

Chapter 12

Volvo CE takes over

A new owner

Since acquiring the Champion Group of Companies from the Sully family (Rosny Corporation) on August 1st, 1988, Sequoia Associates Inc. had groomed the enterprise for resale. All the employees knew it was going to happen at some time, but nobody – except the Sequoia hierarchy – was privy to any boardroom negotiations. Rumours abounded; ranging from the possible, e.g., bought by a major competitor, to the ridiculous, e.g., employee ownership. It became heavily rumoured in February, 1997, that a deal had been struck with an international corporation, and soon it was announced that Champion Road Machinery Ltd. and its subsidiaries had been sold to the Construction Equipment Division of AB Volvo for CAN\$175 million. The deal was officially finalised and Volvo Construction Equipment (Volvo CE) took over ownership in March, 1997.

One of the employees' first exposures to Volvo CE was at a mass meeting convened at the Saltford Valley Hall. The hall was filled to overflowing as three senior Volvo CE managers: Mr. Bengt Ovlinger (president and CEO), Mr. Mike Mudler (senior vice president, finance and administration), and Mr. Tryggve Sthen (executive vice president, industry and technology) showcased the world of Volvo. Their presentation was followed by a question and answer session. Clearly, this was a PR exercise designed to give sceptical Champion employees a "warm and fuzzy feeling." Also it introduced us to a company unalterable mantra – the Core Values of Safety, Quality and the Environment. These omnipresent values would rule our daily work. Most of us left the meeting pleased that our jobs remained intact as there is always the fear of a new owner closing the plant and moving production elsewhere. This prophesy, however, was to come true as the news was announced on September 30th, 2008, that the Goderich plant was to cease operation and, by 2010, all Volvo road grader production would take place in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, and Paderneiras, Brazil.

Later propaganda issued by Champion to its employees emphasised some of the additional benefits brought about by Volvo's takeover. For example, access to world-class technology and state-of-the-art facilities for research and development. Part sourcing and purchasing could provide opportunities to use Volvo components – including engines, and using Volvo's global dealer network for increased sales volume.

For the time being, however, it was business as usual. Bruce Page was settling in well and proving to be a definite asset, given the extra work results expected from the Technical Publications Department. One of his assignments was to write manuals for the new Champion Pro-Pav Series asphalt paving machines and their many variants. Bruce was familiar with these machines having operated them at one time for the Miller Group of civil engineering contractors. Both he and Ray went on an information gathering trip to the factory in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.

April in the 'deep south'

Following the first three months of the year, we were ready for a change from routine and spending a spring vacation somewhere different. Although many Canadians head south for Florida when schools are closed for the traditional 'Spring Break', we elected to explore more inland and were attracted to the 'Dixie' states of Kentucky, Tennessee and Alabama. The first leg of the journey was relatively straight forward as we drove the well travelled route to the Sarnia/Port Huron border crossing and headed south on Interstate highway I-94 towards Detroit where we connected with Interstate highway I-75, the main route to Florida. We continued through the cities of Toledo, Dayton and Cincinnati, finally crossing the broad Ohio River into the rolling bluegrass hills of the state of Kentucky. Prosperous horse farms with traditional white fence lines were dotted here and there. This is where thoroughbred horses are reared and many of the successful racers are honoured in the Lexington Kentucky Horse Park. Lexington was our first destination.

The Lexington Horse Park was dedicated to all things equine and educated us about horses and the many breeds that evolved from their prehistoric ancestors. Horsemanship, too, was explained as visitors viewed a demonstration in a large paddock. Here, draught horses were hitched to wagons and coaches of various descriptions and driven around the arena. Individual horses of different breeds – including thoroughbreds, mustangs and small ponies – were exhibited. Their riders were dressed in different outfits, such as cowboys in Western clothes and aristocrats wearing fine hunting attire. One of the many monuments onsite was a statue of the famous racehorse, "Man o' War."

U.S. Hwy. 68 is a scenic road leading from Lexington to Harrodsburg. Along the way we visited the "Wild Turkey" Kentucky bourbon whisky distillery. It was the first of two distillery tours featured on the American Whiskey Trail and the Kentucky Bourbon Trail. This was our introduction to bourbon whisky, which is a distillate spirit made from maize(corn), fermented in large vats and aged in huge warehouses. Our tour also included the bottling plant. Another introduction was to the life and times of a religious sect known as the "Shakers." One of their preserved communities, the Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, a National Historic Landmark also known as "Shakertown", is located on U.S. Hwy. 68.

The Shakers, or properly known as the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, is an offshoot branch of the Quakers (Religious Society of Friends). Their lifestyle was dictated by a number of social principles; namely worship; celibacy; equality, and hard work. Celibacy and equality were considered in tandem and specific steps were taken to keep the sexes apart. Accommodation was segregated into male and female dormitories and, except for the *finale*, the same for their worship sessions. The *finale* was mixed company and usually ended with a whirling dervish inspired invocation. Since strict celibacy was practiced any children introduced into the society were absorbed from the outside world. Often orphans or foundlings were taken in and, at age 21, they decided whether to stay or leave the commune.

Based on an agrarian way of life, the Shakers, by necessity, were innovators and several everyday household items were of their invention. The flat corn broom and Shaker boxes in particular; plus farm tools and sturdy furniture design and manufacturing. They also introduced a complete industry by growing, packaging and distributing vegetable and other seeds.



Parade of Breeds, Lexington Horse Park, Lexington, Kentucky, April, 1997.



Typical Horse Rearing Farm in Bluegrass Country, Kentucky, April, 1997.



Center Family Building, Shakertown, Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, Kentucky, April, 1997.



Making Flat Corn Brooms, Shakertown, Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, Kentucky, April, 1997.



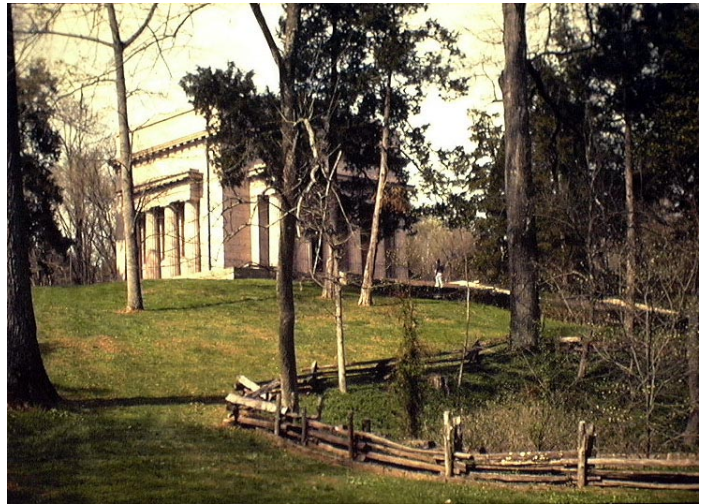
Spinning Wheel Demonstration, Shakertown, Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, Kentucky, April, 1997.



Seed Distribution Room, Shakertown, Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, Kentucky, April, 1997.



"Maker's Mark" Bourbon Whisky Distillery near Loretto, Kentucky, April, 1997.



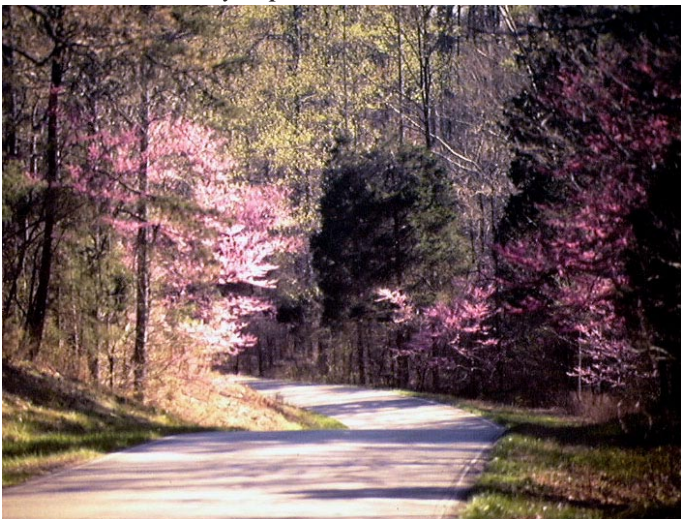
Memorial at Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site, Kentucky, April, 1997.



United States Bullion Depository, Fort Knox Military Reserve, Kentucky, April, 1997.



Barry and Russian T28 Tank at the Patton Museum of Cavalry and Armor, Fort Knox, Kentucky, Apr., 1997.



Eastern Redbud Blossoming Trees in Mammoth Cave State Park, Kentucky, April, 1997.



1950s Main Street Diorama in the National Corvette Museum, Bowling Green, Kentucky, April, 1997.

Because the Shakers have died out, due primarily to attrition, their way of life is now continued in the form of ‘living museums’ where costumed interpreters demonstrated the workings of the Shaker communities. At Pleasant Hill, we saw the ubiquitous flat corn broom being made, a spinning wheel demonstration and an insight into the seed industry. From Harrodsville, U.S. Hwy. 68 continues to Perryville then state road No. 52 to Lebanon, our next overnight stop.

The second bourbon whisky distillery that we visited was “Maker’s Mark”, located in the heart of remote bushland somewhere near Loretto. A collection of buildings on the banks of a mountain stream contained all the trappings of an illicit ‘moonshine’ still, but on a larger scale. We toured through the facility to see the distillation process, aging warehouse, and bottling plant with its unique feature of dipping the necks of each bottle into a vat of hot red wax. The wax dried on the bottle to create an effective seal and trademark. Another museum feature was the restored Excise office showing the ‘Revenue Man’s’ aspect of the distribution process.

Kentucky is the birthplace of the American president, Abraham Lincoln. State road No. 84 leads to Hodgenville and the nearby Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site. The president’s memorial is a large Parthenon-style building located in a wooded and manicured lawn setting with split-rail fencing indicative of Lincoln’s humble backwoods home and upbringing. Access to the Beaux-Arts neoclassical structure is from an extensive, wide flight of 56 stone steps (representing Lincoln’s age). Inside the building is a reproduction of the log cabin where Lincoln was born. After visiting this shrine, we continued along state road No. 61 to Elizabethtown not far from the Fort Knox Military Reserve.

Elizabethtown is a garrison community and U.S. Army personnel in uniform are commonly seen on the streets and in the stores and eating places. For obvious reasons, the United States Bullion Depository, often known as Fort Knox, is not open to visitors. However, the well-guarded concrete building can be seen from a distance. The location served as a model for the 1964 film, “Goldfinger”, a James Bond 007 adventure starring Sean Connery, and made me recall both reading Ian Fleming’s 1959 novel and watching the movie. Another feature of the area is the Patton Museum of Cavalry and Armor. This is a collection of mobile warfare artifacts, among which is a Russian T28 tank and captured WW II materiel – a German Tiger tank. One miscellaneous item in the museum was a portion of the dismantled Berlin Wall complete with graffiti.

Bowling Green, Kentucky, was our next destination primarily to visit the National Corvette Museum. Leaving Elizabethtown on Interstate highway I-65, we continued part way until leaving the freeway to explore a side road through the Mammoth Cave National Park. At this time of the year the Eastern Redbuds start to bloom, and the many blossoming trees lined the undulating road through the park in a colourful procession. The National Corvette Museum, created in honour of the iconic American sports car, was a whole day visit as there were many items to view. Dioramas included pristine models of the cars produced in the 1950s and 1960s; a typical U.S. main street with a Mobil Oil service station building, forecourt and petrol (gasolene) pumps of the era, and a realistic 1960s Chevrolet dealer showroom complete with rare collectible models including a 1963 ‘split-window’ coupé, Sting Rays, Sharks and other classics. Another full-scale diorama recreated portions of the old Corvette Assembly line in St. Louis, Missouri, where the Corvette was produced from late 1953 to 1981, when production moved to Bowling Green, Kentucky.

We now journeyed further south leaving Bowling Green on U.S. Hwy. 231 to its junction with U.S. Hwy. 31E and crossed the Kentucky/Tennessee state line. Rejoining U.S. Hwy. 231, we briefly stopped at Lebanon to view the town square; then continued through Murfreesboro to state road 82 just north of Shelbyville where we turned off to visit an unusual frontier-like village called Bell Buckle. From humble backwoods beginnings, the village grew in size when the railway arrived and an important stockyard was established. Today it is a tourist attraction with many well preserved Victorian homes, shops and eating places. It is well known for its cultural festivals; antiques; quilts; handmade crafts; country music; home cooking and Southern hospitality. Returning to U.S. Hwy. 231, we passed through Shelbyville, Fayetteville, crossed the Tennessee/Alabama state line and entered Huntsville.

The main attraction for me in Huntsville was the George C. Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC). It is the largest N.A.S.A. research facility used for spacecraft propulsion, together with other responsibilities that include the space shuttle external tank; payloads and related crew training; International Space Station (ISS) design and assembly; and computers, networks, and information management. Included in the tour was a visit to the astronaut training tank where simulated weightless experiments and practice took place. For me one of the most interesting parts of the tour was inspecting the ISS module mock up. This was an opportunity to look at the latest technology in space exploration and experience the confined quarters that astronauts live and work in when assigned tours of duty on the ISS. Another section of MSFC is called the Huntsville Operations Support Center and works in conjunction with the John F. Kennedy Space Center at Cape Canaveral in Florida where ISS launches, payload and experiment activities are concerned.

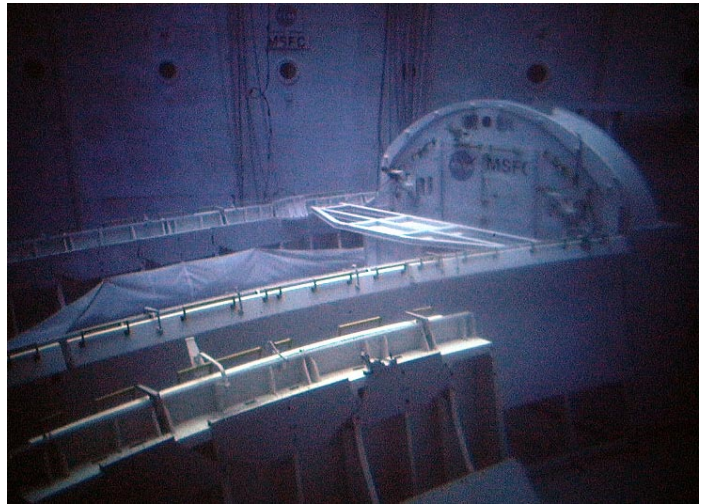
The furthest south on the trip was to the industrial city of Birmingham, Alabama. Similar to its English counterpart it is involved in the iron and steel industry, as well as being an important centre for cotton, telecommunications and insurance. Interstate highways I-565 and I-65 took us directly from Huntsville to Birmingham, and our first introduction to the mainstay industries were exhibited in a small museum near the city that included a cotton gin and recreated old iron furnaces. Birmingham is located near deposits of the three basic ingredients for iron and steel making – coal, limestone and iron ore. The planned and growing city soon rivalled other major metal producing centres and was nicknamed “The Pittsburgh of the South.” One of the main players was the Sloss Furnace Company. Although no longer in operation, the Sloss Furnaces is a National Historic Landmark and the only preserved blast furnace set in an interpretive museum of industry. An entire complex of buildings gives visitors a close up look at the workings of a pig iron smelter from the raw materials to the blast furnace and all the supportive infrastructure.

Before leaving Birmingham we were embroiled in a dispute with the hotel management. We had booked into of the nationally recognised hotel chain Hampton Inns, but were very disappointed with the standard of cleanliness in the room and, in particular, with the inferior laundered bed linen. On top of that there were problems with the catering of the ‘complimentary’ breakfast that wasn’t satisfactorily resolved. We made a strong complaint and, as a result, was not charged for our accommodation.

The return journey north hasn’t been fully documented, but we were aiming for the Land between the Lakes Recreation Area – an extent of wilderness that straddled the Tennessee/Kentucky border. We made our way cross country, possibly by way of Interstate highway I-65 to state road No. 157 to the



Preserved Victorian Main Street Shops and Eating Places in Bell Buckle, Tennessee, April, 1997.



Astronaut Training Tank, George C. Marshall Space Flight Center, Huntsville, Alabama, April, 1997.



Recreated Old Iron Furnaces, Industrial Museum near Birmingham, Alabama, April, 1997.



Typical Cotton Gin Exhibit at the Industrial Museum near Birmingham, Alabama, April, 1997.



Sloss Furnace Co. Blast Furnace National Historic Landmark, Birmingham, Alabama, April, 1997.



Wheeler Hydroelectric Dam and Locks near Muscle Shoals, Alabama, April, 1997.



*Golden Pond with Blossoming Dogwood Tree,
Land between the Lakes, Kentucky, April, 1997.*



*Illicit Still, Tennessee Valley Authority Museum,
Land between the Lakes, Kentucky, April, 1997.*



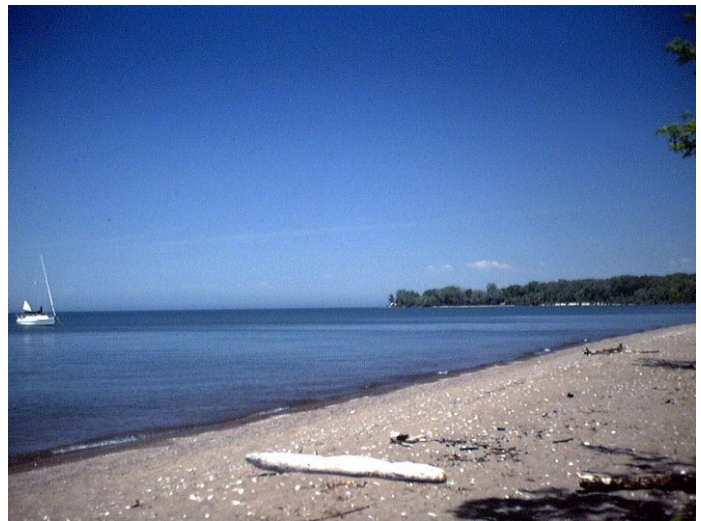
*Museum in the John James Audubon State Park near
Henderson, Kentucky, April, 1997.*



*Family Reunion in Cousin Don Jr.'s Back Garden,
London, Ontario, June, 1997.*



*"The Tin Goose Inn", Our Accommodation on Pelee
Island, Ontario, June, 1997.*



*Fish Point – One of the Deserted Beaches on Pelee
Island, Ontario, June, 1997.*

city of Muscle Shoals; then headed toward the Wheeler Dam and locks on the Tennessee River. This installation was one of several on the river that were built during the Great Depression of the 1930s in the U.S.A. as part of an initiative to improve navigation on the river and bring flood control and economic development to the region. Always fascinating to watch, we stayed some time to follow the passage of a large, segmented barge carrying raw goods (minerals?) and propelled by a powerful tug, the *Ralph E. Flagge*, through the main lock. The water level difference is 52 ft. (16 m) and soon we saw the lock doors activated and the barge ease into the lock chamber. It was quite a while before the barge passed through to the next water level. We then followed the Wheeler Dam Highway (state road No. 101) that crossed the top of the dam and the hydroelectric power station to U.S. Hwy. 72 and the city of Florence. Heading north on state road No. 17, we crossed the Alabama/Tennessee state line where the road designation changed to state road No. 13.

A winding road, it soon crossed the Natchez Trace Parkway and continued north through Waynesboro, Linden and Waverly to Erin and state road No. 49. Just beyond Dover on U.S. Hwy. 79, a scenic road, simply known as “The Trace”, starts wending its way through the Land between the Lakes Recreation Area. This wedge of land is the largest inland peninsula in the U.S.A. On one side is Lake Barkley (Cumberland River) and on the other side is Kentucky Lake (Tennessee River). It was the time of year when the dogwood trees began to blossom and every so often we would see the unmistakable white flowers standing out from the evergreens. Occasional ponds such as Cedar Pond provided photographic opportunities as their smooth surfaces mirrored perfect reflections. About half way along The Trace at Golden Pond was the headquarters of the Tennessee Valley Authority, which included a small museum. In the past, this area was notorious for the distillation of illegal liquor (“moonshine”, or “mountain dew”) that was cunningly trafficked to the speakeasies of Chicago, Detroit and other Midwestern cities during the period of Prohibition. One of the “moonshine” stills was on display. The northern entrance to The Trace ended at Interstate highway I-24, which we took to its junction with the Western Kentucky Parkway. At U.S. Hwy 41 (Pennyryle Parkway) we headed further north and over the Ohio River into the state of Indiana and our hotel in the city of Evansville.

The following day, we retraced our steps to U.S. Hwy. 41, back over the Ohio River into Kentucky and to the John James Audubon State Park. This park is well known for its hiking trails and bird watching opportunities as well as the museum listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The museum is designed in the French château architectural style. John James Audubon was a French *émigré* to the United States in the early 19th century and became a world famous ornithologist, naturalist and painter. He is best known for his bird paintings and other artwork of indigenous wildlife. Inside the museum are galleries containing artifacts of Audubon’s life. At the back of the building, which overlooks natural woodland, a series of bird feeding stations are open for public observation. The feeding stations are well stocked and attract numerous wild birds; some of which are not very common. We saw several species new to us in the wild, including a red-headed woodpecker.

We had come to the end of the cultural explorations of the holiday and, as time was getting short, we started the final part of our journey. Although no accurate record exists of the route, it seems logical that we kept to the Interstate highways (I-64, I-65 and I-69) leading us through Indianapolis and Fort Wayne to the Indiana/Michigan state line. Then on Interstate highway I-94 by way of Detroit and the Port Huron/Sarnia border crossing to Ontario and home.

Changes at the top and a new model launched

Similar to when Sequoia Associates Inc. took over the Champion Group of Companies from the Sully family (Rosny Corporation) on August 1st, 1988, the rank and file expected Volvo CE to ‘clear house’ and restructure according to its own corporate hierarchy. The first move was to make some changes at the top. Art Church decided to move on and pursue some new and different challenges and, on May 5th, 1997, Dennis Vollmershausen was promoted from executive vice president and general manager to president and CEO. Dennis reported to Bengt Ovlinger, president and CEO of Volvo CE. The vacancy of vice president of sales and marketing was filled with the hiring of Scotty Kirkwood.

Not all changes were made to personnel at Champion, but the product also evolved with the times as the Series V range of motor graders (S/N 26677) was launched in May, 1997. Improvements to the machine included: enhanced hydraulics; a single-lever transmission shifter; simplified front frame; additional variable horsepower (VHP) models, and the largest machine yet produced (780A). Although part of Volvo CE, the machines retained their Champion brand, but the biggest cosmetic change was painting the complete cab industry standard grey.

It was about this time that the Technical Publications Department moved physically to another part of the Maitland Road main office building. The Information Systems section was expanding and needed the room we currently occupied. So we settled in an extension to General Engineering – actually the area that used to be by the entire Engineering Department when I first joined Champion in 1976. It was a snug fit, but the four employees settled in alongside other engineers and product designers. However, one of the designers, Gordon “Lox” Adams, was prone to much talking with a booming voice. This tended to disturb the peace to such an extent that following some complaints from Bruce Page, Ray said surreptitiously that. “It looks like I’ll have to send Lox a creative e-mail.” Implying that it would be best all round for Lox to keep his talking to a minimum. The ruse worked and a more conducive atmosphere came about.

There were more ‘fireworks’ later when Ray locked horns with the new general service manager, Gerry Bender. During one dispute, Ray blatantly said to Gerry’s face, “Come on, now. Let’s get with it!” Ray’s forthrightness also caused some friction with Predrag Romano, one of the salespeople. Predrag originated from a part of what was Yugoslavia and which at the time was embroiled in a bitter civil war. At a meeting between the two men, Ray made a remark – albeit jokingly – about the devastation in the war-torn country. Predrag retorted, “You have a poor sense of humour, my friend.”, and promptly walked out leaving Ray bewildered. Ray said, “You’d think he came from that country.” I said, “He does.”, much to Ray’s discomfort and who then sheepishly mentioned, “Boy, I owe him a big sorry.” The apology was promptly given.

Summer trips

With the onset of summer and warmer weather, we set our sights on more travelling – one trip within Canada and another to the New England states of the northeastern U.S.A. The most southerly populated part of Canada is Pelee Island in Lake Erie and it is accessed by toll ferries

from the lake ports of Kingsville and Leamington. The Leamington ferry service runs from early spring to August and we reserved a passage for June 8th, 1997. Driving directly from Goderich to Leamington, we arrived in time to take our place on the *MV Pelee Islander*, one of the two ferry boats that carried both passengers and vehicles. Pelee Island has a network of rural roads, and we needed our car to take us to our accommodation and also to explore the island.

Even under ideal conditions, the voyage could take up to two hours to the West Dock of Pelee Island. Now, I'm not the best sailor and motion sickness comes quickly. Fortunately, the weather was calm but, on the negative side, the boat had recently been overhauled and painted. The combined smell of fresh paint and diesel engine fumes did not go down well with me and I had to find refuge inside. Although I didn't throw up during the passage, it was a near thing and I was much relieved as we approached the dock on the island.

Pelee Island has a year round resident population which swells considerably during the summer months as vacationers visit the many cottages, and casual visitors attend events at the Pelee Island Winery pavilion. One of my colleagues in the General Engineering Department, Sue Huff, and her husband travelled to a cottage on the island every year. It is also popular with recreational bicyclists, who are seen pouring off the ferry boat with their touring cycles to ride around the paved roads that are mostly free from motorised traffic. We had booked a reservation in the only substantial hotel which was called "The Tin Goose Inn." This rustic structure also had a licenced restaurant called "Gooseberries."

The next day was spent touring around the island at a leisurely pace. Pelee Island Winery has extensive vineyards and a tourist pavilion on the island. The winery, itself, is located in Kingsville on the mainland, but wine related events such as tours and tastings are held in the pavilion. The island has many sandy beaches; mostly unspoilt and deserted. One such beach at Fish Point attracted us for its serenity. However, to reach the sandy beach, we had to navigate through some dense brush and, in my haste, my foot became entangled in some brambles near the water's edge. I overbalanced and fell into the shallows of the lake; luckily holding my camera aloft to prevent it from being submerged. A close call!

We wanted to visit the Pelee Island lighthouse, but the road surface deteriorated into a muddy track and, with recent flash floods, actually made the way impassable, so we gave up and headed to Scudder, the other port on the island. This was less developed than West Dock although it did have a modern marina and was served by the ferries. After circumnavigating the island's perimeter road, we stopped at the West Dock to await the arrival of the ferry boat for our return voyage. Soon the shape of the *MV Jiimaan*, the second and larger boat hove to and disgorged its passengers and vehicles. There were quite a lot of cyclists on board; indicating the popularity of the recreation on the island. The smooth lake surface and larger vessel ensured a sickness-free journey back to the mainland and we stayed overnight in a Leamington motel.

The motel was substandard and the proprietors didn't honour an advertised discount that irritated us, but there was little recourse in the matter. Before driving home, we diverted to Point Pelee National Park and enjoyed a hike along the nature trails and boardwalk, as well as to the very end of the sand spit of land. By the time we arrived home, the mud-bespattered Mustang looked as if it had been driven on the East African Safari, but it had been three glorious days and we had explored yet another part of Canada.

Towards the end of June, Aunt Marion and her adopted son, Nicholas, from London, England, were visiting my cousin, Don Jr. One hot afternoon, Don and Claire's family consisting of: Aunt Kath; Don; Claire; Brent (son); Shannon (daughter); Brad (son-in-law); Paige (granddaughter); Evan (grandson); Aunt Marion; Nicholas; Monica and myself congregated in the back garden. It was the first time since we had seen Aunt Marion and Nicholas since 1980, and the occasion made for a pleasant family reunion.

The company's three week summer shutdown period began on July 14th, 1997, but we didn't embark on a planned trip to the New England states until the end of the first week. The final destination was Cape Cod, Massachusetts, with stops *en route* at certain tourist attractions. The journey took us over the Queenston Heights Bridge to the border crossing and Lewiston, New York. State road No. 104 is a rural road leading to the city of Rochester where we stayed overnight. There was some excitement the following morning when the hotel's fire alarms were activated. We had only just finished breakfast and returned to our room when, at the prompting of the hotel staff, all fire doors were closed and every guest was evacuated from the building to the neighbouring car park assembly point. Soon the fire brigade (Fire Department) trucks arrived with blaring sirens and flashing lights, and the white helmeted fire chief quickly mustered his crew before assessing the situation. After some tense moments, a false alarm was announced and all the guests returned to the hotel building.

The delay caused by the fire emergency meant that we checked out late from the hotel. To make up time getting to our next stopover, we travelled on the New York State Thruway (I-90), bypassing Syracuse, through Utica and on to Schenectady and Troy; then taking state road Nos. 7 and 2, crossing the New York/Massachusetts state line to U.S. Hwy. 7. The hotel was nestled in the Berkshire Hills – an area of scenic beauty familiarly known as “the Berkshires” – and just north of Pittsfield. There were two important tourist attractions in the area: the Hancock Shaker Village and the Norman Rockwell Museum.

Next day, the weather was kind to us with a blue sky and a few white, fluffy clouds; ideal for walking around the Hancock Shaker Village located on U.S. Hwy. 20 just west of Pittsfield. Similar to the Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill in Kentucky, buildings and artifacts of the religious sect had been preserved as a ‘living museum.’ So, with prior knowledge of the Shaker way of life, we visited the typical accommodation or Family House, a sturdy five-storey brick building. Nearby was another Shaker practical innovation – the round barn. In this three-storey stone structure, the main floor is used by dairy cattle stabled in stalls that face inwards to a central hay repository supplied from wagons at the upper level. The basement is for manure collected through trap doors on the main floor. Other museum buildings exhibited workshops for the construction of Shaker furniture and boxes; the art of which was explained by costumed interpreters. The old meeting house was a simple wooden building used for religious worship.

We didn't expect the Norman Rockwell Museum to be extensive, but it covered a large area; not just the studio, but several other buildings associated with the enterprise. This popular museum located just outside Stockbridge, contains hundreds of artifacts – including original pieces of art – belonging to the famous American painter. Of note were his well known “Four Freedoms” canvases, and many of the recognisable Saturday Evening Post cover commissions. Rockwell's studio is frozen in time as if the artist were still there in person. The building had been transported from its original site in downtown Stockbridge to become the

focal point of the complex. In the visitor centre and gift shop, selling reproduction prints was a brisk business. Outside in the well-manicured grounds, we sat in a rest area and indulged in a picnic lunch before leaving on the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90) for the city of Worcester.

After a couple of sunny days, the weather deteriorated and we had to contend with rain showers and leaden skies. However, the journey to Bourne just across the Intracoastal Waterway on Cape Cod was relatively straightforward taking state road No. 146 to Providence, Rhode Island, and Interstate highway I-195 to New Bedford back in Massachusetts. At New Bedford, we stopped for lunch at an Irish pub and watched the rain fall through the large, open front windows. Then made our way to the New Bedford Whaling Museum. This extensive museum told the story of whaling and the industry's history in the Massachusetts' south coast region. Whale skeletons, a fully rigged replica whaling boat, and a huge collection of scrimshaw (carved whalebone) were some of the gallery exhibits housed in several buildings overlooking the historic New Bedford harbour. Much of the neighbourhood remained as it was over one hundred years ago.

Continuing on Interstate highway I-195 and state road No. 25 to Buzzards Bay, the road crossed the Intracoastal Waterway onto Cape Cod and, at a large roundabout (traffic circle), we turned off to our hotel. The day's miserable and rainy weather gave way to a beautiful evening and the hotel's receptionist insisted that we eat at "Seafood Sam's", a restaurant in nearby Sandwich. We were certainly not disappointed at this 'spit and sawdust' diner that specialised in local seafood cuisine. After waiting in line for a freshly cooked, deep-fried supper, we sat by a picture window and relished in the food while gazing out onto a glorious golden sunset.

The picturesque sunset, however, belied the complete weather turnaround on the following day. We were aware of Hurricane Danny as it progressed from its origins in the Gulf of Mexico and tracked across the Southern U.S.A. towards the Northeastern states. Cape Cod was right in its path and it was forecasted to be only strong winds of tropical cyclone strength, but as we made an exploratory trip to the south of the cape, the full force of the storm caught up with us at Hyannis. The gales and torrential rain made it virtually impossible to drive as the car was rocked about and the wipers couldn't cope clearing the windscreen (windshield). We parked on the main street in order to find a bank and, wearing only light waterproof ponchos as rain protection, it was a struggle bracing against the wind when walking to the bank building. Following that errand, we looked around for a bite to eat and discovered a unique restaurant. It was called "The Roadkill Café" with the slogan 'You kill it ... We grill it!' The menu was a work of art and some of the food items very descriptive. Examples being – Road Toad à la Mode "Croaked for the last Time!"; Rigor Mortis Tortoise "Breaking the shell was never so fun!", and Lamb Bam Wham "Hit on the Run." After lunch in the basic, rustic surroundings and with little else to do in the inclement weather, we returned to the hotel and wrote postcards.

Hurricane Danny fully dissipated out in the North Atlantic Ocean and calm and sunny weather returned to Cape Cod. A short drive along state road No. 28 took us to Woods Hole, a community that is the site of several marine science institutions, including Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI), and the terminus for the ferry route between Cape Cod and the island of Martha's Vineyard. We had hoped to visit the WHOI research laboratories, but as it was a Saturday the WHOI was closed to visitors. Another disap-

pointment was not being able to visit Martha's Vineyard. This was due to busy ferries and an intermittent schedule as the Steamship Authority company was regrouping from the suspended service of the previous day caused by the tropical cyclone.

Time was not on our side so we continued to explore the region and noted the Nobska Lighthouse – one of several lighthouses on Cape Cod – and the Woods Hole Marina that was full of expensive boats. Continuing along state road No. 28 towards our destination of Provincetown at the extreme tip of Cape Cod, we passed through several communities with English sounding names, such as: East Falmouth; West Yarmouth; Harwich Port, and Chatham Port. Joining U.S. Hwy. 6 near Orleans, the road followed the Cape Cod National Seashore with its remarkable maritime scenery. A short stop at Cape Race encouraged us to walk along the trails through low-lying scrub and sand dunes next to the booming surf of the Atlantic Ocean. A short while later we entered Provincetown.

The small town – also known as “P-town” – becomes a hive of activity during the summer months as holidaymakers flock there and swell the population to something like twenty-times its normal size. The popular beaches and the town's reputation as both an artists' haven and an LGBT (Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender) commune are much to do with P-town's visitor explosion. Indeed, along the main street one could see same-sex couples quite blatantly walking hand in hand. P-town also had a thriving fishing industry, and its association as being the first landfall of the Pilgrims in 1620 is commemorated by the Pilgrim Monument, a campanile tower (252 ft. [77 m]) in the Provincetown Historic District. The nearby Highland Light (or Cape Cod Light) is the cape's oldest and highest lighthouse, and was in a remarkably good state of preservation. Because of the sea's encroachment, the entire lighthouse had been physically moved the previous year. We then returned to our hotel in readiness to continue our journey to the Greater Boston Area.

Our Greater Boston Area hotel for a few days was located in Wakefield, a small community north of the city of Boston and within reach of several historic New England attractions. Leaving Cape Cod using U.S. Hwy. 6 to state road No. 3 we drove to Plymouth and its association with the Pilgrims who established a colony there in 1620. We had last visited Plymouth in 1975 (see Chapter 7) when living in Longueuil, but took time to revisit the full-size replica of the *Mayflower*, the ship that brought the Pilgrims to the New World, and Plymouth Rock. While walking around the historic downtown we saw the elegant façade of the Mayflower Society headquarters, and for lunch at “The Roadkill Café”; another of the restaurant chain; although this particular diner didn't have the same atmosphere as the one in Hyannis. Not far away was “Cranberry World”, an interpretive centre created by the Ocean Spray Company, makers of fruit juices and similar products. We were educated into the nature of the local cranberry bogs as well as the fruit itself. Then the manufacturing process in which each cranberry must pass a test of being bounced seven times before being accepted. Whenever we see cranberries on a menu, the private joke of “I wonder if they've bounced the berries” usually comes out.

From Plymouth, we drove northwards along state road No. 3 to its junction with Interstate highway I-93; then west to Interstate highway I-95, the Greater Boston Area ring road. We turned off onto state road No. 4 to Lexington – the site of the first shots fired in the American Revolutionary War on April 19th, 1775, in the so called Battles of Lexington and Concord. This event is memorialised by the Minute Man Monument, and



The Berkshire Hills near the New York/Massachusetts State Line, July, 1997.



The Sturdy Brick-built Family House in the Hancock Shaker Village, Massachusetts, July, 1997.



The Unique Round Stone Barn in the Hancock Shaker Village, Massachusetts, July, 1997.



The Norman Rockwell Studio, Part of the Norman Rockwell Museum, Stockbridge, MA, July, 1997.



Old Wooden Houses, New Bedford Historic District, New Bedford, Massachusetts, July, 1997.



The Nobska Lighthouse at Woods Hole, Cape Cod, Massachusetts, July, 1997.



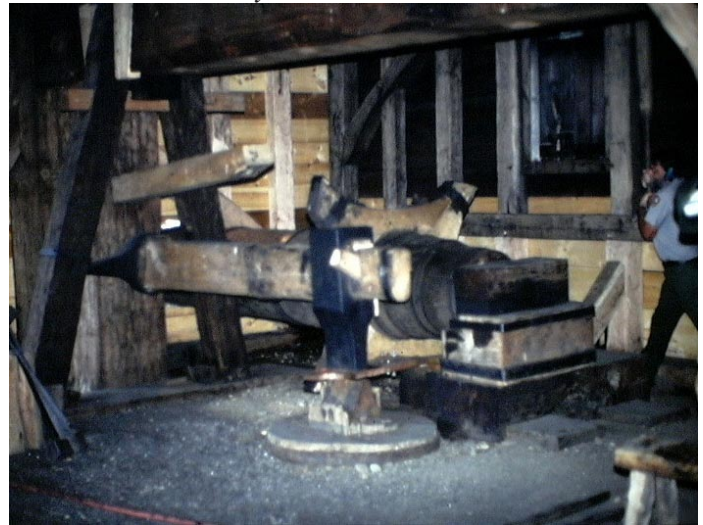
Cape Cod National Seashore near Provincetown, Massachusetts, July, 1997.



Headquarters of the Mayflower Society, Plymouth, Massachusetts, July, 1997.



General View of the Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site, Saugus, Massachusetts, July, 1997.



Interior of the Hammermill at the Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site, Saugus, MA, July, 1997.



The Salem Maritime National Historic Site Custom House, Salem, Massachusetts, July, 1997.



Weaving Looms in the Boott Mills, Lowell National Historic Site, Lowell, Massachusetts, July, 1997.

nearby is the original Buckman Tavern, a rallying point for the revolutionary forces. Returning to Interstate highway I-95, we continued to our hotel in Wakefield.

Not far from Wakefield is the Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site. This tourist attraction represents the cradle of the North American iron industry that operated between 1646 and approximately 1670. It includes the reconstructed blast furnace; forge; rolling mill; shear; slitter, and a quarter-ton drop hammer. Although the first iron works was opened a year earlier in what is now Quincy, Massachusetts, it soon failed and, after a change of management, a new facility was established at Saugus where local raw materials and water power made all the difference. Despite an overcast day, we enjoyed a self-guided tour that included viewing the rudimentary blast furnaces and the huge water wheels used to power the massive drop hammers. Much of this was reminiscent of our visits to Ironbridge in Shropshire, England, in May, 1993, and March, 1995, (see Chapter 11) as the basic iron-making technology was virtually the same.

From Saugus, our next destination was Salem, the Massachusetts seaport well known for its 17th century witchcraft trials. The journey was somewhat convoluted and took us through the city of Lynn. This community has a colourful history of its own and, because of its reputation for high crime, this taunting rhyme about Lynn is known throughout Eastern Massachusetts – “Lynn, Lynn, the city of sin, you’ll never come out the way you went in, what looks like gold is really tin, the girls say ‘no’ but they’ll give in, Lynn, Lynn, the city of sin”. Certainly navigating through a maze of streets in Lynn confirmed at least one part of the rhyme.

After arriving in Salem, we strolled up and down Derby Street on the waterfront. The Salem Maritime National Historic Site consists of a concentration of visitor attractions such as the House of the Seven Gables; Derby House; Derby Wharf, and the Salem Custom House. Tourism related to the witchcraft trials was big business, and many aspects of the city’s culture had a connection with its grisly past. In the late 17th century days of extreme Puritanism, anything smacking of the occult was considered reprehensible, and a frenzy over perceived acts of witchcraft practiced by certain women in the community brought about ‘kangaroo courts’ and summary executions.

We met a couple of uniformed men, who may have been police officers, and enquired about recommended restaurants in the area. It was interesting listening to their distinct New England accent with its ‘swallowed’ R-sounds and emphasis on different syllables – for example: we would say PEA-body and CONCORD for nearby city names. In the local twang, these changed to Pea-BOD-y and CON-c’d. Another feature is the use of the word, ‘wicked’, as an adjectival modifier. One of the men actually recited the Lynn rhyme after I mentioned that driving through the city was not easy. They also suggested a meal at “Victoria Station”, a restaurant specialising in regional cuisine. We found the restaurant and ate a very nice dinner on the open deck overlooking Derby Wharf and a marina.

The final historic site in the area we visited was the Lowell National Historic Park. This attraction was located in the city of Lowell, an important textile manufacturing community during the Industrial Revolution of the early 19th century. There a number of separate sites and one of the best preserved is the complex known as the Boott Mills, established by entrepreneur, Kirk Boott. These cotton mills could be reached by

riding on a fully functioning vintage electric trolley car. The buildings were in excellent condition and contained all the trappings of a working cotton mill, including the water turbine wheel used as the motive power source. A guided tour took us over part of the huge complex which contained hundreds of weaving machines. At one point we were required to wear hearing protection as we entered one of the cavernous halls filled with working looms that were powered by belts connected to pulleys on the overhead line drive shaft. Daily life for the mill girls, who lodged in purpose built dormitories, was also described by the guide.

It was now rime to consider the return journey. From Wakefield we took Interstate highway I-95 south to state road No. 2 and the site of the first official skirmish of the so called Battles of Lexington and Concord. Although the initial arbitrary shots of the American Revolutionary War were fired at Lexington on April 19th, 1775, the first officially ordered musket volley from the American militia took place on the Old North Bridge in Concord soon after. This action prevented British soldiers capturing and destroying the American militia's arms stores. The skirmish caused several British fatalities and forced a strategic withdrawal. Located near the Old North Bridge is the Minute Man statue inscribed with Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Concord Hymn" written in 1837.

The rest of the day's lengthy journey, terminating in Longueuil, Québec, meant heading north to the Massachusetts/New Hampshire state line. State road No. 12 passed through Keene and followed the Connecticut River to a scenic portion that included the picturesque four-span Windsor-Cornish covered bridge, which is the longest in the U.S.A. After connecting with Interstate highway I-89 near Lebanon and the New Hampshire/Vermont state line, the drive continued past Burlington to state road No. 78 and U.S. Hwy. 2; then the familiar border crossing at Champlain, New York. Interstate highway I-87 changed to Route 15 in Québec and took us directly to our hotel, the Ramada Inn (previously the Holiday Inn), in Longueuil.

The hotel room overlooked the St. Lawrence River, and the scene was reminiscent of the view from our 1509-385 Place de la Louisiane, apartment window back in 1974 (see Chapter 7). Although the following day's weather was dull, we took time to walk around parts of the old neighbourhood including a saunter along Rue St-Charles with its Mediæval stone houses. We also made a point of visiting St. Mark's Anglican Church where we were married twenty-three years previously. It was then time to leave Longueuil and travel along Route 20 and the fast multi-lane Hwy. 401 in Ontario as far as the city of Brockville. The Best Western hotel there turned out to be very substandard, but we endured it just for the one night. The bright spot, though, was our evening meal at a fine dining restaurant called "Pippins" operated by a couple of effeminate men. Great dining atmosphere in an old stone house in downtown Brockville. The vacation ended with the drive home along Hwy. 401 and Hwy. 8.

Events during the latter part of 1997

Volvo's presence at work was gradually being implemented. Outside the Maitland Road plant and main office building, three Volvo flags became a *de rigueur* fixture. In August, the first Swedish employee settled in the office. Carl Skoglund, a corporate financial analyst from Volvo CE, Eskilstuna, was hired in the Accounting Department. At that time Ray remarked, "It looks like they've already started sending in their spies." Carl was a very nice chap and spoke perfect English.

Meanwhile, the unprofitable subsidiary manufacturer of truck-mounted highway snowploughs (snowplows), Frink Canada, bought by Sequoia Associates Inc. in January, 1995, was sold to Viking-Cives Ltd., a company that designs, manufactures and distributes a complete line of municipal snow and ice control equipment. The SuperPac range of self-propelled road rollers continued to be manufactured at the Cambridge plant and there was a slight expansion including new hires.

On the Labour Day weekend we decided to visit the Backus Heritage Conservation Area just north of the Lake Erie communities of Port Rowan and Long Point. The conservation area includes campsites and activities for outdoor enthusiasts, and Backus Heritage Village that contains 15 historic buildings. Dominating the village is the 1798 Backhouse Grist Mill National Historic Site that survives as a unique example of early milling technology. The functioning mill continues to grind flour as it was done 200 years ago. Additional to the heritage museum is the annual re-enactment of action in the War of 1812. Costumed soldiers, mercenaries, Native Indians and civilians encamp and prepare for battle, which includes musket and cannon firing in a realistic, accurate and well-orchestrated military engagement. Visitors can also mingle with and talk to the civilians and tradespeople about aspects of 18th century Upper Canada life they are reliving.

The fall of 1997 was a busy one for the SAE Southwestern Ontario Section with three major events. In September and November, dinner meetings with guest speakers were held at “The Black Angus” steakhouse, London, Ontario. The October bus and truck technology meeting consisted of a plant tour of Thomas Built Buses Inc. at Woodstock, Ontario. John Acres continued as the chair for the 1997-1998 section year.

As usual, my hobby business was busy producing the Section’s newsletter, which would be recognised with two SAE Section Publication awards – Special Recognition in Feature Articles and Design and Layout. I also produced a string of small jobs and started a business relationship with William “Bill” Barlow Sr., ghost writing Bill’s new book, “Goderich: Link to the Past”, describing some of the town’s old industries.

Another business trip to Charlotte, North Carolina, was scheduled for September following the usual travel and accommodation arrangements. By this time I had been totally accepted by the employees there and enjoyed a “buddy” type relationship. Two of the chaps, Jeff McKee and Leonard DeFoggi, were particularly good to me and suggested that one evening we should all meet at a ‘gentlemen’s establishment’ called “The Paper Doll.” Following their directions I found the place and paid my requisite cover charge to enter the dimly-lit building. In the gloom, it was difficult to identify people, but I found my friends in an unusual way. Some of the strategic lighting used ultraviolet lamps – emphasising anything white in nature, which included Jeff’s and Leonard’s T-shirt “Champion Road Machinery” logo embroidered in white thread. With a beer in our hands it wasn’t long before the ‘bump and grind’ music started and the spotlights focused on a scantily-clad female form on the stage. She gradually peeled off the remainder of her clothes and finally posed statuesque-like, naked except for a minute sequined G-string. This was not my only visit to “The Paper Doll.”

The weather on the Thanksgiving Day weekend was glorious and enticed us out for a drive through the countryside to admire the fall colours. A well-beaten track that we had previously followed was to the Beaver Valley in Grey County. The meandering drive on a cloudless day passed through three counties to

the village of Kimberley and the beginning of the scenic road to Thornbury that follows the Beaver River. At one point before the road descends into the Beaver Valley, there's an unbroken view of the surrounding hillsides. Although a little too early to see the full magnificence of the changing leaves, some of the maple tree foliage had already turned, setting the stage for yet another blaze of colour. On the return journey, we stopped on the roadside to pick a few wild bulrushes (cat's tails) and other autumn flowers and added them to a couple of pumpkin shells as a floral ornament outside our front door.

Our good friends in Coventry, Roger and Susan Moore, kept us informed of their yearly activities, which included renovation work to both the house and Roger's aging Wolseley 4/44 car. The family's automobile collection had changed during the year as Susan now drove a Vauxhall Astra instead of the VW Polo, and Lindsey had exchanged her older Talbot Horizon for a Peugeot 205. Then there was Roger's classic MG TF sports car that he was jealously possessing, but proudly exhibiting at various functions. Both children were doing exceptionally well. After finishing his one year placement at Redland Technology in Horsham, Sussex, Stephen returned to Portsmouth University for his final year of study. Lindsey's four months working at a family-run hotel near Munich, Germany, was equally successful and she returned with a glowing reference. This benefited her application for the six month contract at the Château Lake Louise resort hotel near Banff, Alberta, Canada, that began in July. Already she had been asked to return on a future similar contract, and suggested that Stephen, who had expressed an interest in travelling a little after graduation, should also apply for a similar posting.

The remainder of the year drifted by and both my 52nd birthday and Christmas were celebrated at home. At work, there was an atmosphere of cautious optimism as the new Series V range of motor graders was gaining acceptance, together with the general assimilation into Volvo CE. Projections of a weak export market in the following year were a little unnerving. However, there was still a measure of confidence from senior management and, with a healthy backlog of orders, Champion's fortunes were still riding high.

A slow start to the new year

The penultimate year to the 21st century didn't produce anything particularly exciting during the weeks leading up to the middle of April. Winter weather conditions were typical and February was remarkably cold, contributing to many fantastic ice formations at the lakeshore. These proved to be very photogenic and enticed us down to the shoreline on a sunny day for a closer view.

At work, Volvo CE was continuing to expand. In February, a letter of intent was signed between Volvo CE and the Construction Equipment Division of Samsung Heavy Industries, based in Seoul, South Korea, which allowed Volvo CE to acquire the business and manufacturing assets of this entity of the Samsung corporation. The acquisition made Volvo CE the world's third largest construction equipment manufacturer, behind Caterpillar and Hitachi. A new Volvo CE company was set up in the Far East to be headed by Mr. Bengt Ovlinger, current president and CEO of Volvo CE. His position was taken over in May by Mr. Tryggve Sthen, executive vice president. Both gentlemen were well known to Champion employees. Other significant news was the dramatic turnaround of sales at SuperPac during 1997. The Cambridge facility's record year far exceeded the total sales of 1996; itself a banner year.



Monica Standing on the Old North Bridge, Concord, Massachusetts, August, 1997.



The Windsor-Cornish Covered Bridge. Longest in the U.S.A., New Hampshire, August, 1997.



Old Stone Houses on Rue St-Charles, Longueuil, Québec, September, 1997.



War of 1812 Re-enactment at the Backus Heritage Conservation Area, Ontario, September, 1997.



Barry at Champion Road Machinery Inc., Charlotte, North Carolina, September, 1997.



Fall Colours in the Beaver Valley near Kimberley, Ontario, October, 1997.



Monica and Flowering Azaleas Outside the North Carolina Welcome Centre, Tennessee, April, 1998.



Monica on the Boardwalk Trail of the Congaree Swamp National Monument, SC, April, 1998.



Old Market Building in the Historic Downtown of Charleston, South Carolina, April, 1998.



The "Three Sisters", Houses in an Affluent Part of Charleston, South Carolina, April, 1998.



Broad Street and the Spire of St. Matthew's Church, Charleston, South Carolina, April, 1998.



Large Mansions in the Battery Park Neighbourhood, Charleston, South Carolina, April, 1998.

Springtime in the Carolinas

Having spent a business trip to Charlotte, North Carolina, in the spring, I knew it would be good to further explore the area after a long, cold winter in Ontario. So in April we set our sights on a vacation to the Carolinas and booked the appropriate hotels to and from Savannah, Georgia. The route was a familiar one as we entered the U.S.A. at the Sarnia/Port Huron border crossing and headed south on Interstate highway I-94 towards Detroit. Connecting with Interstate highway I-75, the route to Florida, we progressed through Michigan, Ohio and Kentucky to Knoxville, Tennessee. By this time, the bleakness of the northern latitudes had given way to more temperate climates, and blossoming Eastern Redbuds became more evident as we headed east on Interstate highway I-40. Just before the Tennessee/North Carolina state line, a welcome centre provides visitors with information and a comfort stop set among a profusion of colourful Azaleas and Rhododendrons. Interstate highway I-40 then winds through a picturesque part of the Great Smoky Mountains, bypasses Asheville and meets Interstate highway I-77 at Statesville. Heading south on Interstate highway I-77, we stopped and checked in at the Country Inns and Suites in Charlotte.

The following day was very busy. First, it was necessary to visit the Champion plant and meet everyone. After entering the office building, we were greeted by both Pam Abernathy and Trisha Shaw; then Gary Abernathy and the rest of the engineering/purchasing crew. A brief tour of the factory showed Monica how the product was made and she also met the shop floor workers.

Charleston, the second largest city in South Carolina, was the destination at the end of the day, so we left Charlotte and travelled on Interstate highway I-77 south to Columbia. According to the AAA travel brochure, one of the places of natural beauty to explore in the area was the Congaree Swamp National Monument. Reaching it meant leaving Interstate highway I-77 and following state road No. 48 to the park. There were a variety of trails to choose from, but because of time restrictions we concentrated on the boardwalk loop section. The 2.4 mile (3.8 km) boardwalk started high on a bluff and descended into the old-growth hardwood forest that contained many species of trees including bald cypress; tupelo; loblolly pines; oaks; maples, and holly. After the hike, we continued along state road No. 48 to U.S. Hwy. 601, then south to Interstate highway I-26 into Charleston where we found our downtown hotel and settled in for a few days.

The downtown location was ideal as Charleston was a city best explored on foot. Dating back to 1670 and, therefore, one of the earliest North American colonial settlements, the city has seen many historic incidents and influenced by several different cultures, including Southern U.S., English, French and Caribbean. Largely rebuilt after the devastation caused by General Sherman's "March to the Sea" during the American Civil War, the local architecture is unique. Substantial stone public buildings such as the Old Market and St. Phillip's church are significant landmarks. Domestic architecture in the French Quarter, for example, is described as "single" and "double" houses. Vernacular features are porched entrances, shuttered windows and elaborate verandas or balconies. Finely crafted wrought ironwork is another characteristic, and gates set into walled properties exhibit much of this art form. Often three storeys high, the more affluent houses such as the "Three Sisters" stand out in rich neighbourhoods. Broad Street with the 'wedding cake' spire of St. Matthew's church is lined with palm trees and a favourite route for tourist calèches. Inside St. Matthew's church are beautiful stained glass windows and fine carved woodwork.

Much of the following day was spent visiting the Patriot's Point Naval and Maritime Museum, and the decommissioned aircraft carrier, *USS Yorktown*, which is classified as a National Historic Landmark. Of all the naval ships I have ever visited, I had yet to go aboard an aircraft carrier; so this was a good opportunity. Although a medium size aircraft carrier that had seen action in the WWII Pacific conflict, once on board it appeared an enormous vessel. There were conducted tours and visitors were shown most parts of the ship including the engine room; vast onboard hangars; crew's quarters; command centre with the bridge and communications room, and the entire flight deck. Several vintage carrier-borne aircraft served as static displays. We also decided to have lunch on board as one of the attractions was to experience a typical crew meal in the messroom. Reaching the messroom was something of an ordeal as we negotiated stairs and ladders throughout the maze of floors and compartments. The basic fare of pork and beans was somewhat Spartan, but enjoyable all the same. We also learnt about the ship's involvement in the recovery of the Apollo 8 space mission capsule. I vividly remember when it happened, as my old friend Dave Cross invited me into his parents' house to see the event unfold on their television. It was considered a major news story at the time and the pinnacle of space age technology.

There was still much to explore, including Charleston's main attraction – Fort Sumter – and the nearby plantation house of Drayton Hall. Among Charleston's multifaceted culture is a thriving theatrical community, and the historic theatre building with its large balcony is another downtown landmark. The day was warm and sunny so I wore shorts. Unfortunately they contributed to a minor injury. The sidewalks in the old quarter consist of uneven paving stones and, not paying attention, I stumbled and ended up falling and scraping my unprotected bare knees. So we had to find a chemist (pharmacy) and clean the wound with an antiseptic before applying Band-Aid dressings. Following that incident, we continued walking and discovering attractive sights such as "Rainbow Row", a terrace of gaily painted houses (although not as vibrant as "Jelly Bean Row" in St. John's, Newfoundland [see Chapter 11]). Battery Park and Murray Boulevard are very affluent neighbourhoods and large mansions with sweeping verandas dominate the area. The choice views look out over the wide confluence of the Ashley and Cooper Rivers, and beyond you can see Fort Sumter National Monument.

The only way to visit Fort Sumter is by a shuttle ferry controlled by the federal government. The short voyage takes visitors to the ruins of the abandoned sea fort that saw the first action of the American Civil War. On April 12th, 1861, Confederate forces bombarded the Union held fort. After surrendering, the fort stayed in Confederate hands until September 8th, 1863, when the Union army and navy attempted to regain possession. This raid failed, but the Confederates eventually abandoned the fort when General Sherman approached on his "March to the Sea", laying waste to everything in his army's path. Inside the fort was an interpretive centre giving details of the fort's history, and visitors could wander among the ruined casements and imagine the action that took place during the two engagements.

The last attraction that we visited in the Charleston area was the antebellum house called Drayton Hall. The plantation is located just north of the city off state road No. 61 (Ashley River Road – a scenic drive). Drayton Hall, built *circa* 1738, is virtually untouched from that time and exhibits the typical Palladian architecture associated with plantation houses – an imposing two-storey Georgian style brick building with a multitude of windows and a huge portico entrance complete with a wide colonnade balcony. It commands

wide open grounds with views of the Ashley River and is surrounded by ancient live oaks draped with Spanish moss. Having never been modernised, the unfurnished house displays interior architectural details, such as the ornate fireplaces, as they appeared when the house was first built.

Savannah, Georgia, was to be our most southerly destination on this trip. The journey from Charleston was a leisurely one on U.S. Hwy. 17 to the junction with U.S. Hwy. 21, then to Beaufort where we stopped for lunch. We found a café overlooking the Intracoastal Waterway; one of the many inland channels that separate the islands on the southern Atlantic coast. After lunch we walked along a scenic promenade before resuming our drive to Savannah by way of State road No. 170 and U.S. Hwy. 17; eventually finding our hotel some way from the downtown area's 22 parklike squares, Savannah Historic District and Savannah Victorian Historic District.

Established in 1733, Savannah has had a colourful history as a strategic port city and the state capital of Georgia. Its unique town plan was designed by General James Oglethorpe. When the city unconditionally surrendered to General Sherman, whose "March to the Sea" was imminent, many of the original historic buildings were spared from destruction and, to this day, continue to line the cobblestone streets of this National Historic Landmark District.

Savannah is a walkable city, but since our hotel was some distance from the downtown core, we were obliged to drive and park somewhere close. Fortunately, the city's Visitors Center had a large car park and we were able to sneak into this free parking area. The only downside was that the location was near the railway and bus termini; always 'dodgy' places where drunks, panhandlers, drifters and other undesirables congregate. So we had to be alert at all times when walking to and from the car. Strolling around the tree-lined squares was interesting. Most had large statues in them; for example, in Chippewa Square was the monument to General James Oglethorpe, and in Madison Square was a central stone and bronze statue to Sergeant William Jasper. Many of the giant oak trees in the squares were swathed with Spanish moss that helped provide shade and coolness in the humid atmosphere. Rich merchants' mansions with elaborate entrances and signature verandas towered above the squares and side streets.

In the days when 'Cotton was King', Savannah's important port facility was busy with the warehousing and transportation of cotton bales. Slave labour was abundant and the West Indians with their Gullah accent contributed to the local amalgam of Southern U.S., English and French culture. The cotton warehouses have been preserved and are now repurposed into emporiums, offices and condominiums. These buildings were linked by bridges of the "Factors Walk", which were very similar to the elevated causeways seen at Shad Thames, London, England. An imposing terra-cotta building nearby was the old Cotton Exchange, whose massive wooden doors could tell many tales.

After a lengthy walk through the Savannah Historic District, it was time to find a restaurant for our evening meal. Just off Bay Street near the City Hall, there is a strip of eating places overlooking the busy shipping lane of the Savannah Front River. A restaurant window table view is rewarding as there is always some type of boat plying the river to look at when dining. In the dusk of the evening, a myriad lights twinkle from the tourist 'paddle steamer' boats and from the traffic crossing the Eugene Talmadge Memorial Bridge,

a unique cable-stayed structure. We chose a place to eat, but was unsuccessful in securing a window table. Unfortunately this was the beginning of a bad dining experience. The waitress, who didn't seem to be too interested in her job, failed to serve the meal as ordered. Probably because she, being from the U.S. South, couldn't fully understand our British-Canadian accent. We explained the situation, but it really wasn't fully resolved to our satisfaction. Needless to say we didn't leave a tip.

The bad dining experience started a trend that accursed us towards the end of the vacation. The Hampton Inns hotel where we were staying was really not up to the national chain's standard of cleanliness or efficiency. I was surprised that we didn't find bed bugs in the room. The breakfast catering was problematic as proper cutlery wasn't available and we had to use plastic utensils. This, together with other issues meant a justified complaint to the management. After some discussion citing the hotel chain's guarantee that if not satisfied the hotel was liable to make amends, it was agreed that we should be given one night's free accommodation as compensation.

The following day's excursion, too, had its share of irritation. The destination was Fort Pulaski National Monument, one of three Confederate forts protecting Savannah during the American Civil War. The fort is located to the east of the city and accessed on U.S. Hwy. 80 after driving through a community with the intriguing name of Thunderbolt. This massive brick and stone structure was built to withstand conventional cannonball damage. However, the attacking Union Army initiated a bombardment using shells fired from new technology artillery with rifled barrels and caused maximum damage before the garrison surrendered. The result of this engagement brought about the loss of Savannah as a strategic Confederate port and crippled the Southern war effort. After the war, the fort became a military and political prison for a short while.

The landward side of the fort is protected by a moat. Visitors cross it using a bridge and enter the fort's inner compound. Surrounding are the thick brick and stone casements surmounted by batteries of cannons. From the outside, visitors can see the signs of pockmarked damage caused by the Union shells. It was when we were standing outside for me to take a photograph of the walls that suddenly I heard Monica yell out in pain. Where she was standing, an army of huge ants started climbing up her ankle and biting as they progressed. We were quick to leave the area and brush off any remaining insects. Then we used what medical items we had in our car's First Aid kit to clean and dress the affected parts.

Having fulfilled our Carolina travel goals, it was time to make the return journey. We anticipated driving north through the heart of Georgia and into North Carolina to stay at a resort hotel in the community of Cherokee. This was located in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, a noted beauty spot and foreseen stopover. Mother Nature had other ideas.

Following usual practice, we always checked the upcoming days weather forecast on the TV. At the time we left Savannah the prognosis was not looking too good, especially where we were heading. Still, we continued to Dublin just off Interstate highway I-16 on U.S. Hwy. 441. The weather forecast indicated deteriorating conditions and obliged us to abandon any trip to the Great Smoky Mountains – it just wasn't worth it. So, as we could easily join Interstate highway I-75 at Macon, the decision was made to drive home on the old familiar route through Atlanta, Knoxville, Cincinnati, Detroit to the Port Huron/Sarnia border crossing.



The 'Island' and Flight Deck of the Aircraft Carrier USS Yorktown, Charleston, SC, April, 1998.



Fort Sumter Casements and Interior Parade Ground, Charleston, South Carolina, April, 1998.



Drayton Hall Antebellum Plantation House near Charleston, South Carolina, April, 1998.



Madison Square and Statue of Sgt. William Jasper, Savannah, Georgia, April, 1998.



"Factors Walk" and Converted Cotton Warehouses, Savannah, Georgia, April, 1998.



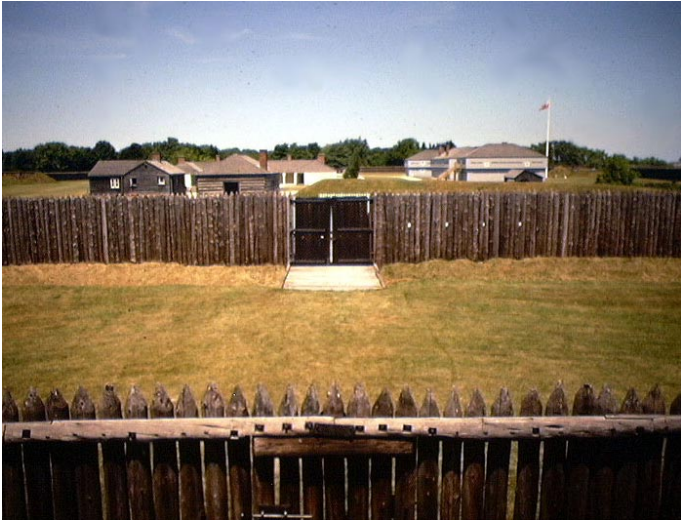
Battle Scarred Brick Walls of Fort Pulaski, Georgia, April, 1998.



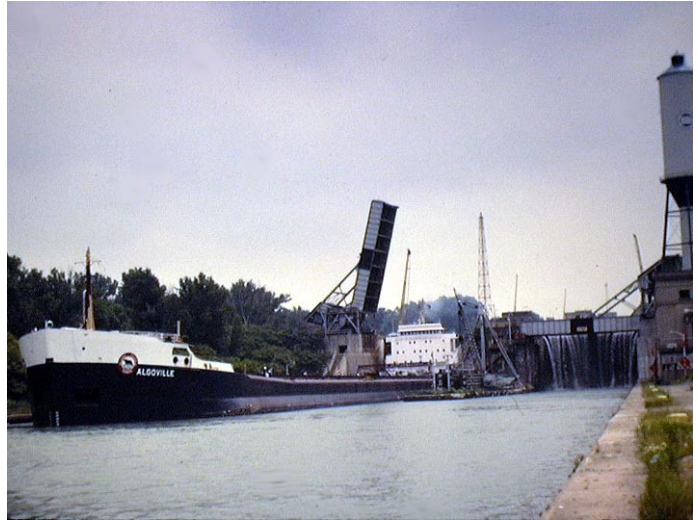
Food Station for Exotic Butterflies at the Butterfly Conservatory, Niagara Falls, Ontario, June, 1998.



Barry and Monica Outside "Brockamour Manor", Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, June, 1998.



Restored Walls and Blockhouses of Fort George, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, June, 1998.



Domestic Freighter "Algoville" Passes through Lock No. 4, Welland Canal, Thorold, Ontario, June, 1998.



Foreign Freighter "Federal Vibke" Passes through Lock No. 4, Welland Canal, Thorold, ON, June, 1998.



"Snowbirds" Precision Aerobatic Squadron Practice Routines over Goderich, Ontario, June, 1998.

Midyear activities

Upon returning from the Carolinas holiday, we were pleased to receive a letter from Roger and Susan Moore keeping us up to date with their news. Part of the letter described Lindsey's adventures in Canada. Her contract at the Château Lake Louise resort hotel near Banff, Alberta, was extended from six to seven months. Also, she was successful in applying for another work term; this time for a one-year contract, with a possible extension to two years. As Stephen anticipated graduating with his degree from Portsmouth University in the coming July, he had, with a little help from Lindsey, applied for and received an open-ended job offer from Château Lake Louise. Both siblings were to travel to Canada at the end of July. Although this meant that Roger and Susan would be alone for a long time – including Christmas, a traditional time for family gatherings – they accepted the situation and considered it a beneficial experience for their children. It was also gratifying to us knowing that Lindsey, our goddaughter, was progressing, and that her brother was broadening his horizons.

The Hessenland Country Inn was a favourite place to dine and we had become firm friends with the owners, Ernst and Christa Ihrig. The German immigrants had built up the motel and restaurant from scratch and provided a nice Continental-style hostelry within easy reach from home. Other Germanic folk in the area, including several Swiss and Austrian farming families, gravitated to the inn and we became acquainted with a number of them. Among the crowd was an entrepreneurial German couple, Uwe and Thea Wisch, who hailed from the Hamburg area. After some dabbling in farming, they moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, and built up an exclusive Bed & Breakfast enterprise called "Brockamour Manor."

At the beginning of June we stole away to Niagara-on-the-Lake and stayed a few nights at "Brockamour Manor." Before arriving, we stopped at the newly opened Butterfly Conservatory near Niagara Falls, Ontario. Operated by the Niagara Parks Commission, the Conservatory is basically a butterfly zoo containing over 2,000 specimens made up of 45 different species. The butterflies are free to fly among the lush foliage and tropical flowers in a humid rainforest setting. Before entering the glass domed conservatory, visitors watch an explanatory film in an auditorium. A self-guided walking tour allows visitors to follow a predetermined pathway past watercourses and falls to a special exhibit call the Emergence Window. Here, young butterflies leave their pupæ and take flight for the first time. Visitors are encouraged to wear bright clothes to attract the butterflies, and the various food stations also entice the insects for photographic opportunities.

Much of Niagara-on-the-Lake's attraction is its quaintness and history which we had experienced on previous visits (see Chapter 8, for example). We strolled around the community to look at the principal sights such as Fort George and the Shaw Festival Theatre. In the evenings, we took to dine at some of the town's notable gourmet restaurants – The Pillar and Post; The Queen's Landing, and The Oban Inn.

Our return journey included a side trip to watch the large freighters travel through the Welland Canal Locks at Thorold. Observation platforms allows visitors to follow the passage of domestic and foreign ships through Locks Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. Whilst there, two vessels, the *MV Algoville* and the *MV Federal Vibke* passed through the huge locks, both fully laden and heading downstream. No matter how many times we witness this operation, it never loses its fascination.

Another free show that always retains its novelty is the display performed by the “Snowbirds”, the foremost aerobatic squadron of the Canadian Armed Forces. On June 21st, 1998, the “Snowbirds” arrived at Goderich Sky Harbour Airport in their distinctive red liveried jet Tutors and were welcomed by town officials and the Celtic Blue Highlanders pipes and drums. The “Snowbirds” spent the following day practicing their routines and becoming familiar with the air space over the lake. More than once, groups of smoke emitting aircraft flew over our apartment building and offered a remarkable sight against the deep blue sky. On the day of the show, hundreds of people anticipated a fabulous event and they were not disappointed. The weather was perfect as the audience lined up on the town’s beaches and other vantage points to watch the precision aerobatic manoeuvres; many of them heart-stopping. On the following morning we watched the aircraft depart in small groups *en route* to their next show.

Newfoundland beckons once again

It had been three years since we last visited Newfoundland and Labrador (N.L.) (see Chapter 11), and we were itching to return and explore more of the province. The emphasis on this fly-and-drive vacation was on the eastern coast peninsulas. After arriving at St. John’s International Airport from Toronto, we progressed through the airport terminal to the luggage pick-up room. I retrieved my suitcase, but Monica’s bag was nowhere to be seen. We made exhaustive enquiries only to be told that some luggage from Toronto may not have accompanied the appropriate flight. However, the airline personnel would trace the errant bag and ensure that it would catch up with us somewhere on our route. So we informed them of our overnight stopovers.

The rental car company had our vehicle ready and, so as not to lose too much time, we headed west on the TCH (Hwy. 1) towards Clarenville and eventually the entrance to Terra Nova National Park, which is administered by Parks Canada and contains protected scenery and wildlife. We stayed our first night in a modest motel in Charlottetown, a fishing village just outside the park’s boundary. As there was a lack of eating places in the small community, the motel proprietor made us an evening meal of simple local fare. We also explained about the errant bag and its likelihood of delivery to the motel. It had been a long day of travelling so we welcomed any bed on which to sleep.

In the early hours of the following morning, we were roused by a loud knocking on our door. Bleary-eyed, we opened the door to be met by a man with a jolly face, who announced in a broad Newfoundland accent that he had driven his taxi from Gander International Airport (a one-way distance of 60 miles [90 km]) to deliver Monica’s ‘lost’ luggage. We were totally amazed with this service and I slipped the cab driver a small tip; something he wasn’t anticipating – true to form for N.L. hospitality where such rewards are seldom expected. As he disappeared into the black night, we returned to bed. Apparently, the proprietor had attached a note on the main door directing any courier to our motel unit.

We were now faced with an extensive drive to the first of the eastern coast peninsulas – Connaigre Peninsula – and following the “Coast of Bays” scenic route. The TCH took us through Gander to the junction with Hwy. 360 at Bishop’s Falls; then we made a southerly drive to our next two-night stay at Head of Bay d’Espoir (pronounced “Bay Despair”, but meaning ‘Bay of Hope’) on Hwy. 361.

We shared accommodation at the motel with several contractors who were working at a nearby hydro-electric scheme. After breakfast we started exploring the scenic bays as the sunny morning promised us with ideal touring weather. We had heard about the aquaculture (fish farming) activity at St. Albans at the end of the highway. There was a parking spot and lookout where the asphalt finished, and the vista provided a clear view of the coastline. Also we could see some strange objects just offshore. Our inquisitiveness was resolved when a man came over to speak to us. He said that he was involved in the aquaculture industry and that the mysterious objects in the sea were, in fact, circular pens used on the fish farm. He continued to explain the intricacies of the industry and we had quite a meaningful conversation.

From St. Albans we retraced our steps to Hwy. 360 and the next turn in the road which was Hwy. 365 leading to the community of Conne River, home of the *Miawpukek* Mi'kmaq First Nation people. Since the extermination of the Beothuk indigenous race, the Mi'kmaq tribe has been the only native people living on the island of Newfoundland, and Conne River is their Reserve. Once a year the community comes alive at the annual powwow when colourful costumes and traditional cultural activities showcase the First Nation. However, at all other times, the Reserve appears ordinary and nothing photogenic. The Mi'kmaq Discovery Centre has been constructed in recent years, but it did not exist at the time of our visit.

It was now opportune to delve deep into the actual Connaigre Peninsula. Hwy. 360 extends to the 'fingers' of the peninsula, and an offshoot, Hwy. 364, takes travellers through rugged tablelands to Seal Cove. Along the way is the pretty outport of Hermitage with the tablelands featured as a backdrop. At the terminus of Hwy. 360 is the substantial community of Harbour Breton. We stopped for lunch and viewed the town, which is built on both sides of an ocean inlet, with its white saltbox houses glinting in the sunlight. Several marker plaques described historic facts attributed to the town. One of them acknowledged "The Ballad of Mildred Baxter", based on the true story of how a deceived woman got her comeuppance with a scoundrel and set to verse by Loretta Ridgley. It's a well known piece of N.L. folklore.

Back once more on Hwy. 360, we headed to Hwy. 362 and an offshoot, Hwy. 363, to visit Belloram (pronounced Bell-OR-am), one of the N.L. outports most favoured by photographers. Its picture postcard setting – traditional fishing stages, stores and rooms; fish flakes; government wharf; saltbox houses; commanding church, and exceptional reflections in the calm harbour water are hard to beat. Only the fishing village of Salvage, Bonavista Bay, possibly ranks as the number one most photogenic outport.

The next two-night stopover was to be at Gander. However, we decided to explore the Exploits Valley area on the way from Head of Bay d'Espoir and drove the 81 miles (130 km) on Hwy. 360 to Bishop's Falls; then changed to Hwy. 350 as far as the hamlet of Northern Arm. Hwy. 352 follows the Bay of Exploits rugged coast, terminating at Fortune Harbour with its huge St. Anne's Church set high on the surrounding hillside. Retracing our way to the TCH at Bishop's Falls, it didn't take long to drive to Gander in readiness for the next stage of our vacation, which was a visit to Fogo Island.

Fogo Island is labelled "The Island Experience", and part of the overall experience is travelling to the island using the scheduled ferry services. From Gander, Hwy. 330 weaves its way through primæval forests to Gander Bay South; then we took Hwys. 331 and 335 to the ferry dock at the tiny port of

Farewell. From Farewell, the ferry runs first to Change Islands then on to Fogo Island. The crossing time to Change Islands, a distance of 3.7 miles (6 km), is 20 minutes, and the complete voyage to Fogo Island (8 miles [13 km]) takes 1 hour and 15 minutes. The island communities rely on this service so all types of vehicles are carried on the ferries.

Although the sky was overcast, at least the sea was calm and that was a good sign given my predisposition to sickness aboard ship. The ferry left its terminal and headed for Change Islands where, from an observation point we watched the activity of deckhands manoeuvring cars and trucks both on and off the vessel. After this exchange, the ferry continued to Fogo Island where we drove to the outport of Seldom-Come-By. As I was taking a photo of the harbour, a fellow came up to us and started a conversation. He was the epitome of the N.L. “bay boy.” Scruffy in general appearance, wearing a T-shirt, blue jeans and the inevitable rubber boots, this character was interesting in his own right. Evidently a man of the sea, he just wanted someone to share yarns with even though, of course, his broad dialect – which may have had vestiges of old Elizabethan English – was virtually unintelligible to us. Still we had a relatively good rapport and I photographed him sitting on the front of a wrecked car before continuing on Hwy. 333 to the town of Fogo.

The name, Fogo, is Portuguese in origin (meaning ‘fire’), but Fogo Island was settled primarily by the French and Irish. Being isolated, the population retained many of the old traits and this was apparent to visitors. A commanding view of the town of Fogo can be seen from the summit of Brimstone Head, which is a rocky promontory that we climbed. We also took away a small piece of the native igneous rock – now part of our mineral collection. The fishing industry used to be the primary source of work and income, but at the time we were there it was declining due to overfishing restrictions. Now tourism is actively encouraged and this has helped the local economy. Driving along Hwy. 334, the small outports of Barr’d Islands, Joe Batt’s Arm and Tilting introduce visitors to a world where time has stood still. Tilting, with its distinct Irish dialect, is a National Cultural Landscape District of Canada and is the first Provincial Heritage District in N.L.

We had spent a good part of the day on Fogo Island and it was time to return to the ferry dock for the voyage to Change Islands and Farewell. After the ferry arrived, most of the vehicles left the boat, but there was a problem with a large truck. As the deckhands were unable to manoeuvre it ashore it stayed on board occupying space. Embarkation was on a first-come, first-served basis so we had to wait for the ferry to return a second time before there was sufficient deck room for our car. By the time we reached Farewell, it was late and dark and we still had a 55 mile (88 km) drive to Gander. One of the scariest things on N.L. roads at night is the distinct possibility of a collision with wild moose. The moose population is large, and the animals are often present on the highways at dawn and dusk as well as some nocturnal activity. Usually any major contact between car and moose results in wrecked car and dead moose (sometimes dead driver). To compound hazards on our cautious journey, fog started to roll in from Gander Bay. Fortunately we survived the white-knuckle ride and arrived at the hotel in one piece.

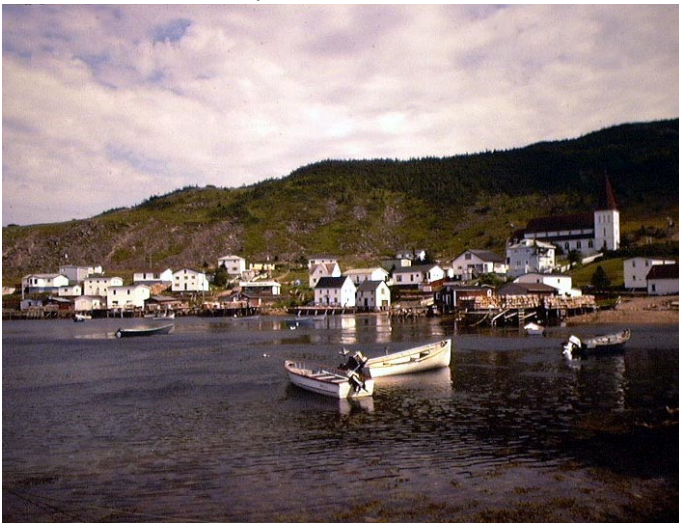
Bonavista Peninsula was the next area to explore and we set out from Gander on the TCH through Terra Nova National Park to Port Blandford, then headed east on Hwy. 233 to its junction with Hwy. 230. At Southern Bay, Hwy. 235 follows the coast and terminates at the town of Bonavista where we stopped for a quick look around. Apart from the developing National Historic Site of the Ryan



Shoreline of Bay d'Espoir with Fish Farm Pen near St. Albans, N.L., July, 1998.



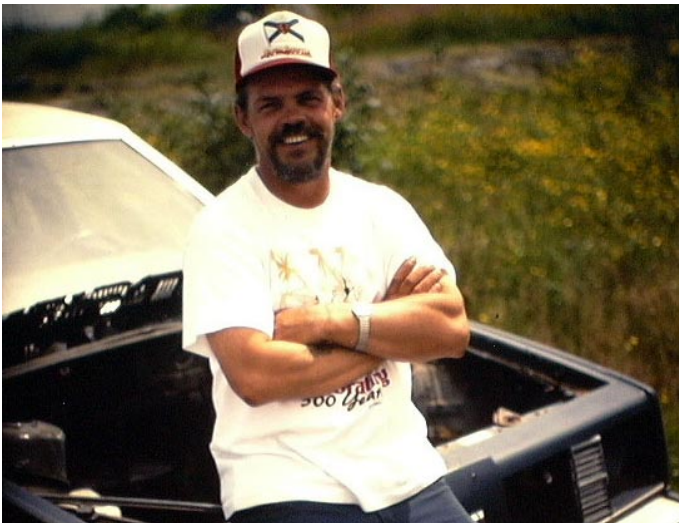
Scenic Tablelands along Hwy. 364 on the Connaigre Peninsula, N.L., July, 1998.



Belloram, One of the Most Photographed Outports in N.L., July, 1998.



Disembarking Traffic from the Ferry at the Dock of Change Islands, N.L., July, 1998.



Typical "Bay Boy", Seldom-Come-By, an Outport on Fogo Island, N.L., July, 1998.



Town of Fogo from the Summit of Brimstone Head, Fogo Island, N.L., July, 1998.



Ryan Premises National Historic Site and Replica of the "Matthew", Bonavista, N.L., July, 1998.



Monica and Barry Enjoy Lunch at the Hôtel Robert, St-Pierre, France, July, 1998.



Above Ground Cemetery Graves and Panorama of St-Pierre, France, July, 1998.



Typical Downtown Streetscape with Commercial Buildings, St-Pierre, France, July, 1998.



Wooden Storefront with Whimsical Signage, Carbonear, N.L., July, 1998.



Longliners Return to Port with the Catch of the Day, Carbonear, N.L., July, 1998.

Premises, a full-size replica of the explorer John Cabot's ship, the "Matthew", was nearing completion and we toured the vessel under construction by tradespeople using traditional shipwright skills. From Bonavista we drove south on Hwy. 238 through Elliston, known as the 'root cellar capital of the world' for the large number of these ingenious food preservers, and continued to our motel in Port Union. Unfortunately, Monica suffered from a bout of food poisoning and was laid low for a while, but the sickness eventually passed.

The next day was going to be an extensive drive from Port Union to Grand Bank on the Burin Peninsula. Taking Hwys. 230 and 230-A we reached Clarenville and continued south on the TCH to Goobies. Hwy. 210 traverses the typical 'barrens' landscape of the Burin Peninsula and, at Marystown, we stopped for a break at a Tim Hortons coffee shop. Similar to many other regions of N.L., people of the Burin Peninsula developed their own distinctive dialect. The peninsula was originally settled by various European nationalities: including English, French, Portuguese and Basque seasonal fishers. So the local 'twang' is quite an amalgam of different tongues. This was evident when two ladies, waiting in the queue behind us at Tim Hortons, were chatting to each other in a totally unintelligible dialect. It really was a joy to listen to with its singsong lilt and dropped letters. From Winterland, Hwy. 220 circles the tip of the peninsula, and the town of Grand Bank appeared out of the sea fog that had shrouded the coastline. After checking into the motel, we continued to the outport of Fortune where we bought tickets for the ferry ride to the French island of St-Pierre. When we pre-ordered the tickets by phone, we were told of a special deal available that included the return ferry trip and a one night stopover at the Hôtel Robert. We thought this was a good way to experience St-Pierre. Also, we were able to secure an early ferry crossing which added time spent on the French island.

The archipelago of St-Pierre et Miquelon belongs to France and thus falls under French jurisdiction, including customs (*Douanes*), laws, etc. The town of St-Pierre on St-Pierre Island is the principal community and terminal for the ferry service to Fortune. Our early departure started after parking the car in a secured compound and embarking all the passengers for the one hour voyage on the small vessel. The sea condition in the harbour and just offshore was calm and so my immediate fears of *mal de mer* were somewhat allayed. Nevertheless I made sure that a sickness bag was at hand. After rounding Fortune Head the sea swell became noticeably choppy and soon were beating against some considerable waves. As can be well imagined, the sickness bag was used and I was not in good shape; feeling extremely groggy and hoping for a quick arrival. After clearing the *Douanes*, we made our way to the Hôtel Robert.

Following a short rest, we set off to explore the town. We had met M. Robert, the hotel proprietor (and owner of the ferry business), and he welcomed us in true expansive Gallic fashion. He also mentioned that we were welcome to buy bread, cheese and wine from the local *dépanneur* and *magazin des alcools* and return to the hotel for lunch. This was a great idea and so we found these shops and procured a *baguette*, some *fromage* and a bottle of *vin rouge*. Buying items on St-Pierre proved interesting as the shopkeepers accepted both French and Canadian money. The cash registers were programmed to calculate costs in both currencies so we didn't need to convert our dollars into francs. Back at the hotel, we indulged in the home-made lunch with gusto.

The streets of St-Pierre are an admixture of European and North American influences. Down by the harbour, small brilliantly coloured fishing boats and huts lined the quays and shoreline. The domestic archi-

texture included features typical of the Maritime East, being simple clapboard structures. One peculiarity was the enclosed entrance porch, indicative of the harsh winter conditions. European style apartment buildings – some with stuccoed exteriors and corner stone quoins – existed in the upper part of the town. Another peculiarity was the cemetery where all the graves were above ground. In the evening we ate at a local restaurant and slept in the hotel’s Continental type *duvet* covered beds.

The next day was Sunday and we had perfect weather for walking around and admiring some of the antiquities such as Pointe aux Canons and the elaborate war memorial. One of the more imposing buildings was the cathedral with its lofty stone tower and belfry. Nearby was a public recreational area consisting mainly of an open court on which participants played a form of *bocce*. Again, we enjoyed a homemade lunch in the hotel; this time together with a crowd of locals as it seemed to be a traditional Sunday activity. All too soon, however, was the return ferry trip to Fortune – this time on much calmer seas. Unfortunately due to time constraints we were unable to visit the Provincial Seamen’s Museum in Grand Bank. This building used to be one of the pavilions at “Expo ’67”.

After our overnight stop in Marystown, more good weather encouraged us to explore Burin Bay Arm on the Hwy. 221 part of the “Heritage Run” tourist route as far as the outport of Burin. At the top of high cliffs in the area, and accessible by a rough trail, is Captain Cook’s Lookout. Its wide panorama enabled law enforcement officers to spot rum runners operating between St-Pierre and the peninsula. It was an exhausting climb, but the view was very rewarding.

Retracing our route on Hwy. 210, we joined the TCH at Goobies and headed south towards the Avalon Peninsula. At Junction 31 we drove north on Hwy. 75 to Harbour Grace and our destination of Carbonear where we stayed at the Keneally Manor Heritage Inn, a quaint Bed & Breakfast private house. In the evening we wandered along the main street looking in the windows of old wooden storefronts; then down to the government wharf as it was a hive of activity. The longliner fleet was returning with its catch, and we met a number of the local fishers. At first they were a little wary of us, but then soon started ‘yarning’ and educating us ‘come from away’ folk on the fishing industry.

Carbonear has many historical connections including the legend of an Irish princess, Sheila Na Geira, who married and reformed Gilbert Pike, a notorious English pirate, and settled in the town. It is also on the “Baccalieu Trail” tourist route that circumnavigates the peninsula between Conception Bay and Trinity Bay. Despite a dreary day, we set off on Hwy. 70 north to Bay de Verde, passing many classic outports including Ochre Pit Cove. This tiny fishing village had family connections with Monica’s old working colleague, Margaret Eadie. At Bay de Verde we saw two old codfish flakes (drying platforms) that were well preserved, and we continued to Grates Cove, but thick fog hampered our progress and we returned to Hwy 80 at Old Perlican. The next attraction was the Heart’s Content Cable Station Provincial Historic Site. We arrived at the museum building that used to be the relay station and quickly became interested in the story behind the laying of the transatlantic telegraph cable. After a few failures, the *SS Great Eastern* successfully landed the cable on July 27th, 1866. I became quickly absorbed with the museum’s original artifacts; then when I turned around to speak to Monica, I couldn’t believe my eyes. Standing behind me was one of my work colleagues, George Vollick. I said, “George, what the hell are you doing here?” George’s wife, Alma, who

also worked at Champion, was born in Green's Harbour, an outport not far away and they were visiting her hometown and relatives in N.L. We had quite a chuckle over this encounter. Continuing on Hwy. 80, we passed through communities with the romantic names of Heart's Desire and Heart's Delight and joined the TCH at Junction 28. From there it was a straight forward drive to St. John's, the N.L. provincial capital, and the Best Western Hotel on Kenmount Road.

The following day was slightly overcast, but sunny conditions were forecasted. So instead of exploring the city we elected to follow the "Killick Coast" scenic route north of St. John's towards Cape St. Francis. Leaving on Hwy. 30 the first stop was at the Ocean Sciences Centre, Logy Bay. This attraction focuses on a variety of N.L. sea creatures, including harp seals that frolicked in and out of large sea water tanks, and visitors could experience a touch tank containing small sea life that could be touched without any harm done to them. Naturalists and interpreters were on hand to answer questions and control the animals. From Logy Bay, the road continued to Outer Cove and followed the scenic route to Middle Cove with its impressive seascape.

Connecting with Hwy. 20 at Torbay, the scenic route takes a side road to the outport of Flatrock. So called because the unusual formations of flat sedimentary rocks lying at an angle towards the sea were used by early fishers to dry codfish, instead of having to construct traditional wooden fish flakes. We ended at Pouch (pronounced Pooch) Cove, one of the oldest settlements on the Avalon Peninsula, and had lunch at an unpretentious diner. The owner of the diner was an interesting man, who told us of a shipwreck that happened at the aptly named Horrid Gulch not far from Pouch Cove, and how the local men made a dramatic rescue by lowering a rope to the wreck and hauling the survivors to safety. The site of the adventure could be seen from a rugged trail along the clifftop. Following the trail we had to be particularly careful as the cliff was precipitous and one false step spelled disaster. However, with the sunny sky above and booming surf below, the hike was quite invigorating. From Pouch Cove, Hwy. 21 took us back to Torbay and eventually we reached our hotel. Of the many different restaurants in St. John's, we discovered a gem on Duckworth Street called "Classic Café" for our evening meals.

Our stay in St. John's and the Avalon Peninsula also included the opportunity to go whale watching. We headed south on Hwy. 10 to the community of Bay Bulls where two noted tour companies, O'Brien's and Gatherall's, operated. Both were well established and we opted to go on a tour organized by O'Brien's. The possibility of a close-up encounter with whales trumped my predisposition for *mal de mer*, so we cast off at the appropriate time in search of whales. From the onset, we were told that there were no guarantees of a sighting but, if nothing else, the tour would include a visit to Green Island and Gull Island in the Witless Bay Ecological Reserve; a sea-bird sanctuary which is specific to the Atlantic Puffin. As time went by, the crew entertained us with traditional N.L. songs, as well as keeping a lookout for telltale water spouts or a breaching Humpback whale. As we approached the Witless Bay Ecological Reserve no whales had been sighted and we continued to Green Island. The craggy ledges were home to thousands of sea-birds such as Kittiwakes and, of course, rich in guano (droppings), the smell of which was detectable from some distance. We then turned and headed for Gull Island on our way back to port. Here the boat stopped close so we could enjoy the sight and antics of the Atlantic Puffin colony. These little birds skimmed across the water with beakfuls of fish, past the crab fishermen who were hauling in their catch off the outport of Witless Bay.

We took in the usual sights of St. John's and, in Water Street, the main commercial thoroughfare, we visited the souvenir outlet and (then) office of "The Downhomer" magazine which we subscribed to. There we met the magazine's founding publisher, Ron Young, and he presented us with two keepsake slate coasters with "The Downhomer" logo etched in them; together with an official Water Street 'walking in the footsteps of history' certificate. This typical N.L. friendly gesture ended our vacation, but we intended to return in later years and continue our explorations of this unique Canadian province.

Changes at Champion and a quiet latter half of 1998

Champion's future was looking brighter, and the product improvements beginning in early 1997 contributed to the granting of the prestigious ISO 9001 registration certificate by the auditing agency of KPMG. This significant milestone in manufacturing and consumer confidence was marked with a company sponsored barbecue for all its employees on May 15th, 1998. Certainly Champion had attained one of Volvo's core values – quality – now that several important inspection measures, such as the so called 'Lemon List', had been instituted. Furthermore, the product appearance had been improved with a new paint process. This cosmetic change included a brighter and glossier yellow colour, and the cab industry standard grey paint was formulated differently. Additional variable horsepower (VHP) models in the V710 line of machines were introduced in late June and aimed at the contractor market.

On the other side of the coin, Volvo CE saw it prudent to divest its interest in SuperPac self-propelled road rollers and Champion Pro-Pav Series paving machines. Despite the investment costs and a marked increase in sales, these subsidiary companies were still considered by Volvo CE as being non-profitable. Both subsidiaries had new products ready to introduce and that would help when searching for prospective buyers. There was also the departure on August 10th, 1998, of president and CEO, Dennis Vollmershausen, who moved on to pursue other personal interests. Scott Hall, vice president of finance and CFO, was promoted to the CEO's position. Another new management hire was Gerry Bender as general service manager.

On August, 28th, 1998, a small flotilla of boats entered the Port of Goderich. At the vanguard was the Canadian Coastguard cutter, followed by the resident tugboats and two 'Tall Ships', the brigantines *Playfair* and *Pathfinder*, both under full sail. They stayed overnight and were open for public tours on the next day. After changing their compliment of training cadets, both brigantines left port at sunset escorted to the outer breakwalls by a number of private motor boats and yachts. It was a lovely sight from the lighthouse bluffs.

Later in the fall we heard from Roger and Susan Moore about their Canadian adventure. Both Stephen and Lindsey were working at the Château Lake Louise resort hotel near Banff, Alberta. Knowing that Roger's 60th birthday was in October, both siblings suggested to their parents that they should visit the Banff hotel and celebrate the occasion in style. After some hurried preparations, Roger and Susan flew to Calgary and continued to Banff where they were treated royally. They stayed at the Château Lake Louise, Banff Springs Hotel, met some interesting people that Lindsey had befriended and travelled with them to BC and Idaho. A flight in a private Cessna airplane and a 300 mile (483 km) drive in a borrowed car completed the unplanned vacation. Although Stephen had to return to England when his one-year contract expired, Lindsey would stay on, but Roger and Susan took solace in the fact that both children were safe among friends.



Fish Drying Flakes, Bay de Verde, N.L., July, 1998.



Transatlantic Cable Station Provincial Historic Site, Heart's Content, N.L., July, 1998.



Harp Seals at the Ocean Marine Centre Interpretive Facility, Logy Bay, N.L., July, 1998.



Characteristic Rock Formations at Flatrock, N.L., July, 1998.



Puffin Colony, Gull Island in Witless Bay Ecological Reserve, N.L., July, 1998.



Commemorative Certificate Proving I Walked on the Oldest Street in N.A., St. John's, N.L., July, 1998.



Brigantines "Playfair" and "Pathfinder" Moored at the Port of Goderich, Ontario, August, 1998.



Celebrating Barry's 25th Anniversary of Emigration, Millcroft Inn, Alton, Ontario, November, 1998.



Barry and Monica, Barry's 53rd Birthday, Goderich, Ontario, November, 1998.



Monica on her 60th Birthday, Goderich, Ontario, February, 1999.



Monica Outside the Hotel "Le Gîte-du-Mont-Albert", Gaspé Peninsula, Québec, June, 1999.



Panorama of Gaspé National Park, Mont Albert, Gaspé Peninsula, Québec, June, 1999.