

Letters to Cyril from his Mother 1916 – 1920

Earlier in 1916, Cyril had commenced Officer Training at the Royal Military Academy in Woolwich. We have a couple of letters from his mother, written in March 1916, transcribed here.

*100 Drakefield Road
Tooting Bec Common S.W.
March 6, 1916*

My dear Cyril,

I have sent more white handkerchiefs as well as collars. I dare say you can do with them. Glad you found your clothes satisfactory. It adds greatly to your comfort.

How unfortunate about your knuckles. These cold winds makes any cuts difficult to heal unless kept bound up.

We are looking forward to seeing you. I suppose so many requiring uniforms makes a delay.

I did not go out yesterday, the biting wind and sleet was not tempting. The day my left hand got so frozen it was painful for days.

Everything very quiet. I have not much to chronicle. I expect Dad and Frances told you all news. Miss Goodman is very kind and comes in and spend Sunday evening with me as I am alone. She enquires after you. much love your affectionate mother.

Shall be glad to hear how you get on with your hands.

100 Drakefield Road

Tooting Bec Common S.W.

March 26, 1916 (Note added from Cyril: I was at R.M.A Woolwich)

Dear Cyril,

I expect you had fine weather for your visit to Cobham, although cold. We had quite a blizzard here. Just after we three got home from the Abbey. Particles of ice all about the windows looked quite pretty.

The pericope by the Rev Carnegie was the last of the three about "Christianity after the war" it was very interesting. The Abbey was full of people.

Evelyn Johnson has gone to France. His people were anxious in the fear he was on the Sussex. I believe he will go on a ?????????? boat. There were four from his regiment went. Graham I suppose has also gone. Frances went with me to tea on Friday with Mrs Freater (?!). We played bridge. Mrs F picked it up very quickly. They seemed to enjoy it. If they lived nearer we could play with them sometimes.

We all enjoyed your visit last week. Ruth shall hope to see John on the 8th. It will be good to be all together again.

I took Auntie Maria to the Coliseum last Wednesday. It was very good. The place was full as usual. I am afraid we have not much to tell you as we met so recently. We are all well, and I hope that your hands are quite all right again. Is the riding progressing favourably?

I often think of you, and I trust that you will like your profession more and more.

*With love. I expect to hear from Dad, how you are and so on.
Your affectionate mother*

E Hooke

PS. We are thinking of clubbing for a wristwatch for Ella's 21st.

3 Woodlands Road
Barnes
S.W. 18

12th Jan 1918

Note from Cyril: I was in France with B.E.F.

My dear Cyril,
It seems ages since we had a letter from you. Really it is a fortnight last Friday. I suppose you are fairly busy if you are still on march or whether the destination for the present has been reached.
This has been a strange Christmas one way and another the girls not feeling quite up to the mark made us a bit quieter, though Mildred seems quite to Serena again. Trix is improving. Last Friday we had a supper party. Uncle Baff, Auntie Annie, Mrs Fellows ???? and Graham. Mrs Fellows???? It seemed more Christmassy than the actual Xmas Day.
Graham looks very well. A bit puffy that is the food after partly being starved. I expect that you have heard about his difficulties and how the Belgians fed him.
Arthur Hooke has gone to Roehampton. We have not yet seen him. In the lau rs Strand the Battle of Bowlon Wood is described also his regiment 20th Middlesex is mentioned. I wish the dear old boy would call ///// us, he shall be careful not to mention anything about his private affairs. The ////////// has not yet ///// on The /////
.....

Dad and I went to Balham this afternoon. I wanted to see Miss Thompson (dressmaker). The streets seemed deserted. Dad went up to St Mary's to speak to Viney (VINEY THE VERGER) and then came back. Tommy would make a cup of tea for us. It was just as well. We

could not get into a "Bus". We came "via" Balham station. We decided to walk to Wandsworth Common to take "Bus" from there or train. All "buses" were full and Wandsworth Common station closed, so we wandered on and on until we reached at Clapham junction, from where we took a train to Barnes. Tommy's cup of tea prevented us fainting by the way. Last Thursday we all invaded the Revell's, had a pleasant hour or two with them. (The |Revells Mr, Mrs & Dorothy now Glander)

I expect the girls tell you all news. There is not much for me to say. We are beginning to look forward to your next leave when we shall see you again.
With love from Ma
PS
Did the cake and games arrive in good time and condition?

3 Woodlands Road
Barnes
S.W. 18

Dec 28th 1919

Dear Old Boy, (Note from Cyril: I am in England)
Thank you so much for the sweet flowers. Mildred To the secret so well that I was so surprised and happy to have them also the Christmas wishes.
We are hoping to see you so that I will not write very much. We had a quiet Happy Christmas, and on Boxing Day the???? Mrs ???? Came. The Aunts being with us.
We have had extra people here today, it is just a post-time. So I will close with fondest love and many thanks for the flowers.
Yours Mother

Feb 11th 1920 Sunday

Dear Cyril

Today we have been a part the United family. Mildred and Trix being home for half term. We have been somewhat worried about the latter, she is so very anaemic and may have to take a terms holiday for rest. We had your RFA March on the gramophone and it made us think of you. Also of the day when you came out of W. Academy where we heard it played. The weather here has been quite springlike, and hot, but the last two nights frosts have reappeared. I have not been out today but other members of the family have had walks, summer along the towing path as far as New Bridge. Mrs Hay came in last evening. We played Bridge two or three hours. She is fairly lonely in the evening and likes to come in to us.

We hope to go to Beethoven's Opera's next week and the following. I had to stand nearly 2 hours in a queue at Covent Garden to purchase tickets. I went quite early hoping to be successful, but found quite a hundred people in advance, it was very slow before my time came. I got two tickets that I wanted it was some recompense for waiting. Yesterday week dad and I were alone for the weekend. We went to the afternoon lecture and visited the war Chandler's Hall, (also the Coopers Nab???)

The Hall

Wax Chandlers Hall is located in the heart of the City in Gresham Street on a site that the Company has owned since 1501. Located in the Foster Lane Conservation Area, the current brick and granite styled building is the sixth design of the Hall on the same site, having lost to the Great Fire of 1666, town planning and general disrepair. The Hall is well appointed and has benefited from a recent refurbishment to its interior.

<http://www.waxchandlers.org.uk/the-hall/index.php>

A member of the company told us some very interesting things concerning the clothing of some of the ancient members of the company and objects belonging to them!

Feb 25th

I called upon Mrs Ella yesterday to see her before going into a nursing home for an operation upon her eyes. She has cataract, and it is advisable to have it removed at once. The oculist has every hope of it being a successful operation. It is to be done by Dr??? Anderson Crickett and is an expensive affair. We have not seen any notice of your ship excepting passing Gibraltar. By now you will be nearing your destination, if you have had good weather the voyage will have been a source of great pleasure and interest for you, and you will have had much to write about.

The weather has not been kind here; of the month warm spring weather, Hill fogs, and cold biting winds and damp. It was very enjoyable to have Mildred home for half term, she is well and bright.

Full of news of interest - as to her doings in Birmingham, and her friends there. Trix is not well again, it is decided that she takes three months rest. I am very glad that she is home for a time, then we'll go away for a change of scene etc. Most likely visit Mildred and Francie. This rest should have been taken a year ago, but she would not give up. Now she has to do so. A substitute has to be found who will take her place.

???????????? China seems to have reached a point of perfecting the painting on the vases of ///// ///// etc. seemed to the perfection.

Ella would have revelled in the pottery had she been there. Pa's latest acquisition is a ////////////// wall water jug not beautiful but quite nice, the water..... Not so cold.

Last evening we spend our second visit to the opera. It was very finally put on the stage, and well acted and ///// everything especially the scenes where the holy Grail comes in were very impressive. ///// Has well represented G Walter Hyde , ..., both in acting, /.///// dignity and apparently character.

///// 7

Francie came home for the week and she looks well also is very happy. Mr and Mrs///// came in on Saturday evening they are well the former will shortly be installed as Master of his Lodge. It has meant a good bit of work to learn all his duties etc. Graham ///// arrived home soaking wet after football match and not///// on with his parents, preferring a hot Bath etc. after very sunshiny weather we are getting morning frosts. But Gardner is cutting down the ??? tree. I am sorry to miss the beautiful flowering but it has become so dangerous.

With much love to you dear, your loving mother

3 Woodlands Road
Barnes S.W. 18

March 10th 1920

My dear Cyril

We have been very quiet the last week, nothing doing. I managed to get a rather severe cold, taking two days rest in bed helped considerably and I am very much better. We went from warm weather suddenly to a very severe frost. It seemed a bit trying, poor Dad after a cold bath fell/felt inclined to, the pain in his hands being so severe. I called to see Mrs Sellars who is ... and so glad to be there. She found a difficulty in sleeping at the Nursing Home lying all night with her hands tied. When she was released (and sent home) she slept well. I am sorry that she has another operation in June to think about, and can only hope that it will be a success then. The gardener cut down the May tree and it has improved the look of the garden greatly. I am sorry to lose but he has now obtained a situation and goes in a week or two. He has been a great help in putting things right and straight. Dads bulbs have turned up trumps this time, the Hyacinths, Daffodils, Anemone blue all look quite cheerful. We have had Mrs Clark Trix's friend from staying here a day or two. She for an interview ??? has had 3 posts offered her this week, she is a French mistress and has decided to go to She went with Trix to ... yesterday, although..... everything I hear looks flourishing.

3 Woodlands Road
Barnes S.W. 18
August 8th 1920

Dearest,

We are looking forward to the next welcome letter. It looks very interesting to hear all that you were doing at ????

Here we have had much rain and depressing skies, last evening being enticing, Dad and I took train from Barnes (Railway?) Bridge to Chiswick and had a pleasant walk to the Strand Green beginning from..... Chiswick ending at Kew Bridge. It's just a bit of the old Thames ? wondering ? by the side of the River so the and others small and built in, but all in the old style all relating apparently to the boating business in one form or another.

On Saturday 31st July we had a little Theatre 8 in all. Mr & mrs ??/, ???/?/ ??? who took Ella's place(she to Cambridge for the weekend) We saw the "???? opera" as it related to