

Letter from Arthur to Mary Prior, undated¹

CANTERBURY UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z.

Friday afternoon.

Darlingest,

I wish you could have been at the Fireside Logic gathering² last night (just Clark³, Robertson and myself). It was, I think, the most profitable one we've had; and all really thanks to you – we worked away on truth-tables, and then read bits of Wittgenstein⁴ in the light of them.

I was seeing the boss⁵ yesterday – next week Ernest Beaglehole⁶ will be down to give lectures on the psychology of Personality – 4 of them, at 8 p.m. in the Chemistry lecture room, Tuesday to Friday (the same sort of arrangement as that by which the boss went down to Otago last year). There will be no Honours lectures, and instead of your Thursday lecture there will be a seminar with Beaglehole.

All that the mail brought today was a note from Mrs. Beck⁷ inviting me to a meal there. I think I'll go tomorrow night, before going out to lecture at the prison.⁸

It's just 3 o'clock – I'm going to nip out and buy the meat &c. I think I may give you a ring tonight after the lecture, just to see how you're getting on.

Lots and lots of love and kisses

¹ Editors' note: This letter has been edited by Martin Prior and David Jakobsen. It is part of the Martin Prior Collection, presently kept at Aalborg University folder B, item 4, undated, Friday afternoon. The letter is written on Canterbury University College writing paper. The letter was enclosed in an envelope dated 15th August 1947. The envelope is from Canterbury University College and addressed to Mary at her parents' address at Bidwill St. in Timaru. It is sent from Christchurch where Mary and Arthur lived. Enclosed in the letter is also a drawing to Martin from Arthur.

² Editors' note: This gathering might have been organized either within the University or as part of the Workers' Educational Association. The clause "and all really thanks to you" could indicate that Arthur had benefitted from his informal talks with Mary Prior and made good use of it in his teaching.

³ Editors' note: According to Martin Prior, this might be a reference to the New Zealand artist Russell Clark (1905-1966), who moved back to Christchurch in January 1947 from Wellington. He taught at Canterbury University College School of Art from 1947 until his death in 1966.

⁴ Editors' note: This is one of the earliest references to Wittgenstein by A.N Prior. He evidently gave more attention to him after he became a lecturer in philosophy at Canterbury University College.

⁵ Editors' note: This is, according to Martin Prior, a reference to Ivan L.G. Sutherland (1897-1952) who was Professor of Philosophy and Psychology at Canterbury University College from 1937 until his death in 1952. He is especially known for his work on the social anthropological studies of the Maori people.

Ivan Sutherland was, like Prior, born in Masterton and Sutherland's sister Olive taught English to Arthur at Wairarapa College, Masterton.

⁶ Editors' note: Ernest Beaglehole (1906-1965) was a psychologist who in 1948 was appointed chair of psychology and philosophy at Victoria University College in Wellington.

⁷ Editors' note: According to Martin Prior, Mrs. Beck ran a kindergarden on Cashmere Hill where the Prior family had their flat from 1946 to 1949.

⁸ Editors' note: This could either have been extramural University work or work for the Workers Educational Association.

- Arthur

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P.S. Caught a rat in the trap last night, but the mice have been evasive.

[Enclosed in the letter is the drawing]



