

5 Jan. '99

Dear Frances,

This is the long quiet stretch after Christmas when the mail is reduced to practically nothing. I did get a letter yesterday from Sandy & was glad they hadn't had such a hectic round this Christmas, & they didn't have Barbara. Apparently she had a very happy time at Loughor, & probably that should be the plan for now on.

On Sunday evening (actually at 3 pm onwards) Marion & Maxine & I went out to Butchart's Gardens to enjoy the Christmas/New Year festivities. We got there in time to see the gardens by daylight, then joined in some carolling, then a hearty supper of huge plates of stew, & by this time it was dark & everything was beautifully lit up, imaginative & lavishly done. The great feature is the Partridge in a Pear Tree & every year lately they have been adding

more & you have to find them in the trees. Five Gold Rings are huge circles of golden light on a lake, really spectacular. The three were Six Geese a-Sleighing down a mountain of snow, & for the rest we would have to go back next year! I can't even remember what comes next. There were many places to go into with entertainers such as conjuring for the children, and it was a marvellous outing. Of course Butchart's Gardens are an international draw & everything is superbly efficient. And we are getting a lot of visitors to the Leonardo exhibit at the Museum, so a lot of those would take in these festivities as well. To go to a thing like that you could never believe these are hard times.

Marion always holds a New Year's

Day "At Home" for family & friends
& everyone knew that this would be
the last in the wee house, so there
was a big turn out. The eldest
brother is 93, & they have five
daughters, so you can imagine I lose
track of the relationships of the grand-
children. I supplied shortbread
in large quantities, & rice flour is
certainly the secret for success.

Marian is now seriously putting
her mind to moving & has all
kinds of strong helpers with vans etc,
so she won't have to rent a
removal firm to do the job.

I am recovering from a horrible
cold but it does show signs of abating.
Anyway I never get colds as badly as
you, and I did have a flu shot
in November.

Are you back at your little school

And do you get a chance to know
the children?

They have introduced a total 'No
Smoking' ban in Victoria in all
Public places including pubs,
restaurants, & all work places. Today
is the first day of the ban, & there
is lots of opposition, but I think most
people think it is a very good
move. What happens in Oxford?

I've heard it said that if a person
is hooked before age 20 they are
hooked for life. If people try it in
their 20's they can drop the habit.

but every where you do see very
young people at it,

very much love to

Jane