

My Dear Harry or The Letters of Mary Ann Fisher

Edited by Freda Wright and Pamela Keegan.

With line drawings by Freda Wright.



Mary Ann Fisher, 1898-1902.

- CROPREDY HISTORY - 4
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FORWARD

Mrs Freda Wright wrote to me from Sutton, Surrey, on the 3rd of August 1987. Thus began the long correspondence that led to the printing of her Grandmother's Letters. Having retired from teaching, but still busy as an artist she had begun to gather together the family history. Grandmother Borton came from Cropredy. Some of the family treasures had passed down to Freda's family. These included furniture, china and John Borton's engraved glassware; but most important and interesting were the documents so carefully kept by Harry and Pollie.

One was an Indenture of apprenticeship made in 1838, for William Borton, Freda's Great Grandpa, to begin his apprenticeship as a saddler and harness maker. Another was a will of 1837, made by the saddler's Grandfather, a blacksmith also called William. He left money to his grandsons to pay for their apprenticeships. William Senior was the blacksmith who rebuilt "The Green" in brick. The old stone house which stood nearer the road had been the home of his Father, another blacksmith called William Borton who died in 1825. This first William had bought land and a cottage (later the home of Louis Lambert's in High Street) from William Hemmings of the Rose and Crown.

With the indenture and will were some papers which included a bundle of letters written by Freda's Grandparents. These had been put away safely and passed down to Mary Ann's youngest daughters. First to Minnie who kept up the family history, telling the stories to the next generation, and then to Freda's mother Muriel.

Other items coming from Mary Ann's bottom drawer were nighties, drawers and a crinoline frame. All now lodged at the Sutton library.

Mary Ann's Father, William the saddler, was the eldest of four [see page 23]. His Father John died in 1833 leaving their Mother to bring up the family. William having been apprenticed left home to start with John Amos of Hemel Hempstead. Once qualified as a saddler he moved to Birmingham. Thomas the youngest son became a coachbuilder and left for Warwick. One sister Susannah married Henry Purser who ran a pub in Thomas Street; Birmingham.

While in Birmingham William married Ann Johnson, whose father William was also an Innkeeper. They married on the 29th. of December 1851. At that time they were living in Ellis Street. Only one child survives, Mary Ann, who was born at 24 Ellis Street on the 12th of January 1853. They then disappear from the area.

By searching records at St Catherine's House; Freda was able to locate William and Ann at 164 Lever Street, West Middlesex, for there tragically, four days before Mary Ann's thirteenth birthday, her mother Ann died from typhus, aged only 37. Worse was to follow. Just four months later William, having been run over by a van in Shoreditch, died on the 15th of May 1866 at

St. Bartholomew's Hospital. Mary Ann moved to Aunt Betsy's and then on to the Pursers. Eventually having lost the two aunts she moved to Cropredy to live with Grandma Borton.

Here the young Mary Ann helped with the Inland Revenue officers, one of whom always lodged with the Bortons. Mr Hosey, a former lodger, left his box behind [p. 109]. The most important one was Henry Fisher and unknown to anyone at Cropredy, Mary Ann and Henry were secretly married by licence at St Phillip's church in Birmingham. 'They have as their address the Purser's Inn: Henry was 27 and Mary Ann 23. When Grandma Borton died in 1877 she was buried in the Borton plot, which is situated in the north west section of Cropredy churchyard. The family graves are all near to James Watts Borton, who was drowned while skating on Clattercote pool: after Mary Ann left Cropredy the Fisher's live in Heath Town. Here their second child Amy Marian. (1877) was born to be followed by William Frederick (1879) and Dora (1880). Dora died. 'Then a move to Burton-on-Trent where Alice Laura (1883); Jessie Victoria (1886) and Alec Percy (1886) arrive. Christened at Stapenhill were Minnie Gertrude (1890) and Gilbert Amos (1891). He died The family baptised at Winshill the two youngest Emily Muriel (1893) and Gerald Aubrey Leonard (1895).

Freda wrote asking for details about the cottages she had found mentioned in the wills. Mary Ann had managed to retrieve the property from the treasury by producing her collection of wills and documents, which may be the reason for the survival of the papers. They came into her possession when the Fisher's were living at The Laurels, 101 Scalpcliffe Road, Burton-on Trent As an owner of property Mary Ann wrote a will which was proved at Derby in 1919. In this she left her property to her husband Henry for life, and afterwards the estate, which included Hemming's former property, to Harry and his heirs [he produced none) otherwise the rents and profits to be shared between the surviving siblings. To Jessie, Minnie and Muriel she left the three cottages on the Green, with their rents shared between them: She suggested they keep the smallest cottage [by Smiths the shoemakers], and rent it free and furnish it with items of furniture and linen left to them. It was to be a rest home for them. If the three daughter's marry, then all five daughters to share the same. The estate totalled more than £700.

This idea of leaving the cottage as a holiday retreat for the women of the family, must surely express Mary Ann's love of Cropredy and the need for women to have a life of their own, from time to time. Sadly the idea was not taken up. Mary Ann Fisher nee Borton was buried at Wins hill parish churchyard, in Burton. The gravestone records that she died on the 16th of October 1917 aged 65 years. Henry missed her, but continued to support the family, with daughter Minnie's help. Muriel, who married Fred Martin was to give birth to Freda at the Laurels. When they finally left for other towns, holidays were spent at the Laurels. Henry died on the 11th of March 1936.

A.P. Keegan 1992

INTRODUCTION

MARY ANN BORTON wrote these letters as a young bride during 1876 and 1877, from Cropredy village in Oxfordshire. She was living at "The Green", the house built by her great grandfather William Borton, in about 1813. Mary Ann was orphaned in 1866, at thirteen, and lost all family of her own and young parent's generation around this date, but for one seemingly crusty uncle, Thomas Borton, of Warwick. Her grandmother, Mary Ann Borton senior, had been widowed in 1836, with four young children, William (father of Mary Ann junior), Thomas, Susanna and Betsy. Mary Ann senior gave her granddaughter a home until her own death in 1877, by which time Mary Ann junior with her first baby was ready to move into a home of her own in Wolverhampton with husband Harry Fisher.

The letters are mostly preoccupied with longings and concerns about her husband, a junior tax collector and excise man, who was moved around to various working "rides" by his supervisors. He was thus obliged to live with landladies in the Wolverhampton area He had earlier been billeted on Grandma Borton at 'The Green", with the predictable result that he fell in love with her young grand daughter, in such convenient proximity. But - cruel fate, he was not only moved on, by stony-faced supervisors, but replaced, by hapless Mr. Murray, who incurs understandable resentment from the loving couple.

The railway station at Cropredy is a busy focus for all the comings and goings of Harry Fisher, and all the friends and neighbours in the 1870's. Many of the present families in Cropredy have ancestors mentioned freely in the letters. Mary Ann becomes "Polly" which must have been a popular pet name of the time, as quite a few Pollies get a mention. Her regular sentiments are interspersed with local news, some of it mildly sensational in contrast with the humdrum tone of the account. I like the evocation of a busy summer day, when they are up and about early in the bath house, cleaning up for a grand visitation of friends and relations. A picture of the house and orchard long ago, seems to grow in my mind almost like a "memory".

Mary Ann Fisher made up for her lack of relatives, by going on to have nine surviving children of her own, of whom the youngest daughter became my mother. This grandma died before I was born, but, like my mother, I was born in her comfortable Victorian home in a midland town, where her widower, Grandpa Fisher, with his fine head of white hair and whiskers, lived on, still mourning his fondly remembered Polly.

Original Spellings have been preserved, do not blame the proof reading. Punctuation is amended where really necessary and paragraphs introduced.

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1. My Dear Mr Fisher

[LETTER 1]

Cropredy, Leamington. Feb 9th /76.[1]

My Dear Mr Fisher,

I was truly pleased to hear you arrived home safe, but I am sorry to hear you have such long weary walks, if you have not sold the horse yet would it not be better to ride some of your long journeys. I am not surprised at your having plenty of work to do perhaps it as well for the present.

I was anxious to know if there was anything serious in the Colt letter. I am thankful there is nothing more. I cannot send the copy of your time employed to day but will tomorrow for Mr Skinner as been here most of the time and now they have gone out and taken the beer book with them. I will write again then.

Grandma praises you very much now though she is still very suspicious and to day her questions were so pointed and direct I did not know what answer to make, but hearing someone in the yard, said hark, and it happened to be Bett so she came and began talking. Mrs Smith is in now.

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I came home on Thursday night as I intended. I began to feel dull & lonely but thought I would try hard to do as you wished and not give way to dismal thoughts or useless regrets. I don't think I shall come to Birmingham till I have been to Banbury as I know you think that best, and the time goes very quickly, it scarcely seemed a week ago since you left. If I can, I shall perhaps go to Stowe for a few days first. I do hope you are quite well and pray don't knock yourself up. As for me I am quite well but there is no change, nothing to confirm the half formed hope you named at Warwick. I fear there can be nothing else but I must not begin on this miserable subject. Do let us hope it may not be all so bad even if the worst come. I have lots of news. W. Adkins is getting on nicely with the thatching only for the bad weather I think he would have finished tomorrow. Grandma's Birthday was yesterday. We drank your health on yours, believe me you are not forgotten. Grandma tells me Mrs Barrett called on her that day after we left she had been to R Smith but said she had not been sweethearting. Frank White married Miss Falkener about a fortnight ago. She had gone away you can perhaps guess why. And his Mother & sisters were very much against it but Squire Chamberlain his Sister's husband came and talked to him till he went off to marry her. His

other sister was keeping his house, went home, so his neice came the while. W. Kinman as got to much beer again, but you must please excuse more till tomorrow. Grandma send her love. And with best love believe me.

Yours as ever Mary Ann

I am in such a hurry for I did not think it was so late so till tomorrow with kind love goodbye.

[1. The content of the letter dated February 9th indicates that it must have preceded the letter dated Feb. 7th. These two letters only have been transposed, and while we leave the dates as written, the letter of February 9th is presented as letter no. 1. The second letter was written after Henry and Mary Ann were married at St Phillips Church Birmingham. This took place on the 27th of February 1876. In which case Mary Ann mistakenly wrote Feb. 7th 67, instead of March 7th 76.]



2. **The Green, Croppedy 1876.**

Borton's House on the right.

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2. If I Can Have You Here

[LETTER 2]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
[March] Feb/7th/67 [76].

My Dear Henry

I never was so near being to late for Poste, for Bessie Catch had the letters in the bag. And the string round in, only not sealed so I was just in time. I quite intended writeing in a day or two, only when I came in Bett was hear saying how ill she had been and I had never been to see her and she was not able to go and pay the Club and it was quarter night so I went to pay for Uncle Thomas and Bett's son. Their sat at the table Mr W. Anker, W. Pratt and T. Amos. So after I was gone Mr. Anker said to Amos Who was that? so Amos said, several times. So W Anker said he would bet him it was not M.A. Borton that brought the money. Amos was certain Anker offered to bet a (sober [c.o]) pound, however they settled it at glasses while Amos came here to enquire. He came in and called me to come out, he had a question to ask. Grandma spoke up. You want to know if she is married. He said that was not it, but when I went outside said that was about it and told me about it, trying to explain so that I should not get offended. At first I laughed and thought I was going to get out of it that way. As I was comeing in he said Have I won? you have not told me, I said I considered it most unfair, to think of makeing bets about me for me to decide. I was sorry he had made the bet, and wished him Good night. As he was not satisfied I laughed and said I would settle their bet that night week, in tending in my own mind to write and ask what I had best do, but what do you think dear? He was here this morning and said he could not sleep. Of course I tried to take no notice but Grandma could not stand it any longer. She said It's right, you have lost (For he said their bets stood over till next Monday night). Then dear he would not believe it, so turned to me, was it true? I said yes for what else could I say then. I am sorry I could not let you know first, but perhaps dear its as well, though its vexing but I should have thought W. Anker, so proud as he seems, the last to make bets in a Public house. I hope my dear you wont be angry or think I acted wrongly in the mater. I suppose the news will soon spread now, but they would have to know sooner or later. Mr Murray I am sure must be suspicious but I fancy he is a person who would not hint anything of that sort, perhaps it would be best to tell him but dear you know best about that so for the present I will say no more about it I think.



3. The Brasenose Inn, 1876.

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I was about to tell you about John [1]. I thought him so different so quiet. Pollie W. came down on Sunday and I was going a little way back with her in the evening. I told John I would go to the station and see him off, but it came on to rain so fast we both turned for the station, Pollie and I, by and bye John, Mr Murray & T Amos came at parting. John shook hands and kissed me so quietly And it was something unusual. Grandma and I both thought him changed for the better.

Yesterday, the morning part I was busy sorting some of my things over (I find written in an Old Prayer Book my Father & Mother were married Dec. 29th 1851) it seems singular so near the end of the year. And I was born Jan 7 on a Thursday morning, how often have I remarked Thursday not dreaming I was born on that day.

Well my Dear I thought at first last night I would try and be more careful about spelling, but Grandma as been washing. I have hung; the cloths out and it as been such a windy day I feel rather to tired to mind, so I am not trying. I hope you will forgive me for saying so.

I told Pollie I would have the machine she had by her. It is exatly the same as her own and Mrs Ankers £4..4 the price her Brother got it cost price for £3..lOd. I have it the same.

I shall be busy ironing tomorrow, so you see dear I can find plenty to do, so I do not grow dull or miserable, only sometimes rather lonely when I think. Then again dear I banish the thought with how much I have to be thankfull for. I hope and trust My dear, you will not have many temptations come in your way, or foolish jokes to vex and annoy you for the presant. Dear I must conclude with Kind love from Grandma & me, ever your loveing wife Mary Ann.

[1. John Purser, see Appendices & Who's Who for personal details.]

[LETTER 3]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
March 13 /76

My Dear Henry

I was very pleased indeed to hear from you, but I am so sorry to hear you have so much hard work. I am afraid my dear I gave you to understand wrongly about how the news first spread; for really T. Amos is in no blame at all because he knew nothing, it was W Anker that was so knowing and how he gained his information I was at first puzzled to know. And the only thing that annoyed me was his bringing it up in a Public house and before all the Club members. I believe every-one about Cropredy knows now, but I have heard nothing said either to vex or annoy me since. Of course, from all those that have mentioned it to me, we have had their best wishes.

But Mr Murray does not know yet that I am aware of, nor Mr L. (Lyon?). That is easily accounted for. A man brought his horse last Tuesday night and has been staying with him ever since. He has got new harness and a small trap. It will take 4 though. Grandma enquired how much he gave for it. He said 12 pound, its not a new one. He seems to have a great deal of time to spare and certainly does not overwork himself cleaning his trap. I feel inclined very often to think it a shame he should be here and more so when I know you have so much to do. And then comes a longing to be nearer you. I am afraid though my dear you will think me dissatisfied even now, but know dear, no not for myself. I can wait hopefully. It is more trying, anxious work for you but let us hope it will not be always such trying uphill work for you. Am pleased you have the assistant still with you and now that you have taken him in confidence it will ease your mind to have someone to talk to. I am so glad, and work wont go near so hard. They said you did not look so well when you were here. I began to think you might knock yourself up and be really ill. I believe then I should not be long coming to Birmingham or father, but then I must not write such stuff.

Grandma and I are going on much the same as ever. We have been by ourselves and I like it best, Julia Lambert came in one night. I was quite surprised. T. Amos as called once or twice he can scarcely believe he says we have both tried to mislead him. Bett as not come in at all for several days, no wonder yesterday, for the weather was fearful. I went to church in the morning and where the snow had drifted I could hardly get along, I think our yard was the worst. C Atkins as commenced cleaning it up. All the afternoon I sat reading your book. I several times wondered where you were and how you passed the day. Resting I hope for you sadly

needed it Grandma does not seem at all well today, her breath is fearfully bad, even when she sits still. She often speaks as if it is a relief to her mind to know if she is taken, I have some one to take care of me, as well as the others of her Grand children, but if it is so to her how much more to me for you cannot know my dear what it is [to] realise yourself quite alone in the world. But it was only at times. I never forgot I had a Father in heaven, and though now I am your own, and you my own dear, we need His guidance still. Then dear look the future bravely in the face, as you told me once, there is nothing to fear. With fondest love from me your Affectionate wife

Mary Ann.

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[LETTER 4]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
March 21 /3 /76

My Dear Harry

You say in your last, my letters do not enclose a vast amount of news, and I am afraid this one will fare worse than the others. You thought then dear, I should be greatly disappointed not hearing from you. Yes, I was a little, for I looked out for Smith and he turned up street without coming to our house at all, but again, had far more agreeable surprise yesterday morning, for I never expected to hear from you till today. It seemed so nice to begin the week with such good news, for Oh my dear, what can be better than the prospect of seeing you soon, or the hope of having you back entirely, however distant it may be a[t] present I was soon busy thinking how you might come nearer. I thought of Shutford, as Mr Askham would be leaving soon, but when Mr. Murray came home he said, so Mr. Askm. is appointed to Scotland. A Mr Armstrong, I believe he said, appointed in his place, so my Castles in the air were soon gone.

And now dear what you said about my not going out with Mr. Murray was quite right, just what Grandma and I had said ourselves, so that before I had your letter, I had quite decided never to go again.

And now dear I will tell you how it was, I had so soon come to this conclusion. I told you before he always asked me to go, of course it was very kind, and he likes company, seems he dislikes starting alone. Friday he went out by himself, Saturday, had little Tom Lambert. On Sunday, after he came from Banbury was going to Chipping Warden and back. I went with him. I asked Grandma and she said do as you like, or something of the sort, but before I started I had talked it over with Grandma and though there was no wrong in my going (and I was not away from home a hour) I was as you say, giving other people an

oppertunity to talk, so that even before I went, I had made my mind up it should be the last time. So now my dear if you think I was to blame I hope you will forgive me, for it will not occur again.

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I dont seem to have anything to tell you. And yet a great deal, if you can make that out, but nothing like news. T Amos called in yesterday wanted to know when you were coming. Mark K. comes in sometimes. I have never been at their house, since I came home, for Mr Hazelwood goes and does their work. Sally comes as usual. Bett, she as allmost forsaken us, we seldom see her. We are going to have a new neighbour in that little house of Mrs Monday's. Its Mrs Tasker's Mother. You will remember hearing Tasker speak of her, about her eye being bad. It looks so now that I did not like to look at her, poor Old woman, seems to say she as been treated very bad both by them and the children.

I am afraid my dear I disapointed you a little not writeing yesterday. I was like yourseff not much in the humour for I did not feel well at all. But to day I seem all right again. I am so sorry to think dear you have so much to do, you will be glad when this month is ended. I will write again one day before the weeks out. That is all I can do now I am so far away. Grandma sends her love to you. She as been busy washing though its snowing fast. And now dearest I must conclude, with fond love your affectionate wife, Mary Ann.

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[LETTER 5]

Croprey
Leamington.
March 30 /76.

My Dear Harry

I am afraid you will think instead of behaving better I am grown naughty and neglectful. I am sorry dear if I have dissapointed you in not writeing before. Pollie as been here altering my Brown dress and Grandma making her orange wine, so yesterday when I quite intended writing it was to late before I was aware. So I hope my dear you will pardon such neglect. I was very pleased to hear you arrived safe none the worst for coming I trust, except tired and sleepy and yet so good of you to write. But you did not say how your throat felt of course you could not tell much more about it Well dear the three of us came back together. Pollie an I went to Church. Amy, Jane and Miss P [Peacock] the Bourton schoolmistress had called at our house while we were at the station and gone to church so we all came out and down home. An I went some part of the way to Bourton. So you see dear, having so much company I did not get dull at first, and I felt to happy after to get dull or dismall yet, I missed

you very much dear and wished you here for Mr Murray went as far as I did with him, and then returned with me. He seems to think Amy a nice girl.

On Monday it was dull. I had a headache and sick, but since the weather as brightened and so have I. Pollie being here was someone to talk to, she is here now. I could not help saying to her to day as we were in the garden the sun shon so beautiful, if you were here how nice it would be. It was laziness though I think for I was picturing you out their and myself.

On Monday Mr Murray only went to Little Bourton. I thought it a shame you should have so many miles to walk. Mr Skinner came. He said he could not believe what he heard untill he asked me if it was true. Joked me about remaining at home, said it would be a breach of contract and then if I made it such by not going with you, would be void.

T. Amos came down seemed very quiet and never inquired about you. I said you had not time to call. He said he knew you were here at 5 oclock. Mark K. went to tell them. Pollie said she had been in. Thomas seemed disappointed you did not go up.

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Well dearest now their does not seem much to tell you. I feel happy and contented, your coming as done me good. It seemed so very nice to have you to talk to and I certainly had grown sad, but it was as I told you all gone when you came. And now how about yourself. How is that poor throat of yours. I do hope much better and you will take care and mind you dont take fresh cold. And now my own dear I am going to close abruptly as usual. Someone come. For Mrs Smith as come and talking and really I have nothing to tell you. Grandma send her love, and you know dearest from me accept kindest & best love your affectionate wife,

Mary Ann.

PS. I will write again my dear because I know you will be tired. I am often talking to you to my own mind. Pollie slept here because of the rain, so I slept in the front room with her. It seemed funny that it was not you dear, but you know now dear, we live in hopes And the time passes very quickly, so dearest, cheer up and take care of yourself.

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[LETTER 6]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
[Good Friday] April 14 /76

My Dear Harry

I am pleased you let me know how impossible it will be for you to come. I did not get your letter till after dinner to day, because the train run the same as on Sunday. John & Annie came at 12 oclock. Hannah was comeing but Mary is ill. I did not expect them being such a dreadful morning this fearful weather. I am wondering dear if you are oblige to go out. John is going to stop till Sunday. Annie will stay a week. Almost her first enquire was to know if you were comeing She hoped to see you before she went back. Yes and her letter sent her love to you. She as been makeing me laugh, she says she is getting so wonderful well off for Cousins. And telling me she shall call you Mr Fisher before folks but her other cousin they called Harry, and she should call you the same. That is arranged between Betsy and herself. I cannot help being amused. So you see dearest I shall have plenty of company, and no danger of being dull, were Annie is chattering, So you wont be uneasy at all about me, I hope, for I take care of myself pretty well, and I know by your letter you will think me right about not coming to B.[irmingham], and I am happy enough for have I not you my own dear Harry to think about and live in hopes of seeing you safe and sound another week, and that wont be long you know. Grandma cold is better and she can speak a lot better, and as for my cough, it is only just troublesome now and then.

I have nothing to tell you dear, but I knew you would like to hear from me. I dare say during this next week, if their as been anything said at Warwick about us, I shall hear from Annie. She was at Birm. last Tuesday, said Mr Purser seemed very poorly and her Uncle was uneasy about him. She went to see Bessie. Mrs Amos had an accident on Sunday night, slipt down comeing [out] of Church. I never heard till the other evening though it was down at Cropredy. Thomas as only been in twice since you were here. I dont think they were very well pleased you did not go up.

And my dear you must please excuse this and all my very funny letters to you and take care of your own dear self this bitter weather. And come and see me if you can another week, and let me know if you hear from Amstrong, how many more I could think of I dont know, so will conclude. Grandma an Annie send their love but accept most and best love from me. Your affect wife

Mary Ann.

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[LETTER 7]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
April 19 /76

My Dearest Harry

I was very pleased to hear from you this morning, I felt so thankful for your kindness, for I should think you find it difficult to manage writing from home. But I was so dull this morning that even your letter failed to make me cheerful for a while. A sort of miserable fit I suppose but it's gone now, and I had nothing to make me so, that it's hardly worth telling you now.

I am glad you went to the Races. It was a change, though only a toil of a pleasure when you had such long journeys before. For I always think Races tiring enough. You say dear you must reform. That may be true, but I think, like Bessie once said to me, being married is not being buried, ought not to be at least, so enjoy yourself if you can, because if you come back here, there won't be so many old friends.

I had hoped dear, you would have been able to write to Armstrong before, but was glad you said in the end you would send his reply, because then I knew you had decided to write to him without more delay. I think it would have been a pity to go all that way upon an uncertainty.

And now my dear, just a little about how we are getting on, but that the old story, about the same.

Do you know dear I had hoped you would be able to come on Saturday, till without exactly knowing it, I was expecting you, for I thought John and Hannah might come, and when I found they did not, I hoped you would, and it was not till the last train had gone, and the people all come up that I knew how much I had expected you for I was so disappointed. I know dear it was wrong but their, I could not help it, for I was sure dearest you would come if you could. And now, I expect, if you can get away, next Saturday, there will be some of them from Warwick here, and I don't feel to want them. I want you all to myself, the little time you are here.

Geo Golby came in about 8 o'clock Saturday night Yesterday Pollie W. came in and we went to Mollington. Mr Murray said he would go a little way with us, and went all the way, but I won't go so far again for some time unless you are with me, for I was so tired. I did wish you there. You and I will go the same round some day I hope.

Then at night went to church to hear the Bishop of Maritzburg, but really though my eyes were of the Bishop, my thoughts were oftener far away. I thought I would write you but glad I did not.

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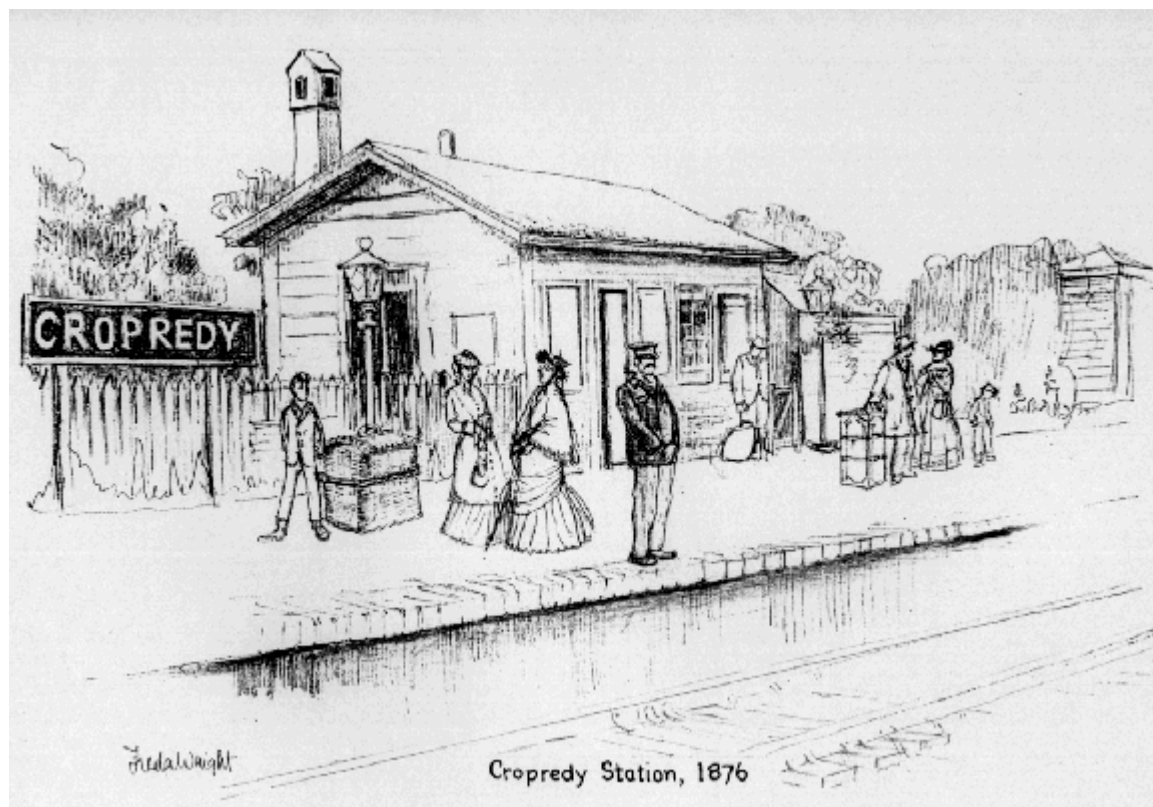
I was going to Banbury today. Mr Murray said I could ride with him, but I thought I would rather not, so I am going tomorrow to Mr Fortescue. If I see that gentleman himself I shall tell him I am married. I think that will be as well. I did think I would call on Dr Griffin, but I shall leave that till I have seen you again. Mr Perry is visiting at Mrs O'Rourke's and is coming here

tomorrow [with] Mr Lyons & so if I help prepare before I go to Banbury, I shall get out of waiting upon them, because I know you would hardly like it more should I.

Grandma as such a cold, she was hoarse yesterday. Today she as lost her voice and can only wisper. I have a cough, but that I have had this week only. I did not send you word thinking it would go away, but Grandma says I shant lose it and nothing will do any good, so to hear me barking about won't surprise you, only it's very unplesant. And you my dear, take care of yourself and don't neglect even slight colds.

And now I must conclude. Grandma sends her love. An accept best love from me, believe me ever your affectionate wife, Mary Ann.

Excuse a funny letter for I am rather behind as usual. I have been busy sewing all day an am not dull or lonly now dear, so don't be uneasy about me. With fond love Your M.



4. Cropredy Station, 1876

[LETTER 8]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
April 20 /76

My Dearest Harry

I hoped to hear from you before, but perhaps dear, you have been waiting expecting to hear from Armstrong. He as come to Shutford for Mr Murray told me he was at the sitting on Tuesday with Mr Askham. He was going away yesterday, but Mrs Askham was to remain. I should have wrote to you yesterday but I thought dear if I did and said anything about expecting to hear from you, it would seem as if I was such a very impatient customer, though of course I feel anxious to hear from you and see you too, and I try to be patient for I know how hard it is for you to spare time. But I know dear you will come if you can, and if anything happens you cannot, you will please try and write dearest just to let me know, for I do feel very anxious for fear dear their should be anything else the matter with yourself.

John went back on Sunday evening and a strong party was at the station,10 in number, for Mr Daniel and Eva came to Kinman's and Mark Hawkins.

I told you what was said about Julia. She had a daughter this morning born dead. They say she is pretty well, considering, Her Mother and father have been greatly upset. But I can tell you anything like this better when I see you. I feel so thankful dear you never walked out with her. Nor is this all I have reason to be thankful for. How much is only know to myself, if I could allways think so when discontented thoughts arise.

I am quite well and Grandma is herself again. Annie is here for the week. She talks of going back on Sunday night.

Uncle wrote from B. he says his Father is very poorly, so that he does not think without a change he will last long. He said he had not seen you. If you should call dear, explain how impossible it as been for you to come, for you know dearest I should not like him to think anything.

Pollie W. as gone to London this week. Her Grandma Mrs Grisold died last week and was buried on Monday.

I don't think dear I have anything to tell you and somehow I don't feel in writeing humour or much else. It's a dull day, but if anything happens you cannot come, try and write dear. I think I shall come to Birmingham then for I so want to see you

again, and when you do come it's only for such a little while. I hope you are quite well dear. Grandma sends her love, and accept fond love from me. Your ever Affectionate

wife, Mary Ann

[LETTER 9]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
April 26 /76

My Dearest Harry

I was very pleased to hear you arrived safe. I hope dear I did not disappoint you much not writeing, but Grandma had been washing and I had a great many journeys up to the orchard because it was so showery, so I was tired, and naughty enough to put you off till to day. I am glad you went to bed ü soon as you could to have a good nights rest. But it's too bad now to say their is anything good in our not being together, and to talk about kicking buckets, but their is no danger for you. In that case it would be me, because you could sleep all day by haveing an assistant to do your work. But of course this is all nonsense, for I am very happy to know dear you are allright, and had not quite so much to do.

Like yourself dear, I had noticed Annie and Murray and had told Grandma before I heard from you. I felt I was right in thinking she was best at home. I don't know what her Father would say. He as such a dislike to Irish.

So my dear you conclude I should fancy the umbrella clean gone. I did not though, for I missed it before I left the station and went and looked in the office to see if you left it when you took tickets. As it was not their, I knew it was safe and would sure to be noticed when Annie took hers, and then I knew you would not forget it. I should not like that umbrella to be lost for it was poor Miss Kinman's. I wondered if I had told you, but don't think I did.

After you had gone, I went home dear, and then to see Julia. As I told you I really felt very sorry for her before, but I begin to fancy the effect on her will not be so lasting, I don't know why I should think so and hope I am wrong.

Tasker had called to see Grandma and was there when I came in. He as promised us some celery plants, so I won't forget. He said he thought how well you was looking.

Pollie W. came back from London on Monday night She brought us a bread trencher and knife because she thought it would be useful.

I wrote to my Uncle Henry today but made no excuse, only that I was wanted more at home than their I thought. But if he is in wants for me to get anything for him, I should not mind comeing, for John was telling me he wanted new shirts, and buying anything new as generally been left for me. For it's what his Father could not do very well.

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I thought my dear I was going to write you a long letter but their does not seem much to say an I am running the time close as usual.

I was talking to Grandma about the ill convience of Mr Murray being here. She seemed to see it at once, but quickly said that would not bring you here in his stead. If it would, it would not take her long to move him. I am sure she is quite as eger to have you back again as I am. I was very glad she could understand what we ment, yet I think she would hesetate, because of the uncertantity of your coming. But never mind my dearest, we will try and be patient and hope. Yet you may be here, or nearer, since I know you wish it as much as myself. It is a comfort to know we are both of one mind, and untited in this and most every thing beside. And like yourself dearest that few short hours together seemed to have been to me a great releif I feel in myself happy and content, it is very nice love to know that being apart makes no differance to us, and only makes the time more precious. No wonder now I dont want to sleep the time away.

And now I must conclude bad spelling bad writeing. With kind love from Grandma, but most and best from me, believe me dear Harry your loveing wife,

Mary Ann

Pollie if you like best.

[LETTER 10]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
April 28th 1876.

My Dearest Harry

I am afraid I have disappointed you again, but I waited to hear what Murray would say. I wanted to know first. I was very pleased to hear from you again so soon dear, though I was almost afraid there was something the matter. An I was not all surprised at Armstrong's reply really dear. It seems to look very difficult altogether. It is quite certain Murray does not wish, or I almost think, intend to exchange for he said when I asked him, if he had looked at Stoney Stratford Ride he did not see that it was so good. There were a lot of licences, and now he was here and settled he did not want to move. I have wondered, if you could have an Irish Ride, would he be willing to exchange. But then dearest its uncertain. If it was were he did not like, he perhaps would not then be willing. I should not like you to risk it. So my dear the only thing at present seems patience and hope. I think it possible he will petition for Ireland where he as been here the twelve months, because the work will be coming on and I believe him extremely lazy. Then dear, as regards Grandma not letting him remain here, again another difficulty occurs. Of course she sees how unpleasant it would be for me, but unless she felt sure you could come, does not seem to fancy not having a lodger. An I can hardly explain the light she takes it in writing, though I can understand it myself. And how she can think of having any one here if I was gone puzzles me. She could not wait on them and look after the house, nor would it be safe for her to be here alone. For Annie to come she would be as bad off as ever. It looks impossible and for you dear to think of paying Grandma the difference she might be out of pocket by not having Murray. It could not last long without very great disadvantage to us and I am sure if it lasted neither of us would feel content for long. Then Grandma thinks if you could not get back you would like to have me away, and she would have no lodger nor nobody else. That about it as near as I can make out.

And now my dearest truly I have made things look perplexing, but in this as in all things else, shall we not remember that there is One Above that rules in all things, and that His ways are not always ours, and so dear with this trust there is no need to be sad or dispare.

I had a letter from my Uncle Henry this morning. he said he had quite expected to see me on Sunday and every day since till I sent Said his Father was much worse. Though I feel very sorry for Uncle I don't know but I am best away. But as I have so

often said, how soon we may see others worse off than ourselves, when our own case looks hard. And I think those two there alone are much worse off than ourselves for I am glad to think you have such a kind man for Super, and the people were you lodge try to make you comfortable. Then dear its nice for you to know that I am safe, and whatever might happen shall be well cared for. For these and many things beside we have reason to feel thankful, and its very nice to me to know whatever difficulties arise if I can't talk them over with you I can write and tell you. Mind dear, Murray's was not a decided answer for he said something about railways comunication. He should like a map of the place or something of the sort Of course if he says anything more about it I will let you know at once dear.

I heard from Annie. She sent a letter, then one of Grandma's little hampers, but that for her own convenience, for this dress of hers to go back in, and I have not had time (to) finish it.

I am quite well dear and I dont think I have any news to tell you. You can fancy how we are going on. I often think and wonder were you are and what you are doing.

Mr Skinner as been here this afternoon. He did not mention your name for he did not see much of me, being Friday I was busy upstairs.

So now dearest I dont think of anything else at present. Will conclude with fond love believe me as ever your affectionate wife Mary Ann.

PS. Mr Murray was saying something about the residence being changed to Warmington. Now dear to make any great sacrifice and just get back, then have to move their, would be very unpleasant, so I think this another reason we must have patience a little longer, though I feel inclined to grumble because things seem all so contrary, when everything looks so favourable, we could have our own way just that one little thing to have you back again allways. Then my own dear Harry you don't know how nice it sounds. But their dear I could scribble away to you regardles of time or anything else, and want to do a great deal. I tryed sitting upstairs in our room to work. Grandma kept calling then. She was in the garden. She seems she can't bear being alone. So now dear with love once more, your loveing wife Pollie.

[LETTER 11]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
May 1st 1876

My Dearest Harry

Before receiving your kind and most welcome letter this morning I quite intended writing to you to inform you about a sort of confidential Chat with Murray last evening, and dear I must try to make it as clear as I can for you (and just on the onset he as come and brought me the letter to read he is going to send to his friend a Mr Simonds, an inspector at Somerset H. London). I said I wondered if Murray would be willing to exchange for an Irish Ride, but I thought the risk to great to venture in case he should not be willing if it was not to his mind. Then dear the thoughts of haveing to go to Ireland of course made it appear anything but tempting. 'Then I thought again, would the Bord allow him to exchange before being here 12 months. This is the point I suppose dear, for I thought I would wait oportunity, and not say anything to soon just after mentioning Stony Stratford, so that was how it was nothing was said till last night. Till then dearest I had not the least idea the same thing or some thing simila had been mentioned by you. Of course dear I was pleased because I felt I was not taking anything on myself I agreed with Murray if exchanged for an Eng. Ride he might regret. I then told if I left home Grandma would be quite unable to have him here as she was too old to wait on anyone (I did not say if I remained it would be the same for it would seem like hinting the cause, which certainly I should not like though he may guess). He said he should be willing to exchange for an Irish Ride any were South of Dublin, and would be willing to oblidge us as far as he could. I told him I thought he would not regret that, for I quite believed he would be for petition away as soon as the 12 months were up, for after a Summers rest he would not fancy winters work, described how dull he would find it with no young man like himself for company and all that sort of thing. So then dear he would write and explain to his friend how matters stood, and know if the board will allow an exchange, Ireland, and he says you being longer in the Ride would soon get appointed to one their. He as writen the letter very stratforward and truthful, so if it does no good will do no harm, thats what I think. So now my dear we must try and not be to hasty in our judgement So now dear you were very kind and so good to write to me yesterday. But oh my dear, do not think your case so very hard. I quite understand what you ment by saying Murray in a manner dified you. I saw it annoyed you at the time, only thought it wisest not to appear to notice, but if he did he was quite wronge. I dont for one moment think anyone of Grandmas lodgers would ever be considered before me, and if I was to determine and wish him to go, does it not seem reasonable she would consider me first, but I dont want to do that, But still the one thing now seem how are we to get together, or nearer. But dear we must not be to hasty. Of course if you have petitioned for Stony Stratford, after a time (and now if it were possible) I should only be to glad to be with you. I heard my Aunt say it was a very pretty place, an how much she should like to live their.

But their my dear, to hear you talk about being so careful, and about ours being a hard case, there does not look anything very terrible to me, for should we not be together, with one and the same object in view, and would it not unite us more closely to each other. Yes dearest, in this case I don't believe there is anything very hard. Only I should be grieved to have you denied anything for me or on my account. Then again dearest I am I believe rather glad you will have nothing from your friends. I have none to give me anything and none expect anything from. And I should feel it very much if you were going to have anything from your home and I could not be the same, so you see I am rather glad than otherwise.

Mrs Smith was talking to me the other night and advising me not to leave home. I don't want, if I can have you here, but without that hope in view home would soon change to me.

Well dear, I am as usual scribbling away at a fearful rate, a most complicated sort of a letter too, but it's just the way everything is in my head, all in a confusion.

I told you Uncle said Mr Purser was very ill. When I wrote to him I told him I would not mind coming a little if the old gentleman was very ill I could serve, mind the bar you know, so if he sends to ask me to come, I may. So I thought I would tell you, though of course I should write to you first in any case. Now dearest, don't get uneasy about me, I am quite well, and try not to be too anxious about coming here, because if anything prevents, it is more disappointing, and then it's unseated about Warmington. If you have petitioned for S.Stratford don't regret. I won't be a burden to you if I can help it. But it's about time I finished for my Chest begins to tire if I don't.

Grandma sends her love and is puzzled what I can find to write about. Accept fond love from me, believe me dear your loving wife Mary Ann.

[LETTER 12]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
May 4 /5 /76

My Dearest Harry

I quite intended writing to you again, for though I scribbled away as fast as I could, I wanted to tell you how pleased I am to hear you wont have quite so much to do. I am glad dear. An I quite believe you was not a very lively guest at your brothers, but Oh my dear you must not get so sad.

I had a letter from Uncle this morning. He did not ask me to come down, but I think of coming. Mr Purser keeps his bed and Uncle says he does not think he will ever leave it again alive.

John & Edward were their on Sunday and Hannah is down their, but is coming away on Sunday, so I thought dear I would come on Saturday or Sunday. I could mind the house if I could not do anything else. It would set Uncle more at liberty. Perhaps my dear you will think I am wrong to think [of] coming, though its not running into any danger that I am aware of. And I think by so doing it is trying to do as we should like others to do by us, and they are badly situated, I am sure. Now dear, I want you please to write a few lines by return of post to know if you approve, or if you had thought of coming. If you did could go back with you on Sunday. If not dear I shall try to come on Saturday by the 4 o clock Train, if its possible, in hopes of seeing you then and perhaps you will think that best, as I know its expensive for you to come this long way: but you will try my dear to write and let me know. I think dear, I can spare the time for a week, then I am in hopes I could see [you] often, and that I would give a great deal to do and not mind the inconvenience of being their so much. And I think I can make up lost time among my sewing. Grandma too as been much better this last few days, so all together I thought there was not so much against it now. You will say all this about nothing, but then dear, if [I] come I shall be able to talk away so fast as I like, an I am in great hopes of seeing you soon, so I dont care to think of news. You must not say I am too bad in saying so dear, and sending so little, and you will please let me know what you think about it. With fondest and best love, your
Affectionate wife

Mary Ann.

[A big gap in May. Was Mary Ann at Purser's in Birmingham?]

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3. Not a Vast Amount of News

[LETTER 13]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
June 2nd 1876

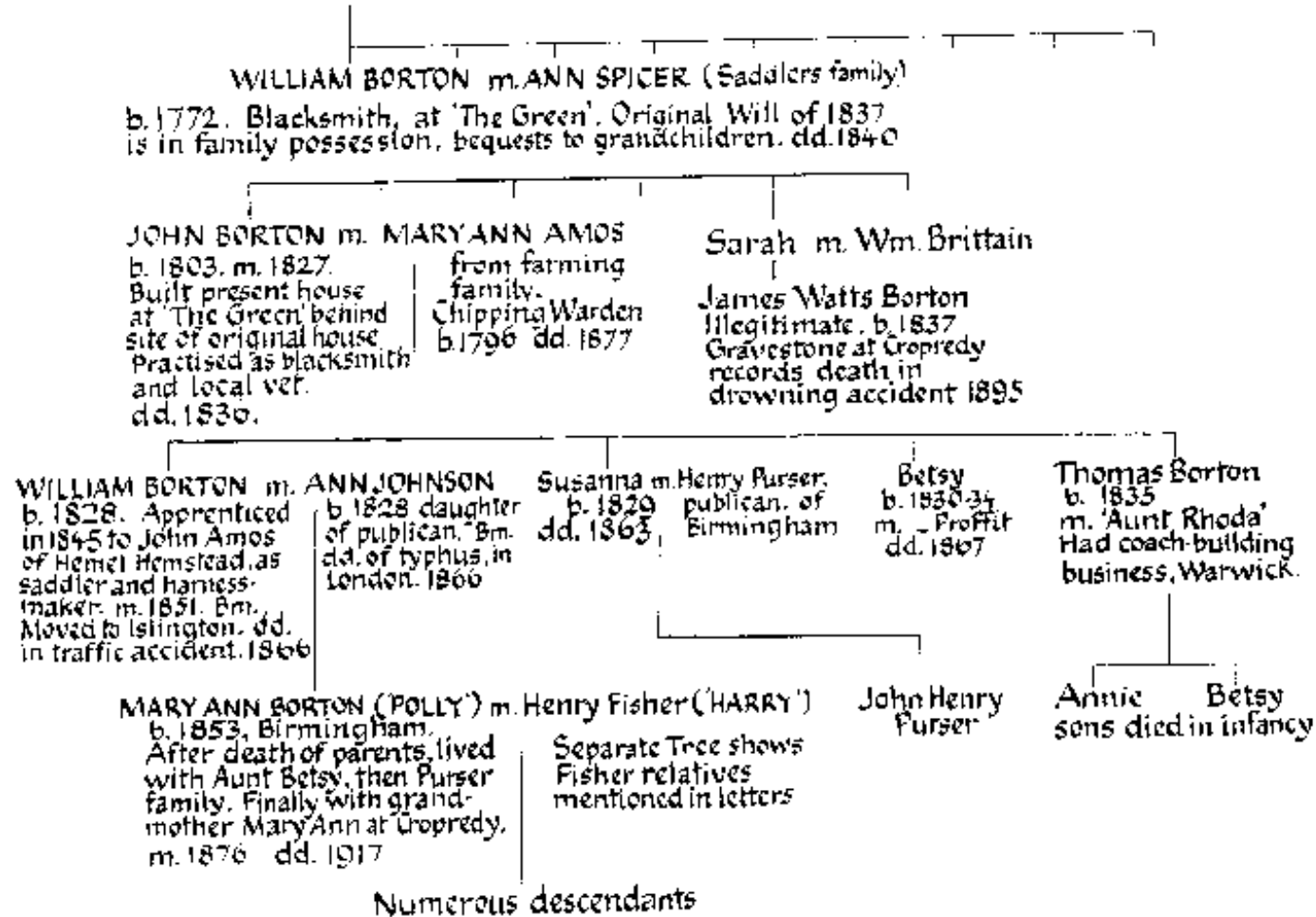
My Dear Harry

I thought I must just send another few lines before it was quite the end of the week. Especially after the dismal style I wrote last. But really dear this seems to me a very tiring week and the prospect seems little better next. I was busy ironing most of the day on Wednesday, and yesterday went to Banbury. How very hot it was. I called on Dr Griffin, as I told you I thought it would be best, then, should anything happen, there would be no trouble, only to send for him, not that there is any reason dear, to think of that sort of thing.

I came home in the same carriage as T. Amos. He seems very well now. Almost the same as ever. To day is Bourton Club you remember last year you and him thought you had caught someone trespassing across the orchard.

There was a note for me from Pollie yesterday when I got back reminding me to be sure a[nd] go this afternoon (and she should be pleased to see Mr Murray as well, he has asked Grandma when I mean going, I suppose he scarcely likes to go himself). She had asked me before to be sure and go. Really I don't want if I could see anyone going & could send and say I would not go, I should be very glad. Of course it's kind of her, but you will think I am running as usual dear, and that was not what I intended. She sent word Joe Barrett was married, had I heard? It was someone they did not approve of, so I was to say nothing till I heard from someone else. Of course there was no more particulars.

FAMILY TREE OF CROPREDY BORTONS IMMEDIATELY RELATED TO AUTHOR OF LETTERS



5. Borton Family Tree

And Joe Steel Gt Bourton who was married last month was taken ill in Church Sunday night and not expected to live.

I had a letter from Mary Canning this morning, to say she was coming tomorrow, an Annie and Betsy were coming on Monday, but if you had thought of coming dear it would make no difference to us. She said Hannah was at Birm. - went on Tuesday, but was coming home tonight.

Mr Skinner was here today. He enquired how you were. Mr Murray say Mr O'Rourke said they should come to C. Club. I hope to goodness they wont for Grandma is not able to wait on them. Her knee is no better. I am sorry she as to be about so much, and I help her all I can till I am as tired as can be.

And now my dear I am beginning to complain again and how are you going on. Tired and weary with walks and weather inclined to say, quite knocked up. You see dear, I partly know. And then you will be expecting returns and no time to spare. Shall you spare time to take a run up and see me first, or think you will come between times? Anyway dearest I know you will act for the best and I am content and shall not complain. I see dear I have filled up the paper and nothing very interesting for am just sitting hear writeing to you because I was thinking about you and felt in no humour for anything, so I thought I could not do better even if I had nothing to say. My cold as gone away. So you see dear I am alright.

I bought some cucumber plants and sewed vegetable marrow seed plants they are coming. I should have bought some celerie plants only could not carry them very well.

Tom Daniel went home last night. Mark was brewing and had taken rather too much. I have never been in for they are such a party in the shop for passing remarks.

One of the Miss Jarvis of Banbury is dead (cousin to Ankers), and Miss Hazelwood of Appletree is dead aged 21.

And now my dear I dont think of anything else I must conclude. Grandma sends her love (and I need hardly say I send my love for that is yours allways). I hope you are quite well dear and take good care of your self among your cricket playing, and accept best love and beleive me ever your Affectionate wife

Mary Ann.

Ps I am to write to Warwick. But you dont know dear, it seems to do me good if I write to you. I seem refreshed, the same as if I were talking and telling you all that was worrying or perplexing.

[LETTER 14]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
June 13/6/ 76

My Dear Harry

I was very pleased to hear from you this morning, that you arrived safe, and in such good time. I was not at all surprised dear, to hear you were rather unfit for work, I always think travelling tires one for the rest of the day. Well dear, when I came home I felt as if I had a lot to tell you, and had a great mind to sit down and write, only I thought it would look so foolish, beside though, I said nothing going to the station, I felt the effect of the long walk and the weather.

T. Amos called just after I came in. I had gone upstairs. He declared I was crying and would believe nothing else till he saw me (but I did not feel the least inclination to cry, I was far too happy and contented and only thinking of what more I had to tell you though its gone now). So he said was I not glad you were gone. I said No indeed! in a fashion so hearty, made them laugh. So we stayed talking till you would be pretty near W.hampton. Then dear, the rest of the day I was busy trying to make up for some of my lost time.

Pollie came in at night She said she had been upbraiding herself all day for going with us and intruding the little time we had together. She should have known better. Well dear, I did not think her company any intrusion at the time, or after. But I could not help thinking after all we had very little to ourselves, or it must be the time seems to go more quickly.

T. Amos called again. I thought it was more like old times. It seems much nicer to be friendly and Grandma never says a word now. Such a difference. Jimie S. came for a treat he was sure not to forget.

Well dear its Tuesday evening, too late for post, but I was busy, and Julia Lambert came in. I had told her before, so I did not try to write, but still I was thinking, yes dear, about how busy you would be for some time now, and only one week leave which you would not care to take while the work of the returns was about, but would it not do you good to come, if only for one week rest after, and the country will look as nice then as now, but there is plenty of time to think of that Well dear, I left off writing, thinking I would finish today, Wednesday, and now it will be in a hurried style.

Mrs Smith as sent Sarah Ward over for me to go over to tea, because she is going to Coventry on Saturday. Mrs Ward coming to W.hampton on Saturday, Mrs Smith is very poorly. She said you never go in to see them when you come to Cropredy, though you was out all Sunday morning.

I am quite well dear, and just now, I dont seem to have any thing to tell you. I was going to tell you about what I had since thought of your brother's letter. I think dear, on the whole, it was very kind of him, and I hope you will find time to answer it, and not offhanded, but you my dearest know best and are kindest. I thought so when you wrote to me on Saturday, if I said nothing. I will write again dear before the end of the week, but they are waiting for me to go to Smiths so you will I hope excuse me saying more. Grandma sends love an accept kindest love from me, believe me ever your Affectionate

wife Mary Ann.

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[LETTER 15]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
June 23 /6 /76

My Dearest Harry I must just write a few lines to you as its is near the end of the week, and it comes natural to write if their is nothing in particular to tell, only to let you know how we are going on. I have been busy and the time as gone very quickly, and yourself dear I know you have been busy enough. I should very much like to have been able to help you stamp and fold papers. Really dear it does not seem two years ago since I helped you with that business. I can form an idea how you are going on though from Mr Murry. He had some returned this morning, Its a pity after all the trouble you were at last year, you cannot benefit by it this. But their dear its no use talking regretfully. I am afraid if I do you will fancy I am continually thinking so, so we will change the subject as they say.

I had some celeary plants yesterday. Jem Sumner as set them today, now I thought they would take root so nice after the rain. The trench was dug before. Such a trench and such a style of planting you never saw. Of course I dont know much about it but I do know its very differant to the way you sit them, or any other I have seen. I should like to pull them up myself only I suppose it would not be adviseable.

Well dear I am quite well and Grandma is about as usual. The hot weather as been allmost to much for her. I have not been out much, round the orchard and over to Smiths will I suppose be about my furthers journey for some time. My feet swelled, little enough to make wearing my boots unplesant, then dear I get such a figher its as well to say nothing, but theirs no telling

what I shall be like after a bit, dont laugh, and picture me anything extra. I am all right dear. I only hope you are going on well. I did not expect to hear from you dear, because I knew quite well you had plenty of writing. But really I don't seem to have any thing to tell you because we are all about the same.

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Sally comes shouting with water as usual. Bett calls. Mark as looked in once or twice. William is getting a little over his drinking. John, their man, as been to ride Mr Murray's horse, the same as he did yours, in the winter, so you will understand how it is a little that I have no news, though doubtless if I had you here I could talk fast enough I think. I have managed to spell one word right at last though their was as little inclination to have Gbh. Oh theres no telling I may get better. But there dear I am scribling nonsense an all manners and nothing interesting so I will say no more till next time. With fond love, believe me dear your loveing wife, Mary Ann.

I have been good and never once got in dull moods all the week. You know dear I would not make you uneasy if I can help it. I dont want to be a trouble allways, so with best love as ever yours M.A.

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[LETTER 16]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
July 6 /7 /76

My Dearest Harry

I thought I must write a line to you though their is nothing in particular to say, for we are going on about as usual.

I was very near going out for a drive with Mr Murray on Tuesday, but thought myself best at home. Also he had Bessie Catch and Miss Ward instead. Then Grandma declared she had intended going herself. Yesterday they came in to Tea, so dear, if I intended writeing to you their was no chance, Mrs Smith & Bessie, Mrs Ward & Sarah. The two last are going back to London tomorrow.

A very sad accident happened last night John Elkington, him who kept the Dirt House of Little Bourton was thrown from his horse and killed at the top of Gt Bourton. He was speaking to Frank White just before. Thomas White was killed very near the place, a brother of F. W.

Kinmans are getting on very strange again, William in his miserable fits and Mark muddled with beer.

Well my dear, I hope you will be able to call on Uncle for he as got some lemonds for Grandma if you will please bring them up. I told him when he was here I would let you know. He says they are all well at Warwick except Aunt, and he thinks, without a change she wont last long.

When Mary Canning wrote she wanted me to arrange to meet you their the next time you came. I said nothing about it before dear, for one thing, I forgot, and another, I thought neither of us care for it now. I have nothing to say dear, a wonder too for me, but then their is only one evening after this before I hope to see you, and the time as seemed rather long. Dont imagin dear I complain for I know it cant be helped. I am quite well dear, and not the least dull. Grandma is much better. I trust dear you are quite well and please pardon such a short and uninteresting letter, for somehow I am as you say, not in writeing humour, so with fond love, believe me, Your Affectionate

wife Mary Ann.

PS Mr Murray as just started to Wroxton and other new Parishes to deliver pay tickets. He wanted me to go, and as I would not, the others were gone to Banbury, he as waited till now for Kinman's chap, so now good bye with fond love till I see you.

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[LETTER 17]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
July 17 /7 176

My Dearest Harry

I was pleased to hear from you this morning, and glad to know the hot weather as not been quite to much for you. Grandma an I were pitying you on Saturday if you had far to walk. Well dear we got along pretty well considering for Grandma was up about 5 o'clock in the morning, so we swilled the kitchen out before 7, then had breakfast. John and Hannah came by the 3 train. They were going back last night, but just as they were starting it comenced to rain, an as it looked so threatening we expected a heavy storm (which it seems visited down your way, we saw or heard but little of it) they stoped till this morning. They both look well. Hannah better than ever I saw her and quite a swell, so dear, instead of looking after that last train with regret, I was with them busy in the front gathering strawberries. Jem came over. We were up till nearly 12 o'clock. I wished dear in my own mind you were here yesterday. Jem came over and we all sat in the orchard on the grass, to see if [we] could

get cool under the trees. I thought it spending Sunday in a very unsunday like fashion. I suppose when you are here I think it excuseable. They wanted me to go for a walk in the evening (so for me & Jem. H. & John. Pollie ü Mr Murray). I would not, so Hannah would stay with me. Why, I could not have got my boots on, were it ever so with the heat and being on my feet, but you see dear I had plenty of company.

Mrs Daniels as another daughter. I was surprised to hear about your brother's wife. Oh dear how dreadful it must be for her to keep her bed, with two children, this hot weather. I feel quite sorry for her.

John Hemmings, I dont expect you knew him, the man who pulled Dr Duglas out of the moat (you will remember), hung himself on Thursday night. An inquest was held at the Lion on Saturday, they found he had been in an unsound state of mind, so returned a verdict according.

Kinmans seem better again. Well dear like you I dont seem to have any news to tell you. Jem as just gone out with Mr Murray after returns. I feel so sorry for you dear to think the long journeys you will have to walk. I fear it will be allmost to much if this weather continues this morning. So you think dear I am best away because it is so hot, and its true enough, you have none to much room for yourself. But Oh you are naught when you wish for me instead of getting up and thinking of something else. I shook my head and smiled this morning at that part of the letter, and you must try not indulge in wishing for me in that respect, or I shall fear for you the temptation will come stronger, but their dear, I am worse than you writeing all this nonsense.

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Wel1 dear I dare say I shall think of something else to write again now I know you will be so busy. I dont know if my Aunt Roda will come up. They said she had talked about it. I did not write. Hannah told Grandma about my Uncle Henry's sister takeing a great parcel away, as high as the table, so Grandma says that was all she came to Birmingham for, Aunt's cloths. It dont please her at all, but is rubish to write to you only I suppose its what I have heard most talked of.

I am quite well dear and hope you are the same. I dont think of anything more just now, but will write again so now with fondest love, believe me ever your loving wife

Mary Ann.

[LETTER 18]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
July 20 /76

My Dearest Harry

I quite intended writeing a few lines, and now dear I must scribe away as fast as I can for the time as gone on so fast, but then dear, their is no important news to tell you. And a most funny way of commencing" a style of my own, what say you?

Well dear I know you must have been busy enough hunting returns I suppose. Mr Murray is a[t] the same business, but his come in well. I tell him that is the advantage of haveing them looked up well last year. He as sent some Post Cards out to remind some of them all to save work you will say, but I dont fancy it at all a bad idea. I hope you get on well dear. I wonder how you stand the heat and all the tiresome people. I have not forgotten how they plagued you last year, and how tired & vexed you were when you first made acquaintance with the Duchess. James Borton says he called their and inquired about her illness, he said he could scarcely believe. He is about, and talks of going soon just as before.

Do you know dear, last week seemed to go so quickly, or I was lazy. The end of the week came, I seemed to have done nothing, and really this seems much the same. We were surprised last night, Fred Simmonds and his wife came. Of course dear as you have seen them, their need be no more said. They both look well and before they left the house Pruey Young & Fanny Lambert came. She is W. Young's sister, you dont know her, she is something after Mrs Roland's style really. I wished the people some were else now. I dont care to see them [when] they come.

Grandma is fretting and trying to do more than she is able. But to be sure their seems a lot wants doing out of doors all at the same time, and we are two such duffers, & I was busy digging some potatoes this morning, my first attempt, well it was a very poor one. I soon found I must give in. Then gathering fruit, currants, gooseberrie all want getting the same time. My feet won't let me stop at that long. I was telling Grandma I should want her to preserve more because perhaps I should want some considering for myself you see.

We heard from Uncle Henry this morning. He complains trade still dull and he as seen no one yet that as come to the Show. Thomas Amos talks of coming on Sunday night to go to the Show on Monday.

And now my dear, I must not expect to see you I know, and if you go home on Sunday there will be no time to write to me. But if you can spare time before dear, I know you will, and if not dear I won't be disappointed this time, because if your Brothers are all there, I know your time will be all taken up. I do hope dear you will enjoy yourself with the rest and nothing unpleasant will occur (with regard to our marriage I mean). Fred Simmonds was similar. He was ordered away on Friday and married on Monday, so they had no cake or anything. He said they meant to keep it at Xmas.

Now dear, I must close. I am quite well, so don't be uneasy, and if you are with them on Monday, cheer up my Harry. We shall get on in the end please God.

[No ending. Was the following detached slip the end? Or part of 20th Oct 1876?]

Things won't look always dark & difficult with fond love in great haste, believe me your loving

wife Mary Ann.

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[LETTER 19]

Cropredy, Leamington.
July 21 /76

My Dear Harry

I was very pleased indeed to hear from you this morning. We seem very much in the same way of thinking about your not having time to write. And now dear I have nothing to tell you only I thought you would not be able to hear from me before Tuesday, then I suppose you will be very busy. I have no doubt about your being sick and tired of acreage. I was thinking just the same thing myself rather strange too. You see dear I understand it pretty well, yes dear, and I can fancy what an exciting game it would be when you seemed so near winning. But you should not say about your usual luck, but I suppose you felt vexed and annoyed at the time. Of course it's vexing, but never mind dear. I was going to say I would not mind trying again, because I thought it made you out of temper and out of pocket too. I was very near telling Grandma, but thought it best not. Well dear I really don't seem to have any news. We are going on about the old style. Being Friday I have been putting straight upstairs, and tomorrow must go through the usual business of swilling out very little of that though, for water is scarce. Charles A. waters the cellar. I have had no more planted at present. Taskers a nice one to promise to bring plants and never come near. His wife as a son. Our Peas & Beans don't grow near as we expected for want of rain. Every where is so dry and neither Grandma or me can water them.

Jem Borton goes about with Mr Murray. They were up at the Pool yesterday bathing. They have easy times dear I think, to what you have. I am so sorry to think you have to walk so far in the heat, an I shall say just the same in the winter when bad weather comes. I should like to think of your coming back here again. Sometimes I fancy Mr Murray's tired. He will say to any thing among the work if I am here or who so ever is here about things as if it were uncertain (of course it is), but I take [it] he as hardly settled his mind to stop, but it is as we say dear. In any case we will try and make the best of it.

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I have come to about the same point in my letter I did last night only I was in such a hurry. I was thinking dear, if you went home on Sunday and you were all their, you would perhaps begin drawing comparison in your own mind, and think your case hardest (I am glad you will go, an after I shall want you to come and tell me all about). I want you dear, if such things come into your head, not to think in that way at all, but to make up your mind by Gods help (for let us try and remember without his help our efforts are in vain), you will persever, and in course of time dear I hope we shall be as well off in our way as the rest. Of course dear it wants patience, but you know I fancy when we are together, we shall soon get on and it wont seem one half so difficult or disheartening. But now dear I must draw to a close, for generally I want to scribe a lot just at the end. I am quite well dear an I hope you will enjoy yourself. I am sorry my poor Harry you should have so much to do and so much to try you. But never mind dear if you are well it will soon be over. Then come and see me and have a rest from figers an acreage. With fond love as ever believe me

your loveing wife Mary Ann.

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4. Now Harry's Mother Knows

[LETTER 20]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
July 27 /76

My Dearest Harry

I was very pleased to hear from you this morning. I daresay you are tired of those returns. I was glad to hear you say you would finish them this week, though I am afraid dear you will find it difficult They seem such endless business. But Oh I am glad you mean to have a rest after, for I was rather disapointed you could not come on Saturday. It seems a long time from one month to another. However I know it cant be helped, an if you come and stay, I would sooner have patience and wait a little longer.

I am afraid dear, to tell the truth, I am not as well as I would wish to be, though a lot better now and more myself again. Yesterday I did not seem very well all day, and in the evening, seemed worse. Grandma was uneasy so I sent for Pollie. She came and slept with me. It was better to have company, and someone younger in case I was ill in the night. I knew Grandma would be so upset. Beside, I felt rather dull and low spirited. I so wished dear, you were near. Well dear, I could not sleep, try which way I would. I was hot and faint and restless, so I got up and sat by the window till a little after three. Then Pollie awoke and we talked till 5, then had a dose. But I heard Grandma get up then I could have slept. Of course it made me seem heavy and I did not feel well all morning but I am as I tell you, better a great deal so you must not be uneasy my dear about me, and I should think I shall sleep tonight well, and then I shall be all right again. For I really did not think I need be anxious for another 5 or 6 weeks, but I suppose dear theirs no telling.

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I know you will feel better satisfied that Pollie will come. She will stop again tonight. She is at work at Amoses, and next week is coming to work at Cropredy. I seem to have more confidence when I have company, but I will write a few lines again tomorrow just to say how I am getting on dear. But their my dear, I had a great mind not to have said a word, because it seem as if I were makeing a fuss about nothing and we know the weather is trying. My feet an all are better to day, so dont get anxious dear.

I sent you word about Grandma going out with Mr Murray. She came home all right and quite enjoyed the out; making such wonders at the changes which have taken place.

I am so glad dear your own people all know, especily as you say it is a releif to your mind, which I can feel sure it must be. So now dearest you can go home without that wreched feeling of deception. I was sorry it should hurt your poor Mothers feeling I hope dear we shall never give her reason to say tha[t] again. But their dear, the least I say now perhaps, the better. We can talk all that over when you come. Thats better than writeing dear. I am glad to hear you enjoyed yourself both days, only I suppose it as threw behind with those bothering returns. Mr Murray means to try and finish his. Well my dear, I suppose I must close. I have no news. Grandma seems poorly, sends her love. Jem is here, comes over as usual. And now dear, accept fond love from me believe me, as ever, your loveing wife Mary Ann.

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[To Henry's Mother, Mrs Elizabeth Fisher at Dudley's. "The wedding" referred to, must be that of Henry's younger sister, Alice, to David Jones.]

[LETTER 21]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
July 28 /76

My Dear Mama

I was so pleased at receiving the cake this morning. Many thanks for it. I hope you will not regret on my account you were unable to invite me to the wedding. I should not like to have come. I hope in time to know you all. I am very pleased you know of our marriage, and very sorry indeed the truth should have been kept secret so long. It as been hard for Henry to deceive you, and as made him seem strange an unhappy when he as come home. He as often been on the point of telling you all, but after leading you to beleive the opposite it was difficult to own the reverse.

I hope dear Mama you will forgive us both for haveing deceived you so long. I trust we shall never again give you cause to complain or hurt your feelings by any deception.

At present Henry is to unsettled to think of providing a home of our own, for on going to Wolverhampton first, he wished exchange with his sucesor, but he was not willing so now if Mr Murray should petition for Ireland Henry as petitioned to return to Cropredy. So now we have to wait patiently the result.

Grandmas Kind regards to you and Miss Fisher. Accept Kind love from me to you both, I remain your Affectionate
daughter Mary Ann.

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[LETTER 22]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
July 28 /76

My Dearest Harry

I am afraid my letter would make you very uneasy, but I was right dear, a good nights rest as done wonders. Its a pity I sent you word anything about it, but then I did not know if I might get better or worse, so perhaps it was best. It is much cooler to day and I am so much better, in fact I may say allright again. My app[et]ite is good. I can eat and drink as usual. Spirits an all are good dear, so their is no need to feel anxious I hope, yet.

I was surprised this morning A little box came by post with some cake and the letter from your Mother. I will enclose it an a copy of the answer I sent. I am afraid dear, you will think it a queer one, but I am a sad duffer you know at writeing letters. I can scribble away to you, but thats a differant thing. I think it is so very kind of your Mother to write, though only a few lines. It is like your sisters letter, no scolding or any thing though we deserve it. But I am glad dear if you can go home with out that secret on your mind.

Some how my dear I dont seem to have much to say or else I am not in writeing humour. Grandma as been very poorly all day. Mr Skinner as been here to day, so I had given Mr Murray a bit of the cake. He was going to save it to dream on, so of course Mr Skinner wanted to know. He said he never had any cake when we were married and he thought it very unkind not to remember him.

I hope my dear you are getting on among the returns. Mr Murray is disheartened with is, but he sits down not time much at them. I dont see as he gives himself much trouble.

I hope I shall keep as well as I am now and not cause you extra anxiety at presant. Then dear you will come and stop a few days I hope. I am not the least impatient dear, but still I look forward as if I allmost reconed of the time. Their is no news to tell you that I can think of. Grandma sends her love, and accept fond love from me, beleive me as ever your

loveing wife Mary Ann.

I have been quietly at work doing something or other all day so I feel rather tired. Perhaps that is why I can think of no more to say, only send love once more.

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[LETTER 23]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
July 31 /76

My Dearest Harry

I was very pleased indeed to hear from you this morning. I was anxiously on the look out for Smith. The tiresome old fellow goes bothering home for so long. It is good of you dear, not to disapoint me. I was not surprised you had both my letters together. I will explain how that is when you come. An again my dear, another thing, I quite expected you would feel inclined to scold about my writeing Mama. Perhaps you thought it distant like, but it was just as easy to me as Grandma. But, my Mother, I could not that day without thinking of My Own Mother and it brought sad recolections to mind, and I was to dull to think that day. Perhaps dear you will understand, and as for what my letter was like, I dont exatly know. It was a curious affair jumping from one thing to another. I thought that was my reason for sending a copy to you. And really dear I do wish I did not make so many erros, it does look bad I know. I am afraid dear I shall be a lot of trouble to you in correcting me. But you know they say it is never to late to mend.

I am quite well again now dear an I hope I shall keep so, for today, quite unexpected, Aunt and Betsy have come, and Mr Murray is expecting Mr Lyns to morrow. An a friend of his wrote to say he was coming in a fortnight, from Ireland. That would be next week. Grandma is still very poorly. An Aunt as come for her health. I wont let it worry me though if [I] get on well this week, I am in hopes you will be able to come, another. An it seems such a help to have that to look forward to.

Am writing in a strange style I fancy, and so I think my letter on Friday must have been for I was so tired, only I felt you be anxious to know how I was. I am very glad to know you are getting on so well with the returns. It must be weary work dear. I am glad to think you have made up your mind for a rest. My Aunt and Betsy being here I dont seem to think of anything to say. I was in hopes she could not come though it is wrong to be so selfish, for she wont stop long, I will write again dear soon, so please excuse anything more at presant. With kind love from Grandma, and fondest love from me, ever your Affectionate wife,

Mary Anne

PS Dont think dear I have forgotten or am ungrateful for your sisters presant because I have not mentioned it, for beleive me, I value her kindness more than I could write.

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[LETTER 24]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
Aug 3rd /76

My Dear Harry

I quite intended writing before, but as their was nothing particular to tell you I thought I would wait and hear which day Aunt thought of going back, and now I am none the wiser. I believe she intended going to morrow, but wether she will now I cannot say for Annie sent her word this morning she could manage very well if she liked to stay till Monday. I dont fancy she will stop but she talked of leaveing Betsy. I really do not want her left behind, for one can hardly speak or stir without them close to your heels. And then talks of sending Annie after she gets back. I grumble to Grandma, for really I do think it annoying to think just now. I thought at first my dear as long as their was uncertainty about them being here you would not care to come, but, oh dear, I could not bear the thought of it. I do hope you will be able to come.

Grandma thinks it nonsense of me to write to you if you are coming. She does not know dear how nice it is [to] have you to write to, for its little enough I can see of you, and it does seem a shame if we cant have that little time to ourselves. Well dear, I must say no more about it for it only makes me dull and I don't know yet if they stay or know.

Tasker as brought some Celery plants to day. Their came a lot of rain in the night and he said it was no used to pull while the ground was so dry. Jem Borton talked he could dig a trench and put them in, but I dont know what to say to it for its not comenced, but if he dont why, I can put the roots in the ground for to morrow, and perhaps you will be able to plant them your self. Charles as watered the others, they look well.

And now dear, I dont seem to have anything like news to tell you. I am quite well, trusting you are the same. I have felt thankful it as not been so hot this week. I hope dear, these plaguing returns are finished as you expected, and that you will be able to come. I should feel very disapointed if you could not. Excuse me saying more dear this time. With fondest love, believe me, your ever loveing wife Polly.

[LETTER 25]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
Aug 8th /76

My Dear Harry

I was very pleased to hear you arrived safe, though I am afraid you must have been very tired and not much fit for business. Aunt went away by the 1 o'clock Train and left Betsy behind for Annie to come and take home. Grandma told her she would not have them both, an if Annie was to come she was to take Betsy with her. I expect Aunt did not like to hear Grandmas talk, an I believe it seemed a relief to Grandma when she was gone, an I am sure it was to me, though I dont understand my reason for it.

Mr Murray and Jem went to Wroxton. It apears they met Mr Loyns and all went together. Grandma an I were both tired, the day was so hot. So about Ten Oclock I thought I would close the windows and put Betsy to bed (to waken myself up, for I dont know how you were dear, I was awful sleepy). Grandma fastens the door and comes up to go to bed and getting quite cross when they come. Mr Loyns drove them home and brought a Mr Baker with him. They had some supper pretty well clearing up the beef, makeing it near 12 oclock before I got to bed. You may be sure I was not long going to sleep I am all right today only in a lazy fit.

I am so glad dear you came. I feel so well satisfied and contented. But dear I hope next time to see you looking a great deal better, for they are all remarking how thin an all you look.

Mr Skinner was here to day and Murray drove him to Warden and home in that dirty Trap. I fancied seeing you start like that in fine weather too. And so my dear you have thought about our possition and, I suppose, wondered how it could be improved But my dearest you must not think ours such a very deplorable position because I dont think it so, and if you do, it will be rather disheartening And another thing dear, though I see the necessity of being carefull, an as you say, comencing at once, you must not make a struggle of it. I hope their is no reason for that, and what you proposed saving, if we set it down a half the sum it looks to me nearer the mark as the saying goes.

Then dear what I propose seemed rather to surprise you, but it was not the first time it had come into my head, an I ought to have tryed to explain how I thought such a seeming wild plan could be carried out. So I will dear tell you what led me to that conclusion, an first put such a notion in my head, an how I fancy it can be carried out if required. But I could not well write such stuff an it will give me something to talk about some other time. But I should never like the thought of borrowing or accepting assistance from any else. No my dear, I am not afraid but you an I can get along very well. So you must mind not get dull and gloomy and worriting your own dear self till what little flesh remains on your bones is gone, or, as I told you, get like an old married man, anxious and careworn. Their dear is a picture. I cant help smileing myself at the thought. No my dearest I hope our worst cares are over and what ever else comes in the future, shall we not share it together. Then I never fear love, God will help those who try to help themselves and all things will be for the best in the end But my dear I am scribbling on as usual, a great deal about nothing.

Jem as just come over. I hear him enquireing for the watering pot to water the Celery. Miriam Hawkins, as we call her, and her children, came in both yesterday and today.

They have comenced this restoring of the Church I hear. Bett makes great wonders about it. I had a long letter from Mary A. Lambert this morning. Not much news, only enquiries, and to be remembered to you. I like you not to be forgotton. But I am a shocking neglectful customer myself. I never sent to be remembered or love to one at Warwick, an I never told you to give my love to one though they were so kind and good as to remember me. But my dear, I mean it right enough. I only wish I knew this dear little Sister of yours better. So I shall some day I hope dear. As for your Mother, I know her dont I, and I can love her I am sure, if she will let me, they will, I feel sure, for your sake. It surprises me to think how rich I am. See what a mistake dear, we used to think their was no one to care about us. Now dear, I must conclude. With fondest love, your ever Affectionate wife, Polly.

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[LETTER 26]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
Aug 11 /76

My Dearest Harry

I have neglected to write again till near the end of the week, because dear I seemed so well it did not matter so much. An of course seeing you so recently their was not much to tell.

Bett came in on Wensday with the startling [news]. Joe Watts who worked for Ed. Borton, had fallen from the rick and Broke his neck. This was the first report. The Inquest was held to day at the B.Nose and they brought it in death from natural causes. Ed. B. found him dead. It seem very sad indeed. Bett came again yesterday all in a great hurry. We were quite amused. One of these cheap crok Carts was on the Green and Bett had been dealing. She had intended to buy me something and so had bought two egg cups. Grandma thought it nothing an you would have been amused at the two of them. James Borton comes as usual, in an out often. He as watered the Celery well.

Well dear I have heard nothing from Warwick wether Annie will come or not, cant say. Mr Murray came out the other night to know if his sister could come. Grandma said yes. I felt annoyed and wondered how she intended to manage. But I hope she wont accept his invitation. One thing, I dont intend to let it bother me.

Their dont seem much to tell you this time my dear. The weather is fearfully hot again. I wonder how you will get on. Its a good thing the acreage is complete.

T. Amos was here last night. Kinmans are drinking again. I heard from Ellen Lambert this morning, but their was nothing of any intrest in her letter to tell you dear. I began to think, like Bessie says, now she was marrying, they had all forgotten her. But it would not make much differance if they did, for if I have any time to spare, I have you to write to, and that is quite enough.

Well my dear, I have been quite busy to day and all the week, doing of something or another, but I am quite well, and hope I shall keep so for another month now. So now dearest you must not be anxious about me, and if I dont seem well, or get dull, then dear I will write to you, for it generally does me good. And now dear if I was to scribble on, it would be nonsense. So with fond love, ever your affectionate

wife, Polly.

Jem was in the house talking to Grandma, so I slipt off to write this, because of the time.

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[LETTER 27]

Croprey,
Leamington.
Aug 20 /76

My Dearest Harry

I should have wrote a few lines to you yesterday, but I thought you would be at Dudley on Sunday morning, an if their was a letter from me on Monday, you would think something was the matter. Then dear I was all right an their was nothing much to tell you.

The most talk was about Howard Cook, for he had a friend come from London on Thursday night on a visit. Next morning they went out together, when young Cook shot the poor boy somewhere near Hanwell brook. They brought him to Cooks an sent for his Mother. She arrived about 5 minutes before he died. James came over an told us, Friday night they had come for Franklin to take young Cook. Everyone talking about it, and sorry for the poor boys Mother (his Father had been taken home dead a short time ago).

Now dear I have a great mind to scold at you saying Perhaps I wont Grumble at your writeing. Its too bad of you now; you know I am only to pleased when you condesend to write, an indeed I thought it wonderful good of you for I thought you would be to busy.

I am glad your luck seems changed at Cricket. It will be more encourageing, an so pleased you enjoyed yourself. I told Jem about the Graces were going to play at Aston, he said he should like to see them Mr Murray proposed going, an then the other said nothing. It as not been mentioned since.

Well now my dear I think I sent you word I had been good an not got dull or impatient, so I shall consider I am entitled to expect you. Well dear, if you can come on Friday do, but there, I need not say that for I know you will.

Their was a letter from Annie to say she was not coming to fetch Betsy. She could not come on account of washing or some such excuse, but one off them would fetch Betsy before the Holidays were over, and they would last another three weeks. Betsy directly says why they were up last Monday. Grandma was quite annoyed and said if anyone was going she would send her home, for they might as well have said she was brought to stop.

And just as I came to that word I was oblidge to stop for Julia came in, and then James, Mr Murray an T. Amos, an they sat talking about the Inquest on the Poor Boy that was shot. So we were well off for company. After, Pollie and Miss Wimbush called.

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I thought I should hear from you this morning, but I suppose dear you could not manage to write very well, so I hope to hear in the morning. I did not seem well at all this morning, but this afternoon I am all right again. My feet are better though

certainly nothing to boast of. I will write dear and tell you how I go on. I am glad to think it won't be long before you will be able to come.

You remember Annie Steel being married? (I believe it was the same day as ourselves) she had a daughter last week - she was not-. Kinmans are going on a fine stroke. William is worse than ever. I suppose Sarah Pratt and Mrs Hazelwood are down their and Jem as seen a note for Dr Douglas. Mr Loyns is coming here to dinner on Wednesday to go with Mr Murray to Avon Dassett Flower Show. I said bother the folks coming here. Mr Murray as trimmed up the Grape trees a bit. John Lambert put their horse in Egertons orchard. Their was no keep [so] he got in ours. An after he had once been in they could not keep him out. He jumped the hedge directly, plagued Grandma ever so.

Well my dear there does not seem anything to tell you. We are going about as usual. Our regular visitors Bett and Sally come as usual. James divides his time between our house and Smiths. Now dear, as I am all right and in hopes of seeing you so soon I will trouble you with no more just now, as all I write amounts to nothing, for I seem in a sort of lazy humour to day. Grandma sends kind love, with fondest love from me believe me, your affectionate wife Mary Ann.

You will hear all about Kinman and the rest of the folks when you come, and see about gardening and such like, so their seemed no need for me to say more about it. With love once more, Polly.

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5. Harry is Born

Immediate Family of Henry Fisher

	— AMY On 1851 Census age 17 b. 1834 dd. presumably. Shipton, Worcs.
	— George Christening noted on I.G.I b. 1836 dd. in infancy Bromley E. London.
	— THOMAS m. Isabella b. 1838 Was cashier in office of Bromley. Earl of Dudley
George Fisher b. 1798 Middlesex. Supervisor, Inland Revenue dd. 1856. Dudley	— JOSEPH Cashier b. 1839 Bromley
Elizabeth Benskin b. 1809 Barking Essex After husband's death ran business as 'Berlin Wool and Fancy Repository' at Wolverhampton St Dudley	— ELIZABETH 'Lizzy' b. 1842 Unmarried. In Bromley business with her mother in Dudley
	— ALEXANDER m. Sophia Penton b. 1844 Stanstead Herts. Studied at London College of Building and Design Headmaster of Brighton School of Science and Art from 1871 dd. 1888
	— JAMES Commercial clerk. '71 Census b. 1847 Congleton
	— HENRY m. Mary Ann Borton b. 1849 Away at school 1860s Congleton Went on sea voyage, China, 1863, as cabin boy, on ship 'Dora'. Joined Excise dept. of Inland Revenue 1870. Became lodger at 'The Green' Cropredy, 1874-5. dd. 1936.
	— ALICE m. David Jones, b. 1852 art teacher Dudley

6. Fisher Family Tree

[LETTER 28]

[From Henry's Mother, Elizabeth Fisher to Cropredy]

8 [Wolverhampton] St. Dudley.

Sepr. 3rd 1876

My Dear Children

I quite intended writing to you today. On the receipt of your letter this morning I am happy to congratulate you on the birth of a son, and hope he may grow up a blessing to you both. It was fortunate to happen while you were with Mary Ann. That would be some comfort for her. Of course we all wish you could remain, but hope the time is not far distant for you to be comfortably settled together. You will have comfort in leaving her in good hands. Her good Grandma who has taken such care of her when she was a child will continue to watch over her. The noise of a little one will be rather a novel affair in the house.

When Mother and Son are well enough we shall be very pleased to have them for a visit here. Mary Ann must take every care of herself not to take cold. A fortnight's good nursing is not thrown away. One of the twins was not expected to live last Thursday. Jas telegraphed for Lizzy to go to the Christening. Since then, we hear it is better.

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I expect Tom and Bella home tomorrow. We hear Tom has hurt his leg while Bathing. Alex called here last Saturday week and left on Sunday. He looked rather better than at the Wedding. He is making a tour of the large towns, had been to Sheffield, Derby, Birmingham etc. etc. Had to attend a Committee Meeting at Brighton on the Monday morning. Would start on the following day for Oxford, Bath, Bristol and other towns where there are good Schools of Art I am expecting every day to hear of Sophy having an increase.

Lizzie writes with me in kind regards to Mrs Borton, and love to you and Mary Ann, with a kiss for the baby.

From yr Loving Mother
E. Fisher.

[LETTER 29]

[This and the following two letters are written in pencil; soon after the birth of Mary Ann's first born son, Harry Borton Fisher, on the 2nd of September 1876. Two are undated, the third is slightly obscured, so they are put in sequence by guesswork. This one was in an envelope post marked 6th Sept]

.My Dearest Harry

I have managed. to write .the address myself. It as made me to hot to write more with ink. (Mr. M. & Miss M. are gone out). Well my dear I am getting as well as possible. I was not dull yesterday when you were gone. Pollie came in after a time, with her work till 12 o'clock. Then, just as Sarah brought my dinner Mrs T Lambert came and stopped such time Grandma came and talked to her. Then Sally Judge came and Bessie Catch. To day I have seen no one but Grandma & Sarah. Miss M. came an enquire how I was .

I heard yon were started to B. I hope my dear you enjoyed yourself but you will tell me when you come. My dearest their is nothing more to tell you and baby is so restless to day he as quite tired me, and this makes me so hot and faint. Grandma stopped with me last night and baby never cried once, but I was oblidge to sit up with him poor little dear. I kiss him for you an me both. He is like a little bird is mouth allways open. And now my dear, with fondest love believe me, your ever affectionate wife, Mary Ann.

I can sit up quite nicely to day, and had best part of a Mutton Chop for dinner and a ham sandwich for tea, and quite enjoyed it. With fond love once more, M.A.

Grandma sends her love and sits nursing baby while I write.

[On a small scrap of paper:-]

Now dear, after finishing in such a funny style, I can manage another bit, for Sarah as brought my tea, and taken Baby downstairs with her. Grandma and Sarah are by themselves. Mr. & Miss M. are gone for a drive. Miss M. comes to see me most days. She seems very kind and thoughtful. They went to Golbys last night, Well my dear their is nothing to tell you but it seems so nice to have you to send to. I keep scribbling on to you tho. as I like talking when you are [here] With fondest love,
your Affect

wife Mary Ann.

[LETTER 30]

My Dearest Harry

I know you will be anxious to know how baby an I get on. I seem pretty well myself but baby was too restless to sleep or let me so this morning. I felt worn out. Grandma brought my breakfast, then I seemed better. Nance came this morning for the las[t] time and after baby was washed he slept till dinner time. You would laugh dear if you could see the style I am writeing in. Baby lies on my arm suck[ing] away (their [is] plenty of milk for him now); and that hand holds the paper while the other atempts to write. I am so well again my dear. I lay still all morning. Since dinner, have washed and done my hair, then of course dear, want to send to you. Grandma says its nonsense so I dont intend to let her know. I have had no visitors and a good thing too, an only Bett yesterday: I am sure Baby improves dear and so do I. You will see tomorrow.

Grandma says Mr. & Miss Murray intend going by the one o clock Train. She would not have known only they were going to write and wanted the adress. I am pleased as can be they are going. I can have you to myself (or ourselves).

Grandma and Sarah are both busy. As I lay I can see the watch, it is just about the time I was taken ill last week. Well my dear I hope you are getting on all right I dont seem to have much to say, though as usual I expect I shall find plenty to talk about. I recon of seeing you my dear. I am so glad the time is so near. Then I hope to get up. I have been sitting up in bed this two hours, an having baby rather tires me. I can see the people go up and down, an Jem B. over at Smiths. Baby war promised a new dress yesterday; but I must close now. I dont forget to kiss baby for you, and talk to him when he is awake about you sometimes. I had better leave that alone for it brings tears. With fond love dearest, Your affect wife

Mary Ann.

[LETTER 31]

[Pencilled letter, date obscured, most probably Sept.7th 1876].

My Dearest Harry

I was very pleased indeed this morning with such a long letter from you, an a short one from Uncle. I was not a bit surprised dear with what you said about Aunt, but Uncle to make such a fuss surprised me. I was going to remark about Aunt, for Miss

Murray was delighted with her. They talked of going I thought a good thing, because we shall be by ourselves, and Grandma wont have as much to do. Well my dear I am so well to day for I had such a nice sleep between 4 & 6 this morning and it seemed so refreshing yesterday. I had my hair done to day. I have combed it out myself. Baby to, is first rate. I am sure he improves. I could not make him out yesterday. He looked so dark round his mouth and eyes. But Grandma says he had the bellyache made him so restless.

Now my dear I am comencing again though sorry to say in quite a different strain, for since I had my tea I seem in pain, and since, have been very sick and bad, but it as gone off a little now, though left me quite exhausted. Baby, pretty dear, as slept all the time. Dont be allarmed dearest, I have no doubt but I shall be all the better after a time, and then dear their is only one more day before I hope to see you. But realy dearest you will excuse more at the presant With fondest love, your ever affect.

wife Mary Ann.

Grandmas love. Don't get uneasy dearest if it returns (but I dont think it will) they will send for the Dr and you know dear will take care of me the same as you would yourself. With fond love as ever.

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[LETTER 32]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
Sep 12 / 76

My Dearest Harry

Its only a little after 11 o'clock an I am up and dressed and alone with baby, so I thought I could not do better than comence a few lines to you. I have just been takeing more Castor oil. Its such a pity I am oblidge to have it because it makes Baby bad. Grandma thought I could go downstairs to day, she would light a fire in the parlor so that I could sit or lie down in the warm, but not to day I tell her, my head is hardly steady enough it aches so. Of course I know the cause. Well dear after you had gone Grandma came up, so dear, her presance was a check on me, or 1 might just have made myself dull at your going.

Mr. & Miss Murray came by the qr past 10 train. She said she fancied she saw you at Leamington. They had greatly enjoyed themselves going to Stratford on Saturday. Uncle and Aunt, Annie & Betsy and themselves drove in a fly to Coventry on Sunday, the same party with the addition of John Hammond & Mary Canning.

Now for a little rest dear. I have taken a walk round the bed an sat a little while, but I am anxious to write as much as I can by myself. Then my dear, after they came back it made Grandma busy to cook dinner for them an just Sarah brought my dinner. Susanah an her little girl came from Warden. I thought what a bother for Grandma.

Now dear I must try and make a fresh start, for Sarah came and put a stop to my writeing for a bit. So I have had my dinner, some Mutton Broth, and then a walk into the back room and carried baby. Realy dear, I am somewhat puzzeled, for Sarah says she dont think she can come after this week, for the children dont go to school but have longer holidays and William's Mother is oblidge to leave and then she says their house is not safe with only the children. I know dear, what she says is right but I am at a loss to know who I can get to take her place [1].

Now dear, heres another start beside the lot of small stops, for I am sure baby gets knowing, for he will sleep while I nurse him, but opens his eyes an grumbles till he crys when I lie him down. Realy dear it does seem dull and quiet now I am up, to sit here by myself. I thought so yesterday and it seems more so today, for I let Sarah go, to assist in her own washing. Mr & Miss Murray are out for a drive (I shall try and go down tomorrow).

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Grandma as been teasing Murray to buy his sister a dress. She tells him he can afford it now. I fancy he dont half like thinks his sister put Grandma up to it.

Well my dear I listened this morning for Smith expecting your letter. He came, and still no letter, so I have conclude someone was their, you could not write. But after a time Sarah brought it when she came up with baby. I was glad to hear you arrived safe and pleased to hear you say you were happy, and certainly did not think it was because you were so glad to get away from baby and me. I only hope dear, it may continue. I too, felt allmost excitedly happy, which caused me to say it seems to much an too good to last I feared something would happen, but I trust not my dearest. I hope it may settle down into that quiet happiness I think more to be deppended on.

And let us try dear to thank God who is the Auther and giver of all our happiness in this world and the world to come. Then dear we realise more [and] more fully that all things work together for our good and that everything is for the best. It will help to make us more contented and thankful. I do try to think so though I often fail. One thing dearest struck me since (though I might have know it before if I had given it a thought), that my eyes tell tales, or you could never read them so truthfully, an even when you were right this morning the happy tears came to my eyes on reading your letter. I am not sorry, my eyes do not deceive you my own dear husband and I trust my actions never may. But their dearest, I too am writeing a funny strain, but I must stop, for Grandma is coming with my tea. I can enjoy all my meals and get on first rate. Baby to is getting on well. He looked so white, I touched him to see if he was alive, he looked so still when he was asleep. But when he is going to sleep,

he starts an jumps just like you. But I am getting allmost murdalen, so I must conclude with fondest love, beleive me as ever, your Affectionate wife,

Mary Ann.

Baby gets his share of kisses though he is not able to understand it. Grandma sends her love to you. She was very middling this morning. Annie did not come. Give my love to Mother and Lizzy and thank her enquire about that scarlet hood, so not to keep it in the way you talked of. With love once more dear, for I am tired.

[1. School Log Book: Sept. 11th. Due to alterations to "offices" & "wet weather hindering harvest" holidays extended to 18th.]

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[LETTER 33]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
Sep 14 /76

My Dearest Harry

I came down yesterday as I told you I thought of doing. Realy dear it was such a very dull day and so dreary to sit up stairs alone. The prospect of coming was to tempting, so I had nice fire and plenty of company. I got tired after tea so lay down and was soon asleep. Miss Murray nursed baby and kept him good the wile. It done me good and I felt none the worse for coming down. I caught no cold dear so its alright so far. Just as I was being dressed Baby cryed an Sarah picked him up. He was quite stif and then tapping his back he came round. Cryed and went off again. It frightened Sarah and me, but when he got better of it he seemed as well as ever and slept all day as usual. I did not write to you dear because I got too tired. So we went to bed all right and was well till about two oclock this morning when baby got very restless an hungry and their seemed nothing to satisfie him, so he kept me awake, himself as well. So this morning dear when I received your letter I felt quite worn out, but you must not be at all uneasy my dear because I tell you all the little difficul[t]ies that perplex me. I am going on very nice indeed. You could scarcely credit the differance since Sunday. I can walk quite well an carrie baby and every day I improve. I keep my thick shawl on so their is no danger about takeing cold. I think I will try dear and be careful for your sake and babys.

I am so pleased my dear you are well and going on all right. But you tell me to be careful, mind, be careful of yourself dear, and not go long journey an eat nothing. I wonder what you would say to me if I was to do like that. I dont think their is

anything in particular to tell you. I think it wont look amiss to have Harry named Borton as well, but it shall be as you like. But now dear I must ask you to excuse any more at presant, of Jem B. as just come in (He came yesterday as soon as he heard I was down). Sally as been bothering hear so they rather Mither me. Baby an I are both going first rate and it seems so nice dear to be down in the house. I have been in the kitchen an had a look round. So now dearest with fond love as ever,

Your affect. wife Polly.

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[LETTER 34]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
Sep 16 /76

My Dearest Harry

I was both pleased and surprised to hear from you this morning and such a charming long letter too. Well dear after I sent your letter last night Mr Murray had been looking through his Almanack and noticed Leamington and Kenilworth Rides would soon be vacant. He said he should not object to exchange for either. In any case dear you would be nearer me should he alter his mind. Mind dear I only mention this for you to notice if you think either likely. He says you would have no trouble in adding to Stony Stratford & Cropredy already petitioned for. It struck me as rather singular dear, both should be named about the same time, so I thought I would let you know. You will then have next week to consider in.

I was surprised you had such a dull day, it was beautiful here after the mist in the morning cleared off. Miss Murray intended taking baby out in the afternoon, only he slept all the time. To day its wreched, raining all day. I left my thick shawl off for a lighter one yesterday. I got up this morning and saw baby dressed as I talked of really how small he looks, less than I thought, for he was better last night and is asleep now. I am afraid I shall have to neglect writeing to you sometime when the little mans tiresome.

Another thing my dear, I told you I had been makeing baby shoes. Mrs Smith brought him a little wool hood and shoes last night for a presant. Mr. & Miss M. are going to dine at Mrs O'Rourkes to morrow, so Grandma and I shall have the house to ourselves.

Really dear I wish you could be hear like last Sunday, but I dont say it complaining mind. Just before I had your letter I had been telling baby we should be expecting his Papa this day week. He was wide awake and Grandma had to nurse him while I

had breakfast. Well my dear I am scribbling on. I have not forgotten the Damsons. I will make enquirie and get some if we can for you to take back. We shall hear more about them then I will let you know.

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I am getting stronger every day. Yesterday I never lay down once all day and have not yet to day, but I begin to feel tired. The air seems heavy as rain generally makes it. But my dearest you must not get dull and disheartened if you can help it. You know dear we have so much to feel thankful for. And now dear the time seems so near when I am in hopes of coming to stop a while, and I think that will be very nice when your work begins because you wont have time to look for other company. So when the works done baby an I shall have you all to ourselves. Then dear I hope even work wont be quite so hard, for I always think it seems hard to comense work afresh, then my dear, work nor dull days I hope, wont efect you to much. But my dear dont it strike you what changeable creatures we all are and how short lived our happiness seems. You were so happy an in such high spirit on Monday. Pray dear that our happiness may be more fixed and lasting, then dear, I hope, weather nor seperation will make no differance. I dont mean in ourselves dear, for I believe separation, though hard to bear, as been for our good. It makes us trust and love each other more, which makes us look forward with impatience to be together.

Now my dearest their is nothing new to tell you. Baby an I are first rate and about house like old times again. It only wants you hear, an with God's blessing we shall be the happiest party out. We must only have a little more patience. An now my dear I must say like you, here is a lot about nothing and conclude. With fondest love from your ever affectionate wife Polly.

Grandma sends her love, she is wonderful good to baby an me. Give my love to Mother and Lizzie. I wont forget the Damson if I can get some.

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[LETTER 35]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
Sep 28 /76

My Dearest Harry

I thought of writeing yesterday but their seemed no chance and their was nothing particular to tell you, and now this morning I have just laid baby down to sleep after washing and dressing him. Its such a wreched morning pouring of rain all the time, no possible chance of going out today, an it does not look very promising for tomorrow. Well my dear yesterday passed in the

usual style, only we had Julia & Ellen L. in the evening. Julia had been washing, so called in as she came from the orchard. Ellen had come from London. She took scarcely any notice of Julia, though they were here together.

Well after they had gone I had baby and was talking of going to bed, well, on a sudden I said to Miss Murray, Just look at baby. I had hardly spoke when, poor little dear was in a fit (thats what Grandma says it was). We were all frightened while it lasted. He threw his head back an his little eyes were hopened at their widest, his hands clenched and froth round his mouth and he looked so white. When it was over he slept well all night, an seems none the worse.

Grandma makes me laugh, for she says if anything happened to him while you were away, you would fancy he had not been taken care of because you think so much of him (as if she did not think a great deal of him herself). I can get him to eat a little I fancy. It satisfies him an does him good.

I suppose dearest you are very busy. I hope you have not to go out in business such a day as this. I should think its dreadful muddy walking for you. Take care of your throat dear if you have to go out. You have baby and me to think of and take care of, and how can you do it if you neglect yourself.

Well my dear their seems nothing to tell. The weather is so gloomy & dull, makes one seem a little so. Not that I am the least dull my dear, only my head is acheing and I dont know exatly what to do with myself. James and Mr Murray are in the kitchen trying to pass the time away sitting about doing nothing, so I will just see how I pass the rest of the day. I was up rather early this morning, came down and brought baby for Grandma to mind. He was awake while I was dressing, and good enough while I was talking to him, but he does not approve of being left by himself. You should have heard him cry yesterday morning. He could hardly forget it, but sobbed away when I had taken him up. They have just all gone into the orchard, & Jem an Mr Murray gone for a drive so they have left me to my self, and it is such a realeif really. I do wish no visitor would come just now for I dont want to see them.

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Their was Mr Palmer, his wife and three children on Saturday. Uncle wrote in from Birm. He enquired how you was, said John had been down, an about him seeming silent and dull, not he was so near out of his time; and trade was dreadful bad in the Black Country. Do you know dear, I could pictur all sorts of dismall things. Its a good thing I am not their, for if you were out late I should be afraid someone had hurt [you], or something was the matter. But these are dull thoughts. I could have made myself miserable yesterday, only I kept along with Jem and joined in what they were saying, not to get by myself. Pollie did not come as I was better. My feet are scarcely like the same. I believe I could have got boot on if I had tried. Its so much nicer to go about. But their dear, I am only wasteing time scribbling rubish an I can talk that fast enough. So with fond love once more, your loving wife Mary Ann.

[LETTER 36]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
Oct [no date]76

My Dearest Harry

I hope you will pardon my neglect for not writing to you before. But on Tuesday dear, I had nothing much to tell you, so now I must think how I spent the day. I went to Lamberts in the morning to pay for some things Grandma had sent for, and have a chat with Ellen while the baby slept. We went through the church coming back. Then after dinner I went as far as the Station, taking baby with me to see her off by the 1 o'clock. Wednesday, I don't exactly know what I was doing all morning, but if I can, while baby is asleep, I try and help Grandma. But I did not feel very well, and in the afternoon when I intended writing I felt so low and miserable, I thought if I would write, then I thought no, not till I was in better spirits, and I could do nothing at home, so I went as far as Mrs W. Lamberts to have a gossip with Pollie, who was there at work, and when once there, stopped so long. Even then my dear I did not feel at all satisfied to think I had neglected you.

And yesterday dear I was very bilious, got sick headache and out of sorts, when I got up, could not eat and felt low spirited so Miss Murray proposed we going to Banbury with them because the day was so fine. Well even then dear, I lay down with baby and thought I would rest my head but they seem to think a drive in the fresh air would be the best, so said Rouse yourself and go. We shall not be long, as Mr Murray had only Lt. Bourton to call at, so I left baby with Grandma, little dear. I longed to take him, only hardly knew how to manage him while in Banbury. It was very nice dear, the drive, and seemed something afresh to be in B. again. It seems such a time since I was there. Well dear we hurried about. I was in care about baby for fear he should cry and Grandma be hardly able to manage him, and was thinking of your letter, and my head ached fearful. But when we came home Grandma was impatient for tea, so was baby. And after tea there was scarcely time, and I felt tired though a lot better. But my dearest I was anything but easy to think you were neglected. I hope now dear you will forgive and excuse it all.

I brought some stout from Humphries but don't know what it's like yet. I must get Mr M. to tap it for me. Miss M. talks perhaps she shall go home next week.

And now my dear, our boy is getting on first rate, such a frangey little thing you never saw else. He is very good, only his temper, that's bad enough at times. Grandma middling, the weather tries her and tries us all.

I fancy I expect dear you find of rheumatics from it. I do hope you are all right. I hope you did not think I had forgotten you dear or let my little Harry take all my thoughts an attention, though he does take a lot of it. I took him walking along the front just now. The celery wants moulding up sadly, only I dont know who to get to do it. James said he would, only for his finger. Its worse again. He had his ladder out to get the policemen's apples an said he would bring it over to get our few. Murray would help but he said he would not go up. James means to try if its fine.

Now my dearest I hope you will excuse this hurried few lines, because when Grandma as baby she thinks the time long to say nothing of the young man himself. So with fondest love, beleive me as ever, your loveing neglectful

wife Polly.

I will write again as soon as ever I can. With Grandmas love, an mine to once again.

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[LETTER 37]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
Oct 7 /76

My Dearest Harry

For a wonder I am alone a few minutes, baby asleep and Grandma upstairs. Mr & Miss M. out

I was very pleased indeed to hear from you dear this morning and glad to know you were quite well. I was not the least disapointed you were not coming, I had not expected you, and like yourself dear have not found this last fortnight long in passing. Yes dear the time does go quickly an not to quickly for our patience. James an I were talking just now, he remarked about Mr M. Flirtations he said probby he should not be here long. But I still think their is little to be depended on for I dont think he know his own mind. But its not long to wait an see if he petitions for Ireland. James says the best plan is to seem indeferant. I think so too sometimes. I hope we shall know.

Their dearest, I was oblidge to come to a full stop and yesterday their was no oppertunity to scribble a line for Mr M. had asked Mr Lyon and Miss O'Rourke with Grandmas permission to dinner. We did not expect them till after Church when in they

walked before I had dressed baby. In the morning, they were all going to Aston le Walls, so while baby slept I assisted Grandma as much as I could. Well we could cook no dinner for ourselves, and could not bake any for want of milk. Grandma said such a C[lub] Feast Sunday she could not remember. When my Uncle Thomas came quite unexpected I was not sorry to tell the truth (in one sense), as they could not say we were feasting and sent for none of them (for I have never wrote to Warwick). Mr Murry took little notice, I should have thought he would after the fuss they made, but I can tell you better than writeing. Uncle went back at night. He took little notice of our Harry, only said he did not think he would live till spring. I said Why Uncle? He hardly knew I fancy (I hope I am wrong). But I could hardly help thinking he said as perhaps was wished. However dear it dont trouble me, our little darling is healthy enough at presant. But my dearest as I have good hopes of seeing you soon I will say no more on that subject.

I was very pleased indeed to hear from you dear this morning and to hear say you are quite well. No wonder are tired, but it will often have to be the case this Winter I fear.

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Wonder what made you think there was something the matter with me, it was not much dear only makes one feel out of sorts and fit for nothing. Then some nights babys restless, I dont get much sleep. I suppose that helps a little. I am all right now, and I believe the stout does me good. Grandma admits how good it seems. I and baby have been for a drive along with Mr & Miss Murray this afternoon to L. Borton & Warmington. They are both at work now. Baby never cryed all the time. I thought dear it would do us good and knew you would no object I would not go if I thought there was danger of takeing cold. I wrap up well. I thought folks could not say much as Miss M. and baby go, but there will be no chance again for sometime. I fear the weather is so very changeable.

My word dear I should think Mother fancies herself a large and fast incresing family to have another Granddaughter. It is as you remark very kind of your brothers wife to think of our baby the more so I think when you consider they know nothing of me. I am afraid they will be disapointed in our Harry, because he is little, yet compared with other though he grows and alters fast. He does begin to take notice and when talked to buttons up his mouth and trys to make a sort of noise.

Grandma is very middling, she finds the work almost too much for her. I am well. Jem is about, his finger bad still. We are going on the usual style, so there is nothing to tell you dear. Only your shoes are not done yet, they are so busy now. They were enquireing if you were comeing so perhaps they will try and finish them by the time you do come. I am so glad you think next Saturday. I was thinking dear I and baby can come alone and as soon as we can because of the time of the year when it would be too cold to travel with a baby so young. But as I say we can talk the matter over best. So my dearest I must conclude for its almost too dark to know what I am doing. Grandma send her love, accept fondest love from me, beleive me as ever your affectionate

wife Polly.

PS Give my love to Mother & Lizzie. You did not say how she was. Better I hope. I was glad you were able to go and see them. Thomas came & expectin to see you with me.

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[LETTER 38]

[Date?]

My Dearest Harry the prospect of my going out does not look very promising and any fresh news I might think of is forgotten for there is nothing come into my head. We have had Mrs Cherry to see baby, but he would not open his eyes to look at her or let her see them. Bett as been in or else this last few days she as been complaining. James as been in again, he does not seem to know what to do with himself. We have heard nothing from my Uncle Henry or from Warwick. Grandma is about as usual, her health is the worst and this damp weather tries her badly.

Now my dear this after the old style of my funny letters. Nothing of any interest only its nice to write, only there is nothing to tell you. I complain and Grandma says she cant think what I have to say when you were only here on Sunday: Never mind dearest I will write again if not tomorrow Saturday, because I suppose you will be busy on Sunday. I hope dear you are well. All I can do is talk to baby about his Papa now I think he begins to notice. But all this dear is poor stuff to write about, so I may as well conclude with fondest love, believe me as ever your affectionate wife

Mary Ann.

PS Grandma sends her love, she is nurseing baby now, he as been so good to day and we both get on first rate. I am so glad dear you need not be the least uneasy about us and its nice dear for me to know you have comfortable lodging, with fond love Polly.

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[LETTER 39]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
Oct 11th /10 /76

My Dearest Harry

I fear this will be too late for post, but I don't mind so much for I have nothing in particular to tell you, so if I can find time to scribble a line or two I do so. Baby is asleep, but when he is dear, there is always something, not that I would willingly neglect you. I have been in to see Mrs Smith this afternoon with baby, but really it's so blustering and showery it's not safe to go from home. They have commenced your boots. Will was at work at them. He said he would do them after the Fair, but Mrs Smith said they could not depend on him. Tomorrow is the Fair. Miss Murray wants me to go. I should be afraid. I should want you dear, to save me from being crushed to death. Of course dearest, I have no thoughts of going. I was going to tell you in my last letter about T Amos, called to see if you were come. What put it in my head, then he said he thought you would come home that night. I felt rather pleased dearest I hardly know why for it was quite right, but I suppose someone else saying it. Mr Murray would have taken baby and I to Warden last evening, but I declined and was so glad for it rained so fast after they started. We have both been very fortunate never to take cold yet. Miss Murray talks of going home next week. Pollie came in last night. She is going to Stratford to day. Now dearest I must take baby, so you get put off, so dearest I must try and finish this evening.

We have had such a beautiful day. I have been to Gt. Bourton and carried baby. I thought it would do us both good. It made me very hot up that hill. He is a little tiresome thing since we came back and so hungry nothing seems to satisfy him. He never cries when I have him out, generally sleeps all the time.

I was very pleased to hear from you this morning my dear and glad to know you were all right. So you think I don't want to hear about your joking. Indeed I am interested in all I hear from you, and know you are going on pretty well and cheerful by that, and glad to hear you find your book interesting (It's something to hear you are turning over a new leaf and spending the evening indoors before I come, to get a good character before I come I fancy).

I shall hear all Mrs Whites says, it's all in fun, I understand, though Grandma would sometimes try to make me think similar in earnest. Ah well my dearest we should get on poorly but for a little nonsense sometimes, if there was nothing else but dull care.

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So you had a run away match (did it remind you). I suppose so, and Mrs White would perhaps think it too. You had not mentioned anything about it before. And now dearest as I hope to see you soon, if there is any more nonsense we will have it then.

I am quite well and so is baby. Grandma very poorly indeed, and as been this last day or two. Indeed you may think so when I tell you she has been in bed by 8 o'clock this last two nights. I fetched her some daffies from Bortons last night and she is

very poorly today. You know she is such a lover of Pork. We had some an I think it as upset Grandma, but my word, it would not do to tell her so. Our Harry sits looking about, his little hands going very impatient, so my dearest I must conclude with fondest love as ever, your affectionate wife Polly.

Grandma sends her love. I was going to add, if you had time and saw any beef that would do, bring some. But not to trouble yourself. It sounds rich as if I would say Bring your dinner, but you know how awkward it is dear, an I say what I think. With fond love.

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[LETTER 40]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
Oct 20th /10 /76

My Dear Harry

I thought you would be anxious to hear how baby an I got on before the week was ended, especily after haveing one letter so dismall. Well dear we are both quite well. My face is easy though the swelling as not gone down. Grandma is pretty middling but for her breath. And my dear I fear this will be a short uninteresting letter, for I am to write to Warwick, though I scarcely know what to say. And even to you dear their does not seem anything to tell you. I suppose I am not in one of my scribbling humours, but I am not in a dull one. Dear their is nothing fresh to tell you about baby. The little man is very quite on Grandma's knee. He gets on about the same an laughs an croes when talked to. I quite believe Grandmas right in saying he knows me.

We have had no fresh callers. Mark K. is in haveing a chat to Grandma. He is better. We had Jem and T. Amos in last night and Sally as usual. I suppose dear you will spend Sunday at home. I believe its 12 months since you went down as your brother was married. No dought they will think of it. Really dear what changes in so short time. We should like a change for you to come back here again.

Mr M. an I were talking. By what he said he means to petition for that ride near his home, as his friend Murray and his sister told him about, but he said he should write to that friend of his in Somerset House to know if possible further particulars. Well my dearest its not much, but every little seems encouraging, but best, it will not be long before I hope to come an see you. I hope you are quite well an getting on all right. Give my love to Mother & Lizzie. Do you know dear I often think how much I wish I knew them well, and yet I feel I dont like the thought of going to see them, but you wont understand me in that. Never mind dearest for I must conclude with fond love, believe me ever your affectionate wife Pollie.

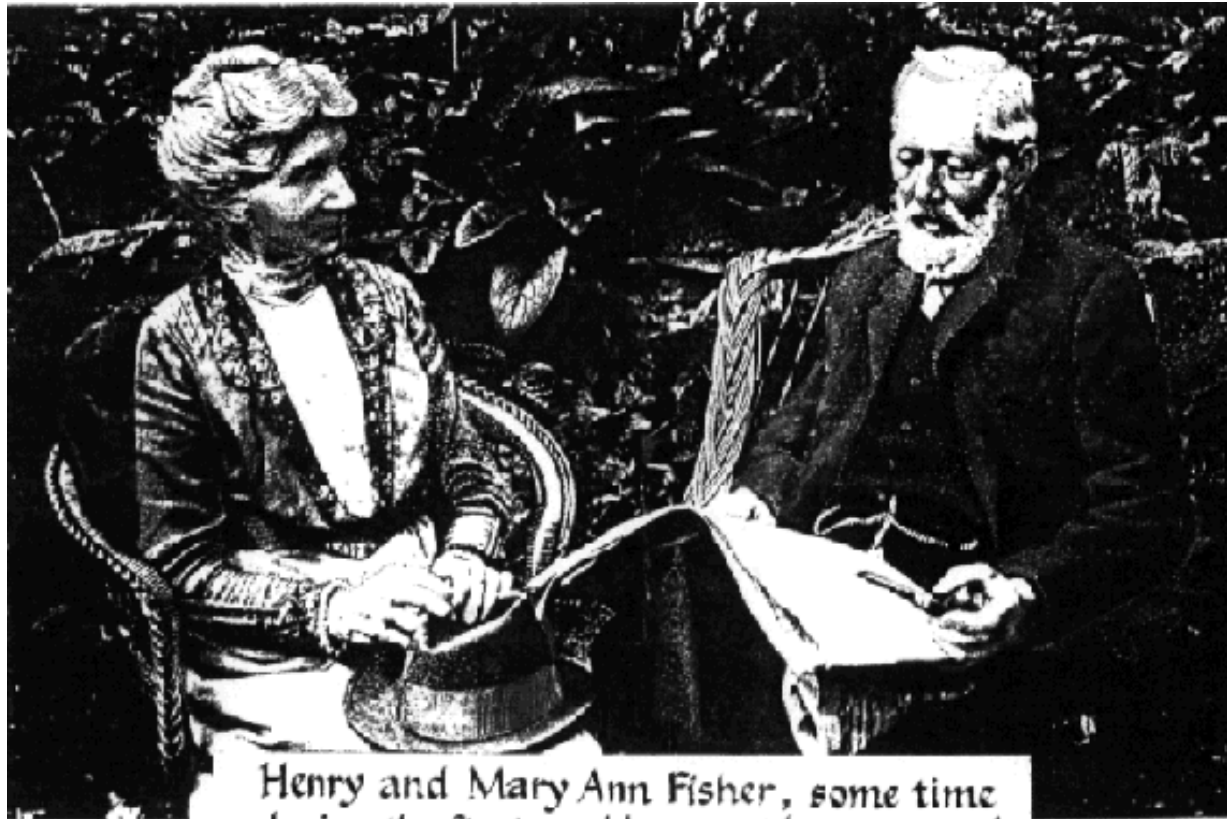
I hope dear I will be able to write a better letter next time, your loving wife Pollie.

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6. My Dear Pollie



Henry and Mary Ann Fisher, some time during the first world war at 'The Laurels'

8. Henry and Mary Ann Fisher

[LETTER 41]

[From Harry Fisher to his wife Mary Ann. Written from his Mother's house on the 28th of October?].

Dudley,
Sunday.
[28/ 10/ 76]

My Dear Pollie,

You have got me into dreadful disrepute, disappointing all the folks, but it is my own fault I had quite made up my mind you would come yesterday, and told the folks here so, & they had made every arrangement for a regular baby show. So you may be sure they are not a little disappointed. Mr James, Mrs James and family came by the train we were expected, there was a car to meet us. After dinner Mr & Mrs Joseph & Mr & Mrs Jones came, all with the expectation of seeing the three babies, & giving their opinion as to which should take first prize. It did seem a shame that you could not come & I was quite as much disappointed as the rest of them. They chaffed me, & said I was ashamed or afraid to exhibit mine. But no matter dear, it is only a treat reserved for them. Jem's young uns have been very good all day & are getting along swimmingly, but there dear, I am not going to write you a long letter. We can talk it all over when you come. Let me know which train you will come by. I thought the early train would have been the best, but forgot, or rather did not think how much you would have to do before starting.

I have just managed at last to get away from the company to write this, but trust dear, you will excuse so short a letter. One of the twins is in short clothes. Do you think it would be wise to bring your sewing machine with you to prepare Harry's. My sitting past off first rate. All the traders paid & the Inspector complimented me on the manner in which I kept my books & did my work. It is a satisfaction to have it noticed by others that one does his work well is it not dear?

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I am not sorry & yet I am sorry (if you can make that out) that you did not come today; sorry because they all seem so anxious to give you a cordial and hearty reception, but then I fancy you would feel strange and confused among so many strange relations. They all seem to agree that Jem's are beautiful babies, but I do not think either of them can vie with our Harry. We shall see what they think about it. Now dear, I will close, with fondest love to you both. Please write tomorrow & give my love to Grandma. Your affect. husband

Harry.

I am pleased you have bought a new jacket and cloak. Shall expect to see you quite a sweet.

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7. Here is a Lot About Nothing

Geopredy
Livingston
Oct 30/1976

My Dearest Harry
I have just received
your letter. I by fell asleep while
I was having breakfast. so I lay
down. Grandma is washing
Dad. Dad Murray started out so you
see that its beautifully great for a
short time and then I am stuck
to make the most of it really dear.
I laughed. And quite pleased my
self with your letter. This morning
I rather at the description you gave
and I quite understand you
being both glad and sorry of course
Ned. I am sorry you are disappointed

8. "My Dearest Harry"

[LETTER 42]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
Oct 30 /10 /76

My Dearest Harry

I have just received your letter. Baby fell asleep while I was haveing breakfast, so I lay him down. Grandma is washing, and Mr Murray started out, so you see dear its beautifully quiet for a short time and then I am oblidge to make the most of it.

Realy dear, I laughed and quite pleased myself with your letter this morning or rather at the discription you gave and I quite understand you being both glad and sorry. Of course dear I am sorry you disapointed them, but rather glad I was not their.

Poor baby begins giveing little grunts. He is not washed yet. And how do you think I have managed him this last few days? Put him in the cloths basket. And Mr Murray as made rockers and tied them on, so he lays by the fire an now and then I give him a jog to keep him quiet.

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I went to Bourton and took baby yesterday, had tea with Pollie. Her Mother as not returned from London. Pollie took my jacket home to finish, an as put pockets behind. I have been telling Grandma, she does go on and hopes she shall never see it. But you must expect me nothing of a swell. For that reason I am glad I was not their yesterday. I quite thought of bringing the machine, yes dear. I think it will be best to come by the train that leaves here at 1 o'clock an I think arrives at Wolverhampton about 4 o'clock. But you know more about that than me dear. I am quite well and so is baby and Grandma. An now my dearest this little bit as been put off so that its very near post time and I must scribe a line to Warwick. I was to take Uncles boots from Smiths and they are not done. So dearest I know you will excuse, for I am busy as can be this evening, With fondest love till we me(et). Ever your Affectionate

wife Mary Ann.

[No letters in November and early December. Mary Ann went either to Wolverhampton and visited Dudley at last, or Henry had leave to spend at Cropredy?]

[LETTER 43]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
Dec 25 /76

My Dearest Harry

I was very pleased with both your letters. I was thankful to hear you got home safe. I felt quite uneasy till I heard and it seemed rather a long time to wait. I am alright dear, and none the worse for waiting at the station. When I got back home they said baby awoke directly we were gone, so Tasker nursed him and he said that was what he was used too.

I felt quite dull at parting with you and missed you quite as much as I used. I felt a strong inclination to have a good hearty cry, but remembering baby would have to suffer for it, refrained from giving way to such a fit. But you dont know how I missed you these last two nights. Baby was cross and restless, and no one to take him off me and I felt tired and sleepy, but baby was better last night so I got along very well. But I was glad you went back as Mr Hill had written. I thought it seemed too bad not to leave the books, and at first thought you might have stoped another day. I was so pleased to hear from you to day and almost forgot it was Monday and Christmas day as well, and what an unpleasant journey you would have to day.

I am glad you would contrive to go home this afternoon. I am so thankful dear you felt none the worse for your accident, but I daresay it gave you a terrible shake. I can fancy it all dear, and what a blessing you escaped. Give my love to all at home and thank Mother for me for the cotton pins etc she put up for me.

And now my Dearest I am here alright and Grandma and I are by ourselves. Jem Borton went away on Saturday morning by the first Train. He came over to wish Grandma goodbye (I was not up). Pollie W. brought baby a rattle. Mr Murray is spending the day in Banbury. He as never said anything about petitioning. As we came from the station that night, he said it was a pity you ever left. T. Amos as been in, and Mark.

And now my dear I know you will excuse, for I have had to take Baby a time or two, and post goes earlier to day. I will write as often as I can. With fondest love your affect wife

Pollie.

I hope dear you will enjoy Christmas and spend a happy as well as a merry one. With fond love from Pollie. Baby is quite well.

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[LETTER 44]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
Dec 29 /76

My Dearest Harry

I thought I must try and let you have a few lines, the end of the week, just to let you know how we were going on. Quiet enough you may suppose, and really I dont know how the time passes these short days. I seem always busy, and do nothing. Grandma as been very middling since Tuesday. She stood a little down in the Brewhouse to wash and I fancy it gave her cold, though she wont hear that. Annie as not come. We expected her on Wensday. Mr Murray had a letter from John this morning, inviting him to a party at Cannings, he told me, but I was not to tell Grandma (I did not promise). He cant go, [he] is to busy. I suppose dear, you too will be very busy, although you are prepared. I hope my dear, this coming New Year will comence differant to the last, without so much vexation with the work, to say nothing of anything else. But I cannot think it will be so bad, and hope to have you here again but really dear I am muddelling or scarcly knowing what I am saying, only I wish you a very happy New Year and a lot of good things beside, if that would be any good.

We have two men hear to day, mending the chimney, and its such a wreched wet day, they have to stand under the hovel part of the time. I was wondering if you had to go up to Paradise, and thought I hoped not. Grandma as got Baby. He is alright. He talks to Mr Murray. Grandma says she knows he thinks its you, for he will stop crying when he talks to him. She says he wont forget you on that account but he wont take much notice of Grandma.

And now my dear, I dont think I have anything more to tell you. I have had no letters, and only our usual callers, so we have been very quiet and not a bit like Xmas hearing no ringing or anything Grandma sends her love. Mr Skinner was here yesterday and seemed surprised to see me, said he thought that Country agreed with me, I looked well. And now my dear I must conclude, with fondest love, ever your affectionate

wife Mary Ann.

God Bless you my dear, with a very Happy New Year.

[LETTER 45]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
Jan 2nd /77

My Dearest Harry

I hope I did not disappoint you by not writing yesterday. It seemed a shame not, on the first day of the new year, but of course dear you know how it is. I was very pleased indeed to hear from you, the more so because Smith was late with the letters. I had almost given up the thought of hearing from you, thought dear perhaps, you were too busy, so you can fancy [how] glad I was and pleased with all the news you sent me. And happy to think you could spend Xmas at home and enjoy yourself a little, though I fear you were almost too tired.

I told baby the little twins would be at Dudley that day, but his Papa would think he beat them. Baby is four months old today. He is quite well dear and has been a good boy this last two nights, and never cried. I went a little way for a walk with him on Sunday, but the water was out so we could not go far. I met with Amy E. and Jane W. They came in and stayed a bit, then Julia came in to spend the evening. Yesterday I was busy. John Andrews of Lte Bourton died yesterday morning, is to be buried tomorrow. T Amos came in but I did not see him. We expected Annie today. I went to meet the 3 o'clock Train, but she did not come.

I told you the men were doing the chimney, and they have done the drain down the yard, you know it was stopped. It was an old stone drain, so they laid a new one with large tiles. They say it will drain the yard, and it wants it bad enough.

I have got babs, so can't manage this part very well, we are in a mess. I quite expected dear you would want that note. I forgot when you were here the stamps you would have to buy. How have you managed dear? I want to send you some socks, but really I seem to have no time. I expect they will have to wait till you come. When will that be dear? But I am not grown impatient or dull, or anything like it. Did Mr Murray tell you if he had petitioned for Ireland? Because somehow I don't fancy he will, and I don't believe, even if you were appointed to either of the ridges he would care to exchange, though I think he would keep his word, if you can understand that. I think he has had enough work this last few days to tire him. Then dear I think, how are you getting on this bad weather. You don't know what a comfort it seemed to hear from you, and to think this year commenced so much happier than the last I hope it was the same with you my dear, in spite of long journeys and being by yourself (not alone).

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Now there is no news to tell you for we are going on about the same. I have a fire in the house, it is warmer for baby though it makes me more work, but I seem so well I don't mind it, and every body tells me I look better (I think well I may). Grandma is better. And now my dear I have nothing more to tell you. I must conclude, trusting you are well. With fond love, believe me ever

your Affectionate wife Polly.

Grandma sends her love. Remember me to Mr & Mrs White and Jenie.

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[LETTER 46]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
Jan 11th /77

My Dearest Harry

I was very pleased indeed to hear you arrived safe. I quite intended writing yesterday, but really dear, I felt rather Anxious and by imagining the worst felt dull and so thought it would be a very doeful letter I would wait till to day.

Annie and I thought of going to Banbury with Mr Murray, but Mr Skinner came, so we have been to G. Golby's. We posted some letters for him, but mine dear, I fear, will be to late (but better late than never) they say. Baby as gone to sleep bringing him home, so Grandmas got him. And now my dear you will guess why I was uneasy yesterday, and why I got thinking, but I think dear I must tell. We have got on pretty well. Baby was good while we were at the station, and I have had some pretty good nights with him, but have not been fortunate enough to get him to sleep before taking him to bed like I did when you were here.

Th. Amos came in on Monday. We heard poor George as cut his foot very bad. I should have called to see how he was if we had gone to day. Mr Golby came in one evening and stopped. Mark came discoursing John Andrews will and property.

And now dear I told you Mr Skinner was here today, so Mr M. said you had been here. He then began enquiring about your coming back, said he should have you at Bloxham soon. He should have plenty of vacancies if he could get them to marry and

settle down. Really dear, I hoped it would be true (for if our fears are realised, things certainly do look very unpromising), but my dear we must hope for the best.

Tomorrow is my birthday, when we can comemorate the visit of the Inspectors. I hope you will drink my health (And the Brave Generals too it you like). Our little Harry as behaved himself very well today, and you know dear, we are just about as you found us, and now my dear I daresay you are weary with your journeys to Paradise, and now I shall close for to night. Its got to late for post so I must scribble a bit more tomorrow.

My dear Baby as had belly ache. Made him so tiresome. Annie as just returned from Bourton. Mrs Amos made quite a fuss and wants to see baby. If Annie dont go back we are to go on Monday and such like Bosh. George is better. Our Harry is making us all laugh clapping his little hands. And my dear we are all about as usual. With fond love till I write again, Your affectionate wife
Mary Ann.

Tell me if you insure, a good plan I think.

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[LETTER 47]

"Friday evening"
Jan 12th 1877

My Dearest Harry

I felt so pleased with your letter this morning I did not expect you would write though I knew you would not forget me. I am sorry my dear I neglected to write for you would feel quite disappointed at receiving no letter from me. I felt sorry dear you should be so busy, for I think it a bad plan to sit up so late when you have long journeys to go. I have no doubt dear, what you say is true enough. When you are tired and begin thinking, it makes you feel dull and miserable, and being so unsettled makes us we don't know what to do for the best. I was quite surprised we seemed so much of a mind. I really dont feel disheartened, but I expect we shall wait till our patience is exhausted before you can get back. And if we make up our minds to settle down their, just as we are getting used to it you would get ordered here. And really dear Mr Hills advice sounds like the most straightforward. I had thought of that myself (and if our fears are true, and I see no other prospect at present) we must, for it will never do for me to come and lodge with you, and I think dear, if we have to do that, as the houses are all so small, we should manage very well for a tempory home. Anyway my dear, we cant make up our minds at once, nor could you take a house at once if you wished, so we wont puzzel about just now. I have heard nothing about the Irish Ride Mr M. talked of, so now my dear we will change the subject. Only you must not be to near and niggardly.

I have got another barrell of Stout, but if baby would eat, I should not want much Stout, but I dont intend to change. Baby is quite well and so am I (so I dont know what to think).

Annie as gone to Bourton with Mercy Watson, to see how Geo Amos is. We heard his foot was not so bad as at first discribed. Baby is rather tiresome, sleepy I fancy, so my dear you must excuse me saying more, but believe me dear in spite of our perplexing situation, I am happy and content to feel I have someone to care for me. With fondest love your own Polly.

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8. Have Set My Heart Upon a House

[LETTER 48]

[Harry Fisher to Mary Ann]

Dudley.
Jany 14 /77

My Dear Pollie

I received your two letters all safe yesterday and was thankful to know you were both well, though the absence of one bit of information (you know what I mean no doubt) makes me rather anxious, I hardly know how to interpret your meaning. At first I thought you meant that your anxiety was at an end respecting your condition, then again, you seem to be more anxious still, tell me more plainly dear. Mr Skinner's words seem to kindle a new hope, does he really think that Bloxham will soon be vacant. It seems a shame to raise our hopes only to be crushed again, but dear we are getting used to it now and have not such faith in probabilities.

That house at the bottom of Inkermann St was vacant again last week & I had half a mind dear to make inquiries about it, but again I thought how ridiculous to think of taking a house until we saw our way clear how to furnish it. We should not require a vast deal of furniture certainly, say one bedroom furnished and another partially so for the Girl for we could not do without a girl. Then one room downstairs furnished which would answer the double or rather several purposes of kitchen, dining room, sitting room, drawing room etc. etc. Then the front room furnished with a good sized table & a couple of chairs & of course fender & fire irons, to be my office. Dont you think dear we could manage very nicely with that for a while? Yes my love that

we could, but then where is even that lot to come from. You see we have nothing whatever. So we must content ourselves with thinking how well we could manage. It seems hard dear, very hard, but there we must be patient it cannot last for ever, that is one consolation.

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I have not insured yet dear, for where is the money to come from? I think we must defer it for a while. There has been a cheap Jack selling off things by auction every night this last week at Heath Town. I had half a mind to buy one or two things which went very cheap. A Copper kettle for instance, quite new to hold 9 pints was sold for 5/3 another for 5/9, then clock, & all sorts of things went off similarly cheap, but my pocket seemed to say steady old boy. I shall be empty enough as it is before the end of the round.

It was as much as I could to catch the last train last night without even washing me or changing my clothes, was very tired indeed when I reached here, they had given me up. Oh dear, how weary I did feel. Am much better to-day after a good long rest.

Lizzie is very near all right again & Mother seems very well. We had a pheasant for dinner, it was very nice & I wished you could have joined & wondered what you were having. Have written a good long letter to Rafferty this afternoon, so dear you get served second this time.

I sent your kind regards to him & the compliments of the season, he will be surprised.

Jem has had the twins portraits taken, but only one came out well & distinct, they are going to have another try.

Mrs White says Jenny is very poorly so keeps her from school, but I dont see much wrong with her. Mr Davies has heard nothing more about his man or horse & cart, except that the horse & cart was sold at W'hampton he cannot find out who to though.

Now my dear I think I have told you all the news, Mother & Lizzie send their united love.

We really must begin to think of some plan dear by which we can get together, if anything should occur to you let me know my love & we will discuss the matter over. Give my love to Grandma, and accept fond love for yourself & Harry,

from your affect husband

Harry.

[LETTER 49]

97 Inkermann St
Jany 18/77

My dear Pollie,

Thanks for the socks. I need hardly say how thankful I was for the bit of information with them, I can quite understand what a relief it was to your mind & that you could afford to be a little cheerful. Poor Jem's Pollie! I wonder if her mind is relieved from a similar burden? I was sorry indeed to hear that Grandma was so middling & trust ere this, she has recovered, it must have pulled her to pieces.

It shows a very mean spirit of your Uncle to talk like that. I suppose Henry calculated upon coming in for a share for John, so went up to have talk over it with Grandma. They are all after as much as they can get either by hook or crook. As for Thomas claiming all in the house, well there ain't a vast deal to claim of any value. Let them have it my love & don't let us begrudge it. Maybe we shall get along all right enough in time. Still for all that there is no harm in knowing how much belongs to them.

I would go and see Fortescue if I were you dear. If I had been with you we could have got full particulars & a copy of them. We did talk of my writing out a copy of the wills, but bless me it seems very strange for me to talk about such things. We will change the subject.

So you laugh at my sketch at housekeeping do you love? Wel1 never mind, I can stand being laughed at by you. I was very pleased dear that you suggested taking a house & I mean to be on the look out. Am afraid dear it will be a difficult matter to find a suitable one, however I will try my utmost.

You had better make a list out of all the things you have which would be of any use to us and let me see it.

Mother thinks we had better take a little house and wait patiently, provided you leave Grandma comfortable, & I am sure dear that we must do so, it will never do to keep on in this fashion. So I have decided that the first house I see vacant which we can make any sort of shift with, I take it at once. I shall go to the Rate Collector & Overseer & put him on the look out. Surely we must get one of some kind. Now dear I hope our darling has got rid of his belly ache & that you yourself are quite well. Mr Hill was with me yesterday & wants me to go over tonight. So as I am waiting to have a Couch in sight before going to Paradise. I thought I would just drop you a line.

I got some boots on Monday they are very strong & I went to Snareshill & Paradise with them the first day, & they nearly crippled me.

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Am getting used to them now. We have not so much wet this week & it has been tolerably mild but today is rather boisterous & cold.

I must go to Paradise on Sunday next so you must not expect to see me. It will be as much as I can afford to come at all this Round. I have paid for the boots 16/- & the bacon 23/- & lic lists 13/6 which it turns out I shall not get back until the end of the quarter and 12/- to Shazell for subsistence, so dear if I manage to clear myself without broaching into next Round's pay I shall consider I have done well. What a business to be sure this reckoning up and calculating is. About changing one of those notes dear I dont see how you can help it. You must not grind yourself down, or want for anything. You must eat & drink plenty, but need not be a drag on Grandmas pocket.

I will give you another note next Round & more if I can. Now dear I must be off to the Malt house. Perhaps I may think of something else I want to say by the time I come back so will leave space. My stout is quite gone & I am paying for beer to be sent for have ordered a small cask of ale this time.

Now dear I have returned & am waiting for dinner, there is nothing more to say that I can think of except that I am sadly tired of my enforced bachelors life. How I do long to have you & baby with me again. Yesterday I was inclined to give way to melancholy, did not feel altogether the thing when I got up. Perhaps had caught a slight cold or something. One thing I was very tired the night before. Walked a long way on Tuesday.

The next time I come up I shall expect to see Harry grown. Poor little dear it seems cruel that he & his Mother too should be separated from his fond father.

Give my love to Grandma & say I hope she has recovered. With fondest love to you & dear baby, Your affect husband

Harry.

[LETTER 50]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
Jan 19 /1 /77

My Dearest Harry

I received your kind letter this morning and I am behind as usual for the post, though I have intended writing all day. I daresay you felt anxious to hear how Grandma was and how I was getting on. Grandma is much better though she is constantly fretting because she is too weak to do as much work, as much as usual. Baby is tiresome just now but he gets so knowing. Every time I speak to [o], he laughs. I have had to take him, and now Grandma has hard work to keep him good by shewing him pictures. He is so sleep[y] he dont know how to keep his eyes open.

I am glad dear you and mother both think to take a small house would be better than lodgings, but I hope you wont be in a hurry has Grandma is so poorly.

I was looking through the Almanack and saw there are two ride officer likely to go to their devisions in Aylesbury Coll and two in Oxford Coll, but I don't think it worth while bothering about it.

I went to Banbury yesterday but I must tell you more about it next time. I did not go to Fortescue as Grandma is better. I led you to make a mistake. It was about Uncle Henry's own things he was anxious. He is in your way of thinking. All the things here are not worth bothering about and bless me my dear, me to make a list of what there is here useful I dont hardly know myself till...and really my dear I have no time to say anything.

I am pleased you have got nu boots and what a pity you were oblige to wear them directly. Give my love to Mother and Lizzy. I hope she is now quite well. And now dear I must conclude with kindest love your loving wife Pollie.

I was not the least disappointed you could not come did not expect you. Mr Murray is going to have a party. With fond love till I write again.

[LETTER 51]

97 Inkernann St.
Jany 21 /77

I have paged the sheets so you can read it better.

My dear Pollie

I seem to have a lot to tell you today, so as I have got to go to Paradise thought it wise to write to you first in case I should feel too tired when I came back.

I must first say how pleased I was to hear Grandma was better & hope she will soon be herself again & thankful that you and baby are getting on all right.

I had no sooner sealed up my last letter to you than Mrs White informed me that one of my new socks had fallen into the furnace hole & was burnt. It is very annoying but accidents will happen & it is not so bad as I first thought, it is only at the heel which she has tried to repair.

(2) On going out that same afternoon I met the Rate Collector and asked him about a house as I told you I should. He informed me that there was a house would be vacant very soon which would just suit me. So next day I went to look at it & seeing "a house to let" in the window I went in to look at it & it pleased me so much that I fetched Mother over yesterday to look at it and we both agreed that we could not possibly have a more comfortable & nice house were we to build one specially. It is a quarterly house at £15 a year. There are two rooms down stairs and a nice little back kitchen & three rooms upstairs. It is situated in a nice quiet spot & has a nice little bit of garden attached. The front door leads into the hall & the stairs facing it. There is a

(3) good cellar, abundance of soft & hard water gas upstairs & down & everything we could desire as compact & comfortable as could be. The space between the little kitchen or wash house & the sitting room is enclosed and covered. We approach the back door through an entry but there is a door to shut ourselves in from the entry. The present tenant holds it until next quarter day but is going on the 12th February so has the setting of it himself. There are of course some fixtures which we should have to take to. We can see the Country both from the front door & the back & I should be considerably nearer the Malthouses. It is to be decided whether or no I am to have it on Wednesday next. Some gentleman whom he has promised before is to come on Tuesday to

(4) look at it & if he does not take it I may. So we must hope he will not. I should feel greatly disappointed if we cannot get it & so will Mother. Let me know by return of post dear what you think about it.

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The house has been newly painted grained and varnished throughout & of course papered as well.

It seemed something like our usual fate that after I should have found a house which would suit us so admirably you should at the same time be writing to me, telling me not to be in a hurry. However dear if I take it we cannot go into it for 3 weeks or a month & we must hope that Grandma will be herself again long before that. Both Mother & I were saying how hard it seemed that you should leave Grandma, but dear, what can we do? I may be here

(5) for a year or two & then Annie ought to be able to take your place now, and I do not see how we can be at any loss in account of her being there. If I should take the house I shall come up to Cropredy for a few days for I think it nothing but right that I should make myself acquainted with the exact state of affairs regarding your expectations, & the whole of the property. It is no more than your husband's duty to look after your rights. It is to be hoped that Grandma will live for a few years yet & then we may by care & economy be able to show ourselves independent when the time should come. We must study our darling Harry's due my dear as well.

Well dear after Mother & I had looked through the house in

(6) question we came & had a cup of tea here: she as usual of late was very communicative to me. Told me different things which I knew nothing of before. Amongst others was the astounding news that Joe's wife was in the family way & gone four months. That Alice would be the next first to break in two, then Catherine & then she supposed Bella, who does not as yet show the least sign of anything of the sort. In fact instead of bulging out she appears to bulge in. However she has engaged a professional nurse from Liverpool who is engaged up to the very day that poor Bella wants her (mind you up to the very day) & she is going to no end of expense so we hope it is all right." Bless me!" Mother says,

(7) "What a host of Grandchildren I shall have soon."

Bella is awfully vexed & in fact indignant because Alice is so well & she has to suffer so much. Miss Bessie Hoyte was dreadfully indignant because there were no parties in honor of her visit to Dudley, she cannot imagine how anybody could really fall in love with her extremely cold! icy cold! sister Bella. She had declined heaps of invitations to all parts of the Kingdom merely to oblige Mrs Thomas Fisher, & all the thanks she got from that majestic lady was, "It is a pity you did not go Bessie dear," the ungrateful wretch! & then to crown all after I had been at the

(8) trouble of getting ready all sorts of finery thinking there would be parties & balls every night; the one single attempt was a miserable failure (which my dear I described to you before), so this August indignant, insulted & ill used Young Fairy Queen will never show her face at Dudley again.

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Well dear you have had enough of that nonsense. I went as far as Bilston with Mother & then to the Super, who told me to hold myself in readiness to perform double duty again at Willenhall, for that young fool of an assistant has been leaving his work undone again. The Super has been compelled to do it for him this past 2 or 3 days. You may be sure dear I dont much fancy the idea of it, though the extra pay would be very acceptable to us just now, would it not dear.

(9) Bless me! Here have I filled up two whole sheets. Why you will be tired of reading it. However I cannot find much more to say dear. I hope my love you will be pleased with the news I sent concerning ourselves. I should be greatly disappointed if my plans cannot be carried out now. I seem to have set my heart upon it & the thoughts of having you dear & our own dear baby with me again all to myself in a home of our own seems to have had a magical effect upon my spirits, & if you cannot join in my hopes I shall feel it very much my dear. Not but I know my darling you are as anxious to be with me as ever I can be to have you. Now dear I will make a finish.

Once again hoping Grandma is better & that you & baby will continue well. Mother & Lizzie are both very well & so am I dear. With fondest love & a kiss for you both or as many as you like to take. Hoping this letter will give you as much pleasure to read it as it has given me to write it. Believe me

Your loving husband

Harry

I did not tell Mrs White that I had been looking after a house, but she asked me quite coolly today if I had succeeded.

I forgot to say that £15 a year rent clears Rates and Taxes.

[LETTER 57]

Inkerman St.
Heath Town.
Jany 24th 77

Mv dear Pollie

You have made me very uneasy with the sad news about our pet. If he is no better my love let the Doctor see him at once. I have no time to say much now dear am doing double duty & being worked to death. Have just called to see about the house. We have made no bargain yet but I am to have the refuse of it. He is going away it appears on the 6 Feby rather sooner than we expected. My beer came in last night. I was going to countermand the order tonight. Now dear hoping our boy is better I must conclude. It must be very trying to you dear.

I have to go to Paradise, Snareshill & some Country Brewers, then to Willenhall afterwards, & it will be after 11 oclock before I can start owing to Davies being behind with his wetting. You had better see what things you have got at once dear & let me know.

With fond love hoping you had a little better rest & baby is better,
believe me
Your Affect husband

Harry.

[LETTER 53]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
Jan 25 /1 /77

My Dearest Harry

I was expecting your letter this morning to know if you had taken the house, but its undesided yet it seems, and I fancy it makes you very unsettled. Our little one is going on very well, and after he had that good sleep on Monday, seemed better. He as got a slight cold, and about teeth I fancy, but, pretty dear he is alright now, and gets very knowing. He loves looking at pictures and tearing paper.

I had a letter from Mary Canning this morning. She is coming on Saturday (to see the dear Baby). Mr Murray sold his horse yesterday. Uncle Henry wrote. I sent him word you were in view of a house so he is coming up soon, is going to have two of his boxes away if Grandma was willing, and she is really my dear. I seem to have a great deal to tell you and yet I seem to have no time. Grandma is very poorly her breath is so bad, so I try and do as much of the work as I can and with the baby you dont know how tired and worred I feel sometimes, but I dont complain for I know she is not able to do it.

You will let me know of course dear if you take this house. I am very sorry my dear you have so much to do. And now dear, you say Let you know what things are here. I will tell you what I thought about not of bringing everything, but only what would be useful at presant. For instance there are 3 beds. Well I though[t] about sending 2, but then I must have someone, and empt[y] those 2 feather beds, though I only thought of bringing the one, and the flock bed if we had a girl after a bit. I thought if I could get a woman to clean up, I could wait a bit. Well dear, theirs the half dozen chairs and that tea table, a set of fire irons, and I think their are sheets, blankets, quilts, towels and such things to go on with. Well then dear I thought, a center table & fender for the back room would do, and for the front [up]stairs we want a bedstead (3) and Pallias (4)or Mattress and (5) washstand, but I thought we could pay for that lot and to have the front room furnished. I dont exactly know how unless we resort to that credits sistim. I dont think we should be long about it and once see our way clear dear we shall get along I hope.

I dont know what to say to your coming up to go to Banbury. I think it wont matter just now. Do you think of coming up dear or are the funds to low? Sunday week is your Birthday, the following Thursday Grandmas. If you take that house I should not be prepared to come as early as the 6th Feb.

And though I seem to have a great deal to say my news drops short. I hope dear, you will get along all right. I am pretty well, got my face swelled up again. I feel uneasy about leaving Grandma, and yet scarcely able to continue as I do now, but as long as I am well, I shall not hurt. Everything around here is much as usual, Mrs Waite of Prescote as got a daughter. The other baby is only 11 months old. And now dear I must close, with kindest love from Grandma, fond love from me, your ever

Affectionate wife Pollie.

Give my love to all at home. Remember me to Mrs. and Mr White. I hope you will be able to go home for Sunday and have a rest, but I shall want to hear from you again. With fond love your own Pollie.



9. Chair

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9. Grandma is Very Poorly

[LETTER 54]

97 Inkerman St.
Heath Town.
Jan 26 /77

My dear Pollie

I was very sorry to hear this morning that your face was bad again & that Grandma is unwell. As for baby I hardly know how to take your account. I hope dear he is not very poorly & that you dont want to tell me. Pray my love do not keep anything from me regarding him.

I have no time to say much, must be off to Willenhall in a few minutes, have just returned from Snareshill & Paradise & had dinner. Am afraid I shall not be able to come for a while Mr Shazell is doing double duty at another Division so there is little chance of my getting leave & am too much occupied just now to run up.

I should like you to tell me what sort of chairs & table you have? Whether for bedroom or kitchen. As for beds, you need only bring one. Mother gives us a little iron bedstead & bed for the girls room. If you have bed linen etc it will reduce our expenditure considerably: dont buy anything at all, or may be we may both purchase similar articles which would be a pity. You give rather a vague description of what things you have got I should like to know dear exactly what sort of things they are & which rooms they are fitted for. If it is possible I shall get a few days leave though it looks rather doubtful at present. You know dear the sooner we get into the house the better for us. Excuse more just now dear for I must run to catch the train. Will write again on Sunday.

Hoping to hear a better account of you all next time, with fondest love
Your Affect husband

Harry.

[LETTER 55]

Dudley.
Jany 28

My dear Pollie

You see I have managed to get here to dinner. Came by the same train you & I came by, that Sunday, but I must go back this afternoon to see Mr Hill.

Am anxious to know dear how you are getting on. Hope baby is better & that you have had more rest & Grandma is better.

Well dear I have taken the house & hope you will be able to come as soon as it is ready. We are responsible for the rent after the 5th or 6th February. Do try dear & be ready it would be as well to send what things you have got on the 5th. It seems a great shame that I cannot get leave to look after things, but there seems no chance of my being relieved from double duty even, as yet, not to say being allowed private leave. It certainly is very awkward. However we must do the best we can. Why do you think dear you cannot get away so soon? Is Grandma so poorly? Oh dear! I feel so worried, anxious and unsettled, shall be so thankful when we are installed into our new home. I feel sure you will be pleased with it. Mother is delighted at the thoughts of it, & everybody here seems so pleased. They are both well & send their love & congratulations.

Mr Hill is awfully pleased & so is the Collector who has certainly had a very flattering account of your humble servant & seems to join Mr Hill in hopes that I may remain with them. It is very nice dear to feel that ones superiors are pleased & satisfied with me. I have no time dear to look after things so am very anxious to have you down. You might stay here for a few days with Mother & Lizzie until all was ready & of course go over and superintend the arrangements to your own liking. They say they would be only too pleased to have you.

Lizzie has enough work on hand to last her until Midsummer so Mother cannot spare time, to be running over to W Hampton. Perhaps in the course of a week or so I may get leave, we must hope so. Now dear I will conclude with fond love. Hoping Grandma is better & I need hardly say you & baby. Send me full particulars of what you have & for which room.

Your loving
Harry

What with double duty, anxiety about you & baby & about this furnishing business I seem regularly worried.

[LETTER 56]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
Jan 29 /77

My Dearest Harry

I was very pleased to hear from you this morning and Saturday. I felt sorry dear my letter had made you uneasy about me or baby, for I am very well only now and then a slight cold. Has for baby my dear I can fancy how pleased you will be to see him he gets along nicely, crows when he is spoken to, munches a crust and will drink milk out of a sauser, only now and then he takes a fit of screaming. On Saturday just as your letter came he led me a nice dance. So I hope you will feel quite easy.

And now my dear I can better tell what to be at, after your letter this morning. You said mine was a very vague description of things, and I had only a confused idea as to what you had done (and really now my dear I dont hardly know what I am saying for Mrs French is here and her tongue going 19 to the dozen) you tell me dear not to buy anything in case you should purchase similar. Now my dear this rather puzzled me, princply because I knew you had no money to spare, indeed dear, I wondered how you managed for cash, doing double duty. One thing my dear, I should not think of buying things here, to pay carriage all that way. But John Andrew's sale is on Tuesday next, and if I could I should like to go, and I thought if I saw anything useful and cheap, I should buy. What do you say to that? And now dear, instead of confusing me and worrying yourself, for that is just what I expected you were doing, just wait until I can come.

It is very kind of mother to give you bed and bedstead for the girl. Now can she recommend a girl something like the one your brother James as got? For as Grandma says, with baby my hands would be tied. Of course dear you will send me word what fixtures you have to take to, the adress to send anything too. And now my dear, I expect your idea is to borrow money from your Mother. I dont say a word about a few pound you may need, but to borrow money to furnish a house would make me most uncomfortable. Perhaps you may guess something of my reason for being so much against this one thing.

And now my dear, to tell the truth though, I dont doubt I shall be very pleased with the house, and the prospect of being together is so pleasant to look forward too. But my dear, I am very anxious about Grandma. It seems I am leaving her now she most needs me, for she as broke so since that atack. She seems so weak, sits by the fire and frets because she can do nothing much. Today she seemed almost crying when I told. But she cheered up since I talked very hopeful of coming back,

and I tell her I can come any time if I get a girl I can leave. I have a good more to do than I can manage, but if I can spare Grandma I am in hopes she will get better as the days get longer. I must send for Annie and get her settled in my place. So you see my dearest, though I long to be with you it is not without regret I look forward to leaving home. Excuse haste my own dear Harry. You know dear I will do as far as possible according to what I think would be your wish. With fondest love from me, and love from Grandma, Your ever affectionate wife,

Polly.

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[LETTER 57]

Jan 30 /77

My dear Pollie

I was very pleased to hear that you and baby are all right but very sorry indeed to hear how poorly Grandma is. I hope sincerely she will soon get better & stronger but my love you must not exert yourself or we shall have you laid up. Dont be trying to do too much.

I do not think it will be wise to buy anything at Andrew's Sale, this man is going to leave a few odd things behind which I am to take to so before buying anything at all we had better see what he leaves.

I have no time now to say anything it is after 7 oclock & I must survey 17 brewers in the Country business yet. Have only just returned from my double duty.

When do you think it likely you may come down? Do not lose any time. You know you can go & see Grandma again after we once get settled & we ought to go into the house as soon as it is vacant. We shall want a bedstead for ourselves so I had better order one, or get Mother to do so. Hope Grandma will not take it to heart much. Give my love to her & accept very fond yourself

Your loving
Harry.

In great haste. You cannot think dear how anxious I am for you to come down.

Am so thankful to think our little pet is getting on so well, for his sake as well as our own do be careful of yourself. Write to me again soon. I will perhaps be able to let you know some time during the week what I shall take to, that is if you do not come in the mean time. Fond love again. x x.

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[LETTER 58]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
Jan 31 /77

My Dearest Harry

I received your kind letter this morning. I felt very pleased with it. Grandma wonders what we have to say. I am serving you last to night dear. I have scribbled a few lines to my Uncle Henry and to Annie.

I thought dear you were quite right about my not buying anything at Andrews sale, for in sales like those theirs no telling how old they are and old things wont stand much nocking about.

Yes dear we must have a bedstead for ourselves. I should like one like that of Mother very well. I dont care for Iron ones and I know you dont, and we shall want some coles ordered to have a fire this damp weather.

Well dear about my coming down. Realty I cant say much yet but I will come has so[on] as I can. I intended going to Ann Neals tonight she is coming to wash and meant to have the beds emptied into the new ticks. The one that comes down will be a large one and not very ful I expect, but has Uncle said we could buy a few pounds of Feathers any time whe[n] we could not buy a bed.

I must enquire of Mr Ward what train will be best and of course let you know all particular in due time. I sent the two old Copper Kettles to Banbury on Monday and got the new gallon one back. The Fire Irons, Tongues had a little knob off I sent that to be put on. Two of my Boxes want locks for what I bring and what I leave behind. I must lock.

I shall pay Pollie W. but shall not go to Banbury to settle the Dr now. I have not yet changed one of those notes. When I do it will so[on] go. I can see Grandma seems more cheerful.

I think I shall bring that Picture the Farmyard but not the wool Work. I thought you [knew] what those Chairs were old Fashioned but strong. They will do for a back Parlour or room we live (till a future time when we buy better) then bape [?] Kitchen chairs. Shall I bring the Books (to make your office have an apperance). Now my dearest I am quite well so is our Pet and asleep just at present, but I must close with fondest love ever your

Loving wife Pollie.

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10. The House Needs Furnishing

[LETTER 59]

Dudley
Feby 4th

My dear Pollie

Thank goodness I finished with double duty yesterday, but am still unable to get private leave.

You see I am at Dudley & am told to look sharp with my letter & accompany the folks to the castle. Lizzie & Miss Nicholls have gone for a walk alone. Mr & Mrs Jones here waiting for mother & your humble servant. But that is not the sort of talk to indulge in just now being pressed for time.

I am to take charge of our house tomorrow at eleven o'clock. He leaves behind some very useful things such as meat jack, 8 day clock, dripping pan, water filter, 2 tons of coal, oil cloth for hall & stairs & sundry other useful things, plates & dishes & jugs. However I will just mention what other things we shall want: there will be a bedstead (am recommended to have an iron one my dear, by all), though my inclination is with yours. Still I cannot but admit that taking all things into consideration it would be wisest to have an iron one. Well a half dozen bedroom chairs would be enough (4 for ourselves & 2. for the girl). Then dressing table, glass & wash hand stand & of course chamber crockery, & chest of drawers. The chairs you have got will do for downstairs, then there will be saucepans & pots, knives & forks & spoons, tea service, smoothing irons, & I shall want a cupboard of some sort for the office & a couple of chairs. Mother finds she cannot spare the office cupboard, or rather, wardrobe. I think my dear, you may as well send all you have got, beds & everything else belonging to you. Did not Grandma promise you a set of cups & saucers? The man leaves behind a metal tea pot .



10. Fisher's Household China

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And now dear, I beg and pray you will lose no time in coming down, for I really cannot find the time to see after things, & hope we may be settled in our new home before next Sunday.

Am thankful to think you and our pet are all right, but am afraid you are overworking yourself: If you send anything down address it to me at Frederick Street, Heath Town, Wolverhampton, late Mr Annetts. Care of [c.o] do not know the number. Will write again tomorrow.

We have forgotten it was my birthday until dinner time & I among the rest. & now my darling I must conclude, hoping you will be able to understand this rambling letter, & hoping to see you in a day or two, & that Grandma is better. With fond love to you & baby. Believe me, my dear Pollie

your Affect husband

Harry

It is a month since I saw you, shall expect to see an alteration in Harry. Kiss him for me dear & take a good supply your self. x
x x

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[LETTER 60]

Dudley
Feby 5th

My dear Pollie

Many thanks for your kind wishes. I got your letter on my arrival at Heath Town last night I am afraid dear you are trying to do too much. I do hope you will be careful. I dont know what I should do if you were to knock yourself up just now, you need not fear for me love, I am all right, but very anxious and worried about our new home & the cares attending it. Am sure my letters of late must be very worrying to you dear, but trust you will excuse me. I do so long to have you with me & to get settled. Was too late for post this evening but hope you will get this by the afternoon post. Have settled about the house today, so we are paying rent from now.

Have came over here to see if Mother cannot help us. She has promised to purchase bedroom furniture for us tomorrow, comprising bedstead, chairs, drawers, toilet table and ware & looking glass, also table & cupboard for office. So dear, as soon as you can send bed & blankets, I will go & sleep at the house. I think I would send all the beds & everything else while you are about it. And dear I beg & pray of you not to overwork yourself. If you will come down & once get things into a little ship shape you may go back again for a few days & put things straight there.

And once again I say on any account do not over exert your self or you will be ill & then dear I should never forgive myself.

There is no number to our house but I think the address I sent yesterday will be sufficient. I have given the keys of the house to the landlady who has kindly consented to look out for anything which may come & see it safe into the house. Have written to the Super again to day asking & pressing for leave. Let me know dear if you will be able to come in a day or two. I can well fancy how tired & weary you feel what with Grandmas failing strength, your own hard work, worry & care about one thing ü another. Am fearful lest you should break down, but my darling for the sake of our "dear little one" have a care.

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I know you think me very selfish & unfeeling to wish you to leave Grandma so hurriedly simply to lighten my own burden, but dear you must know how helpless I am in an emergency, like the present. I am trying to do what I think best for us both, & yet am afraid I shall incur your very severe displeasure & that dear is very far from my wish, hence my impatience to have you here. Now dear it is near one o'clock so I will close, with fondest love & God bless you & baby too. Do not imagine that I have no feeling towards Grandma, for indeed I am very grieved about her. Give my love to her & I hope she will soon be better. Let me know by which train you send the goods & by what train you will come yourself. Your loving husband Harry. x
x

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[LETTER 61]

97 Inkermann St
Heath Town
Feby 7th

My dear Mother

I think Friday will suit me very well. Shall know tomorrow (Thursday) whether or no I can get leave. Mr Hill has kindly offered the Collector to arrange about my work for a week if he will allow him; I should go to Cropredy; I had a letter this morning & am afraid Mary Ann is knocking herself up entirely.

The paper hangers are at the house today, going to White wash the ceilings upstairs & repaper the office. With love & thanks

your affect. son
Harry

Did you send my letter off yesterday? I forgot in the morning in my hurry.

Excuse paper.

[LETTER 62]

[Written on the back of Letter 61]

8 Wolverhampton St. Dudley
Thursday Morning

Dear Henry

I have packed up all yr Chinese things. Now they are clean I feel sorry to part with them. The solitaire board is in yr Portmanteau, and the little nobs belonging the iron bedstead. I send a bed, Mattress & 1 pillow. From Hales [?] Iron bedstead

Straw Palliasse,
Towel Rail, Toilet Service,
Dressing Chest,
Looking Glass,
Wash Table,
6 Chairs, Office Table
& Cupboard.

If the table is too large to go up the stairs send it back. Try and be there by eight a.m. to see the goods unloaded.

Dear Henry We make you a present of these things & hope you & Mary Ann will like them. The hearthrug must be in prospective.

Yr Loving Mother & Sister
E. Fisher's

Your letter went all right.

11. Grandma Wont Keep Her Bed Long

[LETTER 63]

Cropredy,
April 6th /77

My Dearest Harry

I felt just a wee bitt disapointed this morning has I did not get a few lines from you. Baby & myself are quite well poor little pet he gets put about fairish[?].

Yesterday Annie's mother came but went back in the evening. Grandma was not so well. I had hard work to coax her up a little, and then she was so tired. Today she is not able to get up at all. And takes scarcely anything, I really dont think she will ever come down again and I dont think she will keep her bed long. So my dear you use your own discretion about coming tomorrow. I should like you to see poor Grandma alive, but then its expensive to come up and down or will you wait till I send for you.

John has not come yet. He is at Warwick but not at Uncle's. My Uncle Henry as taken all his boxes away.

And now my dearest their is not much to tell you. I know you are busy enough. I thought of you when I saw Murray sending off the dog lists. Annie and I find plenty to do.

Bett as come to pay her rent to Grandma while she is alive she says, and to get asked upstairs, and she has been up their so long I have sent Annie to start her off. Grandma sleep very strange. I should not be surprised to find her dead any time, and her lips look black. What had I best do should anything happen, I dont exatly know. I feel it cant be true.

And now my dear, I must conclude, with fondest love ever your
Affectionate wife Polly.

[LETTER 64]

[The top letter, on a piece of die-stamped official writing paper relates to a long-wished-for change of job location for Henry. It comes too late, now they have settled for the new home.]

Banbury, 10 Apr. '77

Dear Mrs Fisher,

I am glad to inform you that I have received an intimation, this morning of Mr Fisher's appointment to Bloxham Ride. Thinking that the news might interest you at the present time, I have sent a special message with it.

Yours faithfully
J. Skinner

[LETTER 65]

[The next letter from Mary Ann is written on the back of Mr Skinner's above.]

6 o'clock

My Dearest Harry

I have just received this very kind note. I dare say Mr S. thinks I shall be pleased. I do not feel so, it is as you say our usual luck.

I thought of adviseing you to remain but really dont know what to do. Grandma continues to dose. Uncle is going back to night. I have had Baby vaccinated this morning. Could not see Mr Fortescue yesterday. Sarah Pratt is going to sitt up to night. Mrs Nea¹ was their last night Mr Murray is going to remain in Banbury. Grandma is quite sensible as when you saw her. I know my dearest you are terrible upset. I am quite satisfied if you can decide in any way. Poor Grandma cannot last long. Dr said not till morning, but I think she will, without any sudding alteration. I feel sure none of your leave will be wasted if you petition for it at once and come, then we can talk things over.

Susannah from Warden is here. Excuse this, you can understand I feel put about with fondest love your

Affectionate wife Polly.

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[LETTER 66]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
April 11 /77

My Dearest Harry

I received your letter this morning. Poor Grandma is no more. She died about 3 o'clock this afternoon. She was unable to speak to us to day. I hope my dear you took my advice and applied for leave. I shall feel better satisfied to have you here. I dont know what to [?] Of course coming to Bloxham meant coming her[e]. Mr M. would be pleased now as he dont know what to do.

I suppose you must lock the house up and if Alice goes home her Mother will see to her, else anything warm, and I was going to say she might make herself a rice pudding.

I think Babys arm will take, 4 places cut.

Uncle Thomas went home last night so Annie & I have to see to anything thats wanted.

I dont feel in a humour to write. With fond love ever your affectionate wife Polly.

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[LETTER 67]

[From Mary Ann's family Solicitors.]

Banbury
25 April 1877

Dear Sir

M.A.Borton deced.

Mr T. Borton has decided to Administer to the above estate & has instructed a Solicitor at Coventry to prepare the necessary papers. We can however go on with the raising of the £300 & should be glad to see you when convenient We have written also to your address at Cropredy as we do not know at which place you may be.

Yours truly
Fortescue & Sons

Mr Henry Fisher
Frederick St.
Heath Town
Wolverhampton.

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[LETTER 68]

Cropredy,
Leamington.
April 26 /77

My Dear Harry

I was quite surprised to receive a Telegram from you this morning and to no purpuss. We know their can be no Sale till the will has been administered too. And I received the enclosed this morning. So when that his done Beere will have to take a

fresh inventory, before any sale can take place, because I tell you, Uncle says all shall be sold {and anyone that took or attempted to take a thing away he would make them bring them back again). At the same time he takes the clock, weather glass and picture & Hosey's box himself. I was very near interfering about the clock and W Glass. He still talk about the rents for the 12 months and says he shall charge John 3/6 a week stable room, and went to Bett and others to enquire for their back rent. They owe none and it put Bett about ever so. He told them at Egertons he should play Hell with us, however the wonderful play did not take place. He seems very thick with John Lambert, but I think it will be our time when things are settled (I am rather vexed you gave that copy book to Fortescue, you could have copied out and heard some one else, I advise the same as Uncles doing he too had got a copy and then set the place yourself and let him see who is Master.

John tells me W Cheery would be glad to take the place only they heard John Lambert had got it. John sent his things this morning and I sent a box & Bed (dont attempt to unpack till come myself). Cheery took them to the station, two journies only charge 1/6, no Beer.

I was very pleased indeed to hear from you this morning, but very sorry to hear you had been put about and like wise to hear of Alices goins on. Please your self about givin her notice. I have heard of no girl around here, but will make enquirie about it. I hope you will send me one or both packing cases.

I should think it will be best to write to Fortescue and tell them not to rase the 300 but that you can produce it when its wanted. Uncle talks about claiming interest. Made me think it would be well to here another solicators opinion on the subject, how ever dear, I know you will see all right It seems unfortuneate you are so far away.

I should like the set of draws bought in at the sale, because we know they are well made, no (deal wood).

And now with fondest love believe me your affect. wife Pollie.

Baby is going on first rate, as lively as possible.

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[The following was written on an extra slip of paper.]

Uncle takes Hosey's box. John Marches upstairs and takes the Writing desk (to be even) and as sent it away (he never mentioned the locket) of course I know nothing.

[This seems to be the last of the Cropredy letters.]



11. John Borton's Ale Glasses

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Appendices

Appendix One List of Inhabitants

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List of the principal inhabitants of 1876 and 1877, and Who's Who taken from the Brasenose College records, house deeds, school log books, local newspapers, directories, chapel and parish chest records. The first four were the "gentlemen of Cropredy." The rest were farmers and principal tradesmen.

EAGLES Mr William, Poplar Farm.

ELKINGTON William, Old Yard, Creampot Lane.

GRISOLD John, retired farmer at Goodrest. Owned Oxhey Farm.
WOOD Revd William D.D. Vicar.

ADKINS George, Farmer of Thickthorn. 93 acres.
ALLITT James, Carpenter & grocer. Copes Cottages.
ANKER William, Farmer. The Knob (Beech House).126 acres.
BANBURY Co-op, Industrial Society, opened 1873 at 9 Red Lion St.
BORTON Edward, Farmer & farrier. Monkeytree House. 7 acres.
CHECKLEY Hawtin, Butcher & Baker. Home Farm.
CHESTERMAN Richard A. Farmer of 416 acres. Cropredy Lawn.
EDGERTON John, Publican. Brasenose Inn.
GARDNER John, Plumber & Painter of 2 Red Lion St.
GOLBY George, Mason & Farmer of 150 acres, coal-merchant. Wharf.
HADLAND William & sons. Millers & Farmers. Bourton House.
KINMAN William & Mark. Harness makers. East side of Green.
LAMBERT John, Coal-merchant Cropredy & Great Bourton. 3 Red Lion St.
LAMBERT Prudence Miss, Publican of the Red Lion Inn.
LAMBERT Thomas & James. Wheelwrights & Blacksmiths. Woodyard.
LAMPREY & son. Coal-merchants Cropredy & Banbury. Wharf.
MURRAY Richard, Inland Revenue Officer. Lodging at Borton's, Cropredy Green.
SMITH George, Farmer of 158 acres. Station Farm.
SMITH George, Stone mason owned 3 Red Lion St.
SMITH Robert, Carpenter. Holmleigh, Round Bottom.
SMITH Thomas, Shoemaker & Sub-post office on N. side of Green.
TOMS Dier, Farmer of 260 acres. Hill Farm.
WALKER George, Farmer & Coal-dealer. Bridge House.
WARNER William. Farmer at Andrew's Farm, Executors for T. Andrews.
WAYTE Edward, Farmer. Prescote Manor. 360 acres.
WISE James, Basket & Sieve maker. Next to Home Farm.

Registrar: John SMITH of Great. Bourton.

Relieving Officer: William GOLBY.

National School: Robert TWEED MANNING, Headmaster. Arrived 1876.

G.W.R. station: William WARD, Station master, lived Great Bourton.

Carriers: Richard SUMNER to Flying Horse, Mon. Wed. Thurs. & Sat.

William CHERRY to Union, Mon. Thurs.& Sat. Lived in Station Row.

Cropredy Church Choir boys in 1876 with approximate age:

J[esse] Adkins [17], Walt Barnett [12], Hawtin Checkley [13], Henry Golby [10], Frederick Hunt [12], John Lambert [13], Thomas Lambert [13], William J. Lambert [14], George Neale [10], John Pratt [17], William Shakespeare [14], George Tasker [13].

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Appendix Two Who's Who.

G= Cropredy Grave. Gt.B.g.= Great Bourton grave. B.A= Quotes from the Banbury Advertiser 1876. P.C.=Parish Council. bp= baptised.

WILLIAM ADKINS (1837-) Thatcher, son of Joseph & Ann. Married 8 Dec.1861 to SARAH Amos (c1841-) from Lower Boddington. They had c15 children: Ellen (1863), Maria (1864), Thomas & Ann (1865), Betsy (1868), Celia(1869), Albert (1871), Joseph (1873), Susan (1874), William (1876), Walter (1877-82), Beatrice (1879), William (1882), James (1883- 86), Bertha (1885). Lived in Anker's Row, High St. in 1876 when Sarah helped Mary Ann with Henry Fisher Junior. Moved to Great Bourton.

CHARLES ADKINS (c1834) Bach. son of George & Lucy. Labourer. Lived in Anker's row in High Street.

THOMAS AMOS (1834 at Wilscoate -15 April 1919) G.388. Farmer, Innkeeper & Coal- merchant. Son of Thomas, & nephew of George Walker (died 1882): Married 1859 to MARY ANN Anker nee James, widow, Publican of Brasenose Inn (c1821- 25 May 1902) G.217. Her son George Anker (died 1851) G.241. Two Amos sons: George T (1860- 1922) Gt.B.g.82 & Frederick (1866- 72 died of scarlet fever) G.240. Mrs Amos was careful of son George's health. Lived Brasenose then Prospect House Great Bourton. Family purchased Cropredy's Borton House & cottages on Green, Spittal's farm with 84 acres and other Bourton

property thereby becoming a major landholder by 1903 (Mrs Simmons another major Bourton landowner). Geo. Amos lived at Bridge House Cropredy, then in 1919 returned to Prospect House.

WILLIAM ANKER (5 Sept 1840- 5 Oct 1902) Bach. G.498. Farmer at Beech House & later Hill Farm for cousin Miss Mary Toms (also G. 498). After his mother Mrs Kezia died in 1877 his sister Kezia (1838-1922) managed the household. William the local historian. Church warden for 30 years. PC.1896-1902. On many committees. Trustee of Bel1 Land 1873ff. Thrift Club. Acted as agent for Brasenose College. School Log Book p73: "Revd. Greenham told me that Mr Anker school manager had died suddenly about 10 o'clock. This is a sad loss to the school & parish."

SARAH BARNETT (c1825-) from Shotswell. Laundress in 1881 census. Married WILLIAM (c1819-) from Fenny Compton, shepherd. Lived in Jitty as tenants of Mr Smith. Children included in 1871 census: John 29 (later lived in Plantation Row), George 20, Frederick 17, Susan 9, Walter 7, Ellis 5, Robert 3.

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JAMES WATTS BORTON (bp 20 Mar. 1844- drowned skating on Clattercote Pool 13 March 1895) G.42. Bach. In 1881 Brewer & Publican of Brasenose Inn after Egerton. Retired to his cottage on N. side of Green by 1891. His property passed to Mary Ann Fisher nee Borton.

MARY ANN BORTON nee Amos, Grandma (1796- 11 April 1877) G.20. Born Chipping Warden. Married by licence 9 June 1827 to JOHN BORTON (1803-1836) G.29. Blacksmith. Lived at "The Green." 4 children: WILLIAM (1828- 66) Saddler m. ANN Johnson (1828- 66) [Parents of Mary Ann], SUSAN (1829-73) G.21 m. Henry Purser. BETSY (1833- 67) G.20 married -? Proffitt, THOMAS (1835-) Carriage builder at Warwick m. Rhoda. 2 chd. survived, Annie & Betsy. Mary Ann was a widow for 40 years. Owned several properties and had a lodger.

SARAH BRITAIN nee BORTON (1811-) daughter of William & Ann. Married WILLIAM BRITAIN, bricklayer from Yorkshire. Lived in a Borton cottage on N. side of the Green. One lodger was Henry Purser, a railway labourer, later a publican, married her niece Susan. Sarah inherited 4 cottages (Lambert's in High St. & the 3 on the N. side of the Green) from Father, which passed to her son James W. Borton. When he died, without making a will, they passed to Mary Ann Fisher nee Borton, who recovered them from the treasury.

BESSIE CATCH (c1858-) married George Smith (1856-1906), an accountant, son of George of Station Farm, Cropredy. Bessie niece of Mrs Hannah Smith nee Ward, wife of Thomas Smith, shoemaker. Brought up by the childless Thos Smiths on the N. side of the Green. She helped with the sub-post office. Born in Cropredy her father was Charles Catch who was once a lodger at Smiths in 1851. A journeyman miller from Adderbury. Her mother Fanny Catch nee Ward came with her parents from Boddington. Thos Ward a carpenter worked for Charles Cook on the Green. Wards had 5 children 1814 to 1832 and are buried

near Smiths G.45. Bessie sang with Sunday school choir at Chapel. When married lived at 28 Albert St. Banbury. One son Thomas plus ...? She sold her Coxes Butts field to relation Richard Sumner in 1908.

WILLIAM CHERRY (1843- 9 June 1927) Carrier & coal merchant who farmed Oathill by 1991. m. Beatrice (1844- 4 Oct 1921). Chapel family, abstainers, hence no beer, page 108. Lived in Station Row in 1881.

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HOWARD GRISOLD COOKE (1862-) 5th of 7 children of John Cooke (1821-) and Sarah (1831-) farming 125 acres of Hill Farm, Great Bourton from c1855 to 1879. When Howard was about 15 his friend Charles came to stay for a few days from 176 Cold Harbour Lane, Camberwell, London. Charles Shaw Seabrook was also 15 and had recently lost his father. They set out from the farm at 10am on Friday the 18th of August. It was wet Howard carried a double barrellled gun to shoot birds. Charles "was not used to a gun himself, but would like to see his friend shoot" [B.A]. They crossed the Banbury Road and went down to Hanwell Brook to the spinneys in Mr Henry White's field. Charles walked behind as Howard had charged both barrels with powder and shot "with percussion caps on the nipples." He kept the gun at half cock until they reached the brook and then fully cocked. They followed a bird into the spinney, but lost it and turned for home. At this point Charles was now in front. Howard's thumb was slippery, because of the wet conditions and to make the gun safe he was going to "put the hammer at half cock" for the walk home. The hammer of the right-hand barrel slipped from his thumb and the gun exploded the shot straight into Charles's right loin exiting at the front, apparently carrying away part of his stomach. Charles cried out "Oh!" and Cooke seeing blood pouring from his friend laid him on the grass saying "Oh what have I done?" In a panic he told him "to stop there while he went for help. Running up the Lane to get his father he passed Robert Batchelor and his wife and begged them to go down to Charles. His father fetched Mr John Smith, tailor, and Mr White came with his gig. They found Charles' clothes soaked in blood, but he was still conscious. After some brandy and water he was carried into the gig and taken to Cooke's farm. The surgeon Mr Pemberton had been summoned. He found him in shock and beyond help, because of the two large wounds. The Doctor questioned Charles as to what had happened and he described it saying it was an accident for Cooke's thumb slipped from the hammer. His mother arrived from London just before 9 o'clock that night, when he died. The following day the Inquest gave a verdict of accidental death. Mr James Batchelor of Little Good farm, baker and landowner was the foreman of the jury.

AMY ELKINGTON (1853-) Pupil teacher, living with widowed mother at the Swan Inn, Great Bourton. Father, William (1817-1860) G 431, Innkeeper. Her mother, Eliza (1821-). Amy sister to: John (1847-), William (1850-), George Isaac (1851-) and Alban (1856-).

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JOHN ELKINGTON (22 Dec.1817 died 5 July 1876 thrown from his horse). Licencee of Plough Inn at Lt Bourton, nicknamed the Dirt House. Gt.B.g 112. On a Wednesday in July John was riding his horse south wards towards Bourton, on the Banbury road. Mr Francis White and his farm boy Joseph Parker passed him in their trap, perhaps returning from seeing to their stock. He called out "How do you do?" [B.A] and went on. John's horse suddenly, at about 150 yards from the turn to Bourton, left the footpath and went out of control on the road. John shouted "Woo, Woo" two or three times. Mr White turned and saw Mr Elkington had been thrown, landing on his head. Running back to help he found him unconscious. He stopped Mr and Mrs Fowler who came up, to call for assistance. Soon Mr John Cooke came with brandy followed by Mr John Andrews of Little Bourton in his Whitechapel cart. Mr Pemberton, surgeon having been summoned by John's nephew, appeared in his gig By this time the injured man was under the hedge and a crowd had gathered including Mr Thomas. The patient was still unconscious and bleeding from behind the right ear. Mr Pemberton directed him into the cart and he was taken to the Plough Inn. The doctor was still in attendance when he died at 6 o'clock from a fractured skull. A verdict of accidental death was given the following day. The jury consisted of Mr G. Adkins (foreman). J. Cooke of Hill farm, D. Savage, a corn dealer, M. Potter of Gt. Bourton House, farmer, W Boote an inn keeper & farmer, J. Boote a cooper, C. Carpenter a farmer on the Southam Rd, J. Smith a tailor, W.Godson a butcher, R. Archer of Buzzards farm, J. J. Andrews a Little Bourton farmer and J. Checkley a Little Bourton farmer.

HENERY FRANKLIN (1829-) Police constable married JEMIMA (1827-) glove maker from Milton. 2 children: Emma (1858-) pupil teacher and Albert (1864-). Lived on N. side of Green. To Sommerton c 1877.

GEORGE GOLBY (1827-) about seventh generation of Cropredy stone masons. Builder and farmer of 150 acres, and coal merchant employing 10 men in 1871. Lived at the Wharf House. Married JOYCE Terrill of Shotswell (1818-).

MARTHA GRISOLD of Great Bourton (c1792- bur.17 Apr11876) wife of WILLIAM born Mollington (c1789- 5 Dec 1872) Butcher Gt B. g 99. Grandparents of Pollie Watson, parents of Richard, Mary, George, Thomas, John, Emma & William born 1816 to 1835.

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JOHN HEMMINGS (1821 died 4 July 1876 aged 56) bachelor. Shoemaker & pig killer. Son of William & Mary. 4th child of 7, of which only John and William survived to adulthood His brother William married Hannah Allitt, but died aged 27 a year later. Their mother's father Edward Elkington owned & farmed Oathill. When John was 19 his mother, Mary, died and his father, William a carpenter, remarried. She brought with her a young daughter to their cottage at Old Yard (owned by Elkingtons). Grave 14 says William died in great pain in 1858 aged 66. John moved to a cheaper cottage with only 3 rooms, the middle one of 5 down Creampot Lane. He took in a lodger and worked for Mr Lambert, perhaps on a casual basis, hoeing & haymaking.

On July 14th at 9 am he called at a former lodger's cottage, next door but one. James French (24 years) was out, but he asked his young wife Harriett if her husband would pull some plants for him when he came back for lunch. He left saying he was just off for one more half pint. James was too busy that day, but on hearing on Friday that John had not been seen all Thursday he went to his former lodgings and entered the only room downstairs. The stairs door was partly open so he called "John" [B.A]. Silence. He went to the door and as he looked up John's heels "knocked his hat back on his head." Mr Hemmings was hanging from a roof timber at the top of the stairs. James touched him and found him cold and beyond help. He told Harriet that he was going up to the Green to get PC. Franklin. Together they cut John down and laid him on his bed. Apparently he had used his pig killing cord and by standing on the landing bedroom handrail had attached it twice round the beam leaving a slip noose for his neck.

At the Inquest, the French's told how John had been in "very low spirits" for a few days, and George Dumbleton (aged ?19) who worked for Mr Lambert explained how last Saturday night when they went for their pay John refused to take his, though it was the correct amount, saying he had "not done the work." On Monday George asked him the reason, but apparently John didn't remember going for it and acted strangely, not talking as "he generally did and kept himself to himself." Then on Wednesday evening when he spoke to him he "turned short off and went away." He said he'd collected his pay, but this was not true. The jury gave a verdict of suicide whilst in a state of temporary insanity. The coroner, Mr Faulkner, said he'd had 3 or 4 similar cases recently. John's cottage remained empty for a couple of decades, partly due to lack of demand and partly the farmers neglect of that row of thatched cottages.

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JOHN HOSEY (1834-) Inland Revenue officer born in Ireland. Lodging at Borton's in 1871. Hosey left his box their house on The Green.

WILLIAM & ESTHER KINMAN arrived from Tysoe cl775. G.189. A family of saddlers. They converted the barn end of Toms farm on the Green into their house. Charles Cook, a brother-in-law, set up as carpenter in the house next door. One son died of consumption G.188, and the youngest MARK married HANNAH Hewens of Tysoe and carried on the business. Their children: Elizabeth (1812-) m John Hawkins in 1835, a tailor, Mary (1814-38), WILLIAM (1817-1878) bach. Harness maker. G.190. MARK (1819-1884) bach. Harness maker G.190. Evis died, EVIS (1823-1875) sp. Housekeeper to 2 brothers.G.190.GEORGE HEWENS (1821-1855) carpenter with uncle Cook. Elizabeth & John HAWKINS family came to visit. They inherit a small legacy from the sale of the house in 1878.The Hawkins children: Mark a saddler, George a tailor both of Birmingham.William a seaman in the Royal Navy. Hannah m. John DANIELS a pork butcher in B'ham (John took care of uncle Mark's weekly allowance). Miriam Mary m. William PARKER manufacturer of Nechells Green, B'ham & Elizabeth m. Thomas GOODE pork butcher of B'ham. [Info from Marian Hall:-] John Daniels m Hannah Hawkins & had 3 sons: Thomas, Harry & William. 3 daugs: Evis M., Florence & Jesse. John Daniels of Erdington, Warwicks, Gent. died 21.03.1894. B'ham probate 9 May 1894 left to Thos Daniels, Pork Butcher & Wm Kemp, Effects & £4,030. 17s.

The LAMBERTS: [I].JOHN (1764-1837) publican, parish clerk. G.185.m i) DEBERA Smith (died 1791) ii) MARY (died 1813). Children: WILLIAM (1789-1843) wheelwright (see below), THOMAS (1789- 1863) glazier, ELIZABETH (1796), MARY SARAH (1799-1874) publican, MARY (1800), ANNE (1802 - 10), FRANCIS (1804), SAMUEL (1805-65) publican, JAMES (1806), PRUDENCE (1807-83) publican, JOSEPH (1811).

[2] WILLIAM (1787-1843) G.183. Wheelwright m. SARAH Lines (1795-1860). Children: THOMAS (1821-1901) (see below). JOHN (1822-88) Black smith & coal dealer m. Elizabeth Shirley. 2 girls. WILLIAM (1825- 1901) Shoemaker & co-op G.219, married .i) Mary & ii) Elizabeth.4 children: William, Ellen (see below), Mary & Minnie. MARY ANN (1827) m. John Young, Engine driver. PRUDENCE (1829-1851), DEBORAH (1832- 92). JAMES (1838-1916) G.200.Carpenter m. Margaret Allitt (1833-67) 5 children: Mary Ann, William J., John, Samuel & Sarah. SARAH.

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[3] THOMAS (1821-1901) G.220, son of Wm & Sarah. Wheelwright & publican by 1888, Parish clerk for 60 yrs, which meant leading the responses in church, keeping the boiler going & acting as sexton & recording marriage banns. Lived at the Woodyard married i) MARY ANN (died 1852 Ī) in 1854 CAROLINE Denereay (1828-91). Children: SARAH (1851), SARAH JULIA (1855-) (see below). JOHN (1857), FANNY (1859), MARY (1861), THOMAS "Little Tom" (1863), LOUIS (1866- 1943) R.D.C Roadman, sexton, lived at Borton's cottage "Lambert's Cottage" in High Street, JOHN (1868-1938), FREDERICK (1870), LOUISE (1873).

[4] ELLEN LAMBERT (1853-) daughter of Wm & Eliz. Ellen married in autumn 1876. Lived at the Co-op when home.

[4] FANNY LAMBERT (1858-) Pupil teacher at Cropredy. 2nd class Warrington College in Jan 1877. Daughter of John & Elizabeth who according to the school log book on 21st Sept 1876 "Fanny ...on leave of absence in consequence of her parents removal from Cropredy." They soon returned to rent 3 Red Lion St? Later lived at The Green. Fanny married 9 Jan 1882 to William Holbrook, railway clerk from Leek.

[4] MARY A. LAMBERT Either Ellen's sister (born 1857),or daughter of James & Margaret (1859-1934)

[4] SARAH JULIA (1855-) Dressmaker. Daughter of Thomas and Caroline. Mother from Switzerland. Boys in this family often lodged at the Red Lion with their aunts and uncle. When Thomas took over the Red Lion from 1888-1901 he may have run both homes, for in 1991 his wife and some of the family still lived at the Woodyard.

ANNE MONDAY (1808- 21 March 1875) G.195. Widow of THOMAS (d.31 Dec 1854). Lived in Borton's small middle cottage on N. side of Green. Mrs Tasker's mother rented it later.

JAMES NEAL (bp 6 Feb 1825- 2 Feb 1900) m. ANN (1829-18 March 1895) G.467. From Woodford. Did she act as midwife? Children: Sarah (1851), Mary Ann (1854-1908)G 467, m. Wm Mander, Betsy (1857 died) WILLIAM (1859-)builder married Ellen Cooknell, GEORGE (1865) Farmer, James (1856 died). Lived in Copes Cottages. Worked for his son George a coal merchant in 1890's. Allotment next to school.

SARAH PEACOCK. The Bourton's first Infant teacher arrived 1st March 1876: "I Sarah Peacock entered upon my duties here but found I could not commence school as Building was not quite finished. Commenced 13 March."

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WILLIAM PRATT (1836-1911) G.340. Agricultural worker then canal lock keeper. m. SARAH JANE Payne (1830- 29 May 1882) G.341. In 1871 Pratts lived at the old sideways cottage between Borton's and Kinmans. Later moved to Lock cottage. William helped with the Thrift Club. Pratts were connected by marriage to Toms, Bortons & Lamberts.

BETSY PROFFITT nee Borton (died 3 Aug 1867 aged 34) G.20. Looked after orphan Mary Ann for a short while before Betsy married

SUSAN PURSER nee Borton (bp 28 Sept 1829 bur.7 April 1873) G.21. m. Henry Innkeeper at Thomas St. Birmingham. Henir came from Slough. Met Susan while lodging at Brittain's on N. side of Cropredy Green. Son John Henry (bp 6 Oct 1856 at Cropredy). Mary Ann stayed at Pursers before coming to Grandma's at Cropredy.

CHARLES SHAW SEABROOK (died 18 Aug 1876 aged 15 yrs) Shot Gt B.g 103. (see Cooke above)

WILLIAM SHIRLEY (1841- c1920) Bachelor. Shoemaker. Lived by Borton's gate. Worked for Thomas Smith, then Thomas Cooknell. Later moved to bottom row of 5 cottages in Creampot (see Book 2).

ROBERT SMITH (1815- 24 April 1895) G.260. Joiner, Insurance Agent married i) MARY ANN Southam (1806-18 April 1875) G.261 & ii) ELIZABETH Andrews married 1882. 2 children: Alfred (1841-1926) G.271 & Sarah Ann (1846-1905) G.262. Retired from Holmleigh to 12 Red Lion Street Sale on May 10th 1876 recorded in School Log Book: "Punished several children for staying from school to attend the sale of Mr Smith's without leave yesterday afternoon." Robert built the school & school house in 1854 /55.

THOMAS SMITH (bp 5 Oct 1812 [see Buried in Wool book MS dd par Cropredy c2]- 20 Sept 1885) G.35. Cordwainer, sub-postmaster, married in Sept 1840 HANNAH Ward (bp Boddington 23 July 1819 -20 Jan 1889) Thomas son of Thomas & Elizabeth nee Golby. His father died 1813 without inheriting 3 Red Lion St for his stepmother lived on until 1829. Thomas could not be buried in the Smith plot belonging to No. 3 so was buried next to the Wards. Smiths had no children. Looked

after niece Bessie Catch. Had lodgers and apprentices. Received the post job from cousin George of Chapel Row. Thomas sang in the chapel choir 1872-1881. His wife sat in the 3rd pew on the S. side.

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JOSEPH STEELE (died 6 June 1876 aged 25) Gt.B.g 108. married CHARLOTTE Prestidge of Knightcote May 1876. Son of Joseph & Ann farmers of 38 acres. Another son died aged 24 in 1874. Land passed to daughter Ann who married George Prestidge.

JAMIE [?] SUMNER (c1835-) Bachelor, worked on farm & lived in Stone cottages in Station Rd. Son of Joseph & Elizabeth.

EDMUND TASKER (1848-15 Nov 1898) G.364. Groom & gardener, born Pleslow in Bucks. m. ELIZA (1835- 24 June 1915). Lived Riverside cottages then 12 Red Lion St. (see Book 1).

WILLIAM WARD (1840- 21 June 1904) G.537. Station Master born Culworth, married ELIZABETH (1838- 24 Aug 1928) G.538. born Claverdon. Children in 1871 were James 8, Selina 6, Sarah 11 month. 2 others Anne Elizabeth G.538 (c1880-193S) & Alfred. They purchased Station House from J.E.T Loveday in 1884. Elizabeth's executors sold to C.W.G.Godson in 1930.

MARY ELIZABETH (Polly) WATSON (1854-25 April 1929) sp. Gt. B.g 135. Dressmaker still in Directory 1928. Lived with widowed mother FRANCIS nee Grisold (died 1908) shoe binder, and sister MERCY (born 2 Jan.1860-11 April 1923) Gt.B.g 135. Dressmaker. Father George((1816-78) a cordwainer from Banbury. Family consisted of George (1845-) m. Mary Ann (d.1913 aged 72) Gt.B.g 88. They lived at 6 Carter Lane, London where Polly visited them? Alfred (1847), Emma (died), Fanny Ann (1849), Sarah (1858), Emma Jane (1868-86). Possibly lived at one time near the Bell Inn.

JOSEPH WATTS (1813- 9 Aug 1876) G.327. Worked for Edward Borton the vet, farrier & farmer at Monkeytree House where Joseph died. Married ELIZABETH (1810 -3 Jan 1892) from Warmington. 7 children: Sarah (1838), Richard (1840-66) G.327, William (1843-) married Mary A. Cox, Caroline (1848), George (1850), Samuel (1854), Charlotte (1854 died). Lived on N. side of Church Lane. Jo was "Found dead falling of a rick." Their son William. had 3 children. For Richard & Albert Watts see Book 2.

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EDWARD WAYTE (1834- 8 Aug 1905) G.350. Farmer of 360 acres employing 7 men & 2 boys in 1871. Born Peatling Leic. married MARY ANN (1849- died 22 May 1919 at Adderbury East) born Banbury. Children: Edward W.(1871) married Elizabeth M .Rees 1903, William J.(1873), Henry B. (1876-8)G351. Edith L. (1877), Ethel E.(1878), Florence M. (1879), Ida (1881) John P (1883), Mabel A.(1886). 4 staff including a governess. Household of 14 by 1891. Leased Prescote Manor from Wantages.

Edward on Board of Guardians committee 1888 also John Pettifer (see Book 3). John wanted a copy of "the agenda at home so that we can think matters over before we come." Mr Wayte thought "it is of no use wasting time with a lot of humbug like that." Motion defeated.

FRANCIS PROFFIT WHITE (1852-) born Shotswell. Farmer of 145 acres at Great Bourton (Crockwell or Manor Farm?). Employing 3 men & 2 boys in 1871. Married Jan 1876 to Miss Rosa A. J. Falkner his housekeeper (1841-). Children: Thomas (1876-), Francis daughter (1878-), John (1879-), Rosa (1881-). Family left by 1891.

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