

11 November 1940

Dear Haze & Andy,

The letter of yours before me is dated May – Hell its time I wrote again and yet I am of the impression I'm not that far behind. At the moment I'm off duty at a station near Cambridge where they sent me when I was chucked out of flying. It's not bad although as you can imagine seems dead compared with a pilots course – however I couldn't make it so I must suffer the consequences.

I'm in the operations room here and get a bit fed up with it although of course I don't least have good emotions such as billets and warm rooms to work in which mean something at the moment as its bloody cold again as we approach winter.

The fella came up for the weekend and I managed a 48 hour pass which meant we could stay together. A fortnight ago too I had a weeks leave and went to London until the Sat when we bolted for the country – Uppingham in Rutland where the fella's Auntie has a farm – in order that we might get some sleep.

It's Hell in London and as the fella hadn't told me really what it was like I got a bit of a shock even in spite of what I'd read in the newspapers and I'd been down several times for a day but somehow one doesn't worry then except when the Jerries are right overhead – when I walked into the street of the fella's abode in Hampstead and saw it roped off – saw houses down all around, a convent with all its occupants just dust (no-one found) and then stayed there several nights to experience for myself those blood curdling whistles of bombs coming down – shrapnel on the roof, windows and doors blown in. I'll tell you it's not exactly reality. We all slept on the ground floor and on the floor, anywhere at all – not that that would be any use in a direct hit but everyone just hopes!

Lever Bros took over a girls' school in a suburb about 15 miles from the office and a certain number of the girls are allowed there for a maximum of a month for a rest. The firm runs them to and fro every day for nothing (it costs them £500 weekly) and they are looked after quite well so the fella has been there a week. Its much safer then where she was but its all a matter of chance although its wiser to keep away from the vicinity of military objectives – we had them all round us at Hampstead – the fact that they heard 26 bombs drop one night gives you some idea and you can hear them for only ½ mile – it used to be funny although pathetic to see some of girls with whom the fella was flatting dive under the meal table.

She may get a transfer to Bristol in Wales later on but naturally prefers to be in London nearer me although I'd rather see her out of it. I've been here 5 weeks now and Lord knows where I'll go next. I was at a Flying School 7 weeks and I.T.W 4 weeks – every move so far has been in Cambridgeshire.

Had a letter from Gwen Robyns in reply to mine for Gordon and it was the first intimation I had of Gordon's being missing – its back luck and while she holds hopes of his being a prisoner I doubt it. He was with us just before he returned to Lille and we had a lot of fun while he was on leave.

Also had a letter from Muv recently saying Body owes me £39.17.6 for rent and costs in dwellings. Muv was apparently there – damn the man. Muv said you were writing to someone about letting the place again – thanks very much and hope it was successful – it's a bit of a worry being so far away but I hope to be back in it in the not too distant future.

I told Muv to send you girls £30 each on a/c but apparently the bank wouldn't stand it yet but he intends sending something I think. Muv couldn't find the letter card saying how much I owed you all but I know she had it somewhere with my stuff or else I gave it to Muv, but in any case when I return I can check up because I like such things in order – I know it was an odd amount and I said I'd make it up to a round figure to square up interest but anyway I'll try to get some of it to you and the balance we can square anytime. I know you're not worrying but naturally I'd like it attended to.

I suppose Andy is still at his work the lucky and wise blighter – service life never did appeal to me but I thought maybe I could suffer it training kites about the blue. Actually there is some fun in it but oh Hell the restrictions!!

Hope you're still enjoying the bank and making some dough – that's the chief trouble in this outfit although of course the fella is doing damn well which keeps us going so don't imagine I go short of anything for a moment, and as you know I'm a fairly economical individual and here extra food is about all I need plus a beer or two.

By the way thanks for the snaps – I've often wondered how you are looking these days and it was good to see them – you look well too for which I'm thankful – I understand you feel better now than at any time. I've got none to send you but if I ever have one in uniform I'll sent it along and let you see how I'm looking in Air Force Blue.

Your P.S. asks if I want any cash – no Haze, thanks all the same – I'd ask you if I did need it you bet.

Give my regards to Auntie Lizzie when you write or see her and say I'm writing in the near future. There was something else I wanted to say but I can't remember now as all the crowd are acting the fool about my bed so I'll sign off for now with love from us both to you both and I hope you are well and thriving.

As ever, John [handwritten].