

Southampton
1st December 1968

Dear Tom + Joan,

You will guess from the month that it has taken me to get round to replying to your letter that I have had a hectic time. Nevertheless, the house is bought, and we take possession next Wednesday, leaving us ten days to move in the few things which we have bought to start with.

But to return to the beginning. I was reading a newspaper in the S.C.R. in early March, safe in the knowledge that my bachelorhood was secure, when in walked a lass who was quite new to me. I must have been reading too many women's magazine love stories, because I immediately had a feeling that I was going to marry her. Next day she was brought to have lunch with me by Rollo Woods who introduced her as the person who had come to take over the library issue counter under our new computer controlled bar scheme. The next day we went to the theatre together, and by the end of the ^{summer} vacation even I had to admit what everyone else already knew - that my first impression was quite right. The wedding will be in Bridgewater, Somerset, in two weeks time.

Her previous job had been an information officer for Robinson's paper manufactures in Bristol, where she did some Scottish dancing (rather 'ballet' style) and knew many of the folk song and dance crowd. In fact she admitted only a week ago that on leaving Bristol she had been told to 'look out' for me - though in which of the two readings of the phrase I'm not sure! Before Bristol, she worked with ASHB in London, where she went immediately after graduating from Cardiff. Thanks to an error on the part of a temporary Dean there, her degree studies included Botany, Zoology, Chem, History, Economics and Philosophy. Her mother comes from ~~Borrow~~ Frange over Sands, and her father is half Somerset and half Welsh.

Well now - back to the house. We were fortunate to get a house close to the University + to Southampton common, shops and schools, at a very reasonable price because the owners want to get back to Yorkshire because of ill health, and because previous prospective buyers had not been able to arrange mortgages. It is a 50 year old semi, extensively renovated 4 years ago. The garden is long + thin, so I shall grow interesting plants in rows! Actually it won't be as bad as that, but I shall not replace the open fencing on the long

sides which run N-S by solid fencing, so I shall be somewhat restricted in what is reasonable landscaping. All the gardens have fruit trees at the bottom, so the whole area of garden is very pleasant, and it does not seem to me to be reasonable to start chopping it up with high solid fencing round ones even their plot.

I was glad to hear that you have a good garden. But I hope Tom is cautious about the size of his rock garden. My experience is that size for size, the rock garden takes more time than any other part which I have to look after. I just got round to lifting my dahlias today - goodness knows where I shall store them now. These little things will all get sorted out in time.

I've forgotten what the rocks cost - think of me when you wear them.

I've just reread your notes on the two articles which I sent. I did not find them abrasive as you suggested that I might - only instructive. Let me know if you ever have an opening in a department of mathematics, dancing and horticulture at Sheffield. I knew when I was writing them that you had available lots of material that I should have liked to incorporate. I'll get them done as soon as possible. If you give me a deadline

they will be done all the sooner. I seem to be juggling deadlines these days, but I generally manage to keep to them all.

We shall be in Yorkshire for Christmas, so I'll make sure that we visit you.

Best wishes

Frank

P.S. How are your students voting? I've collected the chairmanship of the departmental staff-student joint committee. We have our second meeting next Wednesday.