

THE HALIFAX FIELD NATURALIST



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September to November 2023

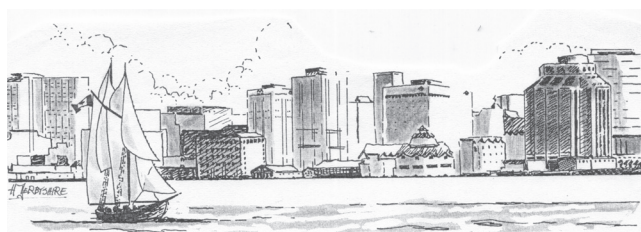


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Return address: HFN, c/o NS Museum of Natural History, 1747 Summer Street, Halifax, NS, B3H 3A6

HFN is incorporated under the Nova Scotia Societies Act and holds Registered Charity status with the Canada Revenue Agency. Tax-creditable receipts will be issued for individual and corporate gifts. **HFN** is an affiliate of Nature Canada and an organisational member of Nature Nova Scotia, the provincial umbrella association for naturalist groups. **Objectives** are to encourage a greater appreciation and understanding of Nova Scotia's natural history, both within the membership of HFN and in the public at large, and to represent the interests of naturalists by encouraging the conservation of Nova Scotia's natural resources. **Meetings** are held (except for July and August) on the third Tuesday of every month at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium of the NS Museum of Natural History. **HFN Field Trips** are held at least once a month; it is appreciated if those travelling with someone else share the cost of the gas. **Participants** in HFN activities are responsible for their own safety. **Memberships** are open to anyone interested in the natural history of Nova Scotia. Forms are available at any meeting of the society, or by writing to: Membership Secretary, Halifax Field Naturalists, c/o N.S. Museum of Natural History. Members receive **The Halifax Field Naturalist**, along with its included **Programme**, quarterly. Our membership year is from January 1st to December 31st, and new memberships received from September 1st to December 31st of any year are valid until the end of the following membership year.



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FEES

Student	\$15.00 per year
Individual	\$25.00 per year
Family	\$30.00 per year
Supporting	\$35.00 per year

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HFN NEWS AND SUBMISSIONS

FROM OUR PRESIDENT



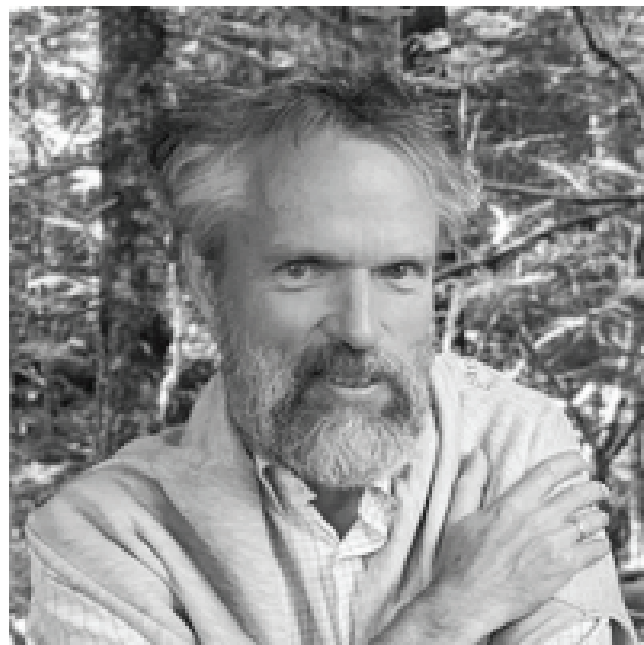
Dear Members,

Every issue of our HFN quarterly newsletter contains a number of articles and reports often just after the usual Nature Notes section. Invariably, they are well written, informative, and entertaining. I feel we are most fortunate to have people who are willing to share some of their favourite experiences with us in this way. I always find these to be especially interesting reading not only for the content but also because they shed some light on the authors' interests, experiences, and their own background.

I encourage everyone to consider doing the same thing. No doubt within our ranks there are individuals whose many nature experiences, both recent and from years past, would be well worth sharing. These need not be lengthy at all, in fact they could be as brief as you prefer. Any such items can be sent to Stephanie Robertson (hayderbyshire@gmail.com) for future posting. They may not make the next issue, or even the one after that but she would then have them on hand as a future newsletter option.

– *Bernie McKenna*

REMEMBERING BURKHARD



On Sunday September 10th, 2023 at 3:00 in the afternoon in Point Pleasant Park, 14 friends and fellow Hfners convened for a small remembrance celebration of our late friend and HFN President Burkhard Plache, so tragically taken from us, a year ago on this date by drowning. Fate blessed the gathering – no rain as promised, no wind, lots of sunshine, and perfect temperatures. Some of us were a wee bit hesitant to relive the event in this way, but happily, it turned out to be a positive and joyous celebration – viewing previously unseen photos of him which each of us had brought, and hearing personal anecdotes and unique experiences we had shared with Burkhard. Below are some of their, and others' who were not there, reminiscences.

STEVEN ADAMS

I had the honour and privilege of working with Burkhard Plache for twenty six years prior to his passing. He had a remarkable career developing cutting-edge sensing technologies, and these have advanced our scientific understanding of global oceans and their fragile ecosystems upon which all life on our planet ultimately depends. I first met him in the fall of 1996 when he joined IOSAT, a Halifax start-up formed to build transportable satellite reception stations for the emergent commercial earth-observation market.

Burkhard developed state-of-the-art software for producing imagery from the radar sensor on Canada's ground-breaking RADARSAT earth observation satellite. He leveraged his background in physics, mathematics, and computing to implement the ingestion and decoding of raw, microwave echo return data as received from this satellite in order to produce highly accurate sea-surface imagery with precise geopositioning. Moreover, it was all optimised for concurrent multiprocessing to achieve a real-time performance. Subsequently, he then focused his talents on developing information extraction software to detect and quantify maritime features such as wind speed/direction, wave height, oil slicks, ice cover, and ships. Importantly, this technology has since been used to successfully stop industrial-scale illegal fishing and illegal bilge dumping in remote marine areas formerly inaccessible to monitoring.

After the IOSAT project wrapped up, many of us on the team, including Burkhard, stayed on with the parent company Satlantic, which specialised in the commercialisation of in-situ sensors measuring the optical properties of water. Burkhard went on to develop many very important processes. He developed algorithms for determining photosynthetic properties of phytoplankton at extremely low concentrations, via a fluorescence induction and relaxation technique. This technique used emitted light to stimulate and measure the fluorescence response. He also developed compact, digital nitrate analysers using ultraviolet absorption spectroscopy to accurately measure harmful nitrate build-up in a range of ocean conditions – from turbid, nitrate-rich coastal zones to cold, dark ocean depths with only traces of nitrates. He also implemented calibration processes to accurately measure and monitor ocean acidification due to global warming. He engineered optical sensors for the measurement of the oceans' photosynthetically active radiation in order to show the availability of a range of light needed for photosynthesis. For NASA, he investigated ocean radiance transfer and increased its accuracy by including corrections for stray light and temperature variation. He engineered a solar-tracking platform for ships in order to measure surface reflectance and water-leaving irradiance using bearing and position data to maintain optimal radiometer orientation with respect to the sun. Burkhard also developed a dual hyperspectral radiometer system for a fleet of robotic floats drifting on ocean currents, repeatedly diving and sampling the water column up to two kilometers deep, then resurfacing to collect measurements via satellite uplink.

A few years ago I brought Burkhard with me to MDA, where he led a team of engineers working on a Maritime Situation Awareness system for NATO. He then led another



team developing a real-time communication and control subsystem for a crewless space shuttle that will resupply the International Space Station with both pressurised and unpressurised cargo payloads. Burkhard's last assignment was, in a way, a return to the beginning. He once again developed algorithms for processing synthetic aperture radar imagery for a new radar satellite constellation that will employ the latest technical advances for imaging the earth and its oceans from space.

Burkhard worked with many people over his professional life. He was highly regarded for his intelligence, discipline, precision, and unwaveringly methodical approach to meeting highly complex challenges in physics, biology, chemistry, engineering, optics, computing and remote sensing. More than that he is fondly remembered by all for his professional humility and quiet commitment to the success of those around him. He always worked for the team and their goals, never for recognition from others. Burkhard was always loath to acknowledge his incredible accomplishments. I hope that he allowed himself the satisfaction of knowing that his work has helped the world to be a better place.

BRIAN BARTLETT



A rare mix of dignity, humility and curiosity helped make Burkhard Plache the person he was. Beginning as far back as 2007 I had the privilege of being on several weekend getaways to Bon Portage Island and Brier Island with Burkhard, Ingrid, and other naturalists. Burkhard's patient observations of flowers and other plants were welcome on birder-centred walks. His humour was wry rather than boisterous; once when I asked him why he was drawn to botany more than to ornithology, he paused, then answered "Well, plants don't fly away." It was no surprise that for the HFN Book Club Burkhard recommended Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Gathering Moss: A Natural and Cultural History of Mosses*, one of the most absorbing, beautifully written books we read during the decade of the club's existence. Speaking of books reminds me how often I crossed paths with Burkhard and Ingrid in the Halifax Central Library; he was a dedicated reader of both non-fiction and fiction yet wore his learning lightly – though his botanical knowledge helped open our eyes when he served as HFN field-trip leader at cherished local locations. Karen and I also enjoyed hours in his and Ingrid's Jollimore house for their birthday parties and over one New Year's Eve; both the food and the conversation were nourishing.

Burkhard lived with a sense of gratitude. Once he told me he became HFN President because he'd gained so much from previous presidents' generous work that he wanted to give to others what he'd received. He understood that one of the most basic ways to promote protection of our beleaguered planet is to encourage interest in its minutiae. Two years ago when we emailed back and forth about Northern Irish teenager Dara McNulty's *Diary of Young Naturalist*, Burkhard wrote that reading the book gave him hope for the younger generations' relationship with Earth.

One of my strongest memories of Burkhard in action was of a trip in a small boat back from Bon Portage Island to Shag Harbour. The skipper suddenly began rushing about, obviously caught up in some emergency, but he didn't explain what the problem was. Most of us sat there, bewildered or confused or (speaking for myself) in a panic that the boat was leaking and drowning imminent, but Burkhard

stayed calm and helped the skipper solve the problem – which turned out to be a rope entangled in the motored blades. That was Burkhard rising to the occasion and demonstrating practical skills. He showed a more homemade sort of skill while picking apple-mint leaves from his and Ingrid's yard and making tea with them. After I praised the tea at one of their parties, Burkhard filled a bag with leaves and gave them to Karen and me. Later, during the first two years of COVID, he drove to our house to replenish our supply. When we tug the lid off the can used to keep them fresh, the apple-mint leaves still have a strong aroma.

GRACE BEAZLEY



From when we first met, I was always impressed with Burkhard's love and knowledge of Nature, and his willingness to share by leading walks or paddling adventures. When I served on the Programme Committee, Burkhard was a highly valued member. As time went on, I was very happy when he accepted the role of HFN President. I enjoyed watching his growth in the role and the increase in his comfort level over his five years in office. After Burkhard's tragic death, I did some math and reflected that we knew each other some 20 years, mostly as HFNers. He was a very bright light during my time of walking with him.

RICHARD BEAZLEY



I admired Burkhard's humble personality, his love of nature, his ongoing eagerness to learn more and to share his expanding knowledge of nature with others, his development into an excellent naturalist, and his many valuable contributions to Halifax Field Naturalists, Nature Nova Scotia, and Nova Scotia Nature Trust.

I also admired his courage to move from Germany to Nova Scotia with his bride Ingrid more than 20 years ago, his mastery of English, his efforts to become a contributing member of his new community, his steady development of confidence to support and then lead, and his rise to become president of HFN.

I was thrilled by his choice to become a Canadian citizen. It is a truism that countries that welcome immigrants thrive more so than countries that do not: Burkhard personified this truth. I regret that one of his favourite activities in nature took him from us.

DAVID BURTON



I knew Burkhard for 28 of his all-too-short 57 years. I met him – and Ingrid – at our First Congregational Church, just before Christmas 1994. It was their first Christmas together as a married couple. Our small discussion group was having a Christmas gathering in the church basement and they joined us. Being their first Christmas away from Germany, I remember us singing *Stille Nacht* (Silent Night) – in hopes they would feel at home and among friends, and an instant bond was formed.

Each of us has different interactions with, and different perceptions of, individuals we may know in common. And each of us will remember Burkhard for different things. I will add to the mosaic of who Burkhard was to us all by mentioning three things that stood out to me.

First, his personality – he was kind. He never spoke harshly of others, he was not an angry or a negative person. He was a quiet person, never seeking to be the centre of attention. He always wanted to know what you thought

about the matter at hand. Second, he was brilliant. He had a mind that was always sorting things out and seeking to find answers. From his highly technical programming work to his love of the game Go, and even to his choice of exercise – Aikido, he loved to find order and to make sense of complex structures. From literature (he was an avid reader and borrower from the Halifax Public Library) to music (he loved Classical music and attended many concerts and cultural events) to life's everyday matters (he would choose their Christmas tree methodically, often selecting it well in advance, a fir tree with branches spaced out to safely accommodate their German candles) – in all things he did, he analysed and rationalised. Yet, despite his brilliance, he was never arrogant. He could run intellectual circles around me, yet he would never make me feel inferior or belittled. Third, he loved the outdoors. From the moment he set foot in Nova Scotia in 1993, he sank his teeth into Atlantic Canada and never tired of getting to know it intimately. Camping, canoeing, hiking, exploring – that is where Burkhard was most at home. He loved the wildness of Canada with its never-ending forests, craggy rocks, and wild coastlines.

The last time I saw Burkhard was at the Van Gogh immersive experience at Exhibition Park in May 2022 – 27 ½ years after that first introduction over *Stille Nacht* in the church basement. Before going over to say “Hi” to him, I remember watching him for a minute there in that large immersive room with the colourful images of Van Gogh’s paintings swirling over him – he was pensively taking it all in. I was always awe-struck by his brilliant mind, so I clearly recall standing there that evening and looking at him and wondering, “What is going through his mind? How is he taking this in and analysing it all?” I can’t think of a more poignant way to remember him. In the complexity of everything this world holds, Burkhard was always trying to figure it all out, while soaking up the beauty and culture around him.

It has been a year since that fateful afternoon at Melmerby Beach. I miss him greatly, we all miss him. We were all made the richer for having known him.

LESLEY JANE BUTTERS



My fondest memories of Burkhard were on HFN field trips. He was so interesting, compassionate, and knowledgeable about almost everything pertaining to our natural world. If a field trip leader/guide on a particular outing was unable to answer a question, sure enough Burkhard would contribute his knowledge in his German-accented subtle voice. He always seemed to come up with an accurate and wise answer – no matter what the subject was. Another fine feature of Burkhard’s was his own ‘internal GPS’. He always seemed to get us out of the woods safely even when some of us thought we were lost forever! He had a great sense of direction. Remarkable!

On a canoeing trip on the Medway River in Albany New Burkhard showed me how to differentiate Glossy Buckthorn from our native species of cherry and alder shrubs. Glossy Buckthorns can look quite similar to them, but – it is very difficult to pull out of the ground – even a very young shoot.

On my Albany New cottage property grows Leatherleaf *Chamaedaphne calyculata* in a mass along the river’s edge. It becomes more prolific as the river becomes more acidic. I had never taken the time to identify this plant but through Burkhard now know it well.

A year before the pandemic I had bought two cords of what was described as “good, split, dried, seasoned, hardwood” for my woodstove. “Great”, I thought, “all split and dried for immediate use.” However – I could never get it to properly ignite; my poor bellows was on the brink of exhaustion! When any of the wood finally did catch, it smoldered and smelled like burning creosote. Upon query, the supplier reassured me the wood was top notch. But, after 37 years, I had much experience and knew how to lay a fire and get it to burn hot and throughout the night. This batch of wood was *far* from topnotch. Passing the subject over to Burkhard. I brought a few sticks of it to his home for him to sample. He too had troubles with ignition and burning. Banging dry firewood together should produce a ringing sound and this didn’t. However – Burkhard had a wood-moisture measuring device! With it he found that the wood still had a lot of moisture in some of the pieces. Burkhard mentioned it was probably wood that had been at the bottom of the pile in a wet area of the person’s lumber yard, sucking up moisture. Good ol’ Burkhard!

During the winter when lakes begin to freeze, William’s Lake in Jollimore is one of the first to become sound. A few times when I was out on the lake alone with my kicksled or Nordic skates, I would often see Ingrid and Burkhard (you couldn’t mistake him – he was the chap that looked like he had just skated in from times past). His skates were as old as the hills, he sported a long woolly grey coat, a scarf around his neck, and grey woolly trousers – a character image of Charles Dickens on ice! I always felt a little safer when Burkhard was there. Interestingly enough, I never saw him stumble or fall even on ‘crinkle’ ice (deeply frozen ice with an almost separate thin layer on top which crinkles and breaks easily under a skate blade or shoe) nor ‘speed-bump’ ice (large, frozen wavy bumps) – he was always upright, striding in total freedom. Once, I lent him my kicksled to try. He was a giant on what looked like a kids toy!

It was Burkhard who informed me that if one is feeling nauseous, rather than taking an antacid tablet, to instead eat a bit of an apple and have a good old fashioned ‘burp’! Sure as shooting, it has always worked for me ever since. Burkhard was so very wise in his quiet way.

PHILLIP ELWOOD



I knew Burkhard for many years. One time I read a novel in which the protagonist was a young, very smart kid. In the novel there was a classic math logic problem. The book’s narrative explained the problem and then gave a math answer and a logic answer. Of course, I couldn’t understand either one! I thought about it a lot though. Then I told Burkhard the problem as described in the book. He chuckled and gave a one sentence answer which I understood immediately!

Another time I was talking to him about the proposed changes to the Armdale Rotary, giving my views of the advantages and problems with the two designs. He nodded and gave a one sentence analysis that underscored a major consideration I had never thought of!

I used to have a carpet cleaning company. One time I had a big job on a tight schedule and Burkhard kindly came and helped for a night – not that he needed the work – just because it was in his character to help someone out.

Burkhard was one of the nicest, smartest people I have ever come across.

JUDY KEATING

I have many fond memories of Burkhard at the HFN Melmerby Beach weekends. One that stands out is of him leading us barefoot through rugged trails on Roy's Island, expertly identifying numerous native species and, stopping at several vantage points to indulge our senses in the magnificent ocean below. Good times!



Ingrid and Burkhard, Melmerby Beach

OLIVER MAASS

My mother Regine and I, among others, live in the same community that Burkhard chose as his home upon coming to Canada. I will start by sharing a few words my mother has prepared.

"When Burkhard came to Canada from Germany almost 30 years ago, he studied a map of Halifax to help decide where to live. His choice? The community of Jollimore, on the west side of Halifax's Northwest Arm, next to Fleming Park.

After finding a room in a home on Parkhill Road, he, for a period, attended Parkhill United Church and joined the congregation at its annual Sunday School Picnic and Potluck. I remember that he brought a carrot salad. This is how we met.

Since I had also immigrated from Germany, we very easily connected. Burkhard started his work as a postdoctoral fellow at Dalhousie, where I also worked. I commuted across the Northwest Arm by canoe, and soon enjoyed Burkhard's company on these almost daily trips.

A few months later, I asked him if he would house-sit during a trip I had planned to Germany. He accepted. Soon after, he began boarding with me.

I saw then how Burkhard began to explore and fall in love with Nova Scotia. He did not reveal much about his plans and hopes for the future, but one day he returned from a weekend outing with a beautiful rocking chair. What could that mean? One day, Burkhard told me that my German was archaic – I had left Germany more than 30 years before him, after all. I paid him back days later when he brought a frozen goose home and announced he would ask

his fiancé, Ingrid, to cook it when she arrived from Germany. It was now my turn to say that surely he was archaic!

It was around then that Burkhard informed me he would be moving out soon, as he and Ingrid planned to get married. But as the wedding day in Germany approached, Burkhard asked if they could both stay with me for a while after returning to Canada so that she could be part of their search for a home. That seemed fair to me. After the wedding, Burkhard and Ingrid arrived with a huge amount of luggage. One room wasn't going to be enough, so one became two rooms. And staying "a while longer" turned into five years! Guess where they finally moved? All the way to the other end of Jollimore.

In those years together, we shared the kitchen, bathroom, garden, canoe, and more. We became the best of friends. It was the beginning of a friendship of almost 30 years. Burkhard and Ingrid grew deep roots here. One of the pleasures of our friendship were the many potluck gatherings at Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter and birthdays – at my home and theirs – often with other friends too."

Those are the recollections my mother wanted to share.

It was at these potlucks and after moving back to Jollimore 20 years ago that I myself really got to know Burkhard and Ingrid. They have been part of the very fabric of Jollimore – walking the streets and trails, skating or swimming at nearby lakes, and attending performances at the local Theatre Arts Guild. They were usually seen together and known or at least recognised by most.

Burkhard understood and loved Jollimore – It's older, organic character, with narrow winding streets, easy walkability, lots of trees and trails and no one house like another – a community where casual encounters, connections, and greetings happen easily. A community that, oddly, cannot be built under today's development rules. Burkhard was more than a resident of Jollimore – he was a citizen, a familiar face at community events, and a long-time member of the William's Lake Conservation Company.

He was also involved with the Backlands Coalition and led public hikes behind William's Lake to raise awareness and support for protecting the nature around us. At one community-organised meeting to discuss a planned subdivision next to Jollimore, Burkhard asked city staff and the developer and, indeed, all of us, "What is to become of the anarchy that is Jollimore?". He was always thoughtful and perceptive.

Several days ago, I asked my two sons, Silas and Pippin, aged 9 and 11, how they would remember Burkhard. They recalled his kindness and good sense of humour. And then they smiled and reminded me of walks home from school with their friends and I on snowy days. Arriving at Parkhill Road, they would sneak down Burkhard and Ingrid's driveway and knock on the front door to set the ambush. Then the snowballs flew. Burkhard would valiantly fend off the intruders, sometimes with Ingrid. He was both playful and measured. We had a lot of fun with him.

Jollimore and all of us will miss you, Burkhard. It's hard to say goodbye.





Gini's grandchildren Pat Leader, Shirley McIntyre, Ingrid & Burkhard

SHIRLEY MCINTYRE



My first memory of Burkhard and Ingrid was in 1997. The Field Naturalists had had a Musquodoboit River canoe trip and they had joined in. I remember this young couple as very much in love sitting off by themselves as we ate our lunch on the shoreline. They were fairly new to our country and our language and beginning their exploration of our wonderful wilderness areas.

The only field trip ("A Taste of the Tobeatic") from which I have a picture of them was in 2000, July 29-30. We had been invited to Gini Proulx's wilderness cabin situated on the northern edge of the Tobeatic Wilderness area. Gini toured us around the wild areas which included a bear wallow – a deep, mucky looking pond-like area that the bears walked through to get rid of bugs or other irritants. Ingrid later went for a good swim, something she always does if there is a place to do so.

The picture is of Gini's grandchildren, Pat Leader, myself Shirley McIntyre, and Ingrid and Burkhard atop a large rock. As you will notice, it was accessed by a ladder. This was when Burkhard was at his 'hairy stage' of life, with a big head of hair and bushy beard!

We lost a special person when we lost Burkhard so tragically last year. He was a wealth of knowledge and an asset to mankind in many ways. He certainly loved and enjoyed exploring our vast local wilderness areas and also further afield in Canada, learning to identify all things in our natural world.

We miss him dearly and know he was taken from us too soon.

BERNIE MCKENNA



Pretty much since my first introduction to HFN it was clearly obvious to me how involved Burkhard was in every aspect of the society. He skillfully fulfilled so many different positions and duties and provided a steady influence for all.

To see someone so knowledgeable about all things natural and yet relate to others in a very unassuming and some-

times basic level was typical of him. I'm so glad to have had the opportunity to get to know and work with him and Ingrid; he is a true highlight of my time in HFN. My most memorable interaction with both of them was when the four of us did a preliminary walk at Soldier Lake. Between the two of them the level of plant knowledge they showed was extensive and fascinating.

Active as both a walk leader and newsletter contributor, his writings were always in depth and complete with all plants being identified in both their local common name and their botanical Latin name. No room for confusion there.

Over the years I have had the good fortune to work with and for some remarkable people. I consider Burkhard to be at the very forefront of these people.

If I had to put a face on the Halifax Field Naturalist Society it would be Burkhard's face I'd see.

STEPHANIE ROBERTSON



Living abroad from 1990 to 1994 and again from 2000 to 2004, Allan and I were not in Nova Scotia when Burkhard immigrated to do Post Doctoral work at Dalhousie. Gradually however, after coming back from our last sojourn in Bangladesh, we got to know them better and better with Ingrid becoming Treasurer and Burkhard being on the Programme Committee. We worked even more closely with Burkhard when he became our able and skilled President in 2017.

The summer of 2014 was the inauguration of our HFN Melmerby Weekends along the Northumberland Shore – with lots of warm water swimming, birding, plant walks, and side trips to other areas in the fresh ocean air. I'll never forget one year, 2017, when Burkhard and Ingrid arrived before anyone else. Burkhard parked, got out of their car, and without a word, immediately threw himself amongst all the small yellow flowers that dot and sway in the grass around our front cottage. He stayed there with eyes closed for quite a little while, breathing in the fresh air and relaxing from the long ride up from Halifax. I knew exactly how he felt because I always experience exactly the same feeling when first arriving – instant relaxation in the awareness of very, very clean smelling air – and – lovely silence. After the heartache and tragedy of that horrific, September 10th Melmerby Weekend day last year, I am so glad I captured that feeling, with Burkhard in complete and happy repose – at one with his beloved nature.

Burkhard always handled everything quietly and capably. His decisions were always wise, thoughtful, and effective. He was a truly unique and wonderful person who we all miss.



Burkhard, 2017, Melmerby Beach

GILLIAN WEBSTER



I was lucky enough to know Burkhard Plache – mostly from HFN but also as a friend of many years. My then husband and I used to hike in and around William's Lake quite often with Burkhard and Ingrid; once we swam together there as well. We also took nature trips to the Purcell's Cove area and one time went cross-country skiing in Shubie Park.

Burkhard was passionate about the different ecological areas around his beautiful Jollimore home. We had dinner together several times over the years, and also celebrated many birthdays and other events, both in their home and mine. Ingrid always made the most delicious cakes – as she still does! Burkhard and Ingrid were keen to keep their garden as natural as possible and I remember there was at least one pair of birds that nested there regularly.

Early in our friendship Burkhard suggested I read *Till We Have Faces* by C.S. Lewis. Lending me his copy so that we could discuss it (I realised later), unfortunately that never took place. (Later I bought a copy of my own, being a big fan of C.S. Lewis and his religious viewpoint, especially in the Narnia series.) I also wanted to see what Burkhard saw in it since I found it a difficult read. I think Lewis was exploring the role of imagination in religion (and in his case, Christianity). I also think Burkhard was trying to reconcile fact and faith – the facts of the rigorous scientist that he was and his faith as required by religion – and in particular – Christianity. Burkhard and Ingrid had a large collection of books, both fiction and non-fiction and they were faithful and regular users of the public library.

On September 26, 2020, there was finally (after a few cancellations!) a truly wonderful Noel Shore geological field trip with Rob Fensome, a geologist with Natural Resources Canada; Burkhard was President of HFN at the time. I remember Burkhard being very interested in the tremendous and beautiful geological formations. That particular field trip attracted a lot of members (including me) from throughout the province. Bob MacDonald and his wife, Wendy, were there as were members such as Grace and Richard Beazley.

Burkhard had a lot of diverse friendships and this effected the many facets of his personality. To me, Burkhard was a gentle, considerate, and thoughtful person, interested in both language and literature. On the other hand, as the scientist I knew, I remember him grilling me over the identification of some of the trees in Purcell's Cove Backlands where he led a winter nature trip one day. I was relieved to know that indeed I had paid attention and that I knew they were Black Spruce; he looked pleased and so I will always remember that particular trip.

I hope that this small piece will remind other people of their memories of Burkhard, and I grieve along with them, remembering how we lost him too soon.

PETER WEBSTER



Fond memories of Burkhard Plache I have so many excellent memoirs of spending time with Burkhard. He was very good friend and I have missed him a lot. Folks in HFN will know, that along with many other friends, Burkhard and I worked together on the HFN Board as well as Nature Nova Scotia activities.

Over the years we shared many outdoor activities. We crosscountry skied and took our bicycles out exploring new

cycling trails. We often hiked together, sometimes leading or participating in HFN hikes, or with our wives Ingrid and Gillian. Burkhard and Ingrid were indomitable hikers, never complaining about rough terrain or weather. But on occasion just the two of us hiked, scouting a trail for a coming HFN walk or just exploring something of interest. On these occasions Burkhard was always working to test his knowledge of the plants, bushes and trees we encountered, and eager to pass on his knowledge.

In particular I remember one long and challenging bushwalk, circumnavigating the lakes in the Macintosh Run/Herring Cove backlands. Bushwacking was something Burkhard particularly enjoyed, rather than sticking to known trails, as we did on larger group hikes. As my hips began to fail Burkhard was increasingly tolerant of my slowing pace on difficult terrain.

But Burkhard and I also found that we had things in common, not related to the outdoors. As we had meals together now and then, I learned we shared an interest in good European cheeses, and Burkhard certainly had a knack for getting his hands on most interesting ones.

We shared an interest in computer technology, and we both worked in technology related jobs. I recall the two of us spending an afternoon getting the wireless internet working in Burkhard and Ingrid's house. Figuring out a new computer setup was something Burkhard enjoyed more than most people.

In the last couple of years complications with hip surgery left me largely housebound and laid up for long periods of time. Burkhard was one of my regular visitors, along with the many other things he was involved with. He would drop by to talk about HFN or Nature Nova Scotia related activities and projects. But often he came by the house just to chat, to talk shop about our job related technology projects, or to share ideas about house maintenance. I was pleased to learn about Burkhard's time in the navy, his wide knowledge of science, interest in literature, and in the martial art of Aikido.

It turned out we also shared an interest in the ancient Chinese board game of GO, a somewhat uncommon interest in Canada. Burkhard played Go at a much higher level than I, but he did his best to help me improve my play. So our time together sometimes involved just sitting over the Go board. I do not believe I ever beat him, but my Go game improved a lot.

I learned a lot about many things from Burkhard. My life has been much richer for having known him.



Burkhard on the left; Noel Shore Geology Field Trip

HFN FIELD TRIPS

Sometimes, two people will take notes at HFN Talks and on Trips. This is a Good Thing – there is always some information that one recorder hasn't noted that the other has. When combined, the event is then more fully covered. For our last Summer 2023 Issue, Janet Dalton submitted her write-up of our Hope For Wildlife Trip. My apologies go out to Janet as I forgot to credit her with the write-up.

Mille MacCormack also took lots of notes, but couldn't get them to me on time to be included. Here they are, with lots of additional tidbits of information.

HOPE FOR WILDLIFE ADDENDA

– Milli MacCormack

More Tidbits – All the mice used for feeding any animals at Hope For Wildlife (HFW) come frozen from commercial producers. HFW is not allowed to rehabilitate Fishers, Moose, Black Bear, nor, Coyotes. About 50% of their re-located animals do not survive. Animals are territorial and introducing another one close by will cause fighting.

More than 250 species come to HFW, and they have the only vet-certified wildlife hospital in Canada. In the past, when the numbers of animals increased to unmanageable levels, they decided to build their own hospital; constantly driving injured animals to the Dartmouth vet was too time-consuming. A necropsy hospital where autopsies can be conducted is currently being constructed. There is a veterinarian school in Ontario which is teaching students how to care for wildlife using HFW as their training ground.

The Raccoons are released to the area where they were found. Natural Resources tell them where to release deer. They are not allowed to band or microchip animals.

Buddy is a 6-7 year old Bald Eagle who had been hit by a car in 2021 on PEI. His foot had to be removed, and he spent a year in rehab. He has partial paralysis of his legs and is unable to stand, has arthritis in his 'wrists' and can only fly 50 ft. A special cage was built for Buddy, and he is fed quail and mackerel.

Animals are only fed live prey when they are ready to be released. The Ravens Cash, Tucker, and Tilly live in a cage which has a very high enclosure where they can perch (they become depressed if unable to perch in a high location). Ravens are the third most intelligent animal on the planet. They can do math, count to 16, and use tools.

Most of the porcupines which are brought to the centre have mange. This is easily treated now, but it takes 3-4 months for their fur to grow back. The Nutrition Centre has various rooms for different animals, each of which has its own nutritional needs. The rooms are kept quiet because of the stress the animals are under, some more than others.

Staff live in apartments in houses nearby that are owned by Hope for Wildlife so that they are always available.

The fawn house is set up like a barn building and has stalls where the fawns are kept. There is room for 10-15 fawns. There is a small field for the fawns and a larger one for deer.



BELCHER'S MARSH

– Brian Bartlett

Date: Saturday, June 17

Place: Belcher's Marsh Park, off Parkland Drive, Kijipuktuk/Halifax

Weather: Cloudy and cool

Leader: Jessica Boyd

Participants: 14

One of many curiosities about human beings is that we often use place names without knowing their origins. For many of us beginning a recent field trip, that was the case with Belcher's Marsh, until we read the "Cultural History" information panel and discovered that in the 1800s Andrew Belcher bought 500 acres including the land surrounding the marsh that would later bear his name. Belcher was the son of Loyalists; his father served as Nova Scotia's first Chief Justice, then Lieutenant Governor from 1761 to '63. The son worked as a Justice of the Peace, then as a merchant connected to the Navy, but he died poor. His younger brother gained fame as leader of the Arctic search in 1852 for Sir John Franklin, whose disappearance while trying to find a Northwest Passage still haunts Canadian historical narratives, fiction, poetry and music (in that sense Belcher's Marsh is connected by a thread to the great folksinger Stan Rogers, who wrote "Northwest Passage": "Ah, for just one time I would take the Northwest Passage / To find the hand of Franklin reaching for the Beaufort Sea.")

When many of us drive to the starting point for a field trip, we're preoccupied with human things; we might be mulling over our city's public transportation, the construction dust and blaring of new condominium complexes, the cost of a new king's face appearing on our money, the Russia-Ukraine war. One value of field trips—a value uncontaminated by anything monetary—is that they feed our inquisitiveness about other species, including many that predate our ancestors by millions of years. Turning our attention to flora, fauna, rocks, ponds and clouds, even within city limits, can put us in touch with sources of stimulation from beyond the merely human.

The HNWT (Halifax North West Trails Association)—founded twenty years ago in 2003—has done a great deal to maintain trails and help the public appreciate woods and bodies of water in the area. It made good sense to have a late-spring field trip led by one of the organisation's major representatives, Jessica Boyd. With summer solstice just four days away, several of us commented on the unusual spring. Little precipitation. Unseasonably low temperatures. Record-breaking wild fires in southwestern Nova Scotia in the previous three weeks. The evacuation of 18,000 people from their homes. It was a relief to walk under trees so soon after a mercifully brief provincial ban on all human activities in forests.

In no rush, starting at 10:10 a.m., we spent two hours experiencing the 2.5-kilometre trail curving around half of the marsh and in the woods adjacent to it. (Eventually, after noon hour, our numbers would dwindle to three; we remaining walkers would retrace our steps, then continue with a visit to nearby Little Belcher's Pond.) The group's attention was primarily botanical, but familiar birds were key components in the morning's soundscape, which mixed Blue Jays' shrieks and Black-capped Chickadees' jingles, American



Robins' slow-paced tunes and Song Sparrows' more varied strings of notes, and what might be the most characteristic sound of Maritime wetlands: male Red-winged Blackbirds' *conk-ka-rees*.

By a wooden observation platform at the water's edge, a silent female Red-winged Blackbird moved about unfussily in a habitat including (most I.D.s offered by Jessica) Blueberry, Cranberry, Huckleberry, Sheep Laurel (Lambkill), Labrador Tea, and Wild Raisin (most of the species without blossoms yet, or with blossoms already withered or shed). With my camera's telephoto lens I created what would at home turn into a gallery of views, a selection of images, seeing the female Redwing from different angles and in different poses—clutching branches or reeds of various thicknesses, looking straight ahead or turning her head light or right, bill shut or open, wings held close to her body or puffed out. The female Redwing has been called “the most commonly misidentified bird in North America”, partly due to her sparrow-like qualities (though her beak isn't sparrow-ish). With her thick breast-streaks, a dark band behind her eye and a golden wash in her face, she might look like a species other than a male redwing; yet she's more complexly plumaged and arguably just as interesting-looking as the debonair male with his black plumage and famous yellow-edged red shoulder-patch. “Just a brown bird” hardly does her justice.



Female Redwinged Blackbird

During our walk we witnessed more than one high-in-the-air feud between Common Grackles and an isolated American Crow. The smaller black birds seemed in pursuit of the larger ones rather than vice versa. We'd heard grackles were nesting nearby, so they might've been acting protectively on behalf of their young. A half hour later, we encountered a family of Canada Geese, two adults and five goslings. The young geese were mottled with browns and whites, without any characteristics that indicated they'd grow into the striking blacks and whites of their parents. The goslings didn't act at all cautious or timid as they scurried up the sandy embankment, feeding and constantly pecking at scattered grasses while the adults kept their heads high and remained vigilant—no doubt ready to lunge at anyone who ventured too closer to their busy brood of five.

A series of questions and answers is one way to structure a report.

What was the reddest-blossomed flower we saw? Rugosa Rose, a non-native spreading far and wide through

the region. What was the pinkest? Pink Lady's Slipper (a.k.a. Moccasin Flower), the largest gathering of them a group of ten. Two-leaved, fond of acidic soil, it's the sort of flower sometimes called “showy”—but the word is misleading, since the blossoms' dramatic appearance isn't just ornamental but attracts insects for pollination. As the morning unfolded, we appreciated variations in degrees of the species' pinkness, from a deep colour edging toward red to a paler pink and a pink-tinted near-white.

What were the most sky-blue flowers? Forget-me-nots, so widespread through the city and the country in late spring—a beauty to some observers, and an annoying space-dominator to others. What about purples? Though we'd shared impressions of Lupins' lateness arising in full force at roadsides and in fields, one small patch of them grew at the trailside, mostly featuring the deep purple variation of the species. Elsewhere on the VIBGYOR spectrum, yellows appeared brightly on buttercups (with twelve species of buttercups in Atlantic Canada, we didn't get any more specific), not so glossily on hawkweeds, and more distantly on Yellow Water-lilies. Familiar white flowers also populated the park: Bunchberries (with our country in their Latin name, *Cornus Canadensis*), Northern Starflowers, Stichwort, a blackberry species, and Canada Mayflowers (with their cluster of star-shaped flowers, *Maianthemum canadense* – not to be confused with the spring-harbinger, and Nova Scotia's provincial flower, Mayflower or Trailing Arbutus, *Epigaea repens*).

Ninety minutes into the field trip, Jessica noted evidence of Fiona—broken, fallen trees downed by last September's hurricane. She also talked about the practice of removing fast-growing young birches to provide healthier conditions for more gradually growing conifers. She pointed out where a downhill stream formerly had one metal culvert directing it under the walking trail—but the rush of waters from areas that have been deforested and “developed,” replacing soil with concrete and asphalt, became too much for this cul-



Adult Canada Goose with goslings

vert, so several more were placed under the trail to prevent flooding.

Urbanization and suburbanization of forested or grassed land and, inevitably, climate change, entered our conversation. No, it would've been unrealistic to expect a field trip to revel in the many pleasures of observation and learning without leading back to human culture and fears about the planet's future.

But let me end this report with ferns, not fears. The Natural History information panel near the start of the walk mentions that fifteen species of ferns have been found in Belcher's Marsh Park. We stopped several times to linger over Cinnamon Ferns, with their cinnamon-coloured fronds (fertile, unlike the surrounding green fronds); Interrupted Ferns, with their spore-bearing rusty-coloured parts along their green fronds rather than separate from them; Common Bracken, triangular-fronded, their spores attached under their leaves, the spores so unusually light that the species is one of the most cosmopolitan of all ferns; and Hay-scented Ferns, hairy-stemmed and more lavishly leafleted than many ferns. Fifteen species of ferns? Our trip had suggested a future challenge for another visit to Belcher's, a morning and afternoon dedicated especially to distinguishing and admiring many more varieties of ferns. "In this way, one walk can lead to another."

MIDDLE STEWIACKE RIVER RUN

- *Bernie McKenna*

Date: Saturday, July 8th

Place: Middle Stewiacke

Weather: 22°C start; 29°C finish. Sunny, a light breeze

Leader: Gareth Harding

Participants: 12 paddlers, one Jack Russell Terrier

Right off the top I have to say no notes were taken while paddling, so this write-up is from memory and from much appreciated notes from Nancy Covington and Gareth Harding. It was also Gareth who made the choice of river route and it was a great decision. All of us initially met at the KFC parking lot at Mastodon Ridge (at Exit #11 off highway 102). From there Gareth led us to exit #12 and on to Middle Stewiacke where we drove up river to the launch site.

I've chosen to arrange this into the following headings. Doing it in sequence just did not work.

LOGISTICS

This was a bit of a drive. It involved six vehicles, five canoes, two kayaks, twelve paddlers, and one Jack Russell Terrier (Millie). On arrival at the launch point we ferried two vehicles back downstream to the pre-planned haul-out. These cars were later used to take four drivers back up to the remaining vehicles.

BIRDS

Birds in good numbers were a constant from start to finish, both seen – and heard. At launching we spotted two Cedar Waxwings – one of them feeding the other (presumably a fledgeling). Starting with the largest birds seen there were three Bald Eagles, one of which was being chased by a smaller bird, most likely a Grackle. The other two were at nests, one at each (standing guard I suppose?). Both these nests were very large, one well up in a large White Pine and the other in a massive oak. Apparently, eaglets were seen in each nest (but not by me). The actual number of adults and eaglets varied with individual observers' abilities

and viewpoints.

Dropping down in size there were two batches of Black Ducks – one had two adult birds. The other was a hen with two pretty-much full grown young. Goldfinches were seen and heard along the whole way – very nice company. There was also a Bobolink on a fence when we were driving the two vehicles down to the finish point; I hadn't seen one of these in years! Common Grackles were seen at several spots on the river, maybe nesting areas. Tree and Barn Swallows were swooping around here and there over the water and it was such a treat to watch their aerial skills. Unfortunately, like mostly all swallows these guys are having a rough time maintaining their numbers. By far, the bird highlight was a 30 to 40 nesting colony of Bank Swallows. Our smallest swallow, they were a joy to watch and hear as they chattered away while darting all over the place. One other treat was a pair of Eastern Kingbirds, perching in a tree then flying out to snatch an insect snack out of midair before returning to their perch to wait for their next victim. The only hawk noted was likely a Sharp-shinned – identified by its wing beat pattern. Yellow Warblers and Redstarts were in steady song and one Chestnut-sided Warbler was seen as well. Many of these sightings were just glimpses as the birds moved from tree to tree. A few robins were seen but by far the most vocal birds of all were the Song Sparrows with their cheerful melodies. Notably absent were Red-breasted Mergansers, whose hens often have a dozen or more young skittering along behind them. As well, there were no Starlings nor Pigeons the whole day, at least not when we were on the water. It was a truly great day to be a bird watcher!

ANIMALS

It being the middle of the day, and us none too quiet, it is not surprising we saw only one lonely Muskrat, and not all of us at that. There was however lots of animal signs. The muddy banks gave evidence of Deer, Beaver, Muskrat, Raccoons, Snapping Turtles, and wading birds, easy to see even as we just coasted by. There were at least two and probably more active Beaver bank-dens, and several non-active ones. No doubt if we had gone up some of the numerous backwaters we would have found more Beaver and Muskrat dens in those riverbanks.

VEGETATION

The trees, grasses, and bushes grew right down to the water's edge pretty much the whole way. The trees were mainly hardwoods with a lesser number of softwoods thrown in. The White Elms especially stood out in quantity, size, and generally good condition, notably more at the beginning of our run. Further down river were a few which had died and one or two which were not doing well. All told though, there were many young trees of different ages which were showing good regeneration. In one spot three Basswood/Linden were just starting to come into flower. They looked to be in good health and later on in the season would smell even better; bees just love their nectar. Red Oaks were in good supply all along the river, many of fully mature height with sturdy trunks supporting the whole mass. Also in good condition were the maples and White Ash we passed as we coasted along. I didn't find nearly the number of Aspen I'd expected; with the good moist soil there should have been more, maybe the large number of Beavers had a bearing on that!? Lesser shrubs and bushes included alders, Elderberry, Serviceberry, Chokeberry, and Hawthorn. Every Beaver den had a good bunch of alder



cuttings decorating and hiding its entrance.

Our haul-out itself had some large Hawthorns up to 15 feet or more in height. Grasses on the banks showed a brown line about two or three feet up showing the river's past highwater levels. Recalling the Waxwings at the start, in that same area there were plants in full flower which looked like Goat's Beard and these were hosting a large and active number of what looked like Carpenter Bees, but that's only a guess.

RIVER

The river itself could not have been better for our purposes, no dragging a canoe over gravel bars here; and – surprisingly – no mosquitoes or horseflies. A teenager jumping off the bridge where we started said there was lots of water there, fifteen feet or more. Halfway down there was a very welcome gravel beach to pull out on for lunch, conversation, and a swim. The only caution was that we had to be careful to avoid what appeared like possible Snapping Turtle nest sites; hopefully we didn't disturb anything. The beach also had a large back-eddy area which served as a welcome swimming hole away from the main current.

We pulled out at 3:30 or so and managed to get our gear up to the road. There we found five or six young kayakers (aren't they all younger!) who had a car that would not start. Short story – we drove two of them up to their other vehicles which were conveniently parked where our own were. Retrieving our own vehicles, we took them back down river where we loaded up our gear and headed home.

This finishes this write-up and again I want to thank Nancy and Gareth for their notes and Gareth for his skill in picking the location. It was a very pleasant afternoon – good water, good weather and good companionship – a hard combination to beat.

SPECTACLE LAKE WALK

-Bernie McKenna

Date: Saturday, August 12th

Place: Spectacle Lake Trail

Weather: 22°C, sunny with a slight breeze

Leader: Bernie McKenna

Participants: 16 plus one dog (Niki)



Our weather over the past few weeks, having been as variable and unpredictable as Nova Scotia weather can be, made being overly optimistic for 'walk-day' a challenge. It need not have been – we could not have asked for any better. Above listed me as leader – hardly true. Among our 16 participants we fortunately had six who were well-versed in plants and nature. All of them were most generous in sharing their high levels of knowledge with those of us less well informed, it was much appreciated.

Spectacle Lake is small and situated between Burnside Industrial Park and Dartmouth Crossing's expansive retail area. It is fed by five or more inflows mainly from street storm sewers, except for one which drains from a good-sized peat bog. Its one outflow feeds into Frenchman's Lake which in turn runs into Lake Micmac. The trail itself, depending on your reference, is anywhere from 1.7 to 2.1 km in length, and doesn't take more than a ½ to ¾ hour walk to complete. However, in our case, due to frequent stopping for plant discussion and lake-viewing, it took us a full two hours.

Everyone parked on Spectacle Lake Drive and after

greetings all around we proceeded to an excellent raised observation platform on the west side of the lower lake. The view here made it easy to see where the lake got its name. Two larger water areas are joined by a narrower section (a 'nose bridge') and these two larger areas are quite different – the upper one appears quite shallow and covered with White Waterlilies, while the lower looks to have more depth and is mainly vegetated along the shore. The wooded understorey between the viewing platform and the lake is a real vantage point to see warblers in spring and summer; it's not uncommon to see several species as they flit about their business. Here, one of our members with binoculars spotted a Painted Turtle sunning on a rock in the lake. I can also attest to there being at least three Snapping Turtles making the lake a home, and I'm sure one is a female.

After further discussion at the lookoff we headed north along the sidewalk to the trailhead. This trail has a crushed gravel and wooden boardwalk walking surface which makes for pretty easy going. Along the way we saw three of the dominant tree species in the park, Red Oak, Trembling Aspen, and a mix of maples. There was also a healthy clump of Staghorn Sumacs beside the sidewalk. The trail heads north along the west side of the upper lake, and immediately you see birches and Trembling Aspens and a clear view of the lower lake. Two specimens of note on the left were two sapling-height Wych Hazels, their rounded leaves indicating that both were healthy plants. Long used for medicinal purposes and as a dowsing rod for locating potential well sites, today it has found its way into a locally popular anti-tick product and various skin cleansers. Next plant was a well-established Multiflora Rose (invasive, non-native). An easy identification feature to remember is its fringed stipule which apparently no other similar plants have. It was also explained that it can grow extensively upward and climb neighbouring trees to the point of harming or even killing them. Heading downhill and still going north we saw a Speckled Alder which a swarm of Japanese Beetles (scarab family) were decimating. By all accounts this is a bumper year for these little bronze and green guys around here. Just past this alder was a clump of False Spirea *Sorbaria Sorbifolia*, another non-native living here and doing well. This one was confirmed on site by iNaturalist.

As we progressed across the top of the lake, we passed through a large stand of mature Trembling Aspen interspersed with a smattering of Birch. Tall and straight, the aspens were well-spaced with a very low understory at their feet. Further on was a small cluster of Cattails. Seven feet or more in height they really stood out! The terrain then got a bit drier and Huckleberry bushes started to show up. With their berries now starting to darken, they should soon make for good bird snacks. Higher up on the same bank Mountain Holly also made an appearance, with its berries already fully red. From here it was on to a substantial bridge crossing the Garland Avenue storm sewer which flows into a Cattail and alder thicket; this must make for a good settling area for the storm sewer water. From the bridge we saw Coltsfoot and Sweetfern as well as Blackberry bushes with fully ripe berries. Unfortunately, a bit out of reach! Leaving the bridge, we came to a junction of the trail loop. Veering to the right we took the shortest of two boardwalks which seemed to float only a foot or so above the water surface. Although the water looks stagnant it's due to the outflow from the peat bog as it makes its slow journey to the lake itself. Here were several frogs, five of

which were probably young Bullfrogs. On the left were some carnivorous Pitcher Plants (Newfoundland Labrador's provincial flower) several of which were in bloom. Here also, in this same wet and peaty, moss-covered spot were several Cotton Grass plants with their namesake tops. A hardy native, it was right at home here.

Leaving this boardwalk someone's keen eye spotted a birch with a large burl on its side. They're generally believed to be a result of stress on the tree, however insects, bacteria, fungi growth, and freeze-damage can also be a possible cause. There was also a spruce with brown needle tips, the needles themselves sported small white spots. The cause of this was not found, even with iNaturalist.

On a short side branch off the trail, we went down for another look at the lake, this time from the east shore almost directly across from the original viewing platform. This section of the lake appears deeper as there were no waterlilies. However, at the shallow edges the Pickerel Weed was well established. We also saw what I had originally thought was a Burr Oak; upon closer examination and with the help of iNaturalist it turned out to be an English Oak instead, another non-native. We started onto the longer boardwalk which crosses the lower end of the peat bog. On the left were several large Larch and a couple of mature White Pines; both species were doing well and looked in good health. We could also see the Osprey nest on a dedicated nest pole, and an Osprey could be seen on it but whether it was an adult or young was anyone's guess.

Several other species of plants were seen at various points throughout the walk, Lady Slipper Orchids and Black Bead Lilies (both natives) and both seemed to prefer the same terrain and were often present together in the same areas. Both were well past flowering and the Black Bead Lilies had dropped their poisonous fruits. The invasive Glossy Buckthorn/Alder Buckthorn was here too, unlike the other buckthorns in that it does not have thorns and often does not stand out as its relatives do. Two of our experienced walkers found both Bog Laurel and Bog Rosemary; both are flowering plants and the Bog Rosemary is a member of the flowering heath family. As per their names they were more than happy in these acidic peat bog areas. Drier areas on slightly higher ground had Bunchberry and Wintergreen, hardy natives that hug the ground. Both bear red seeds that are tasty and interesting to eat. Often you can find the previous year's fruit still hanging on into the following spring or later and still tasting good. We also saw the herbaceous and parasitic white Ghost Plants, Ghost Pipes, or Indian Pipes, all the same plant but with different local names. With no chlorophyll, it is pure white, and it gets its nutrients through an underground interconnection with fungi.

Bird life during the entire day was scarce. A couple of female Black Ducks were seen twice, once resting on a rock, and once feeding amongst the waterlilies. Other than some Chickadees that were seen and the occasional chirping of birds unseen, that was about it. We did however have an Osprey fly overhead just as we finished the walk, but it had empty talons this trip.

A lot of the observations were a result of welcome notes taken by Carol Klar and Sheila Pugsley, without which this article would have been much shorter and lacking in depth. Also, I want to thank the more knowledgeable participants who by their willingness to share their expertise made this a most informative and enjoyable outing.

ADDENDA

– Pat Leader

When 'nature called' on this Spectacle Lake Trail hike, I 'headed for the woods'. Rejoining the trail I found no one in sight except my neighbour's dog Mickey – the bird and plant group were no more. A good way to keep everyone together on a hike is to appoint a dedicated person to bring up the rear and to sweep all along. Various names for the role are 'Sweeper', 'Backstop', and in New Zealand the 'Tail Ender'. It's not always an easy task when birders, plant watchers, and photographers are satisfying their preferences in different places when the Tail Ender tries to make sure they all move off together ensuring a successful and safe outing.

This lake is one of those hidden urban beauties like the Old Coach Trail in Bedford which sports many sidepaths to the water's edge. I briefly met Marion Sensen and Susan Holmes on a path but then it divided and I headed for the nearby road, Garland Avenue. Having a fairly good sense of direction and having seen a map of the area, I knew I would eventually return to the starting point, and as a bonus find some extra flowers along John Savage Road. I turned right, then right again at Commodore Drive and finally right again onto Spectacle Lake Drive, arriving just as the main group were finishing their walk. It did make for a different walk than the others had taken and because the area was reasonably 'new', there were more plants due to recent disturbances. At one point I took a necessary breather at a convenient seat by a bus stop. (I hoped that if a bus did come by the driver wouldn't haul me aboard!) I saw Chicory, Viper's Bugloss, Golden Ragwort, Lance-leaved Goldenrod, and Birdsfoot Trefoil.

Remember when new roads in the '100 Series' were being created? Well – they were often seeded with that very same bright yellow Trefoil. Seeing the Lance-leaved Goldenrod reminded me that Bob McDonald used to choose one plant each summer to learn more about. One year he chose the whole group of different goldenrods, much to my admiration.

On the journey back I learned that there had been some discussion about Sarsaparilla and its pronunciation. I hadn't heard that that word spoken for a very long time.

My father would occasionally walk me to the Sunday street market where a silver machine putt-putting and panting produced a hot tonic. The plant used to make it was so popular that there was a danger of it being extirpated. On my next visit to London, I will check to see if the new immigrants who are now the new stall holders still produce this wonderful hot drink.

On another walk I noticed that the Sumacs were in flower. I consulted Ewell Gibbons' *Stalking the Good Life*, 1966, McKay Publishing, p.57, and discovered he made his drink out of it with cold water. But, I decided to boil my Sumac flowerheads and it produced a drink with a nice lemon flavour. I added sugar and with some liquid left over and a packet of gelatin it also made a nice dessert jelly. So Sumac is the flavour of the season. Meanwhile, I have also spotted a large area of Concord Grapes plus Chokecherries at Scott Manor on Fort Sackville Road.

Many thanks to Bernie for introducing us to Spectacle lake.





"In the deep fall / don't you imagine the leaves dream now / how comfortable it will be to touch / the earth instead of the nothingness of air and the endless / freshets of wind?"

– From "Song for Autumn", by Mary Oliver

NATURAL EVENTS

- 15 Sep. New Moon (best time to observe faint objects such as galaxies and star clusters)
- 19 Sep. Neptune at Opposition (closest approach to Earth and face fully illuminated)
- 22 Sep. Mercury at Greatest Western Elongation (view low in the eastern sky before sunrise)
- 23 Sep. Autumnal Equinox (first day of fall in the Northern Hemisphere) occurs at 03:43 ADT
- 29 Sep. Full Moon, Supermoon (Harvest/Corn Moon)
- 8-9 Oct. Draconids Meteor Shower (meteors radiate from constellation Draco)
- 14 Oct. Annular Solar Eclipse (~20% eclipse seen from Nova Scotia at approximately 14:30 ADT)
- 14 Oct. New Moon
- 20 Oct. Expect first frost in Halifax area (National Gardening Association <https://garden.org>)
- 20-21 Oct. Orionids Meteor Shower (meteors -- dust from comet Halley -- radiate from Orion)
- 23 Oct. Venus at Greatest Western Elongation (bright planet in eastern sky before sunrise)
- 28 Oct. Full Moon
- 3 Nov. Jupiter at Opposition (best time to view/photo Jupiter and its moons)
- 4-5 Nov. Taurids Meteor Shower (meteors radiate from constellation Taurus)
- 13 Nov. New Moon
- 13 Nov. Uranus at Opposition
- 17-18 Nov. Leonids Meteor Shower (meteors radiate from constellation Leo)
- 27 Nov. Full Moon
- 4 Dec. Mercury at Greatest Eastern Elongation (view low in western sky just after sunset)
- 12 Dec. New Moon
- 13-14 Dec. Geminids Meteor Shower (meteors radiate from constellation Gemini)
- 21-22 Dec. Ursids Meteor Shower (meteors radiate from constellation Ursa Minor)
- 22 Dec. Winter Solstice (first day of winter in the Northern Hemisphere) occurs at 11:21 AST
- 27 Dec. Full Moon

– Sources: *Sea and Sky Astronomy Calendar*, and as noted

SUNRISE/SUNSET ON HALIFAX SUMMER AND EARLY FALL SATURDAYS, 44 39 N, 063 36 W (ALL TIMES ADT)



2 Sept.	06:37	19:49	7 Oct.	07:19	18:44
9 Sept.	06:45	19:36	14 Oct.	07:28	18:31
16 Sept.	05:54	19:23	21 Oct.	07:37	18:20
23 Sept.	07:02	19:10	28 Oct.	07:46	18:09
30 Sept.	07:10	18:57			
4 Nov.	07:55	17:59	2 Dec.	07:31	16:35
11 Nov.	07:05	16:50	9 Dec.	07:39	16:33
18 Nov.	07:14	16:43	16 Dec.	07:44	16:34
25 Nov.	07:23	16:38	23 Dec.	07:48	16:37
			30 Dec.	07:51	16:42

– Source: www.timeanddate.com

ORGANISATIONAL EVENTS

Blomidon Naturalists Society <https://blomidonnaturalists.ca>

- 9 Sep. "Kentville World Environment Day!", 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Oakdene Park, free and open to all.
- 10 Sep. "Looking Closer: Pollinators, Plants & Photography" Workshop, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., 1159 Deep Hollow Road, Black River. \$20 fee, 15 participants only; **Registration Required.**
- 16 Sep. "All Ages & Family Birding at Miner's Marsh!", 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, with Nature Nova Scotia.
- 19 Sep. Monthly Meeting & Nature Talk: "How the social life of fish influences responses to climate warming", with Dr. Suzie Currie, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., Wolfville Lions Club and via Zoom.

Nova Scotia Bird Society <https://www.nsbirdsociety.ca>

- 28 Sep. "Resightings of Greenland Collared Canada Geese", via Zoom 19:00 to 20:30 with Dr. Tony Fox of Aarhus University, Denmark.
- 26 Oct. "50 Years of Birding Trips and Travel", 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. with birding enthusiast Richard Stern. Go to <http://nsbird.society.ca/calendar> for the Zoom ID/passcode.

– compiled by Don Flemming

HALIFAX TIDE TABLE

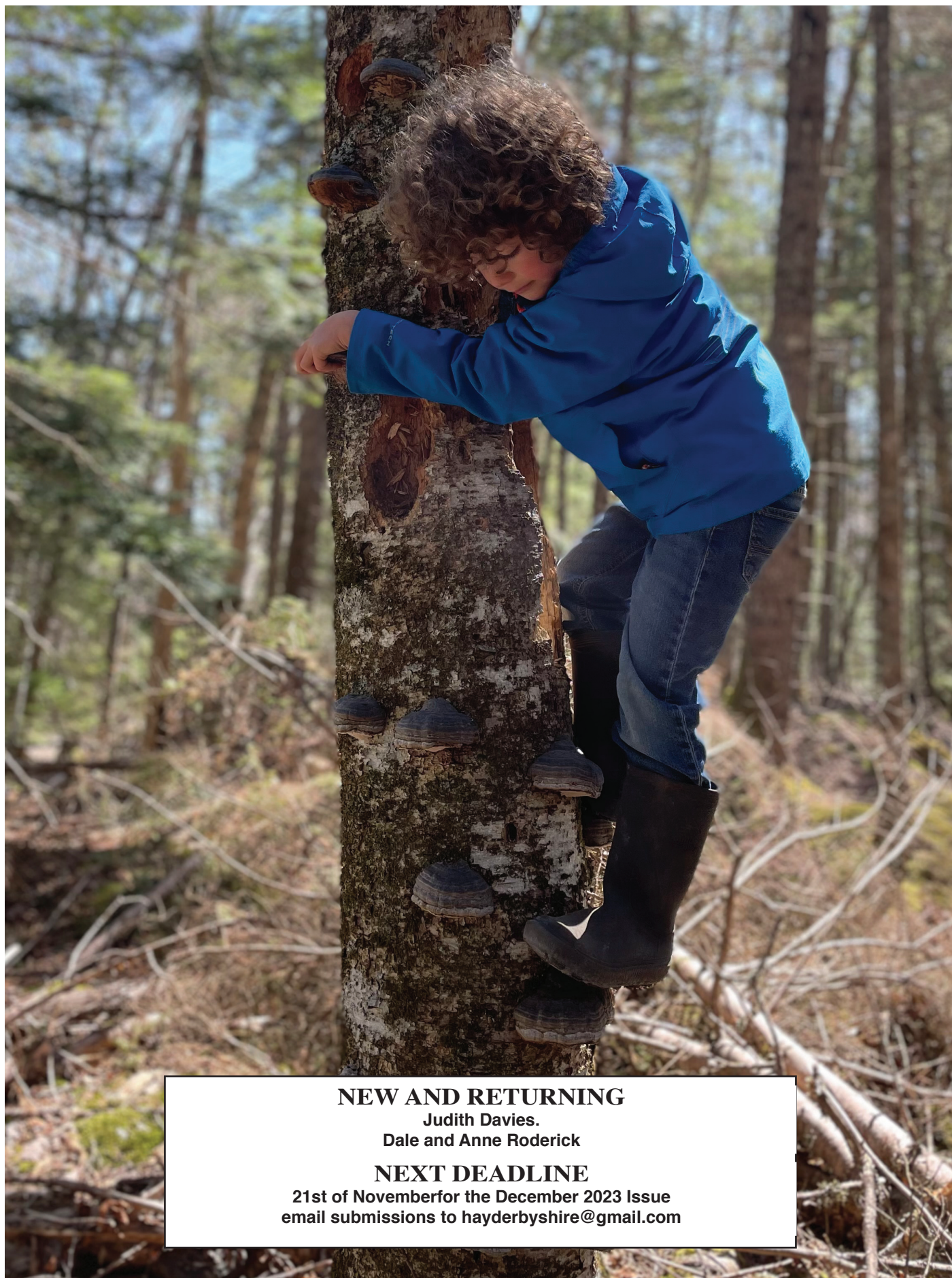


October-octobre

November-novembre

December-décembre

Day	Time	Metres	Feet	jour	heure	mètres	pieds	Day	Time	Metres	Feet	jour	heure	mètres	pieds	Day	Time	Metres	Feet	jour	heure	mètres	pieds
1	0307	0.1	0.3	16	0231	0.4	1.3	1	0424	0.5	1.6	16	0336	0.5	1.6	1	0454	0.7	2.3	16	0426	0.5	1.6
	0859	2.0	6.6		0835	1.8	5.9		0957	1.8	5.9		0926	1.8	5.9		1020	1.7	5.6		1004	1.9	6.2
SU	1548	0.1	0.3	MO	1506	0.2	0.7	WE	1658	0.3	1.0	TH	1621	0.2	0.7	FR	1713	0.4	1.3	SA	1704	0.1	0.3
DI	2128	1.8	5.9	LU	2109	1.6	5.2	ME	2240	1.7	5.6	JE	2214	1.6	5.2	VE	2306	1.7	5.6	SA	2254	1.7	5.6
2	0355	0.2	0.7	17	0305	0.5	1.6	2	0519	0.6	2.0	17	0431	0.6	2.0	2	0545	0.8	2.6	17	0529	0.5	1.6
	0943	2.0	6.6		0909	1.8	5.9		1042	1.7	5.6		1012	1.8	5.9		1106	1.7	5.6		1054	1.8	5.9
MO	1638	0.1	0.3	TU	1545	0.2	0.7	TH	1748	0.4	1.3	FR	1716	0.3	1.0	SA	1757	0.5	1.6	SU	1759	0.2	0.7
LU	2214	1.7	5.6	MA	2147	1.6	5.2	JE	2326	1.6	5.2	VE	2301	1.6	5.2	SA	2350	1.6	5.2	DI	2345	1.7	5.6
3	0447	0.4	1.3	18	0344	0.5	1.6	3	0619	0.7	2.3	18	0535	0.7	2.3	3	0638	0.8	2.6	18	0633	0.5	1.6
	1026	1.9	6.2		0946	1.8	5.9		1129	1.6	5.2		1101	1.8	5.9		1153	1.6	5.2		1147	1.7	5.6
TU	1730	0.2	0.7	WE	1630	0.3	1.0	FR	1840	0.5	1.6	SA	1815	0.3	1.0	SU	1842	0.6	2.0	MO	1855	0.2	0.7
MA	2301	1.7	5.6	ME	2226	1.6	5.2	VE				SA	2352	1.6	5.2	DI				LU			
4	0544	0.5	1.6	19	0432	0.6	2.0	4	0015	1.6	5.2	19	0643	0.7	2.3	4	0038	1.6	5.2	19	0038	1.7	5.6
	1109	1.8	5.9		1026	1.7	5.6		0719	0.8	2.6		1153	1.7	5.6		0731	0.8	2.6		0737	0.5	1.6
WE	1824	0.3	1.0	TH	1723	0.3	1.0	SA	1220	1.6	5.2	SU	1915	0.3	1.0	MO	1243	1.5	4.9	TU	1245	1.7	5.6
ME	2348	1.6	5.2	JE	2309	1.6	5.2	SA	1933	0.6	2.0	DI				LU	1926	0.6	2.0	MA	1951	0.3	1.0
5	0646	0.6	2.0	20	0534	0.7	2.3	5	0111	1.5	4.9	20	0050	1.6	5.2	5	0131	1.6	5.2	20	0134	1.7	5.6
	1155	1.7	5.6		1111	1.7	5.6		0818	0.8	2.6		0749	0.7	2.3		0823	0.8	2.6		0837	0.4	1.3
TH	1920	0.4	1.3	FR	1825	0.4	1.3	SU	1319	1.5	4.9	MO	1253	1.7	5.6	TU	1338	1.4	4.6	WE	1349	1.6	5.2
JE				VE	2357	1.5	4.9	DI	2024	0.6	2.0	LU	2013	0.3	1.0	MA	2010	0.6	2.0	ME	2048	0.3	1.0
6	0038	1.5	4.9	21	0645	0.7	2.3	6	0219	1.5	4.9	21	0156	1.6	5.2	6	0229	1.6	5.2	21	0233	1.7	5.6
	0749	0.7	2.3		1201	1.7	5.6		0913	0.8	2.6		0851	0.6	2.0		0912	0.7	2.3		0936	0.4	1.3
FR	1248	1.5	4.9	SA	1929	0.4	1.3	MO	1429	1.4	4.6	TU	1404	1.6	5.2	WE	1440	1.4	4.6	TH	1501	1.5	4.9
VE	2017	0.5	1.6	SA				LU	2113	0.6	2.0	MA	2109	0.3	1.0	ME	2056	0.6	2.0	JE	2145	0.4	1.3
7	0140	1.4	4.6	22	0054	1.5	4.9	7	0331	1.5	4.9	22	0306	1.7	5.6	7	0325	1.6	5.2	22	0333	1.7	5.6
	0851	0.7	2.3		0754	0.7	2.3		1004	0.7	2.3		0952	0.5	1.6		0959	0.7	2.3		1033	0.3	1.0
SA	1352	1.5	4.9	SU	1301	1.7	5.6	TU	1540	1.4	4.6	WE	1522	1.6	5.2	TH	1543	1.4	4.6	FR	1613	1.5	4.9
SA	2112	0.6	2.0	DI	2031	0.4	1.3	MA	2200	0.6	2.0	ME	2205	0.3	1.0	JE	2144	0.6	2.0	VE	2244	0.4	1.3
8	0303	1.4	4.6	23	0207	1.5	4.9	8	0427	1.6	5.2	23	0407	1.7	5.6	8	0412	1.6	5.2	23	0430	1.7	5.6
	0950	0.7	2.3		0859	0.7	2.3		1050	0.7	2.3		1051	0.3	1.0		1045	0.6	2.0		1129	0.2	0.7
SU	1514	1.4	4.6	MO	1414	1.6	5.2	WE	1637	1.5	4.9	TH	1634	1.6	5.2	FR	1641	1.4	4.6	SA	1716	1.6	5.2
DI	2206	0.6	2.0	LU	2130	0.4	1.3	ME	2245	0.5	1.6	JE	2301	0.3	1.0	VE	2234	0.6	2.0	SA	2342	0.5	1.6
9	0424	1.5	4.9	24	0331	1.6	5.2	9	0510	1.6	5.2	24	0459	1.8	5.9	9	0454	1.7	5.6	24	0523	1.8	5.9
	1044	0.7	2.3		1002	0.6	2.0		1132	0.6	2.0		1147	0.2	0.7		1130	0.4	1.3		1223	0.2	0.7
MO	1627	1.5	4.9	TU	1538	1.7	5.6	TH	1724	1.5	4.9	FR	1734	1.6	5.2	SA	1732	1.5	4.9	SU	1812	1.6	5.2
LU	2257	0.5	1.6	MA	2228	0.3	1.0	JE	2328	0.5	1.6	VE	2357	0.3	1.0	SA	2324	0.6	2.0	DI			
10	0516	1.6	5.2	25	0438	1.7	5.6	10	0545	1.7	5.6	25	0548	1.9	6.2	10	0532	1.7	5.6	25	0038	0.5	1.6
	1132	0.7	2.3		1104	0.4	1.3		1211	0.5	1.6		1240	0.1	0.3		1215	0.3	1.0		0613	1.8	5.9
TU	1719	1.5	4.9	WE	1651	1.7	5.6	FR	1808	1.5	4.9	SA	1827	1.7	5.6	SU	1819	1.5	4.9	MO	1313	0.2	0.7
MA	2343	0.5	1.6	ME	2323	0.3	1.0	VE				SA				DI			LU	1903	1.6	5.2	
11	0557	1.6	5.2	26	0530	1.8	5.9	11	0009	0.5	1.6	26	0051	0.4	1.3	11	0013	0.6	2.0	26	0130	0.5	1.6
	1212	0.6	2.0		1202	0.3	1.0		0618	1.7	5.6		0634	1.9	6.2		0612	1.8	5.9		0701	1.8	5.9
WE	1802	1.6	5.2	TH	1750	1.8	5.9	SA	1248	0.3	1.0	SU	1330	0.1	0.3	MO	1259	0.2	0.7	TU	1359	0.2	0.7
ME				JE				SA	1849	1.6	5.2	DI	1917	1.7	5.6	LU	1903	1.6	5.2	MA	1952	1.7	5.6
12	0023	0.4	1.3	27	0016	0.2	0.7	12	0048	0.5	1.6	27	0142	0.4	1.3	12	0100	0.5	1.6	27	0218	0.5	1.6
	0631	1.7	5.6		0617	1.9	6.2		0651	1.7	5.6		0720	1.9	6.2		0654	1.8	5.9		0748	1.8	5.9
TH	1247	0.5	1.6	FR	1257	0.2	0.7	SU	1327	0.2	0.7	MO	1417	0.1	0.3	TU	1345	0.1	0.3	WE	1443	0.2	0.7
JE	1840	1.6	5.2	VE	1843	1.8	5.9	DI	1929	1.6	5.2	LU	2005	1.7	5.6	MA	1947	1.6	5.2	ME	2038	1.7	5.6
13	0057	0.4	1.3	28	0108	0.2	0.7	13	0127	0.5	1.6	28	0231	0.5	1.6	13	0147	0.5	1.6	28	0302	0.6	2.0
	0703	1.7	5.6		0702	2.0	6.6		0725	1.8	5.9		0805	1.9	6.2		0739	1.8	5.9		0834	1.8	5.9
FR	1320	0.4	1.3	SA	1348	0.1	0.3	MO	1406	0.2	0.7	TU	1502	0.1	0.3	WE	1432	0.1	0.3	TH	1524	0.3	1.0
VE	1918	1.7	5.6	SA	1933	1.8	5.9	LU	2009	1.6	5.2	MA	2052	1.7	5.6	ME	2031	1.6	5.2	JE	2122	1.7	5.6
14	0129	0.4	1.3	29	0157	0.2	0.7	14	0207	0.5	1.6	29	0318	0.5	1.6	14	0236	0.5	1.6	29	0342	0.7	2.3
	0733	1.7	5.6		0746	2.0	6.6		0802	1.8	5.9		0850	1.8	5.9		0826	1.9	6.2		0918	1.8	5.9
SA	1354	0.3	1.0	SU	1437	0.0	0.0	TU	1447	0.1	0.3	WE	1546	0.2	0.7	TH	1521	0.1	0.3	FR	1603	0.3	1.0
SA	1955	1.7	5.6	DI	2021	1.8	5.9	MA	2049</														



NEW AND RETURNING

Judith Davies.

Dale and Anne Roderick

NEXT DEADLINE

21st of November for the December 2023 Issue
email submissions to hayderbyshire@gmail.com