

Appendix 6 Two Letters from Joan Guise to Anthony Guise

Arrived after Tony died.

29/06/1944 from c/o Mrs Bull The Hollies Ruswick Worcs

From Joan To Tony

Comment No.47

29 June 1944

(This is the first of two letters we have from Joan to Tony, both of which arrived in Ceylon after he died)

My Darling

Here are the photos. Some of them are not bad- but I am still making a lot of mistakes with the camera – I am pleased with the ones in the bedroom. The last few days have been very wet and dull but as soon as the weather improves I will use the film I brought up with me. We have been here almost a week now and there does not seem to be any easing up of the raids. I rag Marie the night before last – Mater is still at Cambridge and will presumably stay there – a “doodle bug” came over while I was talking to Marie and she ducked for a few moments away from the glass in the kitchen till it had passed over- I think if they go on for much longer I will write to Auntie Freda in Nottingham and ask her if we can stay there for a bit. We can't stay here indefinitely – it is very worrying not to know what is happening to them at home and the flat might go up at any time. Well – there is nowt we can do about it.

The country is lovely around here but they have ruined it by building beastly little council houses, and in the village there are lots of little modern dolls houses. This one in which we are staying is so tiny – you literally could not swing a cat. It is getting

me down a bit – I keep knocking myself and falling over Raoul and the dog – Pat. He and Raoul get along awfully well together. He is a black spaniel – just over a year and in lovely condition. He and Raoul are really hand in glove to each other. Yesterday, at lunchtime, I made Raoul sit at the table after we had finished because he wouldn't finish his fish before his gooseberry pie. While Mrs Bull and I were doing the washing up Pat went into the dining room and blow me if Raoul didn't go and give Pat his last mouthful of fish. And then he sat triumphantly with his empty plate in front of him. Just now Pat was out in the garden by the pram and every now and then he raced up and down till Raoul was really hysterical with laughter.

We are sleeping in twin beds and Raoul seems quite comfortable only he climbs all over me in the early morning.

Darling it is now Friday- I could not get this finished yesterday. I now find I shall be moving on early than I expected Mrs Bull's sister wired from Edmonton asking if she could come and stay with her husband and child on Monday. Mrs Bull tried to put them off because she does not get on with her sister nor does Mr Bull. But on telephoning she found that it is the only week they can come and they are having such an awful time in town. – sleeping in shelters and diving into cellars in the daytime.- she really felt she could not refuse. So I phoned Auntie Freda last night to ask if she could put us up I find that Diana (remember her) is there with two children – but Auntie said she would manage it somehow so I shall ring tonight and say we are coming on Monday.

I seems to me that if we can stay there a few weeks or month the raids may have stopped.

Am finding rather difficult to write this as I am sitting in the garden and there is rather a high breeze. I wish we could stay in the country a bit longer. I have developed an enormous appetite during the past week and I am sure the air is doing us both good. But still we are lucky to be out of London.

I feel rather like a refugee – trying to find someone who will take us in !

Will stop now my darling as I have several letters to write.

Good please you sweetheart

All my love Dearest – write soon

Joan

20/07/1944 from c/o Mrs Thomas 35 Queens Ave Meols

From Joan **To** Tony

Comment No.48

20th July 1944

(*Tony died three days later*)

My Darling

I'm afraid you have had rather a long wait for this letter – however life has been rather hectic for us since we have been away from home.

I have had no letter from you since we have been away either – and that is just over a month so I hope you are alright.

Darling there are several things which I have asked your advice or opinion on in some of my past letters but you have not acknowledged them yet – would you mind doing so as soon as possible – I think you must have received some of them by now – if not all.

And here now is something for you to think about. And Darling please will you give me your opinion immediately you receive

this letter so I can reckon on hearing it within about 6 weeks. I am seriously considering a complete move from Stanhope Rd. As you probably can hear from the news – radio etc – the raids are still continuing in London and I don't intend to take Raoul back again until they have finished. At present I am staying with Auntie Christine but that cannot last forever though she have very kindly said we may stay as long as we like. I shall have to move anyway when Raoul gets to about two or 2 ½ years as we cannot use the garden and he certainly won't sit in his pram all day at that age and it is not good for him to be in the house – anyway the flat is not big enough he should have a bedroom for himself. Now what I am wondering is – if I should, while I am here with Auntie try to find a house to rent or buy in Meols and settle here until you come home ? Meols is a pleasant place – good air for Raoul and it is not completely strange to me on the other hand I know I shall miss the South and not be above to see the family from one years end to another – Now seems to be the time to make a move – while we are banned from London – on the other hand it is also the most difficult time because most other people are in the same position and probably have the same idea in mind. I seems to me that a bungalow would rather be the thing to have, than a house . In the latter case it would mean buying stair carpet and other furnishings necessary for a house which we have not got. It is an awful problem and I just don't know what to do. I have only Raoul to think of now, until you come home and I do want to do the best for him. It is essential that he has a garden for him to run about in. The main question seems to be whether I should hang on as I am- paying double rent (I am giving Auntie 30/- while we are here) until we can get back to London or whether I should make an effort while I am away of finding some place for a permanent move.

Quite honestly – I am not keen on the North – would much rather be nearer London – but then every one else is thinking the same thing and many business people have gone to live now just

outside London on the North and West side and come in every day for their work. They can at least get peaceful nights. I went up to town last Tuesday week for the day just to see how things were getting on. There were 8 or 9 raids while I was there and just at first I went through ghastly agonies of mind lest anything should happen to me and leave Roaul all alone in Nottingham where I had left him. One came very close – over the house and landed I think near Tooting Bec Common – I was all alone in the house so it wasn't very pleasant. The place was in a filthy state with dust and plaster and the whole of the bedroom was just a carpet of glass – with enormous chunks of plaster as big as your hand thrown in for relief!! I really couldn't do anything about it in the short time I had, so I just collected a few things I needed and through moth balls into everything I could lay hands on also under the carpets and generally tidied up and ran necessary errands around Streatham. Had some dinner with the girls and Widdy and caught the 10.10pm train back to Nottingham. It was 2.30 when I finally got in so I was pretty tired having been up since 5.30 am in the morning to catch the 7.15 train.

Mater is staying at Cambridge She has transferred her job in the Board of Trade out there so presumably will stay there until

London is quiet again. But the girls Nita and Widdy are sticking it out. They spend their nights in a row in the hall and at least, they say, they can get some sleep there if not a full night. I am sorry for everyone left in London because it is bloody and unless you have actually lived in it you cannot realise quite what it is like. London was looking very empty and very tired when I was up there but the humour is still there that will never die “doodlebug” or no ! They say that the food is being thrown at them and the cabbies are cruising around looking for fares. Well darling I must stop and in my next letter I will tell you what I have been doing since I last wrote and how we landed up in Meols. You had better continue to address letters home as the P.O. are forwarding all mail anyway and if luck would have it and the doodlebugs do stop – then we shall ship home again. All my love darling – I hope you have written to the Mater – Christmas was a very long time ago you know – we shall be thinking of the next one soon

God bless you
Joan