

Appendix 12

A Few Significant Letters from and to Peter Dibdin Letter of Thanks from Peter Dibdin to Mater

2088311 Gnr. Dibdin P.H.
C. Troop 325th s/l Bty R.A.
Combe Place Offham
Lewes Sussex

3 June 1941

Dear Mater

Thank you very much for a very delightful time and for accepting me as you did. I like your family dear and enjoyed every moment of my stay. It was beautiful to hear that music and to be with people who live with it. I sang all the way home in the car and didn't feel a bit hoarse when I arrived. I hope I did not scare Aunts Gert and Tate away the other evening. I think they are both jolly good sports.

Look dear, I am going to try to come on Saturday but cannot promise anything definite, there is a good chance as I may be able to change with someone else.

At the moment I am trying to get Harry my partner in crime off the camp bed so I can get a couple of hours kip. Things are pretty quiet tonight except for some gunfire nearby; its throwing up marvellous coloured flashes in the clouds.

My love to you all Peter.

31/08/1943 From Stanthorpe Road To L/Bdr Peter Dibdin 2088311, C/o Queen Bertha' School, Birchington, Westgate on Sea, Kent

From Joan To Peter

Dearest Peter

How are you? As a matter of fact I am a little worried – I have a feeling that it may be a very very long time before you get another leave (if you know what I mean) If it is so, always remember Darling, my best wishes go with you – God speed and safe return.

I hate to think of it but I suppose it will have to come sometime. However, perhaps you will get leave soon I do hope so. Tony will be home, I think at the end of Sept or beginning of Oct. He has put in for it anyway.

Oh dear it is now the 3rd Sept and I haven't finished this letter. I must really finish it now and get it off to you to night. I had to go to the dentist again on Wednesday so I took Raoul up to Victoria and had lunch with the "Midds" and Mrs Midd looked after him while I went over to Harley St. I am going to do the same on Monday. Incidentally here at last is your letter from Lilian. I'm terribly sorry it has been so long darling. And talking of letters when you write to these people who write to you at Pinfold Road will you give them this address because I don't go round there now and it means that your letters will just lie in the hall for ages before Mater thinks of forwarding them. I sent two letters on to you at Blandford the other day and it looked, by the postal mark as if they had been at No. 4 [Pinfold Rd] for about a week.

I got you letter dear and note the change of address – afraid those other letters will be a long time getting to you.

I shall really have to study you letter carefully and see if I can take some decent photos of Raoul.

Jean came over for the day yesterday and I went back with her for the night – that is really why this letter has been lying here half written – We took Raoul between us in the cot and dumped everything on top of him.

However he thoroughly enjoyed it and this morning he had a bath – a tremendous thrill!

Doreen is still away with Terry and Vincent – I believe she comes back this weekend.

I haven't seen anything of the others for about three weeks. The two girls used to ignore me when I went round there – then I had a little trouble with Mater one day when I bought her mattress from her and I finally gathered that she hadn't much opinion of me anymore. So I decided it wasn't much point in going round there anymore. Anyway I certainly shan't without an invitation (which I don't think I am likely to get) so that is that. I have always felt that Mater thinks less of me since I married her son and I sometimes think too that she really was only really pleased to see me because of Raoul - well I'm afraid it doesn't worry me a scrap – but for goodness sake don't mention to Mater if you write to her. I expect it will all turn out right after a time. This sort of thing is always happening but it will never be the same again for me.

Poor Darling, you must be having a lousy time and I don't like the sound of your address

No I don't think Raoul is going to be blond – I really think it will turn out red! I'm enclosing a photo for you, it was really about the only decent one amongst them. Perhaps I will have him taken again when he is about a year old but I hope I shall get some decent ones with your camera.

Well Darling I must go now- it is getting on for 6.30

God bless you dear my fondest love

Joanna.

Comment Picture of Raoul enclosed

17/09/1943 From 81 Stanthorpe Rd To C. Troop 408/123 LAA Regt RA, Evans Barracks, Blandford Dorset.

From Joan To Peter

Peter Darling

Here are your socks. I'm afraid I can't get them any cleaner. It was so good to see you on Saturday, I only wish you could have stayed longer.

Mater rang me up the other night to say that Mr Rayment is selling up all the furniture so of course she will have all her stuff back that we have here –I don't know how they are going to manage, because she only has two divan beds – no bed linen or towels and only about three or four blankets.

However as always I suppose they will get over the difficulty somehow. I shall have to start looking around for bedroom furniture – and we shall have to manage without the dining room suite – eat off the kitchen table.

But now I have some good news for you - Raoul has a tooth. We spent the day at Mrs Midd's on Weds. and in the evening, just before we left he put my finger in his mouth and I felt something prick it. I was amazed because he has been so good. I should think it must have been breaking the skin on Saturday when you were here. If he gets them all as easily as that life will be quite peaceful.

Tony sent a little stuffed animal today that his batman made for Raoul. He is going to make an elephant and a bear for him too.

Well Darling, I'm afraid this must be all for now. I have started to unpick my costume – it is going to be a hell of a job

God Bless you dear My Love Jo.

That was Joan's last letter to Peter

From Mater to Peter

19 Sept 1943

My dear Peter

I feel rather guilty for not writing to you before but Ive been drivingly busy lately at work, each eve . overtime and Saturday.

I hear you came to London on Saturday eve. I met Jo and she said she might be seeing you and then Mr Bass at Thresher told me you had been, I should like to have seen you, we went in a crowd down to the Manor 8 of us in all, quite fun for a little merry and did a great deal of laughing, it was quite impromptu, which is much nicer,

Marie and I have been away for a few days to Cambridge to my sister in law, it was quite nice and a change, went back to the village where we used to live but somehow one cannot recapture memories, people had gone away etc etc. but it was grand all the same, Peter came down for a day and we wandered around the village and did enjoy it.

We are celebrating Marie's 21st birthday on Sat Oct 2nd – any likelihood of your being on leave, should like you to come along if you are. Victor, we hope will be on leave again, also Johnnie Sloan has come back into the fold and we were delighted to see him. I can tell you it was 9 months since we had seen him, it was a grand reunion. Hope you are well my dear
With love, your as ever after Mater.

Peter Died 28th Sept 1943 – 4 days before this party

Two Entries in Joan's Special Diary

28/03/1944 Tis eleven years ago today that Mother and Father died; tis six months today that Peter died.

Have been to the cemetery this afternoon. Met Beryl afterwards and stayed for tea. Everything is really the same at Carshalton but somewhat disappointing.

Sun 2nd April

Quiet day at home –turned out some of the boxes and cases. Was very harassing – going through Peters things Poor darling he must have had a miserable life & so lonely. I wish I could have been more help to him – wrote to Tony.