

Hillman & Bond Copy Letter Book, Nov 1914 -Sept 1915

Summarised by Diane Shaw, Dec 2013.

Introduction

This copy book is very fragile with the pages tearing easily. It has a relatively high number of pages which are difficult or impossible to read as the pages are discoloured. Many of the letters refer to recovering debts owed to town tradesmen, usually for quite small sums, payment by instalments often as low as one shilling per month were often agreed to (and often not received). There are also many letters to owners of properties in L R who themselves live elsewhere in the country, relating to requests for rent reductions, permission to do necessary repairs, rent arrears etc in Mr Ramsbotham's capacity as an agent for absentee landlords (in one case he arranged an annual fee for himself of 10/6 to act as the rent collector). There are also large numbers of long, complicated letters to various financial officials and others relating to several financial trusts set up by clients e.g. the Holmes Trust, the Thom Trust, and the winding up of the affairs of William Burgess deceased.

Quite a lot of effort is put into trying to gain money for the widow of Mr Bond who was a partner in the practice when Mr Ramsbotham joined. She had been left very poor and he was trying to get her debtors to pay. Another matter which took a very long time and much letter writing was the sale of Lily Farm in Charmouth as there was a need for the Bridport Council to remove water pipes from underground which they kept putting off doing, claiming that because of the war they couldn't employ the labour required. Mr Ramsbotham was not very happy about the attitude of some solicitors in London working on the sale who seemed to be very obstructive ("...we are tired of Messrs Kenneth Brown & Co & hope to get the matter completed.") A court case "Cartwright v. Axminster RDC" in 1915 related to Hook Farm Uplyme about the closing of rights of way across a field on the farm. Mr Ramsbotham supplied evidence of use of the path as remembered by two elderly Uplyme residents on behalf of a firm of solicitors in London working on the case. The action was won by Axminster RDC. A small glebe field in Uplyme has been sold to Mr A J Woodroffe, this required permission from the Board of Agriculture, with Rev Parke acting for the Church.

In relation to the war Mr Ramsbotham has been recommending to clients who live the South East of England that they may wish to consider insurance against damage by German aircraft.

Addresses

Mrs Arnopp, 14 Ruskin Avenue, Manor Park, London E
Mrs E Adams, Woodbine, Uplyme
Mr George Bartlett of Hook Farm, Uplyme
Mr Bickley, Holme Lea
Mrs M Bird, 2 Rosewood Cottage, Uplyme
Mr Bosanquet, La Valette, Uplyme
Messrs Bridgman & Co, 4 College Hill E C (London Agents for Hillman & Bond)
Mrs Brown, The Retreat
Mrs Budgett, The Grove
Mr Caddy, Lewesdon, Silver Street
Mrs Camplin, (Freeman House?), 50 Church Street
Mrs Carden, (Haselmere Villa?), 10 Coombe Street
Mrs Case, East Cliff
Mrs Clarke, Hatchett
Mr W J Cooper, Hadleigh Villas, Silver Street
Mr Corbett, Summerhill

Mr Davey, La Casa, Ozone Terrace
Mr Dobell, Wadley Hill, Uplyme
Miss Duffy, The Rosary, Lyme Regis (*Pound Road*)
Mrs Dunn, Church Street
Mrs Edwards, 47 Church Street
Mrs G Emmett, 6 Coombe Street
Miss Ernst, Silverleigh
Mrs Forsey, Jordan
Mr & Mrs W G Fowler, Cobb Lodge
Mr L H Freeman, Rousdon
Mrs W J Govier, 51 Silver Street
Mr Harry Gush, Broad Street
Mrs Eli Hallett, 53 Church Street
Mrs F H Hallett, Silver Street
Mrs Hallett, 9 Millgreen
Mr Robert Hallett, Lower Ware, L R (Trustee of the Baptist Chapel)
Mr F Hawker, Gun Cliff
Mrs A E Hodder, 16 Marine Parade
Mrs J Hodder, 18 Millgreen Court
Miss F Holmes, Coombe Street
Mrs Georgina Hooper, 48 Silver Street
Mrs Homyer, 26 Coombe Street
Mrs Jefford, Pinhay Cottages
Miss Bertha Jefford, Church Street
Lady K L A Jones, St Leonards, Uplyme
Nurse H Legg, The Cottage, Uplyme
Mr Loveridge, Mill Lane
Mr Mariette, St Albans,
Mr Mitchell, Newhaven,
Capt A E Miller, Bell Cliff
Mrs Norman, Cathole Cottages, Yawl, Uplyme
Mrs Rowe, School Lane, Rousden
Mr C (Clifford) Sanders, Broad Street (Trustee of the Baptist Chapel)
Mr T Searle, The Haven? 2 Ozone Terrace
Mr Harry Smith, 52 Broad Street
Mrs Snow, Millgreen
Mr W H Spiller, Slopes Farm
Mrs Spurle, 10 Silver Street
Mr Stoward, Lilac Cottage,
Mrs Stoodley, Cobb House
Miss Tanner, Hillside, Uplyme
Rev J H Townson, Tivoli Villa
Mr E H Wallis, Holmcroft
Mr R Warren, Church Street
Mrs Wiscombe, Victoria House
Dr Wood, Southernhay
Mr William W Lloyd Worth, Victoria Hotel

December (p 19)

To Mr Davis, shipbroker, Plymouth re The Janette a ship which was blown out of L R harbour when by the exertions of Mr J Hodder and 10 other men she was brought back to the harbour and safely moored. The Captain had asked the men to apply to Mr Davis with a salvage claim.

Mr Milward (of Launchycroft) has sold his share in the Westhills estate to his previous partners, Mr Radford and Mr Lane for £800.

January 1915 (p 118)

February 1915 (p 254)

Valuation Office, Bridport "Re Mr Minchinton St Michaels is in Pound Street a little above the Hotel Alexandra, until purchased by Mr Minchinton (*late 1913/early 1914*) was used as an annex to such hotel."

To Mr Fowler, Cobb Lodge re Mr George Bartlett of Hook Farm "there is an account against you for £3-3-11½" ... "owing to the high prices & depression of trade due to the war he cannot at the present time give large credit."

March 1915 (p351)

To Miss Ernst, Silverleigh: "...when may we expect to receive your annual cheque for £50 being a further instalment of the amount due to your various creditors as some of them are already pressing us in the matter."

To Mrs Arnopp: "I have had to have some repairs done to the roof at Govier's but not very much, it is no use spending very much on the place which certainly won't last very long."

To Mrs Von Mehren, Barcelona, Spain: "Dear Madam, We have duly received the Clifton rent charges - one half of which is due to you, but under the present circumstances & in view of the Proclamation against sending money to alien enemies we should be glad to be assured that your husband is neither a German nor Austro-Hungarian subject. Failing that the money will be placed on deposit at the Bank here and kept for you till the end of the War." (DS Mrs Von Mehren sent a certificate of her husband's Dutch nationality and was sent a cheque for £21-10-9.)

April 1915 (p 450)

May 1915 (p 546)

To Mrs Clarke, Hatchett: Mrs Clarke has been renting part of her garden to George Curtis Junior to grow vegetables. She is now refusing him access to cultivate the land. As he has spent much time and money in planting potatoes Mr Ramsbotham is asking her either to allow him access to harvest the crops or, if she insists he must give up the land, she should pay him a suggested amount of £2 to compensate for the inconvenience. (Eventually £1 was offered and accepted, however Mrs Clarke only paid 10 shillings.)

To Mrs Arnopp, "I spoke to Mr Cooper about the work required at Adam's cottage and he says that the painting and colour washing & making good the plaster where defective will cost about £3. However, he suggests it would be wiser on your part to have the plaster removed & the place replastered and rough casted. This would cost about £5 (inclusive of the painting of the wood work)." (DS – Mrs Arnopp chose the cheaper option.)

To Mr C Neale, Black Lion Inn, Axminster, re his recent purchase of 37, Coombe Street from Mrs Jane Wiscombe.

June 1915 (p645)

To: Miss Stanger Leathes (DS Emma), She wishes Mr Ramsbotham to act for her in relation to the sale of a small piece of orchard to Mr Philpot adjoining the Woodmead Estate. A second letter was sent explaining that Miss Stanger Leathes owned to land in common with her late sister Fanny. Mr Ramsbotham needs to see the probate of Fanny's will to see if Miss Stanger Leathes has the right to sell the property. A later letter to Mr Wren in London asked him to go to Somerset House to inspect the will. (DS This letter calls the land Providence Nursery.)

To: Mr Joseph Curtis, Church Cliff, "Our client Mrs Ball (?) of Sherborne Lane has seen us with reference to your conduct to her yesterday afternoon and instructed us to write you to give your authority for the statement you made that both before and since her husband's death she has been in the habit of meeting other men with a veil on. Further we are to request that you give us a written apology for attempting to push our client over the cliff and failing that apology being in our hands on Wednesday next, our client will have no alternative but to take proceedings against you before the magistrates."

To: Mr Caddy, Lewesdon, "I have received a long letter from Mr F W Dunster of Davenport in reference to a piece of land and cottages you hold on a long lease from the Trustees of the Baptist Chapel here, the lease of which was granted without the approval of the Charity Commissioners. He informs me you wish me to act for you in the necessary rearrangements and that you will call and explain matters."

To: Miss F Holmes, Coombe Street, "Mrs Jefford (formerly Crew) has consulted us as to your action in telling people that it is owing to her that your half brother William Hook has deserted from the Army. Mrs Jefford states that there is no truth whatever in the suggestion and unless the very serious allegations are stopped she will be obliged to take proceedings against you. Our client further complains that you use insulting expressions about her in reference to her eyes and these also must stop otherwise a summons will be issued against you.

To: A J Woodroffe, letter re conveyancing of a yard in Coombe Street & Georges Court from Mr Woodroffe to Mr Dollin & Mr & Mrs Neale.

To: Mrs Bertha Jefford, "Dear Madam, We have been consulted by Miss Clarke, Headmistress of the Infants School, as to your insulting conduct towards her at the school and we are instructed to inform you that if such conduct is ever repeated a summons will be immediately taken out against you and without further notice.

July 1915 (p745)

To: Mr Mariette, St Albans (school) "I have heard from John Bond and he asks me if I would ask you to let me know what he owes you or rather will owe you when Geoffrey leaves St Albans at the end of this term..." (DS John and Geoffrey are the sons of Mr Arthur Bond).

To: Mr Bond (Address, Wariapolla, Matale, Ceylon), "...I shall be very pleased to act for you in any way at home. I wrote to Mr Mariette as to Geoffrey's school fees and enclose his reply. In regard to the house, your mother tells me she would prefer another to that in which she is living, namely "Rose Cottage" Silver Street and this I do not think would cost more than £400 at most...(there follow details re borrowing the purchase money). The next letter is to a company in Yeovil asking if Mr Ramsbotham may visit "Rose Cottage" and also when the current lessee will be vacating it.

To: Mrs Arnopp, The first paragraph discusses which debts need to be paid off and where the money will come from. "I do not think there is any cause for alarm as to your accounts,

though if there is at all a serious deficit next year (sic). I think you ought to consider whether it is wise of you to take £7 each per month & and have to borrow each year to make up the deficit, or whether it might not be wise & more economical in the long run to have £6 per month & have the annual account in a sounder position."

August 1915 (p 859)

To: Mrs Arnopp, "I enclose your usual monthly cheque....Do you think you ought to insure your furniture against damage by German aircraft? As the raids have not been very far from your part of London (sic). Mrs Ames has insured her house furniture.

To Mr Corbett" "Mr Clarke has inserted your name in the jury list, if you wish it removed you must apply, or if you wish I will on your behalf, to the Magistrates for an exemption on the ground of your being an American. IF however you think it undesirable as the present time to draw attention to being an alien, it might be as well to let the matter rest.

September 1915 (p 939)

To Mrs Bond, Little Bungalow: "Have again heard from John (her son) this morning and he sets out very clearly the conditions on which he is willing to buy a house for you. He says he absolutely refuses to help with Violet or Phyllis (*DS his sisters*) either directly or indirectly through you & that if he buys a house, whenever either of them stays with you they must pay a reasonable sum for board & lodging in advance."

To Mr Joseph Broome, 32 Sherborne (?) Lane: "We have been consulted by your wife in regard to your persistent cruelty to her, which will compel her to live apart from you and we have advised her she is fully entitled to apply to the Justices for an order against you. However your wife is anxious if possible to arrange the matter without recourse to the Courts, and she is quite prepared to accept 15/- a week for the maintenance for herself and her three children."