



From Beyond The Pond



2014 Edition

The Mallinsons, Orillia, Ontario, Canada

Dear All,

This newsletter is now, of course, a New Year event, as I find the Christmas season so busy that I don't have time to write it. This year, I had more events than usual at Christmas, as will become clear later on.

2014 in brief:

January: Snow, snow and more snow as we experienced the snowiest winter that I have yet seen in Canada. The snow blower was constantly kept busy, and towards the end of the winter the snow piled on the lawn was so high the snow blower had difficulty throwing the new snow high enough. At one point, we had more than 6 feet piled on the lawn. Lots of snow shoeing and cross-country skiing helped to keep us fit.

February: Having painted our bedroom a pale green last year, we decided we did not like it, so we re-painted it a pale peach color. David joined the Orillia Vocal Ensemble – more on that later.

March: Spotted a coywolf crossing Lake Simcoe on two separate occasions. These are coyote/wolf cross-breeds, and we were amazed to find out an estimated 2,000 live in Toronto, but are hardly ever seen.

April: Back into painting mode as we re-decorated our main bathroom – we had managed to put it off for four years, ever since we moved in.

June: We attended a course to identify birds by their calls at the Carden Nature Festival, and went on a nature trip with our Probus club to the Tiny Marsh to see turtles, birds and insects.



July: David gave a presentation on Iceland's geography, history and natural wonders to our Probus club.

August: Spent many hours during the summer months installing an ultra-violet water purification system at the cottage in what turned out to be a major project that involved laying flooring and installing paneling in our utility room, building a small pump house next to the utility room, moving

our pump and water tank into it, and lots of crawling underneath the cottage to connect pipes. For the first time since we inherited the cottage, we will now have a reliably pure water supply.

We visited Sue's cousin Sharon and son Craig at her cottage on Commanda Lake; paddled our canoes up the Commanda River, swam and played hilarious Pictionary. Our visit was enlivened by sightings of a bald eagle and a few sandhill cranes.



We were pleased to meet and enjoy the company of the entire Bowes family at their cottage across the lake during the month.

September: Visited England, spending a week in Cornwall then visiting friends and relations all the way back to Yorkshire. Highlights were Port Isaac (location for the Doc Martin series), hiking on the Cornish cliffs, visiting a tin mine, attending a performance at the Minack Theatre, seeing St. Michael's Mount, touring HMS Victory in the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard and seeing the only two airworthy Lancasters (one of which is normally based in Canada) flying over Lincoln. We also managed to visit, see and/or stay with 19 friends and relations, including sister Anne, aunt Joyce Cocking, Tim Coffey, Ron Turner, Geoff and Rita Burton, John and Janet Burton, Barry and Rosemary Jones, aunt Mary Mallinson, Andrew Mallinson, Rowena and Jeremy Lee, Pat and Archie Galbraith, and Suzie and Anthony Smith with their son Reuben.

October: We organized a trip to the Shaw Festival to see a splendid production of "Cabaret" with our Probus club.

November: We hosted an "Appy" night to welcome new members to our Probus club. On these convivial occasions, all guests bring an appetizer and a beverage, and chat for a two or three hours in the evening. 41 people came to ours.

December:

In February, I joined the Orillia Vocal Ensemble, a community choir that raises money for charity, as a tenor. It's 55 years since I was last in a choir as a treble, and having been used to carrying the main melody I've found singing tenor parts to be very difficult. With practice, however, I am improving. We gave two concerts in the spring, and two in the time leading up to Christmas, as well as singing in retirement homes a couple of times.

Other Happenings:

Once the snow melted off our solar panels in March (helped with a bit of shoveling on my part), we started to see some financial return on our investment. However, come September we realized that the tree in our front yard had grown tremendously, and was shading the roof for a significant part of the day. As it's a silver maple that grows very fast, pruning would only be a temporary solution, so it's likely we will have to remove it and replace it with a slower-growing and shorter tree. We've had some agonizing over this, as we both think it's a beautiful feature of our home.



James and Elsa:

James and Elsa had another eventful year. James shifted into a new job in May and is currently the project architect for a new engineering school building at the University of Waterloo. In June they bought an 85-year old home in the east end of Toronto and moved in July. They undertook some cosmetic repairs (as well as a few non-cosmetic ones) and have now settled in nicely. Elsa continues to enjoy her work as editor at Canadian Architect magazine, which has her travelling regularly across the country and beyond. This year she enjoyed visiting Calgary, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City, Venice and Bologna (Italy) and she'll be heading to Vancouver at the end of January.

Bandalero the cat is annoyed that James and Elsa have yet again needlessly forced this thing called "winter" upon him, but remains as cute as ever.



Rebecca:

In 2014, Rebecca continued in her role as policy researcher for the Toronto Atmospheric Fund, which is an agency of the City of Toronto that focuses on greenhouse gas and air pollution reduction. She also did some consulting work for a former professor and returned to York University to guest lecture the same professor's undergraduate class on energy efficiency. On the non-work front, Rebecca still lives in her two-bedroom apartment in Toronto, and ran in two more charitable races in 2014 (a 5K and a 10K), finishing in the top 10% for her gender in both races. Rebecca also continued with her Zumba classes in 2014 and tried an aerial silks class for the first time in December - an activity she intends to continue with in the new year.

Chris:

Chris has been working in home renovations doing large jobs. One was re-dressing a house with custom bent sheet metal for a very picky customer.



He learned a ton from working with the crew, but also realized that renovations are too wearing on his body and he needed to switch professions. Summer saw many adventures up north to lake country with friends, as well as camping a few times. In December, he had an operation on his leg to remove one of the two plates that were inserted when he broke his leg last year. Prior to that he gave up his apartment in Toronto and moved back in with us. Presently, he is working on the development of a prototype of a video game in conjunction with an English programmer who lives in Bali. He has a team lined up to complete the development of the game once he can obtain financing through crowd funding. He also dated a few girls but nothing serious came of it.



In Port Isaac, Cornwall, in front of Doc Martin's house

Sue has managed to pass on the membership responsibilities for her CFUW Orillia women's group to someone else, but is still organizing weekly hikes for them. She also participates in CFUW group outings to arts tours and special events.

Sue's legs, knees and hips have been bothering her for over a year, and in October she had a bad reaction (headaches and migraines) to some medication for this, so is moving in another direction with physio and another doctor's visit to determine if there is any reason for the aches and pains other than 'old age'!

In October, we were pleased to meet up with two of her University friends, Margaret and Bonnie (and husbands Stuart and Andreas) for a convivial afternoon followed by dinner.

I, **David**, am still handling membership and web site maintenance for our Probus club. In addition I am now on

the board of the Leacock Associates who award a memorial medal for humour each year to a Canadian author. For the past few years, Sue and I have attended a number of the luncheons where the award winner is announced. I'm still not sure how much involvement I will have in this, but it will most likely be administrative.

My major health issue this year occurred when I slipped and fell down the steep steps from our deck and landed on my back. After I fainted from the pain, Sue called an ambulance and I was carted off to hospital. Fortunately there was no lasting damage, though I was sore for a couple of weeks.

In the fall, I started playing pickle ball, a form of indoor tennis played with bats like ping pong paddles and a plastic ball. It is quite fast and strenuous, and certainly keeps one fit, and I've found it to be very enjoyable. And yes, it has a lousy name that doesn't adequately describe the sport!



On the coastal path in Cornwall

As usual, we hope you all have a healthy and prosperous 2015, with best wishes from

David, Sue, James, Elsa, Rebecca and Chris.



Cliff climber in Cornwall



Minack Theatre on the Cornish cliffs

England and Cornwall



Tin mine engine house



What am I doing down here?



Sue on the coastal path



St. Michael's Mount



Gun deck on HMS Victory



Lincoln Castle

Back in Canada



Snow everywhere!



Cardinal in the back yard



Sue, Libby and Sharon – cousins



Lisa at the pump



Craig and Chris negotiate a "snag" on the Commanda River

