

November 4th, 1998, was an important date in my life as it was the 25th anniversary of my emigration to Canada. With so much water having flowed under the bridge, we decided to make this event one to remember. We consulted the handbook of the boutique hotels in the Inns of Ontario organization and chose to stay at the Millcroft Inn located in the village of Alton near Orangeville in Caledon Township, Peel Region. The main hotel was housed in the converted old stone mill building. Nearby, an annex containing modern ‘croft’ units surrounded an outside swimming pool. Each unit consisted of a large sitting room, bathroom and an upstairs ‘loft style’ bedroom with king size bed. The sitting room was unique in that the main feature was a large, open wood burning fire. Logs for burning were kept in a shed outside the room.

On our arrival we were pleasantly greeted by Vera, a Scottish lady, and Neil, a polished front desk clerk. The features of the hotel were explained and we settled into our ‘croft’ unit knowing that the roaring log fire would complement the skiff of snow outside. The Millcroft Inn has a renowned restaurant. Several tables are located in the ‘Pod’, which is a glazed extension that overlooks the millpond and milldam waterfall. We reserved a table in the ‘Pod’ for dinner and were rewarded with a superb meal and wine served by Robyn, a waitress we became friendly with during subsequent visits to the hotel. To finish the anniversary on a high note, we toasted both the past and future with a bottle of champagne in front of the crackling log fire. Breakfast, too, was eaten in the ‘Pod’, and there was a generous selection of beverages, cereals, fruit, cheese and pastries to choose from. All in all a celebration to remember.

Volunteering activities involving the SAE Southwestern Ontario Section continued with its usual intensity throughout the year. Two extensive plant tours – RM Restorations near Chatham, Ontario, and Siemens Ltd. in London, Ontario – were extremely popular. Dinner meetings with guest speakers were held at “The Black Angus” and “The Great West Steak House” restaurants, London, Ontario, and featured many diverse engineering subjects: for example, Lean Manufacturing. Later in the fall, a product design forum and discussion was held on the campus of the University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario. There was also a change on the executive board as John Acres stepped down and Ian McKenzie became the chair for the 1998-1999 section year.

Producing the SAE Southwestern Ontario Section newsletter was standard fodder for my hobby business and continued to be the principal revenue source. However, back in October, 1997, I had received an unexpected phone call from John Cook, a past president at Champion, who had interests in a company called Bailey Metal Products Limited, Concord, Ontario. John explained that there were to be some illustration changes in the company’s sales booklet due to new and improved products. Would I be able to help? I said it would be possible, but he should bear in mind my freelancing restrictions. I was given the opportunity and submitted several illustrations according to the company’s instructions. After a few alterations, the assignments continued to flow in and, by the end of the year, I had earned quite a good income. As usual, working at a distance and communicating with phone and fax (in the days before I was connected to the Internet and e-mail) had its frustrations, particularly when the client changes its mind or expects unrealistic deadlines to be honoured. Still it was useful experience and fairly rewarding; similar to my work for Sky Harbour Aircraft Refinishing Ltd. Two ghost written chapters for Bill Barlow Sr.’s new book, “Goderich: Link to the Past”, rounded off a profitable year for Technical Authorship Services – a trend that was to continue into the next twelve months.

Beginning of a year of ups and downs

Several events in 1999 signified a year of ups and downs. Of the ups, Monica was to recognise her 60th birthday in February, her 25th anniversary of emigration in June, and we were to celebrate our Silver Wedding Anniversary in July. On the downside, the health of my stepmother, Kay, deteriorated after an accident at home. Dad, too, was not his old self and Kay's situation dealt him a huge blow. For some unknown reason, Dad requested in a letter that Monica and I should not visit him unless he requested it. We respected his decision and from that time until Dad's funeral in February, 2014, we did not attempt to travel to England. However, correspondence continued on a regular basis, and it wasn't long before a bright spot appeared in his life.

Fast forward slightly to February and, on a very cold weekend, as part of Monica's 60th birthday celebration we visited the Elora Gorge Conservation Area and stayed two nights at the Elora Mill, one of hotels in the Inns of Ontario organization. A minor adventure happened *en route* to the hotel. Driving along the highway, I noticed something not quite right with a trailer being towed behind a pickup truck that was heading towards us. The trailer was starting to 'fishtail' on the slick surface of the road. Suddenly it parted company from the truck and was literally bouncing across the road directly in our path. I quickly swerved to one side on the gravel shoulder to avoid a collision as the trailer crashed into the ditch behind us. It broke apart and revealed the contents – some startled and injured calves. The truck had stopped and a frantic man rushed to see what had happened. I got out of the car to render assistance as the beasts were wandering in a daze; some bleeding from the impact of the crash. There was a lot of concern as obviously the trailer was insufficiently secured (it appeared to be a home-made job and not too substantial), and that I might consider legal action. However, since we escaped unscathed I wasn't interested in lodging a complaint and was more concerned with the welfare of the animals. I helped round up the calves and then we continued on our way.

The Elora Mill consisted of the main building, which was the original grist mill, and an annex in a nearby side street. Unlike the main building, the annex rooms were equipped with wood burning fireplaces and, after our experience in the Millcroft Inn 'croft' units, we decided to choose one of the annex rooms. There were some minor irritations after we moved in to find no 'starter log' – a roll of combustible material used to conveniently start a fire – or matches. So room service had to supply these items. Part of the room package arrangement was for breakfast to be delivered in the morning. The meal consisted of a basket of baked goods, cereals and beverages. Unfortunately no milk for the cereals was delivered at the same time – so another complaint rectified that. The log fire was left to extinguish itself and we left the room to explore the trail along the Elora Gorge.

The Grand River flows through the gorge and, in winter, the various cataracts are frozen into fantastically shaped icicles. The trail can be used for hiking, cross-country skiing or snowshoeing and meanders 2-1/2 miles (4 km) through the Conservation Area. When we returned to the room, it was full of smoke. It seems that I hadn't reset the damper and the smoke from the smouldering fire was unable to escape up the chimney. This meant airing the room and enduring some discomfort for a while. In the evening we discovered the bistro style restaurant "Serendipity", which had a patio overlooking the Grand River. The menu included a choice of gourmet meals and the restaurant certainly lived up to its name.

From ConExpo, Las Vegas, to the Gaspé Peninsula, Québec

The international industrial trade show, ConExpo, showcases the latest construction equipment models and accessories available from the world's major manufacturers and ancillary companies. The venue for the March 23rd to 27th, 1999, ConExpo show was Las Vegas, Nevada, and Champion motor graders were displayed alongside other Volvo CE products. Of interest to me was the unveiling of the new and improved C-Series motor graders made in Charlotte, NC; knowing that my technical manuals were part of the equation. By all accounts, dealer and prospective customer reactions to the redesigned machines at the trade show were very favourable; thus assuring a healthy future for production. More refinements were made to the machines – ranging from dual crossover brake circuits and the new “creep mode” for All-Wheel-Drive (AWD) motor graders, to the introduction of the Series VI range, which will be described later.

This year I was freed from the restriction of being obliged to take my annual vacation during the company's three week summer shutdown period. So, as something of a novelty, we decided to relive a trip taken twenty-five years previously when Monica emigrated to Canada on June 14th, 1974. The same as all those years before, our destination was the Gaspé Peninsula, Québec. My French speaking ability was still somewhat rusty but given a little effort was sufficient to make ourselves understood. This came in handy later in the vacation when we had to challenge a hotel policy.

The initial part of the journey took us from home on Hwy. 8 and heading east along the fast multi-lane Hwy. 401 to Cornwall, then to the Ontario/Québec provincial border where the freeway changed to Route 20. We followed Routes 540 and 40 across the top of Montréal to the Louis-Hyppolite-Lafontaine bridge-tunnel and reconnected to Route 20 (Autoroute Jean-Lesage portion of the Trans-Canada Highway (TCH)) to Rivière-du-Loup. This is where the TCH turns south and the coast road becomes Route 132, along which we continued to Rimouski for an overnight stop. The hotel was some distance from downtown, but as it was a nice evening we strolled along the main street until we found a restaurant. The waiter was patient with my halting French and no major errors spoiled the dining experience.

Instead of rushing to the city of Gaspé, we drove slowly along the coast road and admired the scenery made more attractive by the sunny weather. At Matane we stopped at a supermarket to buy ingredients for a picnic lunch. In the deli section there was a large array of breads and cheeses to choose from and, during our deliberation, a sales clerk approached to help. My rudimentary French was such that this person reverted to speaking in very good English to assist in the transaction.

Further along the coast road we could see the huge Cap-Chat wind energy development in the distance. Several wind turbine generators of different designs dotted the hillside and we were able to have our picnic up close to them. One particular design resembling an egg beater stood out from the standard windmill type installations. At Sainte-Anne-des-Monts we changed onto Route 299 that penetrated into the Gaspé National Park and its neighbouring nature reserves; all dominated by the massive bulk of Mont Albert. In its shadow is the resort of *Le Gîte-du-Mont-Albert*; a first class hotel, built in the characteristic Québécois architectural style of steeped pitched roof and multiple dormer windows, where we stayed overnight. Before retiring, we explored a trail leading to the rapids of *Chute Sainte-Anne* and a viewing outlook of the park wilderness.

In the light of the following morning we were greeted with the awesome sight of Mont Albert still partially snow covered. Signs of spring, such as blooming lady slipper flowers, could be found in the natural landscape of the park. Retracing our way to Route 132, we then progressed through the many picturesque fishing villages towards the city of Gaspé. The Gulf of St. Lawrence widens considerably at this point and the busy sea lanes are protected by lighthouses such as at La Martre. Scenic lookouts afforded magnificent views of the coastline and communities; for example, Grande-Vallée with its dominant church. At the tip of the Gaspé Peninsula is Forillon National Park, a place of particular scenic beauty. The park is bypassed by Route 197, which we took to our hotel in Gaspé for a two night stay.

Although the Best Western was a premiere hotel, we had a number of misadventures there beginning with a malfunctioning table lamp in the room. After some painstaking negotiations with the staff, we rectified the situation. However, it was plain to see that the French speaking management wasn't very happy. Another issue arose during our stay that prompted me to challenge a corporate satisfaction policy, and that certainly didn't help the rocky relationship. The front desk clerk became quite surly, but because she was uncertain exactly how much French I understood she restrained herself when communicating with her boss.

The continuing good weather encouraged us to tour around both the city and nearby Forillon National Park. In Gaspé, local history is recorded in the *Musée de la Gaspésie*, and a huge granite cross stands as a monument to the famous French explorer and colonist, Jacques Cartier, who landed at that spot in July 24th, 1534. The city's modern wooden cathedral – *La cathédrale du Christ-Roy de Gaspé* – is the only such structure in North America, and I met an interesting gentleman there who spoke at length about the cathedral. One of the official entrances to Forillon National Park is at Penouille with its extensive beach and picnic area. We then circumnavigated the park, firstly stopping at Grande-Grave's pebble beach and fishermen's houses. Before the park was created, several fishing hamlets dotted the coastline. Following expropriation, these communities were resettled and the original buildings demolished or abandoned. The only remaining original buildings, including the Hyman Store, are now tourist attractions at the Grande-Grave National Heritage Site. A well defined trail from Grande-Grave leads to Cap-Gaspé and its lighthouse. Magnificent views across the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the rugged scenery of Cap-Bon-Ami were extremely photogenic. Further around the peninsula is the Cap-des-Rosiers lighthouse, which is the highest in Canada.

We spent the next two days travelling on Route 132 as it followed the coastline of the Atlantic Ocean and Baie des Chaleurs. Fortunately there was an absence of sea fog when we arrived at Percé, and the huge monolith of *Rocher Percé* was plain to see; although the connecting causeway to the mainland was cut off by the high tide. At Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé, one of the many fishing villages along the coast, modern fish flakes (drying racks) abounded with split codfish being salt-cured in the traditional way.

In 1760, a decisive battle between the French and English was fought in the estuary of the Restigouche River. Just west of Pointe-a-la-Croix, we visited a Parks Canada interpretive centre detailing the Battle of the Restigouche. The museum contains the remains of the 18th century French frigate *Machault*, which had taken refuge from a superior English naval force. A gun battle raged for several days, but the French eventually surrendered after scuttling the *Michault* to prevent its stores and munitions from being captured. Many artifacts retrieved from the wreck are on display, together with a reproduction of the ship's interior.

The Matapédia River carves a valley through the interior of the Gaspé Peninsula and both Route 132 and a logging railway follow this natural corridor. Most of the communities in the area are linked to the forestry industry, and we stayed overnight at the principal town of Amqui. Typical of logging communities, the railway tracks ran parallel with the main street and there was a great deal of truck and train activity. One of the businesses facing the railway tracks was a MacDonald's fast food restaurant, and it amused us to see the train driver (locomotive engineer) stop temporarily opposite, rush inside to order a hamburger, then return to the train with his snack. Evidently a habitual practice.

From Amqui, Route 132 passes through Mont Joli, with its important military airport, to Sainte-Flavie on the shores of the St. Lawrence River. For lunch we returned to "Capitaine Homard" (Captain Lobster), a restaurant that we had visited on our first trip to the Gaspé Peninsula 25 years earlier (see Chapter 7). The original humble roadside fishing shack-cum-diner had grown into a large eating establishment frequented by tourist buses and obviously prospering on opportunities afforded by the tourism industry. We met the proprietor, Capitaine Homard, himself, and he was interested in our return trip after so many years; even pointing out a series of photographs on display showing how the restaurant had evolved.

The scenic road following the south shore of the St. Lawrence River is known as *Route des Navigateurs*. To the east of Rimouski is Pointe-au-Père with its unique reinforced concrete lighthouse incorporating flying buttresses. The *seigneurial* system of land division established by the first French immigrant settlers is still apparent, and many of the ancient stone houses standing along the old road exhibit the traditional architecture of steep roofs, dormer windows and wide verandas. This style is carried over with the more recent buildings and superb examples can be seen along the *rue principale* (main street) of Saint-Georges-de-Cacouna near Rivière-du-Loup. We stopped there to look at the houses and noticed in one front yard there was a miniature replica of the old buildings. As I stood looking at the model, a man came out of the house and started a conversation with a torrent of French, much of which I couldn't understand. I uttered a few salutations, together with obvious gestures of admiration, and that seemed to please him.

Driving along *Route des Navigateurs* we passed through other small communities, each with their own charm, until we realised that time was of the essence to reach the motel in Lévis. We changed onto the fast multi-lane Route 20 at Montmagny and continued to Lévis. In the evening we drove to the waterfront near the ferry terminal and found a delightful restaurant overlooking the river. As darkness fell, the lights of Québec City opposite made a magical sight and, on occasion, we could see the ferry boats making their way to and fro.

With still a few more days of holiday, our next plan was to explore the Eastern Townships and we had registered in a well-appointed country inn. From Lévis, we drove inland on Routes 116, 269 and 112 to Thetford Mines where the largest open pit asbestos mine in the Western Hemisphere is located. There was an interpretive kiosk, mineral museum and overlook of the huge man-made hole in the ground. The reduction of the uses of asbestos due to its health hazardous nature has affected the mining and milling operations, resulting in the mine eventually closing down and the local economy suffering enormously as a consequence. From Thetford Mines, we followed Route 112 to the university city of Sherbrooke; then Route 147 to Coaticook and Route 141 to Ayer's Cliff and our hotel, the Ripplecove Inn.

At the Ripplecove Inn we indulged in 5 star accommodation. Apart from its idyllic position at the head of Lake Mapawissi, the hotel boasted a gastronomic restaurant call *Le Riverain* that had been awarded the coveted AAA/CAA 4 diamond insignia on many occasions. We were certainly not disappointed on both accounts. The lakeside façade of the hotel incorporated a patio that stretched its full length and with access to private boat docks. The rooms were exceptionally well appointed with canopied four-poster beds and luxurious trappings. Dinner at *Le Riverain* was a gourmet's delight with exceptional cuisine and a huge wine selection. Service was impeccable with traditionally attired waiters and *maître d'hôtel*.

Because the morning of the following day (June 14th, 1999) was warm and inviting, we had breakfast served on the patio. Next was to revisit the hamlet of Coventry in Vermont; the same as we did just after Monica arrived in Canada on June 14th, 1974. From Ayer's Cliff we joined Route 55 (Autoroute J.A. Bombardier), which is a continuation of Interstate highway I-91 and crossed the border. U.S. Hwy. 5 swings through Newport and eventually we found Coventry along a sideroad. Repeating what we did twenty-five years earlier, I took a photo of Monica by the sign outside the United States Post Office (see Chapter 7). After looking around the hamlet with its simple white painted community hall, war memorial and Civil War cannon on the village square, we returned to the border on state road No. 105 and joined Route 243 to Bolton-Est near the Owl's Head ski resort. This was one of the many downhill ski *pistes* that I went to with the UACL ski club. From Bolton-Est we drove along a country road to Saint-Benoît-du-Lac on the shores of Lake Memphremagog. The main attraction there was the *Abbayé* (Abbey) and associated monastery.

The Benedictine Order chose this serene part of Lake Memphremagog, and after many years of toil and despair, the noted French Benedictine ecclesiastical architect, Dom Paul Bellot, was enlisted to design the huge building with its towers, château roof and dormer windows. The brothers derive an income from cheese and cider making, and the site is a popular tourist destination. We saw many tour buses in the parking lot and this 'captured audience' was taken on walks around selected parts of the abbey. As a consequence, the cheese and cider boutique was doing a roaring trade. Pilgrims are also welcome and they can stay at the abbey's hostels. Gregorian chants are central to the religious observances. The return journey to the hotel was on the backroads following the shoreline of Lake Memphremagog, eventually to Route 112, through the town of Magog and Route 55 south to Ayer's Cliff.

After another superb evening meal in *Le Riverain* and listening to the loons on the lake at breakfast, we took our leave of the Ripplecove Inn for the journey home. Route 55 connects with Route 10 (Autoroute des Cantons-de-l'Est), crosses the St. Lawrence River (Champlain Bridge) and joins Route 20. At the Ontario/Québec provincial border the freeway changes to Hwy. 401, then after an overnight stop we headed west on Hwy. 8 to Goderich.

25th wedding anniversary and hot air balloon flight

It was twenty-five years since that memorable day in July when we exchanged wedding vows in St. Mark's Anglican Church, Longueuil, Québec (see Chapter 7). Naturally we wanted to celebrate our Silver Wedding Anniversary in style and chose to mark the occasion in an unusual way – a hot air balloon flight. At our previous visit to the Millcroft Inn near Orangeville, Ontario, we discovered that a local



Grande-Vallée, a Typical Fishing Village on the Gaspé Peninsula, Québec, June, 1999.



Cap-Bon-Ami and Cap-Gaspé, Gaspé Peninsula, Québec, June, 1999.



Rocher Percé (Pierced Rock) near the Town of Percé, Gaspé Peninsula, Québec, June, 1999.



Cod Drying on a Fish Flake, Ste-Thérèse-de-Gaspé, Gaspé Peninsula, Québec, June, 1999.



The much Enlarged "Capitaine Homard" Restaurant, Sainte-Flavie, Québec, June, 1999.



Traditional Québécois Style Houses, Saint-Georges-de-Cacouna, Québec, June, 1999.



Open Cast Asbestos Mine, Thetford Mines, Québec, June, 1999.



Monica Outside the Ripplecove Inn, Ayer's Cliff, Québec, June, 1999.



Monica Outside the United States Post Office in the Hamlet of Coventry, Vermont, June 14, 1999.



Preparing the Hot Air Balloon for Launch at the Millcroft Inn, Alton, Ontario, July, 1999.



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hot air balloon company used the hotel's back parking lot as a launching place for its excursions. We started making some serious enquiries to see if there were any events scheduled in or around our anniversary date of July 12th. It turned out that two hot air balloons were to take off on Sunday, July 11th, 1999; so we hurriedly booked places on one of the balloons and two nights accommodation at the Millcroft Inn.

The flight was to take place in the evening when atmospheric conditions were best suited for soaring aloft. After dinner, we prepared ourselves by changing into recommended clothing – arms and legs completely covered with all natural fibres such as cotton – as any garments made from synthetic material became a safety hazard in the event of a fire: the melting material would adhere to a body and could not be easily removed. Sturdy shoes were recommended. Safety was paramount and the pilot was totally responsible for every aspect of accident prevention. We also had to sign a disclaimer.

As we walked to the launching area we could see it was already a hive of activity. Minivans and towed trailers were scattered, with the contents of the trailers being disgorged onto the ground. Among the contents were passenger baskets (gondolas), gas burner supports, rigging and deflated balloon envelopes. The scene was reminiscent of our early date at the hot air balloon rally at Stanford Hall, Rugby, Warwickshire, in August, 1973 (see Chapter 6). The baskets were then tipped on their side and the balloon envelopes attached to the supports with the rigging. From a safe distance we watched as a large fan forced air into the opening of a neighbouring balloon. When there was sufficient initial inflation, the gas burner was ignited and directed a stream of hot air into the huge yellow and black envelope. From what originally appeared to be an insignificant piece of coloured nylon, the balloon gradually inflated into a massive inverted teardrop shaped object. The same procedure took place with our multicoloured balloon envelope.

As the two balloons inflated to prodigious dimensions, all the passengers were assembled in readiness to climb aboard. The ground crew made sure that the balloons were stable and we scrambled into the baskets. No sooner as we had steadied ourselves when there was a terrific jolt and we were immediately aloft. The shock of the launch and the rapidity of ascent caught me completely by surprise as I thought the lift off would be an anticlimactic event. With the pilot activating the gas burner, the balloon ascended until we were far above the Millcroft Inn and the yellow and black globe of the other balloon. We were true balloonists!

The flight wasn't lengthy, perhaps just over an hour, but it was the fulfilment of several emotions. First, there was the romantic association with our special wedding anniversary; then the elation of actually experiencing this lighter-than-air journey and, for myself, the realisation that, having flown supersonically in September, 1981 (see Chapter 9), I could now appreciate the exact opposite of the flying spectrum. On this beautiful sunny evening, we blissfully floated in a general NW to SE direction over the Caledon Hills and communities such as Alton and Caledon Village. To demonstrate the versatility of ballooning, the pilot allowed the craft to descend to treetop height, then turned on the gas burner to maximum blast for a swift ascent. It was during one of these manoeuvres that we startled a wild deer from its forest cover, and it was plainly seen running to another shelter. Some reactions from the ground were predictable as people came out of their houses and waved frantically to us. Others, such as the heads of cattle turning in unison and looking balefully at us as the gas burner roared, were unexpected. The fading light dictated that it was time to find a suitable landing spot and, with the minivans in close pursuit, the pilot aimed for a nearby open field.

Landing a hot air balloon is a very tricky manoeuvre. Of the many factors to take into consideration, the pilot has to gauge the rate of descent carefully using special rigging to evacuate hot air from the envelope. More importantly is to avoid a collision with overhead power cables (something that was in the forefront of my mind, and I kept a wary eye open for such a deadly hazard). With the ground crew in position, the balloon descended to a point when the pilot could throw out a handling rope. This was necessary to help stabilise the craft after impact. The pilot advised us to brace for a possible bumpy landing, and this meant grasping the hand-grips on the basket structure. We were fortunate in that the impact occurred on an upward facing slope. The initial landing jolt almost ejected us from the basket; then we were dragged some way up the slope as a result of the dynamics caused by the still moving balloon envelope until it could be controlled.

The efficiency of the ground crew came into play as the envelope was completely deflated by opening the main exhaust valve. With the basket on its side and detached from the envelope, a large container bag was stuffed with the balloon and both items heaved on board the towed trailer. We then drove to the landing site of the second balloon in readiness for the traditional champagne party.

It is customary that when a hot air balloon lands on private property; e.g., a farmer's field, the landowner is contacted and common courtesy dictates that he/she is presented with a bottle of champagne. This is from a tradition harking back to early French aeronauts' habits. The champagne is also shared with all participants after a successful flight; often accompanied with the toast: "Soft winds and gentle landings." We were not denied this pleasure and a jolly party took place before we all departed to the hotel. The empty bottle of champagne from André's Ontario winery remains in our wine rack as a permanent reminder of the ballooning adventure.

The following day – our actual wedding anniversary – was a mixture of exercise and leisure. Instead of staying in one of the hotel's modern 'croft' units, our bedroom was in the converted old stone mill building and overlooked the millpond, which was mirror smooth in dawn's early light. Breakfast in the 'Pod' – the glazed extension that overlooks the millpond and milldam waterfall – was delightful with its generous selection of beverages, cereals, fruit, cheese and pastries. Unfortunately, the milldam was being renovated and the water had been temporarily diverted. After breakfast we decided to explore some of the resort's nature trails and set off along one of the less strenuous paths that led us into the village of Alton. In the heart of the village is the Alton Mills Complex, formerly the Alton Mill, a late 19th century group of industrial stone buildings located on the bank of Shaw's Creek. It was being transformed into an artists' community and, now that the nearby city of Orangeville was rapidly expanding, some of the abandoned stores on the village main street were being repurposed in a programme of gentrification. Returning to the hotel for lunch, we dined *al fresco* on the patio under a special canopy that protected diners from the strong sunlight. The afternoon was spent reading books and magazines whilst sitting in Muskoka chairs on the lawn overlooked by the stone façade of the old mill building.

As the evening drew near, we dressed into our finery, took some souvenir photos and made our way to the 'Pod' for the celebration meal. As usual we were not disappointed with the gourmet offering and impeccable service. Even Robyn who, since our last visit to the Millcroft Inn, had been promoted from server to dining room manager, purposely came to see and congratulate us. A nice touch.



View from the Hot Air Balloon in Flight over the Caledon Hills, Ontario, July, 1999.



View from the Hot Air Balloon in Flight over the Caledon Hills, Ontario, July, 1999.



Monica and Hot Air Balloon Ground Crew after Landing near Caledon Village, Ontario, July, 1999.



The Traditional Champagne Party after the Hot Air Balloon Flight, Caledon Hills, Ontario, July, 1999.



Barry and Monica's Silver Wedding Anniversary at the Millcroft Inn, Alton, Ontario, July 12, 1999.



Monica Relaxing with a Good Book on the Lawn of the Millcroft Inn, Alton, Ontario, July, 1999.



Minnie Mouse Float, "Mickey's Hometown Parade", Goderich, Ontario, July, 1999.



Mickey Mouse Float, "Mickey's Hometown Parade", Goderich, Ontario, July, 1999.



Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum, Mount Hope Airport, Hamilton, Ontario, July, 1999.



Barry Sitting in the Martin-Baker Ejection Seat of a CF-100 Jet Fighter, Hamilton, Ontario, July, 1999.



Avro Lancaster Bomber (VeRA) Arrives at the Air Show in Goderich, Ontario, September, 1999.



Avro Lancaster Bomber (VeRA) Arrives at the Air Show in Goderich, Ontario, September, 1999.

A coup for Goderich

Among other things that were happening was a significant community event known as “Mickey’s Hometown Parade.” Walt Disney Productions has created a mammoth parade of floats showcasing the famous Disney characters including, of course, the loveable Mickey Mouse. Bringing the event to Goderich was the brainchild of local businessman, Doug Fines. Knowing that Walt Disney’s grandfather had settled on a farm in Huron County, and that Walt himself had once visited Goderich to learn more about his ancestry in the area, Doug hoped to convince the company to display its roadshow here in town. After much negotiating, Doug was successful in securing the event.

The parade was well known for attracting huge crowds so initial preparations were important. Similar to the town’s 1977 sesquicentennial celebration (see Chapter 8) the parade followed a predetermined route: starting on Huron Road and leading to The Square. On July 25th, 1999, advertising banners and an arch of red and black balloons stretched across Huron Road to welcome the floats and marching performers. At the front of the parade in open top cars, Doug Fines and the town’s dignitaries acknowledged the thousands of visitors who had assembled along the route. Fortunately the weather fully cooperated and the colourful floats looked their best in the sunshine. One of the first Disney characters was Pluto, followed by an effervescent Minnie Mouse and her entourage. The floats became bigger and more intricate, and soon Mickey Mouse – the parade mascot – arrived to tumultuous cheers from crowds of wellwishers thronging the pavements (sidewalks). The event was a definite coup for Goderich.

Earlier in July, we spent the day at the Canadian Warplane Heritage (CWH) Museum at Mount Hope Airport, Hamilton, Ontario. Back in 1979, the decommissioned Avro Lancaster bomber from Goderich was transported to the CWH workshop (see Chapter 8) and fully restored to airworthiness condition. The Lancaster wasn’t on display as it was flying at various airshows. However, the museum’s vast aeronautical collection made for an interesting visit. One of the volunteers wanted to show us the cockpit of a CF-100 jet fighter, complete with the Martin-Baker ejection seat. He was extremely interested when I told him of my father’s involvement in the seat’s development and allowed me to actually sit in the cockpit. By simulating pulling on the ripcord, I had the same experience as Dad when anticipating the force of the seat’s ejection. Another reason for visiting the museum was for Monica to buy a gift certificate. This was her Silver Wedding Anniversary present to me to fly in a vintage open cockpit biplane; another of my aviation ambitions.

Normally I would commute to the office on foot, but sometimes I needed my car to drive to Champion’s other facilities across town. One occasion this summer I drove the Mustang to the main parking lot and left it to report to work. I absent-mindedly forgot to engage the hand brake and failed to leave the car in gear. When I returned to the car to make the short trip, I discovered that the Mustang had rolled from its parking spot down a slight incline until it had collided with another parked car. Despite the short distance, the damage to the Mustang’s rear bumper was bad. At the point of impact, the paint had cracked and peeled from the bumper bar. Initially I thought that the bumper bar was a colour-matched plastic, but apparently it is painted with the rest of the body shell during manufacture. The other vehicle was an older, more solidly built model and didn’t sustain any damage at all. The outcome was a completely resprayed bumper bar costing \$230.00!

Although we were disappointed not seeing the Lancaster at the CWH Museum in July, we only had to wait two months and on September 18th, 1999, the fully restored bomber returned to its previous home on a goodwill visit during the Goderich Air Show. It was a beautiful day and one of extreme anticipation as word spread about that the Lancaster was due to arrive. The terminal building's ground-to-air intercom kept us informed of the plane's progress and soon all eyes were searching for the first glimpse of the famous silhouette. The Lancaster's initial pass over the runway and assembled crowd was as exciting as when we saw it in flight at Mount Hope Airport, Hamilton, Ontario, in 1988 and 1990 (see Chapter 10). Once again the unmistakable sound of four powerful Rolls-Royce Merlin engines shattered the silence that had settled over the audience, who then launched into a spontaneous applause. The bomber landed on the main runway and taxied to the airport apron. Looking pristine in its RAF livery, the "Mynaski" Lancaster, or 'VeRA' as she was affectionately called – from the identification letters V-RA – continued to awe inspire the crowd. The show's static exhibition consisted of a number of vintage aircraft such as a North American Harvard; de Havilland Chipmunk and de Havilland Gipsy Moth, and a reproduction Russian MiG fighter. A final demonstration flight from the Lancaster concluded a picture perfect day.

Fall trip to Ottawa

Capitalising on the Thanksgiving Day long weekend we left for a week to visit Ottawa, as the last time we had been to the Nation's Capital was in 1987. October turned out to be a beautiful month and travelling through the colourful countryside of Central and Eastern Ontario with the maple trees in full fall splendour was a real treat. After starting late from Goderich we stayed overnight in Newmarket and discovered "The Keg", an excellent steakhouse restaurant near the hotel. From Newmarket it was a short journey through 'cottage country' to Port Perry where we joined Hwy. 7A and continued to Hwy. 115 to bypass Peterborough. Connecting with Hwy. 7 (TCH Southern Route) we continued through scenery that was typical of the rocky Canadian Shield with its characteristic pine forests and lakes. At Perth, we left the TCH and diverted through Smiths Falls to our next overnight stop at Merrickville.

Merrickville is located on the Rideau River and Rideau Canal waterway system, an historic commercial and military route. The town's strategic importance made it necessary for the canal locks to be guarded by a wooden blockhouse (see Chapter 10). Our hotel, Sam Jakes Inn, was one of hotels in the Inns of Ontario organization. There is a cross-country route from Merrickville to Ottawa following the Rideau River and Rideau Canal, and we found the Best Western hotel on Carling Avenue in the city where we would stay for the next four nights.

As usual we were not disappointed with our visit to the Nation's Capital. After the Labour Day public holiday, when most of the tourist spectacles such as the Changing of the Guard on Parliament Hill have finished, there are still some cultural attractions to take into consideration. As this was well before the impact of the terrorist act in New York City on September, 11th, 2001 (also known as '9-11'), access to public tours of the Parliament Buildings was virtually non-restrictive. Indeed, when the House of Commons was sitting, visitors could watch the question period debate from the public gallery. However, before we booked one of the tours, we spent a day at the Canadian Museum of Civilization located in the Hull area of the city of Gatineau, Québec, on the opposite side of the Ottawa River to Parliament Hill. This ultramodern



Typical Autumn Scene in the Canadian Shield with Forests and a Lake, Eastern Ontario, October, 1999.



Sam Jakes Inn on the Banks of the Rideau River and Rideau Canal, Merrickville, Ontario, October, 1999.



Parliament Hill, Centre Block of the Canadian Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, Ontario, October, 1999.



View from the Peace Tower Looking North at the Museum of Civilization, Hull, QC, October, 1999.



De Havilland Beaver Bush Plane, Canadian Aviation Museum, Ottawa, Ontario, October, 1999.



Nose Section of the Avro Arrow, Canadian Aviation Museum, Ottawa, Ontario, October, 1999.

building was still under development but contained a vast collection of artifacts indicative of the history and culture of Canada's indigenous peoples. The entrance, or Great Hall, was framed by an enormous window overlooking the river valley. Facing the window was a display of full-sized totem poles and Pacific Coast aboriginal house façades handmade by First Nations artisans.

The following day dawned bright and sunny and, driving to a downtown parking garage, we discovered a scenic route along the Ottawa River Parkway. We had tickets for the Parliament Buildings public tour and made our way to Parliament Hill surrounded by the magnificent Centre, East and West Blocks. The tour consisted of small groups of English- and French-speaking visitors, each with its own bilingual guide. We were shown through the corridors of power, the Senate Chamber and a short time in the public gallery overlooking the House of Commons. The question period was in session and it was most interesting to listen to parliamentary issues being debated. Security was everywhere, of course, and the guards ran a tight ship. Following was a tour of the Centre Block's signature landmark – the Peace Tower. A lift (elevator) takes visitors to the viewing gallery overlooking the city and beyond. At the base of the Peace Tower is the Memorial Chamber with seven Books of Remembrance. The books list the names of all Canadian service personnel who have died in world conflicts, and every day at 11 a.m. a page is turned so all the names will over one year be displayed to the public. The rest of the day was spent roaming around the downtown area with its many sights such as the colourful and atmospheric Byward Market.

Another institution on the list to visit in Ottawa was the Canada Aviation Museum. Located at the regional airport at Rockcliffe, the museum houses a miscellaneous collection of aeronautical artifacts. Some emphasis was on 'bush flying' and the opening up of Canada's northern frontiers by legendary aircraft like the de Havilland Beaver. There was also the only fragment of the Avro Arrow supersonic interceptor known to have survived, plus Second World War memorabilia.

This marked the end of our visit to the Nation's Capital. Returning home from Ottawa was virtually a reverse of the inbound journey, although the overnight stay was at the Best Western Otonabee Inn hotel in Peterborough.

News from England

Regular correspondence during the year kept us up to date with news of friends and family back in England. There were also some personal contacts – one from Stephen (Roger and Susan Moore's son) and his girlfriend, Erin, who wanted to visit Goderich. Later in the year, Roger and Susan travelled to Canada and, together with Stephen and Erin, we all met at the "Red Lobster" restaurant in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario, for a meal. Although Stephen's and Lindsey's one-year Château Lake Louise work contracts expired in August, 1999, Lindsey successfully applied for another one-year stay in Canada and approached the Château Laurier in Ottawa for a job. Stephen, however, was obliged to return to England, but with definite aspirations to return, even emigrate, to Canada. The main impetus was his serious relationship with Erin that culminated in their engagement to marry. Erin then cemented this relationship by visiting and staying with Roger, Susan and Stephen in Allesley for ten weeks (October to December). There was a downside, however, as Stephen learned from Canada House in England that his application for emi-

gration was rejected (a deficit of four points); plus he was required to have 12 months experience in his degreed profession, and an actual job offer in Canada. Evidently not good news, but neither Stephen nor Erin were discouraged and continued planning their future together.

Dad was still depressed knowing that Kay's health condition was not improving. Even so, he religiously visited her at the care home every day, helping wherever he could. As is typical, he wanted to express his feelings in a written tribute which he called, "Just a Love Story." In September he sent me a draft as I said I would produce a polished version for him on my computer. The result was a complete outpouring of affection and he was pleased to receive the final version as his personal keepsake. Sometime during the year, his other companion, the Yorkshire Terrier pet dog, "Misty", died at a good age of 14 years. However, it was through "Misty" that a ray of hope came into Dad's life. On occasions when Dad was taking "Misty" out for a walk, he would meet a lady neighbour and exchange pleasantries. The lady, whose name was Eileen Rita Dale, familiarly known as Pat Dale, was a 75 year old spinster and an avid animal lover. In due course, their conversations became longer and more personal to the extent that Dad had found a sympathetic ear to his woes with Kay's situation. Pat's own lonely existence brought them closer together as kindred spirits. The upshot was that Pat soon became a fixture in Dad's life.

Of course we still maintained our family connections in Canada; visiting my cousin, Don Jr., and Claire at their London home in October. The situation on his side of the family remained the same with both his mother and sister residing in respective care facilities.

The last new Champion model launched to round off the century

At Champion, the product continued to evolve and the Series VI range of motor graders was launched with the first production machine (S/N 30600) being built on November 5th, 1999. The new range represented the most advanced generation in terms of motor grader design. Using the "Voice of the Customer" marketing campaign, the All-Wheel-Drive (AWD) system was completely revamped with separate variable displacement hydraulic pumps and motors. There were cab control enhancements, a new HVAC climate control system, and an improved Moveable Blade Control System (MBCS) geometry. Major changes that promoted the Champion brand until December, 2000, and had to be incorporated into new technical publications, both for the main 700 Series and C-Series motor graders.

Continuing with the engineering theme, the SAE Southwestern Ontario Section's schedule for 1999 consisted of seven events including three plant tours – IMTI-National Research Council, London; Ford Motor Company, Talbotville, and Timberjack Inc., Woodstock, Ontario. Guest speakers spoke at the "Black Angus" restaurant, London, Ontario, on subjects ranging from off-highway design considerations to quality function deployment and computer aided design. Students in the SAE Student Group gave presentations at the University of Western Ontario on their various projects, followed by a panel discussion from engineering managers. There were the usual executive board meetings to attend and, considering our 'stretched' responsibilities (for little reward), we accomplished some very good results. Another coup was the 1999 SAE Section Publication award – Special Recognition in Newsletter Chair Column – of the Section's newsletter that I produced.

Desktop publishing the Section's newsletter was the bulk of my freelancing activity during the year. It was supplemented with several résumés; a business card design, and ghost writing four new chapters for Bill Barlow Sr.'s new book, "Goderich: Link to the Past." The biggest single order, however, was to produce the Rotary International - District 6003 Directory, a handbook of Rotary International members including photographs and mini-biographies. The three month project was a tight schedule, but came within budget.

With 1999 – and effectively the 20th century – drawing to a close, the year was played out in a number of different scenarios. Firstly, the world was on the brink of a perceived major meltdown of countless computer installations. The Year 2000 problem scare (also known as the Millennium bug or Y2K) involved computer calendars that would not be able to distinguish century dates such as 1900 *versus* 2000. This would cause various errors; in particular, the display of dates and the automated ordering of dated records or real-time events. Fortunately the glitch had been foreseen for quite a while and computer users were taking steps to correct the problem. It was critical for manufacturers to ensure uninterrupted continuation of computer power and Champion's SAP production system was updated.

We still had a passion for all things pertaining to Newfoundland and Labrador (N.L.), and every week a programme call "Jigs and Reels", hosted by personality, Dean Clark on Kitchener radio CKWR, maintained a link between us and the "Rock." We would listen to Dean playing music and conducting interviews for homesick Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, many of who lived in Kitchener-Waterloo and Cambridge, Ontario. A cultural custom that formally introduces Come-from-Away (CFA) folk: that is, non native Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, to become honourable Newfies is called a "Screech-in." It is combined with the ritual of 'kissing the cod.' Essentially the inductee is required to kiss a codfish, followed by downing a shot glass of Newfoundland Screech, which is a type of potent rum.

In December, Dean organized a "Screech-in" at a local Kitchener restaurant run by an East Coast couple. It was open to his radio programme audience and we decided to attend. The event was typical of a Newfoundland kitchen party where everyone mingled in a homey atmosphere. The majority of people there were ex-pat Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and we had a great time conversing with them; in particular a family headed by Nelson Fillier, who was quite the character. During our conversation I mentioned that we had yet to sample eating moose meat. Nelson said, "Not to worry, B'y. I'll make sure you'll 'get your moose' (a popular N.L. saying)." The time then came for all interested CFAs to undergo the ritual, which Monica and I did with enthusiasm (even though Monica repelled drinking the rum moreso than kissing the cod). Dean was on hand with a real fish and measures of Screech, and our induction was recorded on film. So now we can honestly claim to be honourable Newfies.

One sad episode ended the year for us. We had been noticing a change of attitude with our friends, Nick and Liz Avery. Their contact was becoming less and less; seemingly to favour more with other mutual acquaintances, Paul and Sue Dumas. Near the end of December, the six of us met at the "Charcoal Steak House" restaurant in Kitchener. Conversation did not flow too well and an uncomfortable atmosphere arose. It wasn't long afterwards that our phone calls to the Averys were not being returned, and it became quite clear that Nick and Liz were distancing themselves from us. It's still a mystery why the twenty-five year friendship ended, but we respected their silence which remains to this day.

A new millennium

As it was no ordinary New Year's event, but the beginning of a new millennium, we welcomed in the year 2000 at the Hessenland Country Inn. There were regular guests at our table including German Americans, Willi and Gisele, and Walter and Irmgard. Willi owned and operated a translation company in the Detroit area. Walter was retired and he had many stories to tell when he was a soldier in the occupied Channel Islands during the Second World War. For the occasion, Monica had made a special outfit for herself – a long-sleeve sequined top in light pink, together with full pants in a black sparkling material. As usual we were assured of a delicious meal, followed by dancing to “Dr. Hook”, a local DJ, until the early hours before retiring to one of the inn's rooms.

A month before when we were at the Newfoundland “Screech-in”, we had met Nelson Fillier and mentioned in conversation that we had never eaten moose meat. One morning we were surprised to receive a phone call from Nelson, who said that he and his wife were visiting Goderich and would like to see us. We invited them to our apartment and there he gave us some ‘bottled moose’ – moose meat that had been preserved in a standard mason jar. This was typical of Newfoundland friendliness; travelling a long way in winter just to present us with a gift. So, true to his promise, I ‘got my moose.’

On a sunny late winter day in early March we travelled to the Perth County town of St. Marys largely for a change of scenery. There we had a buffet lunch at the Westover Inn and a promenade around the historic town centre with its many limestone buildings. On our previous visit to St. Marys in 1995 (see Chapter 11), we had noted the old railway trestle bridge spanning the Upper Thames River. This time we made sure to cross what is now the Grand Trunk Trail Bridge and admire the view of the town nestled in the valley.

The new millennium ushered in promising signs for Champion as the recently launched Series VI range of motor graders was gaining in popularity, which translated into increased sales. This situation was something of a salvation for the company, given that the previous few years were very lean and some layoffs were necessary. Now, with things looking a little brighter, Champion started to hire more personnel. Among them were at least eighteen white collar employees. Prime areas for the new faces were the General Engineering and Product Support Departments. For example, technical specialists, Bryan Brezynskie, John Chapman and Mike Gajdos were added to Gerry Bender's team. They were to be important contacts for me in the future. There were, however, some awkward moments and a clash of opinions happened between my colleague, Bruce Page, and Mike Gajdos. Both men were clearly unhappy and there were frayed tempers at one time with Mike storming away from the discussion. Eventually, Scotty Kirkwood, who was the vice president over Product Support, said to a frazzled Bruce, “Let's have a chat.” It seems a compromise settled the situation and no disciplinary action was taken.

I was scheduled for a routine business trip to Charlotte, North Carolina, so made the required flight and accommodation plans. Product refinements and the new Series VI branding justified the fact finding mission, and the trip wasn't without an element of fun. One lunchtime at a “Hooters” fast food restaurant – the eating places that employ scantily-clad waitresses with a larger than normal bosom – the Champion engineers and I learnt that a swimsuit pageant sponsored by “Hooters” and the Budweiser brewery was happen-

ing that week. This seemed like a worthwhile diversion and we arranged to meet at the venue for the evening show. The event was immensely popular as it took a long time to find a parking space, and an equally long time to navigate to an empty table where I could consume a greasy hamburger and some rather inferior chips (French fries). The Budweiser beer stand was a hive of activity as the male dominated crowd jostled for the best position to quaff their suds and view the models. At a predetermined time, a parade of girls sauntered across the stage to the hoots and hollers of the alcohol-fuelled audience. An animated MC egged on the crowd to bid for various prizes in time with the girls' orchestrated stripping of outer garments down to swimsuits that exposed varying amounts of golden skin. Definitely a 'boys night out.'

With the return of spring and the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway, Goderich Harbour was visited by both domestic and ocean-going vessels. One day in April saw the arrival of two huge ships, the ocean-going freighter, *MV Federal Oslo*, to take on a cargo of grain, and the *John B. Aird*, a regular visitor to the Sifto Salt Mine. Always a fascinating sight to see the tugs manoeuvre these giants into their moorings.

I was hoping to fulfil my aviation ambition of flying in a vintage open cockpit biplane at the end of May. Taking Monica's Silver Wedding Anniversary gift certificate present with us, we drove to the Canadian Warplane Heritage (CWH) Museum at Mount Hope Airport, Hamilton, Ontario. Here I expected to board the venerable Boeing Stearman biplane for a memorable flight over the countryside. However, when it came time to log the flight plan I was told that weather conditions had deteriorated and all light aircraft were grounded due to excessive wind gusts. A great pity really as it was sunny and dry. The visit wasn't wasted, however, as we were able to see the Lancaster towed to a space on the hangar apron for engine testing.

A second attempt at the Stearman flight was booked for sometime in June. On the appointed day we left early and drove to the CWH Museum knowing that the weather forecast was favourable. On arrival we were faced with a different situation. The CWH staff had telephoned to tell us that the flight had been cancelled due to a mechanical failure. Unfortunately we had already left home by the time the call was made. To emphasize the point, we were shown the crippled Stearman with oil dripping from its engine. Another no-go and rescheduling of the flight (third time lucky?) before we left.

Since the takeover in March, 1997, Volvo CE had not been excessively influential in Champion's day-to-day activities. Behind the scenes, the parent company dictated some corporate policies and was gradually easing the motor grader entity into its global organization. One such strategic move was to add a motor grader assembly line at Volvo CE's factory in Pederneiras, near São Paulo, Brazil. With kits sent from Goderich and locally purchased components, the Brazilian workforce was given three months training before the official roll-out of two manufactured machines on June 9th, 2000.

Closer to home and at approximately the same time, the Technical Publications Department was transferred from General Engineering to the Marketing Department headed by Scotty Kirkwood, vice president, sales and marketing. The rationale was to absorb Technical Publications with Product Support, Parts, Marketing Communication and Product Training and be in line with Volvo Customer Support global objectives: later to become part of the worldwide Customer Support Team (CST) division of Volvo CE. This also meant a physical move within the Maitland Road main office building. An underutilised part of the Marketing



Barry and Monica, Barry's 54th Birthday, Goderich, Ontario, November, 1999.



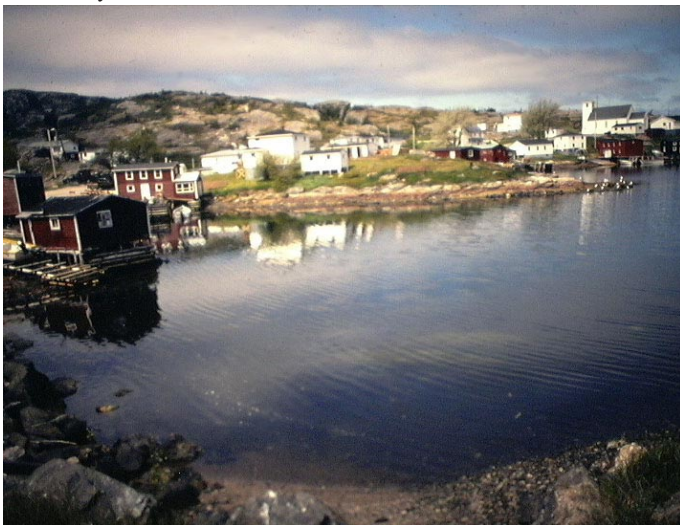
Monica 'Kisses the Cod' at a Traditional Newfoundland "Screech-in", Kitchener, ON, December, 1999.



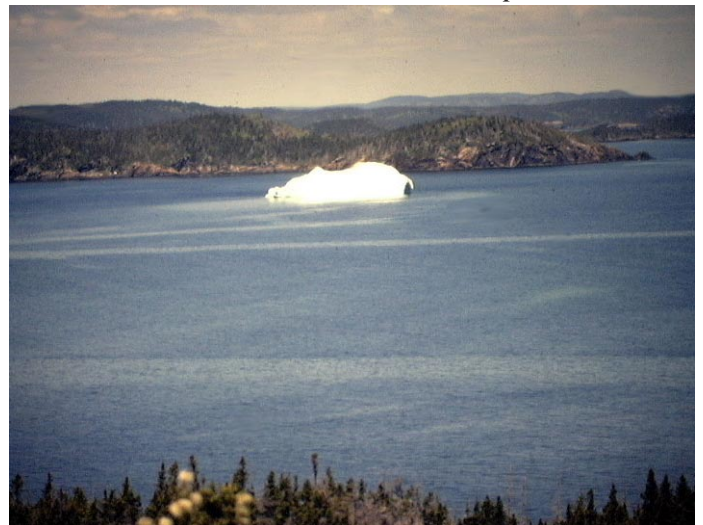
The Grand Trunk Trail Bridge over the River Thames, St. Marys, Ontario, March, 2000.



The "John B. Aird" Arrives in the Harbour with the "Federal Oslo", Goderich, Ontario, April, 2000.



Saltbox Houses, Fishermen's Stages and the Photogenic Waterfront of Salvage, N.L., June, 2000.



A Grounded Iceberg in Eastport Bay, Our First Iceberg Sighting, N.L., June, 2000.



The Pretty Outport of Greenspond with Two Icebergs in the Distance, N.L., June, 2000.



The Pounding Surf at Deadman's Bay Provincial Park, N.L., June, 2000.



Approaching a Migrating Iceberg Outside the Harbour at Twillingate, N.L., June, 2000.



The Other Side of the Migrating Iceberg Outside the Harbour at Twillingate, N.L., June, 2000.



View from Long Point, North Twillingate Island, N.L., June, 2000.



Life-size Diorama at the Beothuk Interpretive Centre, Boyd's Cove, N.L., June, 2000.

Department was earmarked for our occupancy with Gerry, Bruce and myself in a common area and Ray ensconced in a small self-contained office.

Personality conflicts surfaced every so often and I still had a rocky relationship with Ray. He once declared, “Your out-of-office telephone voicemail message is bullshit”, and that I should record a more accurate one. Tempers flared also between Bruce and Gerry and, after one particular incident, Bruce completely alienated himself from Gerry; the two men never really becoming fully reconciled. Ray and Gerry Bender were often at loggerheads, and Ray certainly didn’t take to the new hire, John Chapman; openly professing, “I really don’t like that guy.” However, we soon became accustomed to our new surroundings.

Back to the “Rock”

For this year’s summer vacation our eyes turned east once again and specifically to Newfoundland and Labrador (N.L.). Similar to the holiday there in 1998, the plan was to fly to St. John’s, rent a car and explore parts of the island that were both familiar and new to us. The beginning of the road trip was almost a carbon copy of the previous one. After collecting the rental car we progressed westwards along the TCH (Hwy. 1) to Clarenville and the entrance to Terra Nova National Park.

The park was a focal point so we stayed two nights in Charlottetown just outside the park’s boundary. The Visitor Centre provided information about the flora and fauna in the park’s 153 sq. mile (39,627 ha) varied geography, which ranged from rugged seacoasts to dense virgin forests. The Marine Interpretation Centre touch tank – similar to the one in the Ocean Sciences Centre, Logy Bay – allowed visitors to examine small sea life at close quarters. One of the park rangers asked if we wanted to view a video promoting the park. We were told that the actors in the film were “Buddy Whatsisname and the Other Fellers”; members of a popular N.L. group that we probably had never heard of. “Of course we have heard of them”, we said. “They are often featured on a N.L. radio show called ‘Jigs and Reels’ that we regularly listen to.” The ranger was pleasantly surprised at this. The park’s observation posts, such as at the Blue Hill Lookout, and nature trails made for a nice day out in the fresh air.

The following day was perfect for travelling and stopping along the way and, at the park’s northern entrance, we left the TCH on to Hwy. 310, the Eastport Peninsula “Road to the Beaches” scenic route. Passing through the communities of Eastport and Happy Adventure we terminated at Salvage (pronounced Sal-VAYGE), arguably the most picturesque outpost in N.L. An artist’s and photographer’s paradise, the small fishing village boasts being the oldest continuously inhabited settlement in N.L. One of the locals waved and called out a greeting to us in an unintelligible dialect as we walked around the maze of saltbox houses; wharves; stages, and fishing boats. We should have visited the Salvage Fishermen’s Museum, but time was not on our side knowing that our next stopover was some distance away at Musgrave Harbour. Returning to the TCH, we were excited to see a grounded iceberg in Eastport Bay; the first sighting of several icebergs on this trip.

Through Traytown to Glovertown (pronounced GLOW-ver-town), it was a short drive to Gambo, then diverting on to Hwy. 320 (the “Road to the Shore” scenic route) towards New-Wes-Valley – a municipality

whose name combines those of the neighbouring communities of Newtown, Wesleyville and Valleyfield. Just before New-Wes-Valley, a side road, Hwy. 320-33, took us to the small community of Greenspond. The outport buildings seemed to tumble down the cliffside and, from the top of the bluffs, the view of Bonavista Bay was uninterrupted except for two wayward icebergs in the distance. As I was photographing the scene, two older ladies approached a bench at the top of the bluffs to eat their picnic lunch. Without hesitation we launched into a conversation even though much of what they said was lost in the local ‘twang.’

From New-Wes-Valley, the road, now Hwy. 330, bypassed Cape Freels and we stopped at Deadman’s Bay Provincial Park to walk along the beach and watch the Atlantic Ocean rollers sweep in and crash onto the rocky shore. Finally reaching Musgrave Harbour, we registered into the motel and, after settling down, went to the dining room for dinner. To my complete amazement, I recognised a familiar face among the other guests. It was that of Ian McKenzie, the current chair of the SAE Southwestern Ontario Section. He was visiting N.L. with his partner, and we enjoyed each other’s company for the rest of the evening. Ian was a keen photographer with a huge array of equipment. So, sensing that the sunset would be quite spectacular he rushed out with camera and tripod to capture the event.

Just outside of Musgrave Harbour is the site of the plane crash that took the life of Dr. Sir Frederick Banting, co-discoverer of *insulin*. The inshore fishery was in full swing and, as we left, we could see many small boats heading for the fishing grounds denoted by coloured floats. A bonus diversion was down side road Hwy. 330-14 which ended at Ladle Cove, a pretty outport with picturesque fishing buildings. Knowing that the weather was going to deteriorate the next day, we decided to press on to Twillingate which we had previously visited in 1995 (see Chapter 11). Hwy. 330 took us to Gander Bay South; then Hwy. 331 to Hwy. 340 at Boyd’s Cove where we crossed over Chapel Island to New World Island. The town of Twillingate, itself, lies between North and South Twillingate Islands and is a well known location to view the giant icebergs that float by; brought down from Greenland on the southerly flowing Labrador current.

Because of the tourism popularity, several boat companies offer trips for visitors to observe icebergs up close. The competition is keen, but there is sufficient business for everyone and we chose one operator at random. Fortunately there was a huge iceberg floating nearby and we considered ourself lucky that the good weather and calm seas meant it would be a worthwhile excursion. After buying our tickets, we waited until there were enough passengers and boarded the tour boat. I said, “How are yous b’ys today?” to the captain and crew and settled up for’ard. As we were heading out I noticed that the boat was powered by Volvo Penta engines – perhaps an auspicious sign.

The lump of ice was away from the shore so still free-flowing in the Labrador current. The captain gave a running commentary over a PA system and explained many of the characteristics of icebergs; such as the names of different sizes – the smallest pieces being known as ‘bergy-bits.’ He said we would approach the iceberg to a safe distance then circle around it for different photographic opportunities. The shape was long with three peaks and a smooth contour; looking for all intents as a enormous white marshmallow. Circling around we noticed that light played tricks on the ice surface colour; first being white then translucent. Of course, we were mindful that the ’berg might turn over – a significant danger that could happen at any time, and the captain kept a wary eye out for any signs of this occurring. On the return voyage, we were taken to a

formation of rocks and sea stacks, home to thousands of sea-birds and other marine life. Unfortunately we didn't see any whales on this trip as it wasn't the best time of the year for them to congregate.

Our accommodation was typical of the location; simple and homey. For our evening meal at the motel we anticipated standard N.L. fare served in "Newfoundland time", i.e., unhurried. Among the other guests were several visitors from the U.S.A., who obviously weren't used to the relaxed pace of service. Some of the ladies in the party became agitated and even complained about the slowness to the innocent waitress. We were incensed at this attitude and, after the obnoxious Americans had left, we consoled the harassed girl to put her at ease, for which she was grateful.

Before leaving Twillingate the next day, we drove to look at the magnificent seascape and the Long Point lighthouse at the end of the road on North Twillingate Island. Returning on Hwy. 340 we crossed New World Island and Chapel Island, stopping at Boyd's Cove to visit the Beothuk Interpretation Centre. This museum focused on the cultural history of the now extinct Beothuk indigenous people who populated the island of N.L. before the coming of the Europeans. Many of the artifacts were discovered at a large Beothuk village archaeological site, and several dioramas depicted the natives in scenes of everyday life. From Boyd's Cove, Hwy. 331 took us to Gander Bay South and then the familiar route along Hwy. 330 to Gander and the TCH east through Terra Nova National Park to Port Blandford. There we stayed overnight in the Terra Nova Resort oceanfront property.

The dawn over Clode Sound was beautiful and it started our day off right as we headed into the Bonavista Peninsula on Hwy. 233 to its junction with Hwy. 230. At Southern Bay, Hwy. 235 follows the coast to the town of Bonavista where we stopped for a look around the National Historic Site of the Ryan Premises. This complex of restored 19th century buildings and proprietor's house traces the history of the Canadian east coast salt fish industry. Interpretations using *son et lumière* and a wide range of lifesize dioramas show how the industry functioned; from the different types of fishing methods to the intricacies of the 'truck' system of repayment. Whilst there, we were somewhat amused when a party of visitors on a bus tour were taken on a whirlwind walk around the museum. We wondered exactly how much knowledge they absorbed when whisked from one room to another, as within no time they were on their way to the next attraction on their schedule. We left the museum to walk around Bonavista only to be accosted by striking workers at the local fish processing plant. Mainly women, their protesting outside the gates was quite vocal.

From Bonavista, we followed Hwy. 230 along the coast of Trinity Bay to the side road of Hwy. 239 until we found our next accommodation, The Village Inn, Trinity, owned and operated by Dr. Peter Beamish, a whale enthusiast and human-animal communications expert. We found Dr. Beamish something of an eccentric person; constantly promoting his whale watching enterprise that used small, inflatable Zodiac boats to get up close to the sea mammals. He had other quirks, too, such as entertaining us at the dinner table with his button accordion and renderings of traditional songs such as "Jack Was Every Inch a Sailor." We resisted Dr. Beamish's entreaties to take a Zodiac ride and, as we were leaving the next morning, he thrust a handful of The Village Inn propaganda at us to distribute along the way. Passing St. Paul's Anglican Church, the huge wooden structure with a landmark tower and steeple that dominates the community, we drove along Hwy. 230 to the TCH; then east to Hwy. 100 and our next stopover at the town of Placentia.

Placentia has a significant history dating back to the first Basque fishermen, followed by a period of French occupation. The French fortified the settlement to protect their interests in the lucrative fishing industry. Under the terms of the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht, the French surrendered the settlement to the English who improved the defences. Castle Hill National Historic Park is an extensive area that includes many of the ruined forts and defences. We took full advantage of the sunny weather to explore the ruins on foot and admire the view that overlooks Placentia Bay. Nearby is the Atlantic Charter Monument commemorating the meeting between Churchill and Roosevelt that laid the foundations of the United Nations charter.

We continued around the rest of the southwestern peninsula by way of Hwys. 100 and 92 to Salmonier, then Hwy. 90 to the TCH. Before reaching the main highway, we visited the Salmonier Nature Park and the wild animal and bird rehabilitation service practiced there. It is also a centre for environmental research and aims to educate the public about wildlife and wilderness stewardship. The park's mandate is to bring visitors close to native N.L. wildlife in their natural surroundings, together with a greater understanding of plants, insects and ecology in general. This is achieved using a nature trail that consists entirely of a boardwalk that threads its way through a series of wild animal enclosures. The animals can often be seen from the trail, but there are also those that are shy of humans and tend to hide in the undergrowth. We were fortunate to see several moose in their compound, and a sea otter fending for itself on scraps of food. The N.L. Wildlife Rehabilitation Program ensures that injured or orphaned animals and birds are nursed back to health and, where possible, released into the wild. Several bald eagles on display were being treated for injuries.

The following day was going to be an extensive one and we chose to stay at a motel adjacent to the THC and a cluster of service-related businesses, including the ubiquitous Mary Brown's family restaurant that specialises in fried chicken dishes, and an Irving filling station (or in Newfoundland dialect, "Down by t' Herving"). Although disappointed by an overcast sky, we set out on Hwy. 63 to the Conception Bay community of Brigus. In its 19th century heyday, codfishing and sealing made this outport famous. It was also the birthplace of the legendary Captain Robert "Bob" Bartlett, the well known sailor and navigator who commanded ships on important Arctic expeditions. At Hawthorne Cottage National Historic Site, visitors learn about the adventures of Captain Bartlett and his contributions to Arctic exploration.

In 1995, we had hoped to drive to Trepassey at the south end of the Avalon Peninsula, but aborted the journey because of bad weather. This time we intended to reach Trepassey from the opposite direction of the Irish Loop Drive. From Brigus, we retraced our route along Hwy. 63 to the TCH and then Hwy. 90 past the Salmonier Nature Park; continuing overland and sometimes hugging the coast on Hwy. 10 until we arrived at Trepassey. Thus we had completed the Irish Loop Drive, albeit in two separate attempts.

From Trepassey to our next destination, the historic community of Ferryland, we drove through spectacular scenery ranging from imposing rocky landscapes to the virtually treeless terrain of the Barrens. Here, as in 1995, we were fortunate to see several native caribou grazing on the sparse vegetation. The normally shy animals refused to let us approach closely and moved away whenever we drew too near. At Ferryland, we were pleasantly surprised to see that the archæological site was still active. The visitors centre and museum had been updated and expanded with more information of Lord Baltimore's 1621 settlement. Hwy. 10 then took us to St. John's, the N.L. provincial capital, and the Best Western Hotel on Kenmount Road.



Castle Hill National Historic Park, Placentia, N.L., June, 2000.



Moose Compound, Salmonier Nature Park and Rehabilitation Centre, N.L., June, 2000.



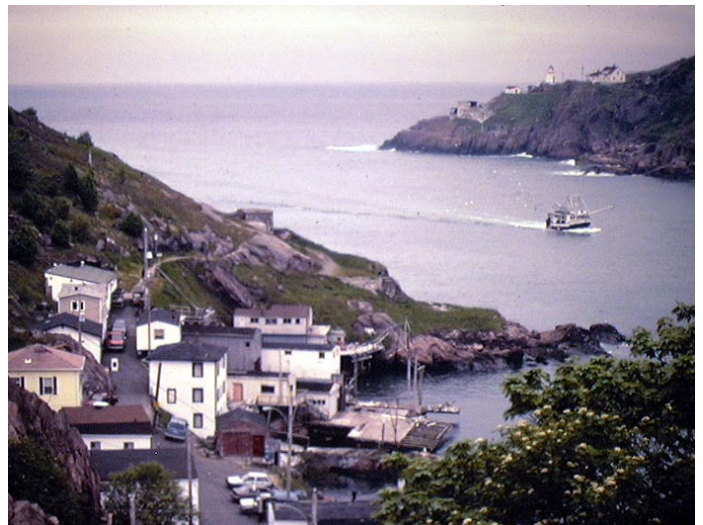
Hawthorne Cottage National Historic Site, Brigus, N.L., June, 2000.



Colony of Avalon Archaeological Site, Ferryland, N.L., June, 2000.



Monica and Newfoundland Ponies near Torbay, N.L., June, 2000.



View of The Battery and the Narrows – Entrance to St. John's Harbour, N.L., June, 2000.



Barry Pretending to 'Swing the Prop' of the Boeing Stearman Biplane, Hamilton, Ontario, August, 2000.



Barry and Rick Rickard Get Ready to Fly the Boeing Stearman Biplane, Hamilton, Ontario, August, 2000.



Mount Hope Airport, Hamilton, Ontario, Seen from the Boeing Stearman Biplane in Flight, August, 2000.



Haldimand County Countryside Seen from the Boeing Stearman Biplane in Flight, August, 2000.



Certificate of Flight Aboard the Boeing Stearman, CWH, Hamilton, Ontario, August, 2000.



Water Street, St. Andrews, New Brunswick, September, 2000.

St. John's is a city that continues to fascinate. Although we had explored the downtown area on foot fairly extensively in 1995 and 1998, parts were still unknown and, of course, old favourites revisited. There were new places such as the MUN Marine Dynamics Institute's workshop, and a short journey along Hwy. 20 to the bedroom community of Torbay that took us to a Newfoundland Pony sanctuary. The hardy ponies – descendants of animals found on Exmoor in England – were the primary beasts of burden found on N.L. farms and down the mines. Reliable and tough, they were worked until mechanisation made them redundant. The breed steadily declined in numbers almost to extinction. Special interest groups have struggled to preserve the breed, and sanctuaries, such as the one at Torbay, have managed to keep the blood line alive. We met the owner of the smallholding and was introduced to a couple of ponies in their paddocks.

Back in St. John's, a coastal fog bank, typical at the time of year, settled in the approaches to St. John's Harbour (the Narrows). This eerie sight almost obscured the sheer cliffs, and Cabot Tower on Signal Hill was the only visible sign. Later we explored The Battery, a neighbourhood within the city that still retains its N.L. outpost appearance. Perched on the cliff face, the collection of houses can be reached by walking on a circuitous trail from Signal Hill. Most of the houses have a commanding view of the Narrows and the maritime activity associated with it.

In true form we ate well while in St. John's and once more patronised "Classic Café" on Duckworth Street, together with traditional fare and "Dominion" or "Black Horse" beer served in many of the raucous George Street pubs. After three days it was time to fly home with a promise to return to N.L. – a promise that we fulfilled in later years.

Taking flight and improvements at Champion

Having been disappointed on two occasions, we kept our fingers crossed for the next Stearman flight opportunity on Friday, August 4th, 2000. It was a pleasant summer day when we drove to the CWH Museum at Mount Hope Airport, Hamilton, Ontario, and, on arrival, we were met by the pilot/instructor, Rick Rickard, who was originally from Bristol, and told that the flight would take place as scheduled. In the ensuing conversation I mentioned that I had previously taken the controls of small aircraft. The Boeing Stearman advanced trainer biplane was parked on the hangar apron having been fully checked for service. Before Rick and I suited up for the flight, Monica took a gag photo of me preparing to 'swing the prop.' Then we climbed aboard the two-seater with me in the forward open cockpit. I wrapped a white silk scarf around my neck in true pioneer aviator fashion, put on a 'Snoopy' flying helmet and plugged in the intercom tube so Rick and I could converse. I gave Monica the thumbs up signal, Rick started the engine and we were ready for "Chocks away!"

Revvng up, we taxied to the end of the runway and, after checking instruments, we were given clearance from air traffic control. Sitting in the open as I was and, given that the windscreen (windshield) was small in size, I fully expected to be buffeted by the slipstream. However, I was pleasantly surprised that this didn't happen and that it was fairly comfortable ensconced in the open cockpit. Of course, Rick had full control and I could see the joystick and rudder bar in my cockpit moving in unison with his actions. Even with the hearing protection of the "Snoopy" flying helmet, the engine noise was loud, but Rick's commen-

tary came through over the intercom. We gradually climbed then levelled out over the Haldimand County countryside dotted with farms and with the Niagara Escarpment in the distance. The experience was different to flights in other, fully enclosed small aircraft. Being exposed to the raw elements and hearing the thrumming of the strut wires between the upper and lower wings was unique. There were high, white puffy clouds – nothing to cause turbulence – and we coasted across the landscape. Suddenly, Rick called to me over the intercom, “OK, Barry, you’re now in control.” With that I took hold of the long joystick, placed my feet on the rudder bar and started to trace a series of lazy ‘esses’ across the sky. This was certainly ‘flying by the seat on one’s pants.’ Our allocated 20 minutes was soon used up and Rick piloted us to a classic ‘tail-dragger’ landing. After which he endorsed my Certificate of Flight, and another aviation ambition was accomplished.

One other of Volvo’s core values – respect for the environment – was attained by Champion when the company received its ISO 14001 registration on August 31st, 2000. It was one of the first Volvo CE companies to be so recognised. This important Environmental Management System (EMS) ensured that the manufacturing processes followed strict guidelines to protect the environment in and around the factory. Already this could be seen with the reduced waste and energy consumption of the newly automated paint production line.

Subtle changes were also impacting Technical Publications as Volvo’s globalized ‘look’ of its family of manuals meant a departure from the current software used. A new Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML) application programme, called Adobe FrameMaker (v.6.0), was instituted and Bruce, Gerry and I attended a familiarization course to understand and implement the computer software.

Vacation in New Brunswick

After reading about U.S. President Roosevelt’s retreat on Campobello Island, New Brunswick, it inspired us to head ‘down east’ for a September vacation. To minimise the number of hotels, we decided to use one as a base camp and radiate out to various places of interest on day trips. During our research, a suitable hotel, the Rossmount Inn, was found in the seaside resort town of St. Andrews, New Brunswick, and we made a reservation for several nights accommodation.

The drive to St. Andrews took three days and we started on what was now becoming a familiar route – heading east on Hwy. 8, along the fast multi-lane Hwy. 401, and a stopover in Cornwall. At the Ontario/Québec provincial border the freeway changes to Route 20 and, by following Routes 540 and 40 across the top of Montréal to the Louis-Hyppolite-Lafontaine bridge-tunnel, we reconnected with Route 20 (Autoroute Jean-Lesage portion of the TCH) and continued to Rivière-du-Loup. Turning southeast, we crossed the Québec/New Brunswick provincial border and stayed overnight in the city of Edmundston where we ate our evening meal at the *salle-à-manger*, “Le Baron.”

Knowing that the final leg of the journey to St. Andrews was a distance of 216 miles (347 km), we started early and progressed along the TCH as it meandered through the Saint John River valley’s rolling pastoral landscape. Also called the River Valley Scenic Drive, the TCH parallels the river on its way to the

provincial capital of Fredericton. Before reaching Fredericton, we headed south on Hwys. 3 and 127 and terminated at St. Andrews.

By this time it was late afternoon and foggy. In fact, the coastline fog was considerably thick and we still had to find the Rossmount Inn – described in the tour guide as a four-star hotel with first class dining. The guide listed directions and it was a case of navigating through the murk until we found the entrance drive. The property was located outside the town and eventually we turned into the drive whose length disappeared into the blanket of fog. A two-storey, weatherbeaten frame building eventually emerged out of the wisps and we stopped in the deserted car park. Two wide flights of steps led from the sweeping drive to a raised pedimented veranda that stretched the width of the house. Looking at each other, we wondered what we had let ourselves in for. Certainly it had striking similarities to the film “Psycho”, but there was no turning back.

We rang the bell at the front door, and a young man welcomed us in. The foyer (lobby) was richly furnished and ornate, carved woodwork trim prevailed. It seemed that the young man was alone and, after registering, he told us where our room was located. We climbed the stairs, along the creaking floorboards of the hallway, and settled in one of the large guest rooms that was well appointed with antique furniture. The lone custodian meant that an evening meal at the hotel was out of the question and we were obliged to drive into St. Andrews. Fortunately, we had driven the length of the main street (Water Street) when searching for the hotel so we only had to find on-street parking and search for a restaurant. There was a small plaza with souvenir shops and a modest seafood eating place just off the main street and we opted to eat there. When we returned to the hotel, another car was in the parking lot, and two travellers, an older couple from Ottawa, were leaving the building. The husband of the couple said, after they had settled in their room he detected an uneasy feeling. He was so alarmed that he convinced his wife to leave in favour of finding somewhere else. He left a note in the foyer as nobody was in attendance. Such an ominous sign didn't help our situation, knowing it was likely that we would be all alone in the hotel during the night. And the fog didn't go away.

We wondered if sleep would elude us, given the haunted nature of the property. Indeed, strange noises were heard (which may have been the natural expansion/contraction movements of the building) and our imaginations were stimulated. The night passed and, following ablutions, it was time for breakfast. Our factotum was around and rustled up a reasonable meal; explaining that he was training for a job in the hospitality trade and this was a way of gaining experience. He mentioned, though, his access to the hotel, which was the investment property of a professional couple, was limited. It seems that even the housekeeping chores were somewhat neglected, and the situation didn't improve as the days went by.

Nevertheless, we were determined to make the best of a bad situation and embarked on our day trips. The first was to reconnoitre St. Andrews by-the-Sea (as it is sometimes called) and the neighbouring community of St. George. Although it was dull, at least the fog had dissipated and we explored Water Street from end to end. The seaside resort had first attracted well-heeled visitors to the area and many substantial mansions attest to this. Also the internationally renowned Algonquin Hotel Resort with its prizewinning golf course catered to the wealthy. Today St. Andrews is a destination for ordinary vacationers favouring the recreational water activities of Passamaquoddy Bay. Water Street is lined with a hodge-podge of frame buildings reflecting the typical maritime architecture found in the Atlantic provinces. The street is also well

known for opportunities to buy locally made handcrafts and woollen products. Other places we visited were the Greenock Church with its towering white steeple, and the old blockhouse. Although it never saw action, the blockhouse is the only remaining example of twelve similar structures that were built as part of the coastal defences during the War of 1812.

Although the fog rolled in again from the ocean, the rest of the day was spent in the neighbouring community of St. George. Driving from St. Andrews by way of the Fundy Coastal Drive scenic route, we arrived at St. George where the Magaguadavic River flows into Passamaquoddy Bay. Nicknamed the “Granite Town” because of the red granite deposits there, St. George boasts Canada’s oldest Presbyterian Kirk. From the lower bridge there is an awesome view of the rushing and roaring Magaguadavic River as it thunders through a deep gorge with a historic mill perched on the precipitous cliff. Returning to St. Andrews, we were faced with the same dilemma for an evening meal and endured a second night of strange sounds.

The following morning we entered the dining room to find that there was nobody around to serve breakfast. After waiting for a short while, we investigated and found in the deserted kitchen a scene reminiscent of the ghost ship *Marie Celeste*. Items such as cooking utensils, eggs and bacon, and a full pot of fresh, hot coffee were set out in readiness. We elected for a more simple meal of cereals, toast and coffee, and were just finishing our meal when the young man appeared looking the worst for wear and evidently hungover. Noticing we had ‘self-catered’ he said he would not charge us for that day’s breakfast.

We then embarked on a day trip with the destination being Campobello Island. Retracing our route to St. George, we followed the signs to the L’Etete-to-Deer Island ferry. Not far along the road I heard a clicking noise coming from the front of the car. The rotating nature of the noise signified that one of the tyres had picked up a foreign object. After stopping and investigating, I found a roofing nail well and truly embedded in the tyre tread. Now this was a Saturday and we were miles from any community. With little choice we had to return to St. George hoping that the tyre wouldn’t fail (I could have installed the compact spare tyre [colloquially known as a “donut” – see Chapter 8], but it was better to spend the time finding a garage). The first service station that we encountered was open, but the mechanic on duty was too busy even to fix a flat tyre. However, he told us of a small repair shop further along the road. When we arrived, the proprietor there was just about to close, but he kindly reopened his garage and, for a mere \$5.75, made a quick repair with a rubber plug. We counted ourselves very lucky to be back on the road with a serviceable tyre and, once again, headed for the L’Etete-to-Deer Island ferry.

The provincially operated ferry connects Deer Island with the mainland, similar to the Glenora ferry linking Trenton with Kingston, Ontario (See Chapters 9 and 10). We knew this would be the first of two ferries to reach Campobello Island. The 3.1 mile (5 km) passage through the chain of islets didn’t take long before we arrived on Deer Island. Hwy. 772 is the main road on the island and we headed for the Cummings Cove-to-Welshpool Ferry which goes to Campobello Island.

When we arrived at the ferry dock, everything appeared to be closed up. With the summer tourist season over, the privately operated ferry was no longer running. This was, of course, a major disappointment and, short of driving a long distance to the St. Stephen/Calais border crossing into Maine and continuing to



*Old Blockhouse, St. Andrews, New Brunswick,
September, 2000.*



*Magaguadavic River, Deep Gorge and Historic Mill,
St. George, New Brunswick, September, 2000.*



*Seascape, Irving Nature Park near Saint John,
New Brunswick, September, 2000.*



*Chocolate Cove, Deer Island, New Brunswick,
September, 2000.*



*Fall Scene of the Maitland River, Saltford, Ontario,
October, 2000.*



*Fall Scene at the Forks of the Credit Provincial Park
near Belfountain, Ontario, November, 2000.*

Lubec, there was no other way onto Campobello Island. We reluctantly continued on the Hwy. 772 loop back to the Deer Island-to-L'Etete ferry, with a brief stop at Chocolate Cove to photograph the seascape.

On the last morning after a cooked and served breakfast, we checked out and said farewell to the factotum of the Rossmount Inn, then headed north on Hwys. 127 and 3 to the TCH. Following the River Valley Scenic Drive to Edmundston and the New Brunswick-Québec provincial border, we stopped for the night at an attractive hotel on the shores of the St. Lawrence River at Notre-Dame-du-Portage, Québec. Once again it was time to exercise my limited French language knowledge, but it seemed to work and we enjoyed a nice evening meal and comfortable room. The view of the river was particularly remarkable.

After leaving Notre-Dame-du-Portage we drove along Route 132, also known as *Route des Navigateurs*, admiring the small communities and their Mediæval heritage. At Saint-Roches-des-Aulnaies the *Seigneurie des Aulnaies* is a collection of historic French Canadiana including a multistorey stone mill building dating back centuries. We changed onto the fast multi-lane Route 20 to continue our homeward journey, then eventually Hwys. 401 and 8 to Goderich.

Events during the last three months of 2000

The autumn colours were brilliant this year between mid-October and early November, especially in Goderich and around our immediate neighbourhood. This meant hiking some of the local trails and also going further afield. One beauty spot that had intrigued us for some time was the so called 'Forks of the Credit.' At this point the Upper and Lower Credit River meet and the confluence is located in the Forks of the Credit Provincial Park. A weekend in November was planned to stay at the Millcroft Inn, then make the short drive to the village of Belfountain and a hike to the forks. Because of the narrow, twisting roads, parking is restricted to official parking areas at the various trailheads. We parked accordingly and followed the famed Bruce Trail through the hilly terrain to a bridge and overlook where the two rivers met. Staying at the Millcroft Inn, of course, had its usual benefits of drinking wine in front of a roaring log fire and, as we also celebrated my 27th anniversary of emigration, enjoying the inn's fine dining.

Letters from England kept us informed about Dad's situation, and how he still maintained a daily vigil with Kay at the care home. By this time, Pat, his steady companion, had been influenced to sell her property and move in with Dad. We were pleased with this arrangement knowing that Dad, at age 77, was also being cared for and having regular, nutritious meals. However, he was finding the cost of motoring becoming more prohibitive implying that he would eventually give up driving.

Soon after I emigrated, my good friend, Roger Moore, and I started a correspondence chess game on November 11th, 1973. Over the years the game's fortunes fluctuated, but towards the end Roger held the upper hand. My 78th move – made exactly 27 years to the date of starting – was a prelude to him declaring, "check mate." Roger also wrote to tell us that Stephen's fiancée, Erin, visited them for a week in February even though the betrothed couple spoke to each other on the telephone every day. This was reciprocated in June when Stephen visited Erin in Canada for two weeks. "Isn't love grand" was Roger's reaction. Despite Stephen's application for emigration to Canada being turned down, he persevered to satisfy the authorities'

requirements and was successful in securing a one-year contract job with the Home Office in Birmingham testing DNA samples. Later in the year, Stephen made another visit to Canada to arrange the church and wedding reception. He also took the opportunity to locate a forensic science company in Toronto and had an informal interview culminating in a possible job offer once he settled in Canada.

Lindsey's situation, however, was less optimistic. Even though she had contacted the Château Laurier in Ottawa and a job vacancy had been kept open for her, the bureaucrats rejected her visa application. Roger and Susan had even forwarded extra funding to satisfy a requirement, but to no avail. Poor Lindsey was in tears when she broke the news to her parents and reluctantly had to return home to England. If it could be called a consolation, at least the Moore family was together as one for Christmas and the New Year.

The current Champion Series VI model motor graders, launched the previous year, were becoming more accepted in the field. However, the market remained soft and the company started to lay off workers and expected to reduce the daily build rate from five to four machines at the beginning of 2001. It was even rumoured that the Christmas shutdown could be extended to include all of January. There was also a major change in upper management when Scott Hall, president and CEO, moved to fill a vacant position at the Volvo CE head office in Brussels, Belgium. Scott's replacement was Anders Larsson, a Swede working as the vice president of manufacturing and purchasing in the Volvo articulated hauler division. Anders started in Goderich on November 13th, 2000. Patrick Olney, vice president of finance and CFO acted as the interim CEO between Scott and Anders.

The hiring of Anders Larsson as the new president and CEO not only meant additional influence from Volvo CE, but also the ramping up of re-branding the product from Champion to Volvo. We expected to retire the Champion name at the end of the year; not only the machine decals but all forms of corporate media. This meant changes to the technical publications artwork and removing all references to Champion in the text.

I was assigned to go on a business trip to Charlotte, North Carolina, as the C-Series motor graders made there were being redesigned to become certifiable for the European market (stringent regulations) and the technical manuals had to meet the standards before the machines could be imported. Originally I was traveling with technical specialist, John Chapman. My travel plans this time were different because of budget restraints. This meant I was obliged to relinquish my usual nonstop Detroit to Charlotte route. Then John suffered a heart attack and couldn't go, but the tickets had already been bought. I was then told to salvage the cost of my ticket by rescheduling the flights using the new route which was flying from Hamilton (Mount Hope) to Pittsburgh, then changing planes to Charlotte. Returning home was the reverse journey — amounting to four flights in four different planes with the attendant tight connection schedules.

I was becoming quite familiar with Mount Hope Airport; having flown in the CWH Boeing Stearman earlier in August. As it was a regional airport there weren't many facilities and so I sat in the departure lounge awaiting my flight. It was the time when mobile phones (cell phones) were gaining popularity, and a fellow passenger sitting close by was making multiple calls on his device. I found this extremely annoying as his loud voice penetrated the lounge. It's one of the many reasons why I haven't considered owning or

using a mobile phone. The flight departed for Pittsburgh and it was here at the U.S. Immigrations desk where I was grilled by an agent as to why I was making this trip. He took a lot of convincing, but eventually passed me through. Just as well as my connecting flight to Charlotte departed at a different terminal. This meant taking the monorail link between termini. Fortunately I had time to drink a richly deserved beer before leaving for Charlotte. Following a usual hectic and fun week there I returned home; although the connection from Pittsburgh to Hamilton was touch and go because of the extra time factoring in the monorail link and I almost missed the flight.

It was another busy year for the SAE Southwestern Ontario Section. Seven events were organized in 2000: including three plant tours – Formet Industries, St. Thomas; Meritor Suspensions, Chatham, and Timberjack Inc., Woodstock, Ontario. Guest speakers spoke at the Quality Inn, Woodstock, University of Western Ontario (UWO), and the “Black Angus” restaurant, London, Ontario, on subjects ranging from aerospace engines to bearing design and finite element analysis. SAE students at UWO gave presentations showcasing their various projects, followed by a talk on virtual manufacturing. Half way through the year the executive board appointed Marc Rochon as the new section chair, replacing the outgoing Ian McKenzie. The Section’s newsletter that I produced was recognised with two SAE Section Publication awards – Special Recognition in Newsletter Chair Column and Meeting Announcement Best Black & White, May, 2000.

Throughout the year my hobby business activities were steady and profitable. Two major projects included additional chapters to Bill Barlow Sr.’s new book, “Goderich: Link to the Past”, and a large, coloured flow diagram for the Thomson-Gordon Group. The accumulated receipts helped to offset the cost of a new computer. The Apple Macintosh IIVX computer bought in July, 1993, was retired and I ordered the newest model called the Apple PowerMac G4/450 Cube with USB connections. Together with other hardware and software, the equipment was bought from Apple dealer CompuSmart on December 5th, 2000, for \$5330.09. The new machine’s capacious memory and storage obviated floppy discs, but later I invested in a compact disc (CD) burner for archiving purposes. Monica took over using the Macintosh IIVX and we shared the use of the Hewlett-Packard 6MP laser printer.

On December 12, 2000, a significant snowstorm affected much of Southwestern Ontario and paralysed most transportation. A huge accumulation of snow had buried the entire front end of my car, and it took a long time to clear a path from the front door as well as removing the drift around the car. Production at work ceased for a while, but because I lived within walking distance to the office I was able to report to work. The snow clearing crews had done a great job opening the roads and pavements (sidewalks) in town. However, the wind was constantly whipping up the snowdrifts and it wasn’t long before some pavements became blocked once again. One morning I was making my way to work through deep drifts on the pavement of Albert Street when I slipped on some hidden ice and fell down. I landed heavily on my right hand, but regained my balance and continued my journey. Later in the day it occurred to me that I may have sprained my wrist and I wrapped a supporting bandage around the joint. We spent the Christmas and New Year’s holiday at home, but since the ache symptoms hadn’t subsided I went to the hospital for an assessment. X-rays were taken and the doctor concluded that I had broken the scaphoid, which is the most important part of the wrist bone structure. I then had to wear a short plaster cast, which although cumbersome was not too inconvenient. At least I could still drive. However, the situation was to change in the coming year.

Champion era ends, Volvo era begins

The twenty-first century, having already been ushered in, encouraged us to continue with the tradition of welcoming each new year at the Hessenland Country Inn. As usual, we congregated with the regular guests. The proceedings were enjoyable with a hearty meal and nonstop dancing entertainment that extended into the wee small hours and provided by local DJ, “Dr. Hook.” After the merriment, we retreated to our motel room along the corridor.

The new year, 2001, however, also heralded a major change at work. One evening there was a knock on our front door and, when I opened it, outside were Mr. and Mrs. Reg Good, two well known faces of a local courier delivery service. Mrs. Good thrust a cylindrical package into my hand and, noticing my quizzical look, said, “You’ll find out what’s inside.” Intrigued, I carefully opened the package and extracted a white cotton T-shirt. Imprinted on it were the names of all 732 Champion employees and above the list was the slogan, “There are 732 important names at Champion and we’re only changing one.” On January 1st, 2001, Champion Road Machinery Company Ltd. became re-branded as Volvo Motor Graders Ltd. Retiring the Champion corporate identity was bittersweet for the veteran employees, all of whom associated the product with that name.

The change was consolidated when on January 17th, 2001, a model G720 VHP, S/N 33000, the first motor grader built in Goderich identified with the Volvo decal, was officially handed over. It was fitting that this machine was symbolically given to the Town of Goderich for an agreed time period of ten years and, at a special ceremony, Anders Larsson presented the keys to mayor Deb Shewfelt. Also present was Champion’s former owner and CEO, Bruce Sully, who, together with other high-ranking Volvo executives, praised this new episode in the evolution of the company.

Despite the handicap of the second short plaster cast (see later description), I was able to make a business trip to Charlotte, North Carolina, this time reverting to my nonstop Detroit to Charlotte route. Fortunately the rental car was equipped with an automatic transmission so manually shifting gears wasn’t an issue. I did get lots of sympathy – from the waitress at the Pawtuckett Village Shopping Center restaurant where I normally had lunch, to my colleagues at the plant. There had been a change of engineering personnel and Joey Lyzen, who was something of a ‘hippy’ type, but also fun company, was hired as a new designer. The C-Series motor graders were now re-branded Volvo to enhance the complete product line.

Other happenings leading up to our spring vacation

Throughout the years that Dad spent on his solicitude of Kay he never missed a day’s visit to the care home. I suspect that although he had resigned himself to Kay’s Alzheimer terminal condition, he continued to hold out for a glimmer of hope. That hope faded on January 18th, 2001, when Kay mercifully passed away at age 82. Fortunately with Pat’s companionship, Dad was able to overcome the sorrow and, with my assistance, communicated his appreciation to both the staff of the care home and the undertakers for their compassion during this difficult period in his life.

There was an assessment done some time after I had my right wrist and forearm encased in the short plaster cast. A different doctor (Dr. Anand) checked the latest X-ray images and determined that the cast provided insufficient support to assist healing the scaphoid bone break. It was necessary to fit an extended cast – one that also encased part of my upper arm. Also my right arm was to be bent at the elbow and supported in a sling. The time allocation for this arrangement was six weeks; then another short plaster cast for a total incapacitation of three months. The extended cast now meant that I was unable to drive; a situation that was remedied when it was replaced by the second short plaster cast. Now that my right arm was immobilised, I had to learn how to use my left hand for daily routines such as shaving and cleaning my teeth.

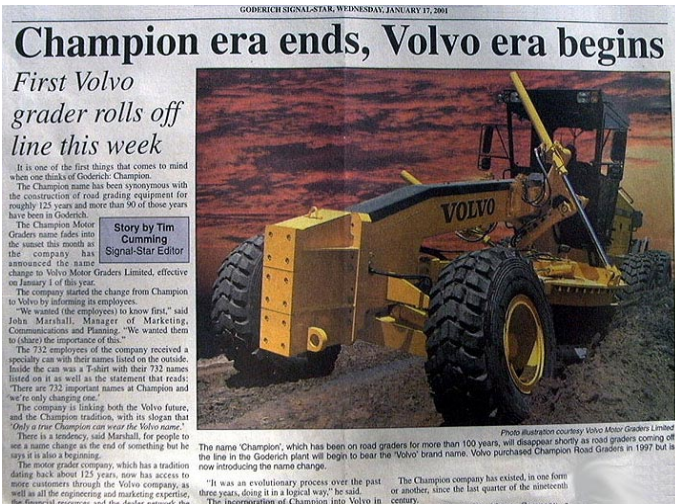
It became clear that the current home computer setup required new office furniture. The old desk, steno chair and printer stand had served us well, but now needed to be replaced. Monica and I spent a great deal of time searching through product catalogues until we settled on a practical arrangement and ordered two matching desks, a bookcase and two black leather office chairs. I advertised the old furniture on the company's notice boards (bulletin boards) and they were bought by Norm McDougall, a worker on the shop floor. Later, the office supply people arrived to assemble the knockdown units and our den sported the new furniture, complete with an array of computer hardware and a bookcase filled to capacity.

Personal computer (PC) activity was also taking place for the first time at my old friend Roger Moore's home in England. In March I received a letter he had composed on his new PC with a promise that further communications would be e-mail messages once he was connected to the Internet. Lindsey was the driving force behind investing in the family PC. Since her return to England, she had actively looked for a job and, after a short and not too exciting time working at the Village Hotel, she changed employment and was now using PC technology at the Accounts Department of the Hilton Hotel in Coventry.

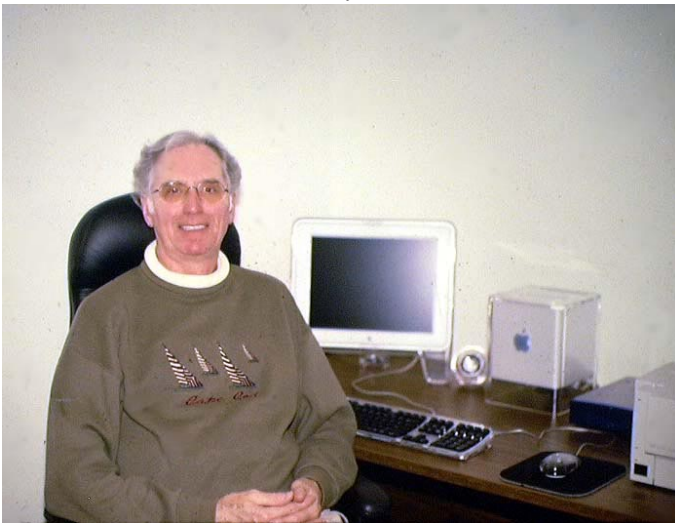
Roger informed us that Stephen's Canadian employment situation remained fluid with no firm offers. Stephen had committed himself to life in Canada and the wedding was scheduled for July 28th, 2001. In the meantime he had returned to Canada as a visitor, reunited with Erin, and also contacted the Toronto forensic science company where he was previously interviewed. The job opportunity, however, was denied him as he was without an official work visa. He was later contacted for reconsideration and was told that if he was the successful candidate the job would remain open for six months – time for him to apply for a work visa once he was married (which was a condition of application).

North Carolina Outer Banks

The usual hard Canadian winter had turned into spring and the longer days and milder weather encouraged us to organize a vacation. The chosen destination was the Outer Banks, an archipelago located off the eastern shoreline of North Carolina. Among the attractions were the Wright Brothers National Monument and site of the first controlled, powered heavier-than-air flight at Kitty Hawk, and the scenic drive along the Cape Hatteras National Seashore. Researching other stops along the way, we came across the Moravian congregation settlement and museum of Old Salem; the Duke Homestead and tobacco industry archives in Durham; several notable lighthouses, and the opportunity to return home through the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.



Headline in the Goderich Signal-Star Newspaper, Goderich, Ontario, January, 2001.



Barry with New PowerMac G4/450 Cube Computer and Furniture, Goderich, Ontario, March, 2001.



Interior of the "Home Church" in the Old Salem Historic District, Winston-Salem, NC, May, 2001.

Just an Ordinary Bloke



Headline in the Goderich Signal-Star Newspaper, Goderich, Ontario, January, 2001.



The 1771 "Miksch House" in the Old Salem Historic District, Winston-Salem, NC, May, 2001.



The 1770 Cemetery or "God's Acre", Old Salem Historic District, Winston-Salem, NC, May, 2001.



Duke Homestead Plantation House, Durham, North Carolina, May, 2001.



Duke Homestead Tobacco Processing Barn, Durham, North Carolina, May, 2001.



The Leary House, a Heritage Property in Edenton, North Carolina, May, 2001.



Bodie Light, Bodie Island, Outer Banks, North Carolina, May, 2001.



Hatteras Light, Hatteras Island, Outer Banks, North Carolina, May, 2001.



Monica on Top of Hatteras Light, Hatteras Island, Outer Banks, North Carolina, May, 2001.

Although no record exists of the route it is probably safe to assume that the most direct journey was from Detroit to Toledo and, using Interstate highways and state turnpikes, with a stopover in Canton, Ohio, south through West Virginia, Virginia and eventually to Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

The modern twin city of Winston-Salem has its roots in the mid-18th century when the area was settled by immigrants of the Moravian faith. Close to downtown is the Old Salem Historic District that showcases the preserved buildings and way of life of the original Moravian congregation. Now a 'living museum', costumed interpreters demonstrate traditional crafts and skills to visitors. Several of the 18th and 19th century buildings, such as the Brethren's workshop and the "home church", are open to the public. The Salem Tavern, now classified as a National Historic Landmark, was particularly interesting as it operated as a restaurant, and we sampled the typical 18th century fare from a list of basic foodstuffs and served in a colonial atmosphere. A unique part of the settlement was the cemetery, or "God's Acre" (*Gottesaker*) where the burials of men and women were segregated into their own respective plots.

Major industries in the area are tobacco farming and processing, with the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company being a sizeable employer. An historical background to the industry can be found at the Duke Homestead State Historic Site in nearby Durham. Interstate highway I-40 connects Winston-Salem with Durham and, at the site, visitors can tour the restored 1852 plantation house, its tobacco barns and related artifacts such as 'bright leaf' tobacco plants that could be handled. The onsite museum documents aspects of the tobacco industry, including farming techniques, processing and the history of tobacco; as well as the Duke family's rise to preeminence when establishing the American Tobacco Company.

Resuming our journey to the Outer Banks, Interstate highway I-40 continued to the I-440 Raleigh bypass where we connected with U.S. Hwy. 64 through Rocky Mount to Williamston. Branching off to follow U.S. Hwy. 17 we skirted the Roanoke River estuary and Albermarle Sound, and stopped to admire some of the heritage properties in Edenton. Several architectural styles were represented, including Georgian and Stick.

The final stage took us past the indented coastline to Elizabeth City and, joining U.S. Hwy. 158, to the beginning of the North Carolina portion of the Outer Banks barrier islands; crossing the Intracoastal Waterway from Powells Point to Bodie Island. To get to our hotel, we had to divert onto state road No. 12, which was the original route from the town of Kitty Hawk through Kill Devil Hills, Nags Head, Whalebone and the communities along the Cape Hatteras National Seashore as far as Ocracoke. Before reaching the hotel however, we stopped to admire the Wright Brothers National Monument located at the top of Kill Devil Hill. It was within walking distance from the secured parking lot and although it was getting late, the guard said we wouldn't be locked in. So we made a cursory visit, knowing that we would be returning for a more thorough look around the monument and the Visitor Center.

The next day's weather promised to be sunny and warm, so we elected to drive the length of state road No. 12 – the 70 mile (110 km) scenic route of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore. The first of several landmark lighthouses was the Bodie Light. Each lighthouse on the Outer Banks is recognizable by its unique black and white paint scheme – the Bodie Light having concentric horizontal bands. Crossing the Oregon Inlet, the road entered Hatteras Island. We had expected an unobstructed view of the Atlantic Ocean