

as we drove along. However, the height of the sand dunes parallel to the road was such that no such vista was available. This was a major disappointment. The Outer Banks islands are susceptible to the effects of severe weather conditions, with areas prone to flooding and significant hurricane wind damage. Sturdy pilings keep buildings above flood levels and this was a common feature for housing developments.

At Cape Hatteras is the well known landmark of the Hatteras Light. This lighthouse is instantly recognizable with its helical 'barber pole' black and white stripes. The tower's overall height is 208 ft. (63 m), making it the tallest in the U.S.A. It is open to the public, and anyone wanting to visit the gallery around the light must climb 268 steps to the 191 ft. (58 m) level. We both accepted the challenge and ascended the tower to be rewarded with remarkable views of the pounding surf on a fairly clear day. The Hatteras Island Visitor Center, formerly the old lightkeeper's quarters, informs tourists of facts about Cape Hatteras and the story of how on September 14th, 1999, the 5,000 ton (5080 tonne) Hatteras Light was physically moved 2,900 ft. (884 m) inland to keep it away from the severe erosion of the seashore.

Ocracoke Island is the last in the chain connected by state road No. 12 and is accessed using a ferry operated by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The frequent ferry service crosses Hatteras Inlet, and the road terminates at the village of Ocracoke where two additional (toll) ferries from the mainland also dock. A significant structure is the 75 ft. (23 m) high Ocracoke Light. Built in 1823, it is the oldest lighthouse in North Carolina. The remoteness of Ocracoke Island has meant its inhabitants have retained a local dialect. However, this trait is gradually being lost or modified with the influence of modern communications and assimilation of mainlanders on the island.

Since state road No. 12 is the only route on the Outer Banks archipelago, we had to retrace our way back to the hotel. The evening meal, however, was eaten in a ramshackled oceanside restaurant; inside of which the dining room was festooned with flashing neon signs, a multitude of enamelled advertising posters and other memorabilia harking from the 1930s and 1940s. Unfortunately no photographic record was made.

We now came to the highlight of our visit to the Outer Banks. Knowing my enthusiasm for all things aeronautical, it was an experience of a lifetime to visit where the Wright brothers made their first controlled, powered heavier-than-air flight at Kill Devil Hills, four miles (6.5 km) south of the seafront town of Kitty Hawk. At the time of the four experimental flights, Kill Devil Hills had not been incorporated into a community so Kitty Hawk is usually ascribed to the flights.

For three years, brothers Wilbur and Orville Wright from Dayton, Ohio, conducted glider experiments from the high sand dunes of Kill Devil Hill; capitalising on the area's steady winds and its remoteness from external interference. On December 17th, 1903, the brothers made four sustained heavier-than-air controlled flights, and visitors can trace them on foot between markers signifying the start and finish of each flight. It was exciting doing this knowing we walked along the actual paths of these pioneering feats. Nearby is the Visitor Center and museum containing original artifacts and life-size replicas of the Wright brothers' 1902 glider and the 1903 Flyer powered heavier-than-air aircraft. Located onsite are two wooden sheds recreating the Wright brothers' living quarters and aircraft hangar, First Flight Airport general aviation airfield and the Wright Brothers National Monument.



Replica of Wright Brothers' 1903 Flyer, Outer Banks, Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina, May, 2001.



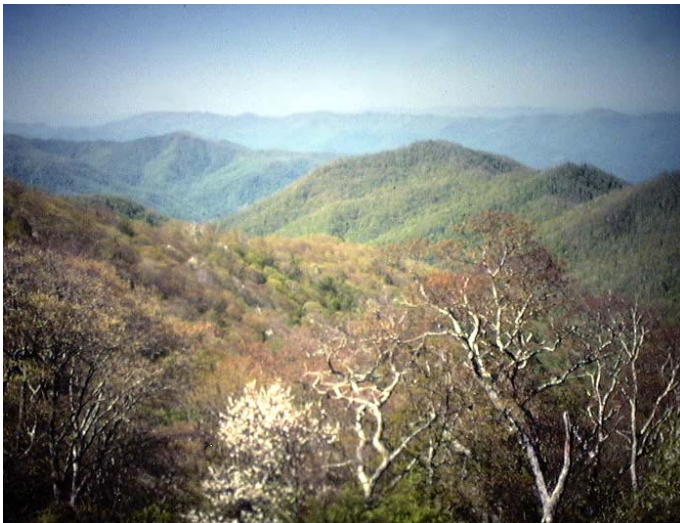
Wright Brothers Flight Path & Cairns, Outer Banks, Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina, May, 2001.



Wright Brothers National Monument, Outer Banks, Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina, May, 2001.



Barry at the Wright Brothers National Monument, Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina, May, 2001.



Panorama of Ridges from the Bunches Bald Lookout, Blue Ridge Parkway, North Carolina, May, 2001.



Visitor Center and Pioneer Farmstead, Great Smoky Mountains Nat. Park, North Carolina, May, 2001.



Panorama of Ridges from Clingmans Dome Lookout, Great Smoky Mountains Nat. Park, NC, May, 2001.



Panorama of Ridges from Newfound Gap Lookout, Great Smoky Mountains Nat. Park, NC, May, 2001.



Erin and Stephen on their Wedding Day, Oakville, Ontario, July 28th, 2001.



Erin and Stephen on their Wedding Day, Oakville, Ontario, July 28th, 2001.



Bridal Party on Stephen and Erin's Wedding Day, Oakville, Ontario, July 28th, 2001.



Roger, Monica and Susan on Stephen and Erin's Wedding Day, Oakville, Ontario, July 28th, 2001.

Standing out from the clear blue sky, the 60 ft. (18 m) granite monument tower, dedicated in 1932, and situated at the top of Kill Devil Hill, was a remarkable sight. At the base of the Art Deco tower is inscribed the phrase: “In commemoration of the conquest of the air by the brothers Wilbur and Orville Wright conceived by genius achieved by dauntless resolution and unconquerable faith.” Doors leading into the tower are ornamented with panels showing actual and mythological scenes representing the conquest of the air.

Having fulfilled the goals of the North Carolina Outer Banks portion of our trip, we started the journey home and headed west along U.S. Hwy. 64 from Manteo to Rocky Mount. The Hampton Inn at Rocky Mount was just across from one of our favourite restaurant chains, the “Outback Steakhouse”, so we were most pleased with this location. The next day was primarily driving along Interstate highway I-40 from Rocky Mount to Asheville. By the time we had checked into the hotel in Asheville it was getting late and we started to search for a restaurant. Not knowing the geography of the city, we found ourselves in a poor neighbourhood and more by luck than judgement escaped onto Tunnel Road that was lined on both sides with strip malls. Another popular restaurant chain, “Applebees”, eventually came to the rescue.

The second highlight of the vacation was the journey through the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Back in April, 1998, we had planned to make this journey through the park following a stay at a resort hotel in the foothills community of Cherokee. At that time, however, the weather conditions deteriorated and we were obliged to abandon the trip (see earlier in this chapter). This time, however, the sun was shining as we left Asheville on the famed Blue Ridge Parkway which meandered its way through the Pisgah National Forest. After driving through one of the numerous tunnels, we stopped at the Bunches Bald lookout (elevation 4,925 ft. [1501 m]) for a break and photo-opportunity. The Blue Ridge Parkway continues through a designated Cherokee Indian Reservation until it connects with U.S. Hwy. 441 and the southern entrance to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. We stopped at the Oconaluftee Visitor Center and Pioneer Farmstead to gather some brochures and learn about the history of the area. The farmstead contained replica cabins, and park rangers explained the pioneer lifestyles of the early frontier days.

The scenic drive along U.S. Hwy. 441 (called the Newfound Gap Road through the park) made a steady 3,000 ft. (914 m) climb through the hardwood forest. In parts, silvertree blossom stood out among the young sprouting leaves. After negotiating several hairpin bends we reached the turn-off to Clingmans Dome Road. Clingmans Dome is the highest point in the park (6,643 ft. [2025 m]) and the road, with numerous viewing points, leads to a cul-de-sac and a large car park. When it is accessible (the road is closed for part of the year), the Clingmans Dome observation tower is a hugely popular destination for visitors wanting to experience “On Top of Old Smoky.” A steep, paved trail leads from the car park to the summit and tower. On this particular day we could see a long way despite the air pollution that often obscures the view. Part of the evergreen spruce-fir forest had been ravaged by fire as evidenced by the many skeletal trees. However, natural rebirth was in process as new growth was gradually taking over. Newfound Gap (elevation 5,046 ft. [1538 m]) is located on the Tennessee/North Carolina state line and offers more spectacular scenic views from a rest area. From here the Newfound Gap Road descends through a series of hairpin bends and tunnels to the foothills and continues to the tourist and winter sports community of Gatlinburg. Vastly overcommercialised, Gatlinburg attracts busloads of visitors wanting to immerse themselves in hillbilly lifestyle and entertainment. We stopped to look around the town centre dominated by pseudo-Alpine architecture and ski

resort aerial cableways. Wanting a small refreshment we decided to buy some ice cream cones and, even though we were not in the tourism high season, the prices were outrageous. Further along U.S. Hwy. 441 were the equally tacky tourist traps of Pigeon Forge and Dollywood, so we bypassed them until we reached state road No. 66, Interstate highways I-40 and I-640 and our hotel on the outskirts of Knoxville, Tennessee. From Knoxville we could easily join Interstate highway I-75 to drive north on the old familiar route through Lexington, Cincinnati, Detroit to the Port Huron/Sarnia border crossing and home.

Wedding bells for Stephen and Erin

We had received the official invitation for Stephen and Erin's wedding to be held at St. Jude's Anglican Church in Oakville, Ontario, on July 28th, 2001. Stephen's parents, Roger and Susan Moore, and his grandmother, aunt and uncle flew over from England for the ceremony. After the wedding rehearsal, an extension to the merriment was a private party held at a waterfront bar in Oakville called "Sharky's." We then retired to our room at the Monte Carlo Hotel.

Next day, guests arrived at the church; including the wedding party with Stephen's sister, Lindsey, as chief bridesmaid. It was a picture perfect day and the bride arrived on the arm of her father, Brian James, who gave her away at the altar. After the matrimonial service and signing of the register, the smiling bride and groom walked down the aisle followed by the bridal party and guests. Outside the church (no confetti, but soap bubbles floated around the bridal couple), formal photographs were taken; then a Highland piper led the column down the street to the reception area in the grounds of the Erchless Estate heritage house. Built in 1858 for the founder of Oakville, this property is now the Oakville Museum.

In the grounds, *hors d'œuvres* were served and later a formal, candlelit dinner took place under a large marquee. Following the usual speeches, toasts and anecdotes, the tables were cleared for dancing, started, of course, by the bride and groom. All in all a wonderful wedding.

Now married, Stephen could apply for his work visa. In the meantime, Erin had already secured a job as an activities organizer at a private school in the Hamilton area and, for the time being, they were living rent-free in a small apartment owned by Erin's grandfather. So they started out on their married life going in the right direction.

Trapped by a terrorist attack

Tuesday, September 11, 2001, dawned a beautiful day, but nobody was prepared for the catastrophic events that were to unfold that morning. We had decided on a mini-vacation and considered Mackinac Island, Michigan, as a likely destination. I had heard about the famous Grand Hotel and, as the island was traffic-free, there were opportunities for recreational walking. For accommodation we chose a small hotel on the island and prepaid for the room (at a premium price due to an unfavourable exchange rate). We anticipated a straight forward journey: from the Sarnia/Port Huron border crossing onto Interstate highway I-69 to Flint and connecting with Interstate highway I-75 for the long drive north to our

hotel at Mackinaw City next to the Straits of Mackinac. After a coffee break we resumed the journey to Sarnia and, at the Port Huron U.S. Customs and Immigration border check, only a few cursory questions: citizenship, destination, how long a stay, were asked. We were waved through with a polite “Have a nice day” and still nothing concerning the horrific situation that was developing in New York City was filtering through. Not until we were comfortably on our way on Interstate I-69 did we bother to turn on the car radio.

The air waves were flooded with initial reports of a major catastrophe in New York City. No matter which radio station we tuned into, stunned announcers were relaying the news. I said to Monica, “This sounds serious.” Fortunately there was little to distract us on the Interstate highways and it was going to be a long journey before we arrived at Mackinaw City. Gradually the details from multiple sources were becoming clarified. Two passenger airliners had collided with the twin towers of the World Trade Center in Lower Manhattan. A third plane had crashed into the Pentagon (the headquarters of the United States Department of Defense) in Virginia, and yet another had come down in a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The authorities were baffled although soon considered that this wasn’t just a random act, but a possible coordinated terror attack. We continued to be spellbound with each dispatch up to the eventual total collapse of both towers and the effect on the surrounding neighbourhood. At one point we stopped at an Interstate highway rest area to consider our options. Should we continue or turn back? As we had prepaid the island hotel room, we decided to press on with the trip. In any case, radio listeners were informed that all the borders were closed to incoming and outgoing traffic; which meant we were marooned in the U.S.A.

As soon as we had checked into our hotel room at Mackinaw City, we turned on the TV to monitor the visual reports. Numerous video footage showed the full extent of the catastrophe, from the first burning tower to the actual impact on the second building. Eyewitness reactions were almost hysterical and, later, when images of the collapsing towers dominated the newscasts, total disbelief was seen on the faces of reporters and bystanders. With hindsight, of course, we were watching history unfolding with its ugly ramifications of vengeance unleashed by the militant group al-Qaeda headed by Osama bin Laden.

Since we were stuck in the U.S.A., we continued with our vacation to Mackinac Island until it was safe to return home. In the evening we ate at a local restaurant and, returning to the hotel, I noticed a car with an Ontario registration (licence plate). The number on the plate suggested it was registered in Goderich. The car’s owner approached and we recognized each other. It was Bill Barwick, a neighbour who lives two blocks away on our street. Bill and his wife, Pam, were on their way to see their son in Colorado Springs, but naturally we had a lengthy conversation about the current news. As darkness fell, flashing lights and sirens from emergency vehicles guarding Mackinac Bridge, a strategic structure linking the Upper and Lower Michigan peninsulas, could be seen, together with Coast Guard activity in the Straits of Mackinac.

Two toll ferries operate between Mackinac Island and the mainland. From Mackinaw City there is a frequent jet boat service to the main community on the island. Although the weather was overcast, it promised to improve as the day progressed. We boarded the jet boat and soon the craft was underway leaving a huge gusher of water (popularly called the ‘rooster tail’) from the jet propulsion in its wake. After docking, we checked into the hotel and did a little preliminary exploration before looking for a restaurant. Despite the elevated price and unfavourable exchange rate I enjoyed a meal of plank salmon; the first time I had eaten it.

Most of the island is designated as Mackinac Island State Park, which includes Fort Mackinac, an historic military outpost established by the British to protect its fur trading interests. The fort reverted to the Americans after the revolutionary war, but was occupied by the British early in the War of 1812. In 1814, American forces invaded and fought a small battle at British Landing, but failed to recapture the island. A cannon and military cemetery mark the spot. The fort eventually reverted to American control under treaty.

The next day we started to explore the island on foot. Only emergency or service vehicles are allowed on the main road, but we had to be aware of tourist horse-drawn carriages, cyclists and roller bladers. A paved perimeter road circles the island and numerous paths cross the fairly undulating interior countryside. Some high points, for example, Anne's Tablet, have lookouts with views of the Straits of Mackinac, the Mackinac Bridge and lighthouses such as the Round Island Passage Light.

The Grand Hotel, opened in 1887, is an outstanding example of the many preserved Victorian-style buildings on the island. The lengthy colonnade, three storeys high, central tower and brilliant white painted exterior dominates the community. The white façade is punctuated with bright yellow awnings, and several huge national flags add further colour. The hotel's esplanade overlooks a formal garden; much sought after by tourists, and there is an air of genteel quality harking back to more affluent times. As we walked up the drive we were approached by a uniformed woman, obviously a member of the hotel staff. Asked if we were registered guests, we said no, but wanted to get up close to the building and perhaps tour the formal garden. We were then informed that a charge of \$5.00 per person was required to visit the garden, and the hotel was out of bounds for non-guests. Needless to say we considered this extortionate and politely backed off.

Fortunately, the weather started to improve and further explorations downtown revealed more picturesque Victorian gems – brilliantly painted mansions with ornate towers; dormer windows; gables; verandas, and picket fences. Market Street was lined with immaculate white clapboard buildings, and Main Street was a cornucopia of commercial properties with characteristic covered sidewalks and vendor signs suspended from the façades. Among the retail outlets were candy stores that specialized in various types of Mackinac Island fudge, a confection popular with tourists.

In the evening it was time to board the jet boat and return to Mackinaw City. The jet boat eased away from the jetty and then started to accelerate with its "rooster tail" spouting high in the air. Behind was a lovely view of the island, fort and buildings lit up by the setting sun. Knowing that the following day was going to be a prolonged travelling one; together with the possibility of a lengthy wait at the Canadian Customs at Sarnia, we elected to turn in early and rise at dawn.

Fortunately, the hotel's breakfast was a self-catering buffet that opened early. We availed ourselves to the breakfast buffet and sat down in the dining room, which faced east, and watched the sun rise over Lake Huron. At the time we remarked that this was a 'first' for us, as we were accustomed to watching the sun set in the west over the same lake. Even though a heightened security alert situation was still in effect, two days after the terrorist attack certain restrictions were being lifted and the U.S.A./Canada border was opened to sustain the flow of commercial traffic. Nevertheless we anticipated a long queue (lineup) at the Bluewater Bridge and, at Flint, Michigan, we stopped at an International House of Pancakes (IHOP) fast food outlet to



Monica and a Jet Boat Ferry at the Round Island Passage Light, Mackinac Isl., MI, September, 2001.



Façade of the Grand Hotel, a Famous Landmark on Mackinac Island, Michigan, September, 2001.



Two Elaborate Victorian Mansions, Mackinac Island, Michigan, September, 2001.



Neat, White Clapboard Buildings on Market Street, Mackinac Island, Michigan, September, 2001.



View of a Busy Main Street, the Commercial Heart of Mackinac Island, Michigan, September, 2001.



On the Jet Boat Ferry as it Leaves the Jetty at Mackinac Island, Michigan, September, 2001.



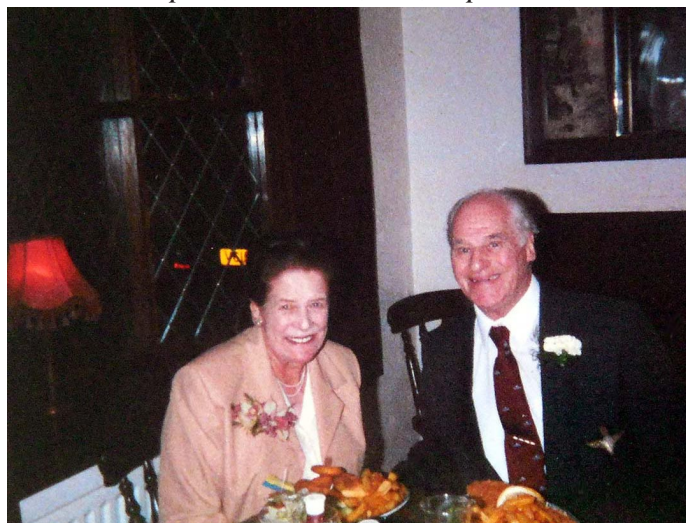
Barry and Monica in their Old Stone Mill Building Room, Millcroft Inn, Alton, Ontario, August, 2001.



Barry and Fairey Swordfish Torpedo Bomber, Sky Harbour Airport, Goderich, ON, September, 2001.



Dad and Pat on their Wedding Day, Registry Office, Biggleswade, Beds., September 17th, 2001.



Dad and Pat Celebrate their Wedding at the Rising Sun Pub, Potton, Beds., September 17th, 2001.



Monica and a Roaring Log Fire in a 'Croft' Unit of the Millcroft Inn, Alton, Ontario, November, 2001.



Bill Barlow and Barry, Bill's Book Launch Signing at Fincher's Store, Goderich, ON, December, 2001.

fortify ourselves. Arriving at Port Huron, Michigan, we started to drive across the Bluewater Bridge, all the time expecting to stop behind a long line of traffic. As we crested the rise of the bridge, we were totally amazed at the absence of vehicles – just two cars in front of us at the Canada Customs border check. After an incident-free inspection we continued home, stopping half way for a well deserved coffee and de-stress break. As a postscript to the vacation, we walked to the Goderich Lighthouse lookout to watch the sun set over Lake Huron; remarking with amusement that it was the same sun that we saw rise earlier that day.

Autumn 2001 events includes another wedding

A day after we returned from our Mackinac Island trip, I heard that a rare aircraft was visiting Sky Harbour Airport. It was a Second World War Fairey Swordfish torpedo bomber, the legendary biplane, affectionately known as the “Stringbag”, and used in many actions at sea, including attacks against the Italian Fleet at the Battle of Taranto and crippling the German battleship *Bismarck*. I think it was just a quick visit and refuelling stop, but I did get up close to the plane and watch it depart, powered by the huge Bristol Pegasus radial engine as it thundered across the sky.

We received some really good news from England when Dad informed us that he and Pat were married on September 17th, 2001. The simple ceremony at Biggleswade Registry Office brought the couple together legally as man and wife, and an equally unpretentious celebration at the Rising Sun pub in the village of Potton, Bedfordshire, completed the day. Naturally we were very pleased with this outcome as now they could lead a normal married life.

The programme of events organized by the SAE Southwestern Ontario Section in 2001 wasn’t as ambitious as the previous year, but five successful lectures, including one university tour, satisfied our mandate. Guest speakers at the “Black Angus” restaurant, London, Ontario, spoke on a variety of engineering subjects dealing with current terrestrial and space technology. The CARE facility at the University of Windsor, Ontario, provided SAE members, guests and students an opportunity to see automotive research and development in action. Again, the Section’s newsletter that I had desktop published throughout the year was recognised with an SAE Section Publications award – Special Recognition in Newsletter Chair Column, May, 2001.

Similar to when it was the 25th anniversary of my emigration to Canada, we thought it would be nice to stay at the Millcroft Inn on November 4th, 2001. It was the second visit to the hotel this year as we had been there in August where, instead of staying in one of the modern ‘croft’ units, we had a room that overlooked the entrance drive to the converted old stone mill building. For the November visit it was back to one of the ‘croft’ units and use of the open wood burning fire – a welcome feature on the frosty evenings. During the day we explored several hiking trails around the village of Belfountain. Sharing a bottle of wine and a snack of pumpernickel bread and *pâté au style rustique* in front of the roaring log fire always completed the day.

By October I had finished my ghost writing and editing of Bill Barlow Sr.’s new book, “Goderich: Link to the Past”, and the publishing was now being coordinated by Bill’s son, Bill Jr., who also designed the book jacket. This exercise, together with the SAE Section’s newsletter and a few small jobs, amounted to

the only activity for my hobby business in 2001. However, I did have the great satisfaction of sharing the limelight with Bill Sr. at his book launch and author/editor signing as reported in the Goderich Signal-Star newspaper in December.

I was now fully conversant with the Apple PowerMac G4/450 Cube computer. However, I realised that as the new technology didn't use floppy discs, it required a different method of file archiving. Fortunately it only needed a stand-alone compact disc (CD) burner interfaced with the four-dock hub to solve the problem. The equipment, a LaCie CD-RW drive, was bought from the Apple dealer CompuSmart for \$333.49, and a new power bar/surge protector completed the installation.

Volvo Motor Graders Ltd. was now recognized as a Business Line in the Volvo CE organization. Up to the September 11th, 2001, New York City terror attack the order intake was healthy, but following that catastrophic event both September and October saw a general drop in demand for motor graders and a rapid depletion of the company's order backlog. At this rate the company couldn't sustain a profitable daily production output and, as a measure of building up the order backlog, the factory was shut down for two weeks before Christmas. To compensate for a loss of earnings, employees could, if they wished, use up any surplus paid vacation days. In my capacity as a shop steward for Local Lodge 1863 I had a certain immunity from layoffs under an agreement called 'super-seniority', which was a bone of contention with management, and this came to a head in December, 2003, resulting in a difficult situation.

Fortunately the company's strategy worked and a rejuvenated order backlog ensured that production resumed as scheduled in 2002 at the same level as the previous year. However, the forecast was such that the daily build rate would remain static, meaning some belt-tightening was expected from the union rank and file. Volvo CE, however, remained confident even to the extent that more product lines were acquired and the company added a range of backhoe loaders, telescopic handlers and skidsteer loaders to its stable.

A quiet start to 2002

Early in 2002, we entered into the world of cyberspace at home. Although I was connected to the Internet at work and access to e-mail messages was possible, it became more practicable to have our own private e-mail account. This was because Internet technology was progressing at a rapid rate and having a presence 'online' on our personal computer was just a question of time.

There were many Internet Service Providers (ISP) available, but we elected to use the services of a local company called Hurontel Telecommunications Co-operative Inc. To make the arrangement more affordable, I started with a modest connection known as 'dial-up.' This was accessing the Internet through our telephone line and was initially capped at ten hours of service per month. The only inconvenience was that the telephone line was in use when accessing the Internet and phone calls could not get through at the same time. When signing on with Hurontel, we chose the unique e-mail address – bjp1map@hurontel.on.ca. We later discovered, however, that the figure '1' in the address was being interpreted as a lower case letter 'l' and a connection wasn't being made. Initially we had to inform people to use the figure '1', but eventually solved the problem by removing it altogether from the address when we changed to a different ISP in 2009.

Since the middle of 2000 the Technical Publications Department continued functioning under Volvo's Marketing organization. Ray had successfully negotiated for additional personnel to help research the spare parts publications and welcomed Mike Rompf and Jeff Hodges into the fold. Mike transferred from a job in the factory (since 1997 in fabrication), and Jeff moved from his position as a customer service parts coordinator. Both had computer skills and Jeff, in particular, had a wealth of spare parts knowledge. However, the department's personnel movement hadn't finished. As a result of the loss of an intermediate draftsman from General Engineering, Bruce Page left us early in 2002 to fill that vacant position. Although Bruce was pleased to remove himself from Ray and Gerry's presence, Ray was not happy to see Bruce go and leave me with all the technical writing assignments. He encouraged Mike to take writing courses at Fanshawe College and eventually promoted him into Bruce's old job. In the meantime, Ray had reviewed our hourly wage rate and came to the conclusion that, "Barry, we're paying you way too much." He was referring to my union lead-hand bonus of 80¢ an hour and considered it superfluous. So that was subtracted from my paycheque as it was difficult for me to justify the extra – not like being a union lead-hand equivalent on the shop floor.

With the company now well entrenched in the Volvo CE organization, we were subjected more and more into the 'Volvo Way', a philosophy that threatened to completely rule our work ethic. Indeed, "The Volvo Way" was an early publication circulated to indoctrinate us into the corporate culture. Another method aimed at levelling the playing field was an annual review known as the Volvo Attitude Survey (VAS). As it was something new to us, the percentage response for participating in VAS-2001 was 60%. In 2002, the response increased to 72% as we became more comfortable with the review procedure. The survey acted as a double-edged sword; ensuring both management and the rank and file performed to perceived expectations. Volvo also encouraged its employees to participate in morale boosting and global team-oriented competitions. One such initiative was the Volvo Group Anniversary Challenge. I enlisted in "Team Fab Five" and, in January, received a diploma and souvenir T-shirt from the corporate head office in Göteborg.

A new car and municipal activities

Ever since the Technical Publications Department had been transferred to the Marketing Department, it was rumoured that eventually it would be absorbed into the Customer Support Team (CST) division of Volvo CE. As part of the company restructuring, CST in Goderich started to become established in the underutilised Distribution Centre building on Huckins Street in the Goderich Industrial Park. Much of the rationale revolved around managing the Parts, Parts Marketing and Product Training operations. The Distribution Centre building contained all the infrastructure required; including the state-of-the-art parts warehouse, service training facility – large enough to work on a complete machine – and offices.

With the anticipated physical move from the Maitland Road office to the Distribution Centre building, it became prudent to consider a second car, possibly a good used vehicle, to make the daily commuter runs to and from Huckins Street. Despite the increased overheads of additional licence, insurance and fuel, I decided to look around the second-hand car lots for a likely candidate. Not too much was in the offing, but when I was casually looking at used vehicles at McGee Motors I was approached by one of the business's owners, Alvin McGee. Alvin and I were well acquainted, and I explained to him why I was perusing the second-hand car lot. He then said these proverbial words, "Do I have a deal for you!"

Alvin continued, “I would like to win back a customer (I had been driving a competitor’s [Ford] vehicle for some years), and can offer you a new car at a great price.” He then proceeded to show me a model 2001 Pontiac Grand AM that met all of my basic specifications – two door coupé, manual transmission and front wheel drive. We then looked at the financial picture and, to sweeten the pie, Alvin sharpened his pencil to allow for a 48-month repayment schedule at zero percent interest. After careful consideration, relegating the Mustang as the commuter car seemed to be a better bet than buying a used car with a possible dubious history. Also, when the time came to trade, two well maintained vehicles had excellent bargaining potential. So we settled on the deal and I drove away in the brand new Pontiac which became our principal vehicle. Fortunately our apartment’s driveway was long enough and, for a short while, we became a two-car family.

For a number of years, the Town of Goderich had participated in an international municipal beautification programme called “Communities in Bloom” (CiB). Apart from the town’s Parks Department maintaining municipal gardens and the waterfront park, residents were encouraged to participate in the competition by beautifying their neighbourhoods in some way. Monica and I became involved by planting flowers on one of the corners of Cambria Road North and Nelson Street East. Three other neighbours did the same for the remaining corners, and the “Nelson Street Neighbours” were awarded recognition certificates on at least three occasions for their contributions.

On April 15th, 2002, the Goderich CiB committee recorded that new gateway signs should be considered at the town’s three principal entrances to replace the existing service club welcome boards. A gateway signs subcommittee was formed and I volunteered to be recruited. The subcommittee – consisting of Shelley Peet, Roy Straughan, Linda Jewell, Duncan Jewell and myself – met for its inaugural meeting at the Jewell’s house on May 16th, 2002. A mandate and other researched material was discussed. Photographs of the current Goderich signage and those of nearby towns, together with a suggested concept I had designed, were reviewed and some considerations recorded as action items.

The subcommittee met again on June 10th, 2002, to refine the design and discuss any gathered information from the town and contractors. I had supplied high-quality illustrations of various concepts. As the year progressed, more information pertaining to a site plan and budget figures fell into place and, in principal, the proposal to town council submitted on January 27th, 2003, showed considerable promise.

A modified trip and English visitors

This year’s main vacation was envisioned as a return to Newfoundland and Labrador (N.L.) and visiting parts that were new to us: in particular the southwest corner of the island portion of the province. Plans were made and, with the flights and hotels booked, we anticipated two weeks away savouring traditional N.L. hospitality. However, Mother Nature had other ideas. Not far from our date of departure Monica started to experience agonizing pains in one of her knee joints. The pain was so acute that she could hardly walk on the affected leg. We assessed the situation and came to the conclusion that the vacation was in jeopardy. The bursitis-like condition meant we had no choice but to cancel all our flights and bookings to avoid paying any penalties. Following consultations with doctors, Monica was put on a course of painkiller medication and we rethought our holiday plans, since my time off from work had been



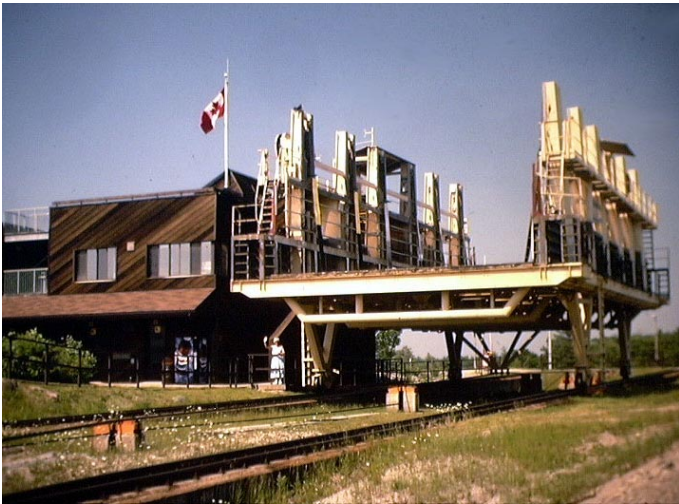
2001 Model Pontiac Grand AM SE Coupé. The Base Model Grand AM was Powered by a 2.2 litre Inline 4-Cylinder Sequential Fuel-injected Engine Coupled to a Manual Five-speed Overdrive Transaxle and Front Wheel Drive. The Colour was Described as Galaxy Silver Metallic, and the Optional Extra Features Included Air Conditioning, Cruise Control and CD Player. The Instrumentation Panel was Fully Equipped. Photograph Taken at the Lighthouse Turnaround of Cobourg Street, Goderich, Ontario, in September, 2002.



Flower Bed that I Planted, Cambria Road North and Nelson Street East Looking NW, Goderich, ON, 2002.



One of Several Conceptual Designs I Created for the Town of Goderich Gateway Sign, June, 2002.



Monica Stands by the Big Chute Marine Railway, Big Chute, Ontario, June, 2002.



Wolfe Island Ferry Approaching the Terminal Dock, Kingston, Ontario, June, 2002.



Canada Day and the 175th Anniversary, Bed Races around The Square, Goderich, Ontario, July, 2002.



Susan and Roger Moore with Monica outside the "Park House" Tavern, Goderich, ON, July, 2002.



Panorama of Corner Brook from a Viewpoint on the Trans-Canada Highway, N.L., September, 2002.



Our Lady of Mercy R.C. Church, Port au Port West, N.L., September, 2002.

agreed upon and scheduled by the Employee Relations Department. A substitute plan of short trips was considered and, as it turned out, two such getaways in Ontario proved interesting and enjoyable.

From the Inns of Ontario catalogue we discovered a resort hotel called The Inn at the Falls, which was located in Port Severn – a community in the Muskoka ‘cottage country’ part of Southern Ontario. By chance, the hotel was operated by Mr. Wolfgang Stichnothe, the owner of the Millcroft Inn where we often stayed. Choosing a few days of forecasted sunny weather, we drove the back roads through Huron, Bruce and Grey Counties; briefly stopping for lunch at Stayner. After heading north to Nottawasaga Bay, the county roads took us through Wasaga Beach to Elmvale, then northeast towards Coldwater and the beginning of the more rugged Canadian Shield countryside. Our sightseeing destination for the day was the marine railway at Big Chute. This device, last visited by us in August, 1979, was a means of transporting several boats at once from the Severn River to the lower level of Gloucester Pool and bypassing the 58 ft. (17.7 m) Big Chute Falls. Essentially it was a large cradle that moved on a tracked incline (see Chapter 8 for details). There wasn’t enough river traffic at the time for the marine railway to operate, but we were able to inspect it at close quarters. We then made our way along a short stretch of the fast multi-lane Hwy. 400 to Port Severn.

The hotel was also a useful base camp for exploring the beauty spots around Severn Sound, including the tourist attractions of “Sainte-Marie among the Hurons”, Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre and the Royal Navy and Military Establishments – also known as “Discovery Harbour” (see Chapter 9). The evening meal at the hotel was a little disappointing, but sometimes that happens. After considering the following day’s activities, we decided to explore the nearby community of Midland. There was an extensive path network at the waterfront, and that meant walking around the marina and the commercial area with its large grain elevators. A modern structure containing a restaurant overlooked the marina and was an ideal place to have lunch. In the opposite direction the path took us along a scenic ridge to a new residential development. The municipality had done a good job with special lighting and information plaques along the length of the path. Later we found “The Library” and, indeed, it was the original library now converted into a delightful restaurant where we ate our evening meal. The return journey home was essentially a reverse of the drive to Coldwater.

A week later, we set our sights on Eastern Ontario for a stay at The Waring House – another member hotel of the Inns of Ontario group – located in the Prince Edward County town of Picton. Instead of the usual drive eastbound on Hwy. 8 to Kitchener-Waterloo and through Toronto on the fast multi-lane Hwy. 401, we headed across country to Palmerston and then on Hwy. 9 through Orangeville and Newmarket to the back roads taking us south to Courtice. Joining Hwy. 2, we followed the old road through Bowmanville, Port Hope, Cobourg and Brighton. Once on the Prince Edward County (“The County”) peninsula, Hwy. 33 threaded its way through picturesque communities such as Wellington and Bloomfield before reaching Picton.

Previous visits in June, 1986 (see Chapter 9) and August, 1987 (see Chapter 10) had satisfied our curiosity about The County, and so we considered another destination that could be explored within a day’s journey. Somebody had mentioned to us about Wolfe Island, which is the largest of the 1,000 Islands and located directly opposite the city of Kingston. Accessible by ferry, the island was allegedly unspoilt and a

birdwatcher's paradise. The following day, we left Picton for the Glenora ferry which is a free ride as it is a part of Hwy. 33, the provincial road linking Trenton with Kingston. Kingston itself is a busy place and has a confusing one-way traffic system; so navigating is quite a challenge. As we were approaching the ferry terminal dock, a critical signpost was obscured and, too late, I overshot the entrance to the terminal's parking lot. This meant I had to find a turnaround further up the road. That was some distance and, by the time I had returned to the terminal's entrance, the ferry had departed. It was over an hour before the next sailing and, after booking our passage, we found a nearby Tim Hortons coffee shop for refreshments. Unfortunately the place was also a haven for the local dropouts and was not very inviting, but we endured it for the length of time until the next ferry.

We could see the ferry approaching the dock and waited until all the vehicles on board had disembarked before being directed by the crew into one of six lanes on the flat bottom scow's loading deck. Once secure, we started on our short voyage to Marysville, the main community on Wolfe Island. There are only two roads on the island, county roads 95 and 96. From Marysville we headed east along county road 96 to its end, then turned around to return to the ferry dock. The countryside was mixed with arable farmland and wooded areas, and we investigated a Bed & Breakfast that looked promising for a later visit. We were shown the rooms, which appeared very nice, and the management described opportunities for hiking on local nature trails and birdwatching. Our return passage to Kingston was routine and we returned to The Waring House in Picton. Driving home the next day was essentially a reverse of the outbound journey.

July 1st, 2002, was celebrated in town not just as Canada Day, but also to recognize the 175th Anniversary of the founding of Goderich. Events were organized to mark the occasion, and one of the more popular activities was the bed races around The Square. Reminiscent of the 1977 Sesquicentennial Celebrations where I was as a member of the Champion Office bed race team (see Chapter 8), this time I was strictly an onlooker knowing what the participants were going through.

A week later we had a pleasant visit from our old friends from Coventry, Roger and Susan Moore. It had been twenty-four years since Roger had visited Goderich on his job search and cursory interview with Bill Metcalfe at Champion (see Chapter 8). Despite the disappointment of not being able to secure a job, Roger still had a soft spot for Goderich and wanted to show Susan the town where they nearly settled down. As they were visiting Stephen and Erin in their Ontario home, Roger rented a car for the journey to Goderich and also a room at "The Copper Beech" Bed & Breakfast on Victoria Street. Fortunately the weather was perfect and, for the next two days, we accompanied them around with Roger acting as tour guide. We had a memorable meal at the "Park House" tavern and stopped for photo opportunities at the town's heritage sites and other venues, including a side trip to the neighbouring community of Port Albert where we had lunch at the "Inn on the Port" pub. Roger was in his element as he remembered so much from his 1978 trip.

Volvo introduces the new G700B Series motor grader

The Volvo-branded 700 Series motor grader had been in production for twenty months. Its first major impact at a trade show was a presence at the ConExpo event in Las Vegas, Nevada, on March 19th to 23rd, 2002, together with other Volvo CE products. However, during those twenty months, sig-

nificant design changes had been made in anticipation of introducing a new range of machines. Following the annual summer shutdown, the official Volvo G700B Series launch took place at the factory in Goderich on August 25th, 2002, with an Open House celebration for employees and their families.

One of the driving forces behind the machine improvements was the need to penetrate the European market. However, strict environmental regulations meant that Volvo had to meet or exceed these standards before any machine could be imported. The main culprit was the engine, so Volvo introduced its own Stage II/Tier II compliant D7 and D10 models for a quieter and cleaner operation. Appearance changes included a new rear engine/radiator compartment (familarly known as the ‘doghouse’), air cleaner and silencer (muffler). Other improvements were the new hydraulic fan and the load sensing, closed centre hydraulic system with axial piston pump. The Contronics machine function monitoring system and Volvo’s common sourced components were incorporated into a new instrument panel.

Again, these changes needed to be documented in all the company’s literature, which boded well for job security in the Technical Publications Department. However, more aggressive company policies such as Operational Development (OD) were becoming part of a corporate culture unfamiliar to the predominantly ex-Champion workers. OD was inaugurated during April and May, 2002, as a manufacturing and quality improvement initiative.

In 2002, my fact finding trips to Charlotte, North Carolina, were becoming fewer and stopped altogether when the technical manuals were considered as complete as possible. Still, it was a gratifying experience and among the memories were these occasions:

- an evening at a National Basketball Association game hosted by the Cummins Engine Company. This corporate goodwill event involved a dinner, open bar and courtside seats at the Charlotte Colosseum to watch the Charlotte Hornets professional basketball team in action. Displays put on by the voluptuous “Honeybees” cheerleaders were an entertaining diversion.
- Roy Bebee, one of the welders at the Charlotte factory, was a fun guy and we sometimes shared each other’s company after work. One evening we went to a restaurant he knew in Gastonia, a community just west of Charlotte. All went well, but as soon as I arrived back at the hotel, I was afflicted with stomach cramps. A clear indication of food poisoning (chicken: probably *salmonella*) that eventually cleared up following natural body function purges.
- when other personnel from Goderich visited at the same time as myself, I acted as an escort/chauffeur. For example, Patricia MacFarland, who was the head of the IT Department, joined me at dinner most evenings at restaurants such as “Hillbillies” and “The Black Eye Pea.” Another visitor was the manager of the Training Department, Henry Pietens, and, after a meal at the “Red Lobster”, we did a driving tour around the affluent Quail Hollow district of the city. Yet another was Kurt from the Accounting Department, who was intrigued when I suggested we visit the “Paper Doll” strip club. After an evening watching the girls peel off to ‘bump and grind’ music we returned to the rental car and found it had been broken into. Fortunately nothing (including the rental contract paperwork) had been stolen.

Resurrected vacation

Monica's bursitis-like condition was gradually improving and we considered resurrecting the vacation to Newfoundland and Labrador (N.L.) previously scheduled in June. Following an overnight stay at one of the Toronto International Airport hotels we flew to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and waited for a connecting flight to take us to Deer Lake, N.L. The short haul flight touched down and, after collecting our luggage, we made our way to the car rental office which was away from the airport. The vehicle offered was not in the best of shape, but it was adequate for our needs. We then drove to the Bed & Breakfast we had booked in Deer Lake and knocked on the door. The lady owner/proprietress invited us in and we were surprised with the modern, pristine interior – unlike most cozy and unpretentious N.L. homes. After being requested to remove our shoes in the entrance hall, it was obvious that guests had to tread carefully and not disrupt the unspoiled appearance throughout the house. We could take this attitude for one night, but it would have been unacceptable for a longer stay. In the evening we found “Jungle Jim's”, a pub/restaurant in Deer Lake and relaxed in a typical laid-back N.L. atmosphere.

The following day's weather promised to be sunny and dry, so we left Deer Lake and headed west on the TCH (Hwy. 1) towards Pasadena and parallel to the Humber River past the popular skiing resort of Marble Mountain. From a vantage point overlooking the city of Corner Brook, the column of steam rising from the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Co. (a division of Kruger, Inc.) mill was plain to see. Continuing along the TCH, we then took Hwy. 460 to the town of Stephenville for a two night stopover. The rest of the day was spent following “The French Ancestors Route” around the Port au Port Peninsula. Of note, as we progressed along Hwy. 460 through the outports, was the R.C. Church of Our Lady of Mercy at Port au Port West. The plain exterior belied the rich interior with its ornate altar and lofty stained glass windows. The rugged cliff seascapes at Abraham's Cove and Ship Cove were picturesque and, rounding the point on Hwy. 463 at Cape St. George, we continued to the village of Mainland; stopping at a small café for refreshments. Nearby was a house and the front garden was adorned with home-made ornaments. The influence of French heritage was noticeable in the area and the local dialect. From Lourdes the highway looped back to Abraham's Cove and finally to Stephenville.

It was just as well we made the effort to visit the Port au Port Peninsula as the weather deteriorated and we were restricted to optional activities. Stephenville isn't exactly a large town so exploring the community on foot only consumed a certain amount of time. The town's biggest landmark is the underutilised airport constructed by the Americans in the Second World War and known as the Ernest Harmon Air Force Base. It is now decommissioned and only general aviation and cargo aircraft use the runway. The original ancillary and support buildings are municipally owned housing and recreational properties. There's a walking path along the runway perimeter which we investigated.

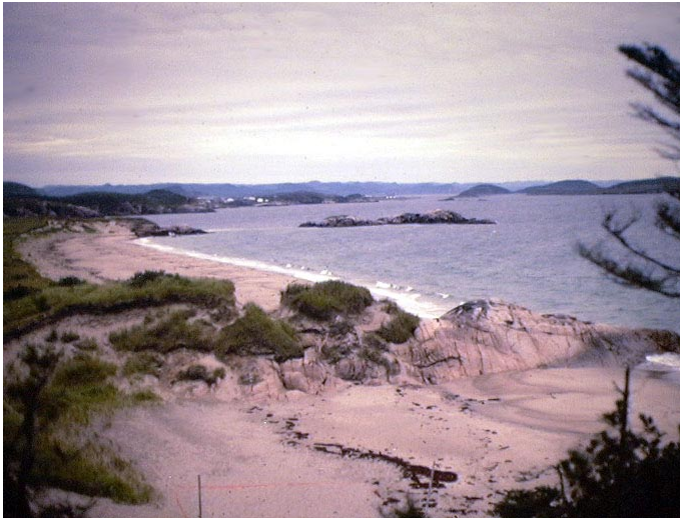
Despite the grey afternoon skies, we decided to tour some of the outports to the south of Stephenville. Hwy. 490 connects Stephenville with Stephenville Crossing, which was an important transit point in the days of the Newfoundland Railway. Continuing on Hwy. 461 the next community is St. George's, home of the Blueberry Festival. With a slight detour on and off the TCH, the dead ended Hwy. 403 leads to the village of St. Teresa which retains much of its original French heritage, including a bilingual school. Back at



Abraham's Cove Seascape, Port au Port Peninsula, N.L., September, 2002.



Garden Ornaments, Mainland, Port au Port Peninsula, N.L., September, 2002.



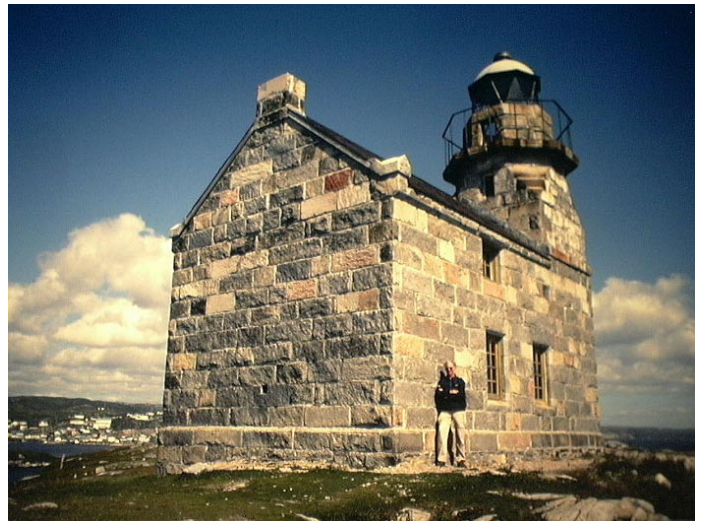
Sandbanks Provincial Park near Burgeo, N.L., September, 2002.



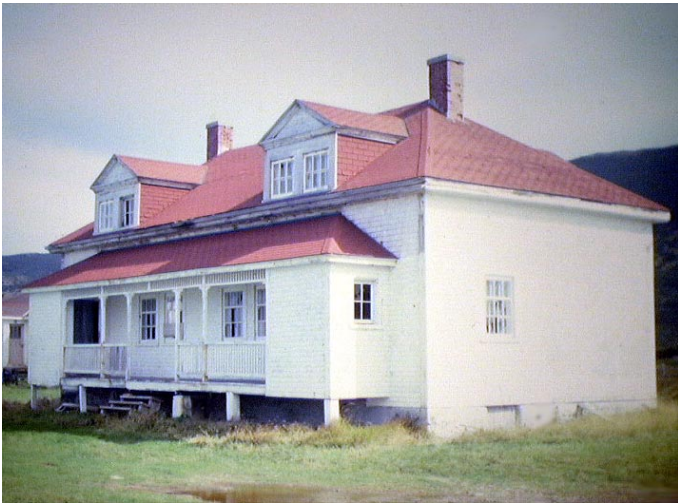
View of the South Coast Outport of Harbour Le Cou, N.L., September, 2002.



Rose Blanche Lighthouse and South Coast Seascape, N.L., September, 2002.



Barry and the Rose Blanche Lighthouse, Built 1873, N.L., September, 2002.



The Lightkeeper's Premises at Cape Anguille, N.L., September, 2002.



Wreckhouse with Table Mountain in the Background, N.L., September, 2002.



The Marine Atlantic Ferry "Leif Eriksson" Departs Channel-Port aux Basques, N.L., September, 2002.



Exhibit of the "Newfie Bullet" Train, Corner Brook, N.L., September, 2002.



Bay of Islands, Blow Me Down Provincial Park, N.L., September, 2002.



View of Bottle Cove with Abandoned Fish Flakes, near Corner Brook, N.L., September, 2002.

Stephenville we prepared ourselves for the next adventure – travelling through the remote hinterland to the South Coast and facing the remnants of Hurricane Gustav.

The second half of the vacation started with the long drive to the South Coast community of Burgeo. From Stephenville we backtracked through Stephenville Crossing to the TCH and north a little to Hwy. 480 – also known as the “Caribou Trail” – the only overland route to Burgeo. For 92 miles (148 km) there was nothing to see but forest, barrens and the occasional logged areas. Even the promise of seeing an occasional woodland caribou – after which the road is named – was elusive. Just a fleeting movement of what could have been a cow moose retreating into the bush sufficed. The outstanding break in this totally boring drive was a makeshift community of log cabins, tarpaper shacks and dilapidated trailers that were placed higgledy-piggledy in a large clearing near Peter Strides Pond. Evidently an unauthorised settlement for people wanting to escape at any time of the year to hunt, fish and snowmobile.

Having arrived at Burgeo in good time, we checked into Gillet’s Motel, which was the only sizeable accommodation in the community. As expected, the motel had basic rooms, but it also had a small eating area called the Galley Restaurant. Knowing that the South Coast was directly in the path of the remnants of Hurricane Gustav, we kept our weather eye open for deteriorating conditions. This was something of a *déjà vu* experience of Hurricane Danny at Hyannis, Cape Cod, Massachusetts, in 1997 (see Chapter 7). In the meantime, we were within easy reach of Sandbanks Provincial Park – a local beauty spot. The extensive tidal sand dunes provided a safe haven for many species of shoreline animals and birds, and a series of boardwalks made exploration easy in spite of the occasional gust of wind that foretold the coming storm. Returning to the motel, we went to the Galley Restaurant for dinner where we encountered some rather uncharacteristic N.L. attitudes. We were told point blank that the restaurant closed at 7:00 p.m. Still, with the impending storm we didn’t want to dally and considered retiring early was in order.

In the small hours of Thursday, September 12th, 2002, gale force winds and torrential rain spawned by Hurricane Gustav made landfall at the community of Burnt Islands, roughly 56 miles (90 km) west of Burgeo. Even though we weren’t affected by the brunt of the storm, the motel building was very much exposed and shook with all the buffeting of the wind. We slept little because the windows were rattling, and there was the constant danger of a widespread power failure. Heavy rain, too, was a problem with its potential of flooding. Eventually the storm abated, but cloudy and wet conditions prevailed for the next day. This meant a miserable journey back along Hwy. 480 to the TCH and a straight run to Channel-Port aux Basques for a three night stay at the St. Christopher’s Hotel.

Part of the journey was traversing the Codroy Valley, a fertile tract of land between the heights of the Anguille Mountains and the Long Range Mountains. Nearby was the notorious Wreckhouse, an area of harsh, exposed landscape where strong winds concentrate with such force they can overturn high-sided vehicles on the TCH, and have been known to topple locomotives in the days of the active railway. It wasn’t a fun drive and, by the time we arrived at Channel-Port aux Basques, the rain still hadn’t diminished and trying to find the hotel in the semidarkness was frustrating. Eventually we checked in and dried out. The hotel lobby was busy with many travellers who were stranded because the Atlantic Marine ferry scheduled to arrive from North Sydney, Nova Scotia, had been delayed by Hurricane Gustav.

Once the remnants of Hurricane Gustav had passed, the following day was filled with glorious sunshine, and so after breakfast we set off on the scenic drive along the South Coast to the end of Hwy. 470 at the charming outport of Harbour Le Cou. For 28 miles (45 km) the road followed the rugged coastline until we reached its dead end. A walkabout took us to the ubiquitous government wharf where we could admire the cluster of saltbox houses and fishing boat activity. As we were returning to the car, we noticed several split codfish hanging on a line and drying in the sun. We had seen split cod drying on traditional fish flakes, but not in this fashion and it made an interesting photographic subject. Just as I was aiming my camera, a man came out of the adjacent house and started a conversation. He spoke at length about the inshore cod fishery and N.L. outport life in general and was very entertaining. However, we had to retrace our steps and visit the neighbouring community of Rose Blanche with its unique lighthouse. The 1873 granite building – restored in 1999 – is located on a rocky promontory at the end of a long, winding path. Open to the public, the lighthouse exhibits tell the story of isolation and dedication of the succession of lightkeepers.

A slow progress – stopping at intervals to admire the scenic views or take photographs – characterised the return drive to Channel-Port aux Basques. Along the way was the tiny community of Isle aux Morts linked to the mainland by a short causeway. We drove around the virtually unmade road that looped through the community and casually waved to the inquisitive folk who were performing their daily tasks.

The following day also promised good weather so we decided to explore the Codroy Valley and perhaps have a picnic *en route*. Near the hotel was a supermarket where we bought ingredients for lunch, and started out on the TCH as far as Hwy 408 leading to Cape Ray. To reach the Cape Ray lighthouse meant parking some way away and hiking along a trail to the three storey hexagonal structure. Returning to the TCH, we continued to the community of Doyles, and Hwy. 406 to Great Codroy, home of the Codroy Valley Wetlands Interpretation Centre. Unfortunately the museum was closed to visitors, but we could make our way along a boardwalk to look for local flora and fauna. At the end of the road was Cape Anguille and the Cape Anguille lighthouse; similar in design to the Cape Ray lightstation. The 1920 lightkeeper's home was in the process of being restored and eventually became the Cape Anguille Lighthouse Inn. Retracing our steps, we were able to see more of the sheep and arable farming of the area. Just off the TCH we stopped at Wreckhouse for our picnic. True to form, the wild winds of the area were apparent. Information plaques gave details of the 'human barometer', Lockie MacDougall, a local inhabitant who had an extra sense as to when the winds would be at their strongest so he could advise the railway company not to run the trains past Wreckhouse.

With a little bit of spare time left in Channel-Port aux Basques we went to look at any activity down at the waterfront. The clear and sunny evening encouraged us to stroll along the relatively new promenade with its colourful boutiques; although being after the Labour Day public holiday, many of them had closed for the season. At the ferry terminal the Marine Atlantic's sleekly designed "Leif Eriksson" was taking on passengers and cargo in readiness for its voyage to North Sydney, Nova Scotia. We waited and watched it leave port; increasing speed as it entered the Cabot Strait.

The city of Corner Brook was going to be our headquarters for the latter part of the vacation. The TCH provided a direct route from Channel-Port aux Basques and we made our way to Bells Inn, our small Bed & Breakfast for the next three nights. After registering, we left our luggage and made the most of the day by

following one of the two historic and scenic routes in the area. Hwy. 440 north of Humber Arm is also known as the “Admiral Palliser’s Trail” and connects several outports; terminating at Cox’s Cove. Some of the place names, such as Irishtown and McIver’s, reflect their ancestry. The approach to Cox’s Cove is very hilly and the road ends abruptly at an open area with an ocean view and surrounded by an assortment of houses. We stopped and got out of the car to admire the view. Of course, some of the locals became inquisitive and a few small boys asked, “Are you tourists?” This we found amusing. An older woman came waddling over to pass the time of day; followed by a pickup truck full of younger men that screeched to a halt at the dead end. Next came a typical N.L. scene of ‘getting to know you’ by engaging in everyday conversation (a trifle difficult given the broad dialect spoken), and the brazen openness of drinking bottled beer, “Help y’self, b’y”. It was priceless. Before leaving Cox’s Cove, we explored the immediate vicinity by walking to the oceanside where a long line of inshore fishing boats had been hauled up from the water. The nearby cliff strata showed an unusual convoluted formation and Monica acquired a small sample for her rock collection.

Back at Bells Inn, we enquired about restaurants in Corner Brook and found a suitable one downtown. In the morning we met other guests at the breakfast table. They consisted mainly of visitors from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Ontario, and first timers to N.L. There was a certain amount of discomfort in the conversation due to an air of GTA superiority – almost talking down to their N.L. hosts. About the only useful piece of shared information we kept for future reference was one of the guest’s impressions of a recently released film called, “My Big Fat Greek Wedding.” As it turned out, we enjoyed the production.

Day two in Corner Brook consisted of a browse around the city. I had hoped for a tour of the Corner Brook Pulp and Paper Co. mill, but visits by the general public were not available. However, the collection of rolling stock at the Railway Society of Newfoundland’s facility gave a good insight into the workings of the Newfoundland Railway when it was an important lifeline to many communities on the island. The static display included a decommissioned narrow gauge steam locomotive (the “Newfie Bullet”) and other railway carriages (cars). Further exploration of downtown revealed a fine dining restaurant on West Street, and we patronised it for the remaining two evenings in the city.

Despite a cloudy morning, the weather was expected to improve and so we set out to travel the length of Hwy. 450 south of Humber Arm. Captain James Cook was renowned in the area for his efforts charting the coastline; so the highway was called “Captain Cook’s Trail.” We also bought provisions for a picnic. The scenic drive took us through Blow Me Down Provincial Park overlooking the Bay of Islands – the main estuary of Humber Arm. At the end of the road was the outport of Bottle Cove and, by this time, the clouds had completely cleared so we walked along the deserted and extensive sandy beach, passing several abandoned fish flakes. Returning to Blow Me Down Provincial Park we decided to eat our picnic and enjoy the fresh air. Being late in the season, many of picnic facilities had been taken away and, by the time we had gathered all our provisions, another carload of visitors had arrived and ensconced themselves on the only remaining table. However, we found a substitute place to eat and enjoyed our packed lunch. There was time to hike around the park and we met another individual on the trail. He engaged us in conversation and it turned out he was a professional hunting guide with many stories to tell. On our return to Corner Brook, we visited the Captain Cook National Historic Site; a scenic lookout in honour of the celebrated mariner. A nice view, but a somewhat disappointing monument.

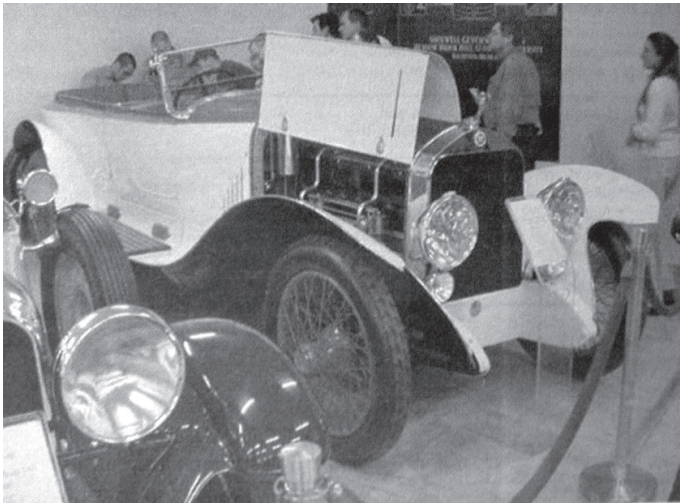
It was now time to return home and, after breakfast, we headed for Deer Lake to drop off the rental car. I mentioned that we were not happy with the vehicle's dirty condition, but my complaint was shrugged off with a feeble excuse and no compensation. We then checked into the airport for our flight to Halifax, Nova Scotia. A short while later we boarded our connecting flight to Toronto International Airport. The shuttle bus ferried us to our hotel for an overnight stay, and the next day we made our journey home.

A wedding, performance review and extracurricular activities

Hessenland Country Inn was one of our favourite dining places and over the years we had become almost 'one of the family' with the owners, Ernst and Christa Ihrig, whose sons, Frank and Eric, we had seen growing up. Now, Frank had graduated from culinary school and was the principal chef at his parents' hotel. Part of Frank's training was at a Canadian college, and he honed his chef's skills at schools in Europe. On his return to Canada, Frank attended a college reunion and reconnected with Elizabeth "Liz" Cabral, a fellow ex-student. The renewed friendship blossomed and culminated in their marriage on October 5th, 2002. We were invited to the wedding at St. Peter's Church, where both a Catholic priest and Lutheran pastor were celebrants. Following the ceremony, the bridal couple were driven in a horse-drawn open landau carriage to Hessenland Country Inn for the reception. With Ernst having been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, Frank and Liz were gradually assuming control of the resort's business. They had a distinct vision of future expansion and also diversification; including a full-package wedding venue. To this end they and Christa had started to modify some of the outbuildings, and the old barn was remodelled to become the Coach House, a facility suitable for large receptions.

Back at work, upper management was keen to spread the Volvo story using various methods. Marketing's Training Department was tasked with familiarising Volvo dealer personnel with the current product using an in-house facility called the "Grader College." This programme was also available to Volvo employees and openly encouraged by the company. In October, I attended a two day course learning about the G700B Series; both in theory (classroom) and in practice (hands on experience operating the machines under supervision). Also included was one of the latest C-Series motor graders, so there was quite a range of machines to drive and operate. As I was the most knowledgeable on the C-Series, I was required to drive the machine from the compound at Huckins Street to the test site in the hinterland of Huron County and return it undamaged. Fortunately no incidents happened on either journey even though, as an incentive, refreshments and a few bottles of beer kept things interesting.

In an effort to keep the union employees on their toes, Volvo Motor Graders Ltd. instituted an annual performance review which was completed in December. This was a confidential meeting between each employee and his/her immediate supervisor and an opportunity to discuss aspects of performance. The rating of performance factors indicated any need for improvement. However, the employee's achievements were also recorded. Ray Frydrych and I had a meaningful conversation – setting our differences aside – and completed a satisfactory report. Under the section Employee Aspirations and Goals (2-4 year outlook), Ray made the following notation: "To continue to be a valued member of the team to produce the highest quality Customer Support materials while anticipating retirement." Evidently at age 57 in 2002 I had set a goal of early retirement and made that a well known fact.



SAE Members Visit RM Classic Cars, near Chatham, Ontario, September, 2002.



Frank Ihrig and his Bride, Elizabeth (née Cabral), Hessenland Country Inn, Ontario, October, 2002.



Volvo Grader College Students Gather around a Brand New G700B Series Motor Grader, Barry is Standing on the Grader Moldboard (Blade) in the Centre, Goderich, Ontario, October, 2002.



Geoff and Rosemarie Edwards, and Monica at a Visit to the Edwards, Goderich, Ontario, December, 2002.



Monica and Barry Celebrating New Year's Eve at Hessenland Country Inn, Ontario, December, 2002.

The SAE Southwestern Ontario Section started its programme of events, including a visit by the SAE international president, Neil A. Schilke, on January 24th, 2002. Plant tours – one being a visit to the GM Defense Operations factory where light armoured vehicles were assembled; a golf tournament, and guest speakers lecturing on hybrid electric vehicles and motor racing attracted quite a number of members and guests. Following Ruth Cooper taking over from Marc Rochon as the new chair, the September event proved very popular as we visited RM Classic Cars, the foremost car restoration company in North America, at their facility and museum near Chatham, Ontario.

The SAE Section's newsletter was now the mainstay business for my freelance activities as fewer assignments came my way, but at least it was keeping the accounts turning over. Even with the possibility of an early retirement, I wasn't too anxious to promote the hobby business and, indeed, anticipated winding up the company when the Ontario provincial government registration expired in 2007.

After some deliberation, I decided it was time to move into the world of digital photography. The faithful Pentax ME SLR camera and array of lenses had served me well for many years (since 1978), but the slide collection was starting to become cumbersome and, with the benefit of the Macintosh computers, using the electronic medium made sense. Now images could be shared online using the Internet and their storage became a non-issue.

The difficulty was choosing a suitable digital camera. With so many models flooding the market it was necessary to do an in-depth survey based on personal specifications; that is, a product that was not too simple or too complicated, but had adequate features. All the popular makes were represented and one well known electronics firm, Panasonic, offered a model that seemed to fit my requirements. It was the Lumix DMC-LC20PP-S and available from a local supplier for the listed price of \$499.99. One of the main attractions was the camera's superior Leica lens. Another incentive was a carrying case (valued at \$50.00) at no extra charge and there was also a reduction in the advertised purchase price. I bought the camera on December 2nd, 2002, and started learning about the new and intricate workings of the device. Fortunately, unlike conventional photographs or slides, any failed exposures could be immediately erased from the memory card without a cost penalty. Understanding some of the controls and their functions, together with unfamiliar settings and the uploading procedure, took time to sink in. Using the self-timer and appropriate exposure proved problematic and there were quite a few 'duds' before I could grasp the technique. There were some initial successes, too, and they remain in the digital archive.

The Festive Season was once again spent in town, starting with a social evening at the home of Geoff and Rosemarie Edwards on Christmas Eve. Geoff and Rosemarie were an English couple who had emigrated to Canada several years before us. After living in the Toronto area, they decided to make an early retirement move to Goderich where they bought a substandard house and completely rehabilitated it thanks to Geoff's handyman skills. They were introduced to us by mutual acquaintances and our common English background helped to promote the friendship. Also being childless, they were of a kindred spirit. The rest of the Christmas period was both at home and enjoying the traditional Boxing Day get together with Norris and Shirley MacEwen's family. New Year's Eve, of course, was celebrated at the Hessenland Country Inn as in previous years.

The year 2003 roars in like a lion

A major blizzard swept through Southwestern Ontario in January, 2003, leaving behind a significant accumulation of snow. It took quite a while for the roads to open and our apartment snow clearing contractor had a difficult time maintaining the paths and parking areas. After the storm, the neighbourhood was a winter wonderland begging for a photographic record. One of the problems being a two-car family is that when both vehicles are parked in the open it becomes a bigger chore to remove snow from them. However, it became a matter of routine and there was no alternative.

The cold, short days of January kept us indoors and so I could concentrate on a few projects such as freelance work, and also prepare a proposal to Town Council from the gateway signs subcommittee. Resulting from the information gathered by the subcommittee members, the proposal was published and packaged for the council members and town administration to deliberate over. This document was submitted on January 27th, 2003, and contained all the recommendations discussed by the subcommittee.

February and March were strategic months for the Volvo Attitude Survey (VAS). Clearly the company wanted to see an improvement to the 72% response participation of VAS-2002. The vice president of finance and CFO, a Swede named Per Alm, who had taken over from Patrick Olney in 2001, announced some encouraging remarks and urged "... all employees to be part of VAS-2003" He emphasized the company's immediate action resolving two key issues brought up in VAS-2002 as positive indicators for the effectiveness of the annual survey. This appeal seemed to work as the VAS-2003 participation response rate topped out at 77%.

As we further immersed ourselves into the Volvo corporate culture, the company's propaganda was made freely to all employees through various publications. For example, "Global Magazine", provided news about all the business lines, such as truck and bus, marine, aerospace and construction equipment. Good feeling stories of employees around the world; their achievements and challenges, often from a cultural perspective; together with general news about company restructurings or acquisitions, kept us informed. Volvo CE had its own magazine, "Spirit", as well as "Volvo CE News."

In order to dispel the 'winter blues' we stayed at the Millcroft Inn for a short break in early March. As usual, we chose one of the modern 'croft' units with its large open wood burning fireplace. With an abundance of snow on the surrounding Caledon Hills we were assured of some strenuous hiking on the local trails. The main trail directed us along a heavily wooded ascent to the summit of 'The Pinnacle', the highest point in the immediate area. Returning to the croft units we passed a swift-running stream and several ancient maple trees with outstretched, gnarled branches. From the bushland we entered an open space where a forlorn scarecrow guarded the inn's kitchen herb garden and remnants of a sunflower patch. In the evening, a delicious meal was served to us in the 'Pod' dining room. Diffused internal lighting enabled us to look across the frozen milldam waterfall to some ruins on the other side where the occasional rabbit could be seen hopping through the snow. Returning to our croft unit, I added several logs onto the roaring fire and listened to light music from the CD player as we prepared a bedtime snack of pumpnickel bread with smoked Gouda cheese, mini-carrots and a bottle of Valpolicella Classico wine to finish the day.

Further to the gateway sign proposal submission to town council in January, additional designs from two local signmakers were reviewed by the CiB subcommittee on March 27th, 2003. Several of the designs were rejected as being inappropriate to the subcommittee's agreed criteria. One was marginally accepted as long as the concept could be modified more to the original idea. Finances (\$10,000) were now available from the current year's municipal budget and, with a completed site plan for Hwy. 21 South, the subcommittee requested that initial construction (footings and base of the sign) commence and the balance of the sign's erection done the following year.

Regardless that I anticipated winding up my hobby business when the Ontario provincial government registration expired in 2007, the company funds were healthy enough for me to buy a new colour laser printer – a model Hewlett-Packard 2500L (\$1738.79). The superior printing capabilities outranked the monochrome model I already had, and the cost was partially recovered by producing the SAE Section's newsletter and any other assignments that came my way during 2003. The monochrome laser printer wasn't exactly made redundant, but used on an infrequent basis until finally donated to a charity outlet. A short while later we bought a special stand for the new printer.

The precursor spring month of April, began similarly to the beginning of the year, but instead of a major blizzard, a huge ice storm affected much of Ontario. However, this was probably the winter's last hurrah and, as the month progressed, signs of wild spring flowers such as trilliums and trout lilies started to appear from under the receding snow. It also meant that out of town trips started in earnest and, at the beginning of May, we made one such sojourn to the Lake Erie community of Port Stanley, south of the cities of London and St. Thomas, Ontario. The previous one day excursion made to Port Stanley in August, 1991 (see Chapter 11) encouraged us to spend a few days at the Kettle Creek Inn – another member hotel of the Inns of Ontario group – close to the harbour. As it was early in the tourist season the town was quiet and many of the summer cottages were still boarded up. Some of these structures were fairly substantial and we found a gem on top of the nearby bluffs. The theatre and large collection of art studio/shops were mainly closed, but we walked around the older neighbourhoods to admire Victorian houses with their ornate features. The inn had a nice English-style pub, and delicious meals were served in the establishment's fine dining restaurant.

In May, Sky Harbour Refinishing Inc. produced outstanding refurbishments. One was of a Supermarine Spitfire and another of a Vought F4U Corsair, both painted in their wartime livery. It was the first time I had been close up to both types of aircraft and welcomed the opportunity to inspect their cockpits and controls.

A business trip to Sweden

Volvo's progressive methods needed to be shared universally among all its global manufacturing facilities. This was achieved electronically, and a huge reliance was placed on the Internet; together with in-house 'extranets' and custom designed software. In many cases this was necessary to overcome language and cultural barriers. Fortunately, Volvo's corporate 'official' language was English, and proficiency in this tongue was paramount for anyone who wanted to rise through the ranks. As the Technical Publications Department was gradually being assimilated into the Customer Support Team (CST) division of Volvo CE, it was required to adapt all parts catalogues, service manuals, service bulletins and



Cambria Road N. and Houses on Nelson Street E. after Snowstorm, Goderich, Ontario, January, 2003.



Our Apartment on Cambria Road N. after Snowstorm, Goderich, Ontario, January, 2003.



Monica Stands on top of 'The Pinnacle', the Highest Point on the Millcroft Trail, Alton, ON, March, 2003.



View of the Millcroft Inn Dining Room and Frozen Milldam by Day, Alton, Ontario, March, 2003.



Monica Relaxes in Front of the Log Fire in Our Croft at the Millcroft Inn, Alton, ON, March, 2003.



View of the Millcroft Inn Dining Room and Frozen Milldam by Night, Alton, Ontario, March, 2003.



The Harbour with Fishing Wharves and Hotel at Port Stanley, Ontario, May, 2003.



Monica in Front of a Typical Summer Cottage on the Bluffs at Port Stanley, Ontario, May, 2003.



An Unusual Red Trillium in Bloom on the Sifto Loop Hiking Trail near Goderich, Ontario, May, 2003.



A Trout Lily in Full Bloom on the Sifto Loop Hiking Trail near Goderich, Ontario, May, 2003.



Barry with a Refurbished Supermarine Spitfire at Sky Harbour Airport, Goderich, Ontario, May, 2003.



A Vought F4U Corsair U.S. Navy Fighter/Bomber at Sky Harbour Airport, Goderich, Ontario, May, 2003.

other CST information into electronic files using PROSIS (Product Support Information System) and an ancillary programme called ALLADDIN (an acronym for All-Add-In: software that embodied all publications). As usage of this specialized software became standard practice, learning to manipulate the programme's features became key to our job functions. With the introduction of PROSIS, directives from the CST headquarters in the city of Eskilstuna, Sweden, obliged CST employees worldwide to undergo training sessions. Initially, training representatives from Sweden visited the Goderich office. For ALLADDIN, however, a reciprocal visit to Eskilstuna was arranged for some of the Technical Publications personnel.

Prior to this activity we welcomed a new employee to the department. Although Mike Rompf had taken over Bruce Page's technical writing assignments, Ray considered that an additional writer was necessary and hired David "Dave" Long, who had an industrial engineering background. Dave's experience was with the farm implement manufacturer, Kongsilde, based in Exeter, Ontario, but had been laid off due to corporate restructuring. Ray had also considered Dave's organisational skills, leading to a rapid promotion supervising the Service Methods technical writing team.

The wheels were set in motion and four CST employees; Mark Charland, Jeff Hodges, Dave Long and myself were selected to travel to Eskilstuna and attend meetings or training sessions appropriate to our jobs. The visit took place between May 18th and 25th, 2003. With our passports in order and a supply of Swedish currency we were taken to Toronto International Airport by private car and waited in the departure lounge for the overnight KLM flight to Amsterdam (Schiphol), Holland. Mark, Dave and I were fairly seasoned travellers, but Jeff hadn't travelled a great deal out of Ontario and, in fact, had flown only once before; his honeymoon to the Caribbean. Throughout the waiting period, Jeff became more nervous and started to imbibe in 'Dutch courage' at an airport bar. I managed to fit all my clothes for the week in an average size holdall as carry on luggage so wasn't bothered with the bag transfer onto the connecting flight to Stockholm, Sweden. Once on board and in the air, Jeff was still feeling agitated and tried to calm his nerves with more in-flight liquor. Finally, the air hostess stopped plying Jeff with drinks as he was becoming a liability. Eventually sleep took over for all of us and in the morning we arrived at Schiphol International Airport.

Schiphol is a huge European hub airport and we were required to pass through another security check point before locating the departure lounge for the connecting KLM flight to Stockholm. In the cavernous building we walked to what we assumed was the correct area but, after waiting a little while, no other passengers appeared and we decided to make enquiries at the KLM reservations desk. This was fortunate because our connecting flight had been allocated a different exit. We rushed to the new departure gate in time to board the flight to Sweden.

We arrived at Stockholm's Arlanda Airport and, after retrieving our luggage, found the taxi rank. Apparently hiring a taxi to take us to our hotel in Eskilstuna was the recognised procedure, and the overland journey of 94 miles (151 km) provided a good opportunity to observe the towns and countryside. Arriving at Eskilstuna the taxi driver took us to the Home Hotel.

For some time I had been studying the Swedish language so I could at least be polite to our hosts. I memorised a few stock words and phrases, and my first effort in communicating with the locals was when I

checked into the hotel. I introduced myself in Swedish, “Jag heter Barry Page”, to the young lady receptionist, who then continued the conversation in her native tongue. When she saw my bewildered look, she offered to resume in English. So much for politeness. Anyhow I found my room, which was immaculate with functional, clean lined furniture and a view of the River Eskilstunaån. The alarm clock was a trifle difficult to programme; being built into the TV set and, of course, the Continental style *duvet* or *federbett* was a standard part of the domestic culture.

Our Volvo hosts were used to looking after foreign guests, and we were assigned ‘minder’ personnel to make sure we were not uncomfortable. Dave, Jeff, Mark and myself were escorted by Hanna Jansson, who drove us to and from the hotel and the Volvo CE/CST building. For the first day, our jet-lagged bodies had to acclimatise themselves. Mark had done it all before, so he was experienced in navigating around the city centre. We tagged along with him as Jeff needed to buy some currency using an automated teller machine (ATM). There was an ATM outside one of the large Swedish banks and Jeff inserted his plastic card. Unfortunately, the ATM didn’t surrender his card after making the transaction. This threw Jeff into a panic, especially as the bank had closed for regular business. It took a lot of banging on the bank door to arouse an employee and overcome the problem. Later, Mark and I went into a local supermarket as Mark wanted some sundry items, and this gave me an opportunity to observe the local shopping habits.

As the weather was mild and sunny, the remainder of my spare time was spent roaming around the hotel neighbourhood. Of significant note was the massive 11th century cathedral or *Klosters Kyrka* with its signature towers. The rather austere interior was dominated by an ornate pulpit and gilded altar, and the outside was floodlit making a nice image reflected in the calm river surface. By contrast, modern apartment buildings appeared barrack-like as they lined the side streets. Not far from the church was the K2000 monument; a large contemporary statue set in the middle of a major roundabout (traffic circle).

Rising in good time, the Goderich quartet met in the hotel’s restaurant for breakfast that consisted of the traditional Scandinavian copious *smörgåsbord*. Hanna arrived to take us to the Volvo facility where we met our CST instructors and other employees, including Koreans, in a computer workshop setting. Considering our diverse backgrounds, it was simply amazing that, a) the Swedish instructors were able to teach us with ease and, b) the Korean visitors not only had to overcome the language barrier, but also Western cultural differences. I had every admiration and respect for these individuals. Our immersion into ALLADDIN and other software packages was intense, but that was what Volvo expected from its employees. Lunch was served in the company canteen (cafeteria), and there were some surprises in store. There was a small choice of meals (an example of each was displayed in a transparent cabinet) and, after choosing, you received the complete meal on a tray before paying at the till (check out). As guests, we were not charged. Even draught beer was available as a beverage and dispensed from a fountain. After eating we cleared our own table of plates and cutlery before returning to the classroom.

Some of our instructors were well known faces as they had previously visited Goderich for CST meetings. Among them were: Lars-Goran Axell; Peter Ahlberg; Roger Lofving; Lars Nordahl; Ronnie Johansson; Ingvar Waldebrink, and Stefan Hokdal. Soon we would be introduced to some of our opposite numbers, including Åsa Goblirsch (Service Bulletins); Tina Fischer; Lena Ingemarsson (Operators Manuals); Anders



Front Façade of the Home Hotel where Most Volvo Guests Stayed, Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.



Typical Residential Apartment Buildings, Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.



Towers and Façade of the 11th Century Cathedral or "Klosterns Kyrka", Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.



Interior of the 11th Century Cathedral or "Klosterns Kyrka", Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.



Main Square, Bus Terminal and Marketplace in Downtown Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.



Blacksmith Statue "Smederna", with City Hall in the Background, Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.



Preserved “Rademachersmedjorna” or Old Forges in Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.



View of “Tingsgården” the Old Section of Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.



Cobblestone Street of “Tingsgården”, the Old Section of Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.



Cobblestone Street of “Tingsgården”, the Old Section of Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.



“Tingshuset”, a Restaurant in “Tingsgården”, the Old Section of Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.



Dinner in “Tingshuset” with Volvo Guests and other Personnel, Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.

Östring; Tomás Cedarqvist, and Rolf Lindgren (Parts Manuals). Also the very capable administration assistant Lotta Primell.

Eskilstuna's history spans several centuries and the city developed around the iron and steel industry. Some of Sweden's master blacksmiths settled in the area and the old forges pioneered by Reinhold Rademacher – *Rademachersmedjorna* – have been preserved in the old section. A part of the old section, called *Tingsgården*, appears as it did in Mediæval times with narrow, cobblestone streets lined with irregular stuccoed buildings. During the evening I explored *Tingsgården* specifically to take photographs. When looking around, a door opened and a young woman emerged. She saw I was taking pictures and probably thought I was an ordinary tourist. She spoke a few words to me in Swedish, but soon switched to English when I didn't react to her conversation. I considered this most courteous. Also in the old section is the *Tingshuset*, which is now a restaurant. This large wooden building was finished in the traditional red colouring of *Falu rödfärg*, a paint pigment originating from the Falu copper mines. One evening, it was arranged for CST personnel and their guests to dine at the restaurant. We occupied the top floor and indulged in the house speciality of grilled reindeer. Unfortunately my steak was rather overdone and a little disappointing.

Sweden is famous for its glassware industry. Apart from large commercial ventures, individual artisan enterprises produce remarkable pieces for sale in the marketplace. After dinner we followed our hosts to a glass studio in *Tingsgården* and watched a young lady glass-blower make a vase. The finished piece was given as a prize to the visitor who correctly answered a question. That lucky person was Mark Charland. In the retail outlet other items were offered for sale at a discount to all Volvo employees. I decided that something from the studio would be a practical souvenir and chose to buy a wine decanter fashioned out of crackled glass.

More intense tuition followed as we tried to get our grip on the unfamiliar software. Linguistically and culturally there were some light-hearted moments. One instructor confessed that communicating was challenging – “I first have to think in Swedish, then verbally translate into English.” One time, when students were being listed on a whiteboard with coloured markers, the instructor wrote a visiting Korean's name using a red pen. “Please.” implored the Korean. “In Korea, only dead people are listed in red ink.”

Volvo CE's presence in Eskilstuna extends beyond the factory and, as a major benefactor to the community, one of its commitments is the *Munktellmuseet*, a museum dedicated to preserving Sweden's mechanical engineering history. A world-class facility, all the machinery artifacts have been reconditioned and in working order. We met the museum's director, Ralph Angestam, who spoke in perfect English and followed him around the many exhibition halls. At one point a technician gave us a demonstration of an ignition bulb engine that belched fire and smoke as it ran. Among the artifacts were several earthmoving machines, including early road graders. Dave, Jeff, Mark and myself posed in front of one for a souvenir photo. Light refreshments were served at the end of the tour, and I sampled the specially brewed, Munktell-labelled beer.

Swedes can be introspective, but also gregarious and, when the occasion permits, drinking is a popular pastime. Back in Goderich, Ray, who had previously visited the CST office in Eskilstuna, described the local watering hole, called the “Oliver Twist”, where many Volvo employees met socially. Essentially a

modern bar based on an English pub, we all congregated for a free and easy evening, and I experienced some Swedish drinking customs. I knew the familiar toast, “Skål!”, although “Cheers!” was more universally said, but the first round was greeted with the phrase, “Helan går!”, meaning, “Let’s down the first!” (initial drink in a series). A mix of drinks was served – draught or bottled beer, cocktails and hard liquor. Smoking was legal and some of the women indulged. By far one of the customs when drinking beer was to follow it with a schnapps chaser. Both Jeff and I each accepted a shot of the strong distillate from our host and were glad that the hotel was within walking distance.

Not all socialising was done in the pub, and house parties happened frequently. Two Volvo employees, Anders Östring and Rolf Lindgren, were very hospitable. One evening was spent at Anders’s house, where I met his partner, an attractive woman who at the time of introduction was changing the nappy (diaper) of their baby son. They also had an older son. I was mindful of social etiquette when visiting a Swede’s private house and after being invited inside started to remove my shoes, but Anders said it wasn’t necessary. Inside, the woodwork trim was superb, and the furniture, fittings and appliances were truly Continental in design. Rolf arrived with several friends and the socialising began; sampling local brews – a common denominator that encouraged comments and critiques. Most of the guests spoke some passable English; although others were not as conversant. However, it was a good opportunity for me to listen to the singsong lilt of everyday Swedish and get an idea of speech patterns even if I couldn’t understand 99.99% of the conversations. Rolf was kind enough to drive me back to the hotel and we also arranged to meet the following day for some last minute sightseeing in the area.

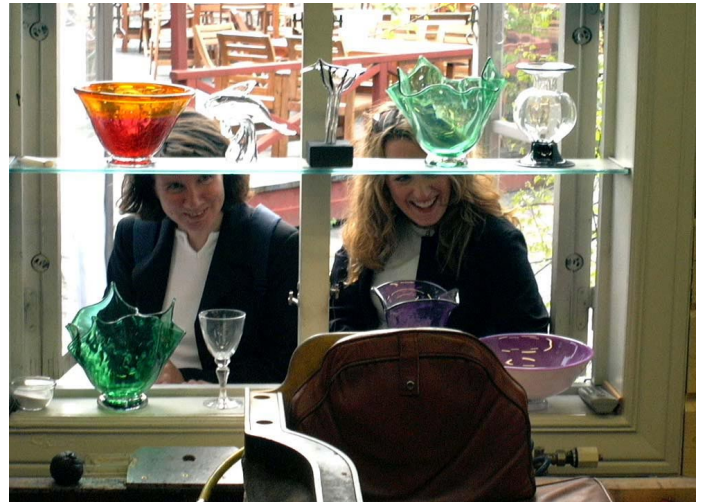
Scandinavian history and folklore – especially Norse mythology – are important components of the national culture. For example, the Saint Lucia Festival, and local events such as the *Medeltidsvecka* or Middle Ages Week held in Arboga, a neighbouring town to Eskilstuna. Runic characters carved in large boulders are reminders of ancient legends or *sagas*. Two carved rocks in the area are *Kung Sigges sten* (King Sigge’s stone) and *Sigurds sten* (Sigurd’s stone). Rolf took me to look at *Sigurds sten* and explained the legend of the runes to me. It is the story of Sigurd the dragon slayer. Carved sometime in the 11th century, the story describes how Sigurd and his companion, the swordsmith Regin, slew the two-headed serpent Fafnir in order to steal the dragon’s treasure. Regin wanted to eat Fafnir’s heart, which Sigurd cooked over a fire. By chance, Sigurd tasted the heart’s juices which gave him the ability to overhear and understand a conversation between two birds. They revealed that Regin was going to kill Sigurd, but the tables were turned and it was Sigurd who beheaded Regin. Sigurd then absconded with Fafnir’s treasure.

Also nearby was *Sundbyholms Slott* or the castle at Sundbyholm. The building was once a religious house, then became a noble’s stately home – transitioning through several high ranking families before being taken over by the Eskilstuna municipality as a conference hotel. Later it was sold to private enterprise and when Rolf took me there he showed me around the estate and also inside the sumptuous main building.

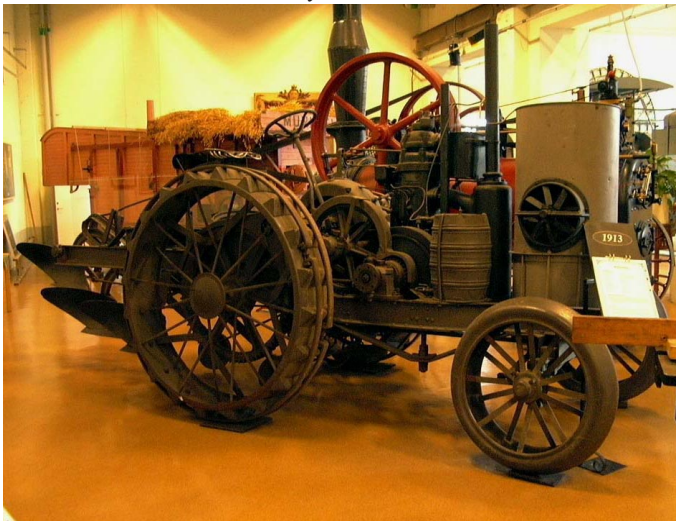
We were to leave Eskilstuna for a one day stopover in Stockholm before returning to Canada. Lotta Primell arranged our tickets for the suburban *Svealandsbanen* train journey. Travelling by train brought back memories of my EuroRail pass adventure in 1971 (see Chapter 6). As timing was punctual and the railway station was some distance from the hotel, I decided to investigate to see how long it would take to walk to



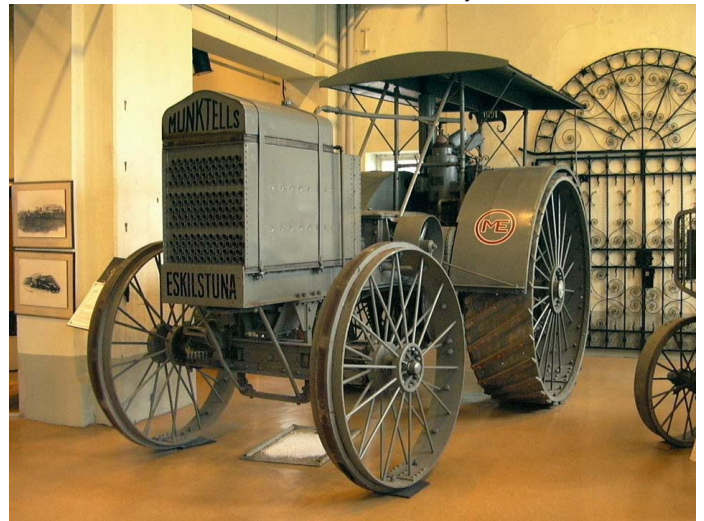
Glass Artisan Making a Vase in her Studio, Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.



Hanna and Åsa Watch the Glass Artisan at Work in her Studio, Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.



1913 Antique MunkteLL Steam Tractor and Plough. MunkteLLmuseet, Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.



Antique MunkteLL Traction Engine Exhibit in the MunkteLLmuseet, Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.



Barry, Dave Long, Jeff Hodges and Mark Charland, MunkteLLmuseet, Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.



Social Time. Barry Swigs a Schnapps Chaser at the "Oliver Twist" Pub, Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.



The “Sigurds Sten” or Sigurd’s Stone with its Carved Runic Legend near Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.



Detail of the Carved Runic Legend Showing Sigurd Slaying Fafnir, near Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.



Sundbyholms Slott or Castle, now a Conference-Hotel near Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.



Foyer Interior of Sundbyholms Slott Conference-Hotel near Eskilstuna, Sweden, May, 2003.



Barry Poses at the Old Communal Water Pump on Västerlanggatan, Stockholm, Sweden, May, 2003.



St. George and the Dragon Statue, Västerlanggatan, Stockholm, Sweden, May, 2003.

the station. When I arrived, the station was abuzz with commuters and it was opportune to locate the Stockholm-bound platform. As I was looking around, a well dressed man approached me and spoke a torrent of Swedish – evidently in the form of a question. I had previously prepared myself for such an encounter and replied, “Talar ni Engelska?” (“Do you speak English?”). Without any hesitation he switched languages to repeat his enquiry, “Does this train go to Stockholm?”, pointing to the carriages (cars) nearby. I was unsure, but since the destination board showed Uppsala, a city north of Stockholm, I assumed the train was bound to go to the capital before continuing to Uppsala. This seemed to satisfy the man.

On the way back to the hotel, I diverted into some of the back streets of what appeared to be a working class neighbourhood. I remember when one of the Swedes was visiting Goderich, he remarked that to get a good idea of the national character, take a trip to the local food supermarket and observe the habits of shoppers. A small grocery store was nearby and I casually walked around the aisles looking at the merchandise and how shoppers reacted. Very much like home-from-home so nothing extraordinary there. It was late and dark so I didn’t hang around too long in the unfamiliar territory.

The following day was Saturday and, complete with our train tickets, we checked out of the Home Hotel and Mark decided that we should take a taxi to the station. The *Svealandsbanen* service is frequent and punctual so we didn’t have to wait too long for the next train to Stockholm. The sleek, electric locomotive stopped and the sliding doors opened automatically (some doors were designed specifically for invalid chair access). Inside the carriage, rows of bench seats accommodated passengers, and there was ample room for anyone standing. Evidently a popular journey as the train was packed, particularly after stopping at the city of Södertälje, and soon the conductor passed down the carriage to collect our tickets. Arriving at Stockholm Central Station I was surprised not to see any of the city’s vagrants, winos and junkies congregating and clandestinely consuming their liquor. A familiar sight when I was last there in 1971.

We were staying at the downtown SAS Hotel, which was quite luxurious in comparison to the Home Hotel. The foyer (lobby) had several, independent check in desks served by immaculately dressed receptionists; totally bilingual (or even multilingual), so communication wasn’t a problem. After securing our rooms, which had an incredible view of the hotel atrium, I decided to find a local travel agent to reconfirm our return flights. After being directed to a Thomas Cook agency, I wasn’t exactly able to make the confirmation as anticipated, so returned to my room.

At the time when this trip was being organised, I made arrangements to meet my contact at the translation company used exclusively by Volvo CE. This company, called **cbg.konsult**, was based in Stockholm and had worldwide branch bureaux. My contact was Elizabeth Albareda, a lady from India, and she agreed to show me parts of Stockholm and the offices of **cbg.konsult**. Elizabeth and her Swedish colleague, Frederik, were in the hotel foyer and, after introductions, we proceeded to visit the **cbg.konsult** building in the Stockholm district of Sundbyberg. After a tour of the facility and meeting some of the translation staff, it was time for lunch and we travelled to the waterfront where we ate on the patio of a floating restaurant called *Tvillingarnas*. The meal consisted of a stuffed baked potato, seafood and beer. Following lunch we continued on foot along the quayside where an assortment of vessels, from fishing smacks to a Royal Swedish Navy minesweeper and a youth hostel square-rigger, were moored. Along the *Västerlanggatan*, one of

the principal streets in the *Gamla Stan* (Old Town) there were reminders of days gone by with the communal water pump and interesting statuary such as the bronze St. George and the dragon. Elizabeth particularly wanted to take me to the famed *Vasamuseet* (Vasa Museum).

In the 17th century, the pride of the Swedish navy was a 64-gun man o'war called the *Vasa*. It was launched in 1628 and, on its maiden voyage, the ship entered open water under full canvas. It soon became evident that the vessel was unstable and eventually capsized and sank. In 1961 an effort to salvage the wreck culminated in raising the hull. The ship was in relatively good shape and was moved to a special building where the woodwork was stabilised and protected. The museum contains the ship now restored with masts and rigging and, under the low lights, visitors can admire the intricate woodwork carving. Quite by chance, we met Dave Long and his daughter's friend (who was living and studying in Stockholm); so I introduced Elizabeth and Frederik. After the museum tour I said goodbye to my hosts.

It was approaching evening and time for Dave, Jeff, Mark and myself to find a restaurant. Naturally we gravitated to the *Gamla Stan* and its bright lights. After a couple of false starts we settled on a seafood eating place and ordered fish and chips, which is well known in Sweden. Following the meal we continued sauntering along the old cobblestone streets and found a German bar that sounded lively with the strains of accordion and fiddle music filtering out of the door. Inside, two entertainers were belting out popular tunes and some of the patrons were carousing with gusto. Obviously a good time was being had by all and so we decided to join in. The beer flowed (I was drinking *Hoegaarden* – a Belgian wheat beer) and I entered the spirit of the party; particularly when the duo struck up a perennial favourite, “¡Viva, España!”, by singing the chorus in a singularly raucous manner; much to Dave's amusement. Returning to the hotel, we decided to have a nightcap in the bar there. The security personnel were on their toes by thwarting us from wandering around the foyer, drink in hand. I decided to call it a day, but Jeff found somebody to talk to and eventually ended up in the hotel's rooftop bar.

Our return journey was somewhat unadventurous; although we had to find our own way to Stockholm's Arlanda Airport using the light rapid transit from Stockholm Central Station. Fortunately the ticket staff helped us get the right train, which I think was automatic. The KLM flights were the reversal of the outgoing trip, with the trans-Atlantic connection at Amsterdam (Schiphol). Our driver was waiting for us at Toronto International Airport and we arrived home on schedule, ready to be greeted by our spouses, and thinking about the debriefing to our supervisors on the following day.

The Acadian Coast of New Brunswick

Having learned much from previous visits about the early French settlers in the Canadian maritime provinces, on June 8th, 2003, we embarked on a trip to become fully immersed in the Acadian culture. The land journey would take us to the unique communities on New Brunswick's Acadian Peninsula, Chaleur Bay, Gulf of St. Lawrence and Northumberland Strait. A side trip visiting Prince Edward Island (P.E.I.) to experience driving over the new Confederation Bridge, and a stay in Québec City, one of our favourite destinations, were included in the journey. We were to find that the Acadian culture was alive and well, and brought to life at the acclaimed *Village historique acadien* near the town of Caraquet.