

## Letter from Mary to Arthur Prior, undated<sup>1</sup>

Darling,

Only a minute to scribble you a surprise note while you bath.

Do enjoy Dunedin. The azaleas will be out in the Gardens now. So walk into town past them. The Gardens will be lovely altogether[.]

I think, by the bye, you ought to take M. to Aunty Eva<sup>2</sup> if she is in town.<sup>3</sup> She wd be hurt if you didn't. As well she has been good to us – the desk, clothes etc. Telephone – under Mrs. A.M. Cameron<sup>4</sup> 10 Drivers Rd.

This letter is plebeian – the hour – after 12, and the posture – the paper propped on mantelpiece hardly make one spread oneself.<sup>5</sup>

So Goodnight kisses

Polly

[separate piece of paper:]<sup>6</sup>

Fri. morning -	Hubert. <sup>7</sup>
Fri. aft. -	Brailsfords. <sup>8</sup>
Sat. morning -	Raphael. <sup>9</sup>
” dinner-time -	Cameron (Gran.) <sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Editors' note: This letter has been edited by Martin Prior, Peter Øhrstrøm and David Jakobsen. It is part of the Martin Prior Collection, presently kept at Aalborg University folder B, item 1-3. The letter is written on standard unheaded writing paper. There is clearly a connection with the content of the letter B1 item 2. As in that letter, Mary also here writes about Gran Cameron who wants to meet Martin.

It must have been written shortly after B1 – item 2, since it appears that the appointment with Gran Cameron has been scheduled. Thus this letter must also have been written in between 1946 and 1949. Furthermore, the letters B1, item 1 to 4 was enclosed in an envelope (perhaps by Mary) postmarked 15<sup>th</sup> October 1947. The envelope is from Canterbury University College and addressed to Timaru where Mary's parents lived, while Mary was in Christchurch for her philosophy studies. It is quite likely that Prior would have visited them and picked up the letters from her parents. See also B1 items 1, 2 and 4.

<sup>2</sup> Editors' note: According to Martin, Aunty Eva is Mrs Evelyn Cameron (née Wilkinson), wife of Andrew McKellar Cameron, who was known as Uncle Max. He was the elder brother of Mary's mother Helen, and in fact the oldest son. He was a manager in a Dunedin based insurance company. Eva was also the sister of Mary's father Frank Wilkinson.

<sup>3</sup> Editors' note: Aunt Eva and Uncle Max had a cottage in Queenstown.

<sup>4</sup> Editors' note: See previous footnote. Her husband died in 1954 and hence the telephone entry was probably under his name.

<sup>5</sup> Editors' note: Mary is quite likely explaining the abrupt nature of the letter.

<sup>6</sup> Editors' note: Presumably accompanying the letter is a piece of paper on which Mary has listed what appears to be Arthur's appointments.

<sup>7</sup> Editors' note: Hubert Ryburn, warden of Knox College, the theological college in which Prior studied for some years in the 30s.

<sup>8</sup> Editors' note: Ruth and Jack Brailsford. Ruth was Arthur's father Norman Prior's youngest sister. Adopted parents of Norman Brailsford (original name Victor Roussine), who eventually married Arthur's first wife Clare.

<sup>9</sup> Editors' note: The name is familiar to Martin Prior who recollects nothing further.

<sup>10</sup> Editors' note: According to Martin Prior, Gran is Mary's maternal grandmother, widow of Andrew Cameron, one time Vice-Chancellor of Otago University, Dunedin. Also referred to in a footnote to letter B1-2.

” evening -	Rodney <sup>11</sup>
Sun. Afternoon -	Brailsfords
Mon. lunch -	A. Eva.
Mon. evening -	Raphael

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<sup>11</sup> Editors’ note: Rodney Eric Kennedy (1909-1989). An artist well known in New Zealand. Close friend of the poet Charles Brasch, a relative of Elespie Forsyth who married Ian Prior, Arthur’s brother. For more about Elespie and Ian see Ian’s memoir *The Story of a Marriage*, Wellington: Steele Roberts & Associates Ltd (2006). Rodney Kennedy lived in Dunedin from 1946. In 1948, he was appointed drama tutor at the University of Otago.