

## In Britain

26.

Left boat 3.45. Train to Waterloo. Luggage at Southampton in squares with first letter of surname. Country beautiful. Waterloo, met by Miss Conyers, down I lift through tube, up moving staircases, train to Southall, met by S. Weston, Miss Kellet, tea. Just in to bed before 12p.m.

27.

Sunday. Rested. To church in morning – great cracking of seats.

28.

A great day in the city. To Base, saw Col Maudesley, Victor Hurley. To Bank in taxi. Shopped. Home on Bus, passed Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens. In a.m. saw Cleopatra's needle. Saw Mr. Room, thinks he will be boarded to Australia.

29.

Went to town in a.m. to Westminster Abbey to Base & Banks. Shopped. Rang up Guys. Saw Mr. Brittingham. The only one left out of 20. Heard of Mr Denny's death yesterday – others well so far.

30.

On call, told in p.m. that we were to go to Whalley, Lancashire. Went for walk in evening with Ethel Forsyth.

31.

Left Southall by 8.30 a.m. train. Thistle, Holdsworth and Stapley came to station. Met at Paddington by Miss Davidson. Left Euston at 10.25, changed trains at Manchester & Blackburn, difficulty in getting our luggage moved – Elsie & I taken for Aust. Members of Parliament at Euston. Arrived Whalley 5p.m., not met so left our luggage on the platform & took taxis. Interviewed by the Matron. Delighted to see Jean & the others.

1.

Went to G2, not busy.

2.

Went to afternoon tea at tennis court with Jean & Field, walk to village. Concert in evening. Very good.

3.

To Church with Florence. C. of England, band & organ.

5.

G.O.C. inspected. Home letters.

6.

Went to the station all by myself.

7.

Garden Party given by M.O.s In p.m. off duty, went with S. Paton & Miller to The Nob – a steep climb, but a fine view, when we reached there. Tea at The Nob, a real country one. Saw the children in the streets with their clogs. S. Birkett & Neil came.

8.

Elsie & others had afternoon off. Heard Mr. C was in hospital in London. Letter from Grace saying Click was well on Aug.29<sup>th</sup>.

9.  
Moved my room, assisted by S. Paton, S. Simpson & Judd left.

10.  
Sunday. A quiet day. Mr. Pollard's talk on "Life at Sea". Chapel of Bones, Malta. Bones the remains of the Maltese soldiers killed in defending Fort St. Elmo against Turks in the great siege of Malta 1565. They were buried in the graveyard preceding the chapel & in 1585 they were by a Maltese priest dug up & arranged in this place. The skeleton at the right of altar is of the French General who com. The Maltese troops, the other at the left an Italian Lady's who built a large hospital for the poor & sick. The five skulls with bullet marks placed under the lady's skeleton were five Maltese gentlemen who in 1798 revolted the pop. Of Malta against the French gov. This wooden statue of the Virgin Mary over the altar was formerly the figurehead of a Maltese vessel & it comes from the 15<sup>th</sup> Cen. The monogram under the statue shows the letter M. within a circle & is made up of fingerbones & ribs. The chapel holds over 2000 skulls besides all the other bones. A service is held each Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> in commemoration of All Saints Day.

11.  
Packed etc. Left Whalley by 5.40 train, changed Blackburn & Preston. Conversation in train most amusing bet. two women. The Father & his sons. Very hard to get a taxi, went to Ivanhoe.

12.  
Saw Ida O'Dwyer & Nap in a.m. J.C.H. came round, went with her. Very glad to see her. Spent part of afternoon with Mr. Campbell, St. James Park, War Office.

13.  
Mr. Baxter's letter about Click –

14.  
Went to Base, no news. Saw Miss Conyers, got concession tickets fixed – Saw Dress etc. Met Winnie Smith, just the same. Went to The Abbey –

15.  
Friday. Went to Tower in a.m., met Keith & Calvert in p.m. Sent telegram to France.

16.  
To Houses of Parliament in morning. Sat on the red cushions.

17.  
To Westminster Abbey in morning, met R & C & went with them & S. Robertson & MD to Hampton Court, saw the famous grape vine, the sunken gardens, etc. saw Stapley.

18.  
Went to Bank with Mr C & got telegram from France, same news as B. Baxter's. Went to Richmond, saw about our tickets on return to Euston. Went to station early, Mrs. K. Lawson's story. McD & Mr P. saw me off.

19.  
Arrived Edinburgh soon after 8a.m. Walked to St. Andrews Station. Afterwards drove round Edinburgh. Left at 1.25, good trip. Arrived Kingussie 6.40. Aunt Peg & Uncle E. to meet me – anxious to know about Click.



Figure 22: Passengers at Kingussie Station

20.

Went out with Uncle E. when he did his rounds in a.m. & again with Aunt Peg. Saw the monument erected by the Duchess of Sutherland who founded the Gordon Highlanders—

21.

Went out in a.m. Walked in p.m., saw house where Maggie Baxter lived when here.

22.

Motor drive in a.m., saw Creag Dhubh, cave in mountain where Prince Charlie was hidden. Spray of water usually over mt. side. Went for walk, motor drive in p.m., walked back to the loch.

23.

Walk in p.m.

24.

Church in morning, good sermons, Rooted in Christ. Went for drive with U.E. & Boysie, lights on Mts fine, gathered heather. Leigh's letter, the same news.

Kingussie (kin-you-sich) means the head of the firwood. 750 ft, above sea level. North bank of Spey. North Monadhliath hills.

Creag Bhaig, on top cairn erected to memory of fifth & last Duke of Gordon, one time lord of Badenoch.

Ruins of Ruthven Castle – ruins really those of barracks erected by Eng. Gov. during times of Scottish Rebellions. Some ref. made when speaking of Wolfe of Badenoch. Maybe the seat of the Comyns.

Facing road a small monument to soldiers killed at Atbara, in Kitchener's Sudan campaign.

On top of Tor Alvie, pillar, erected to memory of last of the Dukes of Gordon, "The Cock of the North".

Lynwilg Hotel walked past on way to Loch.

Loch an Eilan echo

Clan Chattan

25.

Monday – Left Kingussie by the 10.07 a.m. train saw Killiecrankie. Drumochter 484 ft. Arrived Perth, met by J.B. McD. Evidently took the wrong train as we arrived at Waverly, went to another platform & then back to where we came from. When in the train & going discovered that we were in the wrong one. Arrived Carlisle 5.30, had dinner. Arrived Blackburn & S. Robinson came to our carriage. At last got to Whalley. Zepp raids. Letter from Grace.

26.

To G2. 56 patients. E.M.A.. on night duty. Hooter went 7.45 p.m., so a convoy must be coming – Nurse Studholme's brother has been killed in France. Our talk –

27.

Home letters, George having final leave. Granny better.

28.

Afternoon off, wrote letters. Went to The Nab for tea with S. Miller & Neil.

29.

Up at 1 a.m., convoy. Eleven patients all very cheery in spite of their long journey – Bazaar the talk of all – Letter from Aunt Peg. Measles at K. School closed.

30.

Lt. Tait's letter.

*Belgium*

*Dear Miss Bell*

*I received your cable asking if your brother Alex was well & when with great regret I had to reply back saying that your brother was missing, at the same time saying I was very nearly certain that he had been taken prisoner, if I had only known your address I would have written & told you about Alec some three weeks ago, but I will now tell you every detail of information that I know of poor Alec's misfortune to be missing.*

*On the morning of the 26<sup>th</sup> of August, the 21<sup>st</sup> Batt. Made a charge at daybreak to endeavour to take a place called Mouquet Farm, & Alec having been previously made a corporal was in charge of my 3 right flank machine guns. We took our objective with very few casualties, but as you know yourself what an Australian is like when his blood is up, & not being satisfied with having taken our objective we must go further on, right over to the third German line, the left flank did not go so far but the right flank that Alec was on went right on, & consequently I regret to say were nearly all cut off & surrounded by the Germans, this I might mention happened on the Sat. morning & in all about 70 men were cut off including Alec & his three gun teams each of six men. We did our utmost to get to these unfortunate men & relieve them of this position, but sorry to say we never had the men to reinforce us, so we had to give our task up after receiving severe casualties. We were relieved by another Batt. at daylight on the Sunday morning. Although these men were surrounded the Germans had made no attempt to take them prisoners, that was up till Sunday morning. At 7 a.m. on that morning, we left the trenches & came back to Albert; well then on the Monday afternoon about 4 o'clock, 2 of these seventy men arrived back to me. I reported the following – that on the Sunday night these 2 men decided to have a try to get back over the German lines into our front lines & after some very thrilling experiences & narrow escapes, they succeeded in doing so. It would have been impossible for more than 2 men to have done this wonderful escape as they would have been seen, as it was these men were seen by the Germans & heavily fired on, but luckily escaped. These men reported to me as follows- that up to Sunday night when they left the remainder of the party that Alec & most of his men were quite well, but as all their ammunition had run out, there was nothing else for them to do but to give themselves up, which was a very sensible thing to do under these circumstances. And a further report came in saying that all these men had given themselves up & were seen being marched away the Germans. Of course, our men could not fire on them as they would have shot our own men down. So under this evidence I have every right to be almost certain that yr. brother Alec has been taken prisoner. Do not think for one minute Miss Bell that I would say or tell you the above information about Alec unless I was quite sure it was official As I witnessed a lot of it myself & the man that came back reported the last information is quite reliable as he has known Alex ever since we came to France, I think you will agree with me when you have read this note & in the face of everything, it looks almost certain that yr. brother has been taken prisoner.*

*Your brother & yourself left Australia together & I might say we were very close friends & I miss himself & his services greatly. He was a splendid fellow Alec & was liked & loved as a brother throughout the whole Machine Gun Section. The whole section has asked me to convey to you & your family their deepest sympathy in the loss of your brother & son & trust he is safely a prisoner in Germany & will be returned to you safe & well at the end of the war, or even before. I myself having one of the section, am included in these wishes. If there is any further information you require Miss Bell & it is in my power to give it to you, I would be glad to hear from you.*

*Further it is like I may be in England on leave in the near future & if you would write & give me your address I would call on you & tell you all about Alec. I will now conclude by conveying to you & yours my heartfelt sympathy, but trust your anxiety will soon be relieved by hearing good news of Alec, for which I feel certain you will.*

*I remain, yours sincerely  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. N. Tait  
Lewis Machine Gun Section  
21<sup>st</sup> Batt. 6<sup>th</sup> Inf. Brigade*

*On active service in France*

*I might mention that I have only just received my commission. I was Machine Gun Sergeant up till recently –*

*I might mention that your brother Alec did some fine work in the trenches previous to the attack. He was such a reliable man & his men would do anything for him. I will never get another Corporal to take the place of Alec.*

1<sup>st</sup>. Sunday

To church in a.m. with S. Neale.

3<sup>rd</sup>. Tuesday

Went to the village with S. Field in evening.

2<sup>nd</sup> Monday

E.M.G. & Miller left for holidays

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup>

Convoy about 5 a.m. 9 cases to our ward. Home letters. Went to Mitton & had tea, back by 8 p.m. James operated on & went to another ward.

6.

Letter from bank telling me that they had received the following message from their Melbourne Branch. "Advise Sister Annie Bell Alec missing. August 26<sup>th</sup>. Inform Capt. George Bell on arrival"

Wrote to Bank & to George. A cold wet day. Neale to be off duty for two days.

7.

Off duty from 5p.m., wrote letters & talked

8.

Off duty in p.m. To Church with S. Robertson at Wes. Church. Old fashioned seats & ladle for collection.

9.

Nurse Osborne's farewell party in evening.

10.

Rainy and windy. Went for walk, wrote letters.

11.

Convoy 9.45 p.m. two patients to our ward.

12.

Took over stock of G1.

13.

Went to G1.

16.

Had our papers about voting given to us. Heaton v. sick. E.M.A.. & Miller came back from holidays.

17.

Voted. Afternoon off duty. Read & knitted. Went out with N. Studholme.

19.

Letter from George saying he was in England. S. Robertson & others arrived late train off line ahead of them.

20. Wire from George. P.C. from A.R. Hutton dated July. Letter from Pte. Long dated August 1<sup>st</sup>.

21.

Two cards from Click came. Had been sent to Egypt –  
Two aeroplanes over in p.m. S. Robertson to Blackburn. Col's address.

24.

Went to Blackburn to meet George, arrived about 8 p.m. Dinner at White Bull.

25.

To Liverpool, left Whalley soon after nine a.m. Went to Walker Gallery, to Post Office, cabled home that we were well. To Sefton Park after lunch at The Adelphi, saw Palm House, statues of Mercaton, Cook, Columbus. Got telegram from Uncle Bob. Back to Blackburn, dinner White Bull, & then G brought me back to hospital. Telegram & again to station.

26.

G. went to Manchester, & at 5p.m. came to hospital & took S. Robertson & self to Blackburn to dinner. Motored in. Left by the night train to London.

29.

Church in Lecture Hall in a.m. Very wet day.

31.

Dinner at White Bull, farewell to S. Paton, Field, Thomas. Champagne surprised every one.

1.11.16

S. Field, Paton, Thomas left for London.

5.

Off in p.m. Walked up the Nab. For tea, very funny coming back.

7.

Went to Blackburn with S. Robertson, rained a good deal.

8.

Letters

14.

Left by the 1.30p.m. train for London, good trip down, went round to Bemers hut, found J.C.H. out.

15.

George came up at 9 a.m., we went round to Berners and saw J.C.H., talked & had morning tea. George's breakfast. Went to Hyde Park & watched the riding. Lunch at Stewart's. Went to The Abbey & to the The Tower.  
Saw S. O'Reilly & Stapley at train, Bess not looking well. Left London 6 p.m. Letter from Grace. Re Clarrie.



Figure 23: Civilian photo of George Bell

16.

Saw that Capt. Sheen was killed –

19.

Went to afternoon tea with S. Robertson to Mitton Hall. Sat in the wishing Chair. Saw the oak cupboards & rafters.

21.

Went to Clitheroe to the dentist.

26.

Off in morning, went for walk to Mitton Bridge, quite fine at times. Letters from home, they had heard of Click being reported missing. Mother at Burnswark, but going to "Alma". Convoy.

28.

Went to Clitheroe to dentist in morning.

2.

No days off we hear. Letters from Aunt Peg, Grace & Thistle.

1.12.16

Miller went to London.

3.

Went to Mytton Hill in afternoon, very restful. Walked back in the moonlight. Convoy.

5.

Walked to Clitheroe with Ethel Forsyth.

10.

On in afternoon & evening. Letter from L. Stewart 1.12.16.

11.

Left by 1.30p.m. for London, good trip arrived 7.30p.m. Telegram from George.

13.

G. came at 10 a.m., to Berners & saw Jean Howatson. To Bank, & then to St. Pauls, Tombs of Nelson, Wellington, Florence Nightingale's mem. white stone. Saw the pigeons being fed – Met J.C.H. again, lunch at Stewarts, shopped in p.m., very crowded – Afternoon tea at Buzzard's numbers of children. Saw one of my old Ismailian patients at St. Paul's. Left London 6 p.m. Fog. Arrived Whalley 1.15 a.m., taxi waiting. Letters & flowers from Ros. Studholme.

14.

Letter from Leigh Stewart, had received oilskin.

15.

Saw an account of Alan Bishop's death. Letter from Kipling to Albert Dorrington's little daughter Billy.

*Dear Miss Billy,*

*Because I do not always answer letters personally, I am considered a very husky fellow at times.*

*Between you & myself there is a grain of truth in this report, & I am often very terrible when the post comes in. I am glad you knew & loved Frank Bullen. He was also my dear friend, & had a fine regard for your splendid Australians. I had a boy who came near writing storied about kangaroos & Queensland pearl fishers. But another call came & Johnny went to France, where the stars are still shining, although Johnny's drum has ceased to beat.*

*Very sincerely*

R.K.

17.

Climbed the Nab & slid home. Tea at Whalley Arms.

19.

Went to Blackburn with Sister Amos to do the Christmas shopping.

20.

Cable from home re Click:-

*Sister Annie Bell. Care Throbalin London. Get Prisoners War help Committee 5 Southampton Street Strand. Make enquiries about Alec. Inform them contents Lt. Tait's letter. Find out names two men who escaped. All well, Bell*

23.

Great preparations in ward.

24.

Sunday. Getting ready most of day.

25.

Convoy 4 a.m., patients glad to be in England for Christmas – Concert for patients in afternoon, then the nursing staff tea to patients. Whist drive. Hagies doll.

26.

Convoy in early morning.

30.

Convoy 10.10p.m., in bed by 2 a.m., patients a long while in coming to ward.

31.

Off in afternoon. Went to Milton for a walk, tea at The Three Fishes. Letter from Aunt Chris.

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1.1.17

Mr. Baxter came in afternoon to tell me about Click, thinks there is very little hope. Saw Click just before the charge. The 24<sup>th</sup> Batt. relieved the 21<sup>st</sup> in the trenches, so that the 21<sup>st</sup> could make the attack. Mr. Baxter's experiences of different hospitals.

2.

Went to service at 6.30, S. Robertson. First Presby. Service we had had. Very stormy day.

4.

P.C. from Neil to say he was at Salisbury Plains.

5.

Seventeen dysenteries left in early a.m. Wired Neil & Aunt Chris.

6.

Letter from Leigh, in hosp. at Bethnall Green. Wired Aunt Chris.

8<sup>th</sup>.

B's birthday. Letter from George, had had a cable from home.

9.

Off in p.m., went for walk with S. Symonds & E.M.A.. A fine sunset. Church. To stand back & see our work from afar. Wrote home about Click.

14.

Off in p.m., convoy 9.20. Twelve to our ward.

15.

Off. V. sick.

16.

Left at 2p.m. for London, taxi to Preston. Great work at Euston to get a taxi. Went to Langham. Aunt Chris & J.C.H. there. Talked till midnight.

17.

George came up about 10 a.m., then we went to Base & Bank. Went to Stewarts for lunch & saw Leigh & his friend Neil Cameron. Went to see John Howatson, Jean v. worried about him. Went to St. Paul's in morning & to the Whispering Gallery – a great climb up the steps. George, Aunt C, J.C.H. came to the station, left at 5.20p.m. Good trip to Preston. Taxi from there to Whalley. Snow. Supper & hot bags in our rooms when we returned.

18.

Went for walk in evening with S. Symonds.

19.

Convoy. Seven patients, all very weary. Hear that Hilda Knox, King & W. are expected at Southall -- Letter from Mr Baxter, those who were missing same night as Click, their names were through the end of November – Letter from Daisy Rogerson.

20.

Had my Christmas pudding from home, we had it in the sitting room.

28.

Off in p.m., went to Miss Hick's, very cold walk. Walk in evening.

29.

Last thing in disp. To send back empty thermometer case

30.

Convoy 10.30p.m. Eight patients.

31.

Letters from home. Snap of Bob.

1 Feb.

Went to Clitheroe with S. Robertson, shopped. Robertson's minced meat, Aunt Ann's Plum Puddings. Tea at The Swan – very cold.

3.

Snowing. Notice about Sisters paying if lids of special dishes were not returned in three days – Ward very cheerful, great singing when the Boot Room was being scrubbed.

Trust that those we call the dead

Are breathers of an ampler day  
For ever nobler ends.

4.  
John's birthday. Sunny day, plenty of snow on the trees. S. Symonds took snaps of us in the snow.

5.  
Safe. A Te Deum.

6.  
Off in afternoon. Did not go out. A convoy at 9.30 p.m., nine. Very cold.

7.  
Letter from George who enclosed letter from Aust. R. C. Society.

*Dear Captain Bell,*  
*I regret to inform you that a post card has been received from No 1526. Pte. Stewart Campbell, 21<sup>st</sup> Batt. who is a prisoner of war at Stendal, about your brother No. 1516 Cpl A.A.L. Bell, 21<sup>st</sup> Batt. A.I.F. He writes that he last saw his "Friend" Alex Bell, lying very badly wounded in the body in a shell hole, & to all appearances dead – because of the violent nature of the fighting he cannot give a very clear account of what happened.*  
*We have still to hear from Pte. Membrey at Gottingen & we shall at once inform you of his reply.*  
*In the meantime, we offer you our sincere sympathy*  
*Signed V. Deakin, Secretary.*

7.  
How you keep calm.

8.  
Letter from Elsie to say she is to be married on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

10.  
Hogg's story.

11.  
Off in p.m. Clark hurt her hand, but still to remain on duty.

13.  
Taxi to Preston & caught 3.55p.m. train, arrived Berners 9.30 p.m. J.C.H. waiting for me.

14.  
George came at 1 p.m., went to Bank & to Red Cross. Saw in. Saw Rita Wilson. Lunch at Stewarts, Leigh Stewart & J.C.H. & Rita. Went to see John Howatson in afternoon, looks much better. Left Euston 5.20. Whalley at 11p.m.

17.  
S. Robertson & McD. in London, brought back word that six sisters were coming here. Hope it is true.

18.  
Long day on. Sunday.

21.  
Word at 11 a.m. that we were recalled. Great excitement. Handed over ward & packed. Miss Jones came to say goodbye.

22.

Left Whalley 7a.m. Breakfast at Blackburn. Good trip. Reported at H.Q. McD & I to go to No1 General Florence & Lidge to Weymouth. Robertson & Miller to No.2.

23.

Came to Berners. Shopped in morning, went to Romance in evening.

24.

George came up in a.m., shopped. Lunch at Stewarts, Aunt C, J.C.H. John, Leigh, George and I. They went to Professor's Love Story. G & I to The Abbey, Houses of Parliament & The National Gallery. Rembrandt's picture of his mother. Gainsborough's Blue Boy. Dinner at Larchan with Aunt Chris. Saw George off to Brighton.

25.

Packed in a.m. Lunch at Langham, went to Concert in Queens's Hall. Church in evening.

26.

Waited in to see if George would come in a.m. Drove round London in p.m. To theatre in evening.

27.

To Base in a.m. Out in afternoon. George came up in p.m., dinner at Rendez-vous with J.C.H. & self.

28.

Went to Charing Cross at 11a.m. with J.C.H., Aunt C. also came down. Later saw S. Duff, Bonnin. Left Charing Cross 1.40p.m. for Folkestone, pretty country from London. Crossed Channel on "Onward" smooth passage. Arrived Boulogne, waited & then the 70 marched off. Then 10 for No 1 General walked through many streets. Letters from home. Jim had measles, but was better.