

15 Aug '96

Dear Frances,

I expect by now David is back & the final arrangements re Cumbria Close will be coming to an end. Anyone who gets #27 really gets a very nice flat, & I do hope your place is going to suit you well.

It is probably just as hot in Oxford as it is here, & I'm writing to you in bed at night as I can't get to sleep (which often happens). Then later on Maurice wakes up & has to use his pubbing machine, & often we have a gabfest in the middle of the night - coffee for him & hot milk for me. That pubber business is otherwise a lonesome sport & often he whiles away his time counting the cars moving around James Bay & witnessing police chases!

Last Sunday evening was the occasion of the annual Symphony Splash, which happens in the inner harbour with the Symphony

Orchestra set up in a big tent on a barge & the audience all around on dry land, (a some in little boats), I went along on my own on foot, & just worked my way into a good spot. It was a very black looking sky overhead & very windy & I was glad of all my warm clothes. They cut the program down a bit as it looked so threatening overhead, but we did get the big event of the evening - always the 1812 Overture with all the guns & bells & fireworks. All evening with the high wind the barge was swinging around on its moorings, & I really felt we were all in motion! After the Overture & the fireworks a lot of us started to move off, but the real enthusiasts clamoured for encores & the orchestra went gamely on. All for free of course, & you just made a donation. The whole event is heavily sponsored, but is now quite well known & we get quite a lot of America visitors who come specially to be here for this. So the Orchestra plays "The Washington Post" for them. In the library recently I found a

biography of Roald Dahl. I was surprised to find that a lot of his life (& others of his family) was centered around Great Missenden, where Joan used to live. He may not even have been very well liked as a neighbour - I don't know what Joan would have thought of the all. But there were a lot of sad events, & a very jet set sort of life as his wife was a high powered movie actress, & she suffered a bad stroke when still quite young.

A young couple we know from our Gaelic group are getting married shortly on the Dallas Waterfront. She will wear a long dress & black boots. They planned to have the service in Gaelic, but have been gently persuaded that it is a public ceremony & that the exchanging of vows must be witnessed by those who are gathered together, so there will be a compromise & the service will be in English, plus an exchange of vows in Gaelic. To

be honest the young man doesn't
know too much Gaelic, but
thinks he does! And when
I came away on Gaelic
this morning, the Patted gave
me a huge bunch of gorgeous
dahlias for their allotment,

So our apartment looks
lovely just now.

I heard on Binkie recently.

She too had broken a leg, but
didn't say how. She has now
just about recovered & had been
to Glyndebourne. I haven't

heard how you are nowadays
& whether your leg has mended
properly. Do you have to manage
stairs, & are you close enough
to shops?

Lots of love to Jane