

Tide Comes In: Tide Goes Out

Nova Scotia, July 2009

Driving to Sable

Scott and I left the day after school was over. That was Saturday June 27. We were heading for a provincial park, north of Quebec City, Hautes Gorges de la Riviere Malbaie.

We never made it. We had bad luck that first day. Though not as bad as the deer's.

401. Still in Toronto. 120kph. DEER. A doe. Bounding across 12 lanes. In front of me. 15 feet. Sweet Christ I'll hit it. Bounced to the right. Thank god. I'm by it. Thud. It hit the side of a van behind me. Down. Tangle of legs in mirror. More thuds. No crashes. Still shaking. Crying.

Not a good start.

Up past Kingston we were nearly out of gas. Scott, the great GPS navigator, routed us to the next Petro Canada. It turned out to have been sold and was not a Petro Canada any more. The second one we tried only sold diesel. Shit! I was on fumes. Third one was okay. I had made it ☺. I go to Petro Canada for the "points". I was so happy to find the damn thing I totally forgot to swipe my card. No points. Shit! ☺

The rain came in heavy waves north of Montreal. A phone call home confirmed crappy weather up in the park for days to come. So at the bridge to Quebec we drove on by. (After of course getting in the wrong lane and ending up stopped on the ladder work in the middle of the interchange!)

We had supper at St Hubert's in Riviere Du Loup. We camped in St Leonard, NB at a place I've been to many times before. The Trans Canada was right there and a railroad not far away. A perfect campsite for Liz. Lots of bugs too. Turns out there was little traffic that night, no trains and clear sky. Our luck was turning.

It rained the next morning as I drove off the road according to the GPS. The Trans Canada now goes totally to the west of the river, back in the woods. The beautiful Upper St John River Valley is no more.

We arrived with the sun shining at Hopewell Rocks. It was low tide. And muddy. Very muddy. Fun though. Lots of pics. After sandwiches we hit the mini golf at Magnetic Hill. Scott had a spectacular second half of the first round, but ultimately we knew who'd win. Just call me Tiger.

Damn Magnetic Hill! It REALLY is magnetic. It killed the GPS. Simply would NOT come on! Back towards Hopewell it came on again. YIPEE. Worked ever since.

At Hopewell the second time it was high tide and I tried my best to get the same angles for some high/low shots.



Little point paying for a campsite or motel when we could be in Sable at 11pm. Scott in particular was pleased with that idea so we drove straight there. It was heavy fog after Halifax, then heavy rain after Liverpool but by 11pm we were at Mom's, safe and sound.

Staying In Sable

For the next week it was mainly a case of fog and or rain in the morning followed by sunny at times, cloudy at times and even foggy at times in the afternoon. It all depended on location. The sun came out on the 1st in Lockeport. At the same time it rained in Sable. On Friday it was foggy all day up Chester way. Good weather it was not.

I dragged Scott with me to see some local sights. Shelburne one day in brilliant sun. Liverpool and Western Head in cloud another day. Tancook, in the fog, on Friday.



If we weren't away from Sable we were working on the deck. We mixed cement, screwed decking, cut posts. John was in charge, Margaret, Scott and I were the laborers. One day when there wasn't enough deck work for all of us, John got Scott mowing the lawn on a ride-on tractor. It was a first for Scott. He had great fun. At one point, being unfamiliar with the grounds, he drove completely over the old cement flag base. There was a bit of a scrape, but no serious damage. John and Margaret looked at each other and said, "We always wondered if you could drive over that." Scott answered their question. "Apparently."

One night, after I got totally eaten alive by the black flies working on the deck, mom washed our clothes. Liz always checks pockets when she does the laundry up here. I never do. So as a consequence Mom washed my wallet. The cash and credit cards were fine. I had some important paper cards and they survived too. But my receipts fared poorly. Some were a complete wash.

On Wed, Canada Day, while John, Lynn and Margaret worked on the deck, Mom, Scott, Mary, Gary and I drove in to Lockeport to see the festivities. There was flag raising, cake cutting, a craft show and strawberry shortcake. We watched the children's parade then later the main parade. The theme was lobsters and so everyone was dressed in lobster costumes. After the parade Mom hiked us around the Lockeport loop: over the old train bridge and back around the back harbour and beach.





The grease pole was the main attraction of the evening. Ellen Page (of Juno fame) had talked about it on Letterman, so I had to see it. It was, in a word: boring. They had this pole out over the harbour covered in lard. There are bills (5, 10 and 20) on the pole. Higher denominations further out. They were larded on. Difficult to grab. About 6 teenage boys took turns sliding out along the pole and falling off. The idea was to grab a bill as you fell. Once they all had a turn they

did it again, again, again, again and again. They could pretty much all go right to the end if they wanted. The hard part was not the sliding but the grabbing. Those bills were very slippery and tough to grab. Once all the money was gone, they re-larded the pole and loaded it again with more money. And then the same 6 boys did it again, again, again, again and again. After about 4 re-lardings we left.

The other thing of note on Canada day was that I saw Leo and Jonathan. We had a good chat, but unfortunately Sonja was away and they too were leaving so Liz never saw them. Also I saw Cheryl Pierce from high school days. It had been a long time since I had last seen her. But at least I instantly knew who she was: looked the same as in high school except a bit shorter and fatter, just like me. ☺. But then there was this other lady that came up to me and asked if I remembered her? Nope. Not a clue. Well it was Holly Harlow. Oh yes I was supposed to remember her: last time I saw her she was maybe 10 and I was 13. This was 40 years later and I was supposed to recognize a fifty year old woman from a 10 year old little girl? I hate old home week.

Tancook Island was a fun adventure. It was foggy foggy foggy. The ferry was an oversized Cape Island style boat. Plenty of room inside to sit. In the back they used a crane to hoist in people's gas, groceries and planting supplies. It took an hour to cross. We could have been in the middle of the Atlantic for all you could see: nothing. We landed first on little Tancook. I was up top watching the activities when Scott, who had been sleeping below, got off! I laughed and yelled for him to get back on. We were going to Big not Little Tancook.

Big Tancook was interesting. A lovely little harbour. We hiked quickly to the other side of the island, exploring the cemetery along the way. There were no Robart's, almost exclusively Young's and Baker's. Christian Robart had left Tancook in the early 1800's for Sable. There was no trace of him on the island 150 years later.



Back near the harbour we had lunch in the only restaurant. We had seafood chowder and had a chat with the cook. They were starved for conversation. Our quick hike across the island and back in a bit under an hour was apparently quite a feat.

Back in Lunenburg I explored the museum and we visited the newly rebuilt St John's church and the Montbeliard monument.

The week at Mom's was a TV disaster. Satellite TV is the pits. She could get CBC in Halifax, in Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, Regina, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver. She would get the weather channel, for all Canada: not the South Shore. There were NO American stations like NBC, CBS or ABC. It was dreadful. The only bright spot was Star Wars. Each night they played a new one so we watched all six episodes. And of course Coronation Street.

With Liz and Barb in Lockeport

On Sunday, 5th July Scott and I packed up our stuff and left to pick up Liz and Barb at the airport. We went via the Aspotogan peninsula and from Blandford we could see the Tancook ferry, Chester, Little and Big Tancook, all in a single glance. The previous day we thought we were in the middle of the Atlantic on that ferry, while in reality we were never very far from land. Further along at Bayswater we stopped at the “other” Swiss Air 111 memorial. This was the actual graveyard where some of the victims are buried. Very sad, but there was a bunny hopping around. ☺

At the airport we just got to the gate when we spotted Liz and Barb coming down the stairs.

In Mahone Bay they explored Amos Pewters. In Oakhill John showed off his newly expanded fire hall. Then Lynn fed us a huge big lunch of salads and chicken. After a brief tour of Priscilla’s place we were on the beach in Lockeport at the ocean Mist cottages. Scott and I played in the surf and sand. A light supper at Tim’s in Shelburne capped off a great day.

Over the next four days we saw a lot of the south shore: Carter’s Beach, Summerville beach, Western Head, Keji Seaside Adjunct, Sable River Swinging Bridge, Shelburne and Tottie Crafts, Petite Riviere, Green Bay, Crescent Beach, Lahave Ferry, Ovens Park, Lunenburg, St John’s Church, Lunenburg Academy, Blue Rocks and Mahone Bay again.

The Seaside Adjunct trip was worth a mention, not for the trip itself, which was lovely, with the normal seals, and not so normal mink, but the hiking itself was fun to note. We had done our 3 miles round trip and on the way home I suggested we show Barb the swinging bridge. Liz and Scott had had enough hiking so Liz volunteered to drop Mom, Barb and I at the head of the river. We hiked home via the Swinging Bridge. But then as we got down to the old railway crossing, Mom suggested to expand our hike to include a loop out over the lake and back by Arthur’s. Barb thought to herself that she



wasn't going to be out walked by an 80 year old and said "Sure". We did it. That was Tuesday. Barb and Liz took the next day off ☺, while Scott and I went into Sable to help build more deck.

The weather was so good that we never once lost sight of Gull Rock. Barb loved the beach and could have done with less travel and more Lockeport.

Driving around the province

Time and tide wait for no man. So armed with the tide tables we packed up and left the sands of Lockeport for Hall's Harbour on the Fundy coast.

We were there by 10:30. Low tide had been about an hour earlier, but the harbour itself was still high and dry.



Down on the rocky beach we played with the tide. Just standing still is huge fun. In no time at all, if you aren't careful, your feet get wet. At one point I could see a section of the beach that was higher than behind it and so I told Scott to go out on it and it'd be an island. I had to change lens. When I looked up the island, with Scott on it had already formed. Then Scott realized he couldn't get off. He tried to throw a couple of stones in the breach to use as stepping stones. No good. They were covered as fast as he could throw. He barely had time to sit down and take off his shoes and socks and wade off his fast shrinking island before it was gone.

Another sight to see was the small creek that flowed down the harbour to the sea. There was seaweed in this creek. As the tide came in you could follow exactly where fresh met salt water. On one side the seaweed flowed to the right, on the other side it flowed to the left and in between it pointed randomly. It soon pointed left and the line of confusion moved relentlessly to the left, up the creek.

We also had interesting chats with some very young lobster fishermen who had sunk a boat that was now tied up to the wharf! Apparently they hit a bank and as the tide came in they went down! Somehow they got help and managed to partially float the wreck and tow it to shore. It needed to be towed to Yarmouth where repairs might cost over \$200,000. The owner, himself very young (early 20's maybe) estimated the value of the boat at \$425,000.

I also watched a young man fill bait bags with VERY stinky herring.

We ate lunch and stayed till about 2:30pm. As the tide came in, more and more boats left the harbour. They left in order of how far up into the harbour they had tied their boats. The lobstermen were the first out as their new boat was the furthest out, nearest the sea and the first to float on the incoming tide.

At this point we discussed how much fun it was going to be the next day in Parrsboro. Barb didn't quite see the point.

"Tide goes out. Tide comes in." she said.

"Yes, but the view is different" I explained.

"The ocean is totally out of sight of the wharf at Parrsboro." Liz added.

"Yes, but, generally it's the same: tide goes out, tide comes in, is it not?"

"Okay so you're saying you don't want to do this again?"

This was a trip to show Barb the province so we didn't push it any more. Also the weather was going to turn bad in a couple of days and it was important to "Make hay while the sun shines" and go to Cape Breton directly.

I got lost, even with the GPS, (I thought it was taking us the wrong route) trying to get around the Noel Shore. In fairness to me, it IS confusing up around Avondale and Kempt.

We stayed in Truro in a lovely little motel "Willow Bend". Barb in particular was taken with it. We ate at Frank and Gino's, an independent restaurant which was a total clone of East Side Mario's.

The next morning we crossed the causeway, made reservations at a motel in Cheticamp, drove up beside Lake Ainslie and ate lunch at Grand Etang.

I love French Mtn. It is the classic view of the highlands: the twisty road hugging the mountain with the sea off to the left. Awesome. Needless to say we stopped often for photos.



Then we were at the Skyline trail. It was 2:20pm when we set out. It was HOT. Barb and Liz were “done” after about 20 minutes. Unfortunately it was about 50 minutes, one way. I kept well back. It was pretty frosty anywhere near them. ☺. (I’ve been here before, both literally and figuratively.)



Eventually we got to the far point. There one is faced with a huge number of steps DOWN to near the bitter end of the point, from which the best views are to be had. Scott and I ran down. We saw deer and bald eagles. I got lots of pics. It was GLORIOUS. The girls waited for a while at the top, but then headed back to the van. I never saw Barb. I managed to catch Liz. Scott went ahead and caught Barb. There were two keys to the van, water and any relief from the now 2 hour plus expedition in the heat. Liz and I had'em! Barb didn't speak much to me that evening.

The next day we “did” the Cabot Trail and Cape Breton Highlands National Park. By “doing” I mean stopping at each viewpoint and taking pictures. Scott and Barb had a bet as to the exact number. Scott, the optimist, had a far too few. Barb won easily. We made it around to Ingonish beach at noon for lunch.

We returned to Truro and Barb's favourite Willow Bend motel, via the Englishtown and Iona ferries, and Mother Webb's steakhouse in Antigonish.

We were now 1 hour from the airport and had two full days before Barb flew home. What to do? It was decided to go back to Bridgewater and stay with John and Lynn for two nights.

On the way to John's we went thru Hammonds Plains. Liz saw a sign to Peggy's Cove.

"Why not go there now?" she asked.

It was foggy, but not raining, so what the heck. We stopped on the way at the Swiss Air 111 memorial. The lighthouse was all encased in scaffolding for painting and repair. But the cove was nice. Barb found a fellow watercolor painter and was in heaven.



In Bridgewater we dropped off our stuff and headed down to Crescent Beach. It was nice and sunny down there. Scott, Barb and Liz hiked the length of it. I drove around and got them at the far end.

That night John took me out to see some osprey's. He knew exactly where they were nesting so it was no problem to find them. One was on a pole next to the theater in downtown Bridgewater!

The next day John and I drove up to the eastern shore and back thru the woods from Musquodoboit Harbour. Margaret took the girls to Hirtle's beach and then into Lunenburg for lunch. Liz has been raving about that beach ever since. Figures. I took 'em to 25, but the one I didn't, she liked the best ☺.

Sable and the Trip Home

On Wednesday, 10 days after getting off the airplane, Barb was on her way back home.

Liz, Scott and I had packed up our stuff at John's, dropped off Barb at the airport and drove back to Mom's in Sable. When we arrived John and Margaret were packing up. The deck was mostly done except for more railings and painting/staining.

On Thursday we hummed and hawed about the merits of the Digby ferry versus the Cat to Portland. In the end it was Liz's knee that made the decision. She had injured her knee, perhaps back on the Skyline trail (It turned out to be a Baker's cyst). In any case we decided NOT to go via the Portland and the States if there was a possibility of ending up in hospital without any insurance.



In the afternoon we hiked Louis Head beach. Then in Lockeport, Liz and Mom hiked that beach too.

In the evening Scott and I cleaned up the grass around the fireplace and removed all the old ashes. Mom set the fire and by 7:35 we had a great hot dog roast with marshmallows and “smores”. Then we watched old slides of our trips to New York in 77, the Yukon trip in 85 and the trip west in 78. I definitely need to get them digitized.



We said goodbye to Mom the next morning and drove thru the rain up to Yarmouth and along the Acadian Shore.

We drove down to Cape Forchu lighthouse. I had never done that before. It was very pretty even in the heavy fog, but my goodness was it ever a long twisty road to get there.



We also did an ABC tour (not Another Bloody Church) and hit 3 of the big church's along there. There may not be a god, but there surely are some nice buildings built for him.

The ferry ride was uneventful. We listened to a nice girl give two talks from the New Brunswick Museum on the fur trade and on whales. There was nothing to see. In fact I went out at one point and there we were, within 15 feet of the St John dock. You couldn't have seen it at 20.



We stayed right there in St John at a Holiday Inn Express. The next morning we left shortly after 7am and drove the nearly 1500km to Richmond Hill. It rained till Quebec City.

At lunch we stopped at a McDonald's and watched the bikers get out of their wet outfits. Some were okay in their raincoats and leathers, but one lady was not. She was soaked to the bone and shivering from the cold. So much for the thrill of biking. ☺

We were home by 10:15pm.

That night at 3:15am we had to chase a raccoon out of Alex's bedroom. What had they been up to while we were away? ☺

Trip Summary

Date	Kilo	Destination	Things Seen and Done
Sat, 27 th	1138km	Grande-Riviere Campground, St Leonard, NB	Deer in 401
Sun, 28 th	1011km	Sable River	Hopewell Rocks (low and high tide) Magic Mountain mini golf Magnetic Hill
Mon, 29 th		Sable River	Hiked around the River Shelburne: Historic Property tours
Tues, 30 th		Sable River	Deck building Feeding the black flies Washing wallets
Wed, 1 st		Sable River	Lockeport, Canada Day celebrations (Parades, hikes and grease pole)
Thurs, 2 nd		Sable River	Liverpool Museums Moose Harbour Western Head Summerville Beach swimming
Fri, 3 rd		Sable River	Big Tancook Island
Sat, 4 th		Sable River	Around Sable and home
Sun 5 th		Ocean Mist Cottages, Lockeport	Bayswater and Swiss air 111 Picked up Liz and Barb at Halifax airport Mahone Bay Oakhill Fire Department Played on Beach in Lockeport
Mon, 6 th		Ocean Mist Cottages, Lockeport	Carter's Beach Summerville Western Head
Tues, 7 th		Ocean Mist Cottages, Lockeport	Seascape Lockeport Seaside Adjunct (St Catherine's River Beach) Swinging Bridge and Lake hike in Sable
Wed, 8 th		Ocean Mist Cottages, Lockeport	Liz and Barb stayed on the beach Scott and I built deck Scott mowed lawn Took Liz and Barb into Shelburne and Tottie's Crafts. Supper at SeaDog in Shelburne
Thurs, 9 th		Ocean Mist Cottages, Lockeport	Green Bay Petite Riviere Crescent Beach Ovens Park Lunenburg (big Red for lunch, shopping, St John's Church)

			Blue Rocks Mahone Bay Did laundry in Bridgewater and ate at Swiss chalet Danny Mason visited us in cabin
Fri, 10 th	463km	Willow Bend Motel, Truro	Halls Harbour Lookout Noel shore
Sat, 11 th	343km	Parkview Motel, Cheticamp	Canso Causeway Lake Ainslie Mackenzie mountain Skyline Trail
Sun, 12 th	563 km	Willow Bend Motel, Truro	Cape Breton Highlands National Park: Lone Shieling Scotch Cove loop Neil's Harbour Green Cove Keltic Lodge / Middle Head Freshwater Lake Lookoff Englishtown Ferry Bras d'or Lakes and Iona ferry Supper at Mother Webb's in Antigonish
Mon, 13 th	298 km	John and Lynn's, Oakhill	Swiss Air Flight 111 Memorial Peggy's Cove Crescent Beach Osprey watching
Tues, 14 th	410km	John and Lynn's, Oakhill	John and I did Fisherman's cove Lawerencetown beach Margaret, Barb and Liz did Hurtles Beach Lunenburg
Wed, 15 th	357km	Sable River	Dropped off Barb at Halifax airport
Thurs, 16 th		Sable River	Louis Head Lockeport Beach Hot Dog roast Watched Old slides
Fri, 17 th	298km	Holiday Inn Express, St John, NB	Windmills at Pubnico St Anne's in Ruisseau Cape Forchu St Mary's Church in Church Point Belliveau Cove lighthouse St Bernard's stone church Digby to St John Ferry in thick fog
Sat, 18 th	1460km	Richmond Hill	Drove home in the rain.