

Artwork of Hamilton Mack Laing homes
'Baybrook' and 'Shakesides'

by Comox Valley artists

November 24, 2014

NIC art student finds inspiration at Baybrook

Denise Lawson, is an NIC art student in her third year Emily Carr external degree at North Island College. Assigned the theme, 'More Than Human, a silent conversation' for her photography course, she found unique inspiration at Baybrook house in Comox.

She and her art class (11 students) met and wandered around the park as a start for their project. Denise became inspired by the setting and decided to do her project on site, taking photographs of what she saw reflected in the windows of the house.

"The reflection of the landscape was in the windows," she remarked. "The windows also reflected the presence of human beings in that environment. We are a part of the natural world - and belong together."

She had her photos enlarged into huge and beautiful colour transparencies, ideally displayed so that the light would shine through them, like the reflections on the windows of the Baybrook house.

To obtain academic credit for her work, Denise has to display her transparencies. She envisioned displaying her art on the windows of the house itself, inside or out, so the images could be in conversation with the actual reflections. Unfortunately, she was refused permission by the Town of Comox.

Her work will instead be displayed in the George Sawchuck Gallery at the Comox Valley Art Gallery, with that of other students in her class. The show opens on December 3 at 7 pm.

Other venues showing the work of her class will be the Raven Gallery and Ginger 9 Gallery.

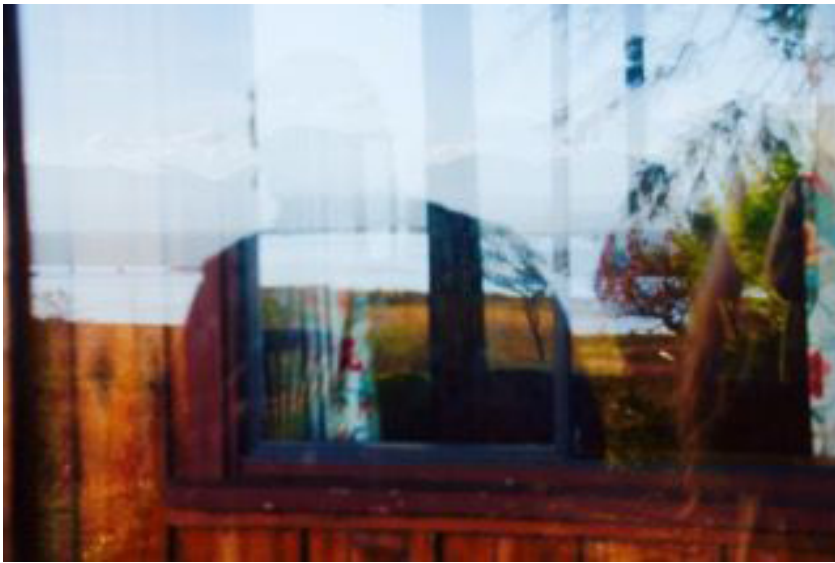
Denise will continue to use Baybrook as the inspiration for her self-directed project, beginning January 2015.

The Mack Laing Heritage Society is proud to be able to help Denise promote her beautiful artwork, which celebrates Baybrook house and Comox Bay.

Transparencies of Baybrook window reflections - by Denise Lawson



Baybrook transparency and praryer flags by Denise Lawson



Artist Brian Scott donates paintings of Mack Laing homes

The Mack Laing Society of the Comox Valley has been honoured with the donation of two beautiful paintings by Vancouver Island artist Brian Scott. The paintings and prints will assist the Society in its defence of Mack Laing and the fulfillment of his wish that a natural history museum be created.

Laing, a renowned ornithologist, naturalist and writer, was a Comox pioneer, clearing land and building his waterfront home, Baybrook, in 1921. He married in 1927 and he and his wife Ethel created an extensive, commercial nut farm.

Laing recorded this effort, as well as writing hundreds of articles for major outdoor publications during his long life. He also wrote a biography of his friend, artist-naturalist Allan Brooks, which was published by the BC Museum in 1979.

Ethel died in 1945 and Laing sold the home and several acres in 1949, building his second home, Shakesides, a duplicate of Baybrook, on the adjoining lot. In 1972, he deeded his remaining land and home to the Town of Comox. He lived there until his death at the age of 99 in 1982. In his Will he asked that his home be turned into a natural history museum and left a sum of money to do so. This was never done. The Town rented out the home until 2014, when flooding compromised its structure. Comox acquired the Baybrook property in 2011, with the assistance of the Nature Trust of BC.

In 2013, on learning that the Town of Comox intended to demolish both Mack Laing houses, the Society engaged an engineer to examine them. While Shakesides had suffered from tidal flooding, it was determined that Baybrook could be restored and re-purposed into a small nature house and museum, as Mack Laing wished.

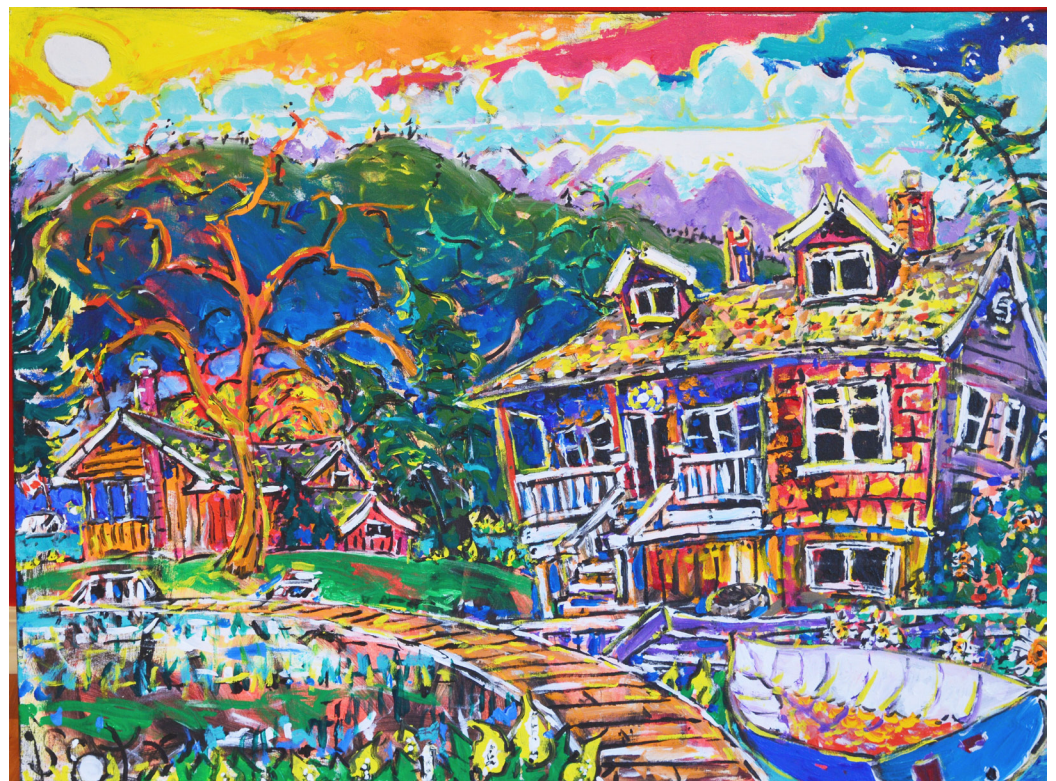
In late 2013, the Society presented Comox Council with a plan that would preserve Baybrook at no expense to the Town. Despite supplying a long-term financial plan in 2014, the Society's proposal was rejected and Council voted in early 2015 to proceed with demolition of both houses.

Brian Scott's exuberant art is well-known in the Comox Valley. He has recorded countless historic buildings and local scenery, in all the communities in the area. His distinctive and colourful scenes also decorate a number of Hydro boxes in downtown Comox.

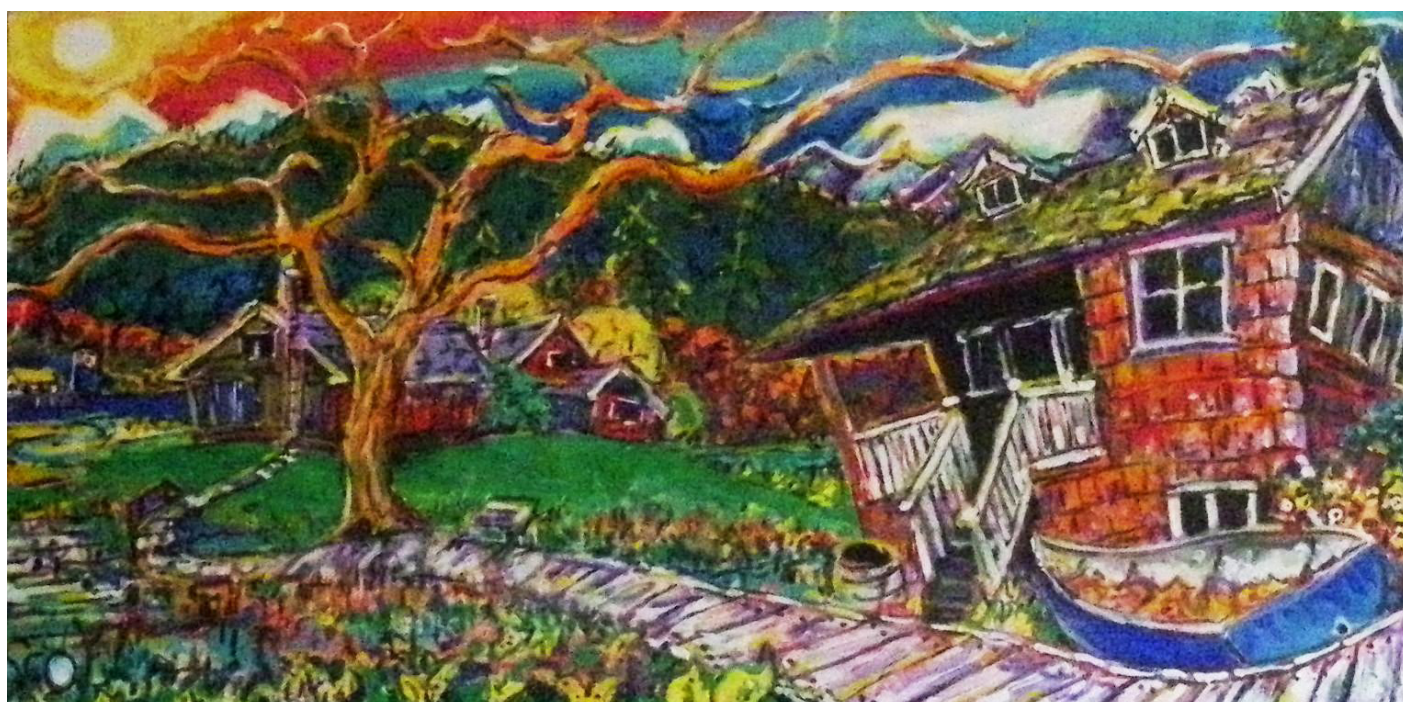
On learning of the Society's mandate to preserve Laing's legacy, Scott visited both Baybrook and Mack Laing parks and was immediately taken with their beautiful location and the homes themselves. He presented the two paintings to the Society on March 20, 2015.

His donations will be used, at his request, to defend Mack Laing's legacy and assist in the fulfillment of the wishes stated in his Will.

**Brian Scott paintings of Baybrook and Shakesides
Donated to MLHS**



Other paintings inspired by Baybrook and Shakesides



Baybrook and Shakesides by Ruth Dickson

