

A final event of the “Jubilee 3” Sesquicentennial Celebrations was the official visit made by the Premier of Ontario, the Honourable William G. Davis, Q.C., on October 21st, 1977. I was present at Sky Harbour Airport when the chartered Beechcraft King Air arrived with the premier and his entourage. After being greeted by the town’s dignitaries, a motorcade took the premier’s party to the Town Hall on West Street where speeches were made, and the premier unveiled a plaque that recognised all the organisers and volunteers who made the “Jubilee 3” celebration a resounding success. The visit ended with a special dinner reception held in the building of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 109.

The remainder of the year leading up to our Christmas and New Year’s vacation in England included a couple of ‘bumps in the road’. Despite a concentrated effort trying to start a family there were no signs of a successful impregnation. Following consultations and tests, the doctors downgraded any fertile potency and, in the fall, I underwent a minor operation as a safeguard. In November, Monica was laid off from her work at McGillivray & Co. due to a surplus of manpower at the office. Fortunately, under my union collective agreement I was allocated incremental cost of living increases and this helped to ward off any changes in the cost of our basic overheads. By December, 1977, I was earning \$311.40 a week.

We left for our Christmas break on December 22nd, 1977, and followed the regular format of spending the first half of the visit at my parents’ house in Hatfield and the remainder of the time staying with Monica’s parents in Coventry. There were opportunities to see friends, including a reunion with Michael, Philip and Ian at our old haunt, “The Compton Arms”, and a visit to London’s West End. We made sure to visit old friends in the Coventry area, and were thrilled to see that Roger Moore and his wife, Susan, were soon expecting their second child. The baby arrived twelve days late on January 23rd, 1978 – a girl, Lindsey – sister to Stephen, who had been born on March 16th, 1976. Lindsey was our first godchild.

Another frigid winter and more changes at Champion

Returning from a relatively mild England to the realities of a Canadian winter was a significant shock to the system. Two major factors were at play – extremely cold temperatures and above average snowfall accumulation. Shortly after our return, an incident – which was first thought to be weather related but then suspected vandalism – took place in town and caused some excitement.

Although now defunct, Goderich was served at one time by the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). The main line from Guelph entered Goderich from the northeast along a single track that descended a steep grade from the Meneset Sidings, over the Maitland River trestle bridge to more sidings; the station terminus; turntable, and roundhouse on the south side of the harbour. Meneset Sidings was a principal marshalling (switching) yard where the CPR stored several bulk tanker cars laden with rock salt ready for onward shipment. Sometime during the night of January 14th, 1978, a number of tanker cars freewheeled down the steep grade, over the bridge, behind the grain elevators and ended up as a jumbled wreck after derailing at the curve by the site of the old Imperial Oil storage tanks.

The damage was considerable with some tanker cars toppled on their side and others jackknifed from the track and lying at crazy angles with their cargoes of salt spilled from hoppers forced open by the impact.

Despite the frigid weather, it didn't take long before a throng of onlookers milled around the crash site. It was very fortunate that the incident happened at night and the points (switches) were set so that the tanker cars were diverted from the station and turntable tracks, otherwise the damage would have been far more extensive. Following a police investigation, it was concluded that the tanker car brakes had been deliberately released which allowed the cars to roll under their own momentum down the grade. With the help of a large recovery crane, the wreckage was eventually cleared from the site.

The extremely cold weather became worse in February and ice built up in huge mounds in both the harbour and lake. It was common to see fantastic natural ice sculptures along the shoreline and, by this time, all maritime activity had stopped for the season. The conditions were taking their toll on vehicular traffic as starting cars became a daily challenge when batteries failed or fuel systems blocked up with ice crystals.

After a short period of unemployment, Monica was offered a part-time job as a bookkeeper at Business Air Services (BAS) at the Sky Harbour Airport hangar, offices and technical workshop. She worked for three days a week at \$5.00 an hour, and on those days I gave her a lift to and from the airport, as well as visiting during the lunch hour. This gave me an opportunity to see the BAS aircraft up close and get to know the pilots, technicians and administration staff. Among them were: Murray Ward; Brian Pepper; Ces Feeney; John deHaan; Dennis Hansen; Bruce McCreath; Don White and Sheila Fink.

While I was still enjoying my relatively new car, the closing of the Datsun dealership in Seaforth was a problem where after-sales service was concerned. I then started to look around the showrooms in Goderich for a replacement North American car. The choice of vehicles in the General Motors (GM), Ford and Chrysler model lineups was significant, and all the dealers were eager to make a sale. I had seriously considered elevating my level of quality and comfort from a compact model to that of a mid-size type so I concentrated on that range of vehicle. After evaluating several models, I started to look hard at a GM product, the Buick Century coupé. I was attracted to the clean, aerodynamic fastback lines and tasteful interior. It was powered by a 3.2 litre V6 engine coupled to an automatic transmission. In those days, when ordering a car from the factory, it was common to 'customise' the list of features, such as colour and optional extras. From a clean slate I specified a number of 'must-have' items and placed the order. On March 2nd, 1978, I went to McGee Motors, the GM dealer for Buick products, and took delivery of the new 1978 model tan coloured car that smacked of luxury. Also included was a full instrument package – the square gauges mounted in a simulated wood veneer console had a decidedly retrospective appearance.

Technical publications had consolidated and moved into a large area on the top floor of of the new Distribution Centre building. The department still reported to John Timbrell, and he and his entire technical services staff, together with sales and marketing personnel, occupied offices and cubicles on the top floor. The new office was a quantum leap in terms of comfort and efficiency. However, increasing engineering activity due to product refinements meant that the technical illustrators' job of researching all new part allocations for the parts manual was becoming unworkable. It was decided that the department would benefit having a spare parts compiler who would investigate all aspects of engineering changes. The usual union job posting procedure attracted some candidates and the person chosen was Ray Frydrych, a fitter on the assembly line.

Although a fully fledged member of the Institute of Scientific and Technical Communicators (ISTC) based in England, I decided to join other professional societies since Champion paid the annual membership fees. I had noticed that John Timbrell was a member of the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE), an old and well respected engineering fraternity. I asked John to act as a referee when I applied for SAE membership and, on March 28th, 1978, I secured Affiliate Member status. My SAE membership was to last for the next twenty-eight years until I retired from the workforce.

In May, 1978, Champion's West Columbia, South Carolina, factory was now up and running, and pilot machines made from subassemblies transported from Goderich and locally purchased parts started to roll off the production line. The company now had a truly 'Made in the U.S.A.' product and was in a strong competitive position to penetrate the lucrative U.S. domestic market of an estimated 4,000 road graders a year.

As well as the 700 Series machines, the world's largest production-model road grader – known as the 80-T – was also assembled at the South Carolina factory. Bruce Sully had bought the manufacturing rights and introduced the machine in 1975. Although very specialised and only a handful were produced, they still needed basic technical manuals to support the product. I was assigned to research the information and that meant travelling to West Columbia on a fact-finding mission.

The trip went well, although I wasn't prepared for the culture shock of the Southern United States. It was a relief to leave the snow and ice of Canada for the subtropical climate of South Carolina, but I had to get used to the different work ethic and other attitudes indicative of the area. I met my engineering contact, Tim Atchley, and the 80-T operator and service specialist, Dennis Skraba, who showed me the intricacies of the machine. The experience gained in the few journeys I made to West Columbia put me in good stead when, years later, I made frequent visits to another Champion plant – this time in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Also in May there was a realignment of departments. The Technical Publications Department was moved from Technical Services to Marketing and Advertising Services and reported to the new director, Mr. William ("Bill") Metcalfe, who had previously worked with Mark Sully in Toronto. Also hired were Mike McKeown and Wayne Kennedy as product specialists, and a contracted graphic designer, Bobb Dyer. With Bill at the helm, technology innovations, such as the use of videotape recording, started to change the way technical publications were done and we soon entered the electronic age.

Spring weather was now enticing us out hiking on the local trails, observing the rebirth of wildflowers and watching for the occasional migrating bird. One attractive destination in the spring is Ottawa, particularly during Tulip Festival time – usually in late May. On the Victoria Day holiday weekend, we made a trip specifically to see the tulips and other sights in the Nation's Capital. It turned out to be a very enjoyable mini-vacation with excellent weather: cool, but the deep blue sky was crystal clear. The new leaves were growing and showing a fuzz of green throughout the city and, on the Rideau Canal pleasure boat ride that we took, some of the city's dominant landmarks, such as the Parliament Buildings; Château Laurier hotel, and National Arts Centre stood out in the brilliant sunshine. On foot, we traced the Tulip Festival trail of millions of colourful blooms, each tulip bulb a gift from the people of Holland in appreciation for Canada harbouring the Dutch Royal Family during the Second World War. Our wanderings contin-

ued to Parliament Hill and the full majesty of the Parliament Buildings, complete with the Peace Tower, Victoria Library, and the perpetually burning Centennial Flame. Then to witness the procession of pleasure boats as they made their way through the flight of locks between the Rideau Canal and the Ottawa River. The vibrancy of nearby Byward Market also made for some interesting dining experiences.

Shortly after, we visited my cousin, Don Jr., and his family at his home in Bramalea. Also visiting were Don's parents, Don Sr. and Kath, whom I hadn't seen since staying at their Ottawa apartment in 1967. Unfortunately it was to be a bittersweet reunion as Uncle Don passed away five months later – October 5th, 1978. As usual, Don and Claire's hospitality was topnotch, despite the fact that Claire was nursing a broken arm and a badly sprained wrist. It was a most congenial time with much reminiscing.

The early June sunny sky beckoned aircraft enthusiasts to inspect an array of domestic and foreign products at the London Air Show. Another impressive static display included two First World War models – a replica Nieuport and a rebuilt Avro fighter. A well preserved Hawker Sea Fury sporting invasion stripes and demonstrating its hinged wings for seaborne storage; North American B-25 Mitchell bomber; Vought F-4U Corsair, and Grumman F8F Bearcat fighters represented the Second World War. The German Luftwaffe was there with its C-160 "Transall" cargo plane, similar to a C-130 Hercules transport. The crowd was treated to an excellent aerial display with lots of power generated by a North American Phantom, and flypasts by the Sea Fury, Corsair and Bearcat with the characteristic noise of their radial piston engines. An interesting spectacle came with a mock 'dog fight' between the two First World War biplanes. Other exhibits rounded out an excellent show.

As the Port of Goderich is an important active harbour on the Great Lakes, it receives occasional 'goodwill' visits from the naval branch of the Canadian Forces. This time, the town officials were on hand to welcome the frigate, *HMCS Saguenay*. Her arrival was particularly unusual as the entrance to the harbour was heavily shrouded in fog. An expectant crowd waited on the south pier as the vessel eerily appeared through the mist and moored near the grain elevators. The ship was open to the public, and officers conducted tours over parts of the vessel, including the helicopter hangar; crews' quarters; bridge; gundeck, and aft deck with its anti-submarine ordnance. Since then, several other warships have visited to both 'show the flag' and act as recruitment centres.

Visitors and visiting

The summer of 1978 saw two sets of visitors to Goderich from England. Monica's parents spent their annual three week vacation with us where we entertained at home, took them on local trips and they also stayed with relatives Ted and Nancy Plummer for a short while. It was on a journey to Stratford that we had a little adventure. As it was a nice summer late afternoon, after I left work we set off for an evening in the "Festival City". We were not far from the small town of Mitchell when there was a blow out of the rear passenger side tyre. I pulled safely onto the gravel shoulder and assessed the situation. Obviously the tyre was unserviceable and that meant replacing it with the spare. Most new cars at this time were equipped with a 'compact' spare tyre to save space, weight and realise a cost reduction. The compact spare tyre (colloquially known as a "donut") was really only meant to 'limp home' the car at a maximum speed of



Derailed CPR Tanker Cars and Spilled Salt Cargo, Goderich, Ontario, January, 1978.



Ice Formations on the Main Beach Waterfront, Goderich, Ontario, February, 1978.



Taking Delivery of New 1978 Model Buick Century, McGee Motors, Goderich, Ontario, March, 1978.



A Section of the Tulip Festival Displays Throughout the Parks in Ottawa, Ontario, May, 1978.



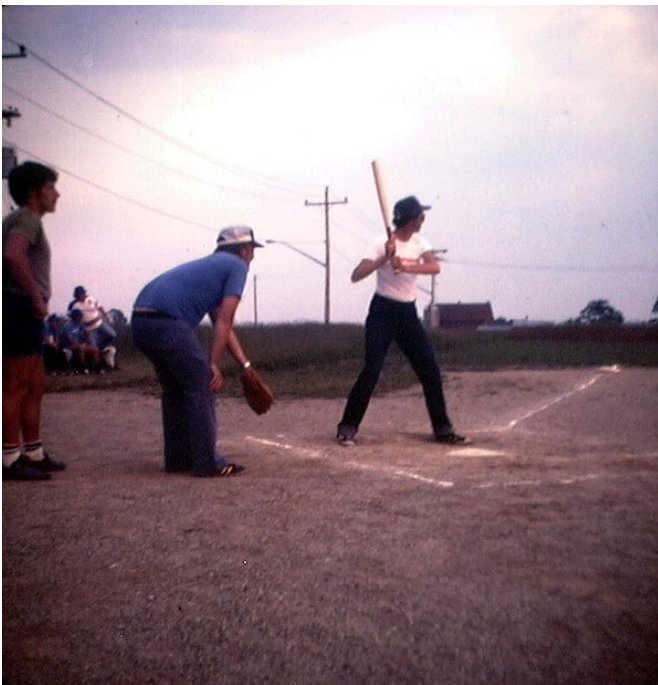
View from the Rideau Canal Looking Towards Parliament Hill, Ottawa, Ontario, May, 1978.



Family Gathering with Claire, Don Jr., Kath, Barry and Don Sr., Bramalea, Ontario, May, 1978.



1978 Model Buick Century Coupé. It was Powered by a 3.2 Litre V6 Engine Coupled to a Three-speed Automatic Transmission. Photograph Taken Outside the Business Air Services Hangar at Sky Harbour Airport, Goderich, Ontario, in the Spring of 1978.



Industrial League Slowpitch Game. The Champion Office Motley Crew Was Without a Formal Uniform. Barry at Bat, Goderich, Ontario, June, 1978.



Industrial League Slowpitch Game. The Champion Office Squad Had Every Level of Experience. Barry as Catcher, Goderich, Ontario, June, 1978.

30 mph (48 km/h). I knew there was a GM dealership in Mitchell so, after installing the spare tyre, I left my three passengers on the side of the road and drove into town. Unfortunately, the workshop was closed and I had to return to the stranded trio. There was no choice but to 'limp home' and that took a long time at the optimum speed designed for the 'donut'.

On the day of Monica's parents return, we drove to Toronto International Airport and, after saying our farewells, waited a short while before meeting our next guest, my old friend and colleague, Roger Moore, who arrived from Manchester. It was his first trans-Atlantic flight and he was somewhat tired and overwhelmed by the journey.

Roger had been bitten by the emigration bug. We had written to each other since I came out to Canada and, similar to my other colleague, Colin Simco, Roger had seen the potential opportunity for an improved life. During our last Christmas visit to Roger and Susan, we had a meaningful conversation about emigration. Roger, being a person always looking for advantages and improvements, understood that Canada was a better place to raise a family and, now that they had Stephen and newborn Lindsey, it was time to make serious enquiries at the Canadian Consulate. Roger started to collect information from Colin, Monica's parents and me, and this only helped to fuel his desire. Therefore, he made plans for an exploratory visit to Goderich in anticipation of a job interview at Champion if I could help to arrange it.

We left the Arrivals concourse and walked to the parking garage. Roger wasn't used to the larger North American cars and was amazed at the size of the Buick, knowing that my last English car was the rather mundane Triumph Herald. Still, he relished in the comfort of the well appointed Century and relaxed as we left the garage and onto the service road that led to Hwy. 401. The airport service road joined Hwy. 401 at the superhighway's busiest part: six lanes in each direction for a total of twelve lanes of fast moving traffic. Roger was mesmerised at the enormity of the vehicular population and, of course, he wasn't used to driving on the right hand side of the road. At best, the driving time between Toronto International Airport and Goderich is about two and one half to three hours. The seven hour flight, plus the effects of the five hour time difference, was taking its toll on Roger's constitution. Now he was faced with a lengthy overland trip. His comment when we finally arrived in Goderich was "I didn't think we would ever get here".

Roger's accommodation in Goderich was at the Bedford Hotel in the heart of downtown. After registering, we left him to unpack and have a snooze. With both of us working, we left him most of the time to his own devices and he explored the community and made contacts at the real estate offices. Fortunately, the weather was good for the duration of his visit. I showed him around Champion after hours so he became familiar with the machines and their construction. This put him in good stead at the time of the interview, which I had managed to arrange.

By the time Roger had made his overtures towards a possible job at Champion there had been the change of management and Bill Metcalfe was to be the interviewer. Of course, Roger was trying to sell his skills as an air brush artist; although he was willing to work on ordinary ink line artwork. Unless there was an urgent need for another technical illustrator, Roger was going to have a significant challenge convincing management that his expertise was an asset to the company.

As a matter of courtesy I introduced Roger to the rest of the Technical Publications team and he was invited to attend a beach barbecue that was planned to mark Bill Barlow's birthday. A large number of guests congregated at St. Christopher's Beach, and a party atmosphere soon developed around the barbecue units and a small camp fire on the pebble beach near the picnic pavilion. Although it was against the law to drink alcohol in public places, a few surreptitious beers were consumed in the shadows. John Dicks arrived with a large amount of ground beef for hamburgers. Unfortunately, the meat was still frozen and it took a long time before it thawed. Being a natural party animal himself, Bill was taking it all in with relish, and we had arranged a few 'gag gifts'. An unexpected one came from John Dicks, who called out, "Hey, Bill, here's your birthday present". To which John promptly turned around, dropped his pants and 'mooned' Bill, much to the amusement of the onlookers.

One out of town trip we made with Roger was to Niagara Falls. The usual format when taking visitors there was to park uptown and walk through the commercial part of the resort to the promenade overlooking the Niagara Gorge and the two distinct waterfalls. At lunch we went to a McDonald's fast food restaurant as I wanted Roger to sample a "Big Mac" hamburger, which consists of two ground beef patties; cheese slice; shredded lettuce; diced onions, and dill pickle sandwiched between three layers of a sesame seed bun. When a "Big Mac" is assembled, mayonnaise (mayo) cream dressing is added to the shredded lettuce. Unbeknown to us, Roger has an aversion to mayo, so at first bite he was not impressed with the hamburger.

After two weeks, Roger had accumulated a great deal of information, but no job offer. One employee in the office was Les Mann, originally from Manchester, England, who was a voluble Jewish fellow with an extrovert personality. Les was working under contract and lived in Toronto and, when he knew that Roger was flying home, offered him a ride to an airport hotel on the day before departure. Roger readily agreed and spent an interesting ride in Les' AMC Gremlin sports car equipped with an early version of a mobile phone, which Roger remarked, "... He certainly handled his personal phone with panache. ...". Roger returned to a rain-swept England, tired but experienced and, in subsequent letters, always wrote in glowing terms about his Canadian vacation.

A feature of recreational sport in Goderich at that time was the Industrial Slowpitch League – a group of teams that played on a casual basis according to an organised ball game schedule. Each game was a pick-up session as the player roster was a loose affair and depended on the availability of team members. Slowpitch, itself, is a variation of baseball, characterised by the slow underhand pitch as opposed to the fast overhand throw seen in professional games. Another variation is fastball where a rapid underhand pitch is always preceded with a wind up circular motion. It is often played by women. Slowpitch, on the other hand, relies on the sedate delivery of the ball in an arc of prescribed height – something that the pitcher has to master. All other team positions are the same as those found in regulation baseball games.

I was attracted to the summer sport when a group of Champion office employees formed a team. Having never played slowpitch before I was not familiar with the nuances of the game. The fielders' positions, running rules and umpire's calls were foreign to me and I had to learn by experience. There were occasions when I was called upon to officiate, and my unfamiliarity with the umpire's calls and their consequences often brought me into conflict with members of the opposing team.



The Champion Office Industrial League Slowpitch Ball Team, Benmiller, Ontario, June, 1978.



HMCS Saguenay Arriving at Goderich Harbour on a Goodwill Visit, Goderich, Ontario, June, 1978.



Technical Publications in the New Office Building on Huckins Street, Goderich, Ontario, July, 1978.



Barry Technical Writing in the New Office Building on Huckins Street, Goderich, Ontario, July, 1978.



Barry and Roger Playing Chess at the Picton Street Apartment, Goderich, Ontario, July, 1978.



The Champion Road Regatta in Full Sail outside the Harbour Entrance, Goderich, Ontario, August, 1978.



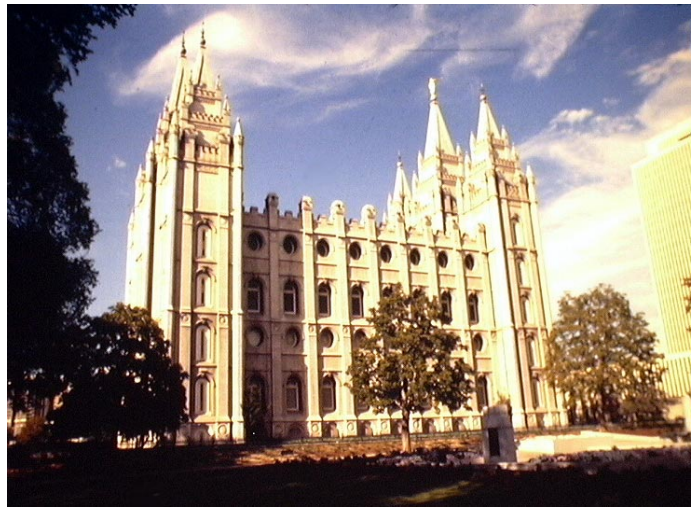
Cash Crop Farm in the Corn Belt, Iowa, on our Journey to the West Coast, September, 1978.



Downtown Stores, Cheyenne, Wyoming, on our Journey to the West Coast, September, 1978.



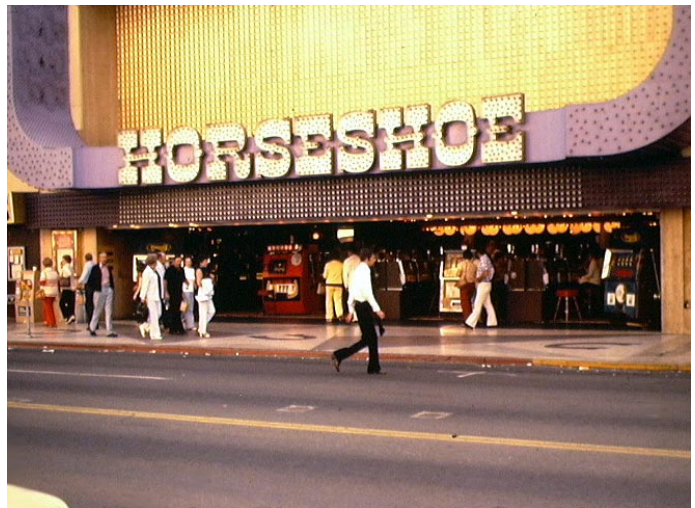
Mesas and Buttes Near Rock Springs, Wyoming, on our Journey to the West Coast, September, 1978.



Mormon Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah, on our Journey to the West Coast, September, 1978.



Barry at the Bonneville Salt Flats, Utah, on our Journey to the West Coast, September, 1978.



Horseshoe Casino in Downtown Reno, Nevada, on our Journey to the West Coast, September, 1978.

Our team, Champion Office, consisted of a motley crew. Most of them had played baseball at one time and exhibited different strengths. The team's executive assigned fielding positions relative to ability and I was put in the catcher's position. The catcher is a key player and responsible for guarding the home plate – one of the four bases. If an opposing player succeeds in reaching the home plate unscathed he scores a run. However, I knew I didn't have a strong throwing arm so outfielding wasn't practicable; the pitcher and base infielders needed to be experienced players so, in a way, being the catcher was the best place for me. In the beginning, the team didn't have an official uniform, just matching baseball caps. One of our members, Jim Bolan, was able to secure some T-shirts from a Champion parts supplier and our first identification denoted us with the name – PRE DELCO MACHINE. In later years when the team was more affluent, we became the CHAMPION ROAD HOGS and I designed a logo for our new T-shirts. Also, I started wearing a protective wire mask, professional type knickerbockers and gaiters, and bought a good leather baseball mitt.

The season started with us being relegated in the standings because the opposing teams were far more aggressive. However, we accepted the defeats with a sportsmanship like attitude knowing that following each game we would meet – usually in George Knight's back yard – for some well deserved cool beers.

Summertime in Goderich is usually a hot season. Long spells of humid weather can be uncomfortable, and there is a further complication – dangerous thunderstorms that can generate hurricane force winds. Under the right conditions, these storms form over the lake, head towards the coast and travel further inland. In late July, 1978, a particularly strong storm cell impacted the town, and the accompanying strong wind gusts uprooted many large trees and wreaked additional havoc, particularly power interruptions. However, this incident pales in comparison with the damage caused by the 1995 mezzocyclone and the catastrophic effect of the August 21st, 2011, tornado – both of which will be fully detailed later in this book.

The Port of Goderich prospered with an increased amount of harbour activity – both commercial and recreational. Large shipments of grain at the elevators augmented the salt mine's tonnage and other commodities; an unusual one being potash, which was dumped on the mine's property like a huge pink mountain ready to be trucked away. I belonged to the Goderich Sailing Club and sometimes took out one of the club's dinghies into the inner harbour to practice tacking. One time I had a problem trying to enter Snug Harbour where the dinghies were moored and promptly fell overboard into the murky water. I eventually made it to the launching ramp, being kept buoyant by my personal floatation device, and returned the dinghy to its mooring. Much larger sailing craft were in evidence, including Bruce Sully's personal yacht, *Butterfly II*. That summer it was competing in the Champion Road Regatta, which took place on a Sunday under perfect sailing conditions. There were many yachts in the race and the brisk wind filled the close-hauled sails and colourful, billowing spinnakers as the boats skimmed by each other heeled over at an acute angle.

We had planned our annual vacation to start on the September Labour Day Holiday weekend, and it was our most ambitious overland trip so far. The destination was the U.S. West Coast and to visit my Aunt Marjorie and Uncle Bill in Oregon. It was going to be a marathon drive, but with careful planning we expected to see a great deal of new territory. Hotels were pre-booked at strategic overnight places and we knew the first few days would be somewhat gruelling as lengthy distances needed to be covered. Starting the trip was straightforward and, as soon as we had crossed into the U.S.A. at Sarnia/Port

Huron, we settled into freeway driving mode on Interstate highway I-94 that took us through the heart of Detroit and due west to the Michigan/Indiana state line. Just south of Chicago, Illinois, we joined Interstate highway I-80, which was to take us all the way to California. The long day's journey was now telling and in the growing darkness we were pleased to see the sign of our motel at Joliet.

The next day promised to be sunny and we started early for the long drive across the Illinois flatlands to the Mississippi River and the Iowa state line. From then on we drove through the Midwest 'corn belt' with its never ending landscape of maize (corn) fields and farmsteads until we crossed the Missouri River – the "Mighty Mo" – and stayed overnight in Omaha, Nebraska. Prairie land again greeted us, then the landscape became more interesting when Interstate highway I-80 followed the course of the Platte River. Fortunately, the Interstate highway system caters to the travelling public with strategically located rest areas that provide tourist information, picnic grounds and toilet facilities. It was at one of these areas that we noticed an unusual metal sculpture, created for the U.S.A. bicentennial year, that included hinged plates that moved in the wind. At North Platte where we stopped overnight, there were signs that we were now in 'cowboy country' as cattle ranches and associations with the "Wild West" frontier, such as the Buffalo Bill Ranch State Historical Park, were apparent.

There was a difference in the landscape and, during the next day crossing the Nebraska panhandle and Wyoming, wild countryside and 'badlands' became standard features. Half way through our daily journey we stopped in Cheyenne, Wyoming, for a break and look around. Downtown had the atmosphere of a frontier community with turn of the twentieth century trappings. Further along the highway, travellers could visit the "Tree in Rock" rest area, so named for the remarkable small tree 'sprouting' from a large boulder as if no soil was present. The next major community was Laramie, another town with a "Wild West" character. Inspired by the surroundings and thinking of the practicalities of warding off the strong sunlight, I found an interesting shop and bought a wide-brimmed, high crown straw Stetson hat. This provided better protection than a standard baseball cap.

As we headed west towards the Continental Divide, the scenery became more desolate and the landscape was studded with mesas and buttes in a predominantly semi-desert vista. The hillsides, eroded by centuries of wind, exposed layers of sedimentary rock, with occasional towers of harder material sculpted into fantastic shapes. Hilly country took over from the flat badlands as we arrived at Rock Springs and our motel.

The westward journey was now entering an interesting phase. We crossed the Wyoming/Utah state line and headed towards Salt Lake City. Called simply "Salt Lake" by the locals, the city is well known as the seat of the Mormon religious sect, or members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. The Mormons were persecuted for their religious beliefs and, in 1847, the sect members under the leadership of Brigham Young trekked 1,500 miles (2400 km) from Illinois to the valley of the Great Salt Lake, Utah. After founding Salt Lake City, the sect flourished and now has millions of adherents worldwide. In the heart of the city is Temple Square, which is the location for the modern headquarters building of the sect, and the Mormon Temple and the Tabernacle, the principal church with its ornate towers. An interpretation centre welcomes visitors to learn about the Mormon faith, and includes a heart-wrenching documentary film designed to help convert members of the audience to Mormonism.

Our evening meal was somewhat unusual, in that the steakhouse where we ate offered a large selection of meat which the diners cooked for themselves over barbecue pits. The steaks were cut to a generous thickness – none less than one inch (2.5 cm) – and it was a little difficult judging how long to grill (broil) them. I think ours were a little rare, but the dining experience still retains a strong memory.

The following two days offered a variety of landscapes. The Great Salt Lake is a huge body of water and, paradoxically, adjacent to the Great Salt Lake Desert. Travellers can now safely cross the desert on Interstate highway I-80 but, in the early days, the treacherous terrain prevented any westward migration. One ill-fated pioneer trek, called the Donner-Reed party, came to grief as mules and wagons foundered in the unstable ground, and the lack of fresh water took its toll on the settlers. Even today warning signs are posted along the highway to dissuade off-road antics by over-enthusiastic operators of all-wheel-drive vehicles. The desert landscape is completely desolate; a flat, featureless and forbidding vista that disappears into the shimmering distance. A few miles to the east of the Nevada state line is the renowned Bonneville Salt Flats Speedway and measured mile, location of many land speed record attempts. An interpretive display at the visitor centre describes the various record breaking runs and details the machines and drivers.

Nevada has legalised gambling and, as soon as you cross the state line, you are immediately drawn to the mystique of casinos and slot machines (one-armed bandits). At West Wendover, an enormous mechanical and illuminated statue of a cowboy beckons you to the first gambling house. From then on, until we reached California, we were assailed on all sides by the jingling gongs of the slot machines and sound of the occasional payout landslide of coins when the right combination of fruits fell in line.

The terrain became noticeably undulating with the appearance of the Rocky Mountain foothills, and soon we were climbing to higher elevations to eventually make landfall in the town of Elko. This was a wide open community with a working population of miners and loggers, but was a convenient overnight stop before we continued along the section of Interstate highway I-80 through the picturesque mountains. At intervals along some of the steep descents we came across emergency lanes for runaway trucks. They consisted of a separate lane that deviated off the main highway and were filled with loose gravel to help stop trucks with failed brakes. We eventually left the snowy peaks behind and entered into fertile valleys to stop at Reno, one of Nevada's principal gambling cities. The bright lights of downtown Reno lured visitors into the casinos, many with exotic names such as the "Horseshoe". However, we didn't make our fortune on the fruit machines and resolved to have a good night sleep as we knew the following day's journey was going to be a long one.

Reno is not far from the Nevada/California state line and, as soon as we entered "The Golden State", we started on a 70 mile (113 km) scenic stretch of Interstate highway I-80 through the Sierra Nevada mountain range. After leaving the mountains, the countryside levelled out into cultivated lowlands and we were able to make good time heading towards Sacramento. We bypassed the city then connected with Interstate highway I-5 and headed north towards Mt. Shasta, our next stopover. This was a significant trek through Northern California, but the destination was well worth the journey. Clearly, the Tree House Motor Inn was a premier resort located where guests had an unrestricted view of the magnificent snow covered peak of Mt. Shasta (14,162 ft. [4316 m]). The hotel's imposing ultramodern lobby and dining room with its exposed

wooden beams, cathedral ceiling and stone fireplace belied its modest exterior. Knowing that we were just one day away from our destination in Oregon, we decided to make a little occasion of the visit to Mt. Shasta by dining in style. The meal in the hotel dining room was, indeed, excellent and the accompanying bottle of red wine proved to be singularly potent. The combination of a long drive, outstanding wine and mountain air made for a vigorous soporific mixture.

The next day saw us admiring the view of Mt. Shasta from our breakfast table in the dining room and preparing for the final leg of the journey to visit Aunt Marjorie and Uncle Bill. They lived on a remote farm near the village of Myrtle Point and deep in the Coast Range Mountains. Although we didn't have any specific directions (except that the farm was somewhere on Arago Route – an unnumbered minor road), we continued along Interstate highway I-5 and turned off on Oregon state road No. 42 to Myrtle Point. We found Arago Route without any difficulty and continued along until we saw a rural mailbox with the name **FAIN** on it. At the end of the dirt driveway was a rustic cottage and, as soon as the noise of our car announced its arrival, Aunt Marjorie came out to give us an expansive welcome and beckoned us inside.

Uncle Bill was there to greet us with a strong handshake, and we also met my cousin Bruce, Bill and Marjorie's adopted son. Unfortunately, another cousin, their daughter, Judy, was not at home. She lived and worked in Colorado Springs, Colorado, but I had met her as a teenager when she, Bruce and Marjorie visited England one time. During our conversations, we discovered that Bill had an interesting ancestry. He was the direct descendant of a renowned Confederate cavalry general from Texas. Bill himself was every inch the burly American outdoorsman, and he relished living in the wilderness with its many opportunities to fish and hunt. The couple met when Bill was a G.I. posted in wartime England and were married December 8th, 1943. They returned to the U.S.A. when the war ended and basically lived off the land. Judy was born in 1944; then they had a son, Kimberley (Kim) in 1947. Regretfully, Kim died when he was a young man. Michael Bruce was adopted in 1960.

Bill and Marjorie treated us royally and we stayed four nights at their house. They were eager to show us the highlights of the area, and the following day was spent on a circuitous drive in Marjorie's ancient, but reliable Valiant sedan that was equipped with a pushbutton transmission selector. Our destination was the picturesque Crater Lake National Park nestled high in the Cascade Mountains at 8,479 ft. (2667 m). We approached the park from the north via the Umpqua Valley, a scenic road that cut through the dense forest indicative of this part of the country. Forestry was a major industry, and confronting enormous logging trucks was typical along the highway. At the higher elevations we encountered a great deal of snow, but this added to the scenic beauty especially when we reached Crater Lake itself. The huge lake lies in the hollow of an extinct volcano and visitors can circumnavigate it on the Rim Drive. Hikers, boaters and naturalists can use the extensive trails and other facilities administered by the Park Rangers. Strategic overlooks provide incredible views, particularly of Wizard Island that protrudes out of the mirror-like lake surface.

Equally as impressive was the Pacific Ocean coastline at Bandon Beach, which we considered our holiday's ultimate destination. The wide expanse of sandy beach, crashing ocean rollers and fanciful shaped rock formations were a spectacular sight. We wandered for a long way along the deserted stretch of sand, dipping our toes in the Pacific and posing for photographs taken of ourselves using the camera's self timer.

Another port of call was the nearby seaside town of Coos Bay, which was a wealthy community as indicated by the number of expensive yachts and pleasure boats in the marina. Before exploring Coos Bay, however, we visited Bruce's place of work. This was a small sawmill that specialised in manufacturing wooden crates for fruit and vegetable growers. Basically, logs were processed into strips of wooden veneer. The spruce logs that had been harvested were delivered to the mill and the excess foliage removed. The logs were then 'tumbled' to debark them and sawn to a predetermined length to fit into the delaminating machine. This was a powerful rotating machine with a sharp blade. Once the blade contacted the log, the rotating motion allowed the blade to 'peel' the soft wood as a continuous strip of veneer. The veneer was moved to various stations for cutting and assembling into crates using metal staples. Despite the operation being very simple, I was somewhat concerned that none of the workers wore protective gear.

Our schedule required us to leave Myrtle Point and head north along the coastal U.S. highway No. 101. Before we left, Marjorie presented us with a special gift. It was a dish made from myrtle wood, the fine grained wood that only grows in a small area on the Pacific coast. The journey up the coast was very scenic and we stopped at various lookouts to admire the view and take photos. Time and distance constraints, however, dictated us to drive inland and connect with Interstate highway I-5, continue through the state of Washington and eventually cross the border into Canada for a stopover in the Vancouver area.

The following day we joined the TCH (Hwy. 1) and entered the broad Fraser River valley and the foothills of the Cascade Mountains. From then on it was a steady climb through the Fraser Canyon until we branched off on the Cariboo Highway as it followed the wild Thompson River to Kamloops. Often on the opposite side of the river gorge we could see the single track of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) precariously perched on the rocky outcrop. Sometimes a long, multi-engined freight train wormed its way along the track as it made its way to or from the spectacular spiral tunnels that we would see the following day. From Kamloops through Revelstoke to Rogers Pass, the scenery became more awesome at every bend in the road even though we hadn't yet fully penetrated the highest Rocky Mountain peaks.

Rogers Pass – 4,363 ft. (1330 m) – in Glacier National Park was a natural rest stop and opportunity to admire the incredible mountainscape of classic snow clad peaks. Although it wasn't a bright sunny day, the clouds were high and didn't obscure the mountain tops so we were afforded a fine vista in the rarified air. More of the same was to capture our admiration as the TCH continued to the famed Kicking Horse Pass at the BC/Alberta provincial boundary.

At this point was a marvel of railway engineering called the Spiral Tunnels, and a special observation platform was provided for visitors to witness the sight of freight trains entering and leaving the tunnels. When the railway was built in the 19th century, steam locomotives at the time had limited power and the most efficient way of crossing the mountain chain was to create a steady, shallow incline/decline by blasting two spiral tunnels in the rock. I distinctly remember from when I was a boy, there was a centre double-page spread in the "Eagle" comic showing a cutaway illustration of the tunnels with an explanation of the reasoning behind the design. Because of scheduling it can take some time before a train enters the tunnels. However, a patient wait has its rewards as, after setting up the camera, we saw the train's locomotive leaving the tunnel and the train's caboose just about to enter the same tunnel at a different level.

We were now in the heart of the Rocky Mountains and Banff National Park. After deciding to stay overnight in the town of Banff, we retraced our steps to Lake Louise ostensibly to visit the well known Château Lake Louise hotel and to admire the picturesque lake, valley and surrounding mountains. By this time, however, it was late in the afternoon and clouds had settled over the peaks eliminating much of the view. Also the temperature had started to drop below freezing. As we were leaving the grounds of the hotel we had to drive across a small bridge over a rushing stream. Unbeknown to me, ice had formed on the bridge and the Buick's rear tyres skidded with enough force to almost propel us off the bridge. A quick reaction and good brakes stopped us just in time, but it was a heartstopping moment and we resumed our journey back to Banff. The little misadventure was compensated for, however, when we discovered a fine dining restaurant, called "Ticino", just off the main street, Banff Avenue. In keeping with the cultural character of Banff, the restaurant exhibited an Alpine theme and, indeed, was run by a Swiss entrepreneur – Ticino being the name of a canton in the predominantly Italian part of Switzerland.

After breakfast on a crystal clear day, we visited the nearby Banff Springs Hotel overlooking the Bow River valley. Snow capped mountains in the distance complemented the scene. This world renowned hotel is built in the château style of architecture and, in the early days of the CPR, was a focal point for well-heeled passengers seeking the mountain experience. Certainly the multi-dormer and solid façade surmounted by a number of steep, green patina covered roofs exuded wealth and snobbery of a bygone age.

We then turned our sights to the east and followed the TCH through the Rocky Mountain foothills to Calgary. The highway crossed the north end of the city and certain landmarks, such as the Calgary Tower and the Saddledome arena building, stood out among the downtown office tower blocks. The landscape was now decidedly flat as we entered the Alberta prairies and cattle ranch grasslands. Large tracts of natural pasture were given over to the herds of beef cattle – one of the mainstay industries of the province. The grasslands also supported different wildlife and it wasn't uncommon to see small groups of deer and antelope feeding alongside the highway. Prairies that had been cultivated were now dormant as the fall wheat harvest was over and vast tracts of stubble could be seen as far as the horizon. The harvested crops were now stored in the many grain elevators dotted along the highway and railway. Clustered around the elevators were small communities, the names of which were painted on the side of the elevator towers. We stayed overnight in Medicine Hat, a city closely associated with the Canadian armed forces and home to the country's crack precision aerobatic team, the "Snowbirds", which we've seen many times at air shows.

Thirty-one miles (50 km) from Medicine Hat is the Alberta/Saskatchewan provincial boundary and the TCH starts its long section across the central prairies where there are few communities to break the journey. Eventually we arrived in Moose Jaw; then it was another 35 miles (57 km) to Regina, the Saskatchewan provincial capital. After a rather monotonous day on the road, all we wanted was an evening meal and lots of sleep before the long drive to Winnipeg, Manitoba. Not wanting to comb the streets of Regina for a restaurant, we decided to eat in the hotel. The meal turned out to be something of a fiasco. The salad bar was a sorry affair with a few items in bowls that floated in a tray of water (all the ice cubes had melted and not replenished), and our waitress wasn't too swift either. She would occasionally visit our table and mumble a halfhearted "Ohh..Kayy?" From all accounts, though, it was the best decision as it wasn't a good idea to roam the downtown streets in the evening because of the many 'undesirables' lurking in the shadows.



Barry Points to Wizard Isld. at Crater Lake, Oregon, on our Journey to the West Coast, September, 1978.



Barry and Monica at Bandon Beach, Oregon, our Destination on the West Coast, September, 1978.



Bandon Beach and the Pacific Ocean, Oregon, our Destination on the West Coast, September, 1978.



Bill, Marjorie, Monica and Bruce, Arago Route, Myrtle Point, Oregon, September, 1978.



A Picnic Stop Along the Trans-Canada Highway in the Rocky Mountains, BC, September, 1978.



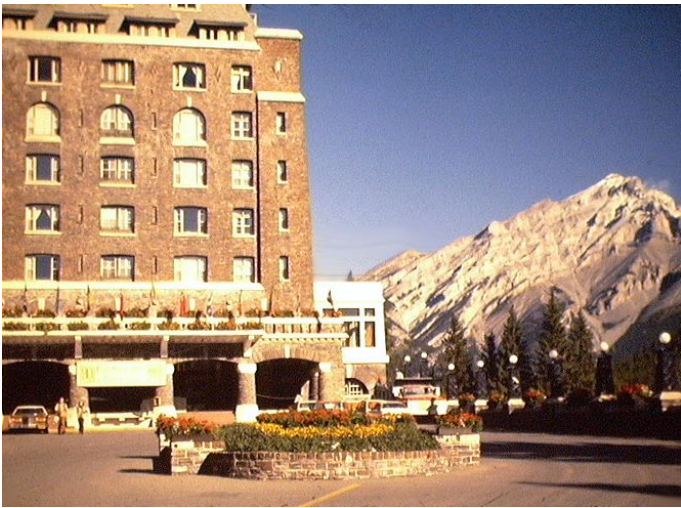
Monica at Rogers Pass, Glacier National Park, BC, September, 1978.



Freight Train Passing through One of the Two Spiral Tunnels, Yoho National Park, BC, September, 1978.



Lake Louise in Banff National Park, Overlooked by the Château Lake Louise, Alberta, September, 1978.



Bow River Valley in Banff National Park and the Banff Springs Hotel, Alberta, September, 1978.



Typical Grassland and Beef Cattle on the Ranches of the Prairies, Alberta, September, 1978.



Typical Grain Elevator Towers and Small Prairie Community, Saskatchewan, September, 1978.



Storage Domes of a Potash Mine and Harvested Wheat Field, Saskatchewan, September, 1978.

From Regina, we continued eastward along the TCH to the Saskatchewan/Manitoba provincial boundary and the lush landscape irrigated by the Assiniboine River. Thirty-four miles (55 km) before Brandon, the TCH became a four-lane highway and this continued to Winnipeg, the Manitoba provincial capital, where we stayed overnight. The following day, it wasn't far along the divided highway before the scenery changed from the flat prairies to the rocky Canadian Shield and dense coniferous forest as we crossed into Ontario and entered the lumber town of Kenora on the Lake of the Woods.

At Longbow Corners, the TCH (now Hwy. 17) divided, and we drove the Hwy. 71 portion south to Fort Frances on the Rainy River where it flows into Rainy Lake. It was here that we crossed into the U.S.A. at the neighbouring town of International Falls, Minnesota. U.S. highway No. 53 then took us to Duluth. The next day, we followed U.S. highway No. 2 through Wisconsin to our overnight stop at St. Ignace on the Michigan Upper Peninsula. After crossing the Mackinac Bridge on Interstate highway I-75, there was an uneventful drive to Interstate highway I-69 and the Port Huron/Sarnia border crossing. We arrived home exhausted but delighted with our transcontinental adventure that totalled 6,400 miles (10 300 km).

Fall activities and a different Christmas

We hadn't been home long when on October 5th we heard from my cousin, Don Jr., that his father had died suddenly from a heart attack. Uncle Don and Aunt Kath were staying at their son's house in Bramalea and, when the cardiac arrest happened, cousin Don tried his best at First Aid to revive his father. Unfortunately the heart attack was fatal. There was a private service at the funeral home where we met other family members; including Anne, Don's sister, from Sudbury. The funeral cortège then travelled to the family burial plot in Newmarket just north of Toronto for the interment. Also buried there is cousin Don's infant brother, Colin, who died when just sixteen months old on January 18th, 1955. After Uncle Don's passing, Aunt Kath continued living independently for a number of years and, at the time of writing (August, 2014), is 102 years old and a resident at a long term care home in London, Ontario.

On the employment front, Monica was faced with a decision at Business Air Services. The company had expanded, increasing the aircraft fleet and taking on more flying crew. Because of the additional business, Monica's original part-time job was to become a full-time position. We thought that in the long run it wouldn't be all that beneficial and Monica elected to resign near the end of the month (October 23rd, 1978) after training her replacement, Linda Vance. In the meantime, Champion was flourishing and another building sprouted on Huckins Street. This was the Champion Sales Company (Salesco) Goderich satellite office and workshop that dealt with new and used Champion road graders, as well as a lineup of other road maintenance and construction equipment such as Johnson road sweepers and Easi-Pour curbers. The facility was built next door to the Distribution Centre – handy for quick enquiries with the mechanics and obviated making trips to the Maitland Road plant.

October, 1978, was a glorious month for fall colours. One of the best places to see the changing leaves is an area called the Beaver Valley in Grey County, just under two hours drive from Goderich. On the way and near the village of Kimberley is the Talisman Ski Resort. This is a pseudo-Alpine chalet style hotel that in the winter operates several chair lifts for skiers wanting to descend the surrounding hills. The chair lifts are

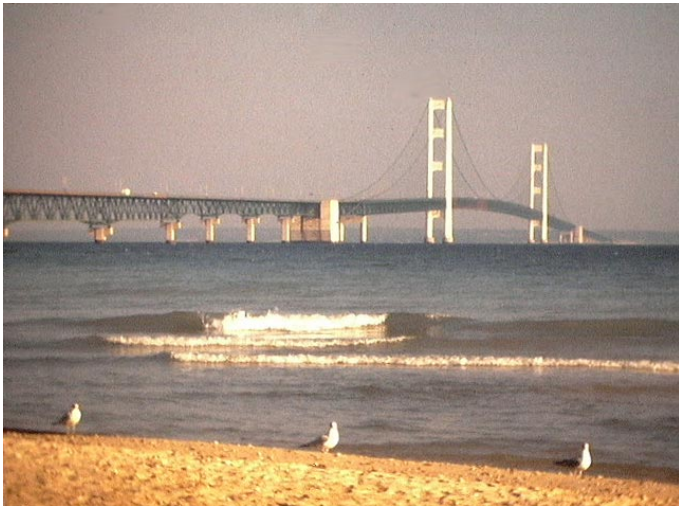
shut down after the winter, but the resort remains open for hotel guests such as hikers. The gravel sideroads provide access to the upper reaches of the valley where much of the coloured foliage can be seen both up close and as vistas. One day we parked at the Talisman resort and had a picnic; then walked up one of the sideroads to a chair lift terminus at the top of the hill. As we were admiring the view across the valley, we heard childrens' cries of anguish coming from one of the chairs suspended on the ski lift cables. It appeared that the chair lifts were being overhauled, and children from a family had casually sat on the chair only to be whisked away as the lift was put into motion. After some anxious moments, one of the parents must have alerted the chair lift operator and the children were safely returned after spending some perilous moments in midair on the swaying chair.

The fall months went by in a hurry, punctuated with Thanksgiving Day and Halloween. After the first snowfall, the Town of Goderich started to gear up for the winter and Christmas activities. First of them was the annual Santa Claus parade with its colourful floats and marching bands. The store windows around The Square were specially decorated, and I distinctly remember Denomme's flower shop had a jolly looking snowman peering out onto the sidewalk crowds.

This year we decided to forego our usual trip to England during the Christmas and New Year's holiday. Hearing tales about the Canadian "Snowbirds" who head south – especially to Florida – convinced us to experience a similar trip. We mapped out a simple journey and made advanced reservations at a number of motor hotels to ensure accommodation there and back. On the Saturday after the office shut down we started on the first leg of a four day drive to "The Sunshine State".

We entered the U.S.A. at the familiar Sarnia/Port Huron border crossing and headed south on Interstate highway I-94 towards Detroit. Always an adventure to drive through, Detroit has a multitude of downtown freeways and we really had to pay close attention to the road signage to make sure we connected with Interstate highway I-75, the main route to Florida. Other factors to contend with were dodging the potholes and debris on the highway, as well as detours caused by maintenance construction. High-speed trucks; discourteous drivers and the ever present Highway Patrol police made it a white-knuckle drive until leaving the city and reaching the Michigan/Ohio state line. Interstate highway I-75 then wormed its way through the industrial city of Toledo and on to the flat farmland of Northern Ohio. By the time we reached our first overnight stop at Lima, the outside temperature, accompanied with a significant wind chill across the exposed, flat landscape, had dropped dramatically.

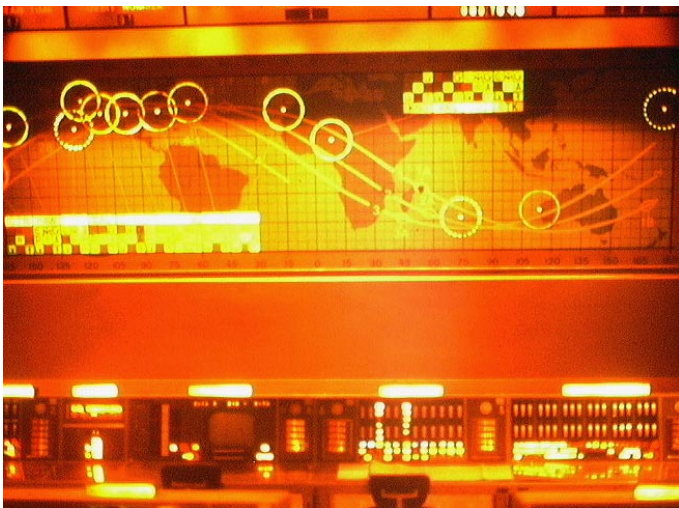
The next morning was bright and clear, but the extreme cold brought about some starting problems with the Buick. Also I was concerned that the oil pressure gauge was not responding, and this was Sunday, Christmas Eve. After determining the location of a GM dealership in Lima, I resolved to drive there on the offchance that a mechanic was available. A dodgy situation considering there was the possibility of oil starvation to the engine, but a calculated risk all the same. On the way, the oil pressure gauge suddenly sprang into life and registered a healthy reading. This was good news and we turned around to resume the journey south. The inconvenient problem had cured itself and had cost us some time, but now we were again on our way and Interstate highway I-75 threaded its way through Dayton to the more undulating countryside of Southern Ohio and the city of Cincinnati as we crossed the broad Ohio River into the state of Kentucky.



Mackinac Bridge – Highway Link Between Upper and Lower Michigan, September, 1978.



Fall Colours and Chair Lifts at Talisman Ski Resort in the Beaver Valley, Ontario, October, 1978.



Inside the Mission Control Building at the JFK Space Center, Cape Canaveral, Florida, December, 1978.



Life Size N.A.S.A. Shuttle Mock-up at the JFK Space Center, Cape Canaveral, Florida, December, 1978.



Outside Rocket Display at the JFK Space Center, Cape Canaveral, Florida, December, 1978.



View of Complex 39 Launch Pad at the JFK Space Center, Cape Canaveral, Florida, December, 1978.

The winter landscape was now behind us and the scenery became more picturesque as we entered the rolling Kentucky bluegrass hills dotted here and there with the traditional white fence lines of prosperous horse farms. Thoroughbred horses are reared in this part of the state and many of the successful racers are honoured in the Lexington Kentucky Horse Park. We continued south of Lexington, where Interstate highway I-75 cuts through the Daniel Boone National Forest and Cumberland Plateau, until we crossed the Tennessee state line and stopped for the night at Jellico. The sound of the ‘Southern drawl’ was now becoming more pronounced as we penetrated further into the land of Dixie.

Tennessee is a narrow state and the Appalachian Mountains lie on its eastern boundary with North Carolina. After reaching Knoxville, we continued along Interstate highway I-75 as it veered southwest towards Chattanooga and followed the natural valley topography created by the Appalachians. After crossing the Tennessee/Georgia state line, it was now directly south to the urban sprawl of Atlanta. Fortunately, parts of the highway were buried in a cutting and there was a minimum of traffic congestion when we drove through the city centre. In the gathering dusk, the lights of the city were very attractive as seen from a worm’s eye view in the cutting.

Our final overnight stop before reaching Florida was in Forsyth, and it was here that we had a disappointing, yet, at the same time amusing, incident. Often when dining out in the evening we order wine to accompany the meal. However, we were informed that the town of Forsyth was located in a ‘dry’ area, so no alcoholic beverages could be served. This was all well and good, but we knew that on New Year’s Eve we would be staying at the same motor hotel on the return journey. To be without a drink to toast the new year was unthinkable! So later we resolved to buy some sparkling wine at a liquor store for the homeward trip.

The last leg of the journey was a lengthy one as we continued south through the heart of Georgia to the Florida state line. We stopped at the Welcome Center to pick up any useful literature and coupons and then drove to the junction with Interstate highway I-10, heading east to Jacksonville. There we joined Interstate highway I-95 and followed the Atlantic Ocean coastline past Daytona Beach to our destination at Titusville. The main tourist attraction near Titusville was the John F. Kennedy (JFK) Space Center, which we spent the next three days exploring.

In shirtsleeve weather remote from any snowscene, the spirit of Christmas at the JFK Space Center wasn’t forgotten. A tower of dozens of poinsettia plants greeted visitors at the orientation building. Following a brief look around, one of the first facilities on the tour was the mission control building. Inside we could see the banks of controls beneath the global tracking map and imagine the hive of activity there during an actual space shuttle mission. An adjacent exhibition hall contained mock-ups of the Skylab multiple docking adapter and Lunar Simulator (moon buggy). As a novel attraction, a JFK Space Center staff member dressed in a spacesuit circulated around the room for photo opportunities. Many artifacts were displayed outside; including space rockets, such as the Redstone and Titan ‘B’, installed on launching pads with their attendant superstructures. In another area there were more rockets, including the huge Saturn V launch vehicle used for the manned Apollo Project missions. Nearby was the Vehicle Assembly Building and a mock-up of an actual N.A.S.A. space shuttle, as well as an overlook of Complex 39, Pad “A”, where the shuttles were launched. Further away were other launching towers still in commission.

Close to the JFK Space Center and forming part of Cape Canaveral is Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. In the public accessible area, we saw some of the indigenous Florida wildlife, including the majestic anhinga bird displaying its wide expanse of wings in the sun. Alligators were also to be seen, but remained passive in the shallows and almost undetectable.

The city of St. Augustine, with its historic Spanish Quarter and well preserved Castillo de San Marcos National Monument (St. Mark's Fort), is in direct contrast to the high technology of the JFK Space Center. On our last full day in Florida, we drove north to Daytona Beach along the length of U.S. Hwy. 1 adjacent to the ocean; then continued on a lesser road to St. Augustine, the oldest continuously inhabited municipality in the contiguous U.S.A. The *Castillo de San Marcos* was very impressive with its four massive stone bastions, battlements and moat. We were fortunate to witness the ceremonial firing of the one o'clock cannon manned by soldiers wearing 18th century uniforms. St. Augustine is a walkers delight, and after passing through the old city gates the narrow streets in the Spanish Quarter offer visitors a wealth of photographic opportunities. Many of the historic wood, stone, brick and white stucco houses have been restored. Palm trees abounded in parks and yards giving the neighbourhood a semitropical appearance, and the ornate tower of the mission-style church dominated the old town skyline.

We started our homeward journey on New Year's Eve and basically retraced the drive along Interstate highway I-75 to Forsyth, Georgia. With the foreknowledge that Forsyth was in a 'dry' area, we bought some sparkling wine out of state and welcomed 1979 with a traditional toast. From Forsyth to Jellico, Tennessee, the temperature started to drop and, in some areas near the Appalachian Mountains, frost was appearing. This made us take more notice of the "Bridges freeze first" warning signs, and we occasionally switched on the CB (citizens' band) radio and listened to any truck traffic chatter that would indicate problems ahead. This paid dividends on one occasion when a startled message came over the air, "Ice ahead!" "Ice ahead!" We were heading down an incline towards a bridge and I applied the brakes just as we crossed the bridge. The Buick started to gently 'fishtail' on the slick surface and it was a close call before I could regain full control. Things became worse later when the highway was completely shut down due to semi-articulated trucks jackknifing on the icy surface. Some frustrated drivers actually turned around and drove the wrong way along the shoulder until they could reach an intersection.

We knew it wasn't going to improve the further north we went, but somehow the stretch between Jellico and Lima, Ohio, wasn't too bad. At the end of the day we found a nice restaurant – "The Olive Garden" – for a satisfying meal. The homeward leg was again a long slog and we were pleased to reach the Port Huron/Sarnia border crossing. However, we had now experienced driving to and from Florida, as well as seeing space travel technology and hardware at close quarters.

A cold beginning to 1979

The gradual familiarisation to winter conditions as we drove north was less of a shock factor than, say, returning by aircraft to a frigid Canada directly from a subtropical Caribbean island. This winter, however, was to inflict very low temperatures in January and February. One of the clear indicators was the extent of ice build up on Lake Huron and, in January, pack ice was seen as far as the horizon.

The formation of ice dictates the length of the shipping season on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway system. Steamship companies try to make as many trips as possible to maximise their profits, and even allow the captains to run risks and hope that the power of the vessels will enable them to cut through the relatively thin pack ice. Evidently the master of the laker *Algoway* considered it worth taking a risk and try to enter Goderich harbour for a cargo load of salt from the mine. The ship made it only part of the way into the outer harbour before heavy ice prevented it from reaching the port – effectively imprisoning the vessel inside the south breakwater. It remained there for the best part of a week until a large Canadian Coastguard icebreaker was able to make a path for the *Algoway* to escape. While the ship was held fast in the ice, teams of people would visit it on foot and, from the bluffs at the lighthouse overlooking the scene, you would occasionally see little moving dots crossing the ice to and from the stricken vessel.

Similar to the previous winter, snow accumulation was significant and we had our fair share of off-lake squalls. Now that the office was across town I was obliged to drive there rather than make the short walking commute when I worked at Maitland Road. On snowy days this meant changing my routine slightly to allow time to clear snow off the car. Digging out around the car was arduous and sometimes the apartment building's parking lot hadn't been ploughed, so even leaving could be a challenge if drifts had built up at the two entrances. Occasionally when returning home, I would discover that a visitor had parked in my cleared spot – very annoying! Several of our neighbours were elderly and relied on their cars for getting around town. Beneath us was a handicapped widow, Vic Purdy, who owned a huge Chrysler Imperial sedan that was parked next to my car. I regularly dug out her car at the same time as my own knowing that she needed the transportation to do her shopping and visiting.

Of course the snow also provided recreational opportunities. Cross-country skiing at Naftel's Creek Conservation Area and on the adjoining properties belonging to John K. Sully, the Hoffmeyers and Norm and Marg McHolm were always fun events. On the spur of the moment we decided to build a snowman in a place that we could see from our living room window. After being a little creative, we christened him "Mr. Frosty" and this moniker stuck when later referring to any snowman.

The problem of ice in the commercial harbour was serious enough to warrant a visit from another of the Canadian Coastguard icebreakers. The *Griffon* was a powerful vessel and made short work of the inner harbour slab ice. Years ago, the 'icebox' was the early form of household refrigeration. A lucrative business venture of harvesting the harbour slab ice took place every winter, where men used long saw blades to carve the ice into manageable blocks before transporting them to a special ice warehouse. There they were packed between layers of sawdust and kept their freezing condition for a long while. Year-round distribution was made by the 'ice man' who, on very hot days, gave children slivers of ice to suck on.

Things start to warm up and Champion has a full order book

A usual sign of warmer weather is the annual break up of ice on the Maitland River. This event – known as the spring freshet – can be very dangerous as often a jam forms at the river mouth and the force of flowing ice can spill over onto the flood plain, much of which is occupied by the Maitland Country Club golf course. The 1979 spring freshet was particularly damaging to the course, and



Firing the One O'clock Signal Cannon at St. Mark's Fort, St. Augustine, Florida, December, 1978.



Old Houses in the Spanish Quarter of St. Augustine, Florida, December, 1978.



Heavy Ice Imprisons the Laker "Algoway" Outside the Harbour, Goderich, Ontario, January, 1979.



Monica Poses with "Mr. Frosty", the Snowman we Made in Goderich, Ontario, January, 1979.



Heavy Snow Squall Viewed from our Picton Street Apartment, Goderich, Ontario, January, 1979.



Canadian Coastguard Icebreaker "Griffon" at Work in the Harbour, Goderich, Ontario, February, 1979.



Spring Freshet Showing Extent of Ice Covering the Maitland C.C. Golf Course, Goderich, March, 1979.



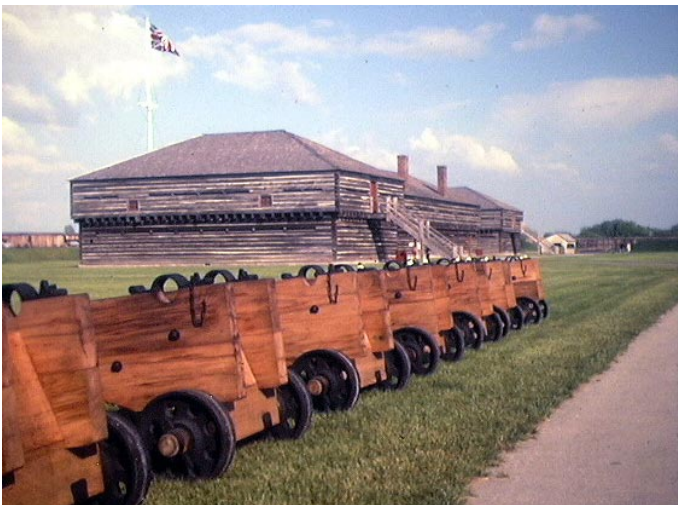
Entrance to the McMichael Canadian Collection Gallery, Kleinburg, Ontario, April, 1979.



Monica and a Lawren Harris Painting, McMichael Canadian Collection, Kleinburg, Ont., April, 1979.



The Eaton Centre, a Fashionable Shopping Mall in Downtown Toronto, Ontario, April, 1979.



Gun Carriages and Blockhouses at Fort George, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, May, 1979.



The Prince of Wales Hotel on the Main Street of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, May, 1979.

even though man-made barriers (berms) had been constructed, the ice still surmounted them and a number of the greens and fairways were gouged and scoured glacier-like by huge irregular blocks. It took a long time before the ice melted and repairs made to the course.

With the departure of the snow by the Easter holiday in April, we took advantage of the four day long weekend by travelling to Toronto and immersing ourselves into a variety of cultural pursuits. First on the list was a visit to the renowned McMichael Canadian Collection in the village of Kleinburg. This private collection of *objets d'art* was housed in a modern gallery building of stone and squared timber logs, and contained many original works of the celebrated Canadian artists known as the Group of Seven. Of particular interest were those of Lawren Harris, A.Y. Jackson and Tom Thomson displayed in a unique but pleasant setting.

Most of the following day was spent at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), a huge monolith near the Ontario provincial legislative building in Queen's Park. On occasions, the ROM organises special shows – such as when the travelling exhibition of the treasures of Tutankhamen came to Canada – but the regular displays are equally as interesting and absorbing. Among them are the dinosaur skeleton collection and extensive array of First Nations peoples' artifacts – from the East Coast Mi'kmaq to the West Coast Haida tribes. We spent most of the day in the museum.

We also went to the reconstructed Fort York, a 'living museum' open to the public. The buildings consisted of the blockhouses, barracks, officers' quarters and ancillary structures of the frontier fortification built to protect the emergent community of York (which eventually became Toronto). University students dressed as soldiers of the period performed their various duties, as well as demonstrating to groups of visitors how flintlock muskets were loaded and fired. Costumed guides in the kitchen showed how bread was made and other foods prepared and cooked using the big open fireplace. Everything was as authentic as possible, including handmade tools and utensils. The officers' games room was cosy and opulent for the period, indicating the degree of wealth enjoyed by the officer corps. Other students in uniform performed with fifes and drums to provide visitors with musical entertainment. This exposure to early military life inspired us to look further afield for similar attractions and the following month saw us visiting Fort George in the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Before leaving the big city, we had a good look around the modern downtown with its high, gleaming glass towers and the newly opened Eaton Centre, a huge shopping mall in the heart of Toronto. The cavernous arcade with its multi-floored sprinkling of boutiques, cafés and the mighty Eaton anchor store showed off the modernistic architectural style of exposed beams, air conditioning ducts and vast expanse of glass panels which was then becoming fashionable.

The month of May accelerated typical springlike conditions, and abundant sunshine encouraged lilacs and ornamental cherry trees to burst into blossom. Another frontier fort that warranted our visit was the Parks Canada site of Fort George at Niagara-on-the-Lake. Again, this was a reconstruction but a great deal of money had been spent on recreating the 1796 outpost since it had been obliterated through neglect and virtually forgotten. Inside the blockhouses were rows of 19th century soldiers' uniforms. Explanatory displays told the story of the fort and its role in the War of 1812.

Not far away was the nucleus of the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake; a community of choice for well-to-do professionals where many of the Regency and Victorian properties were soaring in value. The community has a chequered history – being the first official capital of Upper Canada (1792) – and its name was changed four times: Butlersburg; Newark; Niagara, and Niagara-on-the-Lake. Today, apart from the natural ambience of the town, the Shaw Festival's summer repertoire of classic plays and musicals attracts busloads of tourists and American visitors. As we promenaded along the picturesque Main Street we just had to consume one of the delicious ice cream cones that the town is well known for.

With spring now well entrenched it was time to find new nature trails and look for the resurgence of wild flowers and arrival of migrating birds. The Elora Gorge Conservation Area was a beauty spot with an extensive trail system that we had yet to explore. Here, the Grand River carved its way through the limestone gorge, and the fast flowing water provided a challenge to canoeists who needed to navigate through the rapids. Limestone from the gorge is a natural building material and many of the older houses, as well as the huge grist mill, which at that time had been converted into a hotel, are solid and picturesque buildings. Since our first visit to Elora, the trails have beckoned us back again and again.

Monday, May 28th, 1979, was not your average day in Goderich. The sound of sirens from police cruisers echoing through the town meant something serious was happening. Gradually, word filtered around that the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) S.W.A.T. team had sealed off East Street between Victoria Street and The Square. The local radio news announced that a drama was unfolding where an armed individual, barricaded in the Federal Building, had taken a hostage. Despite the town police force and OPP constables keeping a growing crowd of curiosity seekers at bay, people insisted on taking risks by moving beyond the crime scene tapes to get a closer look. On one occasion, Police Chief Pat King verbally warned several onlookers to leave the area. S.W.A.T. officers with high-powered rifles and telescopic sights positioned themselves at vantage points outside and opposite the Federal Building. At one point the armed insurgent levelled his shotgun through the open upstairs window and let loose two or three rounds into the crowd that had assembled on The Square. Buckshot ricocheted off the kerb and people scattered. A S.W.A.T. officer was heard to say "I have him in my sights", but no order was given to take down the gunman.

As the evening wore on, police negotiators made telephone contact with the assailant. A picture was gradually taking shape in which the individual, a man called Linklater, had a grievance with the federal government where financial assistance was concerned. In a fit of rage he had armed himself and gone to the Federal Building where he confronted Bob MacDougall, a government employee. The hostage taking incident started and the police were then summoned. Eventually, Linklater surrendered peacefully and Bob MacDougall was released unharmed. For quite a while the incident was the talk of the town.

Also making headlines was the news that Champion had delivered 1,000 road graders to the Turkish Forestry Department. This huge order meant Champion had to hire many extra employees, and there were spin-off benefits for subcontractors such as Canadian National Railways that moved the finished products from Goderich to the seaport of St. John, New Brunswick. The 700 Series machines were becoming more accepted both home and abroad, especially since Champion had been awarded a gold medal for outstanding quality at the International Industrial Fair in Yugoslavia, and the order book was showing a healthy backlog.

The giant 80-T motor grader – now called the 100-T – was re-engineered and its weight increased from 160,000 lbs. (72 576 kg) to 202,000 lbs. (91 627 kg). My work on the 80-T needed to be revised to include the 100-T upgrades. I made at least two more business trips, one to West Columbia, South Carolina, and the other to visit the custom welding shop of S & S Welding Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota.

On the trip to West Columbia, I was accompanied by my parts compiler colleague, Ray Frydrych. Our flights to Columbia, via Atlanta, originated at Detroit, and Ray drove us to the airport in his old, beat up Volvo estate wagon, one of many cars he had owned over the years. While at the South Carolina plant, I was determined to have some form of transportation, because during my first visit there I was marooned without any vehicle. The company had a car pool, but all that I could borrow was a 15-seater van. At least it was better than nothing and saved on any rental fees.

An amusing incident happened when Ray and I decided to do a bit of bar-hopping in the evening. One place we were recommended was the lounge of the “King of the Road” motel. Ray was unused to the South Carolina liquor laws and decided to wander out of the bar onto the patio with a beer in his hand, only to be confronted by a state police trooper who explained this wasn’t allowed. A few more beers later Ray wasn’t ‘feeling any pain’ and decided to gatecrash a small party that had gathered in the bar. Since I was still rather sober (I was driving the van), I decided to call it a day and left Ray with his new buddies. The next morning I was eating breakfast when Ray, looking in a sorry state, came up to the table and said he wouldn’t be reporting to work as he had just arrived back to the hotel after an all-night drinking session. He obviously slept off the hangover during the day. While in West Columbia, Ray worked with his opposite number, Adrian Gardiner, and the two became close friends.

The visit to S & S Welding Inc. was another fact-finding mission; this time to the subcontractor that specialised in producing some of the large welded subassemblies for the 100-T. This was more or less a lightning visit, but at the end of the day I had a unique experience. I prearranged to ‘swing’ a ride on one of the BAS executive aircraft on its return trip from Toronto International Airport to Goderich Sky Harbour. After the commercial flight from Minneapolis arrived at Toronto, I called for a private taxi to collect and take me to the BAS aircraft waiting on the nearby Field Aviation apron. To my surprise and delight, the BAS aircraft happened to be one of the two Learjets in the fleet. It seemed that I was the only passenger and so took full advantage of the on-board facilities. This included a reclining leather executive seat, full cocktail cabinet of liquor, and access to the skyphone. Cec Feeney was the pilot and I can remember him making the final checks in readiness for take off clearance. After taxiing to the main runway, Cec put on full jet power and we catapulted a sort distance before the steep nose up take off. There was a course correction then a smooth flight to Goderich. In flight I helped myself to a Scotch and soda then relaxed in the seat and called Monica on the skyphone. I needed her to know my arrival time and to collect me at Sky Harbour Airport. “All in a day’s work” as they say.

Monica’s parents paid their annual visit and, fortunately, the June weather was favourable during their trip. They mostly stayed around town; often strolling to the lighthouse and whiling time away reading books or observing the coming and going in the harbour. There was always excitement when one of the lakers arrived at, or departed from, the port. No matter how many times they saw this

activity it never lost its novelty. After I left work and during the weekends we would socialise and take short trips into the country, exploring the neighbouring communities such as Bayfield and Port Albert. Dining out was also part of the agenda, and dressing up for dinner at the Benmiller Inn was one particular highlight. We also visited Ted and Nancy Plummer, Monica's mother's distant relatives, who had moved from Grimsby to nearby Beamsville. The Plummers now lived in a mobile home park and remained very active in the local Royal Canadian Legion Branch and an enthusiastic group of recreational vehicle (RV) owners that travelled in convoy to camp out at various destinations.

During Mr. and Mrs. Papworth's visit there was some unusual activity at Goderich Sky Harbour Airport. A cairn and memorial to the Second World War No. 12 Elementary Flying School stood opposite the airport entrance. The memorial consisted of a decommissioned Avro Lancaster bomber that had been converted and used by Coastal Command, and it was displayed on two metal pylons as if airborne. Over time, weather, vandalism and general neglect had taken its toll. However, the airplane was rescued in an unexpected way. An organisation known as Canadian Warplane Heritage (CWH) was keen on restoring the Lancaster to full airworthiness condition. Bruce Sully, CEO of Champion and head of the Sully Foundation, agreed to acquire the airplane and arrange for its dismantling and shipment to the CWH workshop at Mount Hope Airport, Hamilton. Soon, the Lancaster was removed from the pylons and a team of skilled mechanics began systematically stripping it. Some of the components, such as the engines, wings and tailplane assembly were dispatched to Hamilton by truck. However, the fuselage was too big to be transported by road. The Canadian Forces were then requested to use a Boeing CH-47 Chinook twin-rotor helicopter; although it required two separate attempts at different dates to successfully airlift the Lancaster's fuselage to Hamilton.

The family was pleasantly surprised to hear from Tony, uncle to both Don and myself, who intended visiting North America to reunite with his kinsfolk both in Canada and the U.S.A. Initially Uncle Tony spent a good deal of his time with Don and Claire, their children and Kath (his sister-in-law). However, his most ambitious visit was to Aunt Marjorie in Oregon, and he chose travelling by long-distance bus as the mode of transportation. As a 67-year old, the tedious bus journeys there and back weren't comfortable for him, but it was cost-effective. Uncle Tony also visited us in Goderich for a weekend so we were able to show him around. We even went to Sunset Beach where we swam in the lake and barbecued hamburgers over a camp fire. This July weekend was when the annual Arts and Crafts Festival took place, so Courthouse Park was brimming with activity.

The August Civic Holiday long weekend was particularly summer-like and we elected to spend the few days away from home. One destination to aim for was the historic site known as "Sainte-Marie among the Hurons" near the town of Midland. The original settlement was destroyed in 1649 to prevent it falling into the hands of the warlike Iroquois tribe. Today's site is a faithful reconstruction of the Jesuit missionary village complete with wooden palisade; the Indian church where Saint Jean de Brébeuf lies in the only known grave of any of the Jesuit martyrs; living quarters, and artisans' outbuildings. Visitors enter the site following a brief audiovisual introduction in the interpretive centre. The history of the missionaries' quest to convert the savage Huron tribe to Christianity unfolds as costumed museum staff re-enact the 17th century scenes. Highlights when we were there included watching demonstrations in the old kitchen; the blacksmith working at his forge, and also walking through the interior of a reconstructed Indian longhouse.



East Street Federal Building, Scene of a Hostage Taking Drama, Goderich, Ontario, May, 1979.



Family Gathering with Monica, Claire and Kath: Tony and Shannon, Bramalea, Ontario, June, 1979.



Partially Dismantled Avro Lancaster at Sky Harbour Airport, Goderich, Ontario, June, 1979.



Tony and Monica at the Arts and Crafts Festival in Courthouse Park, Goderich, Ontario, July, 1979.



Main Square of Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons Historic Site, Midland, Ontario, August, 1979.



Marine Railway Transporting Pleasure Craft on the Severn River, Big Chute, Ontario, August, 1979.



1980 Model Pontiac Phoenix LJ Coupé. It was Powered by a 2.8 litre V6 Engine Coupled to a Manual Four-speed Transaxle and Front Wheel Drive. One of the New GM 'X' Body Cars that Included the Buick Skylark, Chevrolet Citation, Oldsmobile Omega and Cadillac Cimarron. Photograph Taken Outside the River Mill Annex to the Benmiller Inn, Benmiller, near Goderich, Ontario, in the Summer of 1979.



Taking Delivery of New 1980 Model Pontiac Phoenix, McGee Motors, Goderich, Ontario, August, 1979.



Business Air Services Learjet C-GRCO Taxiing at Sky Harbour Airport, Goderich, Ont., August, 1979.

After “Sainte-Marie among the Hurons”, we continued on a circular tour of the district known as Huronia and came across an interesting feat of engineering. This was the marine railway at Big Chute. The Severn River is an important watercourse across this part of Ontario, once serving as a canoe trade route and now used primarily for recreational boating. To navigate past the 58 ft. (17.7 m) Big Chute Falls on the river, boats enter the specially designed cradle of the marine railway and are held in place. The cradle travels up and down a tracked incline carrying the boats from one water level to the other. The original and smaller marine railway cradle is no longer in regular service, but could be used to back up the modern machine that has a larger capacity.

Our return journey took us to the town of Collingwood where there was once a thriving shipbuilding industry. Following the decline of Great Lakes shipbuilding, the slipways and gantries were now silent and no longer resounded to the hoots and cheers whenever giant cargo ships were launched sideways sending a considerable tidal wave across the inlet. However, some maintenance work continues and we saw the laker *Algoport* in the shipyards being refitted.

Although it had only been since March, 1978, that I had owned the Buick Century, I was excited to learn more about the new ‘X’ body cars being launched as 1980 models by GM. The main impetus was that this range of cars was equipped with front wheel drive, a feature that I thought would be advantageous in Canadian winters. Also, with the ever-increasing cost of petrol (gasoline) due to the OPEC cartel’s monopoly on crude oil, a smaller and more fuel-efficient car sounded very attractive.

I mentioned this casually to John Timbrell and he said that he had received an invitation to a car show that featured these models. He really wasn’t interested so gave me the invitation. I went to the show in Kitchener to see the car for myself and, later in Toronto, actually took one out for a spin. The model was the Pontiac Phoenix, one of five different brands using the ‘X’ body. I was convinced that this was a solid purchase and made enquiries with McGee Motors to custom order a new Pontiac Phoenix and trade in the Buick. Although there was a delay (I had specified a sunroof, but that option couldn’t be fulfilled due to production problems), the new Pontiac was delivered on August 17th, 1979.

Mum and my aunt Win visit Canada

Ever since I emigrated, my mother had wanted to visit Canada, but it had always been financially challenging given my parents’ average income. So she started saving a little at a time to pay for a modest holiday. Her sister, Aunt Win, was always somewhat footloose and suggested that they travel to Canada together. After saving for several years, Mum was ready to make the trip and so the two ladies planned to visit us in September for three weeks.

The itinerary was flexible as I had to schedule my vacation entitlement to accommodate any travel opportunities. First of all, however, we had to greet them at Toronto International Airport and bring them back to Goderich to become acclimatised and shake off the jet lag. When we met them at the Arrivals concourse it was clear that they had had an eventful flight. They were both giggling at some of the escapades on board; including the flight attendant’s mishandling of their dinners that sent a shower of peas all over the

floor. “Not to worry”, said the hostess as she surreptitiously kicked the remnants of peas to one side. There was virtually nonstop chatter on the long drive to Goderich as the ladies gawped at unusual sights.

I had secured the first two weeks of their visit as my annual vacation entitlement so we could spend as much time as possible together. After settling Mum and Win into the Cedar Lodge Motel, we occupied some time showing them around Goderich and even had a barbecue meal on St. Christopher’s Beach watching the sunset. By the next day, jet lag had worn off and a more ambitious plan of sightseeing was put into effect.

On the list was the proverbial visit to Niagara Falls. Of course, it’s a novel attraction for visitors and first-timers usually get a kick out of the natural wonder; especially seen from the top of the Skylon Tower. We even walked across the Rainbow Bridge to Niagara Falls, New York State, so that Mum and Win could say they had set foot in the U.S.A. A minor problem was that, anticipating cool weather in September, they had brought medium-weight clothing with them. Unfortunately, the beginning of September was experiencing something of a heatwave and Mum was noticeably uncomfortable.

After Niagara Falls, we were expected to visit my cousin, Don Jr., and his family in their brand new house in Milton, Ontario. Monica and I were invited to stay overnight at Don and Claire’s, and Mum and Win were accommodated in Kath’s nearby apartment. Everything was falling neatly into place until the following morning when Mum dropped a bombshell and asked me, “When are we getting to the mountains?” This was completely out of the blue and I was a little nonplussed as I didn’t know that one of their holiday ambitions was to see the Rockies. It seemed some homework hadn’t been done and it was Mum’s turn to be perplexed when I explained to her – with the aid of an atlas – that the Rocky Mountains were as far away from Milton as England was. A typical underestimation of distances in Canada. This was a significant disappointment to both ladies and cast a pall over the rest of the holiday as, obviously, they had high expectations of being exhilarated by the mountains.

Evidently a compromise had to be sorted out and that meant at least going to places of historical, cultural and natural interest. In my head I had a circular tour mapped out that would take about ten days. It started in Toronto, where we travelled on the subway and explored downtown, with the CN Tower being one of the obvious sights. After staying overnight, we continued along Hwy. 401 to Kingston and visited Old Fort Henry with its black powder re-enactments; firing of the noonday signal cannon; 19th century precision drill demonstrations, and Changing of the Guard ceremony. All very colourful and authentic.

To keep expenses to a realistic level, I secured accommodation in a midtown hotel on Kingston’s main drag, Princess Street. It turned out to be a bit noisy as the lounge was not far away from the bedrooms and, of course, the bar didn’t close until 2 o’clock in the morning. On top of that, as we were walking down the hallway to find our rooms, we met the hotel’s exotic dancer parading along wearing next to nothing. Mum and Win’s eyes and mouths were wide open as she brushed by us, much to my amusement.

The next day saw us take the popular 1,000 Islands Boat Tour. On a somewhat choppy Lake Ontario, the sightseeing boat took us around the archipelago of private islands with their luxurious mansions. In keeping with the historical theme was Upper Canada Village, the ‘living museum’ that replicated pioneer life in the



Mum, Barry and Win on the Visitors' Promenade at Niagara Falls, Ontario, September, 1979.



Mum, Barry and Win on the Cannon Emplacement at Old Fort Henry, Kingston, Ontario, September, 1979.



Recreated Pioneer Farm at Upper Canada Village, Morrisburg, Ontario, September, 1979.



Mum and Rustic Log Cabin, Upper Canada Village, Morrisburg, Ontario, September, 1979.



Mum Looks for Wildlife at an Observation Point in Algonquin Park, Ontario, September, 1979.



Barry, Mum and Honey Open Christmas Presents, Hatfield, England, December, 1979.

original Colony of Upper Canada. Mum and Win were keen to see the artisans at work and also the role of people in everyday life back in the early 19th century. Demonstrations at the print shop, general store and in private houses were among the features that kept interest alive. Outside, they enjoyed looking at the renovated buildings and, being animal lovers, some of the livestock in the fields or the barnyard of the homestead that represented a typical frontier farm.

Ottawa, the Nation's Capital, was our next destination. The principal attraction being the Parliament Buildings, we took a conducted tour through the House of Commons and other public accessible parts of the Legislature. We strolled around the city centre to admire other buildings such as the Château Laurier Hotel; National Arts Centre; the prime minister's residence at 24 Sussex Drive; Rideau Hall, as well as the Rideau River, Canal and Locks. One lighthearted incident happened when we met an RCMP constable, who was on his beat patrolling the grounds of the Parliament Buildings. The policeman was wearing his everyday dark blue uniform. This was an eye-opener to the ladies, who expected to see the ceremonial red serge jacket/jodhpurs/wide-brimmed bush hat normally associated with the Mounties. We had a brief conversation and, after he had left, Win said with a smile, "I thought he was a traffic warden" – referring to the wide, yellow hat band that's similar to the standard issue for English parking meter enforcement officers.

Ottawa was our turning point and the homeward journey was to take us through some of the wilder parts of Eastern and Southern Ontario, interspersed with picturesque small towns such as Arnprior and Renfrew. Following an overnight stop in Barry's Bay, we entered Algonquin Provincial Park with its logging museum and trails leading to observation points. The weather was good and I had hoped that at the picnic spots we would see some wildlife; however nothing big, such as moose or bear, showed themselves. Soon we were back in Goderich and another work week lay ahead for me before Mum and Win returned home.

The ladies amused themselves as best as possible during the day and, after I returned from the office, we would all go on local drives through the countryside or for an evening drink at the "Park House" tavern. One time when it was busy at the pub, a couple of women at the next table were getting somewhat merry. Mum, who noticed this and was rather shocked at their intoxicated condition, lent over our table and said to me in a low voice, "She's drunk!" I had to smile, since this wasn't unknown in British pubs, but perhaps it was an unexpected sight over here. I organised an interview with Joanne Buchanan, reporter for the Goderich Signal-Star, where the ladies reflected on their experiences visiting Canada. It was a bit tough on them not fulfilling their Rocky Mountains ambition, but such is the pitfall of people not realising the true size of the country and, at least they had a few memories, together with some First Nations souvenirs bought at "Chief Maracle's" roadside Indian shanty on the road to Kingston, they could share back home.

Fall and the last Christmas in England

With the exception of my SAE 75th anniversary involvement, not many important events happened in the autumn. To mark the society's milestone, the Ontario Section organised a presence in three fall fairs – the nearest one to Goderich being at Seaforth. Together with other SAE members, I helped to set up and man the booth in the Seaforth arena. This was good experience integrating with the public on matters of new automotive technology and promoting SAE's principles.

Winter weather had arrived before Christmas and snow lay around. However, on the day of our departure to England for Christmas and New Year's, unseasonably mild conditions prevailed and our journey to Toronto was slower than usual because of heavy fog. The intense fog at the airport didn't bode well for a scheduled take off and, after checking our luggage and entering the Departure lounge, we were informed that the incoming British Airways flight had landed at Montréal and was not continuing to Toronto. This despite other airlines still landing and taking off at Toronto International Airport. Typical of these situations, there was a minimum of information shared with the passengers. As time went by, nothing much was heard from British Airways except the possibility of transporting everyone to Montréal by bus; a six hour journey at best. This plan didn't materialise and the airline decided to accommodate their stranded passengers in a nearby hotel until the morning when it was hoped the fog would have dissipated. There was then something of a disorganised scramble as shuttle buses took us from the airport terminal to the Constellation Hotel.

Our overnight toiletry bags were packed in the main, checked luggage, so complete ablutions in the morning wasn't possible. On top of that, the fog had not dissipated. After a scratch breakfast, we were transported back to the airport Departure lounge and continued to wait for the incoming Montréal flight. Weather conditions improved as the day went by and we heard over the loudspeaker system that the daily incoming flight from London, England, was due to arrive. This was a glimmer of hope to the somewhat bedraggled band of passengers. However, that hope faded when an airline representative, who had just come on duty, announced that we would be bumped by the current day's passenger complement and that we would still have to wait for the delayed Montréal plane. This announcement set off a near-riot as several disgruntled and vociferous passengers invaded the airline's kiosk and harassed the representative. In no certain terms were we going to be bumped. This had the desired effect and, eventually, we were allowed on board, but by the time we were airborne, we had lost over a day of our vacation.

After the usual sleepless overnight flight we arrived at London's Heathrow Airport. We called my parents to tell them we had finally landed, and Mum told me to hire a taxi instead of travelling on the tortuous journey by Underground and suburban train to Hatfield. At the taxi rank, a grizzled white-haired cabbie was at the front and he said that there was a set fare from Heathrow to Hatfield, no choice. So we bundled everything into the cab and set off. When we arrived, Mum paid off the cabbie (£30.00p) and we dragged ourselves inside for a well deserved cup of tea.

The remainder of the Christmas period before travelling to Coventry for New Year's was spent in and around Hatfield and enjoying some milder weather. We resolved, however, that after this episode it was probably no longer feasible to continue visiting England at Christmas time given the various problems, delays and other issues, and this 1979 visit was definitely the last such trip.

