



# From Beyond The Pond



2003 Edition

The Mallinsons, 187 Altamira Rd., Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada, L4C 4C6

Dear All,

Mea Culpa, Mea Culpa! It is now three years since my last Christmas/New Year letter. I will plead pressure of work, stress, illness, whatever, to get me off the hook.

There is a lot to catch up on...

**James** is still plugging away at his architecture. In 2000, he completed his 3-year degree in Environmental Studies (a pre-architecture degree), and then took 16 months off. He got his British passport (he's a citizen through me) and spent 7 months in England in 2001 working for a restorative architecture firm in London, after first traveling around the north of England and Scotland for a couple of weeks. It was a mixed experience. On returning to Canada, he worked for 8 months prior to starting his 4<sup>th</sup> year at the University of Waterloo's facility in Rome. Rome was a fantastic experience for him, as the students took

extended trips to the north and south of Italy and visited many historic cities as part of their studies. In one of his assignments, he accidentally desecrated an historic building owing to a problem with a spray can of plastic foam, but it should wear off after a few score years. After Rome, it was work again for 4 months in Toronto, then the second school term was at McGill University in Montreal. That was another good experience, and he finished up with excellent reviews on his major project. Right now, he is working for an urban planning firm in Toronto that has many projects under way in England. James has now decided to complete his bachelor degree in Architecture, rather than going several more years to get a master's degree, so he will be returning to Waterloo for an 8 month stretch from January onwards.

**Rebecca** has been away from home for well over a year now, as she has worked for organizations in Waterloo for two work terms in a row. She spent two work terms prior to that working for Seneca College as an ESL tutor (English as a second language), a job she enjoyed. In the summer of 2001, she took a trip to England to see James, and was able to meet a number of our English relations.

In Waterloo, Rebecca has recently worked for NCR as a technical writer, and for the University of Waterloo itself as a coordinator with the cooperative program



(they assist students to get jobs with industry during their work terms). She starts her last term in January, and will graduate at the end of April, ahead of James. Having been in Waterloo now for nearly 16 months, Rebecca has not had to suffer from the disruption of moving house every 4 months, so we too have been spared the job of moving her furniture and possessions. Now we only have some of James' stuff in the basement, and will no doubt have to move that at the end of December.

Rebecca is now considering an academic career, and has been investigating graduate degree programs at various universities.

**Chris** graduated from high school in June, 2002, but did not want to go to college or university immediately. He took a year off, working at various jobs in catering,

roofing, warehousing and in a restaurant. In the spring of this year, he applied to various colleges and was offered a place at Confederation College in Thunder Bay to study video and film production – a subject he has been interested in for a few years now. In his last year at high school, he thoroughly enjoyed the club scene and his social life. Now his focus has changed and he is getting very good grades in his course at college. In one assignment, he achieved a 100% mark.

So, at the end of August, he packed practically everything he owned into the car, and we took him up to Thunder Bay, a two-day trip each way. He is still socializing a lot, as far as we can tell (you have to surgically extract information out of him these days), but seems to have a better balance in his life now. Chris is looking forward to coming home to experience his mother's cooking again, as he is fed up with the cafeteria food in the residence. Already, he is talking about renting and sharing a house next year with some of his friends to escape the residence. Throughout all this, he has continued with his weight training, and is now the type of person you wouldn't want to mess with!

**Sue** is now feeling much healthier after a worrisome period in which she lost weight, her skin turned darker, her nails started cracking and she got very dehydrated. After our trip to England for Mother's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2001, a perceptive kidney specialist recognized there was indeed a problem, and put her into hospital for a series of tests. It transpired that she has Addison's disease, and since then she has been on cortisone treatment which has made a world of difference. Her only problem now is keeping her weight down as the cortisone enhances her appetite.

Sue has joined the Canadian Federation of University Women, and in her usual way has become entangled in all the volunteer work that is needed to run such an organization. Currently, she is the Membership Secretary, and is tracking new and returning members, a task that seems to take up an inordinate amount of time.

Apart from this, Sue is tutoring a number of students each week, which enables her to indulge in her love of mathematics.

**I (David)** continue to hold the financial front, though with difficulty at times, given the demands of family and the state of the market for consultants. The start of 2002 was very slow, business-wise, and made worse by the fact that the company (QLogitek) through which I

sub-contract for most of my work got into financial difficulties and started paying their sub-contractors later and later. I am still owed tens of thousands of dollars for work done in 2001, and more for 2002.

They came within a hair's breadth of bankruptcy, filed for protection from their creditors, and made a proposal for settling their debts. The proposal was accepted by the creditors, under the terms of which we sub-contractors will receive shares to the value of the amount owed, and which will be redeemable in 2005. There is no certainty, however, that we will ever get paid.

Throughout all of this, I have continued to manage projects for QLogitek at the Royal Bank of Canada, MedcomSoft and Aviva Insurance. The latter two projects involved web development work in Java and Visual Interdev, which required considerable re-education

on my part.

I managed to take only 2 days vacation in 2002, other than a trip to England to check up on Mother and Anne. We made up for that this year, however (more on that later).



James on the sail board

**Mother** celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in March of 2001, and Michael, Katharine, Sue and I all made the trip to England for the celebrations. We held a party the Sunday before her birthday, at which we were pleased to meet many of the people who will receive this letter. Mother enjoyed it all very much, and was pleased so many people were able to turn out.

In the spring of 2002, Mother ended up in hospital for 2 weeks as she had lost weight and didn't seem to be able to put it on again. After she came out, Sue flew to England to provide some tender loving care, and I followed a week later. We were able to assure ourselves that the problem was not serious, and that Mother is still able to run her own home.

Later in the year, Mother underwent two cataract operations on her eyes, and they improved her eyesight tremendously.

**Anne** reached her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday in January, and retired forthwith. She is involved with a church group that enables her to get out and about every couple of weeks.

### The Bowes Family

The last couple of years have been very eventful. Dan and Jill had a baby girl (Morgan) in September 2001, followed by fraternal twins (Devin and Paige) in March

this year. The twins were born shortly after Dan and Jill moved from Wawa to Sault Ste Marie.

Libby and Bill continue to enjoy Canmore in Alberta, but have made several trips to Wawa and Sault Ste Marie since they became grandparents.

Lisa now works for the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), and is engaged to Mark Matulis, a sound engineer. They will be getting married in Canmore in May, 2004, on which occasion this branch of the Mallinson family will make the trek out west.

Sue and I have made trips to Wawa and Sault Ste Marie over the last 18 months to see Dan, Jill and family, and we dropped in there on our way to Thunder Bay with Chris. Sue also spent a week in the Sault just before the twins arrived, lending a helping hand together with Libby.

## Events

Apart from our annual trips to England to see Mother and Anne, and trips to Wawa, Sault Ste Marie and Thunder Bay, we have mostly spent our spare time at the cottage. There have been two notable exceptions.

Firstly, we journeyed to Montreal by overnight sleeper train (didn't sleep a wink) to spend a weekend there in June, and to see James at McGill University. It was a beautiful weekend in which we gawked at old Montreal, cycled up Mount Royal (on amazing rented bikes), and saw one part of the International Fireworks Competition.

Secondly, to celebrate 26 years of marriage (we missed out on the 25<sup>th</sup>), Sue and I took a trip to

France and England in October. We spent 3 days in Paris, seeing the usual sights and sampling the cuisine. Then we took a train to Limoges, rented a car, and spent 6 days in the Dordogne, staying in Brantôme, Sarlat and Limoges. We visited the mediaeval and renaissance chateaux in Bordeilles (definitely worth a visit), the mediaeval towns of Perigueux, Sarlat, Domme, Rocamadour, and Martel, and the replica of the prehistoric cave (and its paintings) at Lascaux. One day we rented a canoe and paddled several kilometres

downstream from La Roque Gageac. The weather throughout was beautiful and warm with the exception of the day when we visited the Lascaux caves, when it poured rain all day. On our final day we were invited to a very pleasant lunch at the cottage of Jacques Lafond and his friend Serge. Jacques is the son of Charles, a friend of my father's, whom Dad met on a 6-month work exchange visit to Paris in 1934. I had not seen Jacques since 1965, and then only briefly.

We then flew from Limoges to Stansted and spent 7 days in England. Cousins Rosemary and Barry were kind enough to entertain us the first night, after which we headed to Yorkshire to visit Mother and Anne, where we tried as far as possible to take them out into the country every day, and to give them a break from cooking for themselves.

We returned to Canada having blown both our budget and our waistlines.

## Cottage Life

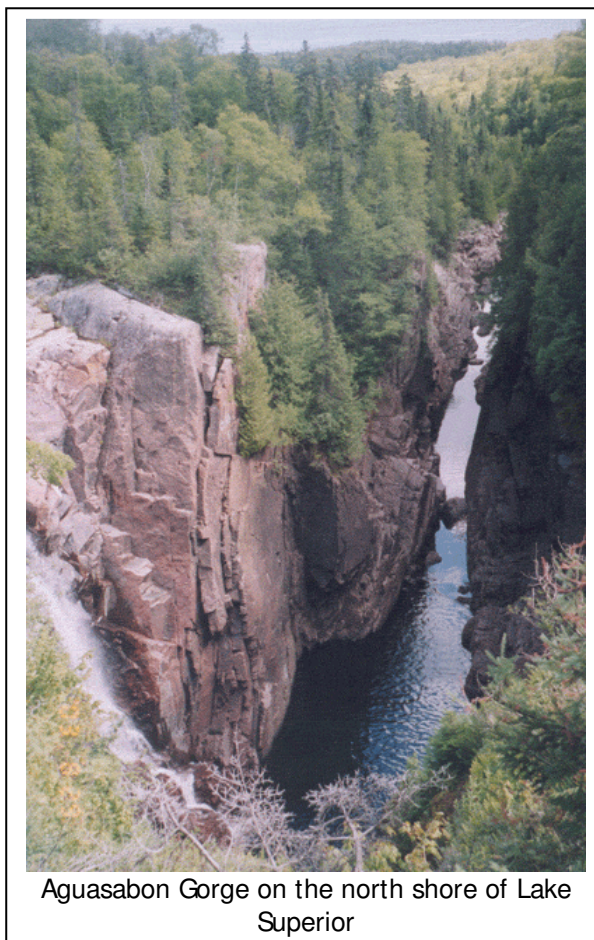
There have been no other projects at the cottage in the last couple of years other than painting the dock and the walkway up to the top of the boathouse.

This summer, from the middle of June to the end of August we did not spend a single weekend at home, either because we went to the cottage or to other places such as Montreal and Sault Ste Marie. I even took my laptop computer there and worked on a project for a week.

We managed to get a week's vacation there in addition to our trip to Europe. One day we took our new boat to Lake Vernon and explored that lake plus several others. Two years ago we did a similar thing when we explored Lake of Bays, Lake Rosseau and Lake St. Joseph; it was very interesting seeing all the millionaires cottages, and made us

green with envy (or was it just seasickness?).

Last year, Libby and her family decided to spend Christmas at their cottage across the lake, and we decided to do the same. We all had dinner on Christmas day together. Chris, Rebecca and James built a toboggan run down our lot using the snow shovelled off the roof, and we all took turns sliding down it on snow saucers. James and Sue also created a skating rink on the lake, which we all enjoyed.



Aguasabon Gorge on the north shore of Lake Superior

This year, we will be spending Christmas at home. I think everyone wants some tranquility this time around.

Life at home seems very calm now with all the family gone with the exception of Velcro the dog. The three of us continue to take our medications to survive our ailments; Sue for her Addison's, me for my blood pressure, and Velcro for his pancreas and thyroid problems. And so we totter on...

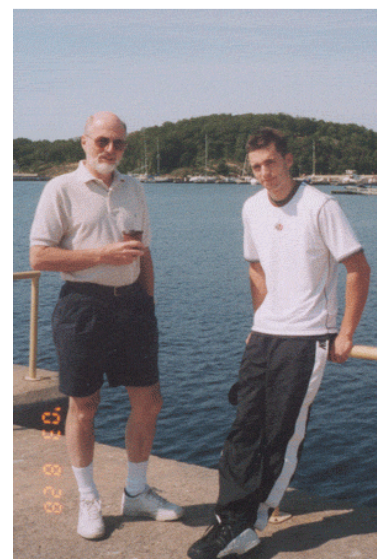
Have a great Christmas and a prosperous New Year.



Paige, Morgan and Devin



The cottage at Christmas



D & C in Parry Sound



J & S in Montreal



Sunset on Lake Superior



Rocamadour

