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Rowntrees in WW1

Dramatis Personae

The letters available during the war period act as a considerable source of information about many friends and members of the family. The few letters from Fred and Annie are loaded with delightful pieces of anecdotal information which give a feel for some aspects of life at the time.

Colin	Colin Rowntree	Fred's son
Mary	Mary Rowntree	Colin's wife nee Begg
Willy C	William Cruikshank	Fred's wife nephew
Ada	Ada Cruikshank	Willy's wife
Nora	Nora - ? maybe	Willy & Ada maid
Baby	Stephen Cruikshank	Willy & Ada son
Harry	Harold Rowntree	Fred's nephew
Donald	Donald Gray	Son of Dr AA Gray
Winkie	Winifred nee Hickman	Douglas's wife
Doodie	Douglas Rowntree	Son of Fred Rowntree
Fred = Dadda	Frederick Rowntree	
Maman, Nan	Mary Ann Rowntree	Fred's wife nee Gray
La Doctor	Dr Albert Alexander Gray	
Ozel	Mr Ozel and Elsie	Worked for Fred
Chas	Charles Gray	Fred's wife nephew
Bird	Wilfred J Bird	
Harold Ellis		Married relation in Scalby
Molly	Judith Mary Thorp nee Rowntree	Fred's daughter

Ralph = Ralphie	Ralph Thorp	Architect from Leeds settled at Hammersmith Ter.
Betsy	Betsy Thorp	Molly's daughter
Ann	Ann Rowntree	Douglas' daughter
Nicolas	Nicolas Rowntree	Douglas' son
Michael	Michael Rowntree	Colin's son
Aunt Mabel	Mabel Gray	Dr.A.A.Gray's wife
Laurie	Laurence E Rowntree	Grandson of Joseph Rowntree II
Joan	Joan Hurndall Rowntree	Fred's niece
Ella	Ella Rowntree	Arthurs' wife
Arthur	Arthur Rowntree	Head of Bootham , Fred's brother
Sir George Newman		Chair of FAU Lived in Harrow Weald
Lady Newman		Wife of Sir George
Harry – a cadet	Maybe Henry Woodville Gray	Fred's wife's nephew
Arnold	Dr Arnold Gray	Dr. at Tayvialich
The Drapers		Draper lived in Kelmscott House from 1905 to 1915, and subsequently at Bedford House on Chiswick Mall. Besides writing histories of Hammersmith and Chiswick, he was an influential local figure. He led successful protests against building a new road through Hammersmith and against siting a gas-works on Dukes..-

Letters To Colin from Fred and Annie

05 November 1914 From Fred To Colin

Details: 11 Hammersmith Terrace
Fred Rowntree FRIBA Douglas Rowntree
Tel Hammersmith No. 268
Telgrams ARCHICRAFT, HAMMER, LONDON

Content

Fred is pleased to hear from Mary that Colin has got there.
Willy C heard from Harry.
Reference to the Hermes incident and joking comment about Donald {Gray} expecting the Iron Cross
Harry says the Colin not quite up to the mark on Sunday - not surprising -
Fred hopes he has plenty to do with the French wounded.
Will be pleased to get details.
Fred would be pleased to receive any sketches of Belgian Furniture - the kind of thing you see in peasants or middle class houses. Fred is interesting in designing Belgium Furniture to be made here.
Scarlet Fever among the Belgian Refugees.
Black family on route to Jamaica
Mary called on Winkie in good spirits. - Doodie says Ann has another tooth 3 in all
Comment: Written on business notepaper - note the telegram name.
Colin for Dunkirk 6 days before.

13 November 1914 From Annie To Colin

Content

Fred was at 123 Pall Mall packing parcels for your lot. Do any of you need anything - cigarettes..
Ella Rowntree and Lady Newman are collecting shirts etc for your wounded.
Molly has got article..
You must have got a terrible lot of victims this week according to the newspapers the carnage seems dreadful
Arthur Rowntree to stay tonight. He and Ella were here last week - Joan coming to live in London to work at one of the LCC schools.
Badda ??(Dadda = Fred) Is at Jordans - thinking of buying Dean Farm
Always looking for a house for you and Mary with cheap rent - There is one, Picton House on Strand on the Green but you would be far better this way - it's a bit dull up there.
No. 12 is let unfurnished I believe...
The Harveys have left No. 13 for good

Peps going to get an appointment to boss a concentration camp for Germans so we are hoping he will let our Belgians have his house from Jan to March when hopefully the war will be over.

Comment: Arthur was Fred's brother
Ellen Rowntree was Fred's sister in law
Lady Newman wife of Sir George Newman - Quaker who chaired FAU.
Dean Farm, Long Bottom Lane, Jordans, Beaconsfield

18 November 1914 From Annie To Colin

Details: Signed as Maman = Mary Ann Rowntree
From 11 Hammersmith Terrace

Content

Complaining about the time letters touch refers to morning and night post.
Refers to Colin's vomits !
How is Harry
Reference to La Doctor coming and insisting the Germans would not get Antwerp or Ostend and having to eat his words
Reference to Houses - Picton House - Black Lion on the Mall Lady Gregories House @ 5 guineas a week. Going to get Mary to look around Turnham Green. If nothing else then take Ozel's house for a while - (Ozel says Elsie may want it. She is only just out of danger.)
Fred is with the Royal Commission about workshops for the Belgians - reference to Fred Ralph Molly self and 2 others to spent Xmas week at Jordans Hostel
Bought some bargain furniture for Colin
Comment: On Rowntree work notepaper
"La Doctor" may have been Dr Albert Alexander Gray who specialised in ears.

19 November 1914 From Fred To Colin

Content

Pleased to get letters although late.
Pleased to hear indigestion getting better.
"It must be sickening work when you aren't feeling quite up to the mark. - In fact at any time it must be fearfully distressing - but what a lot your Unit has been able to do. It seems so odd that it took so long to find where you were needed and then for such an enormous amount of work to be waiting for you. I expect you would like to be nearer the front and hope you will soon feel quite fit.

The Belgian workshops are in full swing and making Belgian Furniture. English workshop is in being and 2 men employed. Toy barges for Heals at 25/- each

Ozel still with us working slowly on the Admin block for China {Chengtu University} He has some rather good wood carvings in colour.

Letter contains more details of Architecture work
Difficult to follow what is happening in the war but it must be interesting to be in Ypres.

"The Doctor is due here tonight - so I suppose I shall be up till 2 am listening to all the latest news and to hear from him what the next week will do with the Germans." Say if there is anything we can help Mary with.

Comment: Dr Albert Alexander Gray would have been 46 years old at this time and Fred 54.

~~~~~  
07 December 1914 From **Annie** To **Colin**

**Content**

Hope indigestion better.  
Fred has taken on No. 3 for 6 months from March 25. The Fishers leave then. Further discussion involving house involving Mrs Draper, Linguard House and Mary not wanting Ozel in his top toom. - Ozel wants the house for Elsie in September.

Tell us how Harry, Chas {Charles Gray}, Donald {Gray} and {Wilfred J} Bird and Bob and yourself are all doing.

**Comment:** Ozel lived No. 3

~~~~~  
01 July 1915 From **Annie** To **Colin**

Details: Signed Mamam

Content

Reference to Mary thinking about letting Strand on the Green.
Story about Lieutenant Turnham arriving at No.11 on Sunday night by taxi
Supper, a glass of wine and all of us making a big fuss of him.
He made a speech to Willy and Ada about their marriage then a taxi to
:Liverpool St for Hull

1st Leicesters, out of 1200 all but 50 killed and 2nd Leicesters out of 1200 all but 300 killed

They had Zeppos in their camp in broad daylight.
Willy to get married tomorrow week in same register office as yours.
The downstairs room to be painted black - Fred's idea. No one has seen a black room.

Comment: Estimate date -- July Aug Sept 1915

Turnham may have been J.E.Thurnham who was in the first corps of FAU with Colin until March 1915

~~~~~  
06 August 1915 From **Fred** To **Colin**

**Content**

Reference to birthday  
Fred has had 10 days in Holland . Cottages are proccessing fine  
5 sent to an exhibition - a Belgian Contractor is looking after them and can put one up in 3 hours.

Harold Ellis is talking of an up to date cow shed at Scalby for 40 cows.

Will C {maybe William Gray Cruikshank }and Douglas are away

Douglas Winkie and Ann stayed with them for a month.

Hear that Harry and Donald going to Italy

Mary looks well

The Drapers are leaving Kelmcott House for Hampstead as they want their boys to have a university college education.

**Comment:** Harold Ellis refers to Harold Thornton Ellis son of Maria nee Rowntree and chairman of Colliery Co. Father of Mahlo Ellis from the Scalby / Scarborough Area.

Warwick Draper lived in Kelmscott House from 1905 to 1915, and subsequently at Bedford House on Chiswick Mall. Besides writing histories of Hammersmith and Chiswick, he was an influential local figure. He led successful protests against building a new road through Hammersmith and against siting a gas-works on Dukes.....-

~~~~~  
29 December 1915 From **Annie** To **Colin**

Details: signed Nan

Content

Reference ot Colin's old pains

And she states:

"An old tabby at Jordans who talked about ailments and religion until you were about driven mad, told me if I ever had indigestion or constipation NOT to go to Arbutnot Lane as he invariably took the Colon out , a very servere operation. I asked what the colon was and she said why the large bowel of course.. For any obstruction or exerescence (words she kept on using all the time we were there) never go to any London Surgeon , each one is more unscrupulous than the last. Go to Collier Gates, he breakfasts you with Bismuth which leaves a black mark all though your insides and then Rontgen Rays { X Rays }you and then he really sees where the obstruction is and treats accordingly - no operations even for exerescences. She had visions

before each of her babies were born and saw them and knew whether boys or girls and wheter they would live or not. Only one has lived."

And regarding family:

"You will have heard Nicolas was born 1/2 hour after Xmas day 12.30. He is a character and a half. Winkie said she never saw anything so appallingly ugly when he was born. He had enormous fat cheeks with head up to a point no forehead, absolutely black in the face, the cord was twice round his neck and he was almost suffocated. He certainly is ugly but a fascinating fat course good natured lump with enormous hands. I banged him about for 1/4 hour yesterday but he wouldn't wake. He is so lazy they can hardly make him feed but when he does he pulls so strong like a horse Winkie nearly faints. He is not like anyone except a course edition of Michael , so I think the cousins will be very much alike when they grow up as Nicolas will really be a fine handsome specimen. . He weighed over 9 lbs at birth but he won't go on nearly so well as Michael who is marvellous and nearly weighs as much Molly's baby at 6 months. Nicolas is a character- he made a great big fountain directly after he was born and Dr Shuten said "well I'll be damned." Michael sent us a beautiful plant for Xmas - Molly thoughtfully enjoyed having tea with Mary yesterday.

~~~~~

20 February 1916 From **Annie** To **Colin**

**Details:** Date is estimated

**Content**

Fred saw Mary and Michael at Fairfax Road. Mary happy with Michael Mary and Michael came for Ann's Birthday - Doodie in pirates clothes Winkie possessive of Ann - comparisons between Nicolas and Michael House been full up for two weeks with the Doodie Rowntrees in 2 offices. Harry coming next week to join his lot - Aunt Mabel La Doctor for few days, Teddy for 2 weeks Willy and Ada as Nora and Babe recuperating at Sideot from Whooping Cough. "I wish you could see the downstairs lot setting off just now for the Hickmans . Doodie in pirates clothes wheeling the pram, Ann dressed atrociously like a scotch highlander tano'shanter and all to match red socks and high lace boot. Doodie is really good, he does hard drill in very hard boots and comes home to very hard work and then either Ann or the baby and Winkie and he are all in a single bed all night. If Nicolas isn't crying then Ann is. There is a single bed that takes up and down but some nights they are so tired they can't bother to make it. They have the office to use for a bedroom and the other office make a lovely sitting room. I fancy Doodie will be going away next week but then Harry will have to stay for 3 weeks."

400 workers have been asked for orderlies for the Mauratania which it to be a hospital ship.

Dadda going to Holland next week

**Comment:** Doodie = Douglas

Dadda = Badda = Fred

Willy Ada Nora and baby ( Stephen) are Cruikshank unsure who Nora was - maybe a nurse or maid

La Doctor is probably Dr Albert Alexander Gray

Mabel was Dr AAGray wife

Donald Gray also with FAU was one son of theirs

Harry maybe Harold Rowntree son of John Watson Rowntree in Scarborough

Fred's nephew. He worked with FAU Jan/15 to Feb /19

~~~~~

01 April 1916 From **Annie** To **Colin**

Content

Discussion about cleaning up No. 3 as the Fishers left it very dirty. Details of people (family and friends) to move in and in which room.

Joan

Booth

Captian Powis

Mrs Wheeler

"Laurie Rowntree has struck lucky - he was in the Crème de Menthe Tank and stepped out to see why the Captain was so longcoming - he was struck by shrapnel and the tank went off without him and none of the men came back either killed or take prisoner. He was put on Ralph's train and later to Edinburgh where he is still in hospital.

Charles Teddy and family were there at No.11

Ann Betsy and Nicolas all got diarrhoea Dr Shuter says it's the water.

"Two men were taken and cuffed from the works next Picton House . They had been flashing signals from the bridge behind your house to Zeppo for some weeks. There were 3 of the workers in the ??? but one not caught."

Comment: Date estimate sometime 1916 after Mar 25th

Laurie must be Laurence Rowntree of Scalby son of John Wilhelm Rowntree Working for FAU Nov/14-Jan/16 then 2nd Lieutenant Royal Artillery Fell in Action 25/11/1917 Grandson of JR2

Joan Hurndall Rowntree daughter of Arthur Rowntree - sec. To Gen. Smuts

~~~~~

## Letters Between Colin and Mary

01 January 1918 From **Annie** To **Colin**

**Details:** Estimate date 1918

### **Content**

Harry to be trained at Exeter - ref. to cadet uniform spurs and all - cavalry engineers.

He was glad to get away from Romford although Exeter a bitter pill.

Had a glorious time at St John's Wood but Exeter is severe.

Ref to Teddy going and to met up with Willy and Ada before going.

Douglas passed his exam and was Captain of the Battalion football team

Doodie homesick hates the whole machinery and Camberley -- Denham ok. as authorities kind.

Germans in a bad way now - war end not long now

Joan loves being at No.10 - lots of entertaining

Nice to see Margaret now and then- she wouldn't know yet that Teddy had gone.

We have all got or had influenza

Mrs Powis upset the her husband Capt Powis has to go to India for 6 years.

Will send daughter Isobel to boarding school and follow him.

Donald and W.. Soon coming for a 2 week holiday in November.

Nora going to Sidcot

**Comment:** This Harry is not Harold Rowntree - FAU all War maybe Henry Woodville Gray born 4th quarter 1902 so this letter may be 1918 although unlikely because of his date of birth and not ref. to war experience

Joan Hurndall Rowntree

Sidcot is a Quaker School in Somerset

~~~~~

01 January 1914 From **Mary** To **Colin**

Content

Mother, her and Max going down to Ruan (Grade-Ruan, Cornwall) by motor.

Fun Journey – Father to follow later for a fortnight.

Colin is to let her know if he changes his mind about marriage.

Comment: Letter before marriage (1914)

~~~~~

01 September 1914 From **Mary** To **Colin**

### **Content**

Ref. to Colin being played through Beaconsfield. And invited to stay at Fairfax Road.

**Comment:** Thought to be Sept 1914

~~~~~

08 October 1914 From **Mary** To **Colin**

Content

Interesting about the Hermes

Mothers day on Sunday - all sorts of people comng.

Tell Donald sorry not to see him at station.

Knitting a scarf.

~~~~~

06 November 1914 From **Mary** To **Colin**

### **Content**

Going to tea at No 11 (Fred Rowntree) tomorrow

The Russell Flints dropped in on mother's day Willy armed with a little sketch of his.

Glad Colin is not plunged into the actual fighting at once

Lovely weather - warm as Ruan

Have been finishing some of my flower sketches - great fun and they are rather nice.

**Comment:** Estimated to be 1914 because of no ref to Michael

~~~~~

12 November 1914 From **Mary** To **Colin**

Content

Mary and her Father had been to the Lord Mayor Show and the Opening of Parliament – London was such fun!

Refers to having 10 women from the workroom to tea. Some of them are very nice.

~~~~~

04 December 1914 From **Mary** To **Colin**

**Content**

Mary sends advert for a reversible Fur Cuirasse which she says she could line with leather.

Comment regarding the day of Molly's wedding – hardly seems a year.

Refers to the death of the son of one of her workroom women. Mother and Mary dread visiting the women for fear of a husband has died in the war.

Looking forward to a letter.

~~~~~

16 December 1914 From **Mary** To **Colin**

Content

Ref to sending Colin tobacco, mittens. Ref to "Colly" not being well
Mary making lots of clothes. Mary's cousin, Julia, sent her two old brooches – miniature of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette- bronze and garnets.
Colin's Mother in law wants to know if he wears his belt night and day.

~~~~~

20 January 1915 From **Mary** To **Colin**

**Content**

Mary has had mild flu

Took Eileen to the house

They are painting and wallpapering.

Going to lunch tomorrow at No. 11 and will try to get Nan to see the house.in the afternoon

~~~~~

17 February 1915 From **Mary** To **Colin**

Content

Father is better but Mary poorly with a temperature.

We have shown Rhoda the house on Monday. She is very excited and full of planning out her work. You should have heard her tongue wagging in the kitchen after she got back

The tide has been exceptionally high and there was a large pool at the bottom of the stairs. Eileen awfully excited and insists on seeing it tomorrow.

~~~~~

23 February 1915 From **Mary** To **Colin**

**Content**

After dinner on Sunday Fred Nan Oslo and I went to see the house and the aunts arrived. They all like it. It used to be three stories and the floors have been raised to make it 2. Bought material from the weaving school 10/- a yard. - about £12 in total. Looked at linoleums at Liberty's - quite a pretty dullish olive green. Mary was reading Honore de Balzac books.

~~~~~

25 February 1915 From **Mary** To **Colin**

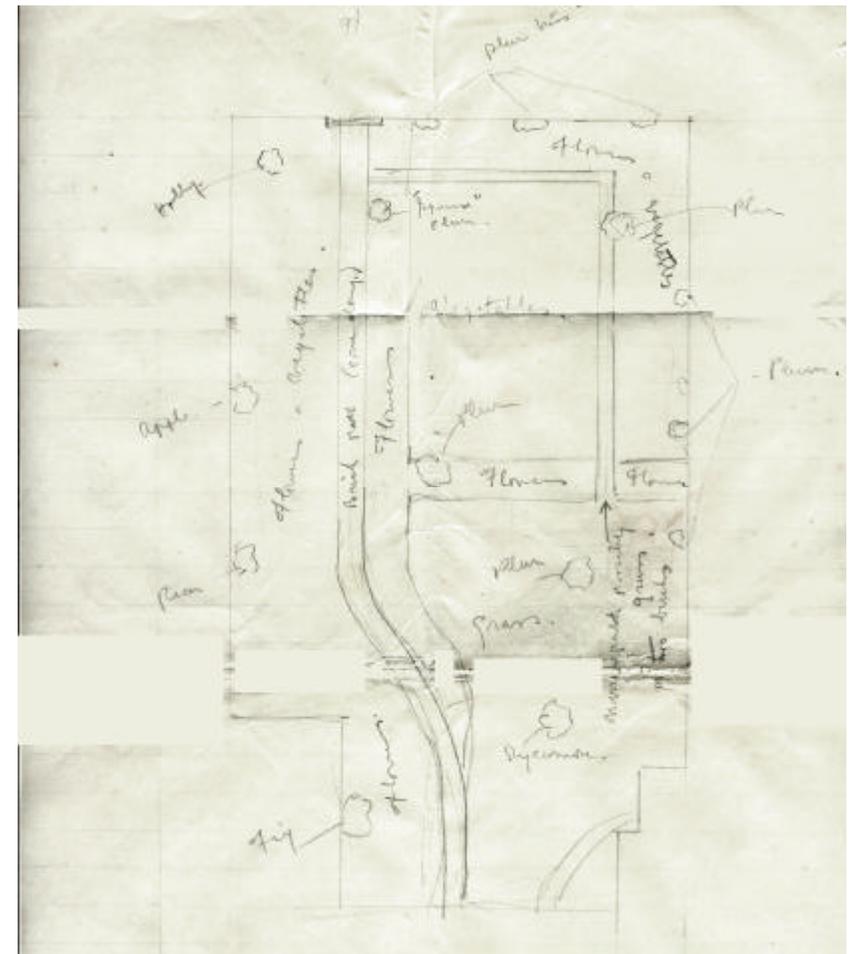
Content

At the house yesterday - comments about telling them (Decorators) about painting details.

Plan of Garden not to scale

Comment: See garden plan .jpg

~~~~~



19 March 1915 From **Mary** To **Colin**

**Content**

"We are going to have a child.  
Colly dear, I shall never have you to myself again, and I've hardly had you at all yet  
I wonder if by about June or July you could get work at Vere Street..... "

~~~~~  
01 April 1915 From **Mary** To **Colin**

Content

Mary had got the garden all dug over and is busy planting perrenial seeds to flower next year - it will be fun if they do and much cheaper.

~~~~~  
06 April 1915 From **Mary** To **Colin**

**Content**

Ref to her music cupboard looking nice as it is finished. Other things to be painted and stained.

~~~~~  
12 June 1915 From **Colin** To **Mary**

Content

Colin refers to his watch being broken and asks Mary to buy him a new cheap one as it is awful nursing without a watch. He would also like some electric light batteries.
There is also reference to new regulations about letter writing and censorship.
Reference to Terence and Chas and to the Flints and Alan Hickman {Winkie's brother}not having his leg off.
Comment: Alan Hickman was the brother of Winifred Rowntree nee Hickman

~~~~~  
13 June 1915 From **Mary** To **Colin**

**Content**

Mary reports that Mother Father and Max has been to Richmond to see Rhododendrons and she spent time in the garden. Refers to the plants. Going to see Francis Flint (William Russell Flint's Father) tomorrow. She supposes that they ought to sublet the house if the war is going to go on. Perhaps Willy and Ada would like it for the winter  
On June 25th going to Perranporth in Cornwall. The nurse says she can swim a bit.  
**Comment:** (Mary was pregnant and just 21 years old; got married before she was 21.

~~~~~  
16 June 1915 From **Mary** To **Colin**

Content

Haven't heard about Winkie
Poor wee Ann, She will have had a very short Reign
Saw the Flint baby the other day.
Quite a shock -- He is so ugly although something nice about him.
They say he is a relic of Willy who is not flattered.
Father (Sam Begg) has a wild desire to go to Chiswick Empire and see "Ever Been Had"
- A revue
Met, in Turnham Green Terrace, Griffith of the Mongolia - fought in South Africa and is Captain or something in Cavalry
"How the women with men in the trenches live from day to day I don't know. I count myself lucky beside them. But my darling I never thought to have you from me at a time like this.
Comment: Michael due in November

~~~~~  
24 June 1915 From **Mary** To **Colin**

**Content**

Got your letter - you are a good person to write so soon.  
Molly has a wee girl about midday Tuesday  
**Comment:** Betsy Knight nee Thorp born

~~~~~  
25 June 1915 From **Mary** To **Colin**

Details: From Perranporth

Content

Dearest Colin
I got your long letter here on Saturday many thanks. I am writing now by the open window. The tide is high and only about 30 yards from us.; it retires in to the dim distance apparently miles and miles away. At low tide there is an enormous stretch of sand, 3 miles long and nearly a mile wide. A great change isn't it. Most of the houses here are fairly new , about the same size I should think as Lizard Town. The country inland is nice. Valleys branching off one from the other. Some nice little cottages covered in roses. We walked inland in the rain yesterday evening and picked flowers out of the rain soaked hedges. There are high cliffs in parts, in between high sand dunes which I love. At midday today it was glorious. It looked as though it wouldn't rain again for a month. This evening we were driven home by it. We had a bathe this afternoon, but the bathing is very poor. But altogether we are very pleased with it, with our rooms. It suits us very well just now. I find it very hard to remember to be as staid as I should. I think perhaps you had better not

expect many letters. I never can write when I am away. But of course I shall expect more than ever ! I don't believe I shall get any flowers drawn either. Much love from Mary.

Comment: Beautiful description of the locality
~~~~~

04 July 1915 From **Mary** To **Colin**

**Details:** from Perranporth

**Content**

Colin's new place in Belgium sounds rather nice.

We went to Newquay the other day - it must have been a lovely place thirty years ago.

Hope you and I shall go to Padstow some day.

Mary feeling miserable

Reference to thinking about Daltote - will they ever go again

Reference of the calm evenings and sunsets

This evening we walked to a circular earthworks call Pirans Round got lost and found a stream flowing in the wrong direction.

Flowers are beautiful

Reference to pet dog howling on the sand when then go bathing. Loves going for a walk on the sand.

Excuse me for not writing but feel tired or lazy.;

**Comment:** Daltote is on Loch Sween  
~~~~~

20 July 1915 From **Mary** To **Colin**

Details: Written from Perranporth Cornwall

Content

"Do keep you moustache until you come home and let me see how funny you look."

Feeling tired and stupid but no cough that she had before coming away .

Looking fat and brown.

Living on honey and cream. Been to St Agnes

Description of St Agnes ..

We went by the cliffs and saw some of the finest wierdest coast that I have seen. Very wild, it was and just alive with gannets. St Agnes itself is rather a eerie place. A big mine close to the sea (some of the deserted ones are right on the edge of the cliffs in most weird situations.) The streams run thick grey with stuff from them and discolour the sea for about a mile out. Then there is prety fertile valley and then the "town" away up on one side - we couldn't find it for ages, till two women, who said they were going to the "teahouse" conducted us. The Teahouse turned out to be the dentists, but we got a good tea that we were very much in need of. St Agnes is quait - it's glory. It was

very much more important some time back. I always think these places are rather fascinating. There is a quaint weird old burial ground right away from the church with some funny old carved slate tombstones, the most striking now are to three little girls all dying with a few days, (small pox I suppose) and one erected by his shaft mates to a man drowned in the mineshaft. That must be a ghastly thing, when the sea breaks in. Did you see the poems they are so fond of in the death notices in the local papers when you were here. They make you think of Mrs Adeln's book - "We have lost our little Annie etc"

Some of the "killed in action ones", I afraid , are very funny.

Thr country inland here is lovely Very pretty valleys and nice very well kept cottages and lovely gardens with gay wild flowers. One thinks at first that the cottages must be inhabited by artists or such like people, but it is not so. And yet the children are not half so well kept as further north. ...

"Do you suppose you will get leave soon"

Comment: Reference to Colin having been there !
~~~~~

26 July 1915 From **Mary** To **Colin**

**Content**

Reference to the new house, the Wisteria and the carpet.

**Comment:** The house refered to must be Picton House - Strand on the Green.  
~~~~~

05 August 1915 From **Mary** To **Colin**

Content

Many Happy Returns

Some photos of Poperinghe arrived for you.
~~~~~

23 September 1915 From **Mary** To **Colin**

**Content**

Writing from Hailie Liphook Hants  
Reference to Aunt May and the garden – sound of firing from Weaver Down.  
They have turned all the people out of the cottages bordering on Weaver Down.  
Mother went up with May to the WMCA hut.  
Feeling proud about November – I shall love you both so much.  
Yesterday the Black Watch play recruits onto the train at Waterloo – it was glorious.  
Her train was crammed with sailors.  
**Comment:** Michael, Mary's first born was due in November

25 October 1915 From **Mary** To **Colin**

**Content**

Hope the cold is better  
Annie had a letter saying George in Poperinghe  
Douglas rang to to know if Winkie could come. Betsy is growing like you  
Do you remember this day last year - we went to Black Head  
Mary sick of herself but grateful for the people about her.  
"I'm going to indulge in the exhilarating occupation of hemming nappys. If you were only here I'd make you do them.  
PS How funny meeting this Bootham friend.  
**Comment:** Black Head may be Beachy Head.  
Michael Rowntree born on 7th Nov 1915

25 December 1915 From **Mary** To **Colin**

**Content**

Reference to Michael's enjoyable behaviour as a baby.

20 March 1916 From **Colin** To **Mary**

**Content**

Non-censored letters have been stopped because someone put in something he shouldn't have.  
"Sickening I saw Chas yesterday, He has moved to the town where the chateau is and not altogether pleased about it.. We are going to join the rest of the Motor section." Weather better after the snow. Going down to the orphanage today to a fete -- the curie's birthday. Got a letter from Nan today saying Mary and Michael had visited.

24 March 1916 From **Colin** To **Mary**

**Content**

Ref to snow again after spring had started. Saw Chas who had been moved to the same place as his Hospital ( Maybe Pop.) and heard that they may be shelled that night. Colin planning to evacuate more children.

29 May 1916 From **Colin** To **Mary**

**Details:** From British Red Cross BASE P.O.

**Content**

There is a letter from Colin, still with the FAU but he may have been in England. The last entry in his diary with the FAU is on 22 April 1916 and the first in a diary with the Royal Engineers is 27th June 1916. The letter is from FAU to Mary at Liphook in Hampshire referring to not coming to see her until she returns home, so she is to let him know when that will be and he will try to get to see her then. He is busy doing two people's work accounting and paying bills.

From this it is surmised that Colin had very little time training for the Royal Engineers and comparison can be made with the time of about 6 months spent by Lionel Aglio Dibdin when training for a similar commission in the R.E. but planning to work in the trenches.

**Comment:** Assumed to be in England, just before taking up his new job in the Royal Engineers.  
Liphook is village in Hampshire.

03 August 1916 From **Colin** To **Mary**

**Content**

One letter, 3rd Aug 1916, from Colin soon after he joined the Royal Engineers working on Graves Registration indicate a philosophic acceptance regards to being killed by a shell while working. It is difficult to judge whether or not the risks were greater than during his time with the FAU. This letter develops into a maudlin comparison between himself and a once possible rival for Mary's affections. He also points out that Mary is not keeping him up to date with how Michael is growing up. He mentions that his batman has been with the war since Dec 1914 and was blown up by a mine and was unconscious for 4 days. All the men on Grave Registration are called Permanent Base Men and are deemed not fit for action in the trenches because of injury, shell shock or old age. He says they are a curious crowd. – "Goodbye Princess"

19 August 1916 From Colin To Mary

**Content**

"We had another orgy down at M Hameaus ( the place where I am billeted.) It was the usual thing glass after glass of very nasty wine and lots of sweet cakes and biscuits. All of us are very tired and bilious today. They are horrible occasions but have to be gone through from time to time. They practically force the stuff down your throat until you think the next glass will make you sick. The worst of it is that when I feel a bit seedy I always get an attack of home sickness. Oh how I long to see my darling again." .... "I suppose you will be going to Perranporth soon .. I hope you have a good time and get quite well and fat again. She is a naughty girl not getting fatter ... The weather has broken - the roads are frightfully muddy - quite like winter ..."

23 August 1916 From Colin To Mary

**Content**

Refers to money issues £20 kit allowance £10 month pay in advance  
Thanks for the ham - only took a few days because sent direct otherwise it could take a month  
Don't send cakes Nan is sending them  
Will get a photo of Jack Websters grave soon.  
Will not get leave before you go to Perranporth  
"Now darling, please don't do too much cooking; you have to be careful with yourself."

04 September 1916 From Colin To Mary

**Details:** To Perranporth

**Content**

Writing to Perranporth as Mary about to go down to Cornwall  
She is a naughty girls for not writing. -please do write.  
How are Michael's teeth  
Colin is now sleeping in the same building as his office - not as comfortable as the billet but there are advantages. The weather is awful

15 October 1916 From Colin To Mary

**Details:** Colin was working on graves at this time.

**Content**

Colin is ok although nothing to report as usual. Doing the same things day after day.  
Missing Mary. Refers to Chas who is travelling about the area and earning £1 a day.

Feels sorry for Teddy. Chas showed Colin a long letter from Donald who loses his heart to a different girl each day. - "he will probably end up with somebody awful". Comments on how beautiful Mary is.

23 October 1916 From Colin To Mary

**Content**

Colin has been censoring letters.  
Reference to the possibility of leave.  
Time goes by so slowly when expecting leave. Colin is longing for Mary.

28 October 1916 From Colin To Mary

**Content**

To remind Mary of Monday – had hoped to get home by then but doubtful  
Today is anniversary of FAU going out – a celebration. Thanks Mary for letters who has been good at writing recently. – Must stop as he has a pile of letters to censor.

01 November 1916 From Colin To Mary

**Content**

No news of leave.  
No reason for not having leave as Capt Fair is back.  
Beastly weather so not much work done.

30 November 1916 From Colin To Mary

**Content**

Returned from Leave which he enjoyed.  
Had to stay the night at the Base as there was no train.  
Got to the town where the HQ was in early hours of the morning and spent night in guard room on bare boards. Walked 3 miles to HQ in the morning in time for breakfast  
**Comment:** This was after 7 days leave.

19 December 1916 From Colin To Mary

**Content**

To wish you and Michael Happy Christmas  
Referenceto the Guv getting that job (presumably Fred.)  
and only Willy to help - he will be busy.  
Reference to his watch at Barkers.  
H.G.Wells prophesy interesting but what does he know about it.

From Colin To Mary

**Content**

Colin worried as it is a week since he heard from Mary - "Naughty and I forgave you last week and it occurred again - please be good darling YOU have no idea what your letters mean to me and how miserable I get when I don't get one for some time. Every day I hope and then disappointment" "I hope Michael is keeping a good boy - but I am sure he is with such a clever Mother.

I am proud of you dearest and Michael too."  
"Excuse the stupid letter - feeling low."

03 January 1917 From Colin To Mary

**Content**

Pleased for your letter and to hear about Michael - nice boy isn't he. How are you - are you getting fatter - you ought you naughty girl. Had indigestion recently - thought I was getting my old complaint. Better send me that stuff of Mrs Bouchers  
The men here had a sort of Sing Song on New Years Day. Singing the dullest and slowest songs you could think of. It was exactly like at that party at the Hotel at Lullworth on New Years Eve 2 years ago. Do you remember ?  
Got a letter from Nan - The Guv (Fred Rowntree) seems to be over here now. Poor Nora - It must have been terrible not hearing from Teddy for a month. But he stands a better chance out there than I should think.

19 January 1917 From Colin To Mary

**Content**

His tummy is playing up – may be the food or the cold.  
Harvey's wife died – He is having difficulty getting leave.

26 January 1917 From Mary To Colin

**Content**

Glad to hear Colin better  
Bad luck for Douglas starting in this weather.  
Hung a coconut out for the tit. 6 at one time. Michael loved it.  
The cold weather makes Mary feel absolutely stupid and she hasn't a think in her head. - horribly lazy and reads when Michael is out of the way.

28 June 1917 From Mary To Colin

**Content**

Mary went with Molly to Margaret's Hospital ( King's College)  
Willy has a commision

Michael enjoyed his outing in the boat yesterday - twice round the island. God weather for sailing.

**Comment:** This may be Oliver's Island in the Thames alongside Strand on the Green

14 July 1917 From Mary To Colin

**Content**

Parting gets harder. How many more times ?  
My usual trouble has started again today so I suppose that has made me more stupid!  
Mary refers to Michael's disgraceful behaviour in town  
-putting out his tongue at people and at Liberty's lying on his back in the middle of the floor.  
On being pulled up, he let his legs go soft. On being scolded he shrieked with laughter  
Took him to Kensington Gardens.

**Comment:** Returned from leave on 9th July 1917

24 July 1917 From Mary To Colin

**Content**

They had gone to the cinema. The girl was really lovely.  
A heartbreaking film but realistic and sensible.

30 July 1917 From Mary To Colin

**Content**

Local news  
Michael says Daddy and slobbers over a photo of Colin.

01 September 1917 From Mary To Colin

**Content**

News of Michael - -and them going down to Dorset.

13 September 1917 From Mary To Colin

**Content**

Went to see Mrs Robson in Trelawny of the Wells  
Comments about Douglas and family.  
" Mother's workroom women were turned out of where they were and they could not find anywhere else. So we have given them the dining room for the winter. We have managed to make the drawing room quite comfortable we use our own table for meals. It is quite nice to see them. The old women are only here 4 days a week so it isn't as bad as one imagined."

Dug 37 lbs potatoes

Going to Nan on Sunday - and onto the boat if fine.

YOU ARE BEING VERY GOOD ABOUT WRITING.

**Comment:** Trelawny of the Wells, Arthur Wing Pinero's 1898 comedy (brushed up by Patrick Marber) follows actress Rose Trelawny as she ditches her thespian friends at the (Sadler's)Wells theatre for a young gentleman.

~~~~~  
12 October 1917 From **Mary** To **Colin**

Details: Burton Bradstock

Content

Received 2 letters from Colin in consecutive posts

Went to tea with people in coastguard cottages. - details

Michael has fallen off his chair

Comment: Date could be 1916 or maybe 1918

~~~~~  
06 November 1917 From **Mary** To **Colin**

**Content**

"You are the naughtiest person to get so run down and that wretched skin trouble."

Michael insists on writing to daddy!" -- a scribble

~~~~~  
13 December 1917 From **Mary** To **Colin**

Content

Reference to Colin's old trouble.

Mary is a bit anemic and off colour

Took Michael to Kensington to see the toys and had tea at Barkers new place.

- with an orchestra. Michael talking now.

"Are you still waiting for this wretched reorganisation business?"

~~~~~  
17 February 1918 From **Mary** To **Colin**

**Content**

Michael and Mary Photographed

Food supply short particularly fats but nobody need go hungry yet.

Took Michael to his "Strand on the Green Garden"

John has been gassed slightly -some weeks in hospital

No one seems pleased about his engagement - she certainly seems an affected little ass.

Other local news.

~~~~~  
20 July 1918 From **Colin** To **Mary**

Details: T0 23 Fairfax Road

Content

Please to hear Mary is better again

Colin reminds Mary that they went to only one A.A. fancy dress dance.

They went to another AA dance after they were engaged at the Empress Rooms.

The only other fancy dress was at Rathbones when Mary wore a Nymph dress

Request for Players Navy Cut tobacco that can be sent "Out of Bond" - duty free.

Or Captstan Navy Cut.

"If I had been moved from here I would not have got my promotion - so turn out ok as I would have missed my leave and my job for nothing.

~~~~~  
19 August 1918 From **Colin** To **Mary**

**Content**

My Darling Mellow

Glad to get you letter - thought you had forgotten me. - a week since your last.

In bed with Flu Started on Friday

My room looks out onto a main road and there is a continual stream of lorries and motor cycles all day. Just read "Passionate Friends" very sad and annoying - the girl is so stupid.

Hear that Ralph has been slightly wounded. I wonder how he managed that.

Thank Michael for the candle.

"Now Mary you have got to be a good girl about writing. If you are not I will only write when I get letters from you. I don't see why I should write two to every one of yours. So don't forget dearest.

Very very dearest love .. Your own Colly."

**Comment:** Passionate Friends - book by H.G.Wells

~~~~~  
31 August 1918 From **Colin** To **Mary**

Content

No sign of the tabacco so no smoke for 3 days but managed to get some for his pipe.

Rumours that the Boche are returning up here. If so there will be plenty of work to do.

They have had stormy weather.

He asks for a dozen 1d stamps for his cheque book.

He hears that Ralph has got across.

30 September 1918

From Colin To Mary

Content

The weather has been diabolical
 Things seem to be going marvellously - they have started on our new front and doing well
 We have done in one day what we could not do in six months last year. And very very few casualties. Got a letter from Jewell the other day - He is very unhappy with that fellow. He is at the place they talked of putting me. And Jewell isn't a person who says anything bad about anyone unless he has very good reason.
 I hope Michael got my letter alright.
 Fair gets back tomorrow - rather glad as we shall have more of our units forward (if not ourselves) if we advance much further.
Comment: one of few comments about the state of the war and Colins work.

13 November 1918

From Mary To Colin

Content

Angie, Michael and Mary poorly.
Comment: No comment by Mary regarding the war over.

27 November 1918

From Mary To Colin

Content

Ref to Colin having a sore back
Comment: In Dec Colin admitted to Hospital with Flu and Broncial Pneumonia

16 December 1918

From Mary To Colin

Content

" I haven't heard from you yet .. But if it is your fault it is very mean indeed of you and I'm really angry with you. I'm longing to hear how you get on at the board tomorrow"
 Monday afternoon .. Your letter has just come.. I still do think you might write sooner.
 Michael say he wants to see you

From Colin to Mary after the War

01 January 1920 From Colin To Mary

Details: From 45 Strand on the Green

Content

Reference to Mary being away and needs to feel strong again.
 Colin sent a cheque for £3-10-00
 Of course Colin will met her.

Comment: Date unknown but notice the sender address

01 August 1921 From Colin To Mary

Details: From Daltote Achnamara to 45 Strand on the Green

Content

Tuesday
 You are a naughty girl about writing. You said you would write twice a week and so far I have only had one letter from you. I suppose the children must be worrying you
 Report on Holiday place and family
 Pleased to get Michael's letter.

Comment: 1921 or later

See "2 letters from Colin in Daltote"

02 August 1921 From Colin To Mary

Details: From Daltote

Content

Friday Report on Holiday place and family -- Love to Michael and Paul
Comment: Date unknown but notice the sender address 1921 or later

See "2 letters from Colin in Daltote"

Other Letters to Colin Rowntree

27 June 1918

From **Arthur Rowntree Bootham School**

Dear Colin

One of the old Boys has recently fallen and I am writing to ask if you can send me any particulars as to where he lies. His name is Geoffrey Birdsall, down on my list as London Regiment. He was shot through the head on Monday 17th June, was taken in dead to No.4 Casualty Clearing Station and was buried in the neighbouring British Cemetery. He only left us last summer so that we feel it keenly in the School.

I hope you are having as good a time as you can under all the conditions imposed on you. I was glad to see Mary at Jordans for a few minutes and hope that I may see some of the Hammersmith people when I am in London next Week. All the best wishes for good luck

Yours Sincerely
Arthur Rowntree

Answer :

Geoffrey Birdsall buried in Plot 2 B10 No4 casualty clearing station.

See next page for letter from Arthur's wife Ella Rowntree in 1914

Post Cards from **Aunt Florence Gray**

8 Jun 1915

Card from Rothesay – Aunts Flossie Julie and Loire
Hope you are feeling better

22 June 1915

Card from F.G Florence Gray (Flossie)
Are you and Mary going to Daltote this summer
We hope to go to Dukes Ave next week to stay.
Hope to see Mary

July 5th 1915

Card from F.G Florence Gray (Flossie)
Hope you are all right

7 July 1915

Card from F.G Florence Gray (Flossie)
Hope you are alright and not smashed up by bombs
Visit from Chas he says to send you post cards.
I gave some of your medicine to Willy Gray – Pleased with it.

29 Jul 1915

Card from Strone F.G Florence Gray (Flossie)
Hope you will be safely home soon at the end of Sept – the war is supposed to be over. Are you and Mary going to Daltote in Aug.

1 Aug 1915

Card from F.G Florence Gray (Flossie)
Had a delightful fortnight in London
Sorry not to see Mary but she was in Cornwall

4th Aug 1915 Strone

Card from F.G Florence Gray (Flossie)
Happy Birthday

49 Bootham York.
11 Nov 1914

From Ellen H Rowntree – wife of Authur Rowntree

Dear Colin

You may be sure we are all thinking continually of you 14 old Bootham boys who are out with the first corps. – and we have followed keenly every scrap of news we can get hold of. If you can spare a minute for a card of news now and again we should love to have it –r share in any home letters that we are allowed to.

I lunched with Joe Baker the day after he got back, so heard lots first hand. He told how badly off you were for things to put on your poor patients -- so Lady Newman in London and I up here are hurrying all we can to get things together to send out to you {Joseph Samuel Baker – Bootham boy - in the first Corps with Colin}

Tell Laurie his Grandfather ordered 50lbs of cocoa for you directly I mentioned it to him and I hope it got off safely last night.

It was to be a particularly nourishing kind, not the kind that we are allowed.

{Ref to Laurence Rowntree and his Grandfather Joseph Rowntree II }

Laurie began cutting bread and butter before he was off the boat didn't he ?

What dramatic good fortune you had at the very start with the Hermes ! I understand there was fierce dispute between cousins as to whether Donald or Charlie or Harry went overboard.

We were at Hammersmith Terrace for a night at Mollies lately and heard lots of odds and ends --- then down to the Newmans at Harrow Weald where we heard more. It was so hot that Sir George and Constance carried their big bowls of porridge out

onto the virandah and made an impressive picture. But we could not help contrasting the quiet and comfort and autumn colouring there with all the terrible sights you are seeing and we wished it were possible to rush over to Dunkirk and help. Does V.Alexander do much interpreting and how does he manage the Flemish.?

Our Belgians are all right here, very grateful most of them, if a touch grasping. 8 families are out at New Earswick now. The 2 boys we have in school are very nice fellows and picking up English fast. Tell Donald his old footer shirt is coming out directly and in fact there are many family garments. Is Richard Barrow { Bootham and FAU } the prize officer for height. I was vexed to miss seeing you all off at Charing Cross. The perpetual tramp of soldiers from 6am along Bootham is so monotonous that we get hardened to its meaning We are all anxious about Roy Hamilton in the London Scottish. Clarence Bentley was killed a week ago in action. Best of greetings to all old boys

Yours affect. E.H.Rowntree.

Comment:

Sir George Newman married in 1898 in Nottinghamshire to Adelaide Constance Thorp – Lady Newman died 1946 Lived at the time Grims Wood Harrow Weald.

**Two Letters from Colin in Daltote
to Mary at Strand on the Green**

1920 -1922

Friday

My Darling Mary

We are getting on nicely so far and have been lucky with the weather. Yesterday started off cloudy but we went to the Fairy Isles and just as we started our bath the sun came out and the rest of the day was lovely. Arnold's lot arrived rather late and the children got in a frightful mess in the mud. After dinner the Dr. and I cycled slowly to Kilmory. It was glorious dead calm and a most perfect sunset over Jura. We did not get back until nearly eleven o'clock. This morning the weather started off well and it has been perfect all day. Really hot and only a slight breeze. We went to Kilmory all in the boat. The bath was a bit fresh but I have known it colder. There was another large party of about 20 there, they came in a motor boat. So we had to go to the far side of the bay which I think is the nicest side. You get a good view across to Jura. On the way back we stopped at the rocks at the end of the Daltote wood (where we often bathed) and had a lovely bathe. – quite warm. I do wish you were here too. It would be much nicer. There is no one to go out for strolls except the Dr. and he always goes on his bicycle. Wee Noll is not a very inspiring companion. He is just the same as ever; makes the same fatuous remarks. He is also a bad bed fellow. I would much rather have you. I am writing this on the hill a little way above the house. The sun is just setting behind Jura which is a glorious purple colour. The midges are getting busy.

I don't know how Betsy gets through the day She will only take half a sandwich and a cup of tea for lunch. She had a tummy ache at dinner and in the midst of her tears sobbed out that it was what Tinny called windy spasms. She was very upset when they laughed.

It was nice seeing Willy and Rosie. They left today. The baby is alright but not nearly as far on as Paul was at 16 months, in fact seemed to me rather dull. Willy is very taken up with her. The flowers are very late this year. The loosestrife is only just beginning to flower.

There are a lot of foxgloves very deep in colour and lots of honeysuckle.

The place is overrun with rabbits. I never saw so many in my life before. I do hope the weather keeps fairly decent. It will be frightfully dull if we have to stay in the house all the time.

Love to Michael and Paul and lots and lots of kisses to you sweetheart.

~~~~~

Tuesday My darling Mary

You are a very naughty girl about writing. You said you would write twice a week and so far I have had only one letter from you. I suppose the children must be worrying you

I was pleased getting Michael's letter yesterday though I could not decipher the part of it between the news about going on the Mary Blake and his I LUV.

The weather has broken today but we managed to get a picnic in. We have been lucky with the weather. It has been quite dry and warm until today. As far as we can make out from the papers it is about the only part of the country which has been fine.

We have been to all the old places. Sat. we went to the mill Sunday morning the Dr and I cycled round past Kilmory to the sandy Bay on Loch Killisport. After dinner everyone slept and we took supper to Taynish. The garden of the house was lovely. We got back about 9pm and about 10 started for the Fairy Isles for a moonlight Cruise. It was full moon and perfectly still and altogether lovely. Yesterday we went to Castle Sween. Polly Harry and Basil came to Arnold's on Friday. You would have laughed to see P.H. and Bass battling together like a pair of skittish young flappers.

By the way my train should get into St. Pancras about 6.30 or 7.00 am on Sat. so I ought to be home in time for breakfast.

I don't think much of the Helpmate by May Sinclair I don't know if you remember it. I shall be glad to get back. Not that I haven't enjoyed myself but I hate being away from you.

Fondest love Colly.

*The Helpmate by May Sinclair – a book published in 1907*

**A letter from Paul Rowntree regarding three Architects  
27.12.88**

It was a pleasure to meet you and hear your talk and photos and pictures. But a further pleasant surprise to get your letter (21.12) and the reprint from the Builder on The West China University at Chengtu. Most of the pictures were new to me and also the plans and the short article were new.

I have in tattered photo of "Fred Rowntree on the way to Chengtu -West China 1912" in Colin's writing. He is in a sort of sedan chair with no front or roof being carried by poles on two men's shoulders.

I think my father would have been pleasantly surprised that his name was still being used in architecture. Most of his working one of Fred Rowntree and Sons. Fred died in 1927 and he and my grandmother were living at 11 Hammersmith Terrace by the Thames. I was born at Stand on the Green below Kew Bridge, but when I was 5 ( and my brother was 10) we all moved to Brandsby in 1925 and a few years later lived in York. My father had various offices, Coney Street, Stonegate, Museum Chambers (Museum St) in York. His elder brother Douglas stayed in London ending up with an office in Baker Street area and a house Jarretts at Gerrards Cross. He liked the train journeys with his cronies better than washing up and when he thought he should retire but wanted to "fiddle on" persuaded my father to break their happy if not lucrative partnership. Fred had been in Glasgow (where my father was born) later at Brompton near Scarborough, and then London when Fred had a run of competition wins. Also he must have been one of the first Quaker architects. I rather think he did some work in Glasgow with Rennie Mackintosh.

There was still more work in this area so my father was sent north again ( and indeed had been at Bootham School when my Uncle Arthur was Headmaster )

So my Uncle Douglas had many slack times and amplified his business letters to his brother with uncensored humour and comments not connected with work.

Some were very funny and not always bawdy. They remained very friendly brothers and partners. My father would enjoy Douglas' ribald humour ( I suppose beachcomber was similar – perhaps also before your time ) but lacked the same inventiveness. Douglas would attack any pomposity especially within the large family. My father said the funniest thing was an essay on "Why fishmongers wear straw hats" but I never did know that. One rhyme was in response to a letter suggesting that he stay the night at the Mount School with the Head Miss Nightingale.

PR.