

2173 Tryon Rd, North Saanich, BC, V8L 5H6, Canada
December 2011

Dear Family and Friends,

We spent a fair bit of time gardening this year. Gillian looks after the terraces and rock gardens, George grows vegetables and looks after the trees (when he can summon the energy!)



Cyclamen coum in one of Gillian's rock gardens



George's lion has grown moss on his mane



Sunday brunch in the dining hall at Friday Harbor labs with Bob Meech, Susan Safyan and Richard

We went to the University of Washington Laboratories at Friday Harbor in April-May and again in Sept-Oct, both times with Bob Meech. Bob and George worked on *Polyorchis* and managed to complete a paper on a new inhibitory pathway that this jellyfish uses to stop itself swimming when it is feeding. Gillian's paper on *Warmundus*, Bishop of Ivrea, came out in vol. 78 of the Papers of the British School at Rome. We had visits from our son Richard (who gave a talk about his logging books) and his partner Sue, also from our daughter Rachel who flew over from France for her mother's 80th birthday.



With Rachel at Garrison Bay, San Juan Island

All our children are thriving. Tina in England, in collaboration with Nottingham Castle Museum, has been awarded the Contemporary Art Society's annual award to produce a work of art that will become part of the museum's permanent collection. It's anyone's guess what will come out of this! Quentin's little daughter Claire came through six cycles of chemotherapy and now, at nearly 3, is a normal little girl, rapidly catching up with her age group at play school. She still has to have MRI scans every 3 months, but so far so good.





As usual, Gillian has made some beautiful quilts for family members and George has been making pots for Christmas presents. The plate on the right bears an inscription in the little-known Klingon language. The white spots are due to an impurity in one of the glaze ingredients - a serendipitous effect that he has not been able to reproduce.



In December we had a memorable reunion with Fran and Ian Sowton and their daughters Coo and Bronnie (red hat). In 1956, when we emigrated to Canada and had just got off the train in Edmonton, travel weary, knowing nobody, and with two kids under 16 months, a young woman appeared on the doorstep: "I've got a washing machine- give me all your dirty clothes!" This was Fran, and they lived next door. How could a friendship so begun fail to prosper.

In October we flew to New Zealand, rented a Toyota Corolla and spent a wonderful time sight-seeing in the North Island, staying in B & Bs and motels, taking hundreds of pictures (impossible to resist in this country). We saw gold mines, volcanoes, green hillsides with sheep, botanic gardens, black sands, caves lit by glowworms, the Auckland Domain and much more besides. Met nice people, sampled local wines....



New Zealand North Island, Mount Taranaki



Pat and Stuart at Bullengarook with Lucy and Ellie

Then George went back to Canada and Gilli went to visit her sister Patricia and brother-in-law Stuart at their acreage near Melbourne. After many years of drought, the spring has been rainy and everything was looking green and beautiful. This meant lots of mowing for Stuart as it is a big place - 30 acres or so - much of it consisting of grass planted with the hundreds of exotic trees and shrubs which they have added over the last few decades. G especially enjoyed walking with the dogs, weeding, and outings to the surrounding vineyards followed by lunch in the country or with friends. She also spent a few days in Tasmania, where she visited our old friend and

erstwhile neighbour at Tryon Road, Mervyn Mitchell, who lives at Boat Harbour on the northern coast of the island. Its an area of long white sand beaches and peaty brown rivers making their way to the sea, between fields of poppies and pyrethrum. . What a beautiful place!

Reminders of mortality are difficult to ignore at our age but we still enjoy our lives and hope for more to come, and send our best wishes for health and happiness to all our friends and loved ones.

Bilham and George