



# The Oystercatcher

THE SALT SPRING TRAIL AND NATURE CLUB - GANGES BC V0S 1E0

October 1993

Editor -- Kacey Chee -- 537-1365

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In my circular letter of Sept.29, delivered or mailed to all members, I mentioned along with other matters of club importance that this is the usual time of year a number of new members come onto the scene.

Continuing this train of thought, I would like to see 'old members' introduce themselves to any 'new faces' on walks, hikes and at evening functions. It is only human nature for members to seek out other 'old members' to continue their discussions on the past week's events. The chatter on the trails is quite amazing.

On approaching a new face, you may even find out that this new member is an old school friend. This actually happened when Ann (Ann Barber that is) and Kathy Carter (now living in Comox) discovered to their amazement on 'Doukhobour hill' that they were Grade 2 pals in Nelson. The shrieks that ensued were unbelievable!

I am not saying that we are not welcoming new members but when the extra effort is made the broad smile on the new face, or the shriek, is wonderful to behold - or hear!

So a warm welcome to all members who have joined in recent months. If I forget your names, please remember I even find it difficult to recall the names of all our grandchildren - Pippa, Jaqueline, Thomas, Simon, Samantha, Madeline, Robyn, Alex. That's eight but Heavens, there's one more - "Ann, what's the name of Jennifer's third?". Of course it's Daniel.

JIM BARBER

FBCN FALL REGIONAL MEETING (Vancouver Island) October 2, 1993  
REPORT FROM SALT SPRING ISLAND TRAIL AND NATURE CLUB

I am pleased to submit the following report on behalf of some 218 members of our club.

ACTIVITIES:

The principle activity for Club members continues to be walks and hikes scheduled for nearly every Tuesday of the year except July and August, including work parties to maintain existing trails &/or to blaze new trails.

Each Spring and Fall we have a 3 day "off-island" outing. This past September 7th - 10th. Thirty five members stayed at the Mountaineer Club premises high on Mt. Baker, Washington for some spectacular hikes and walks under cloudless skies and with a variety of Alpine flowers still in bloom. Last June a similar number stayed near Chilliwack for walks and hikes in the Rosedale - Hope are, as well as enjoying conducted tours of Westminster Abbey, Minter Gardens and Cheam lake.

We continue to offer from 4 to 6 evening functions annually with a Guest Speaker to view and discuss a variety of naturalist related subjects, preceded by a short information session on Club affairs. Also a Pot Luck dinner every January with from 125 to 150 members attending and with notable Guest Speakers such as Richard Hebda in 1993, Robert Bateman in 1992 and Dick Canning this coming January.

1993 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Undoubtedly our prime accomplishment, after two years of work, is the completion this past July of our Club's proposed SSI Trail Network mapping and policy project, which included a 14 page report on our proposed trail network policy and plan, a master network map and a trail inventory consisting of 32 map sections of the island. The majority of these documents have now been submitted to the SSI Trust Committee for their consideration for inclusion in the Official Community Plan. Public hearings will be held in due course.

What with the ever increasing urbanisation of Salt Spring Island it seems to many of us that our Club's proposal represents this island's last chance for a trail network to materialise over the years to come. In turn, this proposal would enable future generations to see, enjoy an learn about the natural habitat of Salt Spring, not to mention all the healthy exercise.

CURRENT PROBLEMS:

Crown Lands on Salt Spring are critical to the proposed trail network.

There are some lovely parcels of land over which we currently walk/hike but there is no guarantee that these lands will be kept for public use. It seems that the Capital Regional District, under which we fall, may well like to take over some of these lands for public use but the Ministry of Environment - Lands and Parks - (B.C. Lands) requires substantial justification as to why a piece of Crown Land is needed for public park or trail purposes.

Somehow or other the Crown Lands on Salt Spring must be kept for parklands &/or trails as otherwise there will be no major green spaces left on the island for future generations to enjoy.

In closing, our Club looks forward to hosting the FBCN Fall 1994 meeting.

Ganges,  
22 September 1993

Respectfully submitted  
JIM BARBER  
President

#### DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR

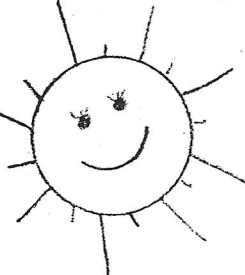
Thurs., Nov. 18th - (Change from Nov. 25) Evening function 7:30 p.m. at SSI Sailing Club, foot of Douglas off Beddis Road. Videos of Mt. Baker September outing - glorious scenery, Alpine flowers & funny people.

**Christmas luncheon tickets will be on sale at \$11/each and at ensuing walks/hikes limited to 95 tickets.**


Tues., Dec. 14th - Christmas luncheon at Golf Club, preceded by short walk. Refer to Nov. 24th issue of Driftwood paper.

Wed., Jan. 19th - Our famous potluck dinner with guest speaker Dick Canning, Curator of Mammals, UBC. 6:00 p.m. at Legion Hall.


Thurs., Feb. 24th - The Annual General Meeting at 7:30 p.m. at United Church.



A SUMMER DAY  
By Rita Aptekmann



Summer has returned to the little house by the sea.  
A gentle wind caresses every bush and tree.  
Busy little birds are everywhere.  
The scent of wild roses and seaweeds fills the air.



A seagull glides motionless way up high.  
From the tree tops, you hear the eagle cry.  
Over the glistening water, the sky is blue.  
Nature is precious but, Oh, so fragile too.

## TRAILS

During the first part of our season, several work parties were scheduled as a regular Tuesday activity. Some excellent members I would like to thank - those who turned out with chain saws, mattocks, and lopper at the ready. No particular individual will be mentioned specifically - you know who you are - and the rest of us are extremely grateful.

Unfortunately branches grow and salal spreads so the work must continue throughout the Fall months. Bringing new trails in Ruckle Park on stream to Provincial standards, maintenance of existing trails and the completion of the Jack Foster Memorial Trail are all on our priority list. In order to have a full programme, we must have trails in good condition. It is possible that we may require some help on weekends or days other than Tuesdays. If you are able to participate in any way, please circle work party days on your calendar.

For those who feel they need some guidelines, here are a few suggestions:

1. When assigned to a specific section, please complete that section to the standard required before moving on.
2. When locating a new trail, try to avoid crossing over live roots; if impossible, pad the roots with forest duff. Dead roots should be cut away.
3. Pull out salal, ferns etc. growing on the travelled portion of the path and dispose them so that the sideline is not unsightly.
4. Do not route trails over rocky outcroppings as these areas become very slippery during wintertime.
5. The width of the trail should be 18 - 27" with edges well cut back and clearly defined.
6. When trails are to be shared with the general public, grades should be kept as gentle as possible.
7. When trails cross stream beds a culvert may be necessary rather than stepping stones or logs.
8. Rocks and other debris should be removed as much as possible to assure firm footing and placed on the down side of path to help prevent erosion.
9. "Eyecatchers" should be removed to a height of 6 ft. (Special request by John Lloyd)
10. Trails will be identified with red delineator tape in the shape of a diamond when possible.

Our goal is to have a regular trail maintenance timetable in place, not necessarily limited to Tuesdays but involving a number of our members both hikers and walkers.

The general work parties listed on our yearly agenda are not strenuous and are fun! Try it - you might like it. See you soon.

BETTY KIRK

## CONGRATULATIONS TO FIONA FLOOK

Congratulations are due to Fiona Flook, our past president, who received a Club Service Award at the Federation of British Columbia Naturalists' Annual General Meeting at the University of British Columbia on the 15th of May.

The Federation gives awards each year in order to "recognize the hard work and accomplishments of individual or groups in the area of natural history." The purpose of the Club Service Award is to "recognize outstanding service at a local level by a person or persons belonging to an affiliated member club of the Federation."

Fiona's name was put forward by two club members, with the support of many others, who felt that her excellent service to our club as President, together with her having represented us on various committees and her involvement in the Crown Lands Use Committee deserved public recognition.

At the AGM, Fiona was presented with a raku Canada Goose which we hope may serve to remind her that we of the Trail & Nature Club greatly appreciate all she has done for us and for the island.

J.N. BRAITHWAITE

## THE NATURE OF ISLAND ARTISTS - 1993

From the 4th to the 19th of September, an exhibition called The Nature of Island Artists was held in the Visitors' Centre at Goldstream Provincial Park. This exhibition, largely due to the efforts of David Fraser, was sponsored by the Victoria Natural History Society and B.C. Parks with the aim of bringing to the fore the works of local artists and increasing public awareness of the importance of protected areas.

After the costs of mounting the exhibition were covered, any profits were to be used by the Natural History Society to increase the post secondary scholarships offered by them and to raise money for the implementation of the wildlife viewing plan for Goldstream Provincial Park.

A number of artists, including wood and stone carvers, sculptors, embroiderers and print makers as well as painters, demonstrated their crafts on various days of the exhibition.

Salt Spring Island was very well represented by the works of Jan Sharkey Thomas, Dave Rayment, Briony Penn, Douglas Penhale, Donald Gunn, David Fraser, Peggy Frank, Brien Foerster and Robert Bateman.



many of the exhibits were to be sold by silent auction and there were raffle prizes as well, the star of which, to my mind, was a remarkably lifelike carving of a rufous hummingbird by Rose Leonard of Sooke.

J.N. BRAITHWAITE

### THE CHILLIWACK TRIP

Monday, May 31st was a dark and stormy morning but most of us leapt out of our beds to catch the 6:40 ferry. Some leapt out later than others - luckily the ferry was late leaving otherwise Eleanor Lloyd's frantic leap from bed at 6:10 or thereabouts and Jonn's equally frantic drive to the ferry would have been for naught. Apparently Jonn had risen earlier and had become so engrossed in his book that he forgot all about Eleanor and the ferry.

We wound our way through unfamiliar territory with our intrepid black clad motorcycling friends, the Radfords, weaving in and out amongst us on the highway and finally managed to reconvene at Westminster Abbey. By this time, it was teeming with rain and we had to take on faith our hosts' (the resident monks) assurances that the views from the hill were magnificent. Actually they had videos to prove it. At this point, the inside looked pretty good to us and we were famished so our kind hosts allowed us inside to eat our lunch. After lunch, we had a tour of their beautiful chapel and admired the wonderful stained glass windows, all the colours of the rainbow in all their subtleties, spectacular even on a cloudy day.

From these lofty heights, we descended to Harrison Mills and visited the Kilby General Store and Museum which perches up on stilts due to the frequent flooding in the area. The family lived behind and above the store and it was easy to imagine the life the family lead back in the days when their store was on the road to riches in the days of the Gold Rush.

On to Tsoona, the Girl Guide camp in the woods, to find our cook, Jocelyn Holmes, busy cooking spaghetti and garlic bread for us. Jocelyn proved to be a great find - she even made us good things for the Happy Hour.

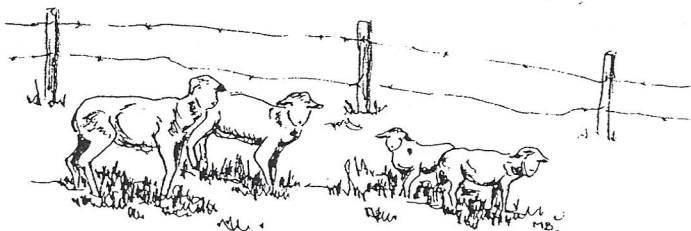


Next morning, we met a member of the Harrison Hiking Club at one of those many highway exits who took us for an interesting and pretty hike through the woods where we kept trying to figure out where we were in relation to the highway so that we could think about it on the next trip to the interior (at least I did). I remember the patches of sunlight which brightened up the woods and we reluctantly came out onto a gravel dump and made our way to the Coquihalla Tunnels. For me, this was particularly interesting as I used to travel on the Kettle Valley Railroad as a child. I remember being told that we always went through this part of the trip at night because the trestles were too scary to be viewed by nervous passengers. Even though the highway workmen were working at that time, we were able to go through the tunnels (this time on foot!) because we were fortunate to arrive at lunchtime. It is impossible to imagine how it must have been for the men building that railroad. The river races through the narrow gorges - very exciting to see. As we hadn't had enough puffing that day, we were then lead up another hill for a view of Hope and to wonder at the enormous houses at the top of the hill. A quick visit to Harrison finished that days' activities.

Next morning, there was a choice between a hike and Minter Gardens. Later I heard that those of us who opted for the gardens (well worth a visit) missed a hike which proved arduous without even a reward at the end. The entire hike took place in the fog. Some hikers (who shall remain nameless) even gave up! The more fortunate garden fans didn't get to meet Brian Minter but we did meet a young man called Dennis who had been a guest at our previous night's turkey dinner. Thus bribed by Fiona, he took us to Lake Cheam and while we ate our lunch, he told us the story of this lake.

Forty years ago, the lake had been drained to provide lime for agricultural purposes. Previously this area had been an important resting and migration centre for birds and also cutthroat and coho. Dennis had been working with an environmental youth crew to restore the area to its original habitat. All three levels of government have been involved - Fisheries and Oceans, the Ministry of the Environment together with Ducks Unlimited and Nature Trust. All very interesting so we went for a pleasant walk and admired the bridges and walkways built by Dennis and listened for birds and to Dennis moaning about the inefficiencies of the provincial government which in the brochure confused the domestic cherry trees along the trail with wild cherry trees. And thus ended another successful Trail & Nature adventure with the Radfords roaring off on their motorcycle in a northerly direction and the rest of us heading to the ferry.

ANN BARBER



## MT. BAKER - SNOQUALMIE NATIONAL FOREST

From the subalpine meadows carpeted with wildflowers - to lush lowland forests from jagged peaks with glaciers to blue-green lakes tinted with glacial flour is where a group of us led by Hans Schroder travelled to on Sept. 7th - 9th.

We arrived at the Mountaineers Lodge Mt. Baker hiking club (as I understood) that Hans had been a member of for many years. It's quite high on the mountain and commands a magnificent view of Mt. Shuksan. The group all settled in and signed up for duties and hiking trips led by various leaders from our Trail & Nature Club. I signed up for the hike that was led by Bob Ball up to Lake Ann. The weather was crystal clear and hot (too hot really for hiking) but we went down into the meadows and slowly up to a rocky glacial plain and over a ridge to be delighted by an exquisite view off jewel-like Lake Ann and Mt. Shuksan with its hanging glaciers. The hike was an 8 mile journey which took most of the day.

The following day, I choose to hike with Fiona Flock up past the Table mountain on Trail 615 towards Mt. Baker. This was a totally different terrain which is mostly above tree line and crossing a remnant of a glacier. We hiked through what looked like grey powder, suddenly dawning on us that this was volcanic ash and we were reminded that this is an active volcano where many previous violent explosions have occurred. We looked up at this spectacular, glistening white mountain and thought about the sleeping volcano god living down deep below us and how close we are to it from Salt Spring Island. Many of us can see this floating vision of a mountain which is 2 miles high from our homes. On this hike, we saw several varieties of wildflowers still blooming and flocks of small song birds. We heard and saw the dear little Pika and the much larger Hoary marmot's living in their secure rocky home dens. Many dens had hay-like grass clippings in and around their entry holes yet these grasses were to be stored away for winter food supply and bedding.

The park ranger down at their headquarters in the small town of Glacier gave us hiking maps and informed us that there were over 200 species of birds that have been seen and a wide variety of waterfowl, raptors and song birds found throughout the area. If you are very lucky in the early morning or late afternoon, you might even spot mule deer and black bear, also mountain lion, coyote and mountain goat.

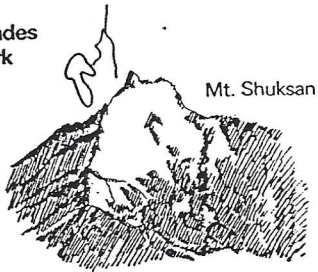
The building that the rangers are in was built by the C.C.C. Core in 1933. The core was one of President Roosevelt's (F.D.R.) plan to help put people who were without jobs during the depression back to work. The building is charming and sturdy built with cut stone which is typical of the many buildings, roads and trails that the C.C.C. corp. built.



Our breakfast and dinner were cooked for us by the 2 volunteer members of the Mountaineer Hiking Club and the meals were delicious and filling. We provided for our own lunches and drinks. Some of us found a delightful spot down in the parking lot to imbibe in our ritual wine drinking before dinner and also to partake of the numerous wild blueberries in the area.

Thanks Hans, it was a great trip.

North Cascades  
National Park



FATTI MAY LAWSON



Come, join in and sing Baker High.

#### BAKER HIGH

(to the tune of "Deep in The Heart of Texas")

WELL BEFORE DAWN, WE WERE UP AND GONE (clap 4 times)  
ON OUR WAY TO BAKER.  
WE CROSSED THE BORDER, IN GREAT DISORDER (clap)  
TO BE WITH BILL AT BAKER.

HANS MADE THE PLANS, JACQUIE FILLED THE PANS (clap)  
TO FEED US ALL AT BAKER.  
THE GONG GOES "BONG", HERE COMES THE THROG (clap)  
WE GET GREAT GRUB AT BAKER.

WE'VE MADE THE LODGE, A REAL HODGE Podge (clap)  
HAVING FUN AT BAKER.  
WE'VE BEEN SO WARM, UP IN THE DORM (clap)  
TRYING TO SLEEP AT BAKER.

WE LINE UP FOR HOURS, OUTSIDE THE SHOWER (clap)  
BY THE BLUE ROOM AT BAKER.  
WE SCREAM AND SHRIEK, BUT PLEASE DON'T PEEK (clap)  
IN THE BLUE ROOM AT BAKER.

FIFTY CENTS FOR HOT, BUT HOT WE HAVE NOT (clap)  
IN THE BLUE ROOM AT BAKER.  
SO HOLD YOUR NOSE, GET UNDER THE HOSE (clap)  
IN THE BLUE ROOM AT BAKER.

WE'LL HEAD FOR THE FERRIES, FILLED UP WITH BERRIES (clap)  
AS WE HEAD HOME FROM BAKER.  
WE'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER, THIS SEPTEMBER (clap)  
SPENT WITH THE CLUB AT BAKER.



Collaboration by Joan Lott, Eva Federson and John Howell with Carol Howell, Margaretha Nordine and Barbara Clark egging them on.

#### "SUMMER SAILING"

Since the poor weather reports for the west coast of Vancouver Island were not favourable to start a trip this summer, shorter cruises in the Gulf Islands area seemed more appropriate. A typical trip was with a group from the Salt Spring Sailing Club consisting of both sail and power boats.

On our first night, we travelled to the north end of Ruxton Island. There was no dock, so we anchored behind a reef, all in a row like peas in a pod, with stern lines to the shore. To the west over Vancouver Island, a glorious sunset glowed with bright colours of red, orange, yellow and turquoise. It was a quiet night.

The following day, we motored down to Telegraph Harbour on Thetis Island where there are two marinas. The first, where we stopped, had a \$10 minimum charge and a very active promoter who went out in his boat solicitating business so we ended up in the middle of many large vessels. Motoring south through Sansum Narrows to Genoa Bay, we tied up to a float and enjoyed a first rate dinner at the dining facilities. This delightful spot can also be reach by road and has trails through the nearby woods.

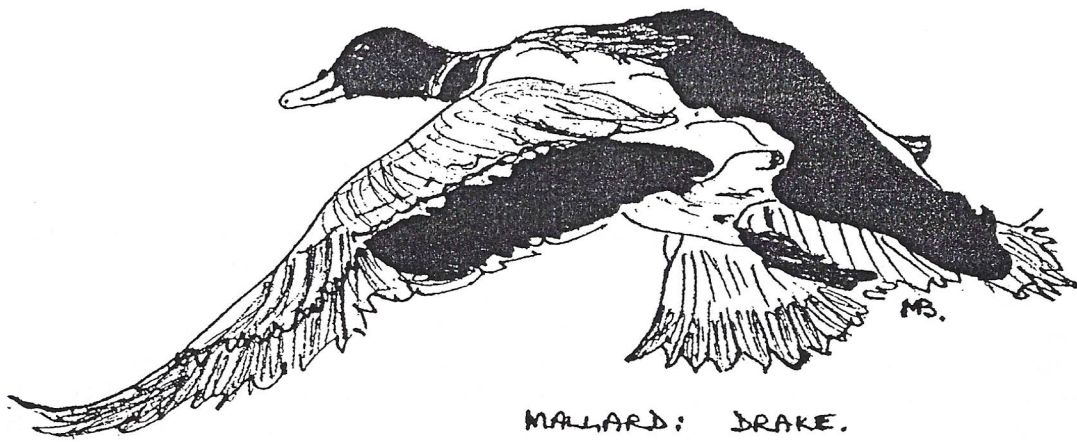
The next day, we tried fishing in the Bamberton area without success and then anchored in Tod Inlet. This is a narrow secluded anchorage adjacent to Butchard Gardens. Fortunately it was Saturday night and after dark, we were able to enjoy the spectacular, hour-long display of fireworks.

Bedwell Harbour (south of Fender Island) was the next destination and with a brisk breeze, we were able to hoist the sails and get some sailing on the way. We anchored in the harbour adjacent to the Beaumont Marine Park. It has hiking trails and is very scenic. The Pub provided sustenance and a very enjoyable evening program with "London Bobby".

The last night was spent in Winter Cove on Saturna Island. A park has been developed on the site of the "shale" plant. A shoreline path led to a narrow pass out to the Strait of Georgia. There is a well maintained return path back through the woods to the camp-site. On the way home, we cast our fishing lines in the popular waters off Fender Bluffs, again with no success and had to visit the Fish Shop in Ganges for our supper.

It was a very interesting six-day cruise through what is said to be one of the best cruising areas of the coast.

DICK PATTINSON "GWAIHIR"



MALLARD: DRAKE.

#### SOME REFLECTIONS ON MY TRIP TO SIBERIA WITH ELDERHOSTEL.

We started with a week in Fairbanks, Alaska under the auspices of the University of Alaska. This was a very worthwhile programme with several sessions devoted to preparing us for our time in Russia. Incidentally this was the first visit of an Elderhostel group to Siberia, so we were "pioneers", and I am sure that we got the royal treatment which subsequent trips may not get.

We flew from Anchorage to Magadan by Alaska Air, then transferred to a small twin turbo plane belonging to Aeroflot for a three and a half hour flight to YAKATSK on the Lena River. Aeroflot wasn't quite as bad as one has heard. Only one seat sank to the floor, most seatbelts fastened, although many seats were damp - the toilet was an unpleasant experience!

We were billeted in a worker's Health Centre - small rooms with 2 beds and not much furniture, a wash basin with toilet to each room - showers downstairs. After initial adjustment, we were relatively comfortable - meals a short walk to another building. Food in general was far better than we expected, although European style - meat and rice for breakfast sometimes. We were told not to drink tap water which was not treated but water which had been boiled was always available and at times homemade juices.

The initial impression of the city (c. 250,000) was dreary and dirty. This is primarily due to problems with permafrost - no drainage and road surface problems. Nearly all construction is done with pre-cast concrete and so many buildings were half finished and nothing happening. The amount of traffic was, to me, quite unexpected, private cars by the hundreds, trucks and buses; then in the winter, when it gets down to -60 degrees centigrade the cars are laid up and only the diesel buses run.

We had a busy schedule, as is usual with Elderhostel, visiting numerous museums, geological and permafrost institutes, international Centre of the Jews Harp, etc.

Professors gave lectures, usually in Russian with translators. We were accompanied and assisted by young students all the time, all of whom spoke some English, several quite fluently. I was fascinated by the excellent English spoken by several of the ladies in their 30's and 40's who were in the Language department, but with quite a British accent, this I learnt was because they have learned from British tapes and hadn't been out of their native country!

After 3 days in the city, we joined a large river cruise ship which I, of course, enjoyed very much. We had lectures again and shore excursions. We did not do a lot of steaming, remaining tied up to the bank at excursion points. We climbed up a path to the top of the Lena Pillars - a huge rocky area reminiscent of the Dakota badlands - we were so lucky that day - after having poor weather with showers, it cleared off and was bright and sunny with glorious views. At another place, we did a short climb to an archaeological dig and a third one to an open air museum area where they were reconstructing old buildings. One of the highlights, for me, was the two quite different troupes of young people doing folk dancing and "geottae" singing. the latter is particular, absolutely blew my mind, in the modern vernacular. The costumes, the dancing, mimicry and singing I found quite entrancing.

I could write reams more, but in summary: I had not expected to "enjoy" this trip, I had thought of it as an "experience" but we all did enjoy it. The autonomous republic of Yakutia (the native people are yakuts) could have a great future, they have immense resources (diamonds, gold, coal and many minerals). They are worse off at present than they were under the Communist system but they certainly don't complain - they have immense problems, in addition to their harsh climate.

I was impressed how open and friendly they were - it is the young people who want to change and progress, some of the old people regret the passing of the Communist system.

In Magadan, a city on the coast where we stayed one night on our return - a city only founded in 1932 and built by slave labour - they have a museum devoted entirely to photos and paintings, etc., of the dreadful Gulag period, to which they took us and talked of "our grim past".

All in all, a rewarding and memorable experience but it was nice to get home!

DENNIS SEWARD

#### EDITOR'S REMARKS

THE October '93 issue has been an exciting newsletter to work with. I had reports, a poem, music, an acknowledgement, many wonderful stories, and drawings from Margaret Briggs. Thanks to Jim Barber's sweet reminder, I was able to get all the articles in good time. Thank you to all who participated in this issue. It has been wonderful and enjoyable working on this October '93 Oystercatcher.

PLEASE RECYCLE!! Please put read Oystercatcher in the Cobbler's box so others can read it, too.

Thank you very much.

Kacey Chee 朱家菁