

## Seasons Greetings

From George and Gillian Mackie, December 2013.

Dear Friends,

Another year almost gone, and we struggle gamely on.

Big news on the home front was birth of our first great grandchild, Frida, to Bran and her partner Jon, here seen with her grandparents, Al and Kjerstin. Al is retiring from his job as a government archaeologist and will continue in private practice. As for Bran herself we wonder if she plans to have another five daughters like Queen Nefertiti, whom she strikingly resembles.



In April Gillian and I shook off dull sloth and flew to England, got a car and drove around seeing our friends and relatives. This included seeing Christina's show at the Nottingham Castle Museum. Here is one of her sculptures.



It was great to see everyone again and we also saw a lot of ruined Cistercian abbeys in Yorkshire and Wales. Here is Gillian on the way to see Cymer Abbey near Dolgellau, famed as the nerve centre of Owain Glyndŵr's council of AD1402. We all learned about it at school, remember?

Cool Wheels. We had asked for a Ford Focus, but somehow ended up with this.

Two trips to Friday Harbor this year, both coinciding with our birthdays, Gillian's in May and my 84th in October, nice birthday parties both times.

The first trip was my swansong as a researcher, the second an excuse to go over and see Bob Meech, long-time friend who continues with our joint work. I don't mind giving up at all as have been feeling more and more lukewarm about my work, and increasingly out of touch. This picture was taken in May by Al.



I

Gillian completed her memoir *An Oxfordshire Childhood*, and it is on the web at <http://web.uvic.ca/~mackie/>



Rachel and Alice flew over from France in May to see family and friends over here. Here they are at our house. Rachel returned in October.

Tina and Chris came to see us briefly in December and we had a big party, 45 guests, which was a chance to see many old friends (and try and remember their children's names).

At Friday Harbor Gillian and Rachel spent quite a lot of time making necklaces and ear rings etc with beads from various sources including Rachel's raku. Back home in France in December Rachel had a successful show and sale of her raku earrings and necklaces, but this is only one side to her work.





Meanwhile back in April, Richard and Susan moved into their new home in Vancouver and have got it all fixed up very nicely, as we saw when we stayed a night there in September on the way to Sugar Lake. Sugar Lake visit was fun but I had trouble with Richard's chain saw and had to take it home and fix it.



*Susan loves her new equipment!*



Great news from Claire's latest scan - there is no sign of recurrence of her brain tumour and her oncologist now only wants to see her every six months. She will be 5 in January, has completely caught up with her peer group and leads the pack in specialist skills like carving Halloween pumpkins!

Running out of space, so will just add that we had visits during the summer from numerous family and friends, including Kat, Jack and Kevin from Swansea, Fran and Ian Sowton and their family from Toronto, and Mervin Mitchell and his son John from Tasmania. Our crumbling old mansion by the sea really earned its upkeep this year.



*Charlotte Mackie as Vivien Leigh*

Our granddaughter Charlotte, now a student at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design also visited in July, accompanied by faithful hound Arbutus. To celebrate her visit I photoshopped her as one of my favourite film stars from long ago.

With all best wishes from Gillian and myself

*George*