

16 Enfield Road
WAINUIOMATA

Tuesday 6 November 1984

Dear Chris, John and Tammy

Well, this is my second attempt at writing. Yesterday I finally closed my letter after writing you 150 lines (the computer screen counts each line as you complete it) only to find that the jolly thing wouldn't print. In fact, the computer locked up and the only way I could free it was to turn it off - which meant losing your letter completely. Was I livid. When poor Ken couldn't fix it for me over the phone I'm afraid he got rather a rough time of it. However, all would seem to be well now, so lets see whether I can get back up to that line tally again, from memory.

Haven't lit the potbelly for ages, although I view each overcast day with eager glee, hoping for cold winds and rain. Of course, without the fire going, there isn't the need for a heat shield on the bookcase - something will probably get done about that next Winter! However, your suggestion of the stainless steel shield is along the lines of what we are thinking of, only in beaten copper. Thanks for the idea.

I haven't been up to Otaki for ages, but I must because I find that another descendant of a local is or was the owner of the Totara Park Gardens, one of the market stalls just south of the Otaki Bridge. Curiously enough I used to go out with her son and he bought my Land-Rover when I met Ken, who already had one. However, I don't think I will mention that, if I catch up with her. I have a sneaking feeling that they may have sold up the market gardens and moved on, but so long as it isn't further north than Palmerston North, I should be able to handle it in my car. All outside jobs at our place at the moment have ground to a halt as Ken works nights and weekends on the Daimler, panelbeating prior to painting. We want to go to his brother's wedding on 23 February 1985 in Palmerston North in it. We shall probably get the panelbeating done, but most car spray painters close down over the Christmas-New Year period, and that will put pressure on us. We had the same problem when we wanted to get our Rover car painted around the same time of year. However, until the Daimler gets painted the wiring, windows and interior don't go back in, so its hardly a case of driving it up to PN in a panel-beaten and primed condition!

Talking about February. The last Sunday of February, which happens to be the 24th, has been named as the official opening day of the Hugh Sinclair Park. If the weather is inclement, the first Sunday of March 1985. The actual time and format have yet to be finalised, along with official speakers, but I thought you might like to tuck this date away and Kill two birds with one stone - ie, attend the Park opening, and visit the Cemetery in a quiet moment. I have told Ken of the conflict of dates that weekend, and now we just have to get the Daimler finished, to make a quick trip back from PN for the 24th. If it is held that weekend then I can't really offer you a bed that Saturday night, but if the following weekend then no problems. Anyway, keep the date in mind.

Lucky you if you get the Janet Gorrie photo from the Prouses. Hope you do 'cause it will fill a gap in your collection, and you have really tried to pick that missing one up through most sources. Did you enjoy reading most of the Wood Book? I note your comments re the family photo - did you pick up that one person was missing, ie Leonard Wood, James Jackson Wood's son by his first marriage to Lucy Key who died in childbirth. Leonard was actually named James Leonard, although none of the family seems aware of this fact - I only picked it up through the Electoral Rolls. By all accounts he got a really rough deal from the second marriage, although nobody has ever actually said that Mary (Prouse) Wood was cruel physically - just mentally from the sound of it. When she introduced her family only her children were brought forth - and none of the family photos appears to include Len. No wonder he took to a rougher life (rough by the Wood ideals anyway) going to work with the flax cutters, bush millers etc etc. He was always classified as a labourer, rather than a farmer which is how the rest of the sons got set on their feet. His remaining daughter Ngaire doesn't seem bitter, but some of the grandchildren of the second marriage recognise the trauma he must have suffered.

Looking out the window as I type I see a bunch of Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormans or the like marching up the Street. They were doing houses up here yesterday, so they will probably reach us today. Must remember to do my usual trick and look out the sittingroom window and ask who is it when the front doorbell goes. Making them crane their necks up a story to introduce themselves usually gives me an edge over them and I can get rid of them without going down and answering the door. I see there are six of them and they are breaking up into pairs and going into houses. They won't get too much joy around here, most of the locals are out working - which probably means that they will get around to me even quicker! Just hope they come to the front door - if they come to the back then we are on the one level and its not so easy to be curt, rude even. Hope neither of you is a member of that following.

Lucky you again being given that old doll. Did you take a photo of it before restoration? I'm quite sure I haven't seen as many genuine old dolls in my entire life as I have seen in one group at your place so how on earth do you come across them all? The word must get about that you are a kind caring home, is all I can think. That sort of word hasn't got out about me yet. My sister and mother went to a weekend seminar on ceramic doll making, and made two models each. One of Mum's is particularly attractive. Ken (my husband) found some old draughting plans on linen paper - the kind of paper they don't use anymore of course - and Mum has been scrubbing and soaking and scrubbing again to get the paper back to its lovely soft dainty linen state. Then she is making bloomers for her dolls with the tiniest little buttons - imported jobs at 32cents each. Mum is a bit of a perfectionist, so the finished effect will be lovely, but I never even knew about linen paper - does that show my youth? or just ignorance? How on earth do you get on for material for bloomers etc? I'm looking forward to seeing your latest effort too.

Incidentally, I haven't forgotten about getting in contact with Mr Sundgren, but he isn't listed in the phone book so I am relying on word of mouth at the moment, and have a couple of feelers out. Eventually my friend, eventually...

I note your comment re the Kenneally title and J Prouse. I happen to

have a few copies on hand on behalf of the Wainuiomata School - would you like me to bring one up next visit, if I remember, and perhaps ring Mrs Prouse. Its worth the effort on my part for the School's sake. Unfortunately we live at the opposite end of the Valley from WOM School, so a second generation of our family won't be able to attend it, mores the pity. I see 4 consecutive generations of the Burden family, and now possibly 5, managed to get on the roll. What a record.

I'm glad you liked Isabella's photo. Now you mention it, yes there is a family resemblance, but I wouldn't have picked it for the same reasons as you did. Definitely a resemblance to your Mother though. If John didn't give Isabella the brooch then I can only suggest that her Mother might have done so - if that was an appropriate gift from a Mother for a 21st. I like the John suggestion better. The only thing I can suggest for your blue and white china is that you attend all the country estate auctions etc locally, and see whether you can pick up the appropriate 'Moness' style dresser - only don't tell John what I am suggesting - he might not thank me for my money spending ideas.

No doubt the dining extension is finished by now, and the bedroom nearly so. Good that you got fairly near for the carpet - after sleeping on the decision of doing the whole room the same, did you end up deciding to do the whole house? tch tch tch

Re your reading about the Sinclairs of Caithness. Mrs Cordy has a firm idea that Caithness is where her branch of the Sinclairs originated, though I haven't been able to substantiate this from family records and documents. Really I should confirm just where Hugh came from, and the sex and dates of death of those two children in Australia. Not terribly important for my work, but interestingly so.

Have got the chipheater going in the Kitchen, and get so involved in typing that I keep letting it die down instead of whipping out at regular intervals and stoking it. Both the chipheater and the potbelly have dampers, and I make a point of using them religiously. In fact, when the chipheater was first installed with its stainless steel flue, the plumber left out a damper, and I had to explain my reasons for wanting one quite firmly. Finally Ken lifted the chimney up 8" or so and fitted a piece of pipe with a homemade damper and it works a treat.

Am currently in the process of mounting a display in the local BNZ with the theme 'Sinclair Cemetery'. Have run out of the long stamen pins, or I would have it finished and up. However, will be biking down to the Village today, so will pick some up enroute. We were promised use of a blank window some time ago, and everybody in the Society wants a display but you know of course who it all falls back on and who they expect to do it, don't you? I've got to get cracking before the Bank rescinds it's offer.

My birthday this weekend and Ken has been muttering about another cat (which I would really like), though no mention of a Siamese, which I would adore, or even a TonKinese, which are supposed to reciprocate any love given them. I could do with one of the latter - my present owner (yes, I mean owner, cats tend to own any household they adopt) only cuddles and purrs when he is hungry, but that could have a lot to do with his upbringing. He definitely got a hard time of it as a

Kitten when we were building and painting the house. I was working on a door one day and Mac the Cat passed me in all his rich black-coated glory. Five minutes later he passed me again, only this time with the top 4" of his tail white! He had made the mistake of sauntering past the boys while they were applying undercoat further around the house. Fortunately non-toxic but I ask you, with an upbringing like that (and he frequently came back asking for more) what could I expect.

Well, dear girl, I've reached about the same quota of lines as yesterday, though I've included a couple of topics I forgot in the previous version. Brett is on the spare bed beside me reading and supposed to be asleep before we bike down the Valley for lunch with the oldest born and bred local - 89yrs and a dear old soul who can't get out because her legs are unreliable. We have ordered Curtain Call for 1pm for her to choose some new nets for me to make up for her 2-roomed pensioner flat for her Christmas present. I really enjoy sewing, and while someone else is paying ... Actually I've been sewing and embroidering Christmas presents for the last week and I'm nearly all done. I did this last year, got everything wrapped before 1 December, then felt funny about not wrapping up presents and getting into the Christmas spirit (not the liquid kind) nearer the date. Some people never learn.

Just remembered another thing I wrote about yesterday. I see 'Strathfield', 54 Winera Avenue, is for auction on 15 November. Is that the home where you go and tend the plants etc and with the stable? It doesn't look as nice in the Evening Post' picture as it did through the trees from your place. I like the list of rooms though, especially the sewing room. Mine has evolved into a computer room and the sewing machine has been demoted to the end of the dining table. Still, no one dare complain about eating with the machine occupying fourth place during weekends, 'cause they know their 'toy' deposed it!

Must away Chris. Hope to be up around the first week of December and will definitely call to admire but will let you know first. Until then, lots of love and take care.

I've just remembered the key thing from yesterday's letter - a letter from Mrs Helen Harwood of Onerahi with a copy of the Register of the Family Bible. Here goes:

McILVRIDE:

John:

Born: 18 April 1833
Died: 10 February 1906
Married: 19 January 1855 by the Rev A Donald Free C Blackford
Wife: ISABELLA
Died: 22 December 1899

Well, I just turned a Jehovah's Witness away with no waste of breath. Any religion which has to go doorKnocking ...

CHILDREN:

Christina:

Born: 1 February 1860 Btr Mr Tom
Died: ?
Married: 22 May 1879 R G Prouse by Rev James Paterson Wgtn

Grace:

Born: 3 November 1863 by Mr Alsworth
Died: 7 May 1938 at Karachi, India
Married: 12 February 1889 Alex M McKenzie by Rev Mr Farrier, St
Andrews Church Allahabad India

Isabella Agnes:

Born: 29 December 1866 Mr McGowan
Died: ?
Married: 22 May 1890 A E Cousins by Rev James Paterson Wgtn

Catherine:

Born: 7 September 1869 By Mr McNair
Died: 1 October 1869

Catherine Elizabeth:

Born: 11 November 1870
Died: ?

Peter John:

Born: 16 April 1874 Mr Patterson
Died: 28 June 1954
Married: 3 January 1901 Selina Williams at Registry Office Wgtn
(his 2nd marriage I presume tho there is no mention of the first)

Well, that is definitely it. I'm now well over 210 lines, so I think
you've got most of yesterday's moneys worth plus a bit.

Lots of love to you all

Vicky