

22 Jan '97

Dear Frances,

I was so glad to hear from you today as I've heard nothing from you since our phone call before Christmas (apart from your inspired Christmas presents). However, mail conditions are now back to normal, we have another snow warning, but it may not affect Victoria.

Margaret Spink & I did our Wednesday afternoon walk along the Waterfront - very cold & drizzly - but what made it really exciting were the sea lions, lots of them, ~~the~~ barking furiously & sometimes coming quite close inshore. They are feeding on herring now & soon will head off to do their mating. They are enormous creatures, & apparently we are on the national news all across Canada.

You mentioned the £50 money order. When I heard that the bill for phone calls was more I sent you a further MO for £10, & never heard if you got that too. I'm sure you did. In future I think I will try sending monies by cheque, if that is now possible.

I'm so glad you are going to be seeing Pat, and the Old Parsonage sounds

ideal. I do hope she isn't still doing that course, it sounded to me like a big drag. Gaelic is still going happily along. We are now going to have a once-monthly ^{10am} gathering at Al's place, bringing everyone interested together, just to exchange C.D's, ideas, & information. No refreshments. Beth plans to take her harp, & she & Al can try out a duet. As a group we plan to sing then a song.

You asked about Uncle Elton & Gambia. I know Auntie Val went out to Nigeria, I've no idea whether the Gambia came before or after Nigeria. Uncle E. was indeed a Chartered Accountant & ⁱⁿ an official government job. I think he did retire (not invalidated out) but of course West Africa was "the white man's grave", & he obviously died of a tropical bug. I've heard people say that the British Empire was held together on the backs of the wives, & when you think of the separation from families, & the early deaths of the husbands, & probably not very good ^{widows'} pensions, that's just about what it was. What is happening now in Africa, now

that they have their independence is
horrifying.

Maria & I went to see "Shine" last
Saturday (about the Australia pianist
who plays Rachmaninoff 3). I don't
think it is your sort ~~of~~ a movie -
too harrowing perhaps? - but it was
very well done & is a true story.

We call curtain "drapes", & the
lighter ones against the panes are
called "sheers". A pelmet is
called a "valance". Don't ask me why.
I do hope yours are going to be a
success - they aren't cheap. I remember
I made a pair of drapes with pinch
pleats & they nearly drove me dotty.

Sandy tells me they are busy making
kneelers for the new Compton Dando
church - you could give them some
pointers! So could Pamela Gwenty. He
says they cost £70 each, which sounds
very expensive to me.

I'm just browsing reading "The Small
House at Allington" (Trollope) & like
150 years ago wasn't so very different
socially from today in England. Some of

it I skip, but most of it is very
readable & very possible.

I've now sold my bike as I think I
told you, & it has gone to Cuba.
Canada is in the dog house with
the States for our continued dealings
with Cuba & we are unrepentant.

I thought Princess Diane was now
no longer to be ~~called~~ "Princess of
Wales". I agree, she shouldn't
meddle. She is, as predicted, a
loose cannon.

Tomorrow is Sylvia day & I must
make a shopping list & push
Maurice out to do the grocery
shopping. This afternoon while I
was out on the waterfront, he was
doing a yeoman job clearing out
planters & bags of soil for our
patio. I hope we will have a
garden again in the Spring.
Very much love & very good
wishes to us both,

Jane