War Poets Collection

Writing Home - 2

Letter writing was an important aspect of life for soldiers on the Front. Not only was it a good pastime, but it kept the soldiers up-to-date with what was happening at home, with their families and loved ones. Parcels of food, clothing and other essentials would also be sent to the soldiers. Such home comforts were always greatly appreciated.

The following letter was written by a soldier called John Henry Carmichael, or 'Jack', to his mother, Williamina on 16th October 1917.

Jack's grandfather was the Head Gardener at Craiglockhart and his family lived there for many years. When Jack was in France, at war, he wrote many letters home to his family, at Craiglockhart.

France, Tuesday, October 16th 1917 My Dear Mother,

Your parcel arrived safely on Sunday last and was much appreciated by the boys and myself. The dumpling was A.1! Just like the ones you used to make. I can tell you it went down fine for tea on Sunday night. I also got father's letter and wee Jimmie's. I have written father, tell wee Jimmie I will send him a nice postcard whenever I can get one, he is getting a good writer isn't he?

I haven't any news to give you at present mother, I hear they are going to send as many as possible on leave now, so if they keep it up I should be home about the end of this year with a little luck.

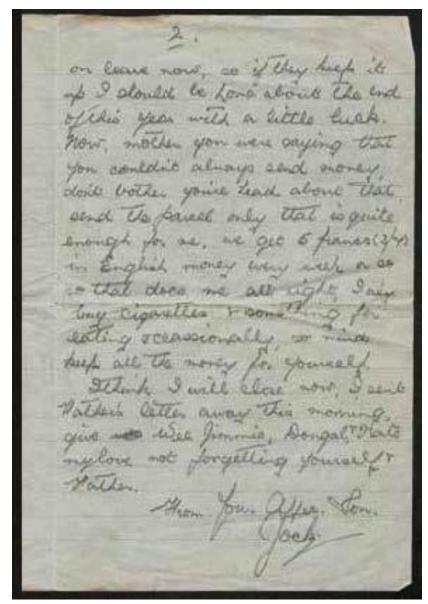
Now, mother you were saying that you couldn't always send money, don't bother you're head about that, send the parcel only, that is quite enough for me. We get 5 francs (3/7) in English money every week or so so that does me all right. I only buy cigarettes and something for eating occasionally, so mind keep all the money for yourself.

I think I will close now, I sent father's letter away this morning. Give wee Jimmie, Dougal and Kate my love and not forgetting yourself and father.

From your affectionate son,

Jack

Hrance. Tuesday Cock, ILLAM My Dear Wolfer your parcel arrived safety on Tunday last him much appreciated by the boys musely. The Dumpling was all just like The ones you need to make it can tell you is went down him to Tatter atter a cose Jimmie's I have written Hatter take Wee Primie I will send him a ries posteand whenever I cam got one, he is getting a good written with the. I haven't any news to give you at present moller. I keen they are going to send as many so possible



Letter from John Henry Carmichael to his mother Williamina, dated 16th October 1917 from the collection of Edinburgh Napier University.

With kind thanks to the late Dr Peter Carmichael for donating these letters to the collection.

Questions

- Q1. Parcels were always welcomed by soldiers on the Front. What did Jack's mother send him in a parcel that he and the boys very much appreciated?
- Q2. What did Jack say about the parcel?
- Q3. When does Jack think he might get leave to come home?

Q.4 How much money does Jack get "every week or so"?
Q5. What did Jack say he spends his money on?
RSVP
In his letter, Jack tells his mother he is going to send wee Jimmie a postcard. Imagine you are Jack and are writing the postcard to send to wee Jimmie.
Put yourself in Jack's shoes. Think about the kind of things he might want to tell wee Jimmie.
Perhaps he is looking forward to seeing him. Perhaps he will tell him about what it is like in the trenches. What is the food like? Are the beds comfortable? What is the weather like?
Try to write in the same style as Jack. He seems to be quite cheery, despite being on the Front.