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Watercolour painting by Jim Marsh

Brian Crumblehulme Mayne Islander of the Year

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From the Lions Den

Brian Crumblehulme
2020 Lions Mayne Islander of the Year

Brian and his wife Mary have lived on Mayne Island for 42 years. In that time, Brian has accumulated a lifetime's worth of volunteering on virtually every island society, non-profit and club, often as a founding member. He has also served on innumerable governing commissions and committees. In December 2020, the Lions sat down with Brian to talk about his time on the island and off.

Lions: Brian, we counted about 32 groups that you have volunteered for and committees you've served on. What are the highs and lows of your time on the island?

Brian: The highs have been working as a member on so many diverse teams and projects to create something good.

The lows include how hard it was in 1980, when we moved to the island full-time, to make a living. I had skills but I needed new skills. And learning that, as a rural island resident, if you want something done, you need to do it yourself.

I had completed a course in business management, so I made a business plan for a bed and breakfast, and a commercial herb farm. But no way banks would lend money to island businesses where there were no banks! It took one-and-a-half years to get the money and permits. We started building Fernhill Lodge in 1982 and opened in 1983.

Lions: I'm sure readers would like to know something about your life before you came to Mayne. You came to Canada from the U.K.?

Brian: Yes, I grew up in Liverpool, which as a kid was great, there was music everywhere and we lived a 10-minute walk from the countryside. My passion outdoors was gardening and indoors I started cooking at the age of five. By the time I was eight or nine, it was more gardening or walking through the local fields for me. I wanted to spend time outside.

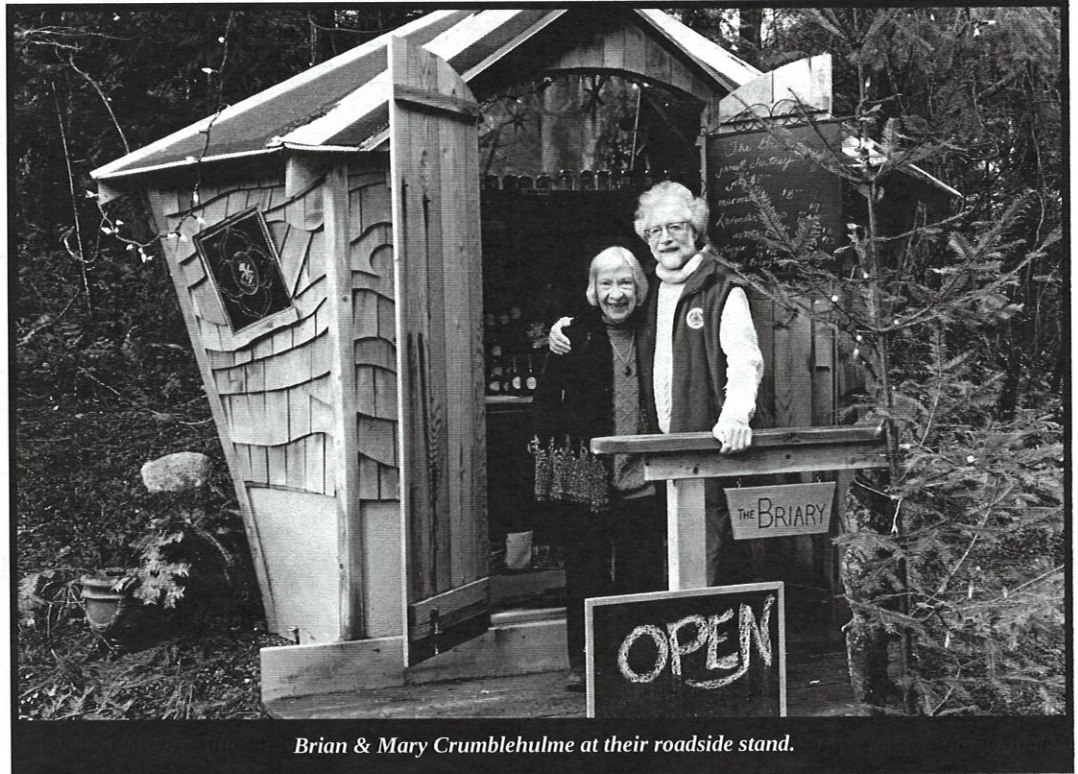
Lions: But you went into chemistry, why was that?

Brian: My Dad talked me out of gardening. He said science was the future and in the late 50s said that plastics were the way to go. He was right. So, in high school I went into chemistry and was subsequently accepted at the Technical College of Science in Liverpool. I graduated first in chemistry and biology, and then with a

degree medical technology in 1967.

Lions: When did you come to Canada and why?

Brian: I came to Canada in 1967. I wanted to get away to something new and to be in the outdoors, as much as I could. I decided upon British Columbia, and I got a job as a chemical technologist in Nanaimo.



Brian & Mary Crumblehulme at their roadside stand.

Lions: When did you meet Mary?

Brian: In 1971, I had a research job in Vancouver and it was then that I met her.

Lions: Many islanders know about your passion for dance. How did you get so involved in this art form?

In 1969 I had joined a dance studio in Vancouver – I really enjoyed American ballroom dancing. Mary loved music, especially early music, so we went to Vancouver Early Music Society concerts together. I taught Mary to dance.

The music they played at the concerts was dance music. It was meant to be danced to, not politely listened to. I did some research and found a woman in San Francisco who was known for renaissance and baroque dance. She agreed to come to Vancouver and hold a workshop. From this I started the Vancouver Historical Dance Society, which I ran for 10 years.

Lions: Once on Mayne Island, your passions through the years have been focused on aesthetics, whether gardening, cooking, dance and even through governance. Can you tell us a little bit about your career in this area?

(continued on next page)