

Tuesday, January 12th 1932

Well, it is now getting near the end of the Christmas hols, and we shall soon all be trotting back to school. I shan't mind!

We had an awfully jolly Christmas, and enjoyed ourselves tremendously. You would not think it possible, but the last two or three days have been almost good enough for summer – warm sun and quite warm air in the mornings, but it has rained a bit in the afternoons.

We (Science people of V̄I b) did quite well in the exams. I think the mistresses are quite pleased with us.

	Jean	Mickey	Me
Botany	I 76%	I 81%	I 79%
Zoology	I 76%	I 75%	I 81%
Physics	III 56%	II 62%	II 64%
Mechanics	II 67%	IV 40%	II 70%
Chemistry Theory	IV 32%	III 52%	III 58%
“ Practical	III 50%	II 68%	III 58%

I sent Christmas cards to tons of people, among whom were five Mistresses – Miss Rootham, Miss Gare, Miss Allen, Miss Denny and Miss Thomas. Miss Allen and Miss Denny sent me one in return. I think it was awfully decent of them, and certainly was very surprising!

Jean and I are rather worried because two or three of the Christmas set will be coming up to join us next term. It will not be nearly so nice with six as with only three people.

Jean and I are going to the 30th Bristol Guide Company tomorrow. We went last Wednesday and had a lovely time. The Captain who is awfully nice asked us to bring a game each next time, so we are getting rather nervous. I love Guides and have got my Ranger 2nd Class all except the garment (which I have just made) and taking a team game, which we will do at school next term.

Pat had a party a week ago last Wednesday, and invited back all the children who had invited her, there was a noise! It must have been heard all over Clifton I should think! But they all enjoyed themselves, which is the great thing. I am having a more modest affair on Friday, and have thought of anything we can do yet!

I have bought a wire-haired fox terrier with my £2-10-0. I call him Kim, and he is a sweet little thing, I'm awfully fond of him already although he has only been here just over a week. He was very shy and frightened at first, but has improved a great deal lately and has become much more like the normal mischievous puppy.

Uncle Fred has just gone back to Paignton. He came up on Friday for a change of air. He really is the funniest person I know. He has no money at all (except Auntie Isa's) and yet he is as extravagant as can be. The funny thing is he doesn't know it!

Goodbye for a little while.

Sunday, March 27th 1932

Today I found God. I have been waiting for this for a long time, and now it's happened.

I know that there is a little bit of God in my soul, and I feel almost overwhelmingly happy.

I must spend all my energy now in making myself worthy, and in preparing myself to carry on His work as a missionary.

This evening I went to church for the first time in the evening for a very long time. Usually we either go round to the Butts' or they come to us, but this week they had some relations staying with them, so our visit was postponed. It seems as if God meant me to go because Mr Hart, who preached, woke me up and showed me God for the first time in that way. Mr George Young told me I was going to be a missionary; now Mr Hjart has opened my eyes.

I can't say how happy I feel, but I feel also very unworthy and shallow, but now I have got the power to be better, and with God's help I am going to be.

I know I am going to get to know God better, and I really am going to follow Him all my life. It is wonderful, and very awe-inspiring, and it makes my very heart sing. I feel I can do anything, with His help. My daily life will have to be reformed, and I must change my whole character, but I mean to do it. Nobody knows – it's a secret between Him and me, and it is a very great secret. It will be very wonderful if I can make others find God, but now I am shy, I don't think I'm ashamed, but I don't like to talk about it. Perhaps I shall get out of that.

My whole life lies before me, with God's help I am going to make the very most of it.
Abide with me!
Goodnight.

Sunday May 29th 1932

It is a long time since I wrote anything of my daily life, and the family.

Since I wrote last I have been to a Guide Camp at Loxlease in the New Forest. We had a lovely time, and got to know the Blackheath girls who joined with us. June Penney was the nicest, I think, and it's time I wrote to her again.

I am now vice captain of the school for cricket, and have to run the second eleven, and perform many duties. I am also in the swimming team, and dive for the school.

As a result of all this activity my work is not progressing as well as it should be, and I shall have to swot for the end-of-term exams which will be on the whole year's work.

Jim was without a job when the Bristol Evening Times was bought up by the Evening World, but has got a reporter's job again on the new paper – the Evening Post.

Today I have been in bed all the time. I got a sore throat at the Guide meeting we held on Friday in the pouring rain up at the field. Therefore I missed the Guide Service held at the Colston Hall this evening, because of Guide Sunday, which marks the coming of age of the Guide movement. Jean, Joan and I cleaned Miss Thomas' car for Guide week. It made me late for a music rehearsal, but I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Jean, Joan and I have all 'cracked' on Miss Gare the Physics mistress. It makes life at school most exciting and we have great fun in her lessons. She is really sensibly decent, not only 'nice'. We don't know what to do when we meet her, and get red, and the funny part is that she does the same! We don't know if she likes us, but I don't think she dislikes us violently, although she would not show it if she did.

Every week Jean and I teach the Transition reading. It is great fun, and we enjoy and look forward to it. We also take Form II for games once a week.

I've been reading a book about a girl who was born from a mother who had never married and all about the hard time she had to keep straight. It seems to me that it is awfully unfair, although awfully easy, to condemn people for doing wrong. Probably you would have done the same under the same circumstances.

I also believe that there is Beauty in everything, however ugly, if looked at in the right way, so I am going to look the right way in future if I can.

Life is very interesting and very complex, and I want my life not to be a blot in the pattern, but it will be if I'm not careful and steady.

Good night!

Sunday October 8th 1932

It is a long time since I wrote last, but it seems very little of great interest has happened since then.

For the summer holidays I went away three times – once with Jean and Ken on a hiking tour of Exmoor, for three weeks; once with the family to Burnham, or rather Berrow. Helen and Lilian came down to stay with us, and added greatly to the success of that fortnight. The other holiday was one I spent with Jean and Joan at Tynings Farm on the Mendips, for the last ten days before school.

The hiking holiday was great sport, and I thoroughly enjoyed it, and it certainly made us come back heaps fitter than before we went. I only wish Alan had gone. I shan't say much about this holiday here, because I have got my letters, which give a running commentary on the subject.

The holiday at Berrow with the family was really topping. The only fault was that the place gave Dad bad asthma, and even Alan had a touch of it. We spent our time, mostly, in being lazy – bathing, basking on the deserted sands, watching the golf, or reading a book on the sand dunes, and sometimes playing tennis on the Cricklands Hotel courts. Alan entered for a Junior Tournament, and did quite well. We went to watch almost every day. I saw the Westons – Sally and Jill – there, and they did excellently.

The three of us – Jean, Joan and I – had a lovely time at Tynings, although the weather was not quite so glorious as it had been for the first two holidays. One day we cycled to Berrow, and called on the Wellands – the people with whom we had stayed when we went there. Their dog Laddie is a topping animal, and played hide and seek with us on the sand dunes.

We are hard at work at school again now, and our school days are rapidly slipping by. I wish they wouldn't. I don't feel a bit grown up and dignified, although I'm in VI A now. I am in the first teams at present for hockey and netball, but I'm not sure to remain there. Jean is captain of netball, and therefore very important and busy.

We are all three still 'gone' on Miss Gare, who has lately been giving us lectures on good behaviour, because now we have to set the new VI bs a good example. Bah!

I have not changed about wanting to be a medical missionary, and I am pretty certain that I wouldn't want to now. I have been reading what I wrote on March 27th, and it makes me a bit sad. I have drifted away from God a bit, in fact I don't stay near for longer than an hour or two. But anyway I have managed to get back again always, and am always making good resolutions. A good many of VI A are going to lectures by the Reverend Robertson and Cannon Narborough at the Cathedral school on Fridays. I have only been to the first one so far, but I think they are going to be very good.

Will try to remember to carry on next Sunday.
Goodnight!

Sunday November 6th 1932

I have not written, as I originally intended, every Sunday. This is principally because nothing of great interest has happened lately. School life is pretty monotonous, although it is very jolly too.

Last Thursday the Sixth gave a 'Social' to the staff – not all, about 30 – and it went off rather well. We played a dreadful game called Ducky-ducky in which you have to be blindfolded and guess the person who replies 'quack-quack', when you have succeeded in

catching them. It was not very popular, as all feelings of respect – or coldness – between staff and girls cannot be quite overcome even at a social. After supper, during which I sat next to and entertained (?) Miss Marshall, we played charades, and it was great fun. The other side acted Hamlet, and we did Guy, as it was Guy Fawkes day on Saturday. In the 1st scene I was the guy, and was adorned (among other things) with a wretched boa-arrangement, which tried to get right down my throat every time I breathed in!

last night – Nov 5th – we had a small celebration in Pat's honour in the back garden. One of the rockets went off almost before Mummy had lighted it, and left us all absolutely breathless, and gaping up into the sky at a fast vanishing streak of light. We were more cautious with the other, and had to wait through several heart rending seconds of suspense before it went off. It landed, with great gusto in the Elliots' garden. Later we – Dad, Mum, Pat and I – went to the Zoo, and saw a gigantic bonfire, and the fireworks, which were very good indeed this time.

I have written to Miss Bowser about being a missionary, and her reply should be very interesting.

A new gym mistress has come just lately – Miss Price. She is awfully nice, and very competent! Flea and Jean, who naturally see a lot of her being netball captains, are both completely and utterly crushed on her. It is awful fun watching them, and Miss Price, and they do hate being teased about it, although they don't try to hide it.

Goodbye!

Friday November 11th Armistice Day 1932

It is Armistice Day today, and we had a little service at school at 11 o'clock. The two minutes seemed very short this year – there is such a lot to think about.

Miss Phillips talked to us very nicely at first prayers and said that we must think not only of the sacrifice and bravery of those who died, and those who were crippled or maimed, but of the carrying on of their work, and the determination to throw all our weight always in the cause of peace.

Today always seems to be a mixture of feelings to me. There is something grand, awe-inspiring, in the contemplation of the war, and the sacrifice of millions of men and families. But also there seems a deep sense of mockery, of sarcasm, even of sham in all of the Armistice Day celebrations. It seems so easy, so obvious, to say 'what good has all this war – this sacrifice done to anybody' and all the poetry, the noble sentiments portraying men as heroically and willingly laying down their lives, instead of blindly scrambling forwards, probably stiff with fright, longing to have an opening to escape and run away from all the noise, the stench, and ugliness of the ungodly side of men's nature, and then meeting the nemy – men like themselves, feeling the same thoughts – of home – and longing for the same thing – peace – and then the slaughter; blind, ruthless, senseless slaughter. It does not seem possible that Man, created in the image of God, could or ever would, do such a thing. Anyway it seems false, rings hollow, to speak of supreme and selfless sacrifice in connection with this atrocity. The only good thing war did, that I can see, is to create a horror of war in the minds of men. This was certainly a good thing, and I hope the lesson will never be forgotten.

The thought of another war, and it has been said in all seriousness, and by those who should know, that there will probably be another in about the next ten years, is unbearable. I pray God there will not be another, and if everybody decides there will be no more war there probably will not be one.

Goodnight!

Sunday December 18th 1932

The same old trouble has been cropping up again, and I have been rather worried about it. A Miss Parnell wrote to Mum inviting Jim, Alan and me to join a holiday dancing club. Of course Jim couldn't because of his work. Alan wanted to, and wanted me to! I still loathe dancing at parties and things where there are boys, although I enjoyed the dance thing we had at club.

Somehow with only girls it is absolutely different. Boys make the whole thing a flirting contest. I always feel terribly sensitive at functions, and am always ready to notice the slightest feeling of 'unwantedness' which I think is one of the most utterly miserable feelings possible. I am absolutely plain, if not ugly, and added to that I feel, and probably look, quite out of place and unutterably uncomfortable at dances or mixed parties, so I am left alone, and try to appear not to mind. This makes me seem superior and aloof, and things get worse and worse. Blow dancing, parties, boys, everything! I am sure it is much more sensible to stay at home and read a decent book. The enjoyment of this is infinitely superior to the hilarious gaiety of parties. This is partly proved by the feeling of flatness and dejection that, with me at any rate, always follows the last farewell after a social afternoon or evening. It is shallow, ephemeral enjoyment, not like the passive enjoyment or contentment of the mind which is caused by a good book, or good music.

That reminds me – Alan is jazz mad. He has got a mandolin, and is quite good at it. He plays dance tunes unendingly, and hums or taps jazz all over the house. We have tiffs because I cannot bear jazz, at least not in comparison to classical music. It, like most modern enjoyments and modern outlooks, seems shallow, full of sparkle and noise on top and nothing underneath. All this is extremely cynical, and sounds suspiciously as if I were moralising, but I do feel it, and strongly too.

I am afraid my sensitiveness has given me an inferiority complex. I always feel that I am worse at the thing I am doing than anybody else is. Maybe I am, but perhaps it is thinking it that makes it true. For instance, the 1st XI forwards had a hockey practice on Saturday. I was quite happy at first and got on quite well. When shooting once however I took my eye off the ball and muffed it completely. Peggy Heaven murmured 'good shot' sarcastically and made me feel a fool. Consequently I got worried, and went from bad to worse, missing the ball altogether more than once. The others all did good shots, and I felt terribly inferior, and began wishing I wasn't in the first after all, as I am the worst one there, but they haven't any wings so they can't chuck me.

This feeling of inferiority comes often in other things too. I joined Guides late – as a cadet in VI b. I was elected a patrol leader this term (probably because the VI b s who voted too were newly arrived and did not know I had only been a guide a year) and am the most inexperienced of the leaders, with inexperienced guides in my patrol. I am also secretary for the Cadet company and have to perform all the horrible little social jobs that I am hopelessly muddled about, and forget the most important things.

Again, since I joined late I don't know the country dances, and make a mess of things at the country dance parties. Consequently I stay away when possible, and go back knowing even less afterwards! It is all a terrible muddle, and all because I am so beastly sensitive. I wish I was like Mary who would not think about that kind of thing. It is all right for boys at dances and things. They only have to ask a girl to dance, and she can't very well refuse. But a girl has to wait to be asked, and if she is plain and out of place, and sensitive, she won't be asked and then endures torture sitting in full view of all the others, unwanted. I am not going to risk that if I can help it.

I hope doctors don't have to go to dances and things, but perhaps I shan't mind when I

am older. Oh, dash everything, I'm going to stay at home and go out alone. It's safe and more enjoyable whatever anybody says.

Goodnight!