

Chapter 1

Into private life

The writing on the wall

December 21st, 2005, was my last working day, and apart from volunteering on the Town of Goderich Municipal Heritage Committee from March, 2007, to November, 2010, I have remained inactive in the workforce. My normal retirement date was to be December 1st, 2010, but the early retirement package changed my last official working day to February 28, 2006, and as I had accumulated a number of vacation days this brought the actual quitting date forward to December 21, 2005.

The opportunity to take early retirement from Volvo Motor Graders Ltd. came at a good moment; not just because it was a personal desire, but as it transpired, the fate of the company was sealed when its doors closed permanently on June 25th, 2009. It was plain to see that Volvo's corporate attitude was having an effect on worker morale. The constant quest for profitability and a healthy 'bottom line' was becoming paramount. The ruthless business practice of acquiring potential moneymaking companies, and closing unprofitable Volvo facilities at random was worrisome. Despite all the changes and modernization, the writing was on the wall that the aging motor grader factory was likely to be a candidate for closure.

The new automated methods of the ALLADDIN software were taking the creativity away from my job, and daily challenges were becoming fewer. So, with the prospect of an extra five years of freedom and the means to depart with dignity and on a high note, this opportunity came at the right time.

Pensions, compensations and farewell events

Volvo's early retirement package was very generous. For example, a lifetime company pension; paid outstanding vacation days; retirement allowance, and company paid benefits until my 65th birthday. The company pension was augmented with payments from the federal government's Canada Pension Plan (CPP), and later, when I was eligible, payments from the Old Age Security (OAS) supplement. However, at age 60, the CPP payments were reduced by a certain percentage of the full allowance normally paid at age 65. Additional to this, I was eligible for a lump sum paid out of the Employee's Fund, and we used this windfall to help finance our 2006 annual holiday to St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Technical Publications Department met at the Park House tavern for a Christmas drink and the presentation to me of a retirement farewell gift—an official Volvo stainless steel chronograph. Exactly what I wanted! On my first day of freedom from work, Monica and I celebrated with a gourmet dinner and a bottle of champagne. Finally, we continued the tradition of going to Hessenland Country Inn for New Year's Eve; thus ending 2005 and entering the new year driving a brand new 2006 model Pontiac Pursuit SE coupé.

Thirteen senior employees working in the Volvo Customer Support building, whose accumulated service amounting to 464 years, had opted for the early retirement package. At the end of February, 2006, the company organized a farewell event to recognize the veteran employees' loyalty and hard work over the years. Various supervisors introduced the soon to be retirees, and spoke at length about their time at Champion/Volvo; including amusing anecdotes and personal reflections. The employees had opportunity to give their thanks as they received a retirement testimonial. My supervisor, Ray Frydrych, was on good form as he reiterated some of the adventures he and I had been through since 1982, and I respected him for his approach to our sometimes rocky relationship (this was common knowledge). Finally, all the guests indulged in refreshments with coffee and two celebration cakes.

The union also wanted to recognize its long service brothers before they retired. Following a monthly meeting at the Saltford Valley Hall, IAM&AW Local Lodge 1863 president Duane 'Dewey' Horton presented each retiree with a union monogrammed wristwatch. I decided to make a short speech to the assembled membership, citing the assistance given to me by the union during the times when I needed help. As the years went by, and after the company had closed its doors, the union's legacy continued as the Local 1863 Retirees Club, of which I was a founding member and still take an active part in organizing events.

Winding up SAE and TAS activities

So, as retirement set in, Monica and I gradually became acclimatised to the new found freedom. We rationalised our day to day living expenses by eliminating certain overheads, and were confident that we could live comfortably on the reduced income. As it turned out, retirement life assumed largely as it should be—certainly no stress. The freedom afforded by throwing off the shackles of employment proved priceless, and I'm glad I made it at this stage of my life.

Although retirement allowed me to spend more free time on personal projects, activities for both the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) and Technical Authorship Services (TAS) were on the wane. The year 2005 saw a decline in the number of SAE Southwestern Ontario Section events; two plant tours—Diamond Aircraft Industries, London, Ontario, and CenterLine (Windsor) Ltd., Windsor, Ontario—and a golf tournament. Furthermore, Ruth Cooper, the Section chair at the time, was moving away from the area, and other executive members intimated that they preferred not to continue for another term. The final blow for me was the Section's newsletter shifting into the electronic age and going completely online; thus a printed and mailed version became immediately obsolete. With the decrease in member interest and a weakened executive, the Southwestern Ontario Section was eventually absorbed into the larger and more influential Ontario Section. My SAE membership lasted for 28 years (from March 28th, 1978), and had proved most satisfactory in terms of involvement and personal advancement at a professional level. It was difficult to resign, but the experience had run its course.

TAS, my hobby business, was garnering fewer jobs, and the loss of the SAE Southwestern Ontario Section's newsletter was the final nail in the coffin. In January, 2006, Ray Frydrych asked me to do a proof-reading task. Together with a similar assignment the next month, they amounted to the only TAS consulting work received from Volvo. In March, 2006, I attempted to acquire some technical writing work based on a



2006 Model Pontiac Pursuit SE Coupé. This Model Pursuit was Powered by a 2.2 Litre Inline 4-Cylinder Sequential Fuel-injected Engine Coupled to a Manual Five-speed Overdrive Transaxle and Front Wheel Drive. The Colour was Described as Ultra Silver Metallic, and Standard Features Included Air Conditioning and Cruise Control. The CD Player was an Optional Extra and the Instrumentation Panel had Basic Gauges. Photograph Taken Outside our Cambria Road Apartment, Goderich, Ontario, in December, 2005.



Ray Frydrych Presents Barry with his Retirement Testimonial, Goderich, Ontario, February, 2006.



Monica and Barry Pose with the CST Employees' Retirement Cakes, Goderich, Ontario, February, 2006.



Monica Poses on the Maitland Woods Trail after a Fresh Snowfall, Goderich, Ontario, January, 2006.



The John Hindmarsh Tract Portion of the Maitland Woods Trail, Goderich, Ontario, February, 2006.



Yellow Trout Lillies and White Trilliums Bloom on the Sifto Loop Trail, Goderich, Ontario, April, 2006.



The Restored Gooderham & Worts Co. Buildings in the Distillery District, Toronto, Ontario, April, 2006.



Monica Poses in the Toronto Islands Park with the City Skyline behind, Toronto, Ontario, April, 2006.



Public Art and Typical Shopfronts in the Chinatown District of Toronto, Ontario, April, 2006.

request for proposal from the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority (ABCA). I had an informal interview with Tim Cummings, the ABCA executive director, but nothing conclusive came of my enquiries. This was probably my last effort to look for any business, as I anticipated winding up the company. Following an extended period of inactivity, the company books were closed in April, 2007, and the Ontario provincial government business licence No. 970645362 registration expired on May 20th, 2007. Thus ended an adventure that started September 16th, 1983 (see Chapter 9 of website, <http://barrypagememoirs.weebly.com/>).

Late winter and spring trips, and other events

The natural divisions of the old workday now evaporated in favour of a loose schedule of events dependent on shifting priorities; or simply no schedule at all. Freedom was the key word driving the whims and fancies that differed from day to day. For example, a crisp, clear morning following a significant overnight snowfall presented the opportunity to hike along the country trails. Tramping through the snow in the Maitland Woods or along the Tiger Dunlop Trail portion of the Goderich to Auburn Rail Trail (GART) was now possible at any time.

Whenever possible, we took advantage of the improving early spring weather by touring around and hiking in various nature conservation areas—the Sifto Loop being a firm favourite. Also at this time, a yearly ritual was to visit an area used by migrating birds (Whistling and Trumpeter Swans) as a stopover place where they could rest and feed before continuing north to their traditional breeding grounds.

The manufacture of maple syrup, or ‘sugaring off’, is a major early spring celebration for rural communities, and several festivals have evolved to showcase the industry and attract visitors. We attended one of these, which was in the hamlet of Belmore where an all-you-can-eat pancake/sausage breakfast was served. It was a great social gathering for the local farmers and their families, and much mingling went on as neighbour greeted neighbour. Free entertainment by Country & Western bands continued throughout the festival.

Early spring also heralded the live theatre season, and we visited a new theatre to see a production of Gilbert & Sullivan’s *The Mikado*. By then, our travel plans for a trip to St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador, in June were almost completed, and the flights and accommodation were booked.

In April, we went on a three day trip to Toronto. Staying at the Holiday Inn hotel in the district of Yorkdale, we were able to use the Toronto underground (subway) train service to take us downtown. After getting off at Union Station, we walked along Front Street past the Hockey Hall of Fame, the iconic ‘Flatiron Building’, and the St. Lawrence Market where vast arrays of exotic goods satisfied the needs of this multicultural city. We eventually came to the Distillery District. This neighbourhood dated back to 1832 when the Gooderham & Worts Co. occupied the largest distillery in the British Empire. Following years of neglect, the buildings were being restored as an urban renewal project, and now housed restaurants, boutiques, galleries, etc. From there, we made our way to Toronto Harbour and caught the ferry to the Toronto Islands Park. It was so peaceful that we could hardly believe we were so close to Canada’s largest city. The following morning, we visited Chinatown where many of the shops had displays out on the pavement (sidewalk). We couldn’t identify the different and intriguing items, as the price tickets were written in Chinese!

The spring weather in May encouraged us to make an overnight trip to Owen Sound, a city on the shores of Georgian Bay. Our main reason for going there was to visit the new Grey County Museum, which was a very impressive facility. We had hoped to visit Inglis Falls Conservation Area to see the falls and hike the trails, but rain put an end to those plans, so instead we visited the Rail and Marine Museum. For dinner that evening, we went to a restaurant called Ted's Range Road Diner near the town of Meaford. It certainly was a different kind of place, both in appearance and for the food served. It was housed in an old Nissen (Quonset) hut, and the inside was as unique as the outside. One of the inside walls was covered in blackboards on which various menus were written. As well as the more usual chicken and seafood, it included emu, caribou, elk, bison and musk-ox. I had musk-ox stir fry, and Monica ordered a bison steak. Both were delicious.

Another county museum on our visiting list was the Wellington County Museum. This very impressive building, made from locally quarried limestone, is located in the countryside between the towns of Fergus and Elora. According to the tourist information, the Wellington County Museum and Archives is a National Historic Site. It was built in 1877 as a 'Poor House' or place of refuge for the poor, homeless, and destitute people of Wellington County. It operated as a Poor House and Industrial Farm until 1947, when it became a County Home for the Aged. In 1974, it was transformed into the Wellington County Museum and Archives. Similar to most county museums, there are collections of pioneer artifacts and archival records, including photographs, maps, correspondence, diaries, assessment rolls, voters lists, newspapers and minutes.

Vacation in and around St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador

St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador (NL), is the oldest city in North America and has a lively culture. June can be an uninviting month to visit because the weather changes rapidly. However, the Newfoundland hospitality that we have always experienced in the past ensured our welcome, and we were not disappointed on this trip. Also, as it turned out, there had been a lot of changes in St. John's since our last visit six years ago, so there was plenty for us to see and do in the week we were there.

The WestJet flight from Toronto to St. John's International Airport was straight forward, and we hired a taxi to take us downtown to the Marriot Courtyard, a relatively new hotel overlooking the busy harbour. From our window we could see the hustle and bustle of the oil rig supply ships being outfitted. After settling in, we strolled along Duckworth Street towards the city centre looking for a restaurant. Diverting to Water Street, we found Velma's Place purporting to be a 'traditional Newfoundland diner.' The menu listed a number of NL staple meals, such as cod tongues and *fish and brewis* (pronounced: fish and brews), Despite the elevated prices, we indulged in a passable dinner of local fare, and felt we had arrived at our destination.

The next day was bright and sunny. We elected to walk to the city's famous landmark, the Cabot Tower on Signal Hill National Historic Site. This was a strenuous trek as it was uphill all the way. We passed the imposing Sheraton Hotel Newfoundland and a new tourist feature, the Johnson Geo Centre, that we intended to visit during our stay. Further along the winding road was the Queen's Battery with its commanding vista across the Narrows—the entrance to St. John's Harbour. At the summit of Signal Hill there was access to the Cabot Tower with its small museum and artifacts dedicated to the first successful trans-Atlantic radio transmission received by the radio pioneer, Guglielmo Marconi.



Barry and Monica outside Ted's Range Road Diner, near Meaford, Ontario, May, 2006.



The Menu Blackboards at Ted's Range Road Diner, near Meaford, Ontario, May, 2006.



Diorama of a Pioneer Stone Lifting Machine, Grey County Museum, Owen Sound, Ontario, May, 2006.



The Wellington County Museum and Archives, Located between Fergus and Elora, Ontario, May, 2006.



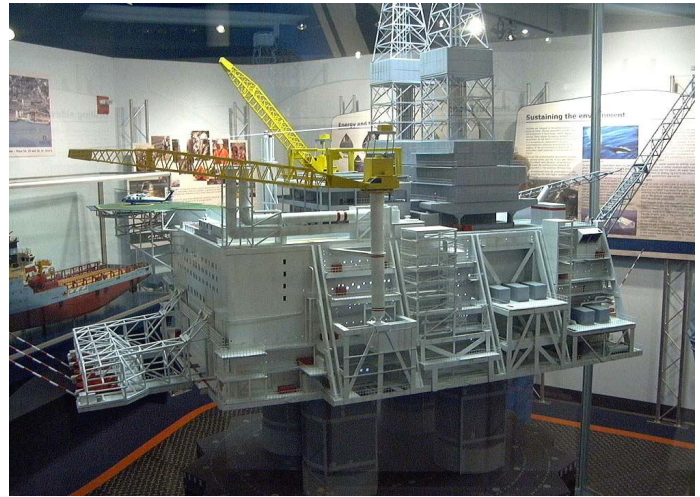
Descending the North Head and Battery Trails from the Cabot Tower, St. John's, NL, June, 2006.



The Battery, an Outport Clinging to Signal Hill and the Narrows, St. John's, NL, June, 2006.



General View of George Street with O'Reilly's Irish Newfoundland Pub, St. John's, NL, June, 2006.



Oil Drilling Rig Model, Exxon Mobil Oil & Gas Gallery, Johnson Geo Centre, St. John's, NL, June, 2006.



An OCEANEX Container Ship Enters the Narrows through the Coastal Fog, St. John's, NL, June, 2006.



The Rooms Provincial Museum, Art Gallery and Archives, St. John's, NL, June, 2006.



Remnants of Fort Amherst Overlooking the Narrows, St. John's, NL, June, 2006.



Railway Coastal Museum and St. John's Archives, St. John's, NL, June, 2006.

Our return to the city was downhill—but equally as strenuous—by way of the North Head and Battery Trails. The initial trail followed a rocky path, interspersed with wooden steps, behind the Cabot Tower and down the face of the headland. In parts, the pathway was very precarious, and hikers were required to grasp handrails to prevent a headlong fall into the sea. Eventually the trail entered The Battery, an outpost clinging to the rocky hillside. An undulating road through the village was flanked with multicoloured ‘salt block’ houses which appeared to be a throwback in time regardless of their close proximity to the modern city.

After returning to the hotel and refreshing, we spent the rest of the day strolling the lengths of Duckworth and Gower Streets, and admiring the multicoloured rowhouses—often referred to as ‘Jelly Bean Row’—which were a photographer’s delight. In the evening was a ‘must do’ visit to George Street where every building is either a pub or club; so we settled for a plate of Irish stew and pints of Guinness in O’Reilly’s Irish Newfoundland Pub, listening to live East Coast music in a spit and sawdust atmosphere.

The following day was foggy and drizzly—an ideal time to visit one of three museums in St. John’s that were new to us, and we chose the Johnson Geo Centre. The main exhibit there focused on geology, and occupied us for most of the day. There were two other displays that we left for a second visit. One showcased The Titanic Story. The other was the Exxon Mobil Oil and Gas Gallery, which showed how crude oil and natural gas were discovered in the North Atlantic off the island of Newfoundland, and explained the recovery and processing methods. It made us realise why there had to be a never ending convoy of supply ships—as seen from our hotel window being unloaded and reloaded—going to and from the oil drilling rigs.

We looked forward to dining out at different restaurants in the evenings, and having experienced the rough bars of George Street, we discovered other, more refined, eating places such as Magnum and Steins on Duckworth Street, and The Pepper Mill, The Tuscan Door and Oliver’s on Water Street.

Being a seafaring city, the harbour is constantly busy with craft of all sizes, and the best place to view all the activity is Harbour Drive. This road parallels the waterfront, and strolling along we could see recreational boats, fishing boats and even the huge ships moored in the container terminal. Massive cranes and fork lift machines manoeuvred the freight containers from deck to dock and *vice versa*.

The weather improved in the afternoon, and our leisurely return stroll to the hotel took us through the Murray Premises, a group of old stone warehouse buildings that had been repurposed into trendy offices, boutiques and art galleries. Following Gower Street, we continued to the Classic Café East for lunch, where I indulged in fish and brewis—the mixture of hard bread and cod pieces that are boiled and served with pork scrunchions—accompanied with an NL brewed Black Horse ale.

After lunch and a freshen up at the hotel, we returned to complete our tour of the Johnson Geo Centre. The level of detail for both The Titanic Story and the Exxon Mobil Oil and Gas Gallery was remarkable, and excellent models and dioramas fascinated us—well worth the price of admission.

On the next day, the unpredictable NL weather changed. From our hotel window we could see that the Narrows were partially obscured by coastal fog. However, modern navigation equipment and radar allowed

the big container vessels to enter St. John's Harbour with little difficulty, and the huge OCEANEX ships appeared through the murk like ghostly galleons.

The cloudy and showery conditions enticed us to visit The Rooms Provincial Museum, Art Gallery and Archives. This museum was totally new to us, and although it was a very impressive building, both from the outside and on the inside—particularly the black marble floors and stairs—we thought it poor for a provincial museum. It seemed as though so much money had been spent on the building itself that there wasn't enough money for the displays. Only one gallery had a permanent display; all the rest had temporary ones.

The sixth day dawned bright and so we rented a car for an excursion outside the city. The first stop was Fort Amherst on the South Head of the Narrows. Built back in the 18th century, but now occupied by a lighthouse, the defence installation was improved during the Second World War; although the fortifications were now abandoned and ruined. We had a clear view of Signal Hill and the Cabot Tower across the Narrows, and every so often maritime traffic progressed in and out of St. John's Harbour.

After leaving Fort Amherst, we drove along Hwy. 11 towards Petty Harbour, then took the sideroad that led to Cape Spear National Historic Site. The original lighthouse building is a Parks Canada interpretation centre. Inside are several rooms containing artifacts and displays of the domestic life of the lightkeeper and his family. A second lighthouse operates as the modern beacon. The cape's significance as the most easterly point in North America means it is popular with tourists, and especially photographers who want to capture the dawn sun rising out of the Atlantic Ocean.

Driving back to St. John's, we diverted to Quidi Vidi Village, which like The Battery, is an independent outpost within the boundaries of the city. Some of the older fishermen's buildings have been taken over by a craft brewery, the Quidi Vidi Brewing Company. There were conducted tours of the brewery, followed by a brief tasting session. Since at that time I was drinking one of their products on a regular basis, I was pleased to partake in the sampling.

For our last full day, we visited the third museum that was new to us. However, we found that the Railway Coastal Museum and St. John's Archives was closed in the morning. Fortunately, nearby was another tourist attraction, the Newman Wine Vaults Provincial Historic Site. As the only historic wine vault in NL, there is an amazing story behind its existence. In 1679, a Newman and Co. ship laden with port was blown off course and spent the winter in St. John's. The cargo of port was stored in the company's vaults and went through an unintentional aging process. In the spring, the product was found to have improved in quality. The process became a tradition and now operates in the same way today. Later, we returned to the Railway Coastal Museum and St. John's Archives housed in the original heritage railway terminus building. It was very well done and gave a good insight into the history of the railway and coastal boats.

That evening, we were celebrating Monica's 32nd anniversary of her coming to Canada, so we wanted to go somewhere special. We found Bianca's, a fine dining restaurant frequented by executives from the big oil companies, and where we dined on caribou steaks. The restaurant definitely lived up to its reputation and we had a fabulous meal.

Thus ended our short stay in St. John's, and another excellent holiday in NL. There was so much more to see in this province, and in later years we were to experience the wilds of Labrador—the Big Land.

Summer excursions

Much of the pioneering history of Southern and Southwestern Ontario has been painstakingly recorded in the form of 'living museums.' There were several to visit within a day's journey of Goderich, and in late June, 2006, we went to the Doon Heritage Crossroads interpretive site on the outskirts of Kitchener. Formerly known as Doon Pioneer Village, the site had changed its branding as it expanded with new structures and additional way of life interpretations.

It was a sunny day and ideal for roaming through the village that recreated a frontier community based on the hamlet of Petersburg. Staple buildings such as the smithy, general store and church were open to visitors, who could interact with the blacksmith, store clerk and parson at the respective locations. The costumed guides were experts in their specific field, and the blacksmith actually forged me a souvenir double-ended hook. Pioneer houses that had been salvaged and re-sited included domestic items of the period. Of note was the restored railway station where we learned about the duties of the station agent (clerk), and met some of the 'villagers' as they went about their daily tasks.

The following month saw us travel to the town of Midland and its neighbouring community, Penetanguishene (known locally as Pen-e-tang) for two nights. We planned on visiting the three main attractions of the district: the Wye Marsh Conservation Area, Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons, and Discovery Harbour. We had visited them before in 1979, 1984 and 2002, but it turned out like seeing them for the very first time.

The Wye Marsh Conservation Area has an extensive network of trails and boardwalks through natural wetlands—ideal for observing birds and the occasional beaver or other wild animals. We were particularly impressed with the resident family of Mute Swans, consisting of the parents and five cygnets.

The Midland/Penetanguishene district is several hours drive northeast of Goderich. The countryside there can be rugged, but that lends itself to the authenticity of the pioneer sites that portray re-enacted life in 17th century New France, and The Royal Navy and Military Establishments set in the days after the War of 1812. Volunteers in period costume show visitors what the way of life was like in those days.

Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons was the 17th century headquarters of the French Jesuit missionaries, and while a number of native people were converted to Christianity, the relationship between them and the missionaries rekindled old rivalries between the Huron and Iroquois tribes. Inevitably, conflicts broke out which eventually led to the mission being abandoned after only ten years. The mission had been reconstructed on its original site, and we spent the whole day there going through the over 20 buildings, talking to the costumed interpreters, watching various demonstrations and visiting the adjacent museum.

Following the War of 1812, the British built a naval base at Penetanguishene. The Royal Navy and Military Establishments—now a tourist attraction called Discovery Harbour—was to represent a strong

force on Lake Huron in case of renewed hostilities with America. However, continuing peace with the Americans and financial pressure from England led to the gradual withdrawal of British troops from Canada and the eventual closing of the base. Like the mission, the naval base has been reconstructed on its original site, and in addition to the dozen buildings, there were replicas of two 19th century British warships—*HMS Bee* and *HMS Tecumseh*—moored at King’s Wharf. Costumed staff and artisans explained the workings of the base as it was in its heyday. There was a demonstration of how wooden staves, used for shipbuilding, were bent using a steam box.

Other outings in the summer months included attending live theatre productions featuring several musicals and a traditional English farce. In August, we returned to Toronto for another visit. However, we didn’t go straight there this time, but detoured to visit some friends whom we hadn’t seen for ages. John Dicks, who grew up in Bristol, England, used to work with me as the chief technical illustrator at Champion Road Machinery Ltd. (as it was then known), but he left the company in 1986 to branch out on his own as a freelancer, and he and his wife, Pat, moved to the town of Bolton, just north of Toronto. After catching up on all our news, we said cheerio and continue our journey.

Our reason for going to Toronto again so soon was the same as when we went to Midland—to revisit places of interest that we went to years ago. They were: Historic Fort York and Black Creek Pioneer Village. Not surprisingly, Fort York played an important role in the War of 1812, but unlike most of the other forts along the St. Lawrence River and on the Great Lakes that were eventually abandoned, it continued to be used by the British Army, and later the Canadian Army, until the 1930s. By then, the fort had been bought by the City of Toronto, and after it was vacated by the Army, the city embarked on an ambitious restoration programme. Today, the fortified walls surround the largest collection of original War of 1812 buildings in Canada. While some of the buildings are furnished as they would have been in the early 1800s, others house displays of artifacts. Similar to our previous visit, summer students dressed as 19th century soldiers. They performed standard drills and blackpowder demonstrations, and other costumed guides explained the workings of the fort in frontier days.

Black Creek Pioneer Village comprises nearly forty 19th century buildings, most of them having been moved there from the surrounding area. However, the buildings making up the Stong Farm are all on their original sites, and it was after they were recognised as being of historical significance that it was decided to develop the village to tell the story of early pioneer life in Ontario. Throughout the village, the costumed interpreters were really knowledgeable and very interesting to talk to. Some of the pioneer homes were open to visitors, and in one we were given a demonstration of how traditional straw hats were hand made. Again, we toured Roblin’s Mill, which is the village’s water-powered grist mill, to watch flour being ground.

A late summer excursion took us to Hamilton, Ontario. Ever since our first visit several years ago, I have wanted to go back to the Hamilton Museum of Steam and Technology, which is dedicated to the preservation of Hamilton’s first waterworks. The facility was built in 1859, and inside the magnificent stone buildings are the two original 70-ton steam engines, which were used to pump water from Lake Ontario to the city. Both engines have been restored to operating condition, and one of them is started up every day—although now driven by an electric motor rather than steam—so that visitors can watch it working.



Doon Heritage Crossroads, View of the Main Street, Kitchener, Ontario, June, 2006.



Doon Heritage Crossroads, Interior of the General Store, Kitchener, Ontario, June, 2006.



Palisade Gate to Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons, Midland, Ontario, July, 2006.



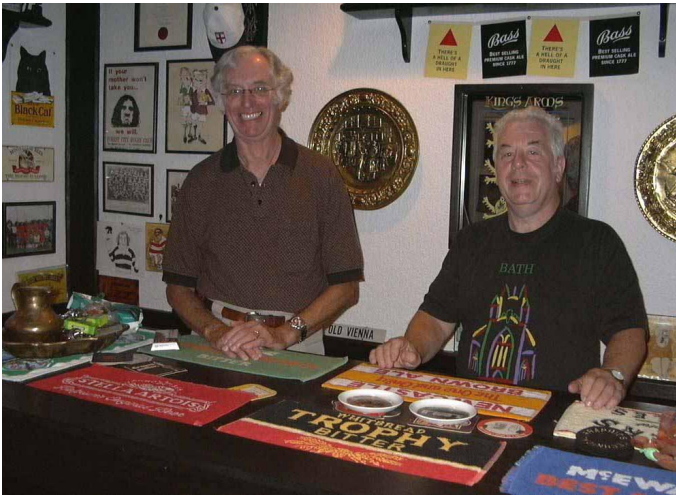
Vegetable Garden, Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons, Midland, Ontario, July, 2006.



Monica Poses with the Naval Clerk at Discovery Harbour, Penetanguishene, Ontario, July, 2006.



Replica of HMS Bee at King's Wharf, Discovery Harbour, Penetanguishene, Ontario, July, 2006.



Barry Visits John Dicks in John's Basement Bar, Bolton, Ontario, August, 2006.



General View of the Blockhouse, Historic Fort York, Toronto, Ontario, August, 2006.



Field Gun Demonstration with British Army Redcoat, Historic Fort York, Toronto, Ontario, August, 2006.



Officers' Dining Room (Mess), Historic Fort York, Toronto, Ontario, August, 2006.



View of Mill Road, Black Creek Pioneer Village, Toronto, Ontario, August, 2006.



Hand Making a Straw Hat Demonstration, Black Creek Pioneer Village, Toronto, ON, August, 2006.

Also on that trip we visited another historic site. In the morning, we toured over *HMCS Haida*, which is now a floating museum. It is the last Tribal Class destroyer in the world and Canada's most famous warship, having served in the Second World War and the Korean War. The entire ship was open to the public where there was access to the engine room, crews' quarters, operations area, ordnance decks and the bridge.

Later in the day, we walked to the nearby Parks Canada Marine Discovery Centre where visitors learned about marine life and also the environment. With its excellent displays and numerous user friendly touch-screen computers, we thought the centre a fascinating place to visit. It was also there that the very friendly and informative assistant asked us if we had ever visited Grosse Île and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site. We had to admit that we hadn't even heard of it let alone visited it, so she went and found some literature on it. Located in the middle of the St. Lawrence River, Grosse Île was a quarantine station for the Port of Québec from 1832 to 1937. At the time, the island was the main point of entry for immigrants coming to Canada. We were so impressed with the information given to us, Grosse Île was added to our list of future destinations—a trip that we fulfilled in the spring of 2007.

We hadn't seen Ted and Nancy Plummer, Monica's distant relatives who lived in a Burlington retirement home, for ages. As we were going to be in the area, we arranged to have lunch with them in the dining room of the home. We had a nice visit and would have liked to have spent longer with them, but we wanted to get out of the city before rush hour started.

Autumn colours in Southwestern Ontario

The leaf colour change started at the end of September, and by mid-October the autumn hues were well advanced. As usual, we set out on day trips trying to find areas of scenic beauty enhanced with the brilliant red, orange and yellow leaves. One particular beauty spot is the Grey Highlands and Beaver Valley in Grey County, just under two hours drive from Goderich, and where we had visited before in the autumn of 1978 and 1997. Near the village of Kimberley and the Talisman Ski Resort, several gravel sideroads follow the contours of the valley. We walked along one of the sideroads from the valley floor to the upper reaches hoping to view a panorama of vibrant colours on this cloudless day. Unfortunately, we were a little too early for the 'peak period', but we did admire several outstanding specimens of maple trees in full splendour up close along the sideroad.

Driving north, the scenic road through the valley followed the Beaver River. At Thornbury, we continued west along Hwy. 26 towards Owen Sound. This route was chosen specifically to view a beauty spot where the Sydenham River cascades over the Niagara Escarpment as a 100 ft. (30 m) fan-shaped waterfall in the Inglis Falls Conservation Area. The river's water power was once harnessed by a grist mill built at the crest of the falls. However, the mill suffered several fates, and its ruins have been turned into an interpretive centre. Inglis Falls is a magnificent sight during the spring and summer when the river is in full flow. Unfortunately, in the autumn, the amount of water is depleted and so the effect is not quite as spectacular.

There were several vantage points overlooking the falls, and as we were contemplating the view from one of them, we met two female visitors who had been hiking on the trail from Harrison Park to Inglis Falls.

Both of them were excited because at a point where the trail and the Sydenham River met, they had seen a number of salmon making their way upstream to the spawning grounds. We thought it was a unique opportunity to experience this phenomenon and asked the ladies for directions. We started along the trail, which at that point was an easy walk through a deciduous forest. However, the trail started to become more rugged as we reached the Niagara Escarpment proper. The trail deteriorated into a boulder-strewn path with significant inclines, hidden roots and loose rocks. Eventually, we arrived at the base of the cliff and found an offshoot trail to the river. Signage indicated that a separate part of the river, which was flowing nearby, was maintained by conservationists who had constructed ‘riffles’ to help the salmon progress upstream. Sure enough, there were fish actively fighting against the current and making a Herculean effort swimming to the egg-laying gravel sections of the river. All very interesting, but we then had to face the climb up the cliff, and this proved exhausting before we reached the level trail to the car park. It was a long drive home, but we had had a full day of recreation and fresh air in a particularly scenic part of the province.

The autumn foliage was also beautifying the local hiking trails, and we took full advantage of the decent weather by walking through the Maitland Woods, and along the McNaughton/Morrison Dam Trail near the town of Exeter. With the advancement of the ‘peak period’ in October, we again considered a journey north of Goderich and staying in the community of Tobermory.

The picturesque Bruce Peninsula—a spur of land jutting into Lake Huron and separating it from Georgian Bay—is a paradise for naturalists, photographers and hikers. The peninsula is part of a limestone escarpment, and has both a fertile and rugged landscape. The coastline is particularly craggy—something like the Cornish coast—and the wild forest and the natural scenery lends itself to cottage development..

Tobermory, or more affectionately know as ‘Tub’, is located at the tip of the Bruce Peninsula, and is the main centre of activity for boaters, scuba divers and hikers. It is also the southern terminus for the car ferry *MS Chi-Cheemaun*—Ojibwa for *The Big Canoe*—that plies between Tobermory and Manitoulin Island. The famed Bruce Trail also terminates at ‘Tub.’ We went to Tobermory and planned on visiting the new Bruce Peninsula National Park Visitor Centre and hiking to some of the beauty spots in the park. We had intended it to be a two night trip, but had to cut it short and return home after only one night, mainly because of the weather. On our way there, we drove along Hwys. 21 and 6 through heavy snow showers—the fields were white in places—and hailstorms. It was raining when we got to Tobermory, and it was also very windy, which added a significant wind chill to the already low temperature. Even so, during a lull in the rain we went for a walk around the harbour where the small shops and eateries were located; only to find most of them had closed for the season. It was like a ghost town!

Fortunately, our motel had a dining room, and the meal we had in there that evening was really good. The wind was still as strong when we returned to our room, and with it howling outside our window all night, neither of us got much sleep. Although we had gone to bed still intending to stay the two nights, waking up to another cold, wet and dreary day, on top of our poor night’s sleep, is what decided us to cut the trip short. Anyhow, before leaving the area, we went to the new Bruce Peninsula National Park Visitor Centre which was very well done. The displays were outstanding, and as the video on the park took its viewers to the beauty spots, we got to see them, albeit only on a screen. Outside at the end of a boardwalk



*Hamilton Museum of Steam and Technology (HMST)
Hamilton, Ontario, September, 2006.*



*Steam Engine Control Rods and Plumbing, HMST,
Hamilton, Ontario, September, 2006.*



*HMCS Haida Floating Museum at her Home Berth,
Hamilton, Ontario, September, 2006.*



*Barry Poses with the Aft Ordnance of HMCS Haida,
Hamilton, Ontario, September, 2006.*



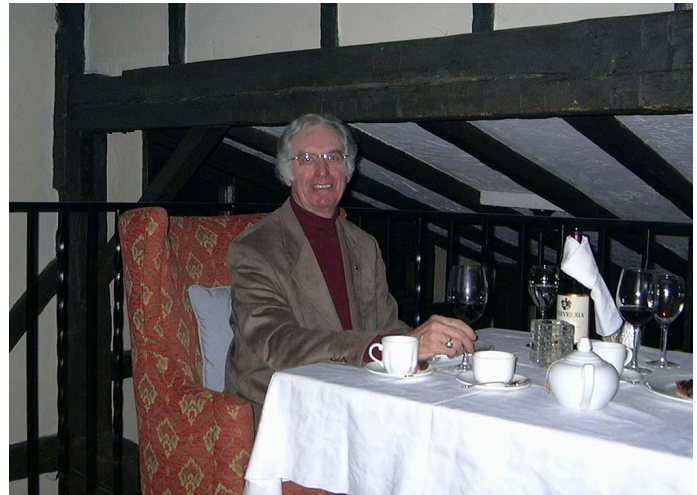
*View of Little Dunks Bay on the Bruce Peninsula
near Tobermory, Ontario, October, 2006.*



*View of the MS Chi-Cheemaun Ferry Terminal Dock,
Tobermory, Ontario, October, 2006.*



Sue, Lindsey and Roger Moore with Monica, Crabby Joe's Restaurant, Woodstock, Ontario, October, 2006.



Barry Celebrating his 61st Birthday at Benmiller Inn & Spa, Goderich, Ontario, November, 2006.



Monica Celebrating her 68th Birthday at Benmiller Inn & Spa, Goderich, Ontario, February, 2007.



Barry Tries Walking on Snowshoes at Benmiller Inn & Spa, Goderich, Ontario, February, 2007.



Ice and Snow Encrusted Inglis Falls, Owen Sound, Grey County, Ontario, March, 2007.



Three Great Lake Freighters Tied up for Winter in Owen Sound Harbour, Ontario, March, 2007.

was a tall lookout tower that afforded a panoramic view of Tobermory and the wide expanse of Georgian Bay with Flowerpot Island on the horizon. Some other visitors were admiring the panorama from the top of the lookout tower. One of the men in the party then lent over the barrier too far and lost his hat, which fell into the upper branches of a tree. It was amusing to watch the antics of the people trying to recover the hat.

Friends visit Canada, and close of year 2006

The day after we got back from the aborted trip to Tobermory, we had a phone call from our good friends from Coventry to see if we could get together while they were in Canada. Roger and Sue Moore were visiting their son, Stephen, daughter-in-law, Erin, and Niall, their six week old first grandchild. Stephen and family lived in Waterdown, a dormitory town close to Toronto, so we chose to get together in Woodstock because that community is about halfway and an easy journey from both directions. We arranged to meet for lunch at Crabby Joe's family restaurant the following day, and much to our delight, Lindsey, Roger and Sue's daughter and our goddaughter, was with them. We hadn't seen Lindsey for five years, and it wasn't until speaking to Roger and Sue on the phone that we learned she had flown over with them. Needless to say, it was great seeing them all again.

Apart from the occasional outings on the local hiking trails and to live theatre shows, once again I became heavily involved in my genealogical research project. My cousin, Linda, in Hertfordshire, England, sent a huge file of family history for me to absorb. Apparently it was quite a find when she contacted somebody very remote in the family, who had documented a list that goes back to the beginning of the 19th century. Of course, the Internet is virtually indispensable, and lots of new and useful information keeps appearing; although the Page side is far more challenging due to 'dead ends' or conflicting data. I have had some unexpected help from contacts on the website www.curiousfox.com, who are more experienced in family tree research. Naturally it has become an addictive and time-absorbing interest.

Chalking up another birthday—my 61st—was a nice occasion as we spent overnight at the Benmiller Inn & Spa, a nearby country resort that's converted from a 19th century woollen mill. When we entered the hotel room, we were surprised to see a vintage bottle of wine awaiting us—compliments of the innkeeper. A nice touch! The celebration dinner was served in a private salon that is located on the mezzanine floor overlooking the main dining room—reminiscent of the minstrel gallery in a stately home. We had a parade of waitresses serving us, and the striploin steak was done to perfection; plus a bottle of very acceptable Chilean *cabernet sauvignon* to help with the digestion.

Although the beginning of autumn was rather wet, it stabilized later and winter weather conditions prevailed in December. In fact, a heavy snowfall hit this area with an accumulation of up to 10 in. (25 cm). Sometimes the snow brings its benefits, and we enjoyed a hike of about 4.3 miles (7 km) in the Maitland Woods, which were a winter wonderland.

The Christmas and New Year's period was kept to our usual format. We spent Christmas Day quietly by ourselves, and even though I had been retired for a year, Volvo Motor Graders Ltd. still presented me with a Christmas turkey. Then, on Boxing Day, we had our traditional get-together with friends and their family.

Normally, we go to bed fairly early, and New Year's Eve is one of the few nights of the year that we stay up past midnight. We continued our tradition of going to Hessenland Country Inn for New Year's Eve, and it was the usual gala occasion we have come to expect. Last minute cancellations due to illness—the flu and outbreaks of the Norwalk virus—meant we were a small crowd, but it was a wonderful evening.

Snowshoeing at Benmiller

Winter brought its usual offering of snow and opportunities to walk the local trails transformed by a blanket of white. The Tiger Dunlop Trail portion of the Goderich to Auburn Rail Trail (GART) and the Maitland Woods beckoned us on several occasions in January and February to admire the snow sculptures formed on rocks or fallen trees. Some of them we christened 'mushrooms' for their similar appearance to the fungi. Small animal tracks, too, were observed as we progressed along the way.

Prior to this year, we had nearly always celebrated Monica's birthday at a restaurant in town. However, in 2007 we went to the Benmiller Inn & Spa, which is the same country inn where we went for my 61st in the previous November. It was being made to feel special that decided us, and since it was also Saint Valentine's Day, we booked the 'Valentine's Package' rather than the regular overnight promotion. It featured a special dinner menu and a few other goodies. We discovered what those few other goodies were as soon as we walked into our room. Awaiting us were a chilled bottle of sparkling wine, a plate with a dish of chocolate fondue surrounded by eight luscious strawberries, and a long-stemmed red rose. Although the strawberries, especially when dipped in the chocolate, were really tempting, we didn't want to spoil our appetites for dinner, so we ate only half of them. Dinner—a leisurely four course affair—was really fantastic, and as usual, the innkeeper and his staff went the extra mile to make it a memorable evening for us.

The sun was shining when we drove the short distance to the inn in the afternoon, but by the evening, it had clouded over and started to snow. Looking out the window from time to time while we were eating and seeing the snow being blown around, we were very glad that we were staying overnight. It was still snowing when we awoke the next morning, and a very wintry scene greeted us. However, we made the most of the freshly fallen snow by trying our hand at snowshoeing. The inn had snowshoes that we could borrow, and cautiously at first we went for a walk around the grounds. We had wondered about buying snowshoes, but although we think it would be fun, it's unlikely that we would get enough use out of them to justify the expense. Driving conditions were very poor for our return journey, but we arrived home without incident.

Day trips to Owen Sound and Strathroy

With spring just around the corner, we dug out our list of interesting places to visit and started planning some day trips, as well as a few mini-trips. The first out-of-town journey was to Owen Sound, and it was lovely driving through the snow covered countryside. We stopped on the outskirts of the city to have a look at Inglis Falls, last seen in the previous autumn. Even though the waterfall was frozen, it was a spectacular sight—a mini Niagara Falls. After lunch in the city, we visited the Tom Thomson Memorial Gallery and Museum of Fine Art, which we enjoyed even though it was smaller than we expected. Tom Thomson was one of the artists in the renowned Group of Seven. The gallery also

displayed several paintings of other Group of Seven artists, including A.Y. Jackson and Lawren Harris. Owen Sound harbour was still icebound, and at least three Great Lakes freighters were tied up at their winter berths. We returned home by a different route, stopping in Kincardine for dinner at The Erie Belle restaurant. It is known throughout the area for its excellent fish and chips, and we were not disappointed.

Following that outing, we had a day trip to Strathroy, a town just east of London, Ontario, to visit the new museum there. It, too, was smaller than we expected, but very well done. While in the museum, we picked up a brochure for a walking tour around the historic downtown area, and as I had recently joined the Municipal Heritage Committee (see Chapter 2), we decided to take a look at Strathroy's heritage buildings, such as the Post Office that was built in the Romanesque Revival style. Some had been well maintained while others were somewhat dilapidated—a similar situation in Goderich, as I was about to find out.

Ray Frydrych's departure

From time to time I kept abreast of what was happening at Volvo Motor Graders Ltd. The news filtered down from chance meetings in the street or at union meetings that I still attended. By this time, I had been retired for nearly eighteen months, and my old department continued to adapt to the occasional changes dictated by the Customer Support Team (CST) division of Volvo CE headquarters in Eskilstuna, Sweden. Therefore, it came as a surprise to read the following announcement: ... March 29th, 2007. It is with regret, we announce a difficult, but necessary organizational decision. Effective immediately, Ray Frydrych has left the employment of Volvo Motor Graders. We wish him well in his future endeavours....

With Ray's departure, leadership of the department was assigned to Julie Norbert, who previously worked as a product/tool designer in the General Engineering Department. Until the company's doors in Goderich closed permanently on June 25th, 2009, the department consisted of: Glenda Becker, Gerry Fernandes, Roy Gutmanis, Jeff Hodges, Dave Long, Julie Norbert, Lindsay Roberts and Mike Rompf.

As to Ray's future endeavours, little is known, but his presence on Facebook (social media) indicated a physical move to Lake Couchiching, and possibly becoming involved in outdoor activities, including kayaking. Certainly the dismissal was a huge blow, and there are indications that he never fully recovered.

Spring finally arrives

Assured sign of spring is the Belmore Maple Syrup Festival. Last year was the first time we went to the festival, and we so enjoyed it—as well as being very impressed at how well everything was organised—that we made certain not to miss it this year. We arrived to find hundreds of cars lining the streets and ten tour buses parked around the Belmore Arena. The big attraction was the all-you-can-eat meal of pancakes and sausages served with lots of maple syrup. Not surprisingly, with so many people attending the event, the queue (line-up) to get the pancake and sausage meal was extremely long, but it was worth the wait. Once seated, if we wanted more pancakes, tea or coffee, we only had to get the attention of one of the dozens of volunteers, and whatever we wanted was brought to us.

Being second-time visitors, we knew what to expect, and decided before we arrived that we wouldn't join the queue for the food straightaway, but instead go and listen to the Country & Western music entertainment on the makeshift stage for a while. Before long we bumped into people we knew. Later, while we were looking at the homemade crafts, we met two more friends, Geoff and Rosemarie Edwards.

We had our first overnight trip of the year when we went to Kitchener—staying in the downtown Valhalla Inn—primarily to go to The Centre in the Square theatre and see a play called *No Man's Land*. It was based on the conflict that took place at Beaumont Hamel during the First World War in which hundreds of soldiers from the Newfoundland Regiment were killed or wounded. It was because of our Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) connection that we wanted to see it, as well as it being a touring company from an NL theatre that was staging the production. It was a very moving play, and you could have heard a pin drop in the theatre when it ended.

We didn't have any plans for the following day, but as it was so beautiful—clear blue skies and a temperature of 77 deg.F (25 deg.C)—we drove to nearby Waterloo and a recreation area known as RIM Park, where there was a lovely multi-use recreational trail that we had hiked along once before in 2004. The Grand River flows through the area, and the trail follows it for nearly two and a half miles (4 km). It was so enjoyable that we did the entire length from the car park to the end and back. This included viewing the Heritage Mennonite Martin Farm which is part of the complex.

The final remnants of snow went at the end of April, and warmer weather encouraged us out on recreational walks. We combined a promenade on the Goderich waterfront boardwalk with viewing the Royal Canadian Navy veterans observing the Battle of the Atlantic remembrance service. Another satisfying hike was on the McNaughton/Morrison Dam Trail near the town of Exeter, with its opportunities to observe wild flowers, such as trilliums, as they sprouted and bloomed in the woodland.

Knowing that the snow melt and spring runoff would add volume to all the watercourses, the continuous sunny days meant again driving to Grey County and following a tourist route of the eight spectacular waterfalls in the area. We were selective, however, as time only allowed us to visit four of them. They were: Hogs Falls, Eugenia Falls, Walter's Falls and Inglis Falls. The route itself was somewhat adventurous as we had to navigate the county back roads to gain access to the falls. The least picturesque was Eugenia Falls, and the most impressive was Inglis Falls, as this was the first time we had seen it virtually in full flow.