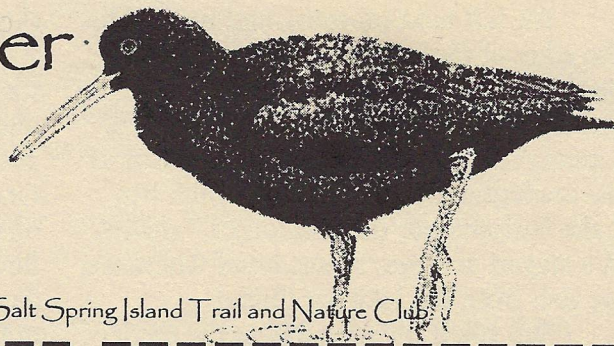


# Oystercatcher



The Newsletter of the Salt Spring Island Trail and Nature Club

## Hiking in Tuscany

*Barbara Watson*

This time last year I was planning a trip to Europe including an eleven day hiking trip in Tuscany. Here are some happy memories.

I met the group in the Rome airport, we were sixteen with two tour guides, one led the hikes, the other managed the arrangements. I was the sole Canadian. There were two Americans and the rest were Brits. We were transported in two Mercedes minibuses to our first destination a country villa just outside Montemerano (altitude 750')

Our first hiking day (6 miles) we visited the walled village Montemerano, and a church with two interesting frescoes. Then on to a medieval castle. After a delicious picnic (a feature of our tour company), we walked across farmland to the village of Saturnia. We finished the day at Molino de Bagno where there is a spectacular cascade of thermal water. Unfortunately at 37 C, it did not provide the warmth needed for the late afternoon temperature. We were happy to return to hot showers.

The next day was our longest hike (14.3 miles) through hilly country. We climbed and crossed a vineyard plateau to approach our second destination Pitigliano. To my Canadian eyes, approaching medieval towns perched on crags in the rosy late afternoon light was an amazing sight. Yes the light in Tuscany is incredible. Walking up into the town after a day's hike sets the stage to enter into a medieval world. Pitigliano

is perched on a tufo (volcanic rock) outcrop (1,085'). It was a great place to spend Christmas, exploring its carless narrow passageways. In the afternoon, we surprised passers-by by singing carols in the main square.

The following day we walked out to some remarkable Etruscan roads and viewed some of the remains of their tombs. The next day, we left Pitigliano, walked across a gorge, visited a Romanesque church, then on to a Necropoli including a third century B.C. Etruscan tomb carved to resemble a temple and an Etruscan street with dwellings carved on each side in tufo. We ended up in Sovano (970') where we stayed in a small hotel, a 4.8 mile day. In the morning, we walked across farmland to visit Sorano (1200') set in a buttress of rock above the river Lente. After our lunch, we walked through the deep wooded Lente valley to visit the deserted troglodyte village of Vitozza, inhabited until the 19th century, enroute to San Quirico (1580') a total of 9.8 miles.

## CALENDAR

**October 28th** Special General Meeting,  
7:00 PM, United Church Hall

**November 25th** Social, 7:30 PM United  
Church Hall

**December 14th** Christmas Lunch,  
Meaden Hall

**January 27th** Annual General Meeting,  
7:30 PM United Church Hall



We left next morning and walked to the edge of the escarpment (1590'): We descended leaving Tuscany, climbed through chestnut woods to the village of Latera (1,420') before walking the rim of the ancient crater (1,995') in which lies Lake Bolsena our destination (9.7 miles). We stayed in a new resort hotel where we ate fish from the lake for dinner.

We spent the next day at the local market and exploring an Etruscan temple, museum, and the church of Saint Cristina with its catacomb.

Our last day of hiking took us on the ancient path to a gentle rolling plateau of farmland and woods. We spied Orvieto

(Umbria), an incredible sight, the light was fading as we looked across the valley framing the city in a coral glow. It was under-lit, so it looked like a city suspended in a luminescent cloud.

Orvieto is magnificently situated high on a crag of tofo (1,030'). We walked through the town to our hotel (10.8 mile day). Orvieto is a wonderful place to see in the new year and the bonus for me was discovering a jazz festival. I spent my last day listening to great music.

All in all a wonderful trip, no rain, ideal hiking temperatures, 14 C with a fair amount of sunshine and marvellous food and wine.

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## Federation of British Columbia Naturalists - September 1999

*Nancy Braithewaite*

The AGM of the F. B.C.N. was held at Qualicum in May as part of the joint F.B.C.N. and Canadian Nature Federation Conference. Three members from the Salt Spring Club were present and found it extremely interesting and well organized. There were some early morning birding expeditions and a visit to the lovely Milner gardens.

As it was the 30th anniversary of the F.B.C.N, Anne Murray, president, planted a dogwood at the entrance to the Qualicum Civic Centre, the conference site.

Since the AGM, the Federation has urged the provincial government to restore funding to the Ministry of the Environment and implement the recommendations of the Parks Legacy Panel. Fifty Conservation organizations, including ourselves, representing 200,000 British Columbians, wrote letters to the Premier in this regard.

The F.B.C.N. has written to the government concerning other resolutions passed at the AGM which include amendments to the B.C Water Act. They urged both federal and provincial governments to: implement stand-alone Endangered Species legislation to protect both habitat and species at risk in Canada; establish Marine Protected areas; and change the Wildlife Act to include the protection of eagles nests in trees whether or not a nest is present. Parks Canada is also being encouraged to establish National Parks in Natural Region Three which is the interior dry plateau of B.C. These resolutions are described more fully in the Conservation Report in the Summer 1999 B.C. Naturalist p. 18.

The Fall general Meeting is to be held at Princetown September 23 - 26 and we will be represented by Brian Radford.





## Trail Mix

**Welcome New Members:** Janet Andersen, Derek and Jenny Barrio, Harry Burton, Robyn Dawes, Iris McBride, Mel and Lynda McKieve, Margaret Munk, Brenda Ringwald, Craig Sheridan, Ann Stewart and Benita von Eichborn.

**Thanks:** To Paul and Beth Ranney for organizing the spring trip to Sooke and Bill and Ann Earlf for organizing the fall trip to Wells.

**Stepped Down:** Joan Lott and Anne Fitz-James as Rambling Coordinators. Beth Ranney will complete their term.

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### Reminders

Please ensure that cheques payable to the Club bear the CURRENT / PAYMENT date. Post dated cheques will ONLY be accepted for early submission of Membership Dues renewals.

#### Annual Membership Dues

Annual Membership Dues for the calendar year 2000 are due January 1, 2000. The dues are \$17.00 per person. Please send your cheque dated January 1, 2000 and any changes to your current address and phone number to the Treasurer, SaltSpring Trail & Nature Club, Box 203 Ganges P.O. Salt Spring Island, BC, V8K 2V9 before the end of December. Payment may also be given to April Steel or Lynn Thompson.

2. Directors and Officers: Formalize the actual structure of the Executive and delete reference to succession of two consecutive years.

3. Membership: Change minimum age requirement from 18 years to 19 years. Delete Junior Membership.

4. Delete (mandatory) affiliation with FBCN and replace with annually voted affiliation through the budget approval process of the Annual General Meeting.

5. Minor housekeeping.

For more details contact April Steel at 537- 4207.

#### Special General Meeting

October 28th, 7:00 PM United Church Hall  
Proposed changes to the Club's Constitution and By Laws will be presented to the members for a vote.

1. Audit: Delete audit requirement. It is provided for within the Societies Act.

#### Hike Arizona!

If you are heading south this winter, contact Brenda Ringwald, Phoenix Arizona at 602 508 0895 and Brenda will take you hiking in her area.



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**Y2K Alert**  
*Lynn Thompson*

All Trail & Nature members are reminded to use extreme caution if hiking in the early hours of the new millennium. Modern technological devices such as compasses, Global Positioning Systems, cell phones, pace makers, pedometers, designer sunglasses, binoculars, 4ply gore-tex raingear and even the spring- loaded walking poles could fail and lead to life- threatening situations.

**BE PREPARED!** Stay home, clean up after that frenzied New Year's party and await the news that compulsive hikers like Bob Ball or Ian Fraser have returned unscathed from their first hike of the year.

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### General Information

The Salt Spring trail and Nature Club features Tuesday outings September through June at three levels of ability. The monthly schedule of outings and events is published the final Wednesday of the month in the *Driftwood*. The fourth Thursday of each month the Club meets at 7:30 PM in the lower hall of the Ganges United Church. The Club is affiliated with the Federation of BC Naturalists.

**Ramblers** enjoy walking without pressure to keep up speed. Members of any level fitness are welcome. Ramblers have frequent "time-outs" for taking pictures, examining flowers, plants, stones, fossils, and hugging trees. Rambles start at 10 AM and usually end around 1:30PM

**Walkers** move at a relaxed pace taking time to smell the roses. Walkers usually try to avoid long steep climbs and will stop to catch the breath along the way. Walks are generally less than 8km and end around 2PM.

**Hikers** like long, adventurous and occasionally quite strenuous hikes, and like to gain a bit of altitude. Hikers need good strong boots and a good but not excessive level of fitness. They may smell the roses, but do it rather quickly. Hikes usually start at 10AM and finish between 2:30 and 3:30 PM.

**Membership:** Annual dues are \$17.00 per person. New members must sign a waiver. Send waiver form and membership dues to Membership Secretary, Box 203, Salt Spring Island BC V8K 2V9

### Current Executive

President:	Fred Howell
Vice Pres:	Linda Quiring
Past Pres:	Bill Earl
Treasurer	April Steel
Secretary	Ron Holcroft Nancy Holcroft
Membership	Lynn Thompson
Walkers	Alan Robertson
Ramblers	Beth Ranney
Hikers	Linda Quiring
FBCN	Nancy Braithwaite
<b>RECORDS</b>	
Archival	Joanne Cartwright
Photographic	Chris Pattinson

### OYSTERCATCHER

*Oystercatcher* is published three times annually. Comments, articles or ideas are welcome. Mail them to Box 203, Salt Spring Island, BC V8K 2V9 or call Linda Quiring 537-5116 or April Steel 537-4207. Design 4th Line Design