

Christmas News, 2018

Dear Friends,

First a word about our grandchildren and I will just say that all ten are fine, including Alice, who has recovered well from a severe wound to her upper arm from broken glass, requiring an operation and an arm splint.



Alice in hospital

Healthwise G and I are doing pretty well and feel lucky to be alive at all! I did something to my left knee in June and it's still not quite right though a lot better. Doc says it's not arthritis. I had cataract operations on both eyes in the spring and can see amazingly well now but need glasses for close up.

When Rachel was here in May-June she overlapped with a visit from Bob Meech. Rach took this pic of our house from across the bay, with a great blue heron posing on a boat house roof. There were also lots of Canada geese with flocks of goslings over at the marina.



The youngest, Claire, goes to her other grandparents for Christmas and looks spiffy when dressed up for formal occasions.

When she comes out here she joins freely in general conversation but also goes off and reads by herself, sometimes in unusual places!



This mink often pays us visits.



Both Rach and Bob were wonderful visitors, good company and enormously helpful in the house and garden. Bob and I rejuvenated the rose bed, applying fertilizer, compost and weed-suppressing bark mulch. The improvement was apparent within a few weeks. The peony plant he gave G for her birthday is doing well.

A big event in Rachel's year was a show of her raku pottery at the Musée Edgar Mélik, shared with her friend Marie-Carmen who does block print paintings based on the traditional art of the women of Wallis Island.

Tina has had a busy year with several shows in England and a big, month-long one at the Fondazione Antonio Ratti in Como, where in addition to showing original new work of her own, she oversaw and adjudicated the work of a group of highly talented young artists from around the world. Two books are in production, one about the work of the young artists and one about hers.



She and Chris came to see us in August while living at their house on Mayne Island, often bringing delicious home-cooked produce. In the picture below, Tina is giving her mother an advance viewing of a set of water colours she did on Mayne which have since been on display in London at the Frieze Art Fair. Chris, who has bought himself a battery powered electric bicycle for getting around on Mayne Island, was a big help with my computer problems (below right). He seems to be able to enter into my mind and see where the conceptual hangups lie lurking in the fog and make them disappear – what's the word for this? *débrouillage*.



My niece Lisa was in BC in August with James and their children and they stayed for a while at



Tina and Chris's house on Mayne Island. They came over here for whale watching outings and to see Gill and me which was very nice for us. Lisa was much involved in trade negotiations in her former job with the EU in Brussels and now, with Brexit looming, her expertise is invaluable in the UK. She works for the Foreign Office and is in great demand in advisory and training roles.

Brexit seems like a mess right now but after reading Roberts Tombs's *The English and their History* (900 pp) I can't believe that we won't somehow come out of it OK in the end.

Our three sons are all doing well. Richard is now solely responsible for the Ormsby Review, an online book review site which he started in conjunction with the magazine, BC Bookworld. As a writer and BC historian himself he has a vast

network of contacts to draw upon in developing it as forum for serious book reviews and commentaries about B.C. society. He is clearly in his element and the Review is doing well.

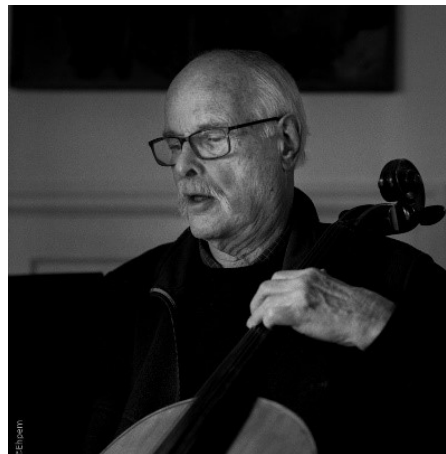
Quentin co-directed a dig on Quadra Island in August and in the rare picture below, captured by Al who was also part of the team, Quentin is seen hard at work doing some real, old fashioned archaeology. Now that he has retired, Al works as a freelance archaeologist and has conducted a dig in Barkley Sound and worked on a project on an island off Moresby Island where there is an abandoned Haida village, S'Gaang Gwaay Llnagaay, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Little remains of the village beyond the decaying totem poles but, by all accounts, it is a magical site which has a powerful impact on visitors. One can imagine this from Al's dark, greyscale photograph with the black forest behind.



Gill and I still enjoy living in our big old house and would hate to leave. We get help from cleaners, gardeners and handymen but can still manage most of it quite comfortably by ourselves. We go for drives almost every afternoon, collect mushrooms in the fall, and go for short walks down to the beach much as usual but now I need a stick. Last year we fed our windfall apples to a flock of sheep, this year it's mostly to cows, particularly a big herd of Ayrshires. (Our own milk cow, Bessie, back in the 1970s was an Ayrshire). Gill often goes out with friends, particularly when I have musicians around! The picture of her below was taken by Al on one such outing. In June I put the motor on the boat and we went for a couple of joy rides round the bay and Gill took a picture of a rusty buoy. At the time I wondered why she took it but its clear to me now that her artist's eye (inherited by several of our children) found beauty there.



I still experiment with pottery glazes and have found that putting a semi-opaque glaze on top of one containing manganese dioxide produces spots of various sizes with areolae, where the manganese has bubbled up during the firing and bled out sideways in ripples. Colours can be added to the top glaze but it is tricky as the spots tend to lose their areolae.



Music still helps keep me sane. Our dear old friend Larry died but I got another viola player and we still meet regularly for string quartets. This photo of me with my cello was taken by Al.

Wishing you all the very best for 2019,

Gillian and George