

Waking hour.
Valentine's Day.

Dearest love,

Thank you for phoneing - you were far away & suddenly you felt nearer. It's wet and windy today which isn't helping!

Yesterday was bright and very spring like. All the Crocus and snowdrops were out and the birds are getting all territorial and chaseing about. I partially uncovered the pond (I hope we don't get very hard frosts) and I cleared the leaves & dead-heads from the front garden. The hydrangeas have big buds almost open already. We have birds coming on one of the hellebores in the shrubbery. I've also moved the two tubs of clematis off the garden and onto the patio as all sorts of things are coming up now. When I get back there will be lots of weeding to do. The rose bed is full of forget-me-nots which will need thinning out!

Do you think you could prune the roses, when you get back?

I have put a phospho-tab in all the house plants today. The bulbs are all coming up now, and they will all need a "lift" soon. It will be nice to spend some time in the garden again.

I wonder if we will have any frog spawn in the pond? Not too many I hope! I can see we carting buckets of tadpoles off to the nearest pond! I don't really know where there is one - do you?

I have ordered some plants which I hope won't come while I am away - they should be sent a bit later in the year, I think.

I have been trying to tempt Isabelle & James to bring us some horse manure by paying for it when they can get it free. I don't know if I have succeeded yet. James is very keen to drive about now that he has passed his test!

I do hope that Mum recovers well so that we can all look forward to the spring and relax a bit.

I'm very nervous about going up there. Silly really, I suppose. I know Dad will be pleased for we to be there and Mum needs lots of moral support.

Jane seems very insecure at the moment. Terry really seems to be reading against his childhood etc - he is drinking too much and smoking. Also he won't commit himself to anything in advance - not even going out for a meal tonight. He won't even discuss holidays - not even to say if he wants to go off on his own so that Jane can arrange something herself. She says he could easily come home & say he's off to Singapore for a week!

Doesn't sound too good, does it?

I suppose having Emma so ill & Jane making more demands is making things worse for Jane. I hope it blows over soon as Jane is very down and up-tight.

Thank heavens we are so much closer and at ease with each other. It's such a blessed relief! It's like a warm, cosy haven in the midst of a storm.

I'm looking forward to working on the house this year - there are quite a few things that need doing. At least we will be able to get the patio nice this year. I really fancy getting one of those plastic green houses -

I think it's Norfolk ones - the ad. is in the 'practical gardening' magazine. You could have a look when you get home, and see what you think. I thought one would go where the cold-frame is.

The carpenter who is working on Ian's house at the moment is rather slow, but excellent. He might be the man to sort out the loft for us. Still no sign of Mr. Stevens & we can't do much until we get a light up there. Jane says to get him to put a strip light up there as it lights into the corners.

No news from Elvis. M. yet - I hope all went well with the birth of the baby. If there are any letters when you get home can you read them & send them on, so that I can reply?

There is an extraordinary G.M. for Midcas on 1st March and we have been sent proxy forms. As it's in Oxford I don't think you will want to go. You have to sign your form yourself, but I could send mine in. You have a choice of two or the chairman but the form has to be sent to the Office & I don't trust them. I could get it copied & send it to Vida, I suppose.

The trouble is it's obvious that NAS are bailing on MIDCAS who are in serious trouble. I don't really know how best to vote. Maybe I won't!

I have sent Nick a photo of you & Nick & Paul at Xmas and one of his bedroom with the new [dwet] cover.

Thank goodness he is not in Midcas any longer. We have been lucky in that, at least!

Phone: Mum has just rung to say that the operation has been postponed - probably for 2 weeks! I feel as if the carpet has been whisked out from under us! So does she, poor dear.

Well, I've phoned Ian and will [water] next Thursday. Carol will be pleased as she has her half [term] next week. I will probably go over there one day & take her those curtains.

I ought to try & see Auntie Edna as well!

Oh dear! Well, at least I might be there when you get back, my love!!

Well, I think I will post this now & buy a few more provisions on the way back. I have got all organised to go away!

I will write again next week - darling, I love you & miss you & long to be close to you again. Have a good trip, love. Take care.

Yours always,
Cxxx

16th February, 1992.

Dearest love,

Here I am settled down for the evening, watching the Antiques Roadshow. I went to the Antique Fair and Crowthorne today, which was quite interesting. Not so many stalls, but most of them different people. There is only one train every two hours on a Sunday, but that was alright.

I got four Botanical prints for £5 each. I thought they would make presents when we go abroad to see friends. One you might want to keep. I also got a print of shells for Clare & a tiny [] for Shirley. I bought a plate for Carol with [] on and a very nice little silver brooch (probably for Lorma) with a carnelian & agate thistle. A book on Mother Theresa and a little brass plate. The plate is butterflies round the edge & then has a glass circle in the middle. It was very dirty & the picture under the glass was a [horrid] water wheel from the Isle of Man. I have cleared it up and put one of [Nona's] little paintings of yellow flowers in & it looks lovely.

I went next door to show her & had to stay & play pontoon with Lauren & Dustin.!! They are growing up so fast - it's amazing!

Well, I'm beginning to settle again. I hope I will be here when you come home now - but it does look as if you will be here for all the time I am away, which is awful. It might be sensible if you stayed in Richmond several nights of the week - at least you wouldn't have to worry about buying food & cooking when you get home.

Mum isn't very happy at the idea - she thinks you need we! She is very fed up about the delay but we are trying to emphasise how good it is that the Consultant is doing the operation.

James has just called - with one bag of horse manure! Well, it's better than nothing; at least we could feed the roses!! Now it's difficult to know how much to pay him.

I shall be working on Thursday this week. It has been very cold and windy today with showers - I think we will probably have a frost tonight. The piptanthus has flower buds on it! - things are rather haywire again this year. I hope we don't get a really cold snap this month - Mum said they had a flurry of snow this morning.

Jane came over yesterday evening while Terry "baby sat" with Emma. I do wish things were a bit better with them.

Here I am back again. I bravely sallied forth & covered up the piptanthus. Then I threw a lamb stew together. Then I rang Paul to tell him I would be here for the next two weeks. He & [] were in Glasgow. Both well and working hard. Now I'm sharing a sherry with you! Cheers!

I wonder where you have been this weekend. I hope you have been able to enjoy it and relax a bit. Tomorrow I plan to do the washing & other chores. Bernadette is away again. Gordon miss her so much that he has taken her to Portugal for a week!! Then on Tuesday I may go to [Carol's] or meet her In Guildford. I ought to try & go to Aunty's on Wed. - if I can muster the energy. Then it's work on Thursday. Shirley may come at the weekend, weather & [] permitting. And so it goes on. Gosh, I miss you love. It's as if a big part of me is missing & I'm just wanting to be whole again.

[Later] Well, my love, I'm going to have to fax you tomorrow. I am positively seething - I have had Martin Lythe on the phone, all

sweetness & light & sympathy - wanting our votes. At least he said yours would be legal if faxed - so we really must vote now. But I will send photocopies of our forms to Vida & make Willy & Vida our proxy voters. Can you believe that he would have the nerve to ring us up??? I do wish you had been here to talk to him! I was really so angry but let him witter on - I just let him be aware that we might not be sympathetic at the very end. Then I rang Vida up & fumed. I'm determined to vote with our friends now.

Mon. A very frosty night, but this morning is bright. I'm going to pop out & post this & also the proxy form for Nicki to fax to you. I spoke to Dianne first & yet again she has invited we over to see the children - so I must try to go next week. It must be the fourth time she has asked!

Well, my love. You know how I love & miss you - just to reach out & touch you will be so good. Longing to be with you again.

So much love,
Cxxx.