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discovered a formal little

Dear Don & Pat,

Thank you so much for having me to stay. Your warm welcome and terrific hospitality made it such a pleasure to meet you & share my experience & knowledge with regard to caretaking at 1613 Churchill Street. I thoroughly enjoyed your company & I was delighted to find that we hit it off so well. It was fun & a wonderful way for me to have closure around the Harker estate. My apologies for keeping you up past midnight with all my questions.

My stay in Toowoomba, Brisbane & Noosa made for a lovely holiday. Dad liked the post-cards of Toowoomba & was surprised to learn that the old courthouse & post-office were being turned into apartments & restaurant, respectively. He hasn't been to Toowoomba since the 1950's & so, was most interested in my impressions.

I hope your daughter's property was not damaged by the bushfire. The Toowoomba fire was big news in Melbourne as was the duststorm. I think I left Toowoomba just in time as the bus I travelled in only just kept ahead of the duststorm. The storm hit Brisbane about the time I got to the hotel in Wickham Terrace, Spring Hill. I had a good view of the dust from the hotelroom balcony & in fact, I didn't know the extent of it until I saw Mt. Cootha the next morning & was rather surprised to discover how close it is to the city. The dust was so thick, I was of the impression that it ^(Mt Cootha) was much further away, like Box Hill is to Mt. Dandenong!

I spent my time in Brisbane happily shopping, walking along the river & in the Botanical gardens, & joining a couple of guided tours - one of the city night lights & one on the river. I also discovered a lovely little outdoor restaurant in the business district - comfortable seating, shady trees & rather large, well-fed goldfish in a pretty fishpond. What a wonderful retreat!

Did you enjoy your holiday at Noosa? I think that is where you said you were going for a holiday. My time in Noosa was so relaxing that next time I go there, I'll make sure I stay longer. It's an interesting place, isn't it. I loved the trip to Eumundi with its quaint buildings, museum & markets. I had a good walk along the coastal path in the National Park & along the beach & river, also. I missed out on a boat trip up the river due to some heavy rain which was unfortunate but I've decided that it will give me something new to do next time which I'm intending will include Hervey Bay & Fraser Island.

No, back in Melbourne - what am I doing? Working & preparing for Christmas. Work is fairly quiet which is good as I've been spending some time planning my next career move as well as my next holiday - N.Z. I hope for the holiday & anywhere in Australia for the career move. I've got a fair bit of preparation to do for the career move in terms of my professional development as I would like to move out of the addictions area. I'm considering family therapy training which is a 2 year p/t diploma so the move will take some time to happen, most likely. Still, it's good value having the occasional fantasies about where I'd like to be. In terms of my social life, there's lots happening - lots of good theatre, movies & Christmas functions.

Most days, I pass the Harker's house & get a glimpse from the train. Nothing seems to have changed & it looks the same as I had left it. Those dandelions on the nature strip are still growing fast & I bet the new owner is having as much trouble keeping them down as I did.

I asked Dad about Jack's burial. He said that Jack was cremated. The reasons for his cremation are as follows: -

1. Jack could not be buried in the same grave as Ruby. It could not accommodate another body.
2. Box Hill cemetery is full & new graves cannot be dug at present. There was an article a couple of months ago in the "Whitehorse Leader" stating this & that the cemetery will be soon expanded so that more people can be buried there. It is only unfortunate that it hadn't been expanded by the time Jack died.
3. The only legal & most ethical thing to do in view of the fact that Jack wanted to be buried with Ruby was to cremate him & spread his ashes over Ruby's grave.

I think it would have been truly sad to have buried him at another cemetery, & so it seems that the ethical dilemma was either to bury his body at another cemetery or to keep him with Ruby in whatever form possible. Dad said that the decision made was as close as could be to Jack's wishes & in keeping with the legalities of the will. I hope this answers your question about the burial & that you understand the dilemma that occurred.

On a brighter side, I must say, Dad was delighted with the photos you sent him. The Japanese garden was a lovely backdrop & they were really nice shots of you both. Dad says to thank you for the Christmas card & greetings. He sends his best wishes to you for Christmas & for a Happy New Year.

Again, thank-you for giving me a great time in Toowoomba. Have a lovely Christmas & a great start to the New Year.

with warm regards,
Shirley