came home from Belfast. Uncle Tom was here (*over from Liverpool*) with Queenie a nice young girl. Uncle Tom says if I build a room he will help me to furnish it and I will get what room suits me.

With fond love from Mother

Aug 19, 1903: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

My own precious sweetheart,

Forgive me for not answering sooner I had not time yesterday afternoon and was sleepy and tired in the evng so I went to bed and was A1 this am. I was down at Eastbourne on Sunday – the first Sunday trip since I came over- and I had a very nice time. Uncle met me at the station and we went on top of Beachy Head about 700ft above the sea and we lay down and got the benefit of the breeze and got back in time for dinner. Then we had a turn on the Prom and a lie on the beach which was packed with people

and I got back at 11.45pm. It is an ideal place for a holiday and Bess I look forward to the time we shall spend one there together.

Bis is very quiet and has been these last few weeks but it still keeps up to the average and at the end of next week we shall take stock and see how we are getting on.

Have you heard from your Mother lately. I had a rather doleful letter from mine She is in bad form and no wonder as hers has been a long struggle and she is not so able for it as she was. She is anxious about me and complains of my not writing oftener which I will try to remedy in future. She says Wallace and his wife and baby were up home for a few days. I have not written Wallace yet.

Sweetheart I have got to get some orders out now so I must stop. Give my kindest regards to your Aunts and accept my hearts best love,

your own Boy Sam

PS The ivy leaf is from The Wish Tower Eastbourne (*the leaf survives!*)



The Wish Tower, Eastbourne

Aug 23, 1903: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

My own Sweetheart, yes I missed you at Eastbourne more than I can express. I thought it very pretty and I only needed you with me to enjoy it thoroughly. The day was very hazy so we could not see very far. Uncle comes back to Bis today.

The boy is doing very well but he is too young to leave alone and I am too much tied down. If trade improves a bit I am going to get a better hand so I can have some time on my own and I want one trained so that I can keep my promise to come to Belfast at Xmas as I have a mission this time which I hope will bring satisfaction all round.

So Gracie is going to leave Arthur all alone. I think she is right in going to her Mother as Arthur is able to take care of himself. Thanks dear for sending the size of the ring. Kindest regards to your Aunts and tell them there is no need to watch Gracie or I. Goodnight sweetheart

your own boy Sam

Sep 1, 1903: From Elizain Burrenbridge to Sam in London

There was a great storm on Sunday night and it done great harm. We had the flax spread and it tossed a part of it badly. We have been these past two days at it. We got a wee cow yesterday. David asked Willie for the money to buy her. We had no milk. Gwen was here twice. Queenie and her are going home next week. Matt was going to play cricket at Roden's park today for the young Lord but it was too wet. Matt says this is the last winter he will spend at home for some time. Herbert has got a watch. David Linton (*probably David William of Ballymena*) was this way after his month of holiday and gave it to him.

Sept 7, 1903: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

My own dear Bess

I had a rare old escapade today. I got a cat which answered the description of the one I lost (*Uncle William's cat which ran away while Sam was looking after it*) and I had it in a basket and tied it on my byke and got on the way to Uncle's. When I got a few streets round the cat got out and ran into a shop so I went in after it and the lady who ran the shop nearly snapped my nose off me as the cat belonged to her and when I was coming back I saw another cat that looked like the lost one so I jumped off and caught her and she was the right one.

I feel in better spirits as bis has been better last week, I took £34 16s and the average for the 13 weeks is £34 10s which is as good as I expected. Now darling I thank you for your lovely present and your birthday wishes but above all for your love, darling you are all the world to me. And darling won't you let me know definitely if the ring size is L or K as I have the ring ordered and need the size.

I had a letter from Mother and she is very low spirited. Have you heard from your Mother and has Gracie moved north yet? (*ie to Manitoba*) A traveller is waiting to see me I only wish it were you. Yours now & ever Sam.

Sept 13, 1903: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam in London

Do not let Uncle (*William*) guide you for I think you are wiser than him. He talks more than he does. Grandfather was here. I was sorry parting from him for he is near done. He had his faults like us all but he was a good father. Bena (*Hall*) is going to the Queen's College of Belfast. They have the money. Wallace would have been better off with them (*This suggests Eliza had hoped Wallace would marry Robina*). We have only one field of corn

and it is not ripe yet. Matt is going to cut it. We got the flax in before it got any rain.

Sept 14, 1903: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

My own sweetheart,

I would have written yesterday but I was out Hackney way with a friend. Uncle wanted me to go over to his own and was not best pleased. I have been over to his house nearly every Sunday since I got back and I feel I have overdone it and intend making longer periods between visits. More independence you will say.

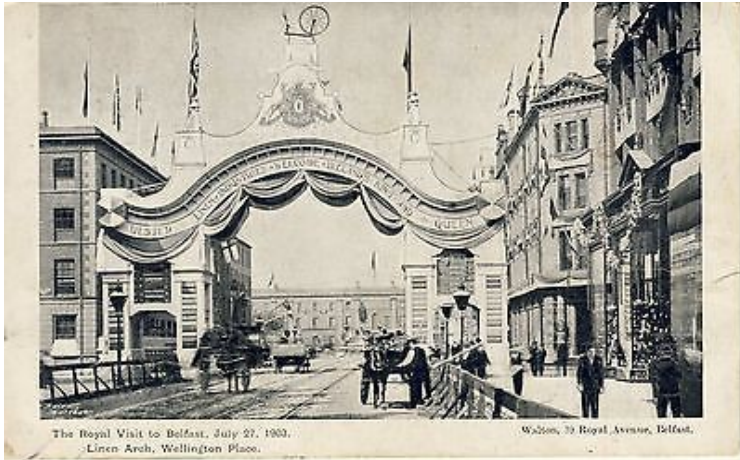
Bis was fair last week £35 and the more it improves the less worry I have and Bess I do not let it worry me more than I can help for altho' darling I know how much success or failure means to me worrying does no good.

I know Arthur is pleased with his present as Bess I am more than pleased with mine. Uncle spotted them and said "hello young man have you been having a birthday?" Once a year says I. Sweetheart I am coming over at Christmas, which is not far ahead now. It falls on a Friday so I will likely get to Belfast Sat mng and stay till about Wed. Thanks for the postcards the Linen Arch was very good I think I had better start an album. I have not sent you many lately. I will have a look around for something new before you finish yours.

I saw in the newspaper today about Ulster suffering very badly on account of the heavy rains. England has not had such a summer for 60 years and last Thursday we had a very heavy storm and a lot of damage.

I think you are right to have the larger sized ring as if it is too large we can easily have it made smaller. Kindest regards to your Aunts and best love to you from

your own Boy Sam



The Linen Arch for the Royal visits

Sep 22, 1903: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate

Mrs Linton of Ballymena died last Wednesday. She got up in the morning and complained of a headache and it turned to paralysis and heart failure and she died about 12 o'clock. Willie and David went to her funeral. *(This is Eliza Linton widow of James Linton great-uncle of David Linton snr. She died aged 70 the last of her generation)*

David says Miss Kennedy is well and can cook a good dinner.

Matt cut some corn the rest is not ripe. We will be selling the red cow soon and will get good money for her. She is looking well. I have not more paper – Matt has wrote it all to his girl. She is doing her best to keep a tight hold on him.

Your loving Mother

Oct 6, 1903: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

My own sweetheart Bess

I should have written to you last evg but it was so nice and I had not been out all day. I could not resist going out for a spin and I was late getting home again. Perhaps darling you will say "He thinks more of his byke than of me" but no, dear you are my love, my all and if I put you off last evg it was for my health's sake as sticking indoors is sure to tell but I don't intend to let it.

This is a fine dry windy night. Just such a one as a few we have experienced up Ligoniel way (*in the Belfast Hills*) How I should like to be up there with you now Bess dear.



On the Ligoniel Way

Though I am making more money here than I otherwise could have, I am not satisfied nor won't be until I have you over here to share my lot. Perhaps I am selfish in this for it may not all be a bed of roses as making one's way in this world is a stern reality.

Thanks for sending on the flower spray I sported part of it on Saturday. I must write Matt it was very good of him to send the leaves etc. I had a letter from David and he says he expected more from me – he knows how to rub me up the wrong way. I have a letter written to him but it is a bit

strong and I don't know if I shall send it.

I hope you are ready for your exam (*ie Inspection*) and that your school comes through with flying colours. Uncle's eldest boy (*William James Shaw 1890*) has passed the Oxford Prelim Exam. He is a smart lad.

Just time to catch the 12pm collection so I must close with kindest regards to your Aunts and my heart's best love to yourself

Sam

Oct 19, 1903: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

My own sweetheart,

It was such a lovely morning yesterday I went for a ride and then to Uncle's for lunch and got back too late for writing. Bess dear, I am very glad to hear you would have peace between David and me and I promise we shall and I will not post the letter I wrote. I will see him first and have a general clear-up. Is there any word of David's marriage coming off?

There is a man staying here who is always willing to work for me if anything turns up and he is going to work for me one evg a week so I can have it off. I am going to have tomorrow evng off, the first I have had since I came here. We are thinking of taking the first good shop that suits us and letting this man manage this one. We can work it alright financially and otherwise I should like to have a shop on one of the main routes with a house attached to it that I could take on and make a home for you and I. Uncle says I should be satisfied and he says I am making £200 a year but he doesn't know all.

Uncle is nominated as a candidate for one of the Borough Councils. I don't think he stands a big chance but he will fight for all he is worth. He is hot on the new Education Bill. I will send you the address he wrote to the electorate. No Bess I am not a Protectionist I am a Free Trader, one of CB's

(*Campbell Bannerman's*) followers and the free traders will not be long in the minority as Chamberlain and Balfour will be defeated. Balfour is a disgrace to the position he holds.

So you think Gracie has gone north. It will be a good job for your mother but a big change for Gracie. One of the men I worked with at Sainsbury's has gone out to Canada to start poultry farming. Now love I must stop. Regards to your Aunts , believe me ever more

your Sam

Oct 26, 1903: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

My own sweetheart,

I was very glad to get your letter and to hear you are longing to see me again but not more so than I am to see you. Have you ever heard this little chorus?

Tho' the ocean may divide us / I'm filled with joy to know
That in my arms I'll clasp you / On another month or so

It is only two months but they will be two long ones and darling I am going see if I cannot reach Belfast on Xmas mornng, at least I will have a big try.

I got one of E T Fowler's books (*Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler author of several witty religious novels around Methodism*) lent me yesterday by Mrs Prior (*Aunt Lizzie Shaw's sister*) *The Golden Thread*. Have you read it? I am going to the debating soc that Uncle is president of tomorrow to hear a debate on E T Fowler and her works.

I congratulate you on your success with your class I am sure you are to be envied as the teacher of the best class in the school and it reflects great credit on you. I think they are right to ask you to teach the grown pupils for your talents are wasted on the little ones. And darling I hope you will like the City Choral Society. I am glad to hear that you have gone and I am

sure you will be a credit to it.

So you are going to pick out the best of the postcards for your album. I think you are quite right. I am going into the City tomorrow and I will see what I can get in the way of good ones as I have been through the stocks of most of the dealers around here.

What do you think of the weather? It has been raining here now for weeks and one professor predicts we will have it like this for 10 years. If I had known what was in store I would not have bought a bike. With kindest regards to your aunts and I will stop with my hearts best love

Sam.

Oct 28, 1903: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam in London

I have been very long writing for we were bothered to get the corn dry. We just got it finished before a great pour. Herbert and Ernest are at school they have passed into the sixth book. We sold the red cow and got £13 for her. The flax is scutched and we had 28 stone – very good for what we planted. We have not got it sold yet but it pays the rent. I bought two pigs last Monday and the potatoes have to be dug now. Grandfather came and we got on fairly well but he is far too fond of the whiskey, the lord forbid my mind was as much on anything on this earth. We had the harvest thanksgiving last Friday and the church was very nice and a good lot of people came to see it. Willie was very busy.

Now Sam I hope you are well and doing well. I suppose you will be happy if you are selling plenty. I have just finished a night shirt for you I hope you will like it and it will keep you warm. Do not think to come to scold David and Wallace for none in Belfast has your welfare at heart as much, be loving and forgiving. With fond love from
your Mother.

Nov 16, 1903: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam in London

My dear Sam

I am sorry for Aunt Lizzie and her children and hope they are doing better. Your Uncle must be well respected. I hope he will get in (*as town councillor*) if he would like to. I think that Willie is not doing a great trade, but I know no more than other about his affairs and have no right to.



Willie Linton's shop in Castlewellan – now a Spar

Matt is away looking well to a Temperance Meeting in the court house. He is going to say a piece for them. Bob is home and tomorrow will dig some potatoes and he can do it, he is big and strong and getting on very well at his trade. He is away to the meeting he says to hear Brother Linton recite. Matt is going to the flower show on Wednesday. Grandfather says he must dress well when his sons are Town Councillors. Goodnight and fondest love from your Mother.

Nov 16, 1903: From Sam The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess in Belfast

My own dearest one,

I didn't write yesterday for two reasons I expected to hear from you today, which I did, and to make sure of the times for Xmas. I am sorry you have

been given such anxiety over my coming over and my health. Sweetheart I think I can put you right on both these fronts. I am coming over at Xmas for sure. There are a few difficulties which have cropped up re the other shop & I am not in favour of trying to overcome them and Uncle won't move without me so we will let it go. So dearest you may rest assured that you will both see and hear me 5 weeks from now. I cannot say for how long. You ask if I had told Mother. She wrote and asked if I was coming over and of course I said yes and she is very pleased I am coming.

Now Bess as to my health, I have not been too well of late. I have had a really bad cold and neuralgia but I am getting back to my usual self & today I was feeling much better and with the help of Fellow's syrup I will be A1 soon.

I am sorry to hear that you too have been unwell but glad you are now better.

Dearest one I know your love for me has not diminished in any way and it is proud I am to know it. I cannot help but think of the reception that awaits me & I hope to stay as long as possible. I must stop and write more later

Ever your Sam

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Nov 17, 1903: From Sam at The Chester Stores to Bess in Belfast

My own darling,

I left too little time to finish answering your letter yesterday so I sent it on in the hope it would brighten your spirits as you say they are low which is

not surprising considering what has happened. However, dear, I hope you will be in better spirits knowing for sure I am coming. I feel like a schoolboy looking forward to the holiday.

Now sweetheart as regards "your main idea being the speedy making of money" Well I like happiness & comfort as well as money & money provides the means to both in my case so I do wish to make it but I don't live for that end. And darling I don't think about the cost in coming to see you as anything especially at Christmas. Last Christmas I didn't think anything like Christmas in the Old Country & couldn't but think of the one before with you.

I was pleased to hear how you spent Halloween Eve. I wish I could have had some of the dumpling As it was I had nothing as Halloween is not counted here. (*In Scotland & Northern Ireland Halloween was a major feast and dumpling the tradition meal usually apple dumpling*). I am sorry you weren't well enough to enjoy the Scottish concert it is always very good.

So David has got his photo taken. I hope you won't criticise mine as severely when it arrives, as I am going to have one taken to send to Gracie at Christmas.



Bis was not so good last week, money is very scarce & perhaps it is well we did not get this other shop. I am going West tomorrow evng to the theatres for a change.

Now sweetheart I will stop with kindest regards to Aunties & sweetheart remember you are always loved by your own Bhoy Sam.

PS I received your cutting this morning. It is the usual long (*ie long-winded*)

style though not so good as some. I enclose a shorter one does it appeal to you?

Mr Chamberlain has appealed to Labour & Labour replies: "Thank God that labourers who toil have a vote without which NO capitalist can enter the House of Commons to commit the sin of INCREASING the cost of living"

(Tariff reform was the big issue of the day. Chamberlain resigned in 1903 to campaign for it. Most Liberals and the new Labour party believed it would lead to unemployment and price increases which would hurt the poorest most. The Arthur's are tariff supporters and Sam is not.)

Nov 30, 1903: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate

My dear Sam

I was glad to hear you were alright and better still that you are coming over in 25 days, I hope there will be nothing arrive to prevent it. Matt had a good day in Belfast and had dinner in the Miss Arthurs (*lodging house*) He did not see Miss Kennedy. Willie Martha and the children were down this evening. Matt says trade is bad with Willie though he does not be telling me. We have got the potatoes out and I am not sorry. I never yet got to Belfast for the work. Now Sam I am sure you will be very busy making as much as you can up to Christmas. Take care of yourself

Mother

Dec 8 1903 From Eliza to Sam in London

Sam has asked if Bess can come to Burrenbridgs for Xmas.

My dear Sam

I am just home from Belfast and read your letter and am astonished at its contents. I am not able to attend my own family at times with covers and jugs. I have far more than I am able for. I saw Miss Kennedy in Belfast. She is far too nice (*ie posh*) for a poor country home. I have done my duty for

my sons and they can see to their wives and sweethearts. I do not intend to put myself out for any of my daughters-in-law. I was very ill in Wallace's yesterday. I need more of a rest than visitors. I think you are very foolish and cheeky too. You are in too much of a hurry. There are plenty of women for men who can keep them easy. Little Miss Arthur (*sic*) is a cheeky little lady and too smart for you. Do not propose such a thing for a long long time and then I might not be here but I hope and trust in a happier place.

Your Mother.

Dec 13, 1903: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

My darling Bess,

Instead of going over to Uncles I am taking Sunday quietly at home or what is answering for it at present, for it is not home.

Now dearest about the photo, you don't care for it – I can't say I like it myself, but I think it is a true likeness of me as I was when it was taken. A lot depends on the mood one is in and I suppose one has to put up with the consequences. I haven't sent one to Canada yet, as I think dearest you would rather I didn't. Is that right?



Bess dearest I am sure you are right in not wanting to leave Aunties all alone especially at Christmas when everyone likes to have their own around them and it was selfish on my part to ask if you would care to come home with me. I thank you sweetheart for your kind invitation for me to spend Xmas with you but it is a case of love or duty. Love says I should spend it with you, duty says I should go home to Mother as this is the last Xmas I will spend in Ireland and perhaps the last I shall have the

opportunity of spending with Mother whereas I look forward to spending many happy ones with you. I will spend this one at home and sweetheart I don't think you will blame me. I won't stay too long and shall be very pleased to accept the invitation for a little later. I am coming over by Liverpool so I hope to spend a little time with you before I go home. I am glad Mother paid you a visit when she was in Belfast with David.

I hope your concert went off well and that you enjoyed it, I suppose it is one of the "swell" concerts of the season and I hope they (*the McCluggages -Margaret McCluggage was another Arthur Aunt*) are all well at Lisburn and I am sure you had a rare old chat with Bessie (*McCluggage*), two girls always can.

Bis was very quiet last week, there is no money about. I called in to see Sainsbury's manager last week and he said it was very bad with him and everyone was grumbling so I suppose I must be content although when bis is quiet it does depress me.



Bessie McCluggage

Sweetheart you are at church and I am here writing. I know I am in for something on this score when we meet but Bess be as lenient as you can. I have been to church pretty often since we discussed the question & what I have heard has taken no effect. I know darling you would rather it were otherwise, however time may provide the sequel.

Now darling I am waiting anxiously the time when I shall clasp thee to myself once again, as I sit here the thoughts of old times flash through my brain and I think what a cruel fate has parted us, but my love, my all we are not parted for ever and the time is not distant when we shall be united

for ever. Kindest regards to Aunties and sweetheart I will close with my hearts fondest love

Sam

Dec 17, 1903: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess in Belfast

My own darling,

My best wishes for a Happy Birthday and I wish you many very happy returns of the same from your own Boy

Sam

PS Sweetheart I have a small present for you but I am not sending it as it might get broken in transit and as I am crossing on Wednesday night I will bring it with me (I will be with you on Thursday mng- Lpool boat) Hoping you won't mind my holding above over

yours ever Sam

Sam spent Christmas with his mother and afterwards stayed with the Arthurs.

Dec 31, 1903: Sam en route from Belfast to Liverpool



Sweetheart Bess This is the last letter I shall write this year and darling you are the only one I should think of writing it to, to finish up this year as I hope to finish up many another, with you, but under different auspices, as

parting is not a pleasant finish. Sweetheart I hope you will bear up bravely and look on the happy side of things as I intend to do.

Now before the New Year starts I will make a few resolutions which by Gods help I will carry though this year.

1st To live a better life

2nd Smoke less

3rd Try to have a home of our own before another year goes by

4th Fulfil the promise I made you this evng.

And Bess if there are others you would like me to add let me know. I said this evng I was leaving my better half behind & that is what I feel as when I am with you I feel a different being for you inspire me with ennobling thoughts dearest and I miss your influence as no one but myself knows.

I have been writing this under difficulties for we are rolling a bit and I much preferred rolling around trying to dance in the kitchen. Darling I must stop.

God Bless you darling & keep you safe your own and yours only Sam.

Jan 3, 1904: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess in Belfast

My own precious darling,

Thanks for your card and New Years greeting and your letter which I was glad to get last evng which I did not expect and yet did as I knew you would think of your boy as he was thinking of you. I pray God darling that both this year and the future may be as clear and calm as this one has dawned. My first thoughts were of you and I prayed God to make it a happy for one, my first prayer in seven years.

Dearest you will be wondering how I got on after I left. Well I was a bit sick but got over it shortly and slept the remainder of the night. We were rather late getting into L'pool & I missed the early train so I had a turn

around Lpool and called into Uncle's (*Thomas Shaw a watch jeweller*) place but did not see him. I came on to London in good time and found that things in general had gone on pretty well. Bis was pretty good last week. Uncle was pleased to see me back again and we had a chat and he has heard of another good business to be sold & I told him I wanted to get married within 12 months & we must have another bis and he is willing to speculate on another bis if not this one then the first we can get that suits us.

You will be pleased to hear dearest that I have cut down my allowance of cigs and I have only smoked 9 cigs since I saw you and may probably stop altogether. And you need not be afraid I will remember to think of you and pray at 10.55 & sweetheart I know you will pray for me in your prayers. Give my kindest regard to Aunties and tell Aunt E I have been wearing one of her collars and it is A1.

Goodnight my darling, Yours ever Sam

PS I am off now to bed to and to read the passage in the bible. I will keep my promise darling.

Jan 6, 1904: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam in London

My dear Sam,

I was glad to hear your good resolutions. Your Grandpa is sitting asleep in the chair. He has been very ill since you left. He does not seem to improve and I do not think he will get better. Your Aunt Jane was here and asked him to her place but I do not know when he will be able to go. Now Sam I am glad you feel better after your rest. I will go to see you in the summer if all goes well. Willie came down and brought Grandpa grapes. Matt says he (*Willie*) is the best married Linton of them all. Tell Uncle William about his father. I must stop – write soon. Wishing you a happy and prosperous New Year.

Mother.

Jan 6, 1904: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess in Belfast

My precious sweetheart,

I have been sitting here by the fire thinking of you and of the happy time I had last week and wishing I could have a repetition every week, but that is denied me so the next best thing I can do is write to you often. Sweetheart I expected a letter tonight but it has not come, however dear it will turn up in the morning.

It is rather quiet here for me at night so I am getting a graphophone to keep me company (I wish I could get your voice on a record) from Lever Bros for Sunlight soap wrappers (*the offer was a graphophone and records for 750 wrappers*)



Bis is none too good at present but it will soon improve & we will have another shop shortly & make things turn.

Now sweetheart I won't write any more tonight for I will be answering your letter tomorrow. So beloved goodnight from your own boy till death

Sam

Jan 10, 1904: From Sam From The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

This is a lovely wet Sunday and I am all alone here, don't you wish you were here? I know I do but that is in front of us darling. We are nearly two years parted but I'm afraid we would never get used to it as we don't easily get used to things we don't like. I intend to take care and treat cigs

as a luxury in future as in the past they have been to me more of necessity and I don't suppose they have done my fortune any good but I will take care of it now for my own girlies sake.

Sweetheart you want me to let you know where I stand on religion. Well Bess it is not easy for me as I don't exactly know myself. However, I will think the matter over & darling I will read the bible so perhaps I may be able shortly to make up my mind.

I had a letter from Mother and grandfather (*Sam Shaw is 84 years old at this point*) has been very ill at my home since he came down to see me and mother does not expect him to live. Mother is thinking of coming over to see us this summer but I'm afraid that is far as she will get. I am feeling a lot better since I got back and I'm getting on fine with Grape Nuts.

I cannot understand why my last letter was not delivered sooner. It should have been delivered first thing on Tuesday. I will post this one the same time & can note what time it arrives. I am going over to church and to see Uncle so I must stop with kindest regards to Aunties and best love,
ever yours Sam

Jan 12, 1904: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

I am very glad my letter was a pleasant surprise and darling what made me propose writing oftener is that we have been rather far apart in the past and I don't want distance to have an effect on our closer relationship.

I had a postcard from Lever Bros today and they say my Graphophone will be sent on when they have stock I cannot say what the difference is between it and a Gramophone but if any it is trifling.

Re Bis I have talked it over with Uncle since I came back & as he has a lot of expenses & a lot depending on him & it takes a lot of capital to run a

wholesale tea concern we cannot do it yet but I believe it is in front of us. So I suggested that we should get another bis and I would work in it and put someone else into this and we worked it out and decided to take another one and we tried for one last week & I have just written about another one and it won't be my fault if I haven't another one soon. & with two going I think I could make ends meet.

Sweetheart I hope to hear from you soon and remember what your letters are to me Goodnight my precious sweetheart

your own boy Sam

Jan 19, 1904: From The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart

I have received the postcards that I was telling you about and I will send one on tomorrow. I received your "Indian brave" this morning. Thanks dear for looking after photos for me. I will send the oval one to Grace. I know very well sweetheart that they will be critical but let us hope they won't be too hard on it.

I have had no more news from home so I assume grandfather is better. I had a letter from David and he doesn't mention anything about him but he does about "the big day in his history" it is to be on the 17th February and he wishes it was over. He is getting nervous already. He wishes I was in Belfast and so do I but for a different reason and says he has asked the next best man Matt. As for the wedding present sweetheart I haven't decided what to do. I told him I couldn't afford too much but would do what I could and I am afraid to buy anything in the silver line as David will know pretty well the value of it. I should like to think of something original but cannot – can you?

As to my den dearest I sit here every evng from 10.30 to 11.30 but not on Sundays as I like to have a clear out then. I am going to have a look over a

few business's tomorrow & I expect to have another soon. I want to get a place that I can hope to look forward to as a home as dearest that is the main item for me at present as darling I long for the time I shall have you with me and dear not until then shall I be happy.

Thanks sweetheart for your trouble and encouragement towards Christianity. I will think it all over but I cannot decide just yet and I hope I won't tax your patience too far. However, as we live we learn & I have a lot to learn yet. Darling I must stop to get the 12pm post. Kindest regards to Aunties and my hearts best love

your own boy Sam

Jan 20, 1904: From Bess to Sam in London Written at Windsor School Belfast

My own darling boy,

Sweetheart, dearest of course I forgive you not writing tho I was very much disappointed, I seem to have waited a much longer time than I did. But you will say what possessed the girl to attempt a letter with the children squealing around her? Well last night I was helping to prepare for some friends who are invited tonight and that takes up my time very fully you will see. Tomorrow by the 7.30 Aunt Elisa is going to Londonderry, she has had a summons from her friends there. She doesn't know what is the matter and she won't be back until Tuesday. I have been writing to Arthur (*her brother John Edward Arthur Kennedy in Ontario*) We had a short note from Gracie to acknowledge the little gifts and I still owe a letter to her.

Haven't we been having fearful weather this week – last Monday was a blizzard here but it is quite mild here. I know you had the same weather in London and wonder how you got home at all that night. Now dearest this is short I know but I must hand it in at 3 o'clock. and I have much to see to. I hope you had a good time on Wednesday. Write and give me a good picture of it all. Ever dearest one your own girlie. Bess

Jan 21, 1904: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam in London

My dear Sam,

Matt is not long home and showed me your picture in the card and like you it is. I should have written before now but as you may guess I was a bit put out when I heard that David was to be married in a month. I was expecting it but after all it troubled me. I sent him two letters with a bit of my mind – not a word about Emily I think her a good girl. I know there is nothing wrong with getting married but you need not to be in too great a hurry. He was a little annoyed and was here last night and I did not draw back from what I said for I felt it all. I told him to marry away and let me hear nothing about it. Miss Arthur will lose an old lodger when David goes. I went to see Lady Mabel's wedding it was very nice (*ie posh*). I hope you are near to quit smoking and do wonder that you would injure your health for the love of it. I am sorry that you have to work such a long day but you will have better times yet. For my part the prospect looks dark. It will be a nice day that I start for London. Matt says to me "if I were you I would sell the bullock and go with the price of it" (*ie use the money to travel to London*). Matt is going to David's wedding so he will be able to tell you about it. With fondest love

Mother

Jan 25, 1904: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess in Belfast

My own Sweetheart

I was sorry to hear your throat was bad again I hope it is improving. It is very hard on you working with it for you must talk. I think I had better get my Graphophone sent over to you to do the talking. It would save you a lot of trouble. Thanks for those "woollen things" they are a very good fit. As to the other socks I don't need them refooted at present but thanks for your kind offer.

I had a letter from My Mother and she is a bit hot on David getting married. She wrote him two letters and says she gave him a bit of her mind & David was up home and she gave him a bit more. Foolish woman she would have been wiser to hold her tongue. Of course the reason she tells me what she has done is to warn me of the wrath to come. I wrote her and gave her a bit of mind and I don't know how it will go down, but I expect she will take it alright. I asked her to encourage me instead of otherwise but I know the way she will do it, no matter.

I have been looking through one of Mappin & Webbs lists and there are some very nice cake baskets at 25/- which I think would do. I suppose you don't see much of David now (*David was a lodger at the Aunts house for years before Sam was and stayed until his marriage*). He will be busy house furnishing. What sort of a send off are you going to give him? So sweetheart you want me more than David wants his Emily. I know it darling and I want you but we have to wait a little longer. I wish I was in the same position as David. I don't think I would be nervous. Now Bess I want to catch this collection so I must stop - your own boy ever
Sam.

Feb 3, 1904: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess in Belfast

My sweetheart

I was very glad to get a full report of yourself & don't think that four pages on your health is too much for nothing else is so important to me. I am glad dear that you have treatment for it and with care and perseverance your voice will come back. I feel sorry for you dear as I know how you feel the loss of your voice but keep your heart up dearest. I am glad to hear you are not taking the whole concern of the school on your back and you are quite right you will get as much thanks for taking things easier.

Ask Aunt E if it is lucky or lucky for a black cat to come and stay. I have one

here which has come in a few days ago and I am told it is lucky but Aunt E will know. I had yesterday evng off and went over and had tea with Uncle and I went over to the jewellers and bought a lovely cake basket for 25/- and asked if it was usual to have anything engraved and the asst said no unless it was a presentation so I wrote a card and had it tied on with white ribbon. I think it will please as it is very pretty.

We were at the Mrs Whitakers for supper and I was her special guest. She invited me to spend Xmas with her and as I couldn't she had this supper last night. She gave us a grand entertainment with her Gramophone . She is very proud of it and her collection of records of which she gave us about 40. We were speaking about rings and Mrs H Whitaker showed us one her husband bought valued at £28, a lovely one. They used to live with Ma as they call the old lady but now have a house of their own and they asked me to look them up. These things help to break the monotony of my lonely existence without you sweetheart.

I have not had a reply from mother yet. Wallace was at home since so I may expect a breeze (*ie a hint*) but there seems to be a quietness come over the Linton brothers though once on a time they could talk plenty.

Now sweetheart I must stop for it is late and I have missed the last collection. If you can let me have an answer on Saturday and I will write on Sunday as I am on my own. I hope dearest you will improve & take care of yourself as you are my all Good night darling with heart-felt love your own

Sam

Feb 11, 1904: Postcard from Sam to Bess



Everything very quiet here & I suppose this war (*the Boer War*) will make it worse. Weather miserable .

Hope you are keeping better

Yours SJL

Feb 18, 1904: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

I am very glad dear that you are a little better and I hope the tonic will do what is expected. This day two years ago I arrived here and just about this time I was trying to find Fairholdt Rd. Two years is a long time and it has seemed a very long time because I have missed you and have only been able to visit you twice since. Tho' my last visit made up for all the lonely hours. But on the other hand I am still not satisfied by what I have accomplished. Uncle says I must not grumble for after two years I have my own place which is making money. So sweetheart I must not grumble as I

might have done worse but I have had a spurt to my ambitions through you darling and I hope to do better next year.

I don't think Bess I have told you how I have accounted for the money I have made on this store. You know I owe Mother & Willie £80 and I have only paid them the interest as yet. When we took over this bis Uncle had no money to put in to it so we gave Mr Line (*the previous owner*) bills for £60 and I have met three of them at £15 each and I will clear him in a fortnight. Uncle bought this house and he borrowed £50 and gave his friend 5 bills of £10 each and I have paid three of those for him so I will soon be clear of those two and then I will clear Mother and Willie. You see I have had my work cut out as with paying away and keeping stock of about £100 worth I had to be careful what I did as I couldn't buy more than I knew I could pay for. I have got over the worst part and expect to be clear of all liabilities by the summer.

Dear this is a short summary of what I have done these 8 months and if I do as well the next 8 our separation will be nearly over, though I expect to see you before then.

So David has been keeping company with Miss D(*alziel*) for five years. He has been rather fortunate as five years ago he was an apprentice. I suppose his marriage came off quietly. Did you play any tricks on him? He is the last of the first lot (*of lodgers*) to leave 73 Denmark St. I had a letter from Mother and she is not satisfied with David. She did not reply to any of my remarks. Wallace was up home & I hear he did not go to the wedding. Was there anything between David and him? I fancy Wallace had been talking to Mother. Mother tried to draw me



David and Emily's wedding photo

out on the subject but I told her I was not at all curious as far as David was concerned.

Glad you like your Tory Cabinet & its members. They're a standing disgrace to the country and now they are about to sanction the introduction of slavery into S Africa. This is what the country gave up 24,000 lives for, not to mention the millions spent (*ie on the Boer War*) and all through "Joe" (*Chamberlain*). He was afraid to stand the racket in the House so he has gone for a holiday, a good job too. As for Lloyd George he was honest in his opinions about the war and there are thousands now who think the same as he does about it.

Sweetheart I have read your remarks re coming to Christ & I know they are right, but want of faith is a drawback. I must stop sweetheart with kindest regards to Aunties and my hearts best love

Sam

Feb 18, 1904: From Grace Kennedy at 53 Dagmar St Winnipeg Canada to Sam in London

Dear Sam,

I just got your long looked for photo today. I thought at first when I got the p/c that you were going to put me off with that, but I am just charmed to get both. The photo postcard is quite a good idea. We don't get them here. I should have written to acknowledge it before this, but you will understand how busy I am at school. It is drawing near the end of my course now (*in stenography*) and I have to work hard. In fact I should be working at my lessons now instead of writing letters. I very seldom get a letter from Bessie now, I wish you would plead my case with her. Perhaps you will have more influence with her than I would.

I got my photo taken for the college group, but they did not turn them out good enough for me to get any finished off for myself. I am sorry but I

never do get satisfaction in a photo. Perhaps I think I am better looking than I am. I think yours was very nice. I like the nice open expression on the face and the eyes are good I am a very outspoken girl and when I tell anyone my opinion of them I mean it. I know I could trust that face.

Do you know I do not feel like writing tonight. I was at an 'At Home' of our college the other night and I have not been feeling right since. I feel positively stupid tonight so you will have to excuse this letter this time if I promise to do better in the future. I am going to take a bath to make me sleep sound and go right to bed. Dissipation and study together do not agree with me.

Mother sends her love and says she is sorry she cannot manage to get time to write to you. She is always glad to hear from you even through me, although she cannot return it. I will have to be the medium I suppose. I do not know how she manages to sleep at night with such a load of correspondence on her mind.

Well goodbye for this time, I am afraid I am only boring you anyway.

Write soon Yours etc.

G.T.Kennedy (*ie Grace Todd Kennedy*)

Mar 7, 1904: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam in London

My Dear Sam,

You will think I am long writing to you but my letters are not very cheerful and you might be happy without them. When I make my complaints to Matt he won't hear them and says he is too happy to be troubled with the cares of the world. David is 3 weeks married. He wrote to me but I did not write to him. He could have helped me for a few years yet to get Herbert and Ernest fixed. I am going to write him and tell him to give me some of my own (*money*) as quick as he likes. David can pay a house rent now but

he could not for me. Anybody can get a big woman without a penny and they could not buy a bride's cake for to send a bit to their kind friends! Did your Uncle hear about Mrs Wallace's sister dead out in Ceylon? The boys will come home soon from school.

With fondest love from your mother.

Mar 11, 1904: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam in London

My Dear Sam

I am glad to hear you are well. I heard Willie say he forgot to send Uncle and you a sprig of shamrock for St Patrick's day. Now Sam I am not fretting as much as I did this last month. I must try to get over my troubles as best I can. Bob is all right and better for being at home every Sunday. I am thinking of going to Belfast in May and taking Herbert with me. Do you think Mr Nixon would have him? (*J Nixon tea and provision merchants*) David says he can stop with them they live very near. I think I will send Ernest to Ansbro School for one year and then he can go to college. Matt says I am not the same to any of them since David married. I think he treated Willie very shabby – Willie says he will let him hear it. I sent him a letter last week and got one with a pound in it. How is Miss Kennedy? I will never hear about her now. Matt says she bought David a (*wedding*) present. He got a lot. Now dear Sam I know you do it with a good heart but I would rather you would not annoy your Uncle about me he has enough to think about. It is very kind of him but tell him I was just annoyed about David getting married and I am over it now. Matt and I are going to a grand concert next week got up to purchase a piano for the school. I think I shall stop now

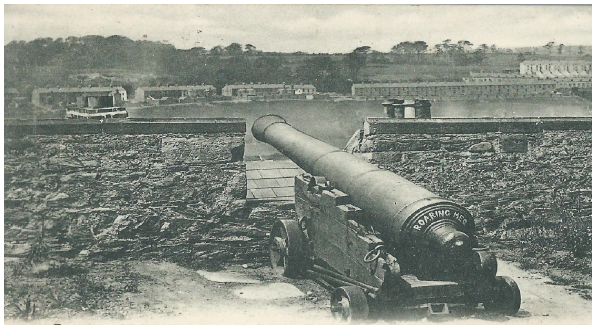
your loving Mother.

Apr 12, 1904: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart

I was very glad to get your letter and know that even at this most depressing time you never doubt me. *(Clearly something has upset the Arthurs. Another Arthur sister Rachel Campbell Arthur the widow of James McEuchran married James Harkin in early 1904. Perhaps the Aunts recognised him for the bigamous rogue he turned out to be!)* & I hope dear that doubt will never beset either of us

I am glad to know that you had such good weather and enjoyed your visit *(to Londonderry)*. It is alright Bess falling in love with the old man *(her uncle John Arthur)* and having such a good escort it makes one enjoy a visit. I hope you are satisfied with how your uncle has done for himself Tell Aunt E I should like to hear from her about the trip to Derry. *(Bess sent a postcard of Roaring Meg to her aunt Mary Knight from Londonderry.)*



Roaring Meg, Londonderry

One of Uncle's customers has a fine shop in a good neighbourhood and doing a good trade and as he is unwell he is going to sell it. Uncle says it is just the shop for me. It is 9 miles from here at Wimbledon and I am going over next Sunday. The owner won't part with it until September & by then we will be able to finance it without any help. It won't be bought for less than £225 but should show a return of £400 per year. Since I came back I

have paid away £60 and paid all trade accounts besides having a larger stock so I think I have done very well. but if we decide on this other shop we shall have our work cut out. But I don't mind Bess if I can only succeed.

I suppose you have got settled down to work again after your holiday. There is one thing to be said about teaching, short hours and long holidays. Have you heard from Canada lately? Now my dearest I must stop as I have a lot to do. Remember me to Aunties and with my hearts best love as ever

your own boy Sam.

Apr 13, 1904: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam in London

My Dear Sam,

I am glad you are doing so well, it shows you are paying attention to your business. It was well you got Good Friday we hardly noticed (*the holiday*) Matt was working on Easter Monday. Bob and Herbert went to Newcastle and Herbert pleased himself at home with wee Wallace and Robert (*Willie's sons*) We had the Rea family in the evening. Aggy made me a nice new bonnet. She is a smart wise girl and very kind. Aunt Jane keeps them well. She has the money and I have none and that makes a great difference in this world but not the next. (*Aunt Jane had a hat shop in Newcastle*). We have no crop in yet nor do I know when we will. Willie did not have any of your tea and I told him it sold well with you but he said it does not suit here, because we like it strong to keep a wee bit of spirit in this quiet place. Now Sam forgive me being so long

from your loving Mother.

Apr 14, 1904: From Uncle William Shaw at Heathfield to Sam in Highgate

My Dear Sam,

Your Auntie (*Lizzie who has been very unwell*) was reading your letter and I make haste to tell you how pleased she was with it. Poor soul she is always glad to know she has pleased others and your far too kind words about us both Sam we do not deserve for we only did what was our duty and our pleasure and I am truly glad from a friendship point of view that you came over. I need not tell you Sam about myself, if I dislike a man I cannot be friendly if I think well of him I treat him as I like to be treated but not I trust from any ulterior motive. You do not know how much I feel your goodness now I was sorely tired and worried and yourself a friend turns up. Now Sam I am to tell you that once your Auntie read your letter she turned over and fell asleep and she has had two hours peaceful sleep.

We are sorry for you that being full of trouble we can't sympathise with you half enough but this I can tell you I am thankful it is not worse. You really must be careful in London. I am and I have so far escaped. I never had a fall like yours in my life. (*Sam had fallen off his bike*)

Well good night and try to get well soon. Accept our united gratitude for your splendid letter and loyal heart.

Your Uncle W J Shaw

Apr 18, 1904: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess in Belfast

My own Sweetheart,

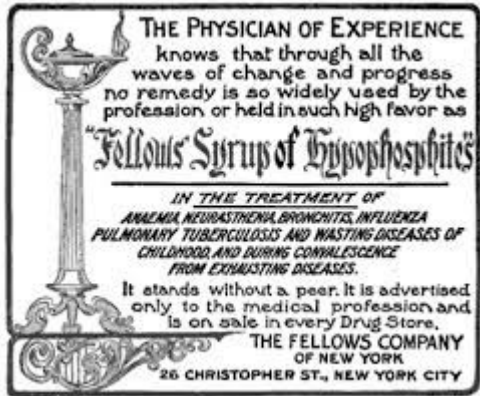
Your own welcome letter & postcard to hand this mng which cheered me for I was somewhat down. Thanks for good wishes re bis. I thought I would have known something more about it today but I could not get over to the place yesterday because of a slight accident I had on the bike a few nights previous. I cut my face a bit and didn't like to travel across London with it. It is alright again, and so am I so I will go over next Sunday.

Auntie (*Lizzie Shaw*) is now out of danger and improving fast. I saw her yesterday and had a cup of tea with her, we are good friends. I was riding

over to see her when I had the accident & I wrote and told her what kept me from coming over and despite having a temperature over 100 she sent Uncle up to see me.

So you had a call from David he must have spent a pleasant Easter & I must have offended him as he doesn't write me. Sorry to hear that Aunt MK has not got over her cold. I can sympathise with her on that & I feel sorry for anyone who has it as you have dearest. Fellow's Syrup is the cure for it.

I heard from Mother on Sat and she is in good health & I would say in good talking form. The weather is simply grand over here and bis fairly good and things running pretty smoothly.



Now sweetheart I must stop best love to yourself
from your own boy Sam

Mar 20, 1904: From Bess at 73 Denmark St Belfast to Sam in London

My Dearest one Sam,

It must be infectious, the blue mood, for this past week I have been very blue, as blue as this paper. My thorn in the flesh is a principal who is so lax that the only way his first assistant gets correction or reprimand is if his second assistant (*ie Bess*) calls his attention to it. Every place has its thorn and I have had mine in pretty sharp. Our place is very peculiar things will be very easy for a long time then all of a sudden something will come on you like a thunder clap. A lot of it is my own fault. I have a very bad memory and do very stupid things that I can't stand over (*ignore*) I'm hasty

and too proud to explain when I am at fault and appear very proud and haughty. But I think I hear you say she is doleful indeed. My own darling boy if you fall off that bicycle again you will make me that I shall be too frightened to go on one. How is it that some people go ten years without an accident? Do you remember when David (*Linton*) fell off his and Mr Moore had a similar accident a few days later? Mr Moore (*a relative of the McCluggages*) was hurt but David got clean off. But I strongly suspect that David is more cautious than either you or Mr Moore. It is a good thing you got off with your life and intact.

It is a good thing the shop is doing pretty well. We would both feel a great regret were anything to happen wouldn't we dear. How does this repayment leave the loans, is that half of Willie's paid off? Most likely Matt wants to break with your mother and that is the reason of his leaving. What will you say if he comes to London.

My own sweetheart I said I felt down but when I read your letter and let its words steal into my heart the black mood lifts. Sometimes school is very nice but other times it is very much the opposite but the sweet must come with the bitter and I would rather have money troubles and refractory children than greater bereavements. We have been singularly free of death and serious illness and we should take these lighter things without grumbling.

I am dearest your own Bessie

Apr 22, 1904: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam in London

My Dear Sam

Thankyou for the letter and the money order. I had to get some money to pay Uncle Robert so I sent it up to Willie with Herbert and he told him you sent it to me for a birthday present and Willie said it was very good. I had a very nice letter from Aunt Lizzie she says you told them when my birthday

was. She says you are well and working hard and that I would be proud of you if I saw you. She asked me to come over – the first one ever did across the water and if I am spared to ever cross I will. David came on his bike He is much the same. He has all he will get from the family he will have to work for all. I think he and Wallace are on good terms now, they had tea together. Herbert and I are going down to Belfast and we will look for some place and give him a trial. What about the smoking. Charles Quinn was near dead with smoking cigarettes, they are very injurious to health. Your loving Mother.

Apr 26, 1904: From Sam at the Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

My own sweetheart,

I forgive you for scolding me Bess as you are right in what you say, I do ride fairly fast as a rule, but on that occasion it was not the speed that was the cause nor was it carelessness on my part. One side of the road was under repair & rather narrow. As I was going along there was a man crossing & I rang my bell, he continued across and I took the other side behind him but he turned round and ran back and we cannoned & the force knocked me clean over the handlebars. I was stunned for a bit and the man disappeared. However dear I promise I will be more careful in future.

I went over to Wimbledon on Sunday and saw the shop I was telling you about and it is a fine shop & a good house so I am satisfied about it. We have arranged the price at £200 for goodwill & fixtures, stock at value, house £600 or to rent £50 p.a. The trade is average at £50 a week. We take it over at the end of Sept. And we are sending the man a deposit. The hours are shorter and they close on Wednesdays at two so I think it will be better for me in every way and sweetheart I am looking ahead and I think you will like the place. As to the financing I think we can do it by letting Mother and Willie wait. I am in a bit of a quandary over whether to say nothing or tell them all.

Now Bess I think I can see my way to run over to see you in September and you know dear how I long & look forward to it. Or perhaps you could come over here this summer. Uncle wanted to know if you would come over and I told him if not this summer you would surely be here the next. Aunt Lizzie is alright again – she had a narrow escape. I hope Aunt MK has got over her neuralgia.

Now Bess as re bike a machine that has been running for 4 years is not worth much and you will have endless trouble and expense with it as I know from experience. If you cannot get one that has been little used you will be safer to get a new one. I can get a new Rudge Whitworth through Willie for £9, a lovely machine & it will come cheaper in the finish. Let me know what you intend doing & if you can afford a new one I will do the rest. With kindest regards to Aunts and my hearts best love to yourself
your boy Sam

May 9, 1904: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess



Lisburn

Thanks for your pc from Lisburn which arrived this mng. I hope they are all well there Forgive me dearest for not writing sooner I have had a bad cold but I am better day after a quiet day at Uncles. Now darling I would be very pleased if you would come over, you can get easily in July when you

have your holiday & I have a man to look after the shop for a week. So if you come over we will have a fine time. I will give Auntie (*Lizzie*) your address when I hear from you.

As re the other shop the man would not take a deposit yet until he gets something else for himself. I think we will be alright but not so soon. I have had another tiff with my landlady so I am getting my meals sent in from a restaurant and I think it better as I will get more variety. I was having steak 4 or five times a week as she was too lazy to cook anything else. Bis was good last week £37 which was good considering how scarce money is.

Glad to hear Matthew sent you some flowers I had a letter from him last week he was in Belfast a few weeks ago and Mother and Herbert should be in today. I suppose they will stay with David. Its a pity you can't have a bike this year, perhaps next spring. Darling forgive my briefness

Your own boy Sam.

May 16, 1904: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

My own sweetheart,

I appreciated the kind way you answered my rather abrupt letter, I knew my letter was far from what it ought to be. There are times when I cannot come anywhere near expressing what I feel and there are many times when I have something troubling me and would like to tell you but I think it over and fancy it would be cowardly to worry you.

There was nothing concerning the bis troubling me last week as we have never been so strong – we could pay Mother & Willie comfortably now. It was my teeth that were troubling me. You can guess the mood one gets into. I put up with the pain as long as I could, foolishly, and then went to the dentist to have two out. He would not take more out at one time so I will go back tomorrow & have the other bad ones out.

So you had Mother & Herbert in to see you. Mother might have brought up the flowers as I expect she came to town on Sat. I'm afraid Herbert will tax both Wallace's and David's ingenuity to suit him or as Matt says "start him on life's journey".

Sweetheart you have not made up your mind yet about coming over. I have got the man so as to be free. Would you rather come over here or would you rather I came to you? If the latter I will come over while you are at Whitehead. Let me know which you prefer. Study your own inclinations only & I shall be delighted either way. They are all A1 at Heathfield Rd. The baby was christened on Sunday – Norman Edgar Shaw. I went over in the evng and had supper with Mrs Whitaker (*Uncle William's mother-in-law*).

I was in Ireland this time last year, time soon passes. Next Monday is Whit Monday and we are going to take stock and see the result of the 12 months takings. I am sure the balance is on the right side tho' it may not be so large as anticipated. As re the Wimbledon shop there is nothing further done. Now sweetheart I must stop. Hoping to hear again from you soon with my hearts best love

Sam

May 21, 1904: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam in London

My Dear Sam

I think I have been far too long writing. I hope you will forgive me. I was not well before Herbert went and now he is gone I miss him and fret a good deal about him though I know he is alright with David. You know how hard it is to get through this world and Herbert is not too well fitted for it. He was very sorry leaving home and parting with me at the station. I know Miss Kennedy will tell you I was in with her. She has had some trouble with her throat but will be alright. Herbert saw her since I came home and says to tell you she was a nice well-mannered girl. Let me know when she gets

her holidays. We have a stranger since Sunday John Dalzell he is at the railway at Hollywood. Matt went to him and asked him over (*this is almost certainly the cousin of Emily Dalzell, David's new wife who was an engineer*) I suppose you heard about another little son in Willies? (*Willie junior*) I have five grandsons. Goodbye

With fondest love Mother.

May 23, 1904: From Sam at Uncle William Shaw's 12 Heathfield Rd to Bess

My own sweetheart

Just a few lines this time. We took stock this mng and worked it out as £204 profit- not so bad under the circumstances. Uncle, Auntie Mrs Prior and I were going for a bike ride when Aunties machine blew up (*a tyre presumably*) and we had to abandon the ride. We are going to some of the theatres this evng. They are calling me for tea altho' I have had it three times today I will write you tomorrow. I expect to be able to come over early in July. The man is coming up to see me & then I will know definitely I will try to get him for some time before the 12th.

Your Sam

May 25, 1904: Sam from The Chester Stores to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

I have just squared up after Monday's work and have plenty of time today as money seems to be scarce after the holiday.

I hope you have got over your spring cleaning, it is a nice (*ie fiddling*) job but I suppose it has to be done. Your landlord is not doing so badly, none of them like doimg it too much. I am very glad to know dear that you are improving as fast as possible. You will be having your holidays in a few more weeks which will set you up, and sweetheart we are going to spend

them together this year and I intend that we shall have the best time yet. I will look up the excursions to Belfast to see if there is one to suit, if not I will do with the ordinary as I want to be over before July 12th so that we can have a trip to the Isle Of Man. I suppose Auntie (*Mary K*) will be taking apartments in Whitehead. You might ask her to engage a room for me for two weeks for whatever time suits you.

I had a letter from Mother yesterday. She has been ill & had to have three teeth out but she is much better now. Herbert wrote Mother & enclosed a message for me about you, it was very complimentary. If you write Mother don't mention about me coming over as it will be a surprise for her. I have not been back to the dentist yet as I could not have them replaced before I come over & I don't want to be toothless.

Now darling I must stop & do some work. I hope Aunt has got over her attack of influenza. Sweetheart accept the hearts best love of
your own boy Sam

May 30, 1904: Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

My own sweetheart

I have been waiting for information re excursions etc... and I am sorry to say I cannot give you a definite date at present so that Aunt MK can make arrangements. I am sorry to put her to such inconvenience. I do hope the weather will be fine Bess and I am looking forward to this holiday more than I have ever looked forward to one.

Now Bess why do you blame me for extravagance? I have not been up till now but I will have to be if I am to look at all respectable beside you. And you dear are getting a new dress to please me and I appreciate the action tho' darling I have always loved you no matter what dress you have on for Bess I love you for yourself alone.

I am glad dearest that you think I have done well – the result is very good and have no need to worry about money to meet accounts or Mother and Willie. I am out of the wood and can talk straight to all.

I hope darling you are feeling stronger & that the operation has proved satisfactory. I am in very good health and my teeth have not troubled me since I had those out but I feel as if I would like a holiday. Now darling I must stop to catch the 12pm collection Remember me to Aunties
your own boy Sam.

Jun 6 1904 From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

My own sweetheart

I have just decided when I am coming over. The man is coming into the shop on 4th July and I will give him a good drilling two days will be sufficient to put him right for the fortnight. So Bess in four weeks we will meet once more.

Bis has been rather quiet since the Bank Holiday but I have nothing to worry about as it is better than last year. From what I know at present we will get the other store at the end of September so we will need all the capital we can scrape together. If it turns out as well as this one I will be happy.

Kindest regards to Auntie. I am very grateful to Aunt MK for arranging her time to suit me and with my hearts bet love

your own Sam.

Jun 13, 1904: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

My own sweetheart,

I was very glad to get your letter and to hear that the thing has been

removed & you are getting on well. I am sure you will feel happier & better now that it is over. (*Bess had a polyp removed from her nose*).

So Mrs David wants you to visit often. Is she finding the time hanging heavily on her hands? I suppose she does during the time David is out of town, that is one of the drawbacks to a (*commercial*) traveller's life.

Three weeks more darling & I am waiting patiently to get started. I spent the day yesterday with Mr & Mrs Langely (*Sainsburys Manager*) I had a very nice day. Uncle & Aunt & children are well but Uncle is very worried as the Tea Trade is very bad, indeed it never was worse. Trade is rather quiet with me at present but it will pull round. Now dear I must stop and get this collection

your own boy Sam

Jun 12, 1904: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam in London

My Dear Sam

I got a good letter from your Uncle and was glad to hear the good news it contained and that you have succeeded so well. I think your Uncle is just and good and I believe it was well for you that you went to London. I suppose you have heard that Herbert is home. I sent for him to come home as there was no chance of any place to suit him. David sent a great letter to Willie about him and he and Emily and Willie and Martha are away in the country today. Did you hear that your Uncle Sam and his wife and Aunt Aggie are leaving America on July 2nd (*Eliza's brother and sister*). I will be glad to see them. I am glad your Aunt is so well. It is a nice name they gave their new boy. (*Norman Edgar Shaw*)

Jun 18, 1904: From David Linton at 18 Albertville Rd Belfast to Sam

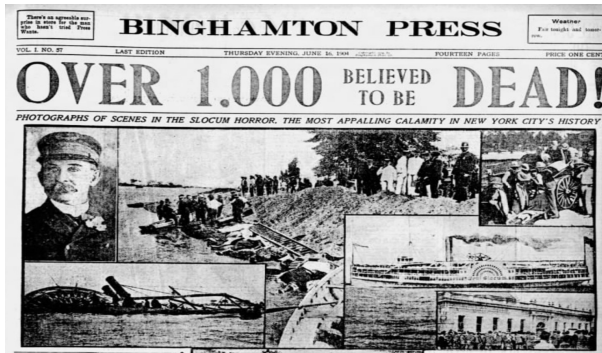
Dear Sam

I received your letter when I got back from a tour of the north and was glad to hear that you still number me among your friends. (If you want to agree with your elder brothers better, do not carry a grudge so long, if we have made a mistake overlook it sometimes). With regard to your stay in Belfast it was part of your training and I think you cannot look back to it with anything but credit to yourself, as in a very short time you advanced a good way in your business career, and had it not been for enemies you made in your last place by being over energetic there would have been no blot to cover. It was not, after all, a blot as far as you were concerned but was caused by an ill-advised employer. However, that is all in the past and gone and I would say to you to entirely forget it as I have done. If I was to hear it referred to in any way I would put my foot on it – and Willie, you know, has never heard a sound of it. I was pleased to hear from Mother how well you have done this year and you deserve great credit but you will need to watch your health and not get run down with your long hours and overwork. I was told by a so-called friend of yours that you had tried to break off your engagement with Bessie so I flatly contradicted him saying it was a bundle of yarns. The same party tried, without success, to put a damper on my friendship with Emily. You know if they were not talking about you they would be talking of someone else. Emily and I were up home last weekend and had a most enjoyable time. I think Bessie is there this evening. I arranged with Willie for him to take Herbert and keep him night and day for 3 years as he would not be strong enough for the city. I know Martha will be kind to him.

We (*Emily and he*) are very happy in our “ain hame” and you will be very welcome to stay in it any time you are over. We are just after our stock-taking and the last 6 months have been our best yet. I gave Willie a cheque for £100 on Monday so I will be square with him soon. I must close, hoping to hear from you again soon with kind regards from Emily and your aff. Bro David.

Jun 20, 1904: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

My own sweetheart, time passes and the space is getting shorter & I am not sorry for I sometimes get impatient. I am glad you had a good day in Antrim with the school, it is a very interesting place. I suppose no accidents happened. Did you see what happened with that New York Sunday School? Of course happening in America it doesn't seem so terrible because we are getting used to their big things.



The sinking of the General Slocum

Talking about America I had a letter from Mother and she says my Uncle & his wife are coming over from New York in July and my Aunt from Chicago is coming with them so there will be a few Yanks around. I asked her if she would like me to come over and she says she would be very pleased so I told her I might run over sometime in the summer.

I had a letter from David this morning (*he quotes at length – see letter above*) Darling you know how far this is from true and I feel very cross about it as it does not reflect to our credit. (*He is referring to the rumour about their engagement*) I can surmise who has said it viz Wallace and his wife. It is very unpleasant but we can afford to let them talk.

Now Bess I can say definitely about the other shop. We have paid £15 deposit on it and we take it over on 29th Sept. It is a lovely shop & a lovely

house in a very select part of London so Bess I have a lot to look forward to and dearest I look forward to this place as our home & when I get you over here I shall be happy indeed. I was over at Mrs Priors yesterday and Aunt Lizzie and she were chaffing me about my holiday & wanting to know when they might expect you over. I hope you have got your timetable finished & have found your temper again. Kindest regards to Aunties & dearest one I am always

your boy Sam.

Jun 24, 1904: From Sam at at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

My own sweetheart,

I was glad to get your letter and your advice about what I heard from David & I think with you the quiet policy is best until I make sure who invented the lie. Yes I wrote David and thanked him for his denial as I considered it a kind action on his part to stick up for us in our absence. I have put more confidence in David since I left Belfast and he has known my intentions re marriage and of course knew better than the one who told him. It is easily seen dearest that they don't know you or your nobility of character or they would not have said what they did. I expect it is Wallace & his wife, they are both fond of this sort of thing. I can see the drift of what is behind it. Wallace has heard indirectly how I have done and, I suppose, how David has done and he has not done so well as either of us and got a bit jealous and tries to get even with me.

I am glad dear your nose is getting on so well and sincerely hope it won't trouble you again. I must stop now and will probably write on Sunday. Rest assured of the love of

your own boy Sam.

Jun 26, 1904: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam in London

My Dear Sam

I just received your kind letter, the time does fly past, the longest day is by again. I have just remembered this is Willie's birthday. Herbert is in Willie's (*working in the shop in Castlewellan*) I never said one word on the matter but it is a great relief to me that he stops at night. He seems quite happy. He is not too soon doing a little for his food. He will be 16 in three months. I am getting £30 from David and Willie, and myself is going to Downpatrick to buy a nice stone to put on your Father's grave.



The cow is calved and doing well and has a lovely calf. James Magreery (*listed as a doctor but clearly a vet here*) sat up with Matt and Bob happened up by chance and Ernest and me made the tea. The (*school*)master says Ernest is doing very well and he wants him a bit early to do extra. Sarah (*Shaw*) at Clarkhill has been very ill and it is a pity for Robert. Now dear Sam what about you, I hope you are well. I was thinking of writing to Miss Kennedy. When do you think you will be coming let me know for I want to ask her before the Yankees come. The week after this I suppose she will be getting her holidays. Now I must stop from your loving mother.

Jun 27, 1904: From Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess

My own Sweetheart,

This is lovely weather, the finest I have seen since I came to London. I hope it will last. It is only a few more days and I shall be with you. If possible I

will be with you on Wednesday at 7.40 am but I will let you know for certain before then. I have let the house again but I have to spend a good bit before the people come in so I have plenty on hand. I suppose you have finished this week for the term and I am glad everything has been running so smoothly Dearest I will not write much this evng as I can tell you all next week and I wish it were here but I must wait and finish with my hearts best love, I am always

your own boy Sam

Jul 15, 1904: From Sam in Castlewellan to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

I received your very welcome letter this morning in bed. I have had beastly weather since I came here until today and it has somewhat improved. I was around seeing my friends this morning. Grandfather (*Sam Shaw*) was very pleased to see me. There is a cousin of mine arriving here tomorrow from New York (*Samuel Francis Shaw*) and they have been wanting me to stay over Sunday to see him but, dearest, I am not going to do it. I will be in Belfast at 11.15am. I have been thinking that we might go down to Bangor (*Co Down*) and see the fleet.



Bangor Co. Down

Anyway we shall see when I get down to the station. Willie (*his eldest brother who runs a grocery in Castlewellan*) is wanting me to do some work for him so I say I don't mind bossing him for a change. I don't know how he will like it when I start. Your verses by Tennyson say all, my darling. I will conclude with love from

your own Bhoys Sam

Jul 24, 1904: From Sam back in London to Bess c/o W J Kennedy Calhame Ballynure Co Antrim

My precious sweetheart,

This Sunday night and the first I have passed since I parted with you and I needn't say how lonely I felt, even though I was at Uncle's my thoughts kept wandering across the stream that separates me from the one I love and I was thinking how happy the last two Sundays had been. Sweetheart another twelve months will finish my longing for you as I hope you will be over here by that time. I am so glad dearest that you put love first as love means happiness and without it we don't live, we only exist.



Ballynure village

Monday morning, my darling I hope you are having a pleasant time in the country (*they both use this phrase in letters to mean at Ballynure, Bessie's grandfathers ancestral farm*) and that the weather is good, it is very hot here. Uncle is going to be in Belfast on Friday, he is going up home to stay with Willie. I told him how Mother treated us as I expect she will tell him about our visit. I will never forget the insults and it will be a long time before I go home again. However dear, you know me and I know you and my Mothers talk won't make any difference to us or our love.

The drains are a very expensive job, I wish they were finished but they do not interfere with the shop as they are at the back. Business was very good last week £36. Another 7 weeks and I will be going to Wimbledon. We will have to get another man in here as the man we had is too fond of the bottle.

I am glad you had a nice day down with your friends at Whitehead. I have to start to do some work now as there is a lot to be done. Kindest regards to all and my hearts best love to you sweetheart,

your own boy Sam

Aug 4, 1904: 4 Postcards from Sam at the Chester Stores to Bess in Belfast

Rode out to Hatfield with Aunt & Mrs Prior. Lovely Ride I may as well send as many as make a Hatfield Page

Yours SJM



The Hatfield page

Aug 11 1904 From Sam at the Chester Stores to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

I was wondering this morning if your letter had gone astray as the Irish delivery had gone past but he came back again and brought me your letter which I needn't say I was very glad to get. I'm very glad you liked the music dearest as I don't yet know what it is like. Yes that photo is like Auntie at a distance but the camera was so much lower than her that it makes the body look smaller. Of course with a snapshot you cannot judge exactly every time. I will take a snapshot of this place some of these days and send you one.



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Sam's camera was probably a Box Brownie

Glad you like those postcards . How do they suit the album?

Thanks for your advice re Mother. She may forget but I am not one to forget easily. I shall pay her off very soon but I will have to make it before she gets it (*ie her money*). Thanks dearest for your lessons on French. It seems simple enough as you put it. I haven't got the books yet as I haven't had much spare time and I won't till I get settled at Wimbledon but I will get the books and have a try but don't expect me to make rapid progress. Business is still quiet and money scarce. Now sweetheart I must stop as I want you to get this tomoorow. Kindest regards to Aunties and fondest love to yourself

Sam

Aug 28, 1904: Sam at the Chester Stores Highgate to Bess at 73 Denmark St Belfast

My own sweetheart,

This day four weeks I will be at Wimbledon. I am going a few days previous to taking over so as to see it is genuine for the owner & his wife would like the bargain declared off. It will be a struggle to finance it. I wish it was over

but there is no use worrying over it. I was over at Uncle's yesterday and they are all in good form though Auntie was was upset as when she was out she saw a man run over and killed on the spot.

I was glad to hear dearest that you had two enjoyable musical evngs. It is a disappointment to lose your music but it can't be helped. I will get you "Jessies Dream" (*a Scottish Ballad*). I bought a few songs last Friday. I hope you will like them. How are you going on with postcards? You might give me an idea what sorts you want to match those you have.

How are things going at school? The schools here have started today it is a good job to get them off the streets as they are a nuisance. Sweetheart you will have to excuse this as a letter for I can't write well this evening but darling if only I could express what I feel you would be satisfied with the love as you are everything to me.

Your own boy Sam

Aug 30, 1904: Sam at the Chester Stores Highgate to Bess at 73 Denmark St Belfast

My own sweetheart,

I received your letter on Monday, which I was very glad to get, I was looking for it days previously. I am glad you like the music dear. It was by chance my choice was so good as, unless I can hear it music is all the same to me, but I live in hope of someday knowing more about it.

Sweetheart you think I am worrying about the extra responsibilities I am taking on. Well naturally I feel a little anxious, not so much about the new place but there is a certain amount of risk in putting a new man in here & until I know the man and can trust him I will be more or less uneasy. I know darling that you sympathise with me but I don't wish you to be troubled by my business troubles as they are only small ones and what everybody has to contend with.

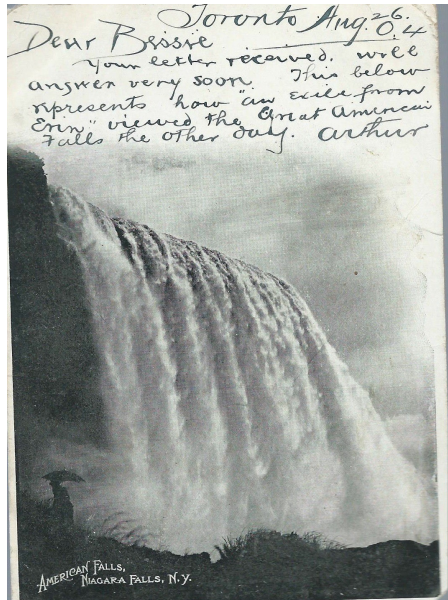
I had a very nice letter from David. Uncle converted him and Wallace to Free Trade. Are you still in favour of Protectionism ? What do you think of the cartoons. Some of them are rather smart.

That was a very sad accident on Lough Neagh I didn't know it could be so rough. *(This refers to the sudden sinking of a boat carrying a family of picnickers of whom all but one drowned)* It must have been a terrible experience for the surviving girl.

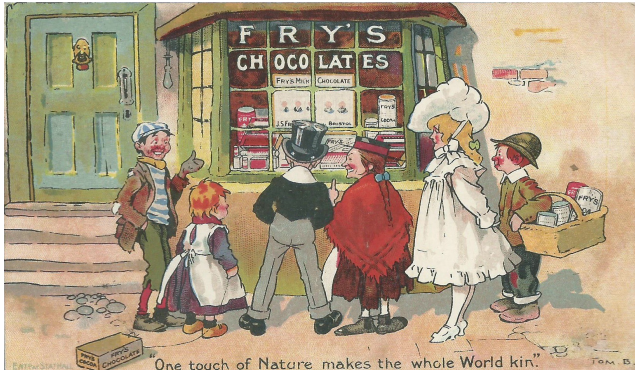
I had a postcard from Bray the other day from a chap called Wilson who has gone over for a holiday – and you have had one from Arthur and he liked to hear from the old country whether you heard from the new or not. Have you heard from Winnipeg lately? I sent Gracie a postcard a few days ago with my new address.

So you have got an addition to the family in the shape of a fox terrier. If he is as cute as his namesake I should like him very much but I suppose when you have had him a time you won't want to part with him. Do you remember me telling you that I sold Uncle's dog for him? Well the man I sold it to has gone away and the dog has gone back to Uncle.

I will get a Fry's postcard the next time the man comes round and send it to you.

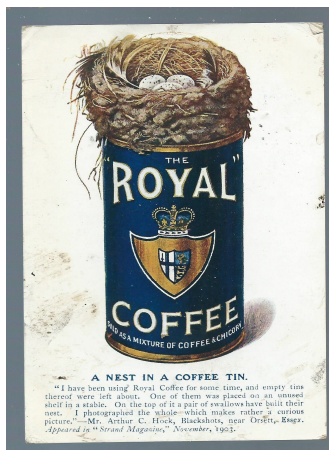


Niagara Falls



Now darling I must hurry down to the bank before it closes. Kindest regards to Aunties and fondest love to my sweetheart
your own boy Sam.

Sep 5, 1904: Postcard from Sam to Bess



This is one of Uncle's firms specialities. The most of the West End clothing houses are advertising in this way. Weather very wet, hoping you will have it fine on Saturday Yours

SJL

Sep 9, 1904: Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess at 73 Denmark St

My own sweetheart,

Your lovely present, good wishes and photos to hand. The card-case is simply splendid (*a calling or business card holder usually of silver*) just the very thing. I was thinking of buying one myself but as you have bought it for me I shall value it much more & dearest I thank you sincerely for it and I thank you for your kind wishes, they mean more from you than from anyone else and I hope I shall have the assurance of hearing you wish me Happy Birthday on birthdays in the future. I know they will be happy ones as I will have you with me and that means happiness to me. Darling how I like your postcard and its sentiment "In life I cling to thee" sweetheart that is what I want.

Aunt MK's rose arrived today in good form, you might thank her from me for so kindly remembering me and also Aunt E for her kind wishes. I received the photos alright and Bess I must say they are not flattering to either of us and neither does you justice.

I was looking at the advert for the Heysham to Belfast route this morning and I find it is not as fast as the Holyhead to Greenmore route by one hour but I may try it next time. (*The first Heysham sailing was in May 1904*)

Your own boy Sam

Sept 9, 1904: From Sam at 306 Haydons Rd Wimbledon his new shop

306 Haydons Road is now a modern block of flats. Sam's shop was probably bombed during the war.

My own sweetheart,

I came down to the above address today to see how things are being carried out & I must say I am well pleased with all I have seen. It is a nice select trade that is done & twice the amount of money can be turned over

here with as little labour as I had in Highgate. I should be well onto the running of it by this day fortnight when we take it over. I am at present living with Mr Butcher, the present owner, they are very nice people & have a lovely home and I know dear if you were here it would please you too and therefore I look forward to making you happy. The man I have left in Highgate promises well altho at the moment he is none too smart. But he will soon wake up to his responsibilities. I believe he is honest and that is everything as the rest will come right.

You won't be sorry when your exams are over. You will be able to take it easier then. Will this be the last one? So you have heard from Gracie at last. She seems to be getting on A1. I think she is mistaken about me for I believe I wrote her last. It will be nice for your Mother if Arthur gets sent North (*ie to Manitoba*) permanently.

There is little strange happening at present. I have my head and hands fully occupied so darling forgive any discrepancies and believe you are all in all to

your Sam.



Wimbledon

Sep 13, 1904: from Sam at The Chester Stores Highgate to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

I was very sorry to hear that you had had a cold and got it in your throat again. I hope dear it is better. You are right sweetheart the photos won't do for circulation but I value them as a memento of our holiday, the happiest time I have ever spent.é

This week will finish me here. I got our man in yesterday morning and he promises to be satisfactory. We took stock and the gross profit is £119 for 16 weeks. The net will be about £70 which won't be bad. At the moment we want all the money we can get to take over the other shop as the man wants cash down & he has about £150 stock which is a lot, but we can do it with a struggle. Being in bis for oneself has its worries and troubles but it pays. If this man does as well as I have with the other shop I should net £300 a year. (*Equivalent to about £30,000 today*) Uncle is very sanguine over this new shop & thinks I will make plenty of money in it but on the turnover it will take all its time to show 23% gross profit as this one has done. The people around here are asking why I am leaving them but I will be here once a week as I have a half day on Wednesday at Wimbledon and will share it with Mr Osborne – the man here – as if I don't I fear he won't stay as the hours are too long and as he is new I need to study him.

Darling forgive me for not writing sooner but it was not possible. I hope Aunties are well, give them my kindest regards. I hope to hear from you soon and remember you are my all,

your own boy Sam.

Sept 27, 1904: From Sam at 306 Haydons Rd Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

I must apologise for not writing sooner but I had to go up to Highgate last

evng and it was late when I got home. I rode on my bike and it was a nice ride most of the way but the traffic was a bit thick around the Strand and Charing Cross. Trade was quiet at Chester Rd last week and I went to investigate the cause. I found that all the usual customers had been in but there seems to be a scarcity of money being spent. However I think things will right themselves and go on as usual. I am getting on A1 in this place and it should pay well. Mr Butcher is going away so I will run it from tomorrow. We are paying him cash down for the goodwill and stock & could not have done so had not Willie sent a cheque for £120 so he at all events, has faith in the undertaking & I think it will turn out well.

Uncle William sent a letter of my Mother's down and she says Willie's second boy Robert had a fall and cut his knee and the doctor dressed it but it got worse and turned to blood poisoning. The doctor attended 2 or 3 times a day until he said he could do no more & Willie sent for Dr Tate of the Downpatrick Hospital and they had to bring him to Downpatrick for an operation. I hope he will get over it. Willie & Martha are very much upset & I am writing Willie this evening. Bess dearest will you write Martha? I know they will appreciate the enquiry.

Uncle had a letter from his brother Sam, the American, they got home safe and enjoyed their trip but they (*Sam Shaw, his wife, & sister Agnes who joined him in Ireland from Chicago*) were sad at leaving the old country for the last time.

A niece of Auntie Lizzie's about 17 years has had a proposal of marriage from a Persian in London making £2000 a year. She has not accepted yet nor I don't think will, altho' I believe he is a very nice fellow.

I think darling you have quite enough on hand with your three evenings a week & your French (as well as teaching full time at the National School) I doubt I shall find time to study any here (*Bess has offered to send French books*) but I will if I can.

I am glad you got rid of your cold so soon. I had a bad one for three weeks but am alright now. The weather is something grand here at present. It seems a pity to be shut up in town when a romp in the country would be so good.

Kindest regards to Aunties (*Aunt Mary Knight Arthur and Aunt Eliza Arthur*) & sweetheart mine own, I am & always

your Boy Sam.

Oct 17, 1904: Sam from 306 Haydons Rd S Wimbledon

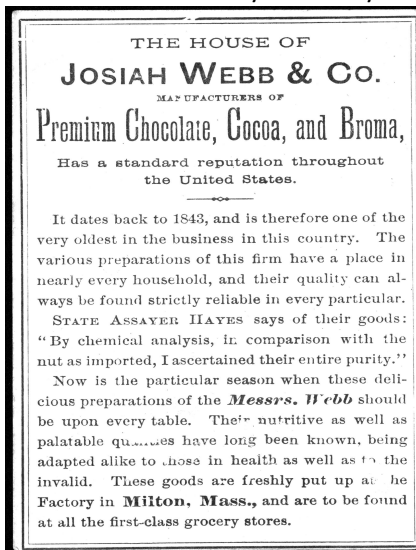
My own sweetheart,

You will be thinking what a beast I am not answering you sooner but darling I think you will forgive me when I say that with one thing & another I had very few spare moments. In the beginning of the week I had no help here & as it takes two and a boy you may guess the fix I was in. Uncle was to have a man for me last Monday but he did not trouble himself too much & on Sunday when I was up he said he had got no one. Well I gave him a piece of my mind & I wrote him a letter on Monday night which he did not like but it was the truth what I said & it almost led to an eruption.

However, he got a man sent to me on Tuesday and he started on Wednesday and he is a good assistant. On Wed I went up to Highgate as I had promised to let Osborne off and it was 12.45am when I got home.

Everything is going A1 at Highgate. Thurs, Fri & Sat I was here getting things squared as things were in a terrible muddle, and yesterday I went up to Mrs Whittakers as I had promised to go and so didn't find time to write you until now but sweetheart you needn't think I will kill myself at it as I hope to come over to you at Xmas for turkey fit and well.

It is a very nice letter you have had from Arthur. I am sure it will be a grand time for you all when he comes over. They will have to pay London a visit when they are over. Of course darling it is you who will have that to decide. As regards Arthur's chocolates, I don't know what to say. Certainly the price of his packets is cheap, but as regards the quality I have had some States confections & I should not place them before our own countries. Webbs may come up to what he says but he is hardly in a position to judge, as the English manufacturers have improved their standard of quality greatly within the last few years. Chocolates at 10d a pound are not much class and if Webbs are good stuff there is no doubt he could sell tons in London alone. I should very much like to see him do it & there is no reason why he can't if the carriage doesn't stand in the way. If you like darling I will write him on this point and if not send particulars to you.



I had two postcards from Gracie a few days ago. She says if they don't come we will have to go over – a small order. However, I am going to tell her we will return their visit in a few years if you will risk the sea-sickness.

I have not heard lately how Willie's boy is getting on but I suppose he is improving (*he was left lame and was unable to serve in WW1*) I hope Aunts MK & E are in good health and spirits & sweetheart mine own forgive me for not writing sooner and believe you are all in all to

your own boy Sam.

Oct 23 1904 Sam at Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My sweetheart.

I have been picturing to myself you here in this house & thinking what is in store for me & I hope to realize my picture shortly. I have worked, dear, with this object in view ever since I left Belfast.

Now sweetheart I will write as you suggest to Arthur. I also hope that Gracie and he will come as I should like very much to see them. I don't think Arthur would be able to do much business in Belfast but he might do well here. Of course I take it for granted he will want to come to London as Gracie is anxious to see the historic parts here and Bess if you are not in London before they come to Belfast you will have to come over with them so we can all have a turn round together. Headquarters at Wimbledon, 25 minutes from Waterloo Station won't it be grand.

I wish I could come over Bess for that event on Nov 11th but you see there are only 6 weeks until Xmas and you know I am coming over for Turkey etc (lots of the etc) at Xmas so I cannot come sooner. Another 9 Sundays Bess and I will be with you, it won't be long & yet it will be & the time I will have to share with you will pass too soon.

Yes sweetheart Uncle & I are good friends again, we have let our difference drop and are as good friends as we have been in the past. The Highgate shop is doing very well & the man we have there is a gem. You remember me telling you about the man we had in while I was in Ireland. It was he who put the sanitary inspectors on the drains which cost us £36. Well he got another sit since & got dismissed and has been out of work some time. He owes us 6 weeks rent and has not cleared out of the house but we haven't liked to push him out on a/c of his wife & child but he has been caught stealing oil out of the cellar and now we are putting the brokers in.

Things are not going so well here as expected but as trade in general is flat it may have affected it. However, it is doing more than pay the expenses & I feel sure it will improve so I keep my heart up & go ahead.

Now sweetheart I must stop as you are a long time in bed. Remember me kindly to Aunties. I hope they are both well and Bess believe me to be ever your Sam.

Oct 28, 1904: From Sam in Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

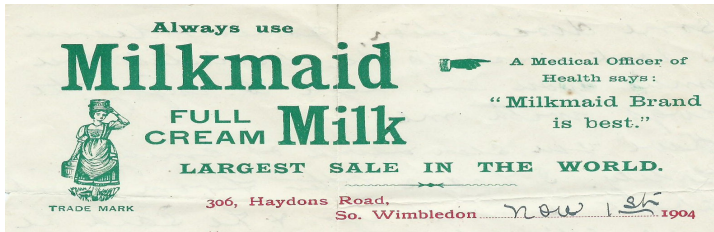
It is quite natural for you to wonder what is wrong with me when I keep you waiting so long, but dearest one you will grant this that I had a lot to do & I must say a good bit of responsibility & worry. I can see it from your side too dearest & I am sorry for causing you that anxiety & Bess I can say that now I have got things into running order I will try not to transgress again.

I understood Bess that you were not serious about your request for the Oratorio & I answered it seriously all the same as nothing tempts me so much as to come to Belfast & it is pleasing to me to know dear that you feel I ought to be with you. Ah well dear it is my misfortune that I can't but the time is not far distant, I hope, when we shall be together for good. We put those people out and lost 6 weeks rent but we will summon him for it when he starts work again.

I will write Arthur and send him one or two of the chocolate manufacturers products. I think he intends selling to the retail shops but I don't think he would have much success with them but with wholesale trade.

your own boy Sam.

Nov 1, 1904: Sam to Bess from Wimbledon



My own sweetheart

I called in at 22 Walmer Rd on Sunday evng as you asked & that is where Mr Moore senior lives. I saw Mr Moore's sister & she gave me Mr Moore jnr's address which I enclose. (*One of the McCluggages married Thomas Moore*)

Business was none too grand last week but it has been alright today & yesterdays so it is picking up. For the four weeks I have had it it has averaged £37 10s at a decent profit. Tomorrow, Wednesday, is my evng off tho that means work of some description. However dear I don't wish to be absolutely free until you are here to enjoy the evngs with me.

Have you seen David or Emily recently? I had a letter from David about a month ago & he was wanting to know how I was getting on with the new business. I haven't answered him yet for want of time and now I have had a letter from Emily wanting to know why I hadn't answered.

How did you get Halloween over? It is not known here. Did Aunt E's nuts burn well? (*According to Scottish tradition, a single woman would select a hazelnut to represent each potential lover and throw them in the fire. If one nut burned away to ashes, rather than popping amid the heat of the flames, that would represent the her soon-to-be husband. Engaged couples would carry out a similar ritual, each tossing a nut into an open fire. If the nuts quietly smouldered that promised a smooth union but if they hissed and crackled it meant a rough ride.*)

I am sending you a pennyworth of chocolates Bess I hope they won't affect your teeth. With kindest regards to Aunties. Sweetheart mine, you are all to your boy

Sam.

Nov 8, 1904: From Bess in Belfast to Sam in London

My own darling boy Sam,

The weeks are going surely enough they seem to go fast and sometimes slowly and now we are well into winter and it is cold stormy and wet. I suppose it is the same with you and you won't get out much. Are you writing to Arthur (*her brother*) this week? His address is 27 Oxford St (*Toronto*). I owe him a letter and must write soon. We went to a Scottish concert on Thursday and a right good night we had of it. The singers came from Scotland and were excellent singing in Scottish dialect. There are a good many Scotch people in Belfast. Most Saturday evenings we spend we spend at the Ulster Hall organ recitals. Uncle (*David*) McCluggage has taken an office in Waring St just opposite David's place (*David Linton's warehouse*). I believe he was up seeing Arthur (*John Arthur McCluggage his son*) there.

You don't speak of business this time, sweetheart so all must be going smoothly. You must not be too impatient with the Wimbledon business, perhaps the slow growth will prove the steadiest. As for those opinions of yours, my sweetheart, if I were you I would not concern myself with others beliefs or unbeliefs. (*There follows a long sermon with the essential message: "He that endureth to the end shall be saved"!*)

Now darling with fondest love

Bess

Sam's reply to this letter, if it was ever written, does not survive.

Nov 18, 1904: From Bess in Belfast to Sam in London

My own sweetheart Sam,

Of course you will now be well into the London winter with its fearful fogs. Does the fog ever keep you from wandering in the evenings I wonder? So you have had a letter from Willie. How has the operation left Robert's knee? What does he say about your mother? Has she written you or you her?

You ask did not Uncle McC(*luggage - David*) have an office before. He did not, the place in Lisburn was enough. But in his new venture he requires premises for a showroom to display his stock. (*Shoes*) Do you remember last Xmas the McCluggages had trouble with David's father dying? Now their Grandmother has passed away yesterday. Their daughter Maggie will be left all alone as she is the only one unmarried. Aunt Elisa (*Arthur*) and Jane (*Mccluggage*) are going over to see her this evening. A young fellow in our house who crossed on Saturday (*from England*) says that the London NW Railway always runs straight to Fleetwood on Sundays as Holyhead does not like Sunday Traffic. Did you know about that? What station in London does it leave from? (*She is pointing out that this means a direct service with no change of train*) Your skirmish with the Wholesale Dealers amuses me. You are such a good Manager sometimes I am quite frightened of your masterful ways. Your Uncle Shaw seems to be of a very sanguine temperament like Bessie Mac's father (*ie David McCluggage*). He crosses tonight for the funeral tomorrow. At school this week Mr Mac (*William McCluggage*) and I have been all alone for Miss M is on the sick list.

Now sweetheart I must run for it is almost time I was dressed and away.
With love my darling,

Bess.

Nov 22, 1904: Sam in Wimbledon to Bess

My own sweetheart,

Your long delayed letter (*dated Nov 18th*) arrived today & I couldn't say how glad I was to get it as I couldn't make out what held it back. I am glad sweetheart that it was only a mistake in the address as you had put Highgate instead of Wimbledon and so of course it went all round the shop & found me out tonight.

We are well into winter time here now. Fog all week last week but there has been a change and it was snowing all this morning & very cold. I was out in it for four hours & I had enough so now I am writing this beside a good fire for a change. Sweetheart, you need not wonder about my wandering in the evg. as they are few and far between.

No sweetheart I have not decided which route I come by yet but as far as I know it will be via Greenmore. Your information is correct but the trains leave too early on Xmas evng for me to get away in time altho' on an ordinary Saturday I could. I wish could dear. However I will write the L&NW people for information also the Midland Rlwy as they may have a later one to Heysham. The L&NW station is Euston, the one I always come by & the Midland station is Paddington. You may rest assured that if I can be with you on Sunday I will.

Willie's Robert wasn't out of hospital when I heard last from him so I don't know how the little chap fares. He never mentioned Mother when he wrote & nor did I when I replied. I haven't written her yet nor have I heard from her. I have thought a lot on Martha's PS & I am not convinced that Mother is worrying about me. I might write her at Xmas or I may not as our last interview is not easy to forgive. I am sorry for her but she has brought it upon herself & I believe she sees the result of her temper but it will be cooled down when we next meet.

I am sorry to hear about the McCluggages's trouble but I suppose the old lady was a good age and ripe for the grave but it is unfortunate happening at this time as it makes Xmas rather quiet for Bessie (*McCluggage – Bess's cousin*) and the boys.

I must write to David as I haven't yet answered him but I don't wish him to know I am coming over as I won't have time for visiting & intend to spend it all with you & yours Bess & make the most of my stay. Ask Aunt MK how long she will keep me?

Things are running very well over here altho' trade is hardly as good as I would like still it is improving here. I got one good new customer who came to the shop after I was closed wanting some goods so I served him & he asked me to call at his house for orders. The Highgate shop is pulling round. It dropped a bit when I left but Osborne is working it up again. His sister is still alive but he says it will be a good day for her when she goes. She brought it on herself by taking anti-fat foolish girl. (*This "botanical" product contained opiates*)



I don't expect to have much idle time before we meet. I have bought a lot of stuff for the Xmas trade & so I must sell it. It is a tiresome time for the trade. With kindest regards to Aunties & sweetheart I will close with love from
your own Sam

Nov 23, 1904: From Bess in Belfast to Sam in London

My own darling boy

I cannot account for the fact that you have received no letter from me. I wrote dearest on Friday (18th Nov) and you should have received on Saturday. I posted it myself in good time and cannot account for it going astray. Perhaps it may have turned up by this time. I hope so dearest for I am very bad at repeating what I have to say.

I was rather disappointed this morning for I was expecting a letter from you to find that you had not had mine. However dearest this will relieve you of any anxiety you may feel on my score

You will have this tomorrow, Thursday morning and I shall look soon after for word from you I shall feel anxious.

As for the other anxiety you felt, that of my being vexed, well sweetheart, I don't think you gave me any cause to feel vexed.

Now sweetheart, much love

your own girlie, Bess

Nov 28, 1904: From Bess in Belfast to Sam in London

My own darling boy

I am afraid this will be but a short letter for I have been shopping and am going out again in less than an hour. I am glad, sweetheart that that letter arrived at last. I should not have cared for a letter of mine to go travelling. I had guessed it would reach you sometime for when I was thinking what could have become of it I did not feel very certain that it was rightly addressed.

Oh yes we had the snow last week, on Monday morning it commenced, it lay all last week but we have had no further falls though it is still lying in

the country.

I was at a concert last week at Railway St Lisburn Bessie Mac was the accompanist and I stayed overnight. The Bessie and I went galivanting all Saturday so that is why you have received no letter from me till now.

The sale of work comes off next weekend and I must go tho I have no money to spend.

Yes sweetheart you know you may come when you like and go when you like. You will be here this day in four weeks in any case. I suppose you will be very busy this Christmas. I had a rare old time of it today for MrMac sent word yesterday that he was going to the country to the funeral of a little nephew and he would not be able to come into school till the afternoon. Miss M being still away I had full charge of the school my only assistants being Miss McLoughlin aged 13 and Miss Prissy Montgomery aged 14. But I managed thro the day pretty well.

Do you know what Aunt E says? She is longing to see your pretty face again. She is counting the weeks and will soon be counting the days. And now sweetheart I remain your own girlie

Bess.

Dec 4, 1904: From Sam in Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

I am just home from Uncles where I have been spending the evng, they are all well and enquiring after you. As I was coming down in the Tube I was thinking with pleasure that this night three weeks I would be speeding towards you dearest with the worries of business left behind for a few days & having a happy time together. I only wish it could be as long as last year.



The London Underground

Business is improving here – last week was the best week I have had altho' the money is scarce. Highgate is hardly as good as usual but there are a lot of out-of-works in that neighbourhood.

So you had a turn round Lisburn. I hope you enjoyed your visit and you had your full charge for a day. Did you have to use much of the cane to get the desired results? I am very glad to hear I can come & go as I like. I am sorry I cannot avail myself more often of the hospitality of Aunties. If they were in London I could – perhaps they may some day. (*They retired to London in the 1920's*) Have you written your Xmas letters yet for Canada? I must drop a few lines across this week. I suppose Aunt E has started counting the days (*till Xmas*) Is she afraid of the time she will be put out of the kitchen? Kindest regards to Aunties and forgive me Bess for not writing sooner. Believe me to be ever

your own boy Sam

Dec 8, 1904: From Bess in Belfast to Sam in London

My own dear boy Sam,

Of course I forgive you, sweetheart, I understand you are very very busy

and I sympathise that you had not a single half hour free in the week. It is well such pressure does not continue more than a few weeks. However, dearest, I hope you are rewarded by a good business for your hard work.

I asked Mr Mac when we would be free and he thinks not until the last Friday (*before Christmas*). Of course he has had to reverse such a decision before this, because the children took the holidays, but one never knows. They are attending very well at the present. I always like a day or so to be free of school. Things are quiet enough and flat at present, nothing to do and bitterly cold.

Lady Dudley opened the Peoples Palace this week in town – a great place it is and such an exhibition. I haven't been yet for I would not care to go without money. We had our own Sale of Work last week. I bought a little table centre for Mother (*Jessie Lemon Arthur*) with one or two little gifts including a doll for Kathleen (*Bessie's half-sister in Canada*) which we sent away last night. I think the mail leaves today. They will be glad to have Christmas wishes from you sweetheart.

I have a great many thoughts of the day that gives me back again my boy, if only for a time however short. If a busy day gives no leisure for my thoughts, when night brings quietness they take full possession which banishes sleep for a time. Yet they are not all sad thoughts nor all glad for sense of separation of more than bodily sensation is always with me. And now Darling with fond love I am yours only

Bess.

Dec 11, 1904: From Sam in Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast.

My own sweetheart,

I received your letter on Friday evng I am glad you forgive me for not writing sooner. Thanks dearest for good wishes as re trade. I have made preparations for a good business & I hope I won't be disappointed.

However if I am I will get over it as there are worse troubles than extra stock on hand, but I must say things don't look too promising. Just another fortnight & the rush will be over.

I hope Mr Mac will have to reverse his decision so that you may have a few extra days. I saw an account in the papers of Lady Dudley opening the People's Palace what is this Palace to be used for? I'm sorry you couldn't go dear. Are you so hard up? If so you are in the same boat as myself.

So you have started sending off your presents. I am sure they will be appreciated. Have you written Arthur yet? I wrote him a few weeks ago and sent him a list of answers to his enquiries. I have wrote your Mother & Gracie on Friday which I hope they will receive for Xmas.

Bess this day night fortnight I am coming over & I will be on the water & I look forward to the time we meet again I hope & trust we will have a happy time though happiest not until you are my wife & Queen.

Your own Boy Sam

Dec 30, 1904: From Bess in Belfast to Sam in London

My own precious sweetheart,

You are away now almost 24 hours and as yet your voice is still in my ears and your looks and gestures easily called up and while they are with me, darling I am happy. But it will pass and I will be again alone. I was glad Aunty thought of a wire, I didn't dream of the wind rising so fiercely. So you got in safely at 9.30 just when you expected but, dearest you must have found it stormy even in the train. It cannot have been very warm or comfortable to sleep in a rocking train. I was going to the country this afternoon but it is so severe I shall leave it till Tuesday after our Oratorio. I will write Gracie and Arthur when I return.

You caught a touch of cold is it better? Take care of yourself in this and

everything for your sweetheart's sake, my own precious love. And sweetheart I feel time and time again I am unreasonable – can you understand that unrest and longing which refuses to be satisfied and which is only quieted by the assurances of your love and you will not be vexed to repeat it many, perhaps a thousand, times and forgive darling for it is because I care so much. Now, sweetheart, my Sam, my hearts only treasure I write myself not for the first or the last time

Your little girlie Bess.

Dec 30, 1904: From Sam in Wimbledon to Bess

My own sweetheart,

Dearest you will have had my wire this morning which I felt you would be anxiously waiting for considering the night. I was surprised to find it so rough but the wind was behind us so it didn't retard us & keep us so much longer in agony. I was sick but I kept my heart up and got over it and am A1 now I have had my dinner & dearest I would do the same once a week to see you. I have never spent such a happy time altho' it was short. I have just a few minutes to catch the post but I must say how thing were during my absence. Business was practically at a standstill so Mason hadn't so much to do but he didn't at all like being in the house alone. I have been round most of my customers this mng & have done well (*for orders*)

Now dearest what will I wish you for the New Year? Health & happiness throughout its course & many more & I hope Bess mine we will spend the better half of this one together. In the past I left you not knowing when we could end our separation but now I can pretty much reckon on the space which gives me a big encouragement in my work. Bess you know I trust you with all my life & I know I shall never be disappointed & neither shall you as you are my other & and better half.

I am off to bed now Bess, my head is anyhow after the pitching last night, I

wish you could put your loving hands on it and cure it. Wish Aunties a very Happy New Year from me and darling Bess health and happiness is the wish for you of

your own boy Sam.

Jan 2, 1905: From Sam at Wimbledon to Bess

My own beloved,

This time last week I was with you on the zenith of my happiness while today I am confined in my room with a cold or something of the sort 500 miles away from the one I love. However dear if I was twice as ill I would stand it cheerfully as happiness is mine being rewarded by love so pure. I have been sitting here thinking what does all the riches that men run after count for when they are ill & they have none near to care for them.

Sweetheart do not think for a moment that I am very ill, it is a bad headache I have today & I thought it best to stay in the heat & shake it off.

I went up to Uncle's yesterday as I hadn't heard or seen anything of them I thought there might be more trouble there & so there was. Auntie Lizzie had influenza 3 days and a temperature of 103 when she should have been enjoying Xmas fare with her friends & family. Uncle William had it too but not as bad. Auntie & Mrs Prior (*her sister*) were very pleased with the perfume

I hope the Oratorio goes off well this evening, I should like to be there but that cannot be but I hope next winter we shall enjoy such things together.

I found things pretty well when I came back though I had to start work & didn't feel up to it. I haven't been up Highgate for some time but will on Wednesday to take stock so next time I write I will be able to tell you how it has paid.

Sorry darling that you have toothache & I hope it has gone, if not darling

how are you going to make it go? You need not fear Bess but I shall take care of myself if only for my little sweethearts sake & for her sake there is little I wouldn't do.

I hope Aunt 's cold has gone & remember me kindly to Aunt M.K. & her. Sweetheart forgive me if this letter is doleful as you are the only one who hears my complaints & Bess my true love, my other half believe me to be always

your own boy Sam.

PS Bess your letter and lovely card arrived on Sat night I needn't say how glad I was to have them as two days seemed so long to me after leaving you.

Jan 5, 1905: Sam in Wimbledon to Bess

My own sweetheart,

Just a few minutes to catch the collection. I was up Highgate last evng & didn't get back till late & was nearly frozen. Stock up there turned out on the right side but not enough, however I hope for better next time. I have got mine out roughly & it shows a nett profit of £84 for the 14 weeks trade which is satisfactory at all events. I had a paper from Willie showing me the results of Potts failure and a good job. (*This is the manager of the Belfast shop who wrongly accused Sam of bad behaviour. He has gone bankrupt*)

Always your own Sam

Jan 10, 1905: Sam in Wimbledon to Bess

My own sweetheart,

I am now quite alright once more dearest & hope to be a long time. Mr & Mrs Shaw and family are all better also. So Papa David- very good -(His

first daughter was Elsie) has his picture brought before the public. I do not think there are many in Belfast who have not seen the original. He is sure to be well known soon, I am sure Emily will be pleased.

So electric cars (*trams*) are coming at last I hope to see the old gee ges at work once more before they resign.



Belfast trams

I went up to Highgate yesterday & took his stock. I was disappointed at the appearance of the place, very untidy, I may say dirty & I talked of it & Osborne seemed upset but he will have to change his tune or “get” as the Yankees say. Mr Shaw (*ie Uncle*) has been up frequently but has never said a word to me. I think Osborne has got it into his head that he can't be done without but I gave him to think differently for he has it in him to keep things right but he has been taking things too easy lately. I do not know yet how his stewardship will turn out but I think fairly well. I will take stock here tomorrow & I hope it is satisfactory.

I didn't go up to Uncle's last Sunday but to a house here of an architect who has been three times to Canada and knows it well & I had a very nice time.

Sweetheart I looked up when Easter falls & is rather late this year. It means a long time for you without a holiday. Do you have any holidays at Whitsuntide? Now darling I am going to be a good boy so that I get letters like these as they are so much to me darling. And now I must go to bed & get my beauty sleep. Kindest regards to Aunties and I hope they are both well & sweetheart, my other half you have all the love of your own boy Sam.

Jan 18, 1905: From Sam at Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

I wrote you a few lines yesterday to keep you from worrying about me & to let you know I am thinking of you, which in my spare time I always am. It is very good of you darling to think of taking care of me from such a distance. I have been very busy this week with Highgate on Monday evng & getting squared up here after stock taking which means a good bit of extra work & haven't found time to write until now.

Pleased to hear that you had the courage to sing in the large schoolroom. I'm sorry I wasn't there. You have the voice & I am very glad you don't keep it to yourself when it gives pleasure to others. I suppose you found plenty in need of your relief parcels when out on that mission. Some of the parts of London are faring very badly but the daily papers are helping them.

How would you have liked to have been on that Irish Express coming up to London when the train ran into some wires & the brakes were put on & they froze to the wheels & they couldn't start for four hours. Now Bess forgive me for not writing sooner, & Bess mine own all love from your boy Sam

Jan 24, 1905: From Sam at Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

You will have been expecting a reply before now but on Sunday I went up to Mrs Priors for dinner and I didn't get home until 12.30 and yesterday after I had been round all my customers I went over to Selhurst on the bike and from there to Uncles & when I got up there Auntie & the children were in a state of terror. Auntie had been out from 2.30 to 4pm & left the 2 maids and 4 children in the house & when she got back she found the house broken into & burgled & her room turned upside down & all valuables gone, including her engagement ring a fish service and dessert service & 9 silver spoons all worth £30. Of course she called the police & they were soon on the track but of course there is small chance of them being traced.

I enjoyed the party last week, there were about 18 altogether and with singing & dancing & games the time passed so well that we had not noticed it was 4am when the gentlemen departed. The ladies all work at Arding & Hobbs (*department store*).

Business was very good here last week but very bad at Highgate. I don't know what to do about that shop. I think I will have to change the manager as he is not trying to keep the customers. If it doesn't do better we will put it on the market & get clear. I am not going to worry over it.

Now my precious love I send my regards to Aunties and my hearts best love.

Your Sam.

Feb 2, 1905: From Sam at Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast



My own Sweetheart Bess,

Paper is at a ransom just now so I must use these, they come cheap. I would apologise for using such stuff but it is all I have & I know you won't mind so long as what is written on it is from one who loves you more than he can express. Now darling I am very sorry you are in a blue mood & I hope you have expelled it & found something brighter. I wish I was nearer to shift it. I am sorry you have to put up with such treatment at school.

Now Bess don't worry about me & the bicycle. I take good care & have very few & very small accidents. Some people ride for years without accidents but they only ride for pleasure when the traffic is in their favour. But I never go out without it saving me 3/- to 5/- & considering the riding I do, I am very fortunate. I have been looking around for a bike for you sweetheart but there are no good ones for sale as with the fall in the price of new ones anyone that has a decent bike is hanging on to it rather than sell at a reduction. I am surprised at the watch going wrong. Let me have it back & I will take to back to Jayes & have it put right.

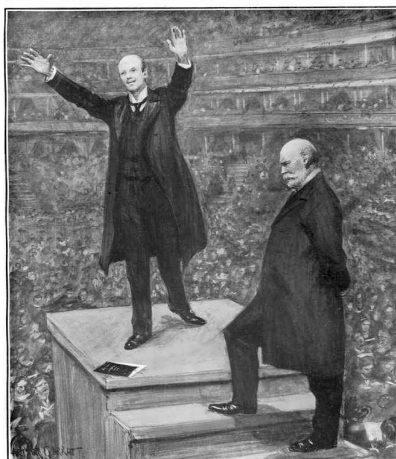
That payment leaves me owing Willie £140 and Mother £30. When I pay another £10 I will write to her although I do not expect a reply. Yes she is foolish in many ways & her most foolish action has been trying to dictate to her sons when they reach an age when they are more capable of thinking for themselves, thereby isolating herself as she has now. I think you are right in your shrewd remark about Matt. I don't think he will come to London. it is too far from home for a start. (*When he left home it was for New York*)

I was wanting to shift Osborne but Mr Shaw wants to give him another 3 months to see how the next stock turns out, so I gave in & will await events. He said to Mr Shaw that I didn't do him justice when taking stock but I think I was fairer to him than to myself. I made £80 in 14 weeks here and he only £40 in 17 when he should have made more than me as his expenses are not half mine. Business was very good here last week which helps to keep one alive. I wasn't up at Uncle's yesterday. I had a letter from him & three of the children are bad again with influenza and the baby has bronchitis as well, what bad luck.

Dr Torry & Mr Alexander (*American Evangelists*) have started their campaign in London at the Albert Hall with a choir of 3000. I will go up some Sunday evng.

Now sweetheart I hope to hear that things are running more smoothly at school and that you are in better spirits. Remember me kindly to Aunties and I hope they are well – and remember you are all in all to

your own boy Sam.



Dr Torry & Mr Alexander at the Albert Hall

Feb 23, 1905: From Sam at Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

I have just come in from North London & read your letter with mixed feelings. I am far away from you, Bess my love, & naturally my thoughts revert very often to our last time we had together & when I read your letter I felt there is something making you think I have grown careless of you & your love. Are you unsettled by that remark of Uncle John's (*her uncle John Arthur*) you mentioned to me? You say it was in jest yet there was a jag in it and if I delay answering your letters you are offended and when I tell you the cause you seem to think it must be an excuse when it is not – now is this reasonable? Bess I want you to be frank on this question as it is very important to me. You have given me one of the best gifts a man could have – your love – and I, well darling, you know I love you and I know that if I could put my arms around you & kiss you there would be none of these troubles which crop up through correspondence. I feel sure dearest that when we start our life together we will have a happier time in front of us than that left behind.

Now sweetheart as regards the bike the Rudge was £10 10s but is now £8 8s and the next one they are making is £6 6s & a good one. I will see the best I can get one of those for. You don't know the pleasure it will give me, darling, to know you are enjoying a spin as I am sure you will. And when you come over here won't it be grand to have a run together.

Glad to hear you are getting on so well with your elocution lessons I hope you have the patience for it. Sweetheart it is 2.45 am & I must stop. But I still don't know if you forgive me or not. It wasn't lack of love that kept me from writing, yet you think it was and won't forgive me. Sweetheart my love, my other half you are all I love.

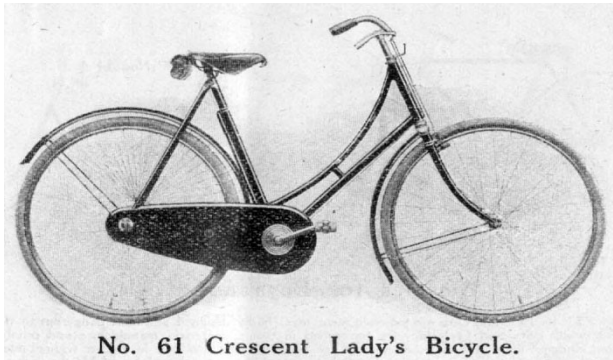
Your own Boy Sam

Mar 4, 1905: From Sam at Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast,

My own sweetheart,

I have just come back from Uncle's where I went to dinner & then to Mrs Whittakers for supper and she has invited me up on Wednesday, she is very conventional in her ways. I suppose I am to be the honoured guest of the evng.

Talk about the weather & cycling is enough to upset me. Since I had the fall I have made four attempts to get my machine back again but before I left either Uncle's or the Highgate shop each time it rained altho' it was nice & dry when I got up there. And since the fall I don't much like negotiating the Strand on slippery roads. As regards your machine I have written Willie asking him what he can get me the no 61 Crescent Rudge for. It is listed at £6 18s 6d & I expect he will do it at £1 less. I like the Rudge as the one I have has done some hard riding & some spills yet after 18 months it is as good as when I had it. I enclose the specifications & I believe it is an A1 machine.



Yes sweetheart I have been up to Highgate pretty often lately. Trade has been very bad up there & I was trying to wake it & Osborne up, which I did as trade showed a decided improvement this week. Trade here is pretty good at £49 10s last week not bad considering the state of affairs in

London at the present time. (*New tariffs had, as forecast by the Liberals, raised prices and led to closures and job losses*)

I went to see the an Irish Play last Wed evng "Peggy Machree" & it was fine. The Irish character is popular in London. (*A musical play and Broadway hit in 1904*)

Now darling of course we have had a misunderstanding which with correspondence is not easy to avoid at all times & considering we have been at it three years we have had only a few tho' granted that is a few too many as each time I have hurt your feelings for which darling I am extremely sorry. I hope & trust that the traces left by these passing clouds will & can be removed by a thorough reconciliation. Sweetheart had we been together would this have happened? I don't think so Bess & while this correspondence continues I shall endeavour to steer clear of misunderstandings & when I am with you I have no fear of any cropping up.

Thanks for the postcard dear it is very pretty. No Bess I haven't heard from David except for a parcel for Uncle he sent to me as he had lost Uncle's address, nor from Home or any of my friends. I haven't written Mother yet but will this week. Am I not isolated from my own people? All because I won't put up with their insults. I have had to fight my way all along but now I have you darling, who is more to me than all, & with you by my side I can face anything.

Now Sweetheart I would like to know how things are running at school, are you all friends again? How is Aunt E & is 73 filled up again? (*all the original lodgers had left*) What a house yours is for young men to get married out of. Of a dozen five have now married & sweetheart ours is to follow. September isn't it? Now my love I must stop as it is late. Remember me kindly to Aunties & darling ever

your boy Sam

Mar 8, 1905: From Bess in Belfast to Sam in London

My darling, my boy Sam, and my comfort,

You are almost the only sense of security and reliance I have at present. When things go awry as they seem to be doing at present and for some time back I thought that pleasant feeling of dependence and sympathy was to be broken, so it is good to know it is to be resumed again for I would indeed feel alone if anything were to come between us. So dearest I can sympathise with your feeling of aloofness and aloneness from your family. It does seem rather a pity doesn't it.

Thank you, sweetheart for the Rudge catalogue and for writing about it. It does seem a likely machine and I hope I can get it. That seems a good recommendation of yours, to have ridden it and fallen off it and sustained no damage. How does Osborne work with you at Highgate? It was a good thing you were able to get up there.

I am friends with Miss Matthews again but if it is not one thing it is another, sometimes the children take a contrary fit. The inspector popped in the other day but fortunately we were all in good order, doing very well for once in our lives. I always have scores of things to tell you during the week and then when it comes to it I can't remember any of them. I wish I could hear from Gracie about Mother it keeps me very uneasy. It is almost a month since I wrote.

The cantata comes off tomorrow night I hope it will be a success. The tickets seem to have sold well and there are not many to be had. It is a pretty work and very varied in character with lots of solos and quartets. I have the soprano part in one of the quartets, he wantd me to take a solo but I would not but I consented to a part in the quartet and regret it now for fear I make spill through nervousness. I have got a lovely new blouse to wear that mother sent, I don't know whether it was yet here when you were over. It is just jap silk (*that is a plain coloured ultra fine silk like*

parachute silk) but Miss Linton has made it lovely with the prettiest laces under sleeves and yoke. (*Maggie Linton – no relation of Sam's – was a seamstress who lived nearby at 59 Denmark Street.*) I will wear daffodils and a yellow ribbon in my hair – I will be nervous until it is over. Now sweetheart it is teatime and all are waiting for me, so with love Sam from your own loving girlie.

Mar 9, 1905: From Sam at Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

Your letter just to hand & you have got over your trying part in the quartet by now. I hope well dear. In fact I needn't hope or doubt for I am sure you have. Yes I did see the blouses you refer to or rather the material, I'm sure it was very nice & can just imagine how you look with it on & a ribbon. I wish I could see you dear but in the meantime I have got to see an imaginary you. I hope it has been a big success.

I'm glad you think I am wise for once Bess as regards the bicycle. It isn't pleasant riding in wet weather as I know to my cost. As to the machine for you I think it is a good serviceable one, not too fancy. I had a letter from Willie today & he says he can do it for £6 6s as the agent gets little. If you decide on having this one Bess I will send Willie a cheque & you can settle with me at any time. But before you decide dear go into the depot at Lombard St and ask to see this particular model. The weather is sure to improve soon so you may as well have it early as late. I got your watch yesterday & it is keeping splendid time now. I will keep it until next week & make sure.

There is sickness in Castlewellan. Martha is in bed and has been for a week and will probably be for another one & or two. Willie & Herbert were ill on Sunday but are getting better & worse Mother is ill, not seriously but up & down & Matt has gone away somewhere & of course Mother is almost

alone now with only Herbert at home. However I cannot say or do much to help her as I am reckoned out of the running now.

I expected you to hear from Gracie by this time. I hope you will have good news when you do hear. I haven't heard from her for a long time. I dropped her a card yesterday. Have you heard from Arthur since Christmas?

About Osborne, well I upset him badly last week when I asked him if he wanted me to come up & do the work for him or if we paid him for fun. He didn't like it but it keeps him in his place.. I was up there a couple of evngs a week for a few weeks which woke him up a bit. I think trade will improve now, it is quiet at present. I don't think we will pay £200 again for a business but open a new one & fight for success.

I was up at Mrs Whittakers last night for supper a fine spread I had a nice evng. Have you played the new game Pit yet? I had a try last night. It is fair.



The game of PIT

The Canadian architect I told you about lives close by here and he comes to see me pretty often & I gave him a job weighing sugar the other night &

he got on pretty well. He has gone to a swell dinner this evng in his dress suit at one of the fashionable West End restaurants.

Now sweetheart I am very pleased you look to me for a sense of security as well you might dearest as you are all to me. As regards you thinking Bess that "that pleasant feeling of sympathy was to be broken some time ago" you seem to have anticipated our misunderstanding. Had you reason for doing so Bess? I expect my letters have been very much at fault. However, dear girl, it is all past now & things are clear & we shall keep a clear course in the future. Tell me dear when anything is wrong in the future & if I cannot aid you then surely you won't mind me sympathising with you for you are my all. Remember me kindly to Aunties. Now sweetheart I will close

Your Sam

Mar 13, 1905: From Bess in Belfast to Sam in London

My darling, my sweetheart Sam,

What a good boy it is just now, how punctually I get my letters and I like it so but do not let it be an inconvenience for you. You must be busy indeed, flying between Highgate and Wimbledon twice a week.

It is no weather for a bicycle as yet but perhaps it may come in soon. Do take a look at the Crescent machine. There is no bell or lamp supplied with the machine. How much would the bell cost dearie? Now dearest I want to wait till nearer Easter to decide not whether I buy this bike or another but whether I can afford it. Then dearest I will tell you more. For now I would rather you sent the money straight to Willie. If I can afford the machine next month I can pay it or do without.

I did not go to Sunday School yeterday for I had a cold so lay thinking a good deal. I thought of your mother sweetheart, she must be feeling lonely. If it is evidence of the influenza going the rounds (*that Eliza is not*

writing) don't you think sweetheart that it would do you and me no hurt but her a lot of good if you were to remind her that you are still her boy and are sorry she is ill and that you wished old by-gones to be? She is your Mother and may not be able to bring herself to say she is sorry and perhaps a kindly word now when she is down-hearted may go a long way towards righting you. Dearest I have thought a lot about it and dearest, though my pride may not let me make advances to anyone who does not want me in their family, yet sweetheart, this does not apply to you. I think you can, without going back on me yet be good friends with her. You are hurt because I was hurt, but dearest, I think if at all possible you should be friends with her. I can't bear it sweetheart if I should come between you when she is so lonely. Is she not annoyed at Matt going? Now he is drawing a large salary why is he going away? But, no matter who does or does not do his duty I know my boy will never prove ungrateful or neglectful of his mother. So Sam will you not write her a nice letter when you send that money giving her a chance to be friends again?

Dear boy we got our concert over very well and I have been congratulated both on how I took my part and how I dressed though I know towards the end I sang a little harsh. I was not too nervous and did not break down but towards the end the nervousness did for me. I shall feel better next time.

I had a letter from Gracie, she mentions you and says she will write you soon. Mother (*Jessie Lemon*) had a bad attack of influenza but has now got over it though she is far from strong. Gracie says she may come over in July or August if she can. The best time for a holiday don't you think? Now sweetheart, my own heart's treasure others are waiting so all I can send is my own heart's love.

Your true girlie Bess

Mar 16/17, 1905: From Sam at Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

I have had a quiet day today & if this letter proves of a doleful mood it will be accounted for by the state of trade & won't be a guide to the feelings I have towards you as dear my love for you is lasting & true. Now sweetheart I never write by routine but when I got your last letter I felt as if you were speaking to me & was compelled by an inner force to reply. I note what you say about the bike dear & admire you for your decision but sweetheart if you cannot afford it all won't you let me pay the difference so that you won't be deprived of the pleasure it will afford? Don't worry about the bell & lamp I will send them over when you get the bike which I hope will be soon.

(He continues in purple pencil) My ink has run out Bess could you lend me some? Very glad to hear that you went through your piece so well & I am sure you did your part A1 & as regards dress dearest I know you looked well. I wish I could have seen you but that is what I pay for roaming so far. Glad to hear your mother was not so ill as you feared. You cannot expect her to be strong after an illness & she will improve in the spring.

I haven't written to Mother yet dear as I hadn't the money to send her. Willie's cheque fell due March 1st & I bought rather heavily in sugar in Feb & sugar is prompt cash in 28 days. But I will write when I do send hers. Your watch is keeping splendid time still & so I will send it. Now I must to bed with regards to Aunties & sweetheart you are all to
your own boy Sam

P.S. Thanks sweetheart for the shamrock recd today (17th). Thank Auntie for her postcards recd this morning, one is a treat.

Yours ever Sam

Mar 21, 1905: From Bess in Belfast to Sam in London

My darling Sam,

Do you know, sweetheart, I have thought a good deal about your letter where you said my letter was as if I was speaking to you, I want you to think so about each and all of my letters. Dear boy it is just like you to offer to get me the bicycle and the bell. I only mentioned it because Miss M got her lamp in with her bicycle and I thought perhaps I could too.

I had your postcard today, you ask about some pcs but the word before is blocked and I cannot make it out. Talking about postcards I forget whether your album has two or four cards per page. Yes I heard from Gracie but I am waiting to get her second letter by the next mail when she would have heard from Arthur (*their brother in Toronto*). On Friday, as we had a holiday, I took a run into the country to see Aunt Annie (*Arthur*) The country was lovely, so was the day and she is always glad to see me. A friend of hers, seeing I had a few unopened daffodils, filled my hands with beauties from his garden. On my way back I hummed a few tunes to myself – perhaps you remember the Rose of Tralee and Flight of Ages do you dearest? Talking of songs, the other day I heard Genevieve ground out on the barrel organ.

I heard the Faugh a Ballagh Band last night in the Ulster Hall, it was splendid it is a glorious Band. (*This is the band of the Royal Irish Regiment*)

Don't let yourself get down or low-spirited about business, dearest one, things will surely mend.



The Ulster Hall

Now dear boy with fondest love
your own girlie.

Mar 23 1905 From Sam in Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart, Your letter was waiting for me when I came home last night & I was pleased to get it & to know darling that you wish so much to speak with me again. Letters are a medium sweetheart but also a poor one in cases like ours. Won't I be glad when our separation is over. I long to have you with me dear. Altho' I cannot just yet but sweetheart you are all I think of & love.

About the postcard Bess I think the word you couldn't make out is "speaking" they are the latest but one requires a sort of gramophone to work them.

I hope you have had good news from Gracie, July or August would be the best time. I hope they will be able to come. I'm glad dearest you enjoyed your visit to the country. I can't say I have heard you sing the Rose of Tralee but I heard you sing the other one. You must have been in a happy mood darling. I wish I could have been with you instead of here.



A 'speaking' postcard

Business is improving up Highgate & it is fair here & so long as things go as they are going I won't worry. The weather has been lovely here for this past week. I went up to get my bike on Mon evng & it has been a treat to get around again so quickly. My man (*ie his assistant*) and I started for town yesterday intending to take Blackfriars Bridge but instead we found ourselves on London Bridge with its congested traffic.



Traffic on London Bridge

We managed to steer round to Bank but I lost him there & he lost himself but he got home again safely. It is fine dodging through the city but I don't think, Bess, you would care to try it for a while. I hope dear that you will be able to get the machine, however in a few weeks more & Easter will be upon us & then you will know.

I have got to spend some money on my teeth which I would rather spend in some other way but I have got to. I am sending the watch back. It is in good order now & I hope you will have no more trouble with it & also some chocolates which I hope you will enjoy dearest. Kindest regards to Aunties & sweetheart remember you are the other half of your own boy Sam

Mar 28, 1905: From Bess in Belfast to Sam in London

My own darling my Sam,

Thank you for the watch and the sweets. It is good to have my watch back again and the sweets are splendid and the box may come in useful too. Aunt says that you must have dreamt that someone else gave me a box

and you wanted to surpass it. No dearest I am in no hurry to change my way of life, though I have the sense that I would enjoy it so much more if you were here with me. There is a lot of enjoyment in a single life believe me. But I was hearing last week that if I am not tired of Windsor National School, some people are tired of seeing me there. Miss Cowan wants to replace me and is expecting my marriage and does not know what is holding it back unless it is the tea trade (*a new tax hurt it*). It was expected last Christmas ,then in the summer and still I'm not away!

Sweetheart I am glad you are going to have your teeth seen to, it is time you looked after yourself sure enough. It won't be long before I get my machine now. Have you any instructions for me when I write for it or are you writing to Castlewellan. (*It is Willie Linton, Sam's eldest brother, who is the bicycle agent in Castlewellan*). I suppose you have written now to Burrenbridge(*ie to his mother*) Are you coming over soon dearest? I suppose you will find it difficult to get away and leave your substitutes to their own devices. Now don't be indefinite like our Arthur, here I am and I do not know when he is coming or indeed if he is coming at all. Miss M's brother is going to Canada this summer. There seem to be many people going there. Anyway darling, write soon

Your own dear girlie Bess.

Apr 3, 1905: From Sam in Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

I know I am in for a blowing up again for not answering sooner, but darling if I didn't write I hadn't forgot you, as you may have imagined, but that isn't possible. The tea tax won't come into force until July so I will have to wait till then to make my fortune (*ie more profit because he bought his tea before the tax*).

Very glad dear that you have decided to get the bike. I wrote to Willie

telling him you would write him when you select one from the Belfast depot. There is little difference between these machines but you must get the right height of frame & the proper gear to be comfortable I think a 25" frame would suit and a 68 gear. When you go to the depot Bess ask plenty of questions & get one that suits you. I will send you over a lamp, bell and outfit. I only wish I could come over & teach you dearest & take you for a spin.

You ask me when I am coming over dear & the answer is just as soon as I can which I hope will be Whit Monday until Wed night & that is so short. But dearest it is well to have something to look forward to.

As to my teeth dear, I have a lot to get out & I can't very well go round my customers without any. I have been to one dentist & he won't fit a plate until the gums are hardened & I will need soft food for two weeks & the woman I was boarding with can't board us just now. You say it is time I looked after myself, well I have been doing, but I wish someone who will be nameless would do it for me.

Yes Bess there are a great many people going off to Canada. My pal Smith - the Canadian architect says he should like to run over this spring - he has crossed the ocean five times & he is not 23 yet – but he has the carrying on of his boss's works which he had in hand when he died and Smith has the finishing of them so he will be in London a few years yet. Business is fairly good at both places altho' its a job to get the money in & I have a fair bit in stock.

I am glad you liked the box & that the watch is going satisfactorily. Let me know dearest if it gets up to its old tricks. Now sweetheart remember me kindly to your aunties & dearest one I am
your own boy Sam.

Apr 10, 1905: From Sam in Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

I have just finished for the day & it has been pretty hard as I have had little or no help & there were a good many orders to collect & get out & with the place in a muddle after yesterdays stocktaking it has been none too easy. Mrs Butcher's daughter has been working in the shop up to today but as they are moving out on Thursday she has had to help pack & we cannot get a suitable man at present altho' we have tried hard. I will have a try at the Grocers Asst Association Bureau tomorrow. I hope I may chance on one as there is work here for two & two boys. There is a big outdoor connection which must be well looked after & it occupies a good part of the mng in calling.

We got everything settled amicably. The stock amounted to £105 5s & we paid Mr Butcher cash down for it and £200 for goodwill etc. so we have done very well & I think will make a success of it. The Highgate shop is doing very well also. I am having a bed-sitting room furnished here & a woman is coming in to do for me so I will be alright presently.

Pleased to hear that your exam is so near as I think you will have it easier afterwards. I had a pc from Willie & his boy is doing A1 & will probably get about again soon, altho with a stiff leg. Uncle & Aunt and family are all well, I haven't time to run up & see them so often now.

Kindest regards to Aunties & sweetheart my own heart's treasure I am
your own boy Sam

Apr 13, 1905: From Sam in Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

You thought my last letter too business-like well darling I have tried to keep business in the background & if it has come to the front too strongly

Bess you do right to remind me as I don't want to have that tone towards you darling as you are more to me than all else but it is business I have to succeed to gain what I most long for & therefore part of my existence at present.

You thought I was coming over sooner than Whitsun - well Bess you may be right. What do you say if I come over on Easter Monday & teach you to ride the bike & come back Monday evng? Will you have the machine for then? If you find the Crescent too high & mean to have the Standard you will have to hurry to have it by Easter. What will Willie do a Standard at? If you can afford it then have it as it is a better machine but there is a difference in the price. You say you find the brakes strange - I prefer the pull up brakes as the others are separate & the one you pull may not act too well and you may be over before you pull the other one. I cannot advise you darling as it is a matter of price but I hope you will have one or the other by Easter. Now darling let me know definitely about the bike & I will let you know if I am coming over or not

Your Own Boy Sam

Apr 18, 1905: From Sam in Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

You have done remarkably well. The Standard is definitely worth the 14/- extra. I didn't think Willie could have done it so cheaply. I hope it will be satisfactory & that you will enjoy many a ride on it. Will you be able to ride on it by Monday? If so could I get a machine to ride as I shall be over to teach you.

No joking sweetheart do you really think I am coming over? I appreciate the kind thoughts you will have on my return journey. I was bad last time & don't wish for it again & Bess you should not wish it on anyone. However dearest I won't have you wish that – I shall stay longer than than

the Monday. How long can Auntie put me up for? Has she room for me at all? I am joking dearest when I ask for I know dearest I am always welcome thanks to their kindness. Now darling what makes you think I might come Friday or Sat? We close Fri but not Sat so I am doubtful I can come then. But I might manage to get away Saturday evng & be in Belfast on Sunday (*Apr 22nd*). If not I shall let you know by wire & if not I shall be at the GWR station Monday mng. What questions sweetheart did I leave unanswered? Supposing I look them up before kissing you will that do? Now sweetheart don't be vexed if I have teased you a little bit as you know you are all I love & Bess I hope the weather will be good & we can have a very happy time. Kindest regards to Aunties

your own Boy Sam

May 2, 1905: From Sam in Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart Bess

Something I ate on Sunday upset me & I was far from well yesterday & could not write you but I am alright today. I had a splendid passage & arrived in London at 8am came down here & had breakfast & got squared up with Mr Langley & everything was A1. It is much more pleasant to come back and find things as they should be. It makes one appreciate the holiday more.

When I went up to Uncle's I found he was in Ireland; he left on Sunday evng I had a letter from him this mornng & he says his father is just alive (*Samuel Shaw died on May 1 in fact*). I should have gone up to Highgate yesterday but couldn't so I have to go up this evng as, with Uncle away, I must keep my eye on it.

I hope you enjoyed last week. I was sorry that the weather was so bad & that you didn't get the opportunity of mastering the bicycle but a few more attempts will put you right.

Sweetheart I do miss you so much when I come back but it won't be long wearing round until you shall come over to make me happy with your presence as Bess you are all I love & you know dearest I love you truly. Kindest regards to Aunties & sweetheart write soon to your own boy Sam.

May 8, 1905: From Sam in Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

You will think I am dilatory in writing again but as a matter of fact this is the first opportunity I have had. I had to go up to see Uncle after his sad visit & although he expected his father's death for years past yet when it did come he felt it very keenly indeed. He told me all about it yesterday & Grandfather was sensible up to the finish altho' he was suffering a lot. He stayed until the will was read & all was over. The farm & everything has been left to Uncle Robert & he has only £120 to pay off it in small legacies. He requested his son Robert to maintain the heritage of the old home & pass it on as has been done for three generations. Now sweetheart I don't know if this will interest you much but still it might.

Uncle says that Mother was pleased I went home & that she is going to write when she gets over her trouble (*ie the loss of her father, Samuel Shaw*). She is quite prepared for me to get married at any time and darling I am glad that the event will come off with the goodwill of everyone aren't you dear?

The reason I asked you if you enjoyed yourself when I was over was that I wanted to hear you say it as your happiness & mine are linked for life & sweetheart mine I am confident in most things but times I doubt if I can make you as happy as you deserve but dearest you have trusted me in the past & will trust me in the future to do the best for our mutual happiness

Your own boy Sam

May, 1905: From Sam in London to Bessie in Belfast



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The first page of this letter is missing so its date is uncertain. Bessie has clearly had a fall on her bicycle.

Don't lose interest in your bike, sweetheart. It means health for you and health means happiness. I know dearest one that you would enjoy it more if I were with you, from my own experience, but, darling that time is not far off. I hope you have got over your difficulties and are now able to enjoy a spin on your own. The weather is lovely now and I know you will enjoy it more when you get into the swing of it. I am glad, dearest that your face is so much better.

So sweetheart you have entered on your last term at school and yet you feel anxious you will not be able to accomplish enough. Yet remember what you are to me and don't overdo it. It won't be long wearing round to September now, dearest and then our separation will be over. No more of

the horrid partings. I look forward to the time you shall be mine darling and I shall be yours. I hope dearest you are not putting me on too high a pedestal, but no matter how high you put me I will have a good try to hold on. Have you had the reply from Moore yet? If not his address is 67 Gillygate York.

I hope Aunties are both well. Kindly remember me to them, I will be writing Aunt MK this week. Darling sweetheart, my love, my all I hope you will keep happy and contented in the love of

your own boy Sam.

PS excuse the paper Bess I had no other

May 29, 1905: From Sam in Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

I feel like a bad boy for not writing you sooner & probably you will say I am, but I live in hope of your forgiveness.

I was glad to hear you are getting on so well with your bicycle I I hope you enjoy it. I was more than amused at the escapes & capers you have had. I think it will be my turn to caution you to be careful. I should like (as well as you sweetheart) to come over at Whitsun but business prevents. Although Bess there is a future date to look forward to with avidity. Altho' Bess we have not settled on a date or time definitely another 12 weeks will bring us very close to September, the time when I shall claim you as my own. And Bess we had better start making some arrangements as the time will start wearing round speedily in one sense altho' slowly in another. I suppose Bess you think I know all about this sort of thing but I am entirely at sea. However I rely on you to tell me what I don't know. But first sweetheart we must fix a day & I would suggest Tuesday September 5th. I suggest Tuesday because I could cross on Sunday night & have Monday in Belfast & early in September because I may get a man in for the shop then more

easily than later on. Let me know dearest if you think this will suit you as I have to look a little bit ahead at present.

The house feels a bit empty now but it will be better filled for me when my sweetheart is here. Sweetheart remember you are truly loved by
your boy Sam

PS Matt has not gone far from home this time just to Lord Dunleath at Ballywalter & Bob is coming to Belfast.

Jun 8, 1905: From Sam in Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart, Your letter was a welcome arrival as I expected it on Saturday but we don't always get what we expect as Osborne gave in his notice on Saturday & my boy here went home ill on Monday. However we have got a new man in to take Osborne's place at Highgate & he at all events can't do worse than Osborne. I wanted to get rid of him weeks ago. Business is fairly good here but at Highgate it is below par. However sweetheart I don't let it trouble me as I can't be in both places at once. Mason is doing very well & has no notion of changing as far as I know. For September I shall have to find another man for 1 or two weeks as Mason could not do it all by himself.

Now sweetheart I am pleased to think that is time to make some arrangements. It will take longer for us settle matters as we must do it by post & Bess mine I appreciate that feeling of not wanting to be the first to move but you are my other half & what I cannot do myself you are going to help me with so let us start now.

I haven't found out yet about Residence in Belfast but I take it for granted it is unnecessary as the laws are the same, however I will find out at once. Quite right Bess that we should get July over before doing anything definite. Yes dear I have another reason for suggesting the 5th but that is at your disposal. I am glad you don't want a fuss & I am sure I wish it to be

as quick as is fitting the occasion.

I think it is your due to know more about "our little house" I shall try & describe it more fully. There is only one entrance through the shop & a passage to the right leads to the kitchen, a fine large one with a dresser, cupboards drawers etc & a scullery & garden to the back. A passage then leads to the stairs stained on either side of the carpet. Wall along the stairs & passages are papered dark and varnished which looks A1. Upstairs the room at the back is about the size of your sitting room. The walls are papered but need repapering. It is the room I wish for a sitting room so we can have what shade we like. The room next to this is the one Mason sleeps in & is not as large as this. Then up 3 steps is another larger room, twice the size of my room & it will be a fine room when we can furnish it. Upstairs are two fine rooms & a bathroom so there is room to spare.

Now sweetheart as to what I intend to get I have two good prompters in that Uncle & Aunt take a lively interest in our welfare. Auntie said last Sunday "Sam as Miss Kennedy is not here I will have to do some shopping for you as you won't know what to get" & Uncle says "Sam we are going to give you and Miss K something useful for a present rather than ornamental" and they want to know when it is to be & I say sometime this year.

I am thinking of putting linoleum down on the bedroom floor & buying a nice suite. Let me know dear what wood you would prefer. I am glad dear you think my taste will probably please you, but I should much rather you were here to see & get what you like best yourself I will only get what is essential so that we can get the remainder together. Now sweetheart I think I have written enough on this theme for the present but it is one I have long looked forward to & thoughts of the future have been my best company for some time. I hope dearest you will enjoy both days outing. I don't know either place altho' they are so near town. We will have a few days outing later on Bess. Where shall we go? Think it over.

Now Bess it is late & I must get some sleep as I feel I could do with it. Remember me kindly to Aunties. I hope they are both in good health and sweetheart I wish I could look into those eyes of yours so true & kiss you my love before I retire but I look to the future Sweetheart I am your boy now & always

Sam

Jun 27, 1905: From Sam at Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

I am sorry to learn you have been unwell & the doctor doesn't do you much good. Do you think dearest that if you tried some other one you might benefit. Here you are sweetheart none too well & thinking of going back to school. I think dear if I were you I would give it up now. I see your point Bess that is to have two months salary for two weeks work but if you think you would be better without going back well then let it go. You should spend as much time as possible out in the open as probably that would do as much good as any doctor.

I am sorry dear that you have to take the initiative with the minister but I know you will do it better than I could.

I have not heard from Mother yet but I saw her letter to Uncle on Sunday & she sounds quite sensible about it (*the wedding*). Strange that you should have suggested Eaton dearest (*for best man*) I wrote to him on Monday – I hope he will consent. Do you think it would be as well to tell Mr McGranahan (*the minister*) the date? Say Tuesday of the first week & then I shall have the best birthday a man ever got & dearest we don't want to be away in the country too late in September. I have men coming in this week to square up the place a bit.

I didn't tell you dearest some of the troubles we had at Highgate. Osborne left & we started a another man before we got his references & they were

bad so he had to go & Uncle started another man & I went in the same afternoon & found him drunk so he had to go sharp. So we got Osborne back again until we get suited. I have to see a man up there tomorrow as Uncle won't be responsible after two failures. Besides we are going to sell it as it is very hard to get good men in for such long hours & get another one on this side of London so that I can work both. Uncle offered to give Mr Tue the previous owner the first offer & he think he will offer what we paid for it. If we are to be continually in trouble with managers it is better to sell don't you think Bess? Of course you will be better able to judge when you are here & I do wish you were here dearest. I am tired of having a lonely life.

I am sorry that Gracie will not be there, she will have to visit London as well as Ireland next year. I must stop dear as it is late. Kindest regards to Aunties & Darling I wish I could enclose an embrace as an assurance of the love of

your own boy Sam.

Jul 6, 1905: From Bess in Belfast to Sam in London

My own dearest one

I had your letter this morning & so prompt a letter deserves a prompt one. The letter to Mr McGranahan is written & despatched & I will not be long kept waiting as he is one to answer promptly. Yes Bessie (*McCluggage*) will be bridesmaid & as to afterwards I don't seem to mind much where we are go as there are so many places to see so dearie if you are in the way of hearing of somewhere just make a choice.

Now dearie I have been thinking hard about the business First dearie am I right in thinking that you would have a better business if you had the shop with the P.O. as it is bound to bring trade & custom. Next I could help you in this & I could learn it I know. The hours are 8am-8pm & a stated holiday

a splendid business for a girl. I know you would be the first to grumble if I tied myself down to stated hours but I know you have thought of having Aunt E come not only so that I might have her company but as a good turn for Aunties. You see it is not likely that she will go to Londonderry (*to live with her brother Uncle John*) she was down there but they could not come to a satisfactory arrangement. You see it wouldn't do for Aunty to give up this house illpaying though it was & is until she has something definite to go to. It would not be beyond her capabilities because she has had good business training. She was in Aunt Meg's shop – that is Meg's first husband's shop - & after Aunt Meg was widowed they ran it together and then Aunt E had it after Aunt Meg married again. Then she had a shop in Belfast just before I went to Dublin. I also could sell as well as anyone for many a pair of boots I have sold (*at her Uncle David McCluggages shoe shop*) and I think she would like it. And sweetheart the arrangement we thought of first with Aunties in their own house big or small & Aunt E in a business like that would be nicest of all. So dear I would take this shop with the P.O. attached if you can. Let me know dearest even if you hear no more about it. Now dearest with fond love

Bess

Jul 13, 1905: From Bess at Aunt Annie's in Lisburn to Sam in London

My own sweetheart,

Here I am with Aunt Annie for a day and I have picked up any sort of paper I found lying about. Many thanks dear for the photos especially the clear one you couldn't have a better likeness. I suppose the picture is of Mrs Shaw, her little girl, the house, & the cat – I mustn't forget the cat – and the cigarette. I was nearly forgetting the indispensable cigarette. Mr Shaw took the photo I expect.

Darling keep your industrious fit as long as possible. I was tidying some

letters the other day & was surprised at the dates, one every 3rd or 4th day. Now if I get one in a week you call yourself industrious. But it doesn't matter & by another year I would not be anxious at a 3 week interval. Now I sound as if I am scolding, it seems as if I have forgotten how to write some of the loving expressions that are always in my mind. But sweetheart looking at that photograph what do you think I wish most? And what do you want most when you look at mine? Think of your thoughts dearie & you have mine.

Sweetheart I'm not afraid of the event my only fear is that the poor little me is not worthy of my great-hearted sweetheart. And dearie tho' I am so proud with others yet I feel my love for you makes me very humble.

It has been grand weather with a thunderstorm or two. On Sunday two people died in a tent in Armagh it was very sad but it seems they were ready to go for they were singing Onward Christian soldiers.

Thank you dear for what you say about my candid opinions I always like to speak out. Just now I have little patience with those glorifying in their release from Popish Thralldom by running their necks into drunken halters. There was a great meeting in the Ulster Hall on Thursday when all the Lodges were represented. I don't know how it passed off but it was anticipated with more enthusiasm and gathering of Loyalists than usual because of the overthrow of McDonnell (*A Catholic who supported a Devolution Bill which was defeated that year*)

Mr McGranahan has consented to marry us. When I got his letter on Saturday night I was delighted. There's nothing else arranged dearie but we are beginning to plan a little. Darling I shall like North Wales alright. I know nothing about the place and will be curious to see it.

With fondest heart's love to my own dearly loved laddie your own little girlie Bess

Jul 16, 1905: From Sam at Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

It is a good job our love does not depend on the shade or quality of paper for the changes far exceeds the change in our love & if the quality changes one way our love improves in its steadfastness & will I am sure as time goes on.

I am glad you like the photos I think they are very good but it is not Mrs Shaw in the picture, it is my landlady & the picture was taken in her garden. If you think dear when you look at my photo what I do when I look at yours (which is often) I am more than happy.

I am not long in from Mrs Whitakers & had a chat with her about N Wales & got an address from her of a lady they have stayed with in Barmouth.



Barmouth

It is a quiet place & rather mountainous & within easy distance of places of interest. If you think dearest you might like Barmouth I could write for an apartment when I know the definite date. I am glad Mr Mcgranahan has consented & your wish is fulfilled in that respect. I only hope Eaton will reply as favourably. You say you are beginning to make some plans. Don't

make too many elaborate ones sweetheart. I am going to make a start this week to have this place put right. I have had one room papered & most of the white-washing is done & I have ordered a few yards of linoleum to lay when all is washed.

I suppose when you looked over those letters you thought what an attentive boy I was then but you see when I finished work I went home & wrote to you but now it is later when I finish & even then often something needs seeing to. If I had as little to think about now as I did then you should have letters more often as writing them is my greatest pleasure.

It was a sad affair in Armagh with the lightening. There were several in & around London. A man with a wooden leg with an iron spike took his little daughter for a walk on Hampstead Heath & both were killed.

Appropos July 12 my sympathy with the Orange body is not very pronounced as a matter of fact & I forgot all about the anniversary with its show of heathenism.

Yes Bess I think we understand one another as re the Aunties & will have the pleasure of seeing them comfortably fitted up before very long and now Bess remember me kindly to them & sweetheart you have all the love of

your boy Sam

Jul 20, 1905: From Sam at Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My dear sweetheart,

What a disappointment it is when you are about to go out on your bicycle & find it starting to rain. I have been tricked like that a few times. Glad to hear Bess that you are getting about a bit & I hope you are enjoying it. Also glad you had a nice evening at Bangor. Now that is one place you have to take me to. Are you going to Whitehead this year?



Bangor Co Down

When does your school finish this term? It is your last dearest & I hope you won't have any regrets at leaving. I wrote Mother last week & told her of our plans.

Now Sweetheart I appreciate the generous spirit of yours in leaving things to Auntie Lizzie & I but Bess mine own it is only natural that you should wish to have things you like so I won't get too much to start with. I spent the holiday with Uncle & Aunt Sunday to Tues mornng. The weather was very uncertain so we didn't go far.

Glad to hear that I don't have to be resident in Belfast. Not that I wouldn't mind a spell in Belfast but if I had to be away previous I couldn't be away after & I am intending we shall have one of the finest holidays we have ever had. Now sweetheart I should like to know what arrangements you intend making on your part. I should like to talk these matters over with you but it is not possible.

Osborne, the Highgate man left a week ago & we got another man who was no use & had to go last night & we have another man starting in the morning & I have to go up & take stock. If we cannot get a man to run it

satisfactorily we will sell it. Business was rather quiet last week a/c of the holiday. Sweetheart I am looking forward to the time when your company shall leave no room for letter writing as it cannot convey the love as one would wish & I shall be heartily glad when it is finished & I have you for companion for good, the one I love most on earth & sweetheart well I know that I am loved in return which makes all the happiness for your own boy Sam

PS Kindly remember me to Aunties -I had a letter from Aunt M.K which I will reply to soon.

Jul 23, 1905: From Sam in Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

What a surprise it must have been to receive Arthur's letter (*from Toronto*). I think by the tone of it he is sure to come. I hope Gracie will be able to come with him.

So Bess you have bought your dress, well that does look like business, & you enjoyed your shopping. I wish I had mine done. I am to be introduced to a wholesale furniture dealer & so save money. Next week I am going into the city to order a suit which will have to be extra special to secure me a place by yourself when you don your new dress.

Eaton says he "will see me through on such a momentous occasion" I knew he only needed a little more pressing & you bet he got it. I expect to hear from you if you have fixed a definite date with McGranahan as I have to get a man from here & I cannot always drop on a good man at once so let me know sweetheart. Thanks sweetheart for your information that your plans are quiet, so much to be thankful for I am of a nervous disposition & too much fuss might not agree with my health

However dearest one no matter about plans you are all I love & cherish &

with, I hope, a long future before us. I hope to show it more by my actions than I have by my letters

Your own Sam

Jul 27, 1905: From Sam in Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

There were great doings down here yesterday. Wimbledon got made into a borough & there was a lot of spouting & etc so I went up to Highgate & did some work. I think the people will take that shop over on the Bank Holiday & I won't be sorry to be finished with it altho' if I had been there my self these nine months I believe I would have made more money than we did in both places as the stock here has been none too good. Auntie & the family go to Eastbourne next week for a holiday so I won't buy any furniture until they come back.

You are quite right in thinking that I am agreeable to the second Tuesday in Sept as I am but I thought Mr McGranahan might not be able to suit our arrangements so agreeably. So then it is settled for Sep 12 in six weeks time & that day darling will see us made one.

I am glad to hear dear that you got your increased salary & you have given in your notice & it has been accepted gracefully. I think I had better give in mine. You should have heard the fatherly advice I got from Uncle William the other night. I thoroughly enjoyed it. No Bess I have not written to David but I am thinking of doing so as I may stay with him the one or two nights I am in Belfast as I fancy you & Aunties will want some time to yourselves. I say one or two nights as I may cross on Sat. Night if possible so as to have our last single Sunday & have a walk round some old haunts.

Fancy Lillie Rea back in Belfast again, well Bess you may be sure she has not been so comfortable since she left your house but I wonder at you asking her round again after the report she gave to Mother of it. And Aggie

is going to Liverpool, that is to visit her rich uncle (*Thomas Shaw, a clock jeweller*) but she might as well stay at home if her mother is sending her with the same expectations as she had when she visited her uncle in Edinburgh (*probably a Rea uncle that time*).

So sweetheart you sympathise with regards to my Bohemian way of living. (*She asked about his meals as he explained that he mostly grabbed what he could get*) But in regard to sympathy you will soon bring relief & you know the adage sympathy without relief is like mustard without beef.

I am so sorry you have no one to put your machine to rights. You must think what is the use of being engaged when I have no one to do things. Ah well wait a little longer & I shall not be beyond your call. I hope you enjoyed your ride to the country & your visit. When do you go back to school?

Remember me kindly to Aunts & darling mine I am saving up all my love for the future but there I don't think it is possible as you have all the love of

your Sam

July 29, 1905: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Sam in Wimbledon

My dear Sam

I(have been a long time in replying to your letter but if I had a thought that you were anxious to hear from me I would have written sooner and then you warned me so much that I did not know what to write for as you say yourself you and me are of different opinions. Time changes our thoughts and views through a wonderful extent. Everything looks bright in youth but that time quickly passes. Some are young for a long time but not so with my sons they are in a hurry to be old men and you are going to get married one year sooner than any of them. Well I hope it will be for your good and that you will be happy. You have had a lot of ups and downs and

you will need to be very wise but I must not advise you for you do not want it and I could say a lot you might think of hereafter but then you know so much yourself that you do not need any counsel from me but many a time you did.

David was here last week he looks well and is always willing to help his brothers and me in every way he can. If you get on as well as he has done after you get married it will be well.

I had a long kind letter from your aunt (*she means Lizzie*) I must write to her. We have had a very warm summer it is cooler today and I am glad.

Matt was home at the 12th He gets on well but he will have to come home for Ernest will have to go to something and I cannot do here alone. David says I am greatly failed (*ie weak with age*) and well I know it.

Bob is working away with Mr McKlenan (*a carpenter*) and walking to and from Newcastle every day. His feet are sore so he is getting a bike. Herbert is very wise but not too strong nor does not look very well. He was at home a week. Willie was in the shopmen (*convention*) for a week and David and family were at Portrush for two weeks and Wallace and Belle has to get theirs got now (*sic*)

Dear Sam I will be glad to hear from you. I hope you are well and doing well. How is your uncle? I hope he is well and his bussness good. With fond love from Mother

E. Linton

Aug 3, 1905: From Sam in Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

Thanks for your pc I am glad you are having a turn around & making the best of your holiday. Yes sweetheart the time is coming round & I suppose you are like me with a lot to do. I have got the walls papered, ceilings

white-washed & all washed down and scrubbed. I expect the linoleum will be laid tomorrow. I was in a furniture wholesale place yesterday & the assortment was good. I will get some next week & Auntie will buy what else is required when she comes back from Eastbourne. Now you see how I stand where are you in comparison? Have you finished the arrangements for the day? Will there be many of your friends there? Would you like to have any of mine? It is immaterial to me. Have you seen Mr Prentis yet? (*at the Presbyterian Church*) If not you will need to see him at once as I think they need a month's notice. I expect Eaton (*Sam's best man*) over here tomorrow or Sat.

I am sure you are excited a bit about Arthur (*Bess' brother in Canada*) as it is so long since you saw him. If we arrange for the 5th you would have about three weeks with Arthur & then he could come over to London & finish his holiday here. I'm sure Bess you could do no work at school if Arthur is here so you may give it up & make the most of the time you have. Uncle has asked me to join them in Eastbourne for the holiday but I won't as Eaton is in town.

What do you think Bess I had a letter from Mother last week. She doesn't say much but she thinks I am in a hurry to be an old man. I enclose it – it is a bit sarcastic but she may mean well.

Yes darling you will see me on Sunday morning Sept 3rd D V (*god willing*) & I am looking forward to the time which is only a month distant when we shall meet & not part. I will write to Wales soon & get apartments. I hope you will be able to have a few days at Whitehead with Arthur. I should like a few myself.

So your bicycle was punctured - a very usual occurrence Bess. I hope are you having a pleasant time in the country, remember me to all your friends there.

Your boy Sam

Aug 11, 1905: From Bess in Belfast to Sam in London about wedding plans

My darling my Sam,

The days are slipping away and I have accomplished a great deal but not as much as I would have liked. School begins on Monday and I must put in an appearance to justify the commissioner awarding me a quarters salary.

Dear boy I will not comment much on your mothers letter except I fancy it isn't as bad as it might be, or as some of the others fared, but no matter. I don't feel the omission of my name as an insult and, as she says we and our views change with time. When we have each other few people's views will not matter, if we go by our conscience and have our own hearts approval of what we do, don't you think?

Yes, sweetheart, I think you are getting on very well with your house - I think I should say our house. It is good of Mrs Shaw to take the place of a good friend and I fully appreciate it dear as I am sure you do. If you like, dearest, you might tell her so. Perhaps you would like to have a list of the guests -not many. Bessie McC and Mr Eaton our Arthur and Mr McGranahan (*Mr James McGranahan clergyman*) Aunt MK and Aunt E (though they don't want to come but I want them to) and ourselves. Now I had thought all along of asking David and Emily (*Linton*), of course I supposed they would be the representatives of your family you would prefer. I never for a minute thought of making up a party without some one or two on your side. So sweetheart if you would rather have anyone else let me know. Is it Mr Eaton who looks after the carriages?

I am writing in Aunt MK's name to the Crawfordsburn people. There is a great garden there and I would so like we be photographed in a group for Mother and Gracie especially.

I am not conceited enough to have many photographs taken. What do you think dearest. Of course that can be done when Arthur (*her brother in*

Canada) comes. I can call at Charles and Russell (*photographers*) and ask them to go down there that day if you think well of the idea.



Crawfordsburn Garden

Dearest yesterday I saw in the window of the Railway Co. The name Barmouth. I was going to ask where it was, I didn't know. Will you take your cycle and would it be worth taking mine? Is there much scope for cycling there? Another thing dearie, I have no trunk of my own but a little one. When I was in Dublin I borrowed Aunt Mks and I could do it again. I will need a trunk for my own clothes and sweetheart I am telling you straight I may be short at the end of the month. Will your money stretch as far as a travelling case? Don't think, dear boy, because I am asking this I am coming exactly empty-handed. I am not by any means a well off girl but I will not give you cause to be ashamed of me. Now dear I must be off to Miss Linton (*her dressmaker probably not related*) I have an appointment.

These few days I fancy it has been much with me, my marriage, my sweetheart, but that stage will soon be over, won't it. Are you getting nervous? With love to my own boy my precious sweetheart

Bess

Aug 14, 1905: From Sam in Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

Uncle has gone down to Eastbourne today so I am all alone & I do wish you were here sweetheart, though it won't be long now. Thanks darling for your lenient criticism of Mothers letter. One's mother is a privileged person as far as remarks go but as you say when we have the approval of our own hearts & consciences it doesn't matter how others vote on our actions.

You think I am getting on well with our (I'm so glad you said our Bess, as it means nothing without you) house. I have had the linoleum down & it makes a vast improvement & will get the bedroom furniture this week.

Eaton was over presiding at a meeting of the executive committee of the NAGA (*The National Association of Grocers' Assistants, founded in 1898*). He looked A1 with his chain of office when I called at the Anderton's Hotel to meet him. Everything is alright with him. He will look after the carriages & anything else I should ask him.

Sweetheart Crawfordsburn will do fine. You will have to take care of the timing as that evening we leave Belfast on the 7pm train & you will need time to change etc. I don't know what time the ceremony is at or how far it is to Crawfordsburn or how long to drive so you will have to plan accordingly. Crawfordsburn will be just the place for the Group Photograph which I would very much like as a reminder of the day so by all means see Charles Russell (*Belfast Photographer*)

Now Bess do not borrow Aunt MKs trunk you shall have the travelling case by all means, & Bess do not apologise for asking for it as what is mine is yours & Bess do not talk of coming empty handed or full handed as if I thought of such things. I love you for yourself alone. I enclose a cheque for £3 3s.

Now as to cycling at Barmouth, from what I have heard I don't think there is much possibility but at all events we will take your bike. As re David I am writing him to see if he can put me up. Sweetheart we get rid of the Highgate shop next Monday & tomorrow I am going down to Addlestone to look at a new shop a few stops further down the line.

Now sweetheart I am looking forward to the 5th very much but I am not at all nervous are you sweetheart? Let me know if you have got the licence & if there is anything I can do for you. Remember me to Aunties & sweetheart my all I am

your boy Sam

Aug 15, 1905: From Bess in Belfast to Sam in London

My darling boy

I was writing a few hasty notes when I received a telegram saying Arthur has arrived and is tonight in Cork and will be here tomorrow night. Dearest I cannot tell how I will put the day tomorrow until six o'clock. I feel as I did the day you came back for the first time, and dear boy, doesn't that seem a long time ago. Thank everything we don't have those partings again.

Now dearest I have written Mr Granahan tonight to ask if 11.30 o'clock will suit him I have been thinking of all that has to be done and I think we can do with 11.30 for the wedding ceremony and get home about 5 o'clock. The Aunts are thinking of having a cup of tea while I can dress and be in good time. Thank you dearest I have received the cheque (*for the travelling case*) I will leave packing until you come. I shall write to David and Emily to ask them to come so that it will come about the same time as yours to them. I am going ahead with my dresses, one will be white and one blue and they will be home in good time.

At school they would like me to take any days off I want and still have my cheque for my salary until the end of the month. But I will close my school

career when I want to and not go back. I send you my hearts love
your own girlie Bess

Aug 16, 1905: From Sam in London to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart Bess,

Thanks for postcard. I had a letter from David this morning and he wishes to have us up for tea or supper one of the evenings before we leave. If you will tell me whether tea will suit you or to go up after church for supper, let me know and I will tell him. Now sweetheart I enclose a card (*a jewellers wedding ring size chart*) and you will let me know which size.

I was up at Highgate yesterday and got finished there. Now with that off our hands we are sure to have another one (*shop*) soon. We (*Sam and Uncle William*) go to see one tomorrow which, if all that is said is correct, means a nett profit of £6-£7 per week. Now sweetheart remember me kindly to your Aunts and Arthur and accept my hearts best love

your own boy Sam

Aug 17, 1905: From Sam in Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My sweetheart,

I have been up to the eyes in work since closing the shop painting the Venetian blinds, a tedious job. You will now be settled re your excitement over Arthur's arrival. What a lot you will have to tell each other & won't it be grand to hear all about the Canadian life of Mother, Gracie & Kathleen from the lips of your brother. I suppose you will accompany him on his visits. Give him my regards & best wishes for a good time in the old country.

Now darling 11.30 will do A1 for the ceremony & get back about 5pm which will leave lots of time to get the train. I will send off my box next

week & if you leave the packing to me I will see it is properly done. I wrote to David but did not mention any dates so if my letter arrives before yours he will not know when until yours arrives.

When I think that we shall be together so soon, this time for good I don't feel I can write so much but darling I know that this visit will give me what I most long for.

What a picture we found at Addlestone. A fine shop, a good home, the security of a big London co the owner of the shop & his wife recently married, Uncle & I. The owner owed the company so much money he wanted to sell the shop to us over the shopman's head as the man had taken to drink & was himself muddled & his wife sat supping ale. I felt sorry for the man & wanted nothing to do with it & helped persuade the owner to give him a chance to right himself which he agreed. Uncle gave them a rattling good temperance lecture which with what they have at stake may have the desired effect. Rest assured Bess you will never figure in such a picture.

Now darling it is late so I must turn in. Remember me kindly to Aunties. I hope they are both well & sweetheart you have the heart's love of your own Boy Sam.

Aug 21, 1905: Bess in Belfast to Sam in London

My darling boy Sam,

Today I finished my school career. Little did I think when I started that it would be my first and only place. I did not tell the children I was going except a few of the first standard. The boys thought I was joking, the little girls seemed to understand better and I could scarcely get some away. But strangely I would have felt leaving all my pets more a few weeks ago, but I can think of nothing since Arthur came. I took him out to the country on Monday and am going again afterwards. We will be together a good deal

next week and then he goes to Scotland. He is just here a week today and the time seems to be going so fast. I don't know how I can let him go back again

I suppose you are very busy just now, is everything alright about your own things? Poor Arthur is quite in a quandary over his clothes. He says they don't wear frock coats in Canada and of course it would be foolish to get something that would be no use afterwards. Did I tell you, darling that Aunt Mary gave me a pretty eiderdown quilt? That is Aunt Mary in the country (*Mary Kennedy – her maiden aunt out at Ballynure*) Darling I know this is but half a letter but forgive me my dearest,
your own girlie Bess

Aug 24, 1905: From Sam in Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

At certain times with me events travel quickly, what with getting rid of the Highgate Shop on Monday, buying another on Wednesday, looking after two businesses & buying a bit for our home I have had enough for four days. Tomorrow Mason goes away for four days and the man I expected to come can't come till Monday. However that won't matter if he doesn't disappoint me. I needn't tell you about the shop dearest as it will only be a week until I am with you. (*This must be 883 Old Kent Rd*) I have made my plans to land in Belfast Sunday.

So sweetheart you have finished school aren't you sorry? Well I am not Bess & I know you will never look back & regret it. And sweetheart you would be a queer sort if you could stick to your routine after Arthur's arrival. But you have thought of his departure – Bess don't let such thoughts mar your happiness for the time being. You say he goes to Scotland next week. For how long? Tell him not to worry about his frock coat he would be foolish indeed to buy one.

Of course I forgive you darling for not writing more I understand what it means to you Arthur being with you so give him a good turn around next week. Kindest regards to Aunties & Bess mine own, my love I am for now & always

your Sam

Aug 25, 1905: From Bess in Belfast to Sam in London

My darling,

I see you would require a prompt answer to some of your questions so this Friday morning before I catch the 9.55 to the country I must do my best.

Dearie about Emily's invitation I would be very willing indeed to go and visit them all altho' I had arranged in my own mind at least that I would like David and Emily in our house that Sunday to meet Arthur of course I will do what you wish in the matter.

Dearest I enclose the card again. I think the size marked 5 will fit. (*This is a card from Jay's Jewellers 366 Essex Rd Islington with holes to measure ring size which survives 5 is very small by modern standards*). I have got the licence home, I just went for it last night. I shall hold it till you come. Now dearie I must run for that train. With fondest love

your darling Bessie.

Aug 31, 1905: From Sam in Wimbledon to Bess in Belfast

My own sweetheart,

You will forgive me I know for not writing sooner but I have been hard at it this week & our little home will look alright when we get back. Through unforeseen circumstances I have to come back two days sooner than I expected. Do you mind dear? It is compulsory or I would not do it but we will finish our holiday in London.

I sent my box off this morning & I had a few unexpected congratulations this mng. Where do you think Bess? The last place I would have expected – a police court. I was up as a witness against a man & he was remanded till next Wednesday & I would have had to appear had I not asked for an exemption on that day. Well the magistrates would not so I explained the circumstances & one said he would not like to upset the honeymoon & the other agreed so I got off till Sept 12 when the man appears at the Central Criminal Court and the magistrates & police inspector all wished us every happiness. So you see I will have to appear & do my duty on Sept 12.

I needn't say more as I will be with you shortly after you get this darling. I could fairly dance around as there will be no parting this time. This is the last letter I will send under these circumstances & you will say good job but they have been the means of conveying our love for three years but I shall cherish those years of correspondence through life as they mean so much to me. They represent a long time of waiting & patience on your part dear until your laddie could exchange them for this closing bond of union & love that I know we shall enjoy as man & wife.

Kindest Regards to Aunties & Arthur who I hope to find in good health & good form & Bess my darling, my love I hope you are in good spirits & lastly sweetheart with my whole heart I am

Your Sam

Aug 31, 1905: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to Bessie in Belfast

Dear Miss Kennedy

I have written to my Brother in Liverpool to send to you a teapot, which I hope you will have received before you get this, on the occasion of your marriage to my son Sam with my sincerest wish for the blessing of God to be on you both and peace and prosperity which will be sure to follow.

With kind love to Sam and you and every good wish for your future

happiness from Sam's Mother

E Linton

Sep 1, 1905: To Sam From Auntie Lizzie in Stoke Newington

My Dear Sam

I suppose you will expect a line from me before the final day. As you know I am a poor hand at making speeches or writing set letters, I never have the words on these occasion, your uncle takes my place, but I am going to try to say a few plain words. I congratulate you and Bessie on your approaching marriage. It is my most earnest and heartfelt wish that your married lives will be full of happiness and prosperity. I am sure she will make you a splendid wife and that you will make her a good husband. There is no doubt you will be much happier than you have ever been before, you won't know where you are.

As you will see we are all back from our holiday, we all look very well, we had a good time. The weather might have been better but it did not keep us at home. I am longing to see both of you here again. I want too be the best of friends with Bessie. I am sure we shall, you must bring her up as soon as you are home. Poor Willie, is feeling a bit better tonight he has had an awful time of it (*this will be their eldest son*) As they are awaiting supper I must close.

Your loving Auntie.

Sam and Bess were married on the 5th of September in Townsend St. Presbyterian Church. The wedding photograph was taken in Crawfordsburn Gardens.



Townsend Street Presbyterian church



*Aunt Eliza Sam Mr H. E. Eaton Arthur
Aunt Mary Knight Bess Bessie McCluggage
Crawfordsburn Gardens, Sept 5 1905*

Sep 5, 1905: from Jessie Lemon Arthur Kennedy Boddcher in Gilbert Plains Manitoba to Bess

I just received yours and Arthur's post card today I have put off writing every day, well I have been so unsettled for over a month or rather two here and there, but *A(rthur)* will have given you all the news. What did you all think of Arthur in Denmark Street? Would you have known him? What did your Aunt Knight say? I would have liked to be there. I got your Aunt *K(night)*'s letter just as I was leaving Winnipeg *G(racie)* gave it to me I will write to her next. Tell *A(rthur)* I got all his letters and will answer them. Tell him they are a great comfort to me, I only got a short note from Gracie last week She is being kept very busy at her business just now, but I suppose you will have heard from her.

And now my dear wee girl I wish I were with you. It is hard to speak ones thoughts on paper but I know you have two aunts that has been all a mother could be to a child and more than most, but still I know you would have liked your mother also I was glad for your sake that *A(rthur)* got over in time. I would have liked to have given you a few words of advice Bess but it is not easy when I am not near you. But there is one thing Bess is your duty to your father in Heaven let him be first in your heart and it will regulate all other ties. do not take things serious (??) that is be girlish as long as you can and enjoy your self as long as you can with out any other ties that will tie you down the best time for a girl to have enjoyment is the first two years if she is not tied down too much. Now Bessie if I was only beside you I want you to have a happy life.

Now dear Bessie I do not know if I have made sense of what I have been trying to tell you. Give Sam my warmest love and your mothers constant prayer is that you may have a happy and useful life I will be thinking of you altho I am not there I know you will all be busy and not much time to think

about any other thing Now dear Bessie I would have liked to have sent you a good present also to help you with a little money and if I had only been left in Winnipeg I would. I help Gracie all I could but we both planned to do more but me having to come away made it impossible both for G(*racie*) or myself to do what we would, but it will come yet if we all are spared. I will have to stop

your loving Mother

With lots of kisses from K(*athleen*)

PS I would have liked to have got down to Winnipeg next week for the opening of a new church home but as things are I cannot get but I may get later if things turn out better. How did you like the little church paper I sent you. I am sending you another, there are some in London. I am sure if you found out where they meet for worship and go you would like them

Oct 3, 1905: From Grace at 461 Balmoral St Winnipeg to her Aunts in Denmark St

Dear Aunties

I haven't time to write each of you a nice letter apiece as I would like but I mustn't let another day go by without acknowledging your repeated letters and remembrances. First I had Aunt M.K.'s postcard, then Aunt E's nice long letter, description of the fair bride and the wedding, then another nice letter from Aunt M K with the dear little siver bird which had flown all the way across the big ocean to me. Then on Saturday I got the letter from Aunt M K to Mother addressed to my care which I forwarded this morning. Dear Aunt Eliza your letter was just such a splendid description it read like a good book – and unlike the society columns I'm glad to say. How I did laugh at the picture of Arthur in Uncle's tall silk hat. You know over here even elderly gentlemen keep their silk hats for public ceremonies lke receiving a visiting Mayor or public dignitary of that kind,

and young men seldom wear them.

So Bessie is happy, I am so glad. I have not heard from her yet but I expect to some of these fine days when they have had time to get over the "holding hands" period. Thank you so much for the bridal rose and the piece of the wedding dress. I shall prize them both and the dear little silver brooch.

Yes, the trio is indeed broken. How sad it seems and yet how nicely it has turned out for Bessie. And you two dear Aunties must try and not feel too lonely. Some of these fine days we'll all have a jolly reunion I am sorry the pictures arrived too late for Arthur to divide. Let me see, I sent one to Bessie to the McC(*luggage*)s, to Uncle John and to Aunt Mary Kennedy, so you two must take your choice of the remainder. Give Aunt Annie one and the other is for Uncle David in the country, You see I sent those first who might think they would have been left out, but I knew, you two would understand that yours would come as soon as I could send them. I am glad you like one of them at least.

That photo of yours Aunt M.K. reached me, as I said, on my birthday, and you may be sure I was glad to get it. I like it very well and think you have changed very little since I left Ireland, and it is very like my recollection of you but as Aunt E says the expression might be better. I like the picture of you in the group, I think that is lovely. By the way I have got the wedding group framed – a dark oak frame with a white matt and a gilt edging inside, and it looks very well. That group is certainly a success, it shows up everyone well. I am going to send this last photo to Mother just to see it, and she will return it to me. We usually exchange any letters we get, and I suppose she would like to get this too. By the way I sent your letters to her and she has not yet returned them, so don't blame me if you have asked any questions and I have not answered them as, of course, I haven't got the letters here for reference. She said she just felt as if she was home again, when she came to Winnipeg. Gilbert Plains is a small place, of

course, but Mother is beginning to make friends there and of course she does not have to work so hard. I think she will like the place better in summer time. I intend to pay her a visit then.

I realise that I should have written a separate letter to each and I will soon, but this time my time was limited (its eleven o'clock now and I am sleepy) and I feel that I could not put off writing any longer. So this is just a little of the general news for you. Give Bessie my love when you write and tell her I will write to her soon, If you see Bessie McC(*luggage*) some time around her birthday (*her 20th*) I wish her many, very many happy returns of the day and give her my love.

And now goodnight dear Aunties,

Lovingly Gracie

Oct 17, 1905: From Arthur Kennedy at 303 Huron St Toronto to Bess in London

My dear sister,

How is my youngster, now I suppose I shall have to stop calling you that being an 'old married woman' now. I suppose you will be anxious to hear of my trip home. It can hardly be termed uneventful since, between stormy weather and cylinders blowing up we were delayed about four days. About one day out from the North of Ireland, head winds blew almost every day until we were in sight of Belle Isle off the coast of Newfoundland which of course roughened the sea and made 'the good ship Corinthian' (as my room mate used to term her) pitch and roll a good deals. Altho she's a remarkably steady boat. The second day saw about half the number of passengers mustered round the table at meal-times this however dwindled to about 1/6 or 1/7 when the sea was roughest. Strange to relate I never missed a course let alone the whole menu. The fresher the breeze the better my appetite and the more food I converted into flesh, and muscle. My net gain I figure amounts to about 11 or 12lbs

and all put on during the voyage home. I should have gotten quite stout at this rate if the engines had given out altogether and kept us out for a month or so. You would then be less certain should I go back to see you again whether you kissed the right man or not. I enjoyed the twelve days on the water very much and like all my pleasant days during my whole trip they came to an end all too soon so that after a most delightful sail at half speed on account of our crippled condition we reached Quebec and later Montreal down the mighty St. Lawrence, which could not have been seen to better advantage at any other time of the year. The autumn tints in bright red and yellow were just touching the trees, and with beautiful warm weather, warmer than any I had experienced since I left, made a delightful ending to a pleasant altho somewhat stormy trip. Quebec is a very quaint old place very French I should judge three fourths of the people know nothing but the langue Francais. There is quite an old citadel there and it is a very strong one, in fact reckoned I believe to be the second fortress in the world. The streets give it an old world air very narrow and mostly very steep in fact some of them are so steep that the grade has to be relieved by steps. Of course there is no vehicular traffic on these streets. The whole town is built on an immense rock overlooking the river, the fortress built on the outer edge all round the river front. I inquired my way to a certain place from a man in the street and was surprised to learn he did not understand a word of what I said. I spoke in English. I then asked my question in French and he immediately directed me. It surprised me to find myself not understood, in an English colony, in the mother tongue of the nation. Well, in due time I reached Toronto after an all night journey in the train from Montreal. Home again. No matter how well one enjoys oneself away from home yet there is a real pleasure in returning. I found your letter on my desk when I reached the office and I can tell you that was an added pleasure, I did not expect it. I have had two or three from Grace since and like myself she is anxious to see the photo of that eventful and happy gathering at Crawfordsburn. There is a poem by

one of the American poets, Whittier I think it is, who starts out with the words

“Of all the pictures that hung on memory's wall
Is one of the dear old forest that seemeth best of all”

I do not know whether you have heard it or not, but it is a beautiful thing all the way through portraying the memories of past pleasure and scenes of his childhood and younger days. This comes into my mind now and applying the words to my own case – I say the lines over thinking not of a forest but of many other things and places especially the scene in the room upstairs at 73 when you asked me to button on your glove before going down to the carriage. You were looking your best and laughing through your tears which made Aunt Annie say "you were just like Mother when she went off". Well my dear Bessie it is nearly twelve o'clock I shall lose my beauty sleep, nothing new however. In Denmark St. I remember you did help me very much by helping me to keep good hours. Now don't forget I am hungering for a sight of that photo. The one I took at the same time as the large one did not turn out well, I am sorry to say. Am getting up a kind of album for you. I fear it will not be a very elegant work however but it may revive old pleasant memories lest we forget. My kindest regards to Sam and with much love to yourself I shall bid you goodnight,dearie.

Your ever loving brother Arthur - Write soon and often, will try to do my share.

After the wedding, Sam and Bess had a honeymoon holiday in Barmouth and, presumably lived in Wimbledon at first. But by November they had clearly moved from Wimbledon to Old Kent Rd as the following letter from David below was sent there.



Old Kent Road oin the 1900's

Nov 30 1905 From David Linton 15 Alberville Drive Belfast to Sam 883 Old Kent Rd

Dear Sam,

I received your note about the (*wedding*) photos and Emily went down to Allison's yesterday to see why they had not completed your order and they informed her that they had been overlooked, but they would send them next morning which they have done a few hours ago. We have taken one and I will send the balance to Miss Arthur's in the morning. We were very glad to hear that you enjoyed your visit to Wales and you are fairly well settled in the wedded state and also glad to hear that your new business has turned out as good as it was represented to be.

I suppose you did not hear that we had a very bad fire in stores which has done a great deal of damage to the stock and buildings. Also the mare was burned to death with harness which is a dead loss. Of course we had insurance on the stock but not enough to make money on the fire.

However, our loss will not be terrible.

You know Matt has been at home since Ernest came away but I don't think he will stay long as there is not enough money in farming such a small farm. Bob is working away and they are all quite well. Our new electric trams were started today, which is a big advance on the horse car. Tell Bessie that I hope she is liking London. It will be much more pleasant for her living on the Old Kent Road. Now I think I will cease for it is bedtime and I am very tired. With kindest regards to Bessie and yourself.

Your Affectionate Brother

David

Dec 1, 1905: From Grace Kennedy at 401 Hargrave St Winnipeg Canada to London

Dear Bessie,

Once more the festive season draws near and how different with you this year. In a nice home of your own, It is different with me also, but I still have hopes of going to spend it with Mother. It is not decided definitely yet, but I still have high hopes.

I have been (*waiting*) for that promised letter of yours ever since Mother told me she had one and that you had mentioned writing to me also, I believe however, that it is here as I had a telephone message today from 463 Balmoral St, and was told that a letter had arrived to-day for me and I suppose as it is to the old address it is either from Aunties or you. I will certainly try and answer it soon. I seem to have lost my sister altogether since the wedding day was first decided upon. I thought after you had had a few weeks in which to get settled in your new surroundings and mode of life you would remember your own folks so far away, especially your little almost orphaned sister -whose mother is 135 miles away, whose brother is something like 1000 miles away, in fact all who are nearest and dearest

are a long distance away.

Now Bessie I don't want to make you feel badly, as after all I hear from Mother about twice a week and usually get lots of letters. Still I would so much like to hear from you and Sam, how you are getting along and any details of your life -you would like to give, as you know I would be interested in all.

Under separate cover I'm sending you a little lace centrepiece for your dining table and there is where I take my stand, right in the middle so you won't be able to forget me. Of course when I come I expect I shall be satisfied with a place at the side but until I do , why I'll always have a place anyway. It is not much dear Bessie. but I send it with heaps of love

Your little sister Gracie

PS Sam seems to have forgotten, the rest of the family, now that he's got the most important member.

Dec 27, 1905: To Bess in London from Jenny M Kennedy at Clement's Hill Ballynure

Dear Cousin,

I think I will just start with the old proverb "better late than never" and would now ask you to accept my heartiest congratulations on the occasion of your marriage. I would have written you long ago had I known your address but I only learned a few days ago by your very kind remembrance of me. We are all getting along here much as usual and have had a very quiet Xmas. We had all the married members of the family and their wives here Christmas Day excepting Rev S who was spending his holiday with his father-in-law in Cookstown. Have you heard of uncle Willie McGookins illness? How that an operation was necessary and has been I believe successfully performed? The malady was a stoppage at the entrance to the stomach, a nurse from the Royal Hospital was in attendance.

The weather here is very mild and very dull and damp and very unlike the season of the year. And Now Bessie, if amid the bustle of London life and your numerous household duties you could find time now and again to drop me a letter or postcard I would like it very much. I would like to hear if you have got settled down comfortably and how you are enjoying married life. I believe Arthur got back across the Atlantic again safe. I wonder how he enjoyed his visit to Ireland.

Wishing you a Happy New Year, your affectionate cousin

Jenny M Kennedy

Feb 2, 1906: From Jessie Lemon Arthur in Gilbert Plains to Bess in London

My own dear Bessie

I am writing you this note to thank you and Sam for that beautiful wedding group I think it is good and the picture is well grouped every one comes out well. When K(*athleen*) saw it she did not know any of the group but Arthur and she thought your Aunt Mary K was me. She thinks she is like me and she laughed when she saw the hat he had on Now dear Bessie this is a hurried note as if I do not get it posted in less than twenty minutes it will not leave Winnipeg till Saturday week you see the Winnipeg English mail is sent out every Tuesday and Saturday and there is only three mails goes from here in a week and the reason I was afraid you had not got my letter I have just had a letter from Gracie, and she says she had a nice letter from Aunt Knight, and in it she said she had not had a letter from me since Sept, now I wrote two one after the other. So thought if you had not got yours either, I do not know what you would think of your Mother - not writing to - acknowledge the receipt. Thank you dear for the nice cushion cover I have been wishing for one this long time but somehow never got it and is it not funny Bessie Gracie said when I wrote and told her what I had got and she said she was thinking to get one for me for Xmas but could not

see what she wanted.

Kathleen has not been so well for a week or so but she is a lot better now she is growing, Write soon Bessie and let me know how you are keeping Excuse this hasty note but I could not let another post pass, with fond love to Sam and a double share for your own dear self

From your loving Mother.

Bess' first child (David Leslie Linton) was born on July 12th 1906.

Jul 13, 1906: From the Arthur aunts at 1 Dalmaine Terrace Belfast to Sam in London

My Dear Sam,

I was out when your wire arrived – too late to send a return one. I was so glad to know that your young son has arrived safe and well and his young mother got through safely. I was thinking about her all morning and praying to our Heavenly Father to bring her safely through it all. I expected the time was drawing near and I must say she was always in my thoughts. Aunt Eliza always declared that the young stranger would arrive on Sabbath morning. Dear Sam I pray that he will be spared to you and Bessie to be a blessing and comfort to you both and to his day and generations. God Bless the little darling and guide his footsteps aright is the sincere heartfelt praying of his loving Auntie. Dear Sam I suppose you will have so much to do and think about just now that I can scarcely ask you to spare a moment to write any details, but if you can, if only a few words I would be so glad. How is dear Bess? And did her courage keep up as I am sure it did even if she did feel nervous. I will be here till Monday morning, leaving before the post comes so please address the letter to Denmark St. God Bless Bessie and her wee treasure is the prayer of their loving Aunt (MK).

Dear Sam,

I see Aunt M K has left me room on a piece of paper to say a few words.

Indeed, I think she has said all I would wish to say. We told Mrs Cain and she sends her congratulations and Mrs Chesnal asks for Bessie's address which I will send. I feel I would like to ask lots of questions. I hope it is a bit cool with you there for dear Bessie will feel the heat badly. Now dear Sam, I fear I am taking up your time reading this for I feel I could say a lot but Aunt MK has said it all so I will stop – with my hearts best love to dear Bessie and the wee treasure. I wish I could see it. I am always your loving Aunt Eliza.

Sept 3, 1906: From Jessie Lemon Arthur in Gilbert Plains to Bess in London

My own Darling Bessie

I know you will be looking and wondering why I do not write but you would see by Gracie's letter I was in Winnipeg, when we got the word of the arrival of the dear wee man (*Bessie's son David*). Then after I came back we were all sick and I would say I will write today, and of course I let it pass that day that meant half a week as the post for the old country only goes twice a week go you will see Bessie how it was and I did feel so sick I had not ambition to do anything but I thought of you and your little darling and I am glad you have some good friends and that you were so fortunate in getting so good and kind a nurse It means a lot Bessie. And now dear in your letter you say you had a hard time the whole 9 months. Dear Bessie I think that must have been that you did not get your sistem up after all the excitement of getting ready for your wedding and teaching school Your nervous sistem was low and then coming away from M(*ary*) K(*night*) and E(*liza*). It all told on you. If you had three or 4 months before you got in that way I know you would have felt a lot better but I am so glad that you have come through it so well and everything right and you both so well. I am glad Bessie you have got some one there you can appeal to that has got some experience and that is so kind to you (I mean Mrs Shaw), And now Bessie do not begin to bring Baby up to be a house bird If you have

him well rolled up, you should take him out every day. The more he lives in the open air the healthier he will be and will not take cold and will get his tooth without your knowing it. All the best Drs say that is the cause of so much sickness with children, is that they do not get out enough.

And it will be good for your own health, Watch Bessie you do not make his bath too hot because if it is he would be more ready to take cold and be careful of drafts Dear Bessie you will think I am giving you a lot of instructions but I know how I felt at first. Watch your own health and baby will be all the better for it, I know Grace will have written you all the news of Arthur being up in Winnipeg and K(athleen) and I also. I would have liked to have sent you some little thing for baby but it is so hard to get some thing that would be useful and that one could send but Bessie after he is in short clothes and I will send him a little Canadian dress. I will close now Bessie but will write soon Give my love to Sam and kiss Baby for me. And now my own dear Bessie good night and may God bless and take care of you and your darling is the prayer of your mother With lots of love to your own dear self

Your loving Mother

PS excuse paper and pen we are all pretty well now

Dec 14, 1906: From Grace Kennedy at 53 Dagmar St Winnipeg Canada to Bess

The Envelope has a printed shield with the name 'The Hingston Arms Co. Ltd Winnipeg Manitoba' – her employer

Dear Bessie,

I am afraid you will think I have forgotten our usual custom of sending a message of love and greeting at the festive season. But I had not forgotten you but we have only two British mails leave here in the week and as luck would have it, I had to work at the office just before the last mail left. I was doing double duty on account of the illness of one of my fellow

stenographers, and had to let the mail go by without writing to you. I suppose I should not have left it so late but of course you can understand how busy it generally is at this season of the year and I certainly have been very busy this last two weeks So I am hoping you will forgive me and say "Better late than never". Unpunctuality is a strong weakness of mine anyway.

So this is Baby's first Xmas, by next year at this time he will be telling all and sundry about the wonderful Santa Claus and what he is going to bring him. I suppose you are longing for the time when he is be able to talk and run around, Won't it be lovely? I wish I could see him. Be sure and tell him about his Auntie Grace when he gets old enough. It seems hard to realise that I've got a real little nephew and I'd like to kiss him just to realize it. But I guess you will have to do it for me, at present anyway. Whenever I see a baby with bright intelligent eyes I always think "How I am sure Bessie's baby is just as bright as he".

Do you know Bessie, I've never had a real letter from you since you were married. Isn't that a little too bad of you. I wish you would write me a nice long letter telling me all about the baby and your life in London. I just know what Mother and Aunt M.K. tells me.

I expect this letter will arrive before my parcel, which I sent on Tuesday. I sent a little pin for His Babyship and hope you will like it and also that it will take his eye as well. Tell Sam, please, that I could not think what to send him not knowing his tastes, and that it was not because I did not think of him. I am enclosing with this a little postcard calendar I made myself, of views of Winnipeg and hope he will like it. The views are from real photographs and are fairly good.

Now, dear Bessie, I must close as it is getting late and I have a few more letters to write. Have you been to see the folks in the country on the farm? But I guess you have not been to Ireland at all since you went to London or

I would have heard of it.

Good bye dear for now. Kiss the baby for me and give my love to Sam not forgetting a whole lot for yourself. Best wishes for happiness and prosperity during the ensuing year.

Lovingly, Grace

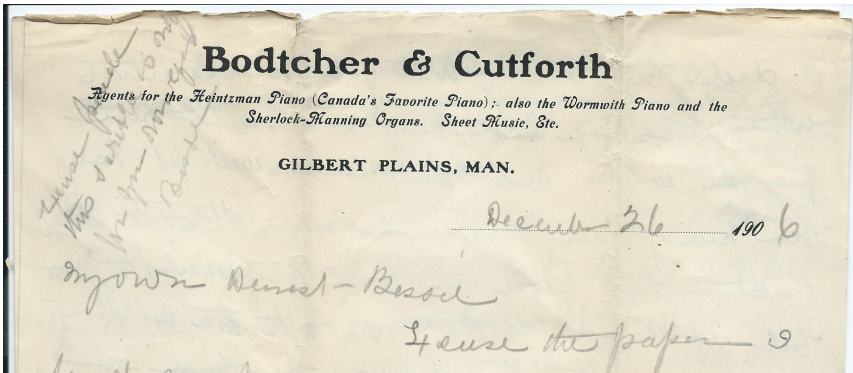
Dec 19, 1906: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to 883 Old Kent Rd

My dear Sam

You are kept so busy that you have not the time to think if we are alive over here, but I always think of you and pray for you. I do hope that Bessie , yourself and your little son are well you did not think it worth your while to tell me about the birth but no matter. I hope your business has improved since David (*ie Sam's brother*) was with you. How is Uncle William doing now? We are all well here, this a nice mild week and I hope it will keep good till after Christmas. I have no turkeys this year or I surely would send you one. You will be glad of a few days rest, David says you have to work hard. I wish you both a very happy Xmas and I hope the coming year will be a prosperous one

Your Mother

Dec 26, 1906: From Jessie L A Kennedy Bodtcher at Gilbert Plains to Bess



My own Dearest Bessie

Excuse this paper – I find my pad is done and if I put off perhaps I will not get it off this mail, Well Bessie I intended writing you in time for Xmas but just the time I should have got this away, I had to go down to the store as first - C (*Cutforth*) went out deer shooting and then Carl went for a week when he got back and I had to go down to the store every day, and then I took such a cold and it settled in my eye and for a week I thought I would go crazy, but I am glad it is all gone now, but you will see Bessie it was not that I was not thinking about you all, I did not get writing to your Aunties either. We have had very cold weather here for six weeks but this last week it has been nice. Dear Bessie since I have been writing Kathleen has come in with the mail and your letter and card, and the box with the collar for me and the tray for K. She had been writing to her Aunty M(*ary*) K(*night*) and E(*liza*), and buying cards to send to Grace and you. I have promised to enclose it. She picked out the nicest for you., as she thought. It is the biggest anyway, She flies at things, and Grace's met with a little accident and then there was a few tears, to think that Grace would think she was sending a torn one to her but I said I would tell Grace, but Grace will only get a laugh when she sees it with a tear and two spots. The

flowers on yours are very nice I asked her if she had read the verses and she said no only the good wishes. She is growing very tall, but she is as fond of dolls as ever, and can play for hours with them, but she is as fly away as ever. She got on well at school she got promoted from one Graid to another in 6 months and it usuly takes 12 months, She got a big dictionary for having the highest mark in her class for two months, Dear Bessie I am just telling you as I know you will like to hear And now dear Bessie about dear baby, you need not be anxious about baby if you keep him regulary in his bowels and do not excite him but keep him quiet as you can. It would be better if be would sleep more, but perhaps he sleeps when he is out, but you cannot do better than have him out all day See that you have not his close (*clothes*) too tight about his body and every Dr says to give baby as much water to drink as they want. If you would offer him a drink now and then it might cool his little mouth.

And now dear Bessie thank you for the collar It looks nice. I have just written a note to G(*racie*) and told her about it. Dear Bessie I suppose you think I am never going to send that little remembrance to Baby but I cannot get anything in a small place I got a catalogs to try and pick out what I wanted but I could not see anything that would do so if I do not get up to Winnipeg, this spring I will have to get Grace, my man of busness, to get it for me, And now dear I will have to close as it is near 9 oc and I have bread to set, but I will write soon again. excuse pencil this scribble is only for your own eyes. Give my love to Sam and a double share for yourself and baby,

your loving mother

Dear Bessie, I forgot to tell you I have done to you as I did to Grace I put a pair of flour vases away for Graces Xmas box. I could not send them but they are there all the same and she will get them when I can get them taken and I have a nice photo frame for you and the first time K(athleen) is in Winnipeg I will get her photo taken and put it in and you will have them

as soon as I have a chance of sending them say if someone goes over and although you do not get it at Xmas it is here from your mother.

Jan 4, 1907: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to 883 Old Kent Rd

My Dear Sam and Bess,

Forgive me for not writing to tell you I received the box of tea and for Bessie's nice letter and card. The tea is very good and I thank you for it. I had a very kind letter from Aunt Lizzie saying she has been down to see you several times since the baby arrived but Bessie has not been to her. It would be a shame to lose a kind friend like she is. I hope you done fairly well at Xmas, you will surely be in need of a rest. It is a hard life the grocery business but I hope with hard work you will not be beat.

Did you name your boy for your father or David (*Sam's brother*) or both? He is the first named for his grandfather. Willie named one of his David Ernest but the Hall's did not like David so it is dropped altogether and you will be apt to do the same (*This was true David was Leslie or Les at school and Vera always called him Pat!*) I think David is a nice Bible name and I hope he will be spared to you and be a good wise boy. Matt came the day after Xmas for a ball at the Castle. I have Herbert at home now and he is well improved. Bob is going away soon to work on a station house.

I could not stay here alone so it is well I have Herbert for company. I will be glad to hear from you when you have the time wishing you and Bess a very Happy and Prosperous New Year.

With kind love Mother.

Jan 11, 1907: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to 883 Old Kent Rd

My Dear Sam

I sent you a note on Jan 4th but got it returned this morning because of

Herbert putting 3 instead of 8. I hope you will get it now. We are all well here – it has been a lovely week. Sam Shaw is home on furlow a very fine looking soldier. He will get on the constabulary in two years. (*This is Robert Shaw's son Sam at Clarkhill soon to emigrate to Montana where he continued to be a policeman*) I got you and Aunt Aggie's photos they look well. With love from your Mother

E Linton

Mar 19, 1907: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to 883 Old Kent Rd

My Dear Sam

I received your kind letter and am glad to hear you are all well. Such weather and it is terrible every day and gets worse and it is blowing very hard just now, It is a good job you can stand the cold so well but you got much of it on the road in Castlewellan. Your Baby looks happy and well and a fine big forehead. I am sure Bessie and you takes many a good laugh at the picture.

Herbert was glad to hear you would take him and try him out. He is getting wiser and sees he would need to be able to do for himself, for if I were to be taken away he would be badly fitted for the world. I will miss him but I know it is my duty to let him go. I know Willie would be glad to have him back but he does not want to go. (*He did go back to Willie's, however, because he is working there in 1911*) Aggie Rea is going to open a shop in Castlewellan. She was in London with the young Jack she has been with these two years, buying goods and will go back to buy for herself and will bring Herbert with her all being well. Now don't send me the money, pay David and we will see later about it. I am very glad to hear that Uncle William and Aunt Lizzie are well and I hope their boy is doing well. I do like her (*Aunt Lizzie*) I hope this will find you all well

with love from Mother and a kiss for David.

Apr 30, 1907: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to 883 Old Kent Rd

When you are coming soon we can talk about all better than write. There is a little daughter come to Willie's last week (*this was Bena, who sadly contracted meningitis and suffered brain damage*). I hope Bessie and yourself and little David are well and hoping to see you soon.

With love from Mother.

May 27, 1907: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to 883 Old Kent Rd

My Dear Sam

I am fast after writing to Bessie for she wrote to me and I was glad to hear that Wallace and you are friends once more, you are both getting wiser. Thank you for your kind present. But it cost a lot to come to see us all and you need all you can for the business. I do hope you feel a little the better for the short rest I was sorry after you left and I have thought more about you since then than I have for a long time. You are too thin, you must work too hard but I have been saying to Bessie that I hope things will turn up that will enable you to leave London and come where you could have a better time and not toil to pay it away again. If you had a shop that Bessie could come into and sell, you would be happier and she would be better than upstairs. Willie sent us a very nice calf yesterday. Bob went to the station for it. He and Herbert are in Willie's and I am alone and a bit tired after doing a fair washing. Now Sam I would like a few lines when you have the time which is not often. You will be glad to get Bessie home again.

With love from Mother.

Her letter to Bessie also survives and is much the same except for the ending:-

David is coming to this part tomorrow. Do you like his house? Your Aunt and yourself will be tired minding Baby, you will be glad to get home and get him out a while. (*the weather in Belfast had been very wet!*) Now

Bessie I must finish with a kiss for David and love to yourself
from Mother.

Jun 3, 1907: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to 883 Old Kent Rd

Try your best to be enough for William. He is not what I thought he was. He has not the principle of his Father and mine and watch him or he will be too many for you. Wallace said you were a deal wiser and that Bessie was a fine woman and little David an extra fine child. As to David (*Sam's brother*) there will never a penny of his go to keep Ernest and my opinion of his is changed.

Jun 4, 1907: From Bess visiting Belfast with baby David to Sam in London

My dearest old boy,

This will just be a note in answer to your request for news of us. I am better, it was just my usual but a bit worse and some added pains I don't usually have, but its over now I think. I have not such good news of Baby. I brought him in from David's and Aunt E declared at once he was hoarse. Its nothing serious dearie we are going to prevent it turning into a cold. I sent out for honey and Borax and we will give him a warm bath tonight and touch his throat with camphorated oil. I ran up to David's yesterday and spent the night there. He has had 9 teeth out all at once, thinking it was better to get it over and done with but he found it very hard to bear. Emily cut her finger and was also a semi-invalid but she was very good to me. She gave Baby two little wool petticoats she had wrought and me a piece of print for a blouse. I said I would see them again before I go home.

Jun 5 1907 (continued from Jun 4) Dearest since I wrote we have had a little bother, you see I treat you fairly and tell you all at once, Baby passed a very poor night poor little man. After we bathed him and rubbed him last night, still he was hoarse and difficult in his breathing. He did not seem

improved this morning so I thought I would like to see if the Doctor could do anything for the brave wee soldier so I took him up to Dr Brown. I had nursed him all day by the fire and he had slept little or none. Dr Brown went straight for his gums and said he would ease them by scoring them which he did. He advised me to bathe him tonight and rub him again and gave me cough mixture for him. Poor wee boy he can hardly make to cough for the pain. But dearest my mind is easier now I have seen the doctor. Aunt MK thought it was croup but the doctor found none (*croup was the first sign of the dreaded diphtheria*). We are not astonished at him having a cold for I have a little myself and the weather is treacherous as the doctor said. We were going to Lisburn (*McCluggage territory*) tomorrow and I believe they had asked people to see Baby but we have had to send postcards to say we cannot for the doctor advises against it. I will send you a card tomorrow to tell you how he is, for I know you will be anxious.

Jun 6, 1907: From Bess in Belfast to Sam in London

My own dearest Hubby Sam,

I suppose you are thinking it is time I was coming home and I am beginning to think so myself. I thought I would get all my visits done this week and be ready to come home at the beginning of next week. But Baby being ill put me all behind for Doctor advised me not to take him out. His cold is improving now and last night was a better night with little trouble with him. His teeth are now making progress also. We are going up to Lisburn tonight with Aunt Eliza and on Saturday I will go to see Aunt Annie in Portadown until Monday or Tuesday. Wednesday and Thursday I am going to spend in the country (*ie with the Kennedy family*) How will Saturday night be to cross? I should like to get home on the Sunday. I could get a rest that day before getting into harness again. How would that do, wouldn't it be convenient for you too?

I called in to see David last night and he says babies always have a cold when they are teething. I told him you had dissolved your partnership with Uncle Shaw but I suppose you will be writing yourself sometime. I expected that would be the final result. Well dear I suppose it is for the best, you will not have a weight round your neck now. I am glad your stock was fair tho I expect you are not content with fair when it might be better. I had a letter, did I tell you?, from Aunt Shaw. I must answer it tho a card I sent must have crossed her letter, and I must answer your mother. Did you send her and Bob their photos? I did not know you had a photo taken that day, it was quite a surprise and is very good indeed. I will arrange for Baby's photo next week, I am glad you wish it so. Emily would like one of the locket photos of Baby and Aunt MK wants one and one of you. She was more pleased over that locket and because you were in the giving in than she is with the umbrella I gave her and she really needs the more useful article. So she must think a lot of it and of you.

I don't think you need worry about baby any more. If I keep him as he is now and get no more cold he will be "as A" as you say. Well dearest time runs away and the rascal won't be at peace to let me finish.

Always your Bess.

Jun 6, 1907: From Sam at Old Kent Rd to Bessie in Belfast



Dearest

Just recvd yours, glad to hear of Baby's improvement poor little chap, he has had a rough time of it but I hope he is over it. Yes that will do for you to arrive London on the Sunday morning & I will meet you at Euston. I enclose cheque for £2 David or any of them will cash it for you.

Ever your boy Sam.

Jun 7, 1907: To Bessie at Denmark St from Eliza in Burrenbridge

Dear Bessie,

I had a letter from Sam this morning and was sorry to hear that little David has not been well. I hope he is better before now. Bob has just killed a wee chicken, it is the best I have. You can boil it into jelly for him and it will do him good. Sam says he is getting on alright but as the weather is miserable here and you have not much got out you would be fretted about Baby. Is there any more sign of a tooth? I am glad Sam has got settled with William I know he will be happier and better. I sent word Saturday to Ernest to go up and see you but I do not know if he will or not. Hoping to hear that

Baby is well again, I would not like anything to be the matter with him, he is so good. Give him a kiss from and love to yourself

Mother.

Jun 7, 1907: Postcard from Bess in Belfast to Sam in London



Dear S

Glad to say Baby is a little better tonight, cough easier , more in the head now. The teeth are still sore. Dreadfully cold weather papers say Sunday was coldest June day on record – shouldn't wonder.

Yours Bess

Jun 9, 1907: From Bessie at 18 Seymour St Lisburn to Sam in London

My dearest old hubby,

baby is asleep and they have gone to church and I have a few minutes quiet to write my boy. I have been here since Thursday night and Aunt Eliza joined me yesterday to go to Portadown. She brought your letter with her and I need scarcely say it was very welcome also the enclosure which Arthur (*McCluggage*) will cash for me. Dear boy don't apologise for your fun I am only too glad to see you light-hearted in person or in your letters. Well, dearest, you gave me a few laughs; and when we were coming down in the train there were some excursionists who greatly took Baby's fancy.

They were singing popular songs "There's a man man man in Manitoba slaving and working hard" and another about a lonely man. Indeed all the songs seemed to echo your sentiments in your letter. So, dearest, the time won't be long now till I come back, and on Sunday, please God, I and my wee boy will be back in my big boy's arms and glad glad to be here again sweetheart. I am going up to Belfast tomorrow.

Dearie I believe I was relieved of my purse on Thursday coming down to Lisburn. There was such a crush getting in the car and I felt my bag pulled and thought it caught but when I turned my bag was open and the purse gone, there was little in it but I was so provoked. The car inspector said there was little chance of getting it back. To think I have gone about London a few times, Baby and all and never lost a ½d out of that same bag and come to Belfast to be robbed.

Oh dearie I was nearly omitting an important bit of news. What do you think, I had a letter from Aunt MK and enclosed in it a letter from your Mother. She on receiving your letter sent Bob out for her best chicken and despatched it for Baby, wasn't it very very good of her? I wrote her today and thanked her but I was astonished, are you not? But wonders will never cease.

No dearest I shall not worry about your cold until I am home. Baby is a lot better of his though still fretting with his teeth. I am glad to see them annoying him for I won't rest until they are through now his gums are cut. One tooth is practically through and the others not far behind.

Darling is the Court Circular the Bankruptcy Court Circular or the St James Court Circular? I could not very well place you either in fashionable Intelligence or in Stubb's Gazette (*Stubbs is the Irish equivalent of the London Gazette in which bankruptcies are listed*)

So you wrote to your mother concerning business. I should like to know what Shaw thinks of it all and what Mrs Shaw, but I suppose I must wait

for all news until I get home.

Your loving Bess

Jun 20, 1907: From Eliza to Sam in London

Dear Sam,

I have been thinking about you a good deal. I hope you have got Bessie and your little man back safe and well, I know you would be glad to see them. I hope the shop is doing well. William will not trouble you often now. I am afraid he does not tell the right way of you and he separating. Uncle Matthew and his wife (*Alma his second wife*) were here on Tuesday and he had not the true way of the story. I told him it would take you to tell him the way of it but I was glad you were rid of him (*William*). The weather is as it was when you were here, it is pouring wet. It must be near the end of the world for there will be no summer. I am sure Bessie was sick of it so few good days when she was in Ireland. Bob is working in Newcastle (*Co Down*) at a new Post Office. Did you see Miss Hall's wedding in the paper? It was a nice one and she got a good day. (*this is Bena Hall's marriage to Joseph Hassard*). Now Sam do not work to kill yourself, you are wore away for want of sleep, try and get more flesh on. I hope Bessie is a little mended she could do with more too. Now I would be glad of more lines from either of you to let me know how you are and how the dear wee man is. I wish he were near me, he is a fine fellow. I hope he has some teeth to eat his cake with.

Love to Bessie and yourself and a kiss for David from his Grandma.

Jul 20, 1907: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to 883 Old Kent Rd

My Dear Sam and Bessie,

I have been thinking of you a great deal since the heat has come. Now do write and tell me how you are doing. The strike in Belfast is doing a great

deal of harm to all the country round. Ernest is home for his holidays but he did not like the work I had for him. Now what about my dear good wee David. How is he doing with the heat? Are his upper teeth coming through and can he talk any better? Wallace was praising him when he was here. Ernest was here in his holidays. He did not like the work I had for him. No one likes the farming and I have more than my part to do and Bob is still at Newcastle and Herbert in town. What about William? You did not write to Willie about him yet. Uncle Matthew said your tea was good. Now Bessie write a little bit when Sam writes to tell me about your wee man and how you are doing yourself. Love to you both and kisses to David.

Sept 2, 1907: From Jessie Lemon Arthur in Gilbert Plains to Bess

My own dear Bessie

I got your letter 4 days ago and I was glad to see it but I was just going to write anyway as I will explain before I start to answer your welcome letter. Well you see dear I wanted to send some small reminder to Baby and I would have liked it to have arrived on the 12th of July not that baby cares but I was afraid his mother might think he was forgotten Well Bessie I thought I would get down to Winnipeg at the fair time as there are cheap trips then but I didn't (and Grace intended going to Toronto to see Arthur and have there holiday together but she only got 8 days and it takes 5 days between going and coming so it was no use thinking about it. It would have taken 44 dollars for fare alone so that was too much to spend for such a short time so they were both disappointed So she came up here for the week which cost her for train about 12 dollars) Well Bessie to go back to the reason I did not send them is I did not want to send money as I thought you would like some little things that he could keep, but what could I do in a small place, and if Baby had been a girl it would have been easy. I could have got a little ring or a bracelet. I went down to the post office to get a P P order (*a postal order*) for you to get some little thing for

Baby, but I turned back, I knew you would not care for that. It was something from Canada. When Grace wrote she was coming to G(ilbert) P(lains) then I decided to wait as I could get her to get me something. Perhaps you have got it before this letter as I have a letter from her telling me she had got what we decided on, and had posted it, I hope you will like it. It is hard to get anything when one is so far away but I know Bessie you will value it as a token of love from your loving mother. Now dear Bessie as I have explained why I did not write sooner I will try and answer some of your questions. Yes I think Grace is better this year than she was last, but her work is hard on the nerves but she had not been so well before she came up but I hope the change will have done her good, but I have only got two letters since she went back, She was saying when she was here, that she was going to write you when she got back so likely you will have had a letter from her before this, with all the news you want.

No Bessie I do not blame Arthur at all only I would have liked to have had him all to myself for some time but I can trust him and he is a good boy and poor boy he told me as if he thought he had no right. In a letter G(race) got from him since she went back in giving a reason for not answering her letter at once he had been pushed with business but Grace just keeps at him until she gets an answer It is 5 months since I got a letter from him but it was partly my own fault, as I lost his address when he was in Montreal but he is in Toronto again now. You say Bessie it has been a very cold summer with you. It has been the same here the crops are 4 or 5 weeks late and that means that the whole of the wheat crop may be lost by frost and it is a very anxious time I can tell you just now to both farmer and merchant as the one hinges on the other as the farmer gets his implements and other things and gives the merchants his notes to be paid in the fall when the crops comes off and if there should come frost it means failure and hard times. There are always frost but this year it is because the spring being so late, the harvest is late. There has been one

nights frost already and has frozen whole districts of wheat but Gilbert Plains is not suffered yet, but it will be 2 or 3 weeks before it is all ready for cutting, Last year it was all cut before this. They (*Carl and his partner*) are in the implement business and hold a lot of notes (*notes promising to pay after harvest*) so it is a pretty anxious time, so I have not been away anywhere this year. Dear Bessie I will have to close as I have a note to write to Grace and it is almost post time. With fondest love to Sam and your own dear self

lots of kisses for Baby your loving Mother



Gilbert Plains, Manitoba

Sep 10, 1907: From Grace Kennedy in Winnipeg to Bess

Headed The James Ballantyne Co. Ltd

Dear Bessie,

About a week ago I mailed you a locket for his Babyship, which Mother had commissioned me to do when I was up at Gilbert Plains about three weeks ago which you have no doubt received by now. I was all in love with it myself, it seems to be something out of the ordinary. So many babies get brooches and pins and rings but a tiny engraved locket is something one does not see every day and Mother wanted to give the little dear

something he could keep. Perhaps he will hang it on his watch chain, if he does not think it too small when he gets old enough for that.

Now dear Bessie, Mother tells me she had a letter and photo from you the other day. Am I to get one of those too? I have been looking every day since Mother told me of hers, for mine, but I suppose you were not sure of my address and had to get it from Aunt M.K. and that occasions the delay. I will certainly keep on the lookout for it.

I remembered some time before the event that my little nephew was an Orangeman, but I have been puzzling my brains ever since for something that I could send him from his Auntie Grace, but have not yet succeeded in hitting on the right article. I did think of writing and asking you if you would like a pair of embroidered mocassins for him but these are so hard to get now, I was afraid to suggest it to you, as I might not be able to procure them after all. But never mind, I will come across something soon, and of course, I don't have to wait for a birthday or Xmas or any special occasion to send my little nephew a gift. But if you think of anything you would like for him, Bessie which you cannot very well get for him in London, let me know, and you may be sure he will have it, if Auntie Grace can lay her hands on it. How would he like an American "Teddy Bear".



Perhaps you have not seen them. They are made of white or cinnamon coloured bearskin cloth like they use for children's coats and are very life like. All the children on this side of the water are simply wild over them, take them to bed and sleep with, then and everything. Dolls are 'not in it' with "Teddy Bears" and of course boys and girls alike have them. They

originated in some joke in which Pres. Roosevelt and a bear played the leading parts. You know the President is commonly known as Teddy.

As I was saying, I was out at Gilbert Plains on a short visit just a week, as I could not get longer leave of absence from the office. If I could have got a few weeks, I would have arranged to go to Toronto to see Arthur and all my old friends there, but perhaps it is just as well I did not, as it would have taken a lot of money, and I have not got very much to spare. This cold winter we have here takes a lot of money for clothes. I will have to get a fur coat soon, I think, as the office is some little way out of town, and we have to drive, and I'm afraid there are some cold drives ahead of me. I have not been here in the winter time, so I do not know just what a drive with the thermometer about 20 degrees below zero, at nine o'clock in the morning, will be like. I have just been with this firm since the middle of April. Talking of cold, we have had a rather cold, wet summer this year, although I believe down East near Toronto, they have been having it hot and dry. The Autumn is the nicest season of the year here, and we are having nice weather just now, and I believe, will have all through October.

It is very nice in the summer time at Gilbert Plains although quiet, of course, to what it is in the city, Mother manages to spend a lot of time in the garden, and she has reclaimed quite a patch of prairie out there, and has a lot of nice flowers. Kathleen is an out-of-doors girl, and all the time during the holidays I do not believe she practised an hour, but I believe it will do her all kinds of good to stay out so much, altho' it takes a few weeks to tame down again once school and music lessons begin again. She is quite handy with her pencil, and is beginning to use water colors a little. I sent her out a box of paints the other day. She made some nice post cards and little canoes out of birch bark, and painted flowers on them, when I was out at G.P. You should ask her to send you a postcard when you write again.

I must close, as I am taking this time in the office and will have to get back

to work again. Please excuse haste and typewriting this time. Give my love to Sam and give the Baby a hundred kisses from me, and don't forget yourself when you are distributing the goods.

Heaps of love from Grace

Please address letters care of Ballantyne Co. Ltd, P.O.Box 237, Winnipeg

Sep 11, 1907: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to 883 Old Kent Rd

My Dear Bessie.

Thank you for your kind long letter and Baby's photo. His uncle David was here the other day. He got one from you and how he does praise him and so does everyone. Wallace and Bell brought me a good picture of Jack and Myra. She is a fine good child and can walk very well. I hope (*baby*) David is doing a bit at it by now and I hope he is well. I have brought Herbert home from Willie's to stop at home for I could not like it here by myself. The corn is nearly ripe and I cannot do all there is to be done alone. Willie was in Liverpool last week at a great dinner on the Lusitania. He got free 1st class there and back. (*This was a sea trial across the Irish Sea*) Another of the Miss Hall's is married and away – this time Lizzie. Sam will know who. I will be glad to hear from you before long with love to you both and a kiss for the wee man

from his Grandma

Sep 31, 1907: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to 883 Old Kent Rd

Dear Bessie

I received the box and its contents safe and well and it was far too much for you. Bobs are lovely and he was pleased when he looked at them and the others the very best for the Boys and Ernest just needed them and I am very thankful. Ernest has gone to see could your Aunts keep him (*at her*

boarding house). He was to leave the other place yesterday and I hope he has got to your Aunts. He is a great big boy I wonder when I look at him. Matt was here and is away now. I do be sorry parting with them each in turn. How are yourself and how is your little man? Matt said today when he saw his photo that he is a fine fellow. Martha's baby is doing well but I did not see her in a long time. They might near as well be in London as here they have so little time to spare. I must say good night now with love to you and Sam and a kiss for my little David.

Mother.

Oct 18, 1907: From Grace Kennedy in Winnipeg to Bess

Dear Bessie,

I got your letter accompanying the photo of the baby nearly two weeks ago, and it has been a load upon my mind ever since as I had determined to answer it at once. I knew you would be wondering if it arrived safely, and when your card came to the firm it was a fresh reminder of my determination. However, now that I have started, I had better not take up valuable space and time making excuses.

The photo is lovely at least the baby must be. I would have liked a larger picture, but I am not grumbling I am awfully glad to get it. I just dote on babies anyway, and to think that I have a claim on such a dear bright little piece of animation as this little chap appears to be tickles me to death as they say here. I should just love to see him and play with him for a little while. Don't forget to teach him about his Auntie Grace as soon as he is able to understand,

Now Bessie, as to not telling you of my 'affaires de coeur' well to tell you the truth, I was and am, rather ashamed of myself. I was too young and had no business entangling myself in anything of that kind at the time I am sorry and ashamed every time I think of the affair, and altho' I have never

seen the young man since I returned his ring, I have heard rumours which are not pleasant. However it is all over now,

To turn to the pleasanter side I believe that I have chosen wisely now, dear Bessie, and at least I can say this for it, my whole heart is in it, and as I firmly hold that mutual love is the only true basis of marriage, that much at least is all right. As to the young man himself, dear Bessie, allow me to draw a pen picture, and as I am no artist either with the pen or brush, there is no danger of me flattering him. But first I will do away with the personal pronoun and you can do the same, capital A and all. His name is Arthur Coombe, quite a family name you see, and he originally hails from the



Art Coombe

land where you are getting your bread and butter now. He, however, came to Canada as a child about the same age as when I came out altho' some time before as he's five years my senior, and his folks settled in Toronto, where his father died while he was still at school, Funny isn't it when one thinks of it, that altho' we both lived in Toronto for a number of years we did not know it and yet for a time we lived within five minutes walk of each other. He left Toronto just a month before I did, so you see we have been out in the West for the same length of time. I met him socially two years ago, just after Mother left the city. I knew him quite well to see for about a year before that time as we both worked in the same office building and knew each other well enough to say "Good Morning". It seems to me I have been giving you a history instead of the picture, but I can talk about my Arthur all night. Well, in appearance he's somewhat like

our brother Arthur but he's perhaps an inch shorter and a trifle broader in the shoulders. His face differs from Arthur's in that while the outline is the same, the nose is straighter and the mouth is large, and when he laughs he shows all his teeth, which by the way are good. You know our Arthur has a very small mouth. As to character he is steady and quite easy as a rule. He is ambitious but has not much of the speculator in him Good natured up to a certain point after that point is reached he is somewhat mulish, or rather he will not move from his stand once he has taken it. Like Arthur too, he never actually loses his temper. I have tried hard to keep from telling you what a really nice fellow he is, Bessie I tried to tell Aunt M.K. what he was like and she wrote back and said that if he turned out half as good as I said, he would be all right. Just the same Bessie, we will both agree that I am praising him highly when I say he compares so much with our Arthur. (Of course I can't compare him with Sam as I don't know him so well, that is the worst of living so far away, isn't it?)

Sunday afternoon Oct 20 / 07,

You see I did not get the letter finished the other night, so I will just have to make a fresh start at it, and try to get it off to you this time. I think from reading over the proceeding pages I have talked enough about that young man of mine for once. I am sorry I have not got a photo I can send you. I have only one in my possession and it is framed so that I cannot very well send it to you, but perhaps I may be able to find one some time and if I do I will send it.

Now Bessie, as to getting something for His Babyship I think perhaps I will be able to get the moccasins, and I will get him a "Teddy Bear" anyway, so be on the lookout for it. Mother and Kathleen have not been able to get to Winnipeg this year, but I am in hopes that they will be here before the winter is over.

Give my love to Sam. How is it that I never hear from him now? Tell him I

would appreciate even a card once in a while from him. I will close now with love and kisses galore for yourself and Master Baby

Lovingly Grace

Nov 7, 1907: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to 883 Old Kent Rd

Dear Sam

I was very sorry to here you had trouble with little David. I do not understand the operation - for all my big family - but I am sure if you and Bess did not think it needful you would not have got it done. I hope he is keeping well ever since. I had a letter from David this morning. He says if you make up your mind he will look out for a shop in Belfast for you. He asked me to go the Chrysanthemum Show but my leg was too sore. I had a hard time with the corn it was very wet and much is out lost in the fields.

Bob is still at Newcastle but it (*his apprenticeship*) will soon be done and I think he will go to Canada in the spring. (*He did indeed go to Canada eventually after his brothers bought the Bodtcher's section in Gilbert Plains for him*). I will be glad to get a few lines from either of you. What about William? Do you ever see him or Aunt Lizzie or know how they are doing? Willie and Martha and the family are well. Martha got her likeness taken – it is very good. With Love to you and Sam and a kiss for the wee man from his Grandma E Linton.

Dec 13, 1907: From Eliza in Burrenbridge to 883 Old Kent Rd

I received your letter and thought I would write before many days passed to tell you to watch out well about the shop. Do not let it go without the money, you are smart but they would try to be too smart for you but I think you will be able for them. Bob was up in the town and brought me the note you sent Willie about the turkeys.

We have three cock turkeys 14lb each but they look well and glossy. Let me know when to send them off. Willie has an affair to send them in and I will feed them well before they go and I do hope they will arrive safely and be the means of making you some money. You can kill them in a few days and pluck them and sell them. I will send a nice wee hen for yourselves to eat at Christmas. Two weeks since I was in David's they are very nice and comfortable. He bought me a good warm fur. Ernest is getting on well and likes his business (a chemist's) and looks well. Bob is still working in Newcastle and Herbert and me has room to run about. It is lonely and cold at present but I am fairly well and must try to be content. I am sending you a picture of Matt he sent me two of them the other morning. *(It is only months before Matt sailed to America on the Lusitania)*



Matt Linton

Now Sam I must stop and trust that all will go well with you and that you have a good time. With love to Bessie and you and a big kiss for baby from his Grandma.

*Jessie Linton's description of life at
883 Old Kent Road*



881 – 887 Old Kent Road

Sam and Bess brought up their family of three children – David, Jessie and Dennis in the rooms above the shop between the tree and the lamppost. This is Jessie's description of the shop and life on the Old Kent Road.

[My parents] lived here from 1905 onwards. Sam died here in 1842. Old Kent Rd is as its name implies was the old road to Kent and stretches from near Tower Bridge almost to New Cross .It ends at 915 and visitors from Ireland were known to get off a bus at the beginning and walk nearly two miles. It is a main road with buses and trams and was crossed, just near 883, by a railway line. There was a station there and one could go to London Bridge in one direction and Peckham and Dulwich in the other. It closed in the 1930s.

The house was rented; the shop occupied the ground floor and in 1920 the

store behind was converted to a living room and kitchen and a bathroom and bedroom (formerly kitchen) were above it. Above the shop was a large sitting room overlooking Old Kent Road and a room behind had been a living room and became a bedroom. On the floor above were two bedrooms. The house was lit by gas -a gas works was about half a mile away in Old Kent Rd-but we were expected to use candles in our bedroom. In the scullery, off the downstairs living room, were two coppers which were heated by burning boxes and packing material from the shop. One was used for boiling hams, which were then sliced by hand for sale in shop. The other provided water for baths which was carried upstairs in buckets and after several journeys you got a shallow fast cooling bath. Later we had an Ascot heater which also provided washing water. In the early years a washerwoman came and did the wash in our house and early on we had a "live-in" maid - usually a girl in her teens and later a charwoman.

The shop had two long counters from front to back. The grocery side had a mahogany counter, with large drawers on the serving side in which currants, raisins etc. were stored loose. They needed washing before use! Behind were racks and shelves for tea, jams etc. Tinned goods were stacked up in displays on the counter and there were one or two chairs for customers to sit on while being served. On the other side were cheese, butter, ham etc. Butter was "knocked up" on a marble slab with wooden pats to customers requirements. Bacon and eggs were sold from a display outside the shop where a large blind pulled down from its casing to provide a roof. The shop door (the only door to the house as well) was solid wood and was lifted off its hinges every morning and put back again at closing time. Shop hours were 8.30am (when the assistant arrived) to 10pm, gradually shortened to 9 and then 8pm. It closed early one day a week at 1pm - on Mondays at first and later on Thursdays - when all the shops in the neighbourhood closed. Sugar and tea were delivered in sacks

and tea cases and were weighed up on the premises, Much later tea was delivered in ¼ and ½lb packets. Biscuits came loose in tins and were placed in a display case - four racks of open tins with glass lids, one to a rack and four or five tins to a rack. They were a terrible temptation to us children, especially to me.

In World War 1 customers were registered for rations and we children would sort their registration slips into alphabetical order. When something in short supply came in, customers would queue for it and nothing else would be sold. Business flourished during the war and post war years. Sam and Bessie visited Canada in 1920 - for about four months, travelling out on the Corsican and back on the Mauritania. The shop was run by the assistant, overseen by Mr Thompson, a traveller for a bacon wholesaler, Hudsons, and the children were in the care of great aunts Mary Knight Arthur and Eliza Arthur.

Gradually, through the 1920s business declined and the neighbourhood deteriorated. Sam ran the shop single handed eventually. We were all expected to help in the shop, especially in the front courtyard selling eggs. In the Depression years of the early 1930s times were bad, and money very tight. But Sam remained in business till his death in 1942, by which time business had picked up with the rationing of the second World War.

Jessie Milton (née Linton)

