

Dear Friends/friends and family--Here's the first installment--finally can get to an internet connection and send attachments from the laptop--don't know when the net one will follow. A couple of weeks?

*Love,
Marnie*

Following Job--Part I

26 February, 2005--Well, I' here--rumped, very tired (2 hours of sleeping--or dozing?--on the overnight flight Newark to Birmingham) feeling very fuzzy and semi-disconnected from reality, but after a very expensive (22 plus pounds--about 45 dollars) taxi ride, I'm checked into Woodbrooke. And it looks as if I can't get on to the internet, at least not at the moment, until the more knowledgeable people return on Monday.

27 Feb--And I did get on, having discovered the computer room on my own, But still can't use my lap top--no where to plug in.

Thought I'd arrived into spring--snow drops, crocuses, primroses, cherry trees--all in full bloom. Birds twittering everywhere. This morning--a dusting of snow on the ground--just a reminder it's still February.

Meeting for worship at the Selly Oak Meeting, just up the street. Very little vocal ministry--someone read one of the Queries. Walked back to Woodbrooke with the clerk; he's also Woodbrooke's very opinionated gardener: "Grub it all out! Restore it to the way it was designed to be!" One thing that was grubbed out was one of my favorites--the roses that climbed over a tiny boat house on the pond--gone in favor of a Chinese water garden--the boat house now has a tile roof with turned up Chinese twiddley bits on the corners.

1 March--London, at the Penn Club. Perfect location. Fifteen minutes brisk walk to the library--British Museum just around the corner. Theatre district, Picadilly Circus, Trafalgar Square, art galleries, the Thames--all walkable.

2 March--So I walked. Found my first internet cafe--with a bunch of e-mails waiting. Answered most--piece of cake--except it costs 15 cents a minute on my earthlink account, plus the cafe's charge of 4 dollars an hour. Ouch! Now seeking cheaper alternatives. Penn Club was supposed to have internet hook up for the lap top. But it doesn't work. "When do you think it will be fixed/?" "When the man gets here." "The man" has yet to appear. So as an instrument of communication, the computer is a washout so far.

Afternoon in the Library at Friends House--Found several letters to, from, and about Scott--all, oddly, originated in Ireland. Favorite quote from "himself": "Low lies the life in these Northern CLimes, and Truth has too much fallen in the streets of our poor faded Society; long has the call been continued to them to return; is it strange then that the feet of the Messengers are turned to the Highways and Hedges: My little services

be mostly among other Societies [i.e., non Friends--mostly other Protestants, such as Methodists and Presbyterians]. Among Friends he often found that a “listless stupid silence prevails over all, as dead a Form as any in the Land.” He attributed this to their thinking too highly of themselves, seeing themselves as “far advanced” beyond the “forms” of the “other Societies.” Interestingly, when he died, he was seen as a “saint” by those around him.

4 March--First venture into minutes of the London area Meetings--absolutely no mention of Scott's presence. Oh well--early days. Maybe he hasn't yet told them that their Meetings are full of stupid and listless silence.

5 March--Lovely, nostalgic visit to Hampstead, an 18th century suburb high above London. Hampstead Heath was once infested with bandits, including the notorious Dick Turpin. Now one of London's most famous recreation grounds, mostly infested with joggers. Much of it left in it's “wild” state--there are actually deer. Also views over the whole city. It's one of my favorite places in all of London--people have lived around it, a few on it, for centuries; it has well groomed paths and game fields and a swimming pond--but it's still very strange and mysterious. If it were larger, the Lord of the Rings could have been filmed there--that sort of strange.

My family and I lived on the verges of Hampstead for a semester in the early 1980's; my daughters went to school in an old Edwardian school building in the middle of the village. Many residents are very wealthy--and they have the clout to keep eager developers out--they like it the way it is. And O Joy!--many of my favorites shops were still there--hardware store (then called an ironmongers), tea shop, a classy fruiterer's shop (selling even more exotic and expensive fruit than it did over twenty years ago--some I couldn't even identify). And the wonderful used book shop--shelves so close together, customers have to back up to let other people by, stacks of books on the floor so you cant see what's on the bottom shelf.

And I had a real English tea in the tea shop--tea pot with tea leaves (not bags), with a tiny stariner to keep them out of the cup; a little pitcher of milk, and one of hot water, in case it's too strong. And a real china cup--with flowers painted on it. To go with it, a “savoury”--which seems to have disappeared from everywhere else in England, but is something not sweet that is served with tea to make it a light meal--usually a sandwichy sort of thing--like sardines on toast or some such. Mine was sliced tomatoes covered with grated cheese, stuffed into a very large puff pastry. A lovely day.

6 March--Meeting for Worship at Westminster Meeting--for that, see this month's newsletter. Wandered back to the Penn CLub via Covent Garden--full of stalls selling overpriced gee-gaws, and the buskers--London's famous street entertainers--a knife thrower, a juggler, and several examples of an “art/entertainment” form also available in Providence at Waterfire--people in fancy dress pretending to be statues. Why?

7 March--Spent the morning in the internet cafe, sending off e-mails to F/friends and family. Back to the Penn Club to discover the internet connection is now working. "The man" finally came!

And at the Library-first actual mention of Friend Job Scott, who attended the Select Meeting of Ministers and Elders (six men, six women) of the Devonshire House Friends Meeting (the biggest and most influential London Meeting at the time). But all it said was that he was there--so I can't get too excited yet.
