

2173 Tryon Rd, North Saanich, BC, V8L 5H6, Canada

Dear Friends,

This was us in 1991 at the cabin at Sugar Lake, the last time we all got together there.

We thought it would be interesting this year to tell you a bit about what we are all doing in our 'day jobs' rather than sending the usual newsletter with pictures of quilts and grandchildren. It has turned into rather a long document but we hope some of it will interest you, and it comes with our warmest wishes for your health and happiness in the coming year.

All the best,
Gillian and George



Tina, Richard, Quentin
George, Rachel, Gillian, Alexander

Christina lives in London with her partner of 32 years, Chris Panton, and has a studio near the Olympic stadium. She describes her day job as being an artist. The coming year will be a year of adventure for her as she is embarking on an Arts Council fellowship which will give her an opportunity to research ideas for a few months, first at Lady Margaret Hall and the Ruskin School of Art in Oxford then at the Centre for Ideas in Melbourne which will be her base in Australia. She says she will be looking at rock formations trying to understand what is hidden in a place, the physical forces such as geological processes and weather patterns as well as the cultural aspects -the mythology and political history, and the music of the landscape. Her theme is "the strong and unyielding forces that make movement impossible, forces both physical and cultural and the forces that constitute time".

She writes "It will be a chance to work away from the practicalities of the studio, to travel and follow thoughts wherever they lead. In preparation home and studio are being organised so that when I come back refreshed all will be ready for me to implement my ideas over the next couple of years. As an extra bonus I will be able to visit Aunt Pat and Uncle Stuart at Bullengarook and visit Gillian and George and my brothers and their families in BC".



Tina on the ferry to Saturna
Island, Sept 2009

When people ask us what sort of art Tina does, we mumble about 'installations', 'multimedia conceptions'. Nowadays it seems to be primarily sculptural. Her hippopotamus, bought by Saatchi, was definitely a sculpture in the round and so were the Large Huts which spent the summer in the sculpture garden outside Tate Britain in 2008 and have since travelled around sculpture parks in the UK. However something she did for a show in Haarlem recently was a box-like thing that unfolded to become a house-like structure which itself unfolded to hang on the wall as paintings. A piece in the Galleria Sonia Rosso in Turin called *Us* (2008) (see pic) consists of a vaguely humanoid slab of mahogany standing in front of a water colour 'shadow'. Professional art critics appear to have the same difficulty in describing her work as we lay people do, thus *Frieze* magazine says of *Us* (2008): "there is an obvious relationship between the two forms, but at the moment any identifying pressure is brought to bear, the pair sneaks out from under it, obfuscating the nature of the coupling and asks, 'How can you be sure?'".



As another commentator puts it, "Mirroring the labyrinthine nuances of private thought patterns, only fully evident to Mackie herself, these works eschew any sort of narrative containment or definition, shooting off in a hundred directions" However hard it is to find words to describe these things she makes, they usually grab the attention and make you want to apply words and meanings to them, but perhaps its best to let them soak into your retina and just feel what happens. Gratifyingly, her work has become quite well known in the last few years and she has pieces in national collections. see further: <http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/artnow/christinamackie/essay.shtm>

Richard lives in Cowichan Bay, BC, with his wife Cathy Richardson who teaches in the School of Social Work at the University of Victoria. They have three children, Juliet, now in Grade 9, Raffie in Grade 7, and Rupert in Grade 4. The whole family drove as far as Winnipeg in the summer on a three-week tour of the western half of the country, stopping at Sugar Lake on the way and dodging forest fires throughout the Kootenays.

Richard was rooted firmly at Cowichan Bay working for much of the spring and summer on drafts and proofs of his book *Mountain Timber: The Comox Logging Company in the Vancouver Island Mountains*, which came out in late September. It has now (December 13th) been on the BC Bestseller list for eight weeks, and Richard has been on a signing and lecture tour that has taken him from Sooke to Campbell River to Vancouver. The

interest in the book reflects the historical dominance of logging on coastal British Columbia. The book follows Camp 2 as it moved from Oyster River, to Quadra Island, to Bevan, to Comox Lake, and finally to Cruickshank River between 1925 and 1945, and loggers moved away from the coastal flats to the high mountain valleys.



The progress of this one camp mirrors the progress of Pacific Coast logging at this time, when technological advances -- geared railway locomotives, powerful skidders, and highlead logging -- allowed the loggers to leave the accessible and logged-over coastlines for the good timber of the higher valleys and hillsides. Richard based the book largely on interviews with old loggers and their families, which gives the book, he hopes, a brevity and accessibility, and allowed him to bypass the voluminous documentary records ("There is no period more remote in history than the recent past." (Allan Bennett from *The History Boys*).

This is Richard's fifth book. Three of the others are about people, places and logging on Vancouver Island and the fourth is a major historical work based on his doctoral research at the University of British Columbia <http://www.rsmackie.com/books.html> . It deals with the Hudson's Bay Company's ventures into non-fur trading activities on the Pacific coast between the 1820s and the 1850s and, more broadly, the economic origins of British Columbia. This book, *Trading Beyond the Mountains*, won the Lieutenant-Governor's Medal in 1998, has been reprinted three times and remains in print.

Quentin is an archaeologist at the University of Victoria. He supervises graduate students and teaches courses at all levels including introductory courses in method and theory, advanced courses in the archaeology of BC, and graduate courses in archaeological theory. For the past decade he has worked mainly in Haida Gwaii (the Queen Charlotte Islands). With colleagues in Parks Canada and others (including his brother Alexander), he has found or excavated a series of sites from about 10 to 12,000 years ago, which is when modern climatic and vegetation conditions were established.

This was a time of rapid environmental change – literally, it may be the "Time of Transformation" related in Haida oral histories. Sea levels were much lower 12000 years ago at the end of the Pleistocene ice age and the stretch of water (Hecate Strait) separating the islands from the mainland was a channel only some 15 km wide. As the glaciers retreated sea levels rose and flooded the land and within little over two thousand years Hecate Strait was 60 km wide. The rapidity of this "transformation" would have

been all too clear to the ancestors of the Haida people, as sea levels were rising 5-10cm a year.

Incredibly, a memory of these events lives on in Haida oral tradition 10,000 years later. →

Quentin and his Parks Dept colleagues have explored a variety of sites that provide different perspectives on the life of the ancestral Haida people showing amongst other things that they were bear-hunters and fishermen. Some caves the team explored at Gaadu Din have provided the oldest evidence of human occupation in British Columbia. They are continuing this work, analysing the stone tools and flakes retrieved from their digs and are planning further underwater archaeological investigations. Quentin also plans to expand his research to southern Vancouver Island and the adjacent Gulf Islands in the Strait of Georgia. In Spring of 2011, he hopes to return to Argentina to conduct field research on the southern Pampas and northern Patagonia.

"Then Raven-Walking told only the black bear, marten and land otter to be on Haida Gwaii. And the strip of ocean between the mainland and [Haida Gwaii] was narrow. The tide flowed back and forth in this, and he pushed the islands apart with his feet [...] at that time there was no tree to be seen."

• From J. Swanton (1908) *Haida Texts - Masset Dialect*



George got his grant renewed so is going on doing research ("Case studies in Neural Evolution" - a title so broad that it covers almost anything I might want to work on), but I have no intention of going on slogging away at it for the full five years it was renewed for. I am 80 and often feel much older - old but not downhearted as I have engrossing hobbies like chamber music and earthenware pottery. Best of all, of course, is to have Gillian and be close to all our children.

One interesting thing happened this year. I got an email from a lady called Maria who got a hit for "Weston Elwes" in my family history *Mackie Men and the Empire*. She soon realized that her great grandfather must be the same chap who was my mother's first husband, Gervase Weston Elwes. Gervase died tragically in 1921, 7 months after he and my mother got married. Maria had no idea her



George with Humboldt squid

great grandfather married this English lady, and neither I nor my brother had ever been told that Gervase had a second family. If my mother knew that Gervase had another wife and two children in Thailand, she never told us about it.

After many emails and much web research the facts began to emerge. Comparing photos of Gervase that had come down to the Elwes descendants and to me, there was no doubt that we were talking about the same man. I discovered that the Elwes family are landed gents with a family seat in Suffolk and that Gervase's father was archdeacon of Madras. Gervase himself evidently worked with elephants in the teak forests of what was then called Siam. His consort was a Thai lady living in Chiang Mai. The women of that city are known for their beauty. This has come down to the Thai Elwes descendants as you can see.

Majorie Elwes (Gervase's granddaughter) now lives in England with her husband, Mahmood Samat, who is from Sulawesi. Of their eight children, Maria and Farida married Englishmen, Selina married a Norwegian, Sham a Hungarian, Mutalib a Bosnian, Sofia a Jordanian and Faizal a Sicilian. Majorie



Majorie



Selina



Maria

holds the whole family together. We often talk on Skype. I have marvellous photos of them all (including innumerable grandchildren). Selina and her husband Bjørn Halstad have put together an Elwes family genealogy with photos and stories on <http://trees.ancestry.co.uk>

Rachel lives with her husband Olivier Arnaud and their daughter Alice in Cabriès, a medieval hilltop village near Aix-en-Provence. From the terrace of the 9th century château you can look across to Mont Sainte-Victoire, made famous by Cézanne.

Rachel teaches English at the Centre d'Océanologie de Marseille which is part of the Université de la Méditerranée (Aix-Marseille II). Her students are in a B.Sc. programme called Marine and Environmental Science, and in a two-year Masters programme in Oceanography.

She writes "I try to adapt the course content to their areas of specialization as well as their language needs. This is fairly easy, first because I'm the one who gets to define the programmes and second, there's so much stuff on the internet and



Rachel in her kitchen after seeing an exhibition of Jacqueline Picasso's self portraits taken in the mirror at Vauvenargues in the early 1960s

in the news about the oceans and the environment. I'm very lucky to have small groups of motivated students who are interested in everything I put in front of them. We've been working on conservation projects, recycling, early maritime exploration, eco-tourism, NGOs, going behind-the-scenes in an aquarium, the N. Pacific 'garbage patch', ocean acidification, the Mediterranean Sea, pollution, writing abstracts, writing reports, newsletters, brochures, etc, as well as lots of grammar in the context of the topic under discussion".

Her first year Bachelors students have just adopted a wild killer whale ("Blackberry") through a Vancouver Aquarium adoption programme. He lives in the southern Strait of Georgia, where we might see him one day from the ferry that takes us to Friday Harbor, just across the border in the USA.

From time to time Rachel goes out on sampling cruises with the Masters students and on excursions to the oceanographic museum and aquarium at Monaco. She plans to put together a trip for the 3rd year students to the Marseille sewage treatment plant. She was told when she took up this post last year that 'les clés de la maison sont à toi'. In effect, she can do what she wants and is supported in it by the Department administration.

As her parents, we wish Rachel and her family lived a bit closer but we still see them quite often and with the advent of Skype, we can have long video conversations at no cost, and take full advantage of it.



At Chesterman Beach, this summer

Gillian gave a talk at a Medievalists meeting in Ottawa in March on a rather out of the ordinary but very interesting topic. In 1984 she and Alexander had been on a trip cataloguing early churches built by missionaries in north-western BC, including a Salvation Army Hall at Gitwinksihlkw in the territory of the Nisga'a First Nation on the Nass River. The interesting fact came to light that this building had been erected on a foundation of cut up totem poles. This immediately brought to mind the well-known letter written by Pope Gregory to Saint Augustine in the year 601, four years after the saint's arrival in England in 597, instructing him not to destroy the "temples of the idols", but only the idols themselves, purifying the sites with holy water and erecting new, Christian altars on them. This would encourage the pagans to continue to come to the old sites of their worship, where they could be "converted to the service of the true God".

Pope Gregory to Abbot Mellitus

"When, therefore, Almighty God shall bring you to the most reverend Bishop Augustine, our brother, tell him what I have, upon mature deliberation on the affair of the English, determined upon, viz., that the temples of the idols in that nation ought not to be destroyed; but let the idols that are in them be destroyed; let holy water be made and sprinkled in the said temples, let altars be erected, and relics placed. For if those temples are well built, it is requisite that they be converted from the worship of devils to the service of the true God; that the nation, seeing that their temples are not destroyed, may remove error from their hearts, and knowing and adoring the true God, may the more familiarly resort to the places to which they have been accustomed."

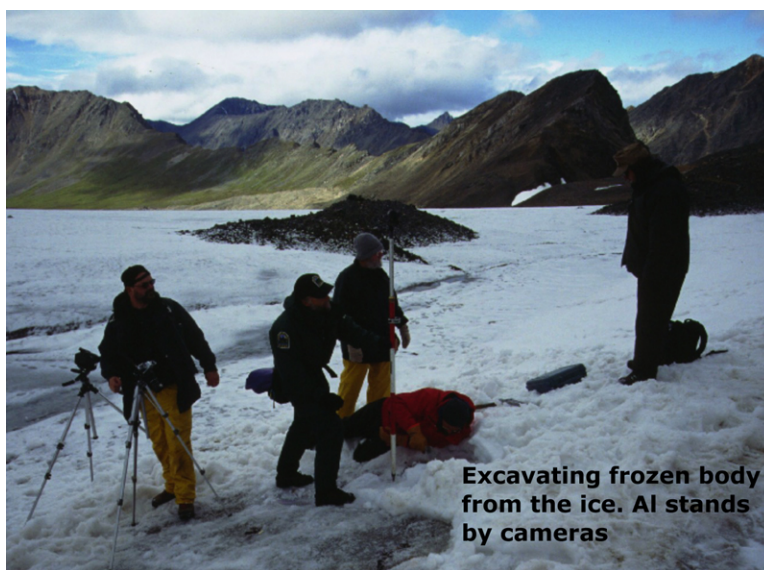


The question is, did the Salvation Army converts who supervised the erection of the church at Gitwinksihlkw consciously intend to encourage their flock to attend it by incorporating sacred relics from their own culture? Or was it just that there happened to be a number of decrepit old totem poles near the site which made convenient footings and joists for the new building? The weight of the evidence suggests that the latter interpretation was correct, a pity perhaps, as it would have been fascinating to think that Pope Gregory's instructions about how to convert the Anglo-Saxons lived on in the 20th Century. The talk went over well and produced a lot of discussion.



For both Gillian and George our 'day jobs' have diminished in importance in recent years and we are spending longer at home and enjoying family stuff, cooking, gardening, quilting and pottery.

Alexander is an archaeologist with the British Columbia government. Places identified as sites of archaeological interest cannot be excavated by researchers or built on by developers without a permit. Al and his colleagues determine whether or not development can proceed and, if it can, whether archaeological work must be done in advance. BC is a huge place (about the size of France, Germany and the Netherlands combined) and has more than 200 First Nations (native Indian peoples) for whom both archaeological digs and commercial development are highly sensitive matters, so the job calls for great patience and diplomatic skill.



Excavating frozen body from the ice. Al stands by cameras

Something out of the ordinary came along a few years ago when the body of a man was found melting out from a glacier at 1700m elevation in northern BC, near the Alaska and Yukon borders. The elders of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations called him Kwaday Dan Ts'inchí (Long-ago-person-found). Al attended the site after the discovery as part of an expert team to help recover the remains, including excavating the lower body from the ice, mapping the site area and collecting various bits and pieces, such as salmon, clothing, wooden implements, a copper bead, and bits of a fur robe.

This project is notable not just for the nature of the discovery but the way it has been run as a collaboration with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations. Al, who has had extensive experience in dealing with First Nations leaders stayed behind after recovery of the body to negotiate the agreement that allowed scientific study of the remains to proceed and he has been BC's liaison with them ever since. He has also been the liaison with more than 30 researchers from around the world who are studying different aspects of the project. These include his wife Kjerstin, a textile conservator, who has undertaken the conservation of the man's robe. Now in 2009, in addition to his normal duties, Al is editing the book that will cover the discovery and results of the research. Many interesting things have been discovered about the man; where he grew up and lived in the last year of his life and, best of all, who are his living relatives.

DNA studies on the robe that Kjerstin is working on have shown it was constructed of arctic ground squirrel and sewn with moose sinew. These species are distributed in the interior regions, suggesting it was probably made in NW BC or the Yukon. It was repaired at a later date and the patches were sewn on with sinew from blue whale, humpback whale and mountain goat which suggests that the repairs were done on the coast of Alaska. This is consistent with other lines of evidence showing the man grew up on the coast and that he was walking from the coast in the two days prior to his death.

DNA studies were also done on the body, and some 240 people from various First Nations in the area contributed samples for comparative analysis. Seventeen living relatives were found. The study used mitochondrial DNA which is inherited through the mother's line. By a fortunate coincidence the First Nations in this area have an exogamous matrilineal clan system which means you get your clan affiliation from your mother and you must marry into the opposite clan or *moiety*. A fascinating finding was that all 17 living relatives are from the same moiety (called Wolf in the interior and Eagle on the coast). This shows how phenomenally robust the marriage system must be to have persisted for the last 350 years through contact with Europeans, massive depopulation from introduced diseases, complete economic disruption, subdivision by artificial borders and accompanying profound social change.

This research, in co-operation with the First Nations, makes it clear that the man who died on the ice in the mountains all that time ago was unquestionably a member of the Wolf/Eagle clan. It is probably the first time that such results have been achieved in archaeology. The elders' interest in working with scientists to find out who the man was has allowed his living relatives to plan a final potlatch in his memory, as their clan's traditions require.

The End (at last!)