

Appendix 8

Letters of Condolence to Joan from family and friends 1944

Letters from Family and Friends
to and from Joan Guise after
the Death of Tony Guise
on 23rd July 1944

**Based on letters this commentary gives a further insight into the significance of
Tony's death not only to Joan but also to many other family members and friends.**

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Introduction to Family and Friends Condolence Letters after Tony's Death

Collecting together all the relevant material regarding Tony's death has been a mammoth task. New sources of information have kept appearing from different boxes and files as well as details from Joan's diaries.

It started with aural history passed down somewhat haphazardly over the last seventy years. Then a few years ago about 6 of Tony's letters home from India and Ceylon were found in the tin box returned from Ceylon. These gave some insight into the relationship between Tony and Joan, particularly when they were added to by some letters from Tony to his mother written during his time in the war. One letter was found, to Mater and Joan, at the time of Tony's death from his commanding officer and this gave further insights into the nature of his death and the respect the soldiers and officers had for him. Recently in another brief case a set of letters were found that directly followed Tony's death from the padre, senior officers and the matron in the hospital who tried to resuscitate Tony. Amongst these were copies of replies from Joan which give us considerable insight into her anguish at the time and her struggle to grow through the grief.

Since first writing the article – 3 Lives in WW2 – another batch of 35 sympathy letters have been found. Most of the letters were answered with an acknowledgement card but we have a few significant replies.

Poignant to find an airmail letter addressed to Tony from Joan just started –
“My Darling”.... Then nothing more.

Included in the archive is the death notice to the Streatham News

Since the printing of the 1st edition a lot more information about the Guise and Fleuss Families has come to light, enabling many of the writers of letters to Joan be identified and so their comments in letters can be seen in context.

The caring and sympathetic expressed by the letter writers are now understood to be from people that more often than not had known Joan long enough to know about the tragedies in her life and probably had met Tony or were related to him and grown to love him.

Comments about the various people that have written are listed below and these are followed by summary comments selected from the letters, with a number of the letters shown in full.

So many of the letters contain such detail and demonstrate such a deep connection with the situation that it felt worth reproducing them in full.

Whereas some letters had been sent straight to Meols so those people knew that Joan had evacuated, many of the letters had been forwarded from 81 Stanthorpe Road or 4 Pinfold Road Streatham.

Below are details of the letters, the senders falling into about five specific groups.

The Haycraft and Dibdin Family

The Dibdin and Haycraft Families would have been very supportive and will have watched Joan develop over the war period.

Gertie Davis nee Haycraft had two sons at war and had lost a third, Geoffrey, at sea a month before, leaving a widow Shelagh. Don had met Tony while training and had been responsible for their introduction.

Letters from **Gertie, Lewis** and daughter in law **Sheelagh**. (recently bereaved) These are all the Davis family, Gertie nee Haycraft

Don Haycraft – convalescing from Glandular Fever in West Kilbride. Don had been very supportive of Joan before the war and was responsible for Joan meeting Tony.

Lorna and family Nottingham

The **Dibdin Family** was by now rather scattered. Rex was living in Forest Hill and did offer advice to Joan at times. Marian and her family had returned from Australia a few years before, after the death of her husband Paul Montford. No letter has yet been found from **Margaret Cowham** but one can imagine the gist of it, and Joan of course was living with Christine (Tine). The family must have be shattered for Joan having experienced the deaths of Lionel and Cecily ten years earlier and then the death of Peter the senior male member of the Dibdin Family. The continual reference to Raoul was in part because of his position as potential “head of the family” for two lines, the Guise and the Dibdin.

Rex Dibdin

Marian and Bobbie Montford – Peterborough – Telegram
Mrs Midd on 14 August 44 and 13 11 1944 really part of the family

Letter from **Joe Dibdin** re Peter’s death.

The Guise and Fleuss Family

This group are all either Guise or Fleuss family or friends and neighbours.

Mater at 22 Station Road, Cambridge. – Mater’s Sister house probably.

Phyllis Fleuss **Mater’s sister in law Cambridge**

Vera - Royal Naval Air Station Easthaven Carnoustie Scotland

Vera Perrier – Mater’s great niece

Marie Guise from 4 Pinfold Road Tony’s Sister

Yvonne Callow nee Guise temporarily at 22 Station Road Cambridge

Neil Callow- husband to be of Yvonne Guise- Sierra Leone

Betty in Market Drayton Shropshire (could be **Betty nee Perrier**) great-niece of Mater

Betty and Girls Telegram and letter

Auntie Andrey... Mater’s Sister 32 Rusper Rd Horsham. She had married Charles Frankland and amongst her six children were Paulos Frankand and Jiminy (either John Charles or Oswald J) Frankland.

Geape of the same address Horsham Maybe a **Frankland** sibling
Vincent J Poole a friend of Tony from Art College who married Tony’s cousin **Therese Batt** daughter of Evangline nee Guise.

Dr Jiminy Frankland Aug. 44 and again = Jiminy Cricket
No.1 Platoon 509 113 Coy RASC CMF

Jiminy Cricket was an important person in Joan life during the war period but as yet it is not clear how. His name was mentioned from time to time.

Dr Paulos Frankland 5501966 No. 1 MT Platoon 473 Coy RASC CMF =Paul Frankland be Vera Perrier, Mater’s niece
Telegram. Paul married his cousin once removed (Doreen Perrier.

Anita – 22 Station Rd Cambridge who may have been a member of the family but more likely a lodger with Mater who travelled up to Cambridge with Mater to stay with her brother's family in Station Road.

Dinah - 4 Pinfold Road

Widdy - 4 Pinfold Road

Violet Anderson – 94 Sternhold Ave Streatham.

Johnnie Sloan a friend of the family who wrote from Egypt

John G Sloan- a summary

Known as Johnnie Sloan

The reader may be bewildered by the space allocated, later, to Johnnie Sloan, but it is through his letters during 1944 and 1945 to Joan that we not only get some insights into Tony as a person but also to life in Greece at the end of the war period.

Before the war, he must have become part of the Pinfold Road clan and a close friend of Tony and his attitude to his work and recreation in many ways reflected that of Tony, whom he respected greatly.

What we know of John Sloan is through a number of letters to Joan Guise during the War. Not only did he obviously know Tony and Joan well but also the two Frankland boys who were cousins of Tony and coincidentally ended up in Greece at the same time as Johnnie.

Johnnie wrote to Joan after Tony died, expressing his deepest sympathy and explaining how he had met Tony when he was about 16 ½ and was greatly impressed by him.

The reference to his mother, the London bombing and Pinfold Road in the same sentence suggests that he lived locally in the Streatham area and from the army records, he must have joined the gunners earlier in the war and then acquired the rank of Bombadier (BDR) which is the rank of corporal in the Royal Artillery.

In this first letter, written on 28th Sept 1944 he expresses beautifully how he felt about Tony as a person and subsequently his new family.

“I think I was sixteen and a half when I first met Tony – I had paid a visit to the Adam's and was on the point of leaving when Tony walked it. We chatted about one thing and another until midnight and then he took me back to his den in Kirkstall Road where he made some of his famous coffee and continued our conversation. From this night I became a staunch admirer of Tony and was proud to think that he honoured me with his friendship. From then on I met several interesting people but none that would stick in my memory for evermore than Tony, except, of course, your dear brother and yourself.”

Having joined the Civil Affairs Group he thought he was going to France following the June D Day landings however much to his surprise his boat went to Egypt where he settled for a while. It was from here that he wrote and like Tony he wrote back about all the details of what he could buy in the NAAFI and how much items were.

He must have been about 23 years old at the time.

His next letter written two months later indicate that he is working again with the Civil Affairs group but in Greece just after the German force withdrew from the country in October 1944. His job as described in letters explains that he was involved with transport of food etc to the island in the Province of Preveza. Sadly by the time that the Allies moved into Greece, the Civil War had started making life exciting and a little difficult for our troops who were there to help with relief work

His letters which are in full in the Appendix 16. are important as his behaviour seems in some ways a reflection of Tony.

Friends of Joan and others

These are less known about family or friends :

Ginela... 161 Grove End Gdns NW 8 St John's Wood friend from younger days probably from the Royal Academy.

Jean Irvine friend from Royal Academy and friend for life.

Jane also wrote to Joan from Leeds over the War period. – see “Three Lives”

Letter to **Mrs Priest** – Shetland. It is very likely that Tony must have met her while on duty in the Shetland Isles during a period of the War. Joan kept up correspondence with Mrs Priest for some years.

Chris Redford A neighbour of her parents

Ella Rowe A neighbour of her parents

Constance Berridge A neighbour of her parents

David Muir as mentioned elsewhere, was the son of Joan's immediate neighbour in Carshalton and saw himself as the boy next door.

There is still uncertainty about these people.

Thelma – from Symington

Thelma in Ayrshire

John - Class 40 FX Division H of S Scotia Ayr – maybe family Mater's great nephew – son of Margaret Wilson

Peggy - Hanwell

These were all local neighbours of Joan's parent in Carshalton who were always pleased to keep in touch with both Peter and

Joan was, in the years following, to be in touch with both Don Haycraft and David Muir for help and advice. Both visited 33 Wellesley Road from time to time.

There are, repeatedly, a few underlying themes within all the letters. Apart from the usual line that “words cannot express” there was often a complete disbelief that Tony could have died. In the light of the fact that most will not have known any details about Tony's activity at the time, it is amazing that so many considered him to have been immortal, at a time when anyone at war would expect to die at anytime. The fact that he died not actually on active service but of drowning during recreation is an irony only balanced by the report that he was saving someone else.

All who wrote were aware of Joan's other bereavements, and so felt and expressed a deep sympathy for the sadness she must be experiencing, added to that of the previous year when her brother died in an army accident and the loss of her parents in 1933. There was considerable reference to her son and to him being a reason for her to “keep going”. All passed encouraging remarks about Joan's strength of will and ability to overcome the grief and the odds against her, particularly for the sake of her son.

The fact that those four people nearest to her all died of accidents did not go unnoticed by Joan. One can imagine that an aura of fate or doom laid over her and this was referred to in one or two of her letters, as well as occasionally during the rest of her life.

Her feelings toward her son and her relationship with him must have been greatly influenced not just by the love for and promises made to his father Tony, but also by the fear that yet another one dear to her was “at risk”. It must be remembered that her second husband died in a lorry accident.

Joan was not overtly religious or spiritual. She had little time for church and clergy but was aware of a God, although she never discussed her relationship with him. Fate and predestination may

have grown into her being, particularly as in that era the term “everything happens for the best” was part of the culture. Strangely this acceptance of fate seemed to give hope. While Tony was in India, Joan and he had a dialogue in letters on the topic and we have his view that of a catholic with knowledge of the East. The alternative wording and perhaps approach “we make the best of everything that happens” was not used although often implied, especial in the sympathy letters to Joan. Despite the feeling of doom that she must have lived with, Joan was, at least in principle, prepared to allow her son to make his own way in life despite the risks. In a letter to her second husband, in about 1964, she makes it quite clear that her son was to be left to work through his risky ways in life and be allowed to develop to maturity in his own way. I wonder how often she feared another fatal accident whenever he went out in a car or lorry.

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It should be noted that Joan took very seriously the business of writing letters back to those who had been in touch. Each envelope indicated when she had sent a card of thanks. I remember years later Joan mentioning the difficulty she had settling down to letter writing, because of the trauma of so much of it under such sad circumstances during the war. It is lucky that there are so many typed rough copies by Joan in that period.

There is a theme within Joan’s letters about her true love and life being finished “but my true life is finished, and my love has gone with Tony and so will always remain.”

She recognised that in time the wounds heal and that she would make a new life but it never would be the same.

This is probably truer than anyone realised. Joan, as a mother, was a responsible adult who planned carefully and, although she may have made mistakes, the aspect of her life that was directed towards the upbringing of her son was based on the fulfilment of her commitment to Tony.

As with most of us Joan had demonstrated with Tony, alongside her strong practical and artistic ways, a loving nature with no shortage of romanticism. She had, before the war and in the early years, striven to enter the theatrical world. After Tony’s death, Joan had to become totally in charge of situations and planned life as best she could to achieve set goals. Within certain limits she managed her second husband and he always took it that she was “The Governor”.

It is hard to judge, but it does seem that this dynamic also applied to her relationship with her son. Only on one occasion do I remember her behaving in a relaxed “childlike” manner. This was at a party when her cousin and childhood friend, Lorna, visited us and, for the first and only time, her behaviour was such that I had a glimpse of someone I “did not know”.

I wonder if Joan did loose or suppress an enormous chunk of her demonstrable loving self as a result of Tony dying, having given all of herself to him when they first met and married.

## Letters from Family and Friends

**Letter from Mater to Joan 2<sup>nd</sup> Aug. 1944**

22 Station Road Cambridge

My Darling Child

What can I say to you, how can I comfort you, for I too am broken hearted. Our beloved boy has gone away from us. The veil has been drawn and we can no longer see or hear him.

Only his spirit remains with us, a small, very small consolation.

The awful and tragic news was given to me by Archie Cory who is here on holiday, Mrs Wurley phoned the girls and they phoned Archie and he immediately flew to me. I heard Mrs Wurley posted you the wire, I did not know where you were, having been waiting a letter from you with an address, and until I knew you had received the awful news I would not write. Yvonne came to me yesterday and has given me your address. Nita who was in Minehead travelled here to be with me yesterday.

I cannot think or realise it is true, my first child and I loved him so.

The tragedy of it is beyond believing and you my poor poor child, the greatest of all your tragedies, I know how you loved him, now you only have his little son to comfort you.

God help you dear to hear the burden in the prayer of your loving Mother.

( Yvonne and Nita are here for a week and Marie comes on Friday. I feel then I shall return to London to be with them.)

**Yvonne Callow nee Guise Tony's sister**

**22 Station Road**

Cambridge

August 2<sup>nd</sup> 1944

My dear Joanna

You will think I have delayed writing this letter for a long time – I have because I was afraid to write until I knew you had received the Telegram.

I was quite heartbroken when I heard the ghastly news from Mrs Worley. Heartbroken as a sister and being a wife too I can understand what a ghastly abyss this will create in you life.

You know we were terribly proud of him and his achievements his memory will always live – everybody was fond of him and all his friends are deeply grieved that his departing should cause you yet another sorrow. Mater has received many sympathetic letters and all ask her to convey to you their deepest sympathy. They feel Raoul must be some consolation to you, someone to cling to in the future.

We have not heard from you yet and are anxious about you and any arrangements which you will make – perhaps the post is delayed.

One thing is certain – Tony is happy with our father, with Peter and all others dear to us who have passed over. The pain is largely for this left behind

Write soon if I can help at all

Love Yvonne.

## **Letter from Marie**

4.Pinfold Rd. Streatham.S.W.16.

My dear Jo.

I feel that I too should have written to you, a long time ago, but as you say, what can be said on these occasions, words are very inadequate, and I think you know and understand, not only from the point of view that you've lost a husband, but having so recently lost a brother that you were equally as proud of as we were of ours. I wrote and told all the boys of course you've probably by now heard from them. Victor echoed my thoughts when he said that he always considered our family and gang were onlookers in this ghastly war, and that nothing could possibly happen to any of us. If it had been anybody else somehow it would have been vaguely understandable!, but not Tony, he was always so very alive and active, and such a real sort of person, that I just cant even now realise it. In one respect I almost dread the end of the war, everybody will no doubt go mad, but there will be such a majority of people who wont want to go mad, in the middle of it all thoughts will turn to the gallant boys who aren't coming back. As Tony's wife you must be terribly proud of him, as I was as his sister. Altho' Raoul won't remember him, he'll know what sort of a father he had and I'm sure will follow in his footsteps, with your guidance. I feel that Tony and Peter must both be together looking after you in a way that they could never have done even on earth, when one comes to sort things out it really is the spiritual things that count more than the earthly, altho' its damned hard to think that way.

Mater asked me to tell you that she is back from Cambridge, she just couldn't stand it any longer down there. She's looking forward tremendously to seeing you and Raoul, she also wants to know whether Raoul talks yet.

I do want you to know Jo, that you can always rely on both Yvonne and I, particularly myself as Yvonne probably wont be in this country much longer, to help you to look after yourself and in particular Raoul, you must feel so dreadfully helpless and hopeless at the moment. I'm not exactly a tower of strength myself, but two heads are always better than one.

Re the new job. I'm not surprised that you wondered about the feeble voice, that's the new bright little number that the Association have managed to procure. She's the wettest thing in years, but quite a sweet child. I'm now in the Ordnance Board, not the same as Mater, but a sort of general Board for all three services. Work isn't too bad, automatic etc., and quite interesting, but I much prefer it to the Association, not only is it a change not to have to think quite so much, but there's far more life, the girls really are extremely nice, actually we have great fun. I shall definitely not go back to the Association if I can possibly help it. The office is in Kensington, by the way, the journey isn't too bad, 49 bus all the way. takes about 1 hr. and we have to be in by 9, the hours are a bit thick really and the pay pretty lousy. 9-6 every day, 9-12.30 one Sat: and 9-5. the next, however I'm very lucky to have landed the job and not have to go into a factory or the forces.

Take care of yourself. It looks as if by the news that we should be seeing you soon.

**My love Marie**

I meant to tell you that mater had a rather nasty fall in the lounge, and hurt her back, at the present moment she's in bed, but will write to you as soon as she can.



### **Letter from Neil Callow to Joan**

Free Town Sierra Leone

My dear Joanna

I'm most terribly sorry – What use can I possibly say of something so crushing.? Words will only hurt you more., but in my brevity there's a world of deepest sympathy and condolence. I'll not burden you with more my dear – My hand is in yours in mute sympathy.

Please write if you want to talk with someone about it. Our loss is different, Joanna, but so great for both of us.

Be brave my dear

My love Neil.

### **Reply from Joan to Neil Callow**

My Dear Neil

I was so very glad to have your letter, and though I found it very hard to read it was very comforting

I have wanted to write to you for a long time but somehow could not do it. You will understand I know

I can still hardly realise what has happened... it didn't seem possible that Tony wouldn't come back, .. I never let that thought materialise in my mind, and coming safely through his experience on the outward voyage, it seemed as if he was destined to come safely home again.

For a long time I believed there must be some mistake.. but I have had several letters from his fellow officers, and from the Matron of the hospital where he was taken. He was buried in Liveramentu Cemetery, Colombo. Perhaps, one day, before I die, I shall have the opportunity to go out there myself....

They are all accidents, Neil, my parents, Peter and now Tony ..and I cannot help wondering sometimes if there is some curse upon me or through me on those who are dear to me, and I dread and fear for Raoul. He is my last tie to this earth now, and if a anything should happen to him. Tony used to say, before he went abroad, that he would always be with me in spirit. I feel that more now than I did before and it is a comfort; but it is so hard when I think of the years ahead without him beside me

I suppose the wound will heal in time... I shall probably make a new life and may even marry again, but my true life is finished, and my love has gone with Tony and so will always remain.

I used to be afraid sometimes of having too much happiness...now I know why those three years that we knew each other we must have lived a life-time of happiness, and perhaps I have had my share....and far rather would I have it so than to have lived on together for years and had our love grow thin. ..that I cannot think that that would ever have happened. But.. .oh it is hard, so hard.

I am sorry Neil, forgive my rambling I feel I must say these thing tho' I cannot speak them.

I hear that Yvonne is joining you very soon now. You must be very happy about it.

At last you can begin you lives together, and I wish you both every happiness.

I hope this is in time to wish you all the best for Christmas and the New Year you will be getting some leave in about eight months won't you? It will be good to see you again.

God bless you

with love, and Raoul's too

**From Margaret Sarah Beatrice Perrier nee Wilson**  
(AKA Peggy)

8 Highland Ave  
Hanwell W7  
Aug 1<sup>st</sup> 1944

My dear Joanna,  
I have just heard the tragic news about poor Tony. You poor dear what dreadful sadness you're having in your young life. Words are so inadequate to express one's sympathy for you, all I can say is, I am truly sorry for you. Thank God you have little Raoul who well I am sure be a comfort to you in your terrible trouble. For goodness sake do not come back to London yet, it is far from safe. Every letter will only renew your wound so I will end – assuring you of my deepest sympathy. Ever yours affectionately  
Peggy

~~~~~

From John Perrier

Class 40
FX Division
H of S Scotia
7 8 1944

My dear Joanna
I have just heard of the death of Tony and write to offer you my deepest sympathies. I sincerely pray that you will overcome your grievous loss which will be felt by all who knew him. One must resign themselves to the fact that it is the will of our lord that

Tony has departed from us. May he rest in peace. My deepest sympathies John

~~~~~

**From Betty Perrier**

Telegram OUR THOUGHTS AND DEEPEST SYMPATHY  
ARE WITH YOU LOVE BETTY AND GIRLS

Then letter

Pelham House  
Stoke Park  
Nr Market Drayton  
Shropshire  
3 8 44

Joanna my dearest  
I feel so sad about four tell me that I do not know how to one had a sympathetic and soothing letter. I can guess how you feel about it knowing how much you long for his return.  
Jo you're grand and I'll always say so because you've endured what none of us could go through and I know that you will bear this blow just as well.  
How is baby Raoul ?  
I expect by now he can almost walk on his own.  
I'd pray and hope that no harm will come to any of you at Streatham and that this dreadful war will soon be over. I must write to Mater, so will say Goodnight and God bless you love  
Betty

~~~~~

Letter from Vera Perrier Peggy's daughter
and a granddaughter of **Katherine Fleuss**, Mater's sister

Telegram JOE MY DEEPEST
SYMPATHY MAY GOD SEE YOU
THROUGH AND HELP YOU
ALWAYS VERA

Royal Naval Air Station
Easthaven, Carnoustie
Scotland
3rd August 1944

Joanna

However wearisome letters are at a time like this please let me write to you to tell you just how sorry oh! So grieved I am about Tony. Poor darling Tony. It came as a terrific shock yesterday still I can't believe it and dear Joe my heart is full for you in your latest and bitterest grief. One cannot say "be brave and bear up" when life suddenly loses all its meaning and sanity. Dear Joe do try to believe that however empty your tummy feels now from this blow, it's beyond us to understand why it was to happen and we know very little. Keep your faith warm and your head high, you were such a source of admiration before. You know you can take even this Joe for Raoul's sake, for Mater oh! Jo dear sympathy must even be aggravation now but I think I know and understand, if only a fraction, what it is to mourn for Tony. But he won't ever really be dead, not in our memories ever Joe, he was too fine to die in all but name and God left a part of him for you in Raoul. No more now to add to your burden. I am sorry Joe. God be with you to help you through now and always. Vera.



Vera May 1944

Letter from Jiminy Frankland, maybe a nephew of Mater

{Dr ?} Jiminy Frankland Aug. 44 and again = Jiminy Cricket
No.1 Platoon 509 113 Coy RASC CMF

My Dear Joe

I have not heard officially yet but got word through Paulos a couple of days ago of Tony's death. It is a great shock and hit me terribly, I can only convey my heartfelt sympathy for you my dear, it is very awkward to write about but you must know how I feel. Tony was very dear to me and more dear to you, you must be brave and bear up as he alone would wish of you, a great man with a greater future. Capable of soaring to great heights and with one of the best of wives he could wish for. We must pray for his soul and please God he is in a far happier place. The baby thank God is young and cannot understand, take care of him and teach him to love the beautiful things in life as he alone would wish, a hard job but I know you can do it. Remember my dear any help and advice I can possibly do for you I will. You are so much younger and capable of bearing the strain so please do help his mother my darling Auntie a great woman beloved so much by one and all that know her. Well God bless you Joanna, my prayers are for his deliverance, God rest his soul. Don't bother to reply until you have time and feel better. I know what it is. My Love as always Jiminy

Reply from Joan to Cricket

My dear Cricket,

It was so sweet of you to write to me and I am so sorry to have kept you waiting such an age for a reply. You will understand I just felt I could not write before

There seems little for me to say now, but I did want you to get this for Christmas with my very best wishes.... and Raoul's too.

We are staying with one of my Aunts and have been since July. I didn't want Raoul in London during the raids, so I haven't seen any of the Family. I hear Yvonne is soon to leave to join Neil. Mater may be coming up here for a few days after Christmas...she is dying to see the boy, of course. Quite honestly I am not in any hurry to go home. Auntie has been so good to us, and I dread the idea even the thought of seeing Streatham and the flat again.

Oh, God Jiminy, sometimes I feel I just can't bear it. It didn't seem possible that Tony would not come back, and I cannot visualise how I shall manage to go on living without him. It might be years and years. Yet I shall have to.... others do, and then there is Raoul...he needs me, and I must see him through to manhood as Tony would wish. He is a big chap now, a mixture of Tony and Peter... not like me at all. He has definitely got Tony's vivacity and sense of humour....yet he is careful like Peter, and I think, may have Peter's build. I do hope he will be tall.

I won't write more now, Cricket, but lots of good wishes to you old thing for Christmas and the New Year

Look after yourself

With our love God bless....

Letter from Paulos Frankland, maybe a nephew of Mater

{Dr ?} Paulos Frankland 5501966 No. 1 MT Platoon 473 Coy
RASC CMF

My Dear Joey

Old thing – its with the deepest regret that I've just heard of your pathetic loss, it shocked me beyond measure. May I take this opportunity of offering my heartfelt sympathy. You've had so many wicked things happen to you in so short a space, that I think you are so brave a woman to carry your burden – Joey be brave darling, as I know you will and I look forward to the time when I can once again be home to met your son – he must be a Tony all over.

I won't bother you with idle talk now but will write again soon.

God bless and help you in the future.

Sincerely Paulos

Tony was my buddy. It hits me hard too!

Reply from Joan to Paulos

My dear Paulos

It is a very long time since I received your letter----- I just haven't realised how the weeks and months have passed, and now it is almost Christmas and I may be too late to send you good wishes, I hope this gets to you in time.

I won't write much, Paulos because I just feel I can't. The wound is still so terribly sore, tho' in time it will heal, no doubt, there will always be a scar. Raoul will help— is helping, but gosh Paulos it is hard, I never thought it could possibly happen.... not to Tony, and I simply cannot visualise my life ahead without him.

I haven't been home since I had the news and haven't seen any of the family, You didn't see our flat, did you Paulos? I dread going back to it. It is so full of Tony and he was so very proud of and yet I cannot bear the thought of breaking it up and moving as I shall have to sometime.

Mater may come up here to stay for a few days after Christmas. Poor Mater, her family is dwindling gradually, I hear that Yvonne is about to leave to join Neil Well, Paulos, forgive this crappy letter I wont write more now, but very best wishes to you my dear from Raoul and I for Christmas and the new year....let us hope you will be home before it is out.

God bless you, with our love,

From Geape (Frankland)

**Maybe Mary or Anne Frankland
Or possible Gertrude Eustace nee Fleuss**

32 Rusper Rd Horsham
2 Aug 1944

Sent to 22 Station Road Cambridge and forwarded to Meols.

My poor dear Jo,
how can I express to you my deep sorrow in your dreadful trouble my heart bleeds for you. It cannot be true that we shall never see our darling Tony again. How you have suffered in your short life – I can never express in words my sorrow for you in your loss. He was such a dear boy and so loved by all who knew him. I as you know loved him dearly – may God give you strength to bear your great sorrow- When you can will you write to me. Give little darling a big hug fro me.
My fondest love Jo dear

Always your affection Geape

Letter from David Muir

19th August 1944

My Dear Joanna

I was terribly shocked to learn the tragic news of Tony's death; it must be an almost unbearable blow to you. I am most awfully sorry for you, Joanna my dear. You have had to go through far more suffering in your short twenty four years than anyone expects to have to bear in a normal lifetime, and it certainly does not seem right. I feel however that your strength of character will not permit you to feel despondent. For neither is there any need to feel so. Tony has died in the service of his country, in order that his son and present and future generations shall have a more worthwhile existence, and it is your duty, and I am sure your wish, that Raoul should grow up in the likeness of his father, and be able to share in making a better world, the opportunity of which will be presented by winning of this war by the allies. Furthermore, life goes on, and one has got to keep looking upward and seeking the light even though the troubles through which one passes try at times to drag one down into darkness. Don't be downhearted. Remember Christian in Pilgrims Progress ?

I was so glad to know that you had managed to take Raoul away from the danger zone, and hope that he will not realize the dangers to which you were subjected until you were able to get away from Streatham. Don't be too hasty to come back, as we cannot yet tell whether the nuisance has been mastered.

I hope you are finding things where you are as comfortable as can be expected. I'm sure your aunt is pleased to have you both, and maybe your two cousins are at home sometimes. Anyhow, I gather that your friend Mary is staying not far from you, and you can probably meet her sometimes.

Winifred and Edward (Colville) returned to Ewell from Staffordshire where they have been staying for 4 or 5 weeks., but

I do not think it is wise. Francis has, however, now taken his holiday, so they have gone down to Cirencester for a fortnight; they had difficulty in finding a place to stay at, but they went to that town because Winifred has a friend there who was able to find them lodgings. Winifred is not unfortunately relieved of the shopping, though.

You may have heard that Bill was seriously wounded in Normandy about a week after the invasion started, but he was quickly returned to this country by plane and is now in hospital in Leicester where, thank goodness, he is making a very good recovery. He is expecting to go to a convalescence home next week. Marjorie and John have been able to stay up near him, so he has been seeing a lot of his wife and son.

Life is fairly normal for me throughout all the troubles of these times, but I shall be glad to get a rest from business at the end of next week when I am taking a fortnight off. If I can find a place to stay at, I will be going away with Kathleen, as we do feel that we could do with a change, but so far I have not been successful in fixing up although I have written to a number of seaside addresses. Still, if I cannot get fixed up, I will look forward to a really good holiday after the war.

I trust that it will not be very long now until the dangers of the South of England have passed, and I shall look forward to seeing you and Raoul when you come back to your home. Is it too much to expect that the war may even end in Europe before the year is out? I am still reckoning on next year, but if it ends sooner, I shall be all the more pleased; and so will everyone.

Meanwhile my love to Raoul and yourself, in which the family joins me

Yours affectionately

David.

Letter from Anita staying at Gerald Fleuss birth place

Anita (Nita) had been staying with Mater at Pinfold Road and travelled up from Minehead to Cambridge to be with her when the news broke.

C/o 22 Station Road
Cambridge

My dear Jo

I just don't know how to write to you dear, it is quite impossible to put on paper what my heart is feeling. Why this terrible tragedy has happen again to you my poor sweet, is more than one can understand.

Your only comfort is that your beloved has gone to the great Creator who loaned him to us all for so short a while, there to find eternal peace and rest.

Tony was such a darling and will be sadly missed, to me he meant much more than my own brother.

Thank God you have a dear little son who grows more and more like his daddy. There you will find consolation in this great grief.

You are such a grand guy Jo and will take this cup of sorrow in the same brave way as you did the death of your dear brother.

We are all going to mass and communion on Sunday for our dear one and my prayers will be for his dear wife and wee son, for you both will be Tony ????? of that I am sure

God bless and comfort you dear

If I can do anything at anytime please call on me.

Much love to Raoul and yourself from Anita.

Gertie Davis nee Haycraft Joan's aunt
Morlock Lodge
Bleadon Hill Nr Weston S Mare Somerset
9th Aug.

My dearest Joan

We were so sorry to read this morning the sad news about Tony. What can I say dear to comfort you. I am afraid there is so little but I just want you to know how much I feel for you and little Raoul. You have had so much to bear and this last blow must seem almost too much.

Raoul will be your greatest comfort and will help you through.

I wrote to you at Streatham but I wonder if you ever got it as you had left for Nottingham, Uncle Stan said. I do hope that you will be able to get back before long. Uncle Bernard in his last letter said you were going up to Christine. As I do not know her address I must send this to Nottingham. Our house has been blasted by a bomb falling across the road, we are lucky as the opposite house is down but we cannot go back until we get windows in, at the moment. They have put the roof right and blacked out the windows but there is only one door that can be opened on to the staircase. We are remaining on here until we can see what is best to be done. Poor Sheelagh is having her babe in October and unless the bombs have stopped it will be impossible for her to go back to Reigate as things have been and are pretty bad at the moment.

You know dear that if there is anything Uncle and I can do to help you, we will and this address will find us. I want to write to your mother in law but I do not know where she lives at the moment. I will enclose it in yours and perhaps you will send it on for me.

With all my love and sympathy Joan dear and a big kiss to Raoul . From Auntie

PS Please give Christine my love.

Lewis Davis

**Joan's Uncle – a bank manager
Bleadon Hill
9 August 1944**

My dear Joan

I do not know how to write this letter for your grief must be so great and no words from me can be of any help but I do want you to know how much I sympathise with you in your sorrow. Tony was such a fine fellow and although I only saw him the once I could not but think how lucky you both were in your marriage. You have lost a great comrade but you have one alleviation in your sorrow and that is Raoul whom I am sure will more and more be a comfort to you in your life, and fill the void so you will not be so lonely.

I can say no more except to repeat how I sympathise with you in your sadness and to say that if I can at any time be of any help don't hesitate to let me know.

With love from your Uncle Lewis.

Sheelagh Davis

Daughter in law of Gertie. Husband Geoffrey, a naval Doctor, had drowned on the 15 Jun 1944

C/o Mrs Vowles
Morlock Lodge

Bleadon Hill

Ne Weston Super Mare
Somerset.
Aug 9th

Dear Joan

We were so sad to see your news in the paper this morning and I feel I must write and offer my very sincere sympathy as I do know how you must be feeling.

There is very little one can do – or say – to help at a time like this – as it is really something one must fight ones self and you little boy will help you in that way – you must be so very thankful to have him. But I want you to know that if there is anything I could do I would.

I hope we shall meet one day soon

Yours affectionately

Sheelagh.

Letter from Joan to Sheelagh Davis,

wife of Geoffrey Davis who had just died as a surgeon on a Royal Navy ship in June.

Geoffrey was the son of Gertie Davis nee Haycraft , brother of John and Pat Davis.

{Date about Nov 1944 Husband Geoffrey had died 15 Jun 1944
My dear Sheelagh, }

Congratulations! and best wishes to you both. I have Just heard that you have a fine baby boy. I am so pleased for you, and you must be very proud. He will be a great comfort and companion to you in the future.

It is a very long time since I received your letter, and I should have answered it long ago. DO please excuse the delay I have found it so hard to write letters, and there has been so much business which has had to be done by correspondence, it was very sweet of you to write.

I hope we shall meet before long. I shan't bring Raoul back to London until the raids are quite over, but when we do eventually get home will come over to Reigate for a day, that is if Auntie can cope, she must be very glad to have you with her.

Do give them both my love, I expect Auntie has had my letter by now.

Very best wishes to you and the wee man.
Yours affectionately,

Stanley Haycraft

Gerties brother

(see website for many letters to the Dibdin family in WW1)

High Peak Hotel

Forest Road

Nottingham

Nov 22nd 1944

My Dear Joan

I send you my deepest sympathy dear. You have indeed had a terrible lot to bear first with one going and then the other. It will be a comfort to you to be with Christine during these sad times.

I wrote for your address, but in the moving up here I couldn't find it and now it has just turned up among some other papers

When we get back to Edgbaston after the war we will look forward to seeing you. At present we have no home and as you know our furniture is blitzed.

We don't like Nottingham and we shall be glad of our next move.

Pat and Percy { Stanley's nephews } are both in Holland and Belgium while John Davis is far away in Burma {more likely Malaya}. My own old Company is in Italy and I hear frequently from others on all fronts.

I hope you are alright. Please give Christine my love.

Auntie Jean sends much love and sympathy to you.

From your affectionate Uncle.

Letter from Don Haycraft, Joan's special cousin

Through his encounter with Tony while training, Joan and he met the Guise family.

Paisley Convalescent Home

West Kilbride

Ayrshire

Sunday

My dear Joanna

It was a great shock to me that I heard of Tony's death in Ceylon. Mum wrote to tell me the sad news and at the time I was in Hospital with a high temperature and so could not write to you before.

As you know Tony and I were great friends during the early part of this war and a true and kinder friend I never had.

He was in every way an ideal companion and I am sure he must have been an ideal husband to you . It must be a great loss to you particularly as you have had so many intimate losses in your life.

I am just recovering from 6 weeks in hospital, glandular fever being my downfall. Apparently it is an obscure complaint which results in high temperatures. The treatment is complete rest and under a perfect sky and strong sun I am carrying out the Doctors orders.

I hope this war will be over soon – I am heartily sick of the whole thing and my one aim is to return to civilian life and attempt to have a normal life.

Let me have a letter from you and don't forget to tell me how the infant is getting on. If there is anything I can do for you don't hesitate to let me know.

Your loving cousin

Don

Letter from Vincent Poole

Student friend of Tony. married his cousin Therese BATT

119 Palace Road
SW2

My Dear Jo

Forgive me for not writing before but I really haven't known what to say and letters on this kind always seem to be so empty and superficial, but you know my Dear whatever sort of mess I make of this letter that I am most terribly upset over the news. It was the last thing I expected could happen. I think we all thought that Tony would have come out unscathed, but apparently the power that be decreed it otherwise although one cannot help wondering why out of the countless people it should be Tony. Terry wishes me to tell you that she hope to be in London quite soon and if there is anything either she or I can do you know we will only be pleased to do it. Please don't bother to reply to this letter as you will no doubt have quite enough writing to do. Let us know when you are coming back to London. Give my love to Raoul

Love Vincent (and Therese)

Letter from Mrs Midd, (Mrs Middleton)

who was a loyal friend to 3 generations on the Dibdin Family. She had lived as a sister to the children in WJ Dibdin's household until she married.

118 Victoria Street
London SW1
14 Aug 44

My darling Joan

Have just heard this very dreadful report of Tony. I just cannot think it is true – somehow it does not seem possible.

No wonder I have not heard from you -- needless to say you have our deepest sympathy - that seems a futile word dear – fee too dazed to think of /// words. Is it due to sea voyage or and accident – or what?

I pray God give strength and keep you to bear this further loss in your still very young life – it seems so impossible to happen to Tony- So full of the joy of life !

Again Dear you have our united love and very deep and sincere sympathy.

As always

N. Middleton

P.S. How glad I am you are with you Aunts who are able to give you and comfort

God Bless

The Aunt was Tine (Christine nee Dibdin) in Meols. Tine had lived in the household with her as a girl.

2nd Letter from Mrs Midd, (Mrs Middleton)

118 Victoria Street
London SW1
13. 11. 44.

My dear Joan

Thank you so much for your letter. You know we shall be pleased to see you anytime you care to call. Am simply longing to see Raoul. He must be a little man by this time.

Yes I am sure Auntie Christine has been a tower of strength to you. On thinking things over I think you were meant to be with you own people just when you most needed their sympathy and help. These things happen for the best but we don't always see it at the time.

Mac { her son}has been home and gone again, he came straight from Burma and doesn't want to go back. He says the Germans are babies compared with the Japs.!

He has had no news for three months and went straight off to the flat, got a shock when he knew Marjorie { his wife} was in Leeds with friends.

I am to give you their sympathy and kind thoughts both of them feel they just cannot write about it, Mac was very upset, we had other sad news for him.

This is their fifth wedding anniversary. I thought of you on your second {3rd Oct 1944} dear. Our united love and all the best for your future

My love and thoughts to Christine
Always Mrs Midd.

Rex Dibdin Dibdin Uncle
17 Wynell

Forest Hill SE23

Aug 14 1944

My dear Joan

I am very grieved over your sad loss, and all my sympathy goes out to you.

Your great consolation must be in developing the character of Tony's boy

My love to you and Raoul
From Your loving Uncle Rex

Auntie Audrey Frankland nee Fleuss Mater's Sister
Doreen nee Perrier was her daughter in law married to Paul Frankland, Doreen's cousin

32 Rusper Rd Horsham
1.8.44

My Dear Johanna

I have just heard on the phone from Doreen telling me of he terrible news of poor little Tony. My dear I just can't believe it. It is too dreadful for words. How my heartaches for you and your dear little man. I loved Tony very much and he was always so sweet to me, it is a tragedy, you poor little soul have had so much grief, may you have the strength to bear it all, but it needs so much courage to bear so much, please write to me when you feel you can, God bless you dear and help you through this terrible time

With love from your broken hearted
Auntie Audrey.

Letter from Johnnie Sloan

Johnnie had been a friend of Tony's for about 7 years from the age of 16½. He met Tony at the Adam's household and visited Tony's "den" at 16 Kirkstall Road SW2. This must have been in 1937 when Tony was about 20 years old.

902780 SLOAN J.G.

No.4 Supply and Provision Depot (Balkans) MEF

28th Sept 1944

Jo', my dear.

You will be more than surprised, I think, to receive a letter from one whom you no doubt thought had forgotten about you and all those dear to you.

After January, when I was last on leave, I was unfortunate enough to receive no more leave and in June I volunteered to go overseas in Civil Affairs, preferably in 21 AG (which is France).

On the first of August I received embarkation leave and it was not until my last night that I went over to 4 Pinfold Road – the Doodlebugs so scared mother that I did not wish to leave her.

On the last night- practically my last in England - I learnt of your grievous loss.

Believe me, Jo', when I say I cannot put into words on paper what I actually feel and that my most heartfelt sympathies go out to you in your bereavement.

I have thought these last few weeks - when I was cut off from all communication with the outside world – so much of you and it hurt more than I can explain that God had dealt you two such severe blows within twelve months.

I was more than proud to call Tony a friend, as indeed a great friend he had proved to me during the seven years that he harboured me with his friendship. It would be impossible for me

to forget Tony for his qualities were such that they will be indelibly imprinted upon my memory.

I think I was sixteen and a half when I first met Tony – I had paid a visit to the Adam's and was on the point of leaving when Tony walked in. We chatted about one thing and another until midnight and then he took me back to his den in Kirkstall Road where he made some of his famous coffee and continued our conversation. From this night I became a staunch admirer of Tony and was proud to think that he honoured me with his friendship. From then on I met several interesting people but none that would stick in my memory for evermore than Tony, except, of course, your dear brother and yourself.

If only I had known earlier of Tony I would have paid a visit to you on my leave for I cannot possibly make this pen put on paper what I really wish to say. All I can really say is that I am more than sorry and that I am only waiting for the day that I land in England in order that I may express myself properly.

When I saw Yvonne and Marie I was convinced I was going to France because I had been told so when my posting came through. You can imagine my surprise, therefore, when I saw the size of the boat on which I was to embark. I then thought that perhaps I should be going to the South of France but after a few days at sea I realised that I should not see France on the trip.

I was not really surprised therefore when I found myself in Egypt. It would have been an experience to go through France from one end to the other – not that I wish it for I have already seen enough, although I have not walked through a town or village but have merely passed through them on a train. Even so, Cairo, was a great shock to me. Perhaps one day I shall be able to spend more time in that town and it would be interesting to see then how one part of the world lives. I will tell you a lot more about Egypt in my future letters but suffice it to say that during my short stay in this country I have formed the opinion that our

slums, compared with an Egyptian village, would be regarded as palaces.

Not having been outside the two camps that I have been stationed in I can give you very little idea of the price of goods etc.

although have been given to understand that genuine champagne can be bought in a first class restaurant for approximately £3-16-0. South African Brands which are fairly dear in England being priced at 3/6 a measure sell for between 2½ d and 1/0½ according to the type of restaurant or bar visited.

The NAAFI's are very good and cater for all ranks. American cigarettes such as Chesterfield and Lucky Strike sell for seven pence halfpenny and Senior Service Greys 333' are priced at ten pence. All prices are for 20 cigarettes.

The Players and Gold flake sold are made in Egypt and they are only 10d for 20. Toilet articles in the NAAFI besides being more or less unlimited – as are the cigarettes (if you want 200 you can have them) are on the whole cheaper than in England.

5 Gillette razor blades cost 1/0½ as compared with 1/3 in England; Dettol 11¼ d Lux, Palmolive, Lifebuoy and other popular brands of soap 3¾ d Colgate and Maclean's toothpastes 11¼ d and so on.

Beer is a bit of a snag – the only kind being sold in the NAAFI or anywhere else for that matter being a Lager brewed in Egypt which in that excellent institution the NAAFI costs the enormous sum of 10d for a bottle containing a pint and an third.

I will certainly write to you again before many days pass,
All my Love to Rhoal {Raoul} and yourself

Johnnie.

Jean Irvine Close friend of Joan
5 Beverley Court
Chiswick W4 presumed 1944

Darling Dibby

Your letter arrived with you dreadful news, and my dear, I just don't know what to say, and I'm not going to try to say all the usual sympathetic things because on paper they seem such a hollow mockery. If you don't mind my dear I would rather wait until I see you, you know what I mean. All I can say here is that after the loss of Peter, for Tony to go too, and even the manner of his going is too cruel for words, though it was a worth one and so typical of Tony, that he should die saving someone else.

What are your plans my dear, though I don't suppose for a moment you can bring yourself to think of such things yet, but please Dibby if I can be of any assistance in any way at all, do please let me know, also the moment you get back to London, tell me for I should like to see you so very much and also Raoul.

I have one or two odds and ends that might be useful to him, nothing much, but with coupons even socks are a help. Would you like me to send them up to you or wait until you get home? I have written to Jock and told him, but I haven't had a letter for a fortnight so I'll send you his sympathy which I know he will ask me to do, a little ahead of his letter.

Take care of yourself my dear for Raoul's sake, and go on being the brave lass I've always know, difficult though it may be, God bless darling

All my love

Jean

Jock was Jeans Husband. By this date Jean had a son, John, who would have been about 3 years old.

About 2 years later Joan moved into a house in Chiswick 500 yards from Jean

Letter from Violet Anderson

94 Sternhold Ave
Streatham Hill
SW2
Aug 1st 1944

My dear Johanna

I have just heard the sad news of Tony, Joe dear I feel so desperately sorry for you and Raoul, please accept Ian's Mother's and my sympathy. One says so little at these times but I know how you must be suffering. I can only pray that you will be given strength to carry on and that little Raoul will grow up a good son and man and help to dry your tears. You have had more than your share of sadness. You know that Tony has gone on a little ahead to a higher life and he and your parents and Peter will be beside you in Spirit and helping you to bear the pain.

Now dear I will leave you in His loving care and trust you will be comforted.

With love and a kiss to Raoul

Yours affectionately
Violet Anderson.

Letter from Ginela

May have been a friend from her days at college because of the use of the name Dibby and reference to Jean Irvine

161 Grove End Gardens
N.W.8
10th Aug (1944)

Dear Dibby

With real sympathy I write to say how much I felt for you when I saw the sad announcement in the Telegraph yesterday.

What a cruel blow my dear, and how misfortune has added to misfortune for you.

I am truly so very sorry, and I do hope that Raoul will be the greatest comfort to you.

I haven't seen Jean for simply ages, three dates fell through and then the doodle bugs have come to make life even more restricted than it was before. I know Streatham has had it badly and hope you are both alright.

When times are more normal and work less exacting, you and Jean and I must meet again.

Mummie joins me in many thoughts of you at this sad time

Yours affectionately
Ginela

Written to Stanthorpe Road so she did not realise Joan had evacuated a few months before.

Letter from Helen Priest in Shetland

Mailland
Baltasound
Lewick
Shetland

19-12-44

My dear Mrs Guise

What am I to say, I am too shocked to say anything. Your husband was such a bright boy so jolly so lovable so delighted when he told me your name. Such a wonderful girl he said. I was looking forward to seeing him here again with you and the darling wee boy. It just seems Mrs Guise as if our father needed him in the home above. O poor you, Mrs Guise, I just can't find words to express my sympathy properly but you will know I'm so awfully sorry for you both, your brother gone and now your dear man. O but life is hard. But then Mrs Guise there is something else, he is safe for evermore, just gone into the next room to wait for you, such a fine lad the world is a poorer place without him. Why does such things have to be we often wonder. No wonder they all liked him, he was always so jolly and if his son grows up like him he will be a very real kindly hearted man. May God bless you both and comfort you.

Were you bombed in London, I wonder. I have so often thought about you there and wondered how you were getting on and Mrs Guise I ask if you will get a pension. I don't like to think of you having to go and work and leave the little love. Please forgive my asking but knowing your husband, (just seemed like a lad of my own when he came running in, my son is 23 you see) I just love his wife and baby too, our son is not married but works this Farm with my husband. I am 55 yrs and my dear man 59 so we are getting on. My dear, good night and write when you can, but I am so sad for you and for us too.

For we have lost a very dear kind friend,
Yours sincerely Helen Priest

Letter from Joan to Mrs Priest in Shetland

My dear Mrs. Priest,

I was so pleased to get your letter, and I'm afraid I have rather delayed in replying, -but..... I have bad news, and I know you will be sorry.....Tony was drowned out in Ceylon on 23rd July. It was a ghastly shock as you can imagine, the more so perhaps as he was not actually in a fighting zone at the time. I only know that he died whilst attempting to rescue another person from the same fate, he was seen from the shore just afterwards lying across his surfing raft and they went out to him immediately and brought him in to the hospital close by but it was too late. They worked on him for hours trying to bring him round, with respiration and oxygen

I have received several letter a from his fellow officers and from the matron of the hospital.. They have all been so kind.

I shall always feel proud that he should die so but he was so young and had so much to look forward to in life, he always brought joy and laughter wherever he went and was liked by everyone. I believe he was very much loved in the Regiment by officers and men alike, and the natives under his command.

I am so thankful to have the boy....he is my one consolation, and he is a very fine lad... very like Tony in many ways. I think Raoul will have his spirit.

I will not write more now, but just to send you the very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year from us both,

Summary of other letters written at the time to Joan

Marion and Bobby Montford - Dibdin aunt and cousin
In Sutton : Adrian was at Monte Christo
Telegram

Lorna Haycraft
2 Brunel Terrace
Derby Road

Notts - Joan's Cousin

Sympathy from Mother Di and Lorna
And they are glad she is with Christine.

John maybe a Perrier cousin of Tony
Class HQ
FX Division H of Scotia Ayr Scotland
7.8 .44

Sympathy and we have to resign ourselves to the will of God.

Widely (Widdy)
Living at 4 Pinfold Rd
2/8/44

Sympathy and may God give Joan peace.
Offers of help.

Dinah
4 Pinfold Rd –
Rather a belated note of sympathy. Dinah is pregnant and remembers that Joan may have some literature about “these things”.
Bombing raid so going to the basement.

Betty and Girls probably Betty Wilson nee Perrier
Stoke Park Nr Market Drayton Shropshire

3/8/44
Telegram and letter
Deepest Sympathy – know that you longed for his return.
“you’re grand and I’ll always say so because you’ve endured what none of us could go through and I know that you will bear this blow just as well . How is baby Raoul?”

Winifred {Colman}
16.1.45 living in Ewell - Dibdin family Friend
Thanks for the Christmas card and sympathy from her and Edward. Look for to seeing Joan when the V bombs stop.

Gladys
61 The Chase Edgware
21/8/44
We were all shocked and sorry not to write before but needed to get Joan’s address from Mater. Remember Joan in their prayers and hope that sweet little son will give you comfort

Thelma

Thistle Cottage Symington Ayrshire

16/8/44

Shocked to hear of husband's death and her and her sister feel deeply for Joan

Chris Redford

77 Grosvenor Ave Carshalton Dibdin family friend

August 28th 1944

Heard about Tony from Gertie. Sympathy and hope the news is false. She has just been to Weymouth and glad that the family is away from the bombing.

Ella Rowe

106 Grosvenor Ave Carshalton

Aug 15th 1944

Dibdin family friend

Saw death in Telegraph. Sends sympathy.

"It seems only a short time ago I saw and spoke to him, at dear Peter's funeral. It is so dreadful, all these young lives gone. May we be worthy of their sacrifices"

Constance Berridge

105 Grovenor Rd Carshalton

Aug 10th 44

"I see in the Telegraph the death of your husband."

Sympathy and God bless and help.

Peggy maybe Rex's housekeeper or more likely Margaret

Wilson or her daughter Margaret Perrier.

8 Highland Avenue Hanwell

Aug 1st 1944

Just heard the news – what dreadful sadness in your life.

Sympathy and for goodness sake don't come back to London yet.

Appendix 9 Letters of condolence to Mater

Letter to Mater from Vera her great-niece

Her mother was one of the 5 girls of Katherine Edith nee Fleuss

Vera was about 21 year old at this time.

Royal Naval Air Station

Easthaven

Scotland

3rd August 1944

Mater Darling

At a time like this letters are often more wearisome than helpful but you've got to know how sorry (oh! such an empty word to express death) terribly sorry I was to hear about Tony when

Mummy wired me today .

Oh! Poppet not all the sympathy and kindness of friends just now will do very much to help you in this grief only you and your faith in God will pull you through. I want right now to be with you holding your noble head up and pressing your hand, cos you need it now and Joe {Joan} will too poor darling.

Don't grieve yourself ill Vera you know Tony wouldn't have it, bless him he's happy and however big a hole it's cut into your heart try to keep yer pecker up because he's all right and he's the one you've always wanted for, not yourself.

Oh! Mater it was an awful shock to get the telegram today, I still don't know any details but I believe in whatever circumstances he went down he would be bearing up and praying to God.

Believe that, it will help you. If he was the only son he didn't died before leaving Raoul to whom you must now turn, poor little mite with such a brave mother. When you have a Mass or Masses said

for Tony please include me, he meant very much to me and I'm heartbroken.

I can't say more at thistime Mater, I know too well how you fell but bear up and help Joe to believe there is still is a God and some meaning in life for Raoul's sake. Of course you will, you can take even this knock however hard it isnow. In time you will understand why the bruise was meant if you can't see sense now.

All for now darling

Keep that chin firm and that head high. He above understands fully

Always in deepest sympathy

Vera.

Letter to Mater from Charles and Toby

5 Appach Rd

SW2 {Brixton}

2-8-44

My Dear Vera

We are so grieved at the news of the loss of your dear boy, that I cannot find words to express our sympathy.

My heart is aching for you, as I know too well what you must feel like.

Try to be brave for the sake of your dear Girls and may his baby son by his sweetness and love bring comfort to you and Johanna who is also in our thoughts.

With deepest sympathy to you all in your great sorrow

With love

Yours sincerely

Charles and Toby.