

Trip 3 – Episode #4: The Surprises Continue.

We continued south along the Saint John River, having done the kind of research we generally do: None.

Which meant that almost everything we discovered along the way was a surprise, or at least a beautiful new vista.



It was lovely to see so many charming homes and gardens, and always the Saint John.





Our next stop (though not a long one) was Fredericton. We only got a few glimpses of this pretty town.





Our main destination was the Beaverbrook Art Gallery.



It's undergoing a major renovation and because several of the galleries were empty, admission was free. (Although we could and did make a donation.) It's slated to have a grand opening in the fall. But, there was still an interesting, eclectic selection of art to view in a very nice, open space.

The first gallery we went into was space given to the artist in residence. The artist we met was Brittany Schuler, who was working on a series of layered landscape paintings using mylar sheets.



It was an interesting and effective technique and we enjoyed talking with her about it.



It was not surprising, but it's always fun to see a few of Maudie's paintings, especially since we're not likely to get a chance to see the great collection in Halifax.



More surprising was to see some large paintings by Dali ... and a new admirer.



Another exhibit featured the work of New Brunswick artist Cathy Ross, whose detailed watercolours were lovely and deceptively simple. She says she wants the viewer “to pause and take in the subtle joy of the ordinary”.



There were some unusual pairings. The painting between the two British paintings is by a Canadian artist (you can tell by the distinctive lumber jacket).



This was a fascinating piece by Canadian artist Nataalka Husar, called Self Portrait of a Has Been. Oil, graphite and zipper on canvas. (If you look closely, you can see the zipper going up each side).



The biggest surprise was an exhibit of the work by George Paginton, an artist just after the time of the Group of Seven, who painted Canadian landscapes in a style similar to the Group of Seven, but was never quite acknowledged the way they were.





It was nice to discover him in Fredericton.

We were disappointed that so much of the space was closed for renovation, but we were glad we had a chance to at least see some of this impressive gallery.



After we left Fredericton, we headed toward the lovely town of St. Andrews by-the-Sea.

We had been looking forward to this stop because we'd been once before, just for one night, and loved it.



We got to our camping spot, with a pretty nice view of the water...

... And celebrated our arrival.



As most everybody knows, the Bay of Fundy is famous for its dramatic tides. At certain times of day, you can walk out for quite a long way on what was, just a few hours earlier, submerged in several feet of water.

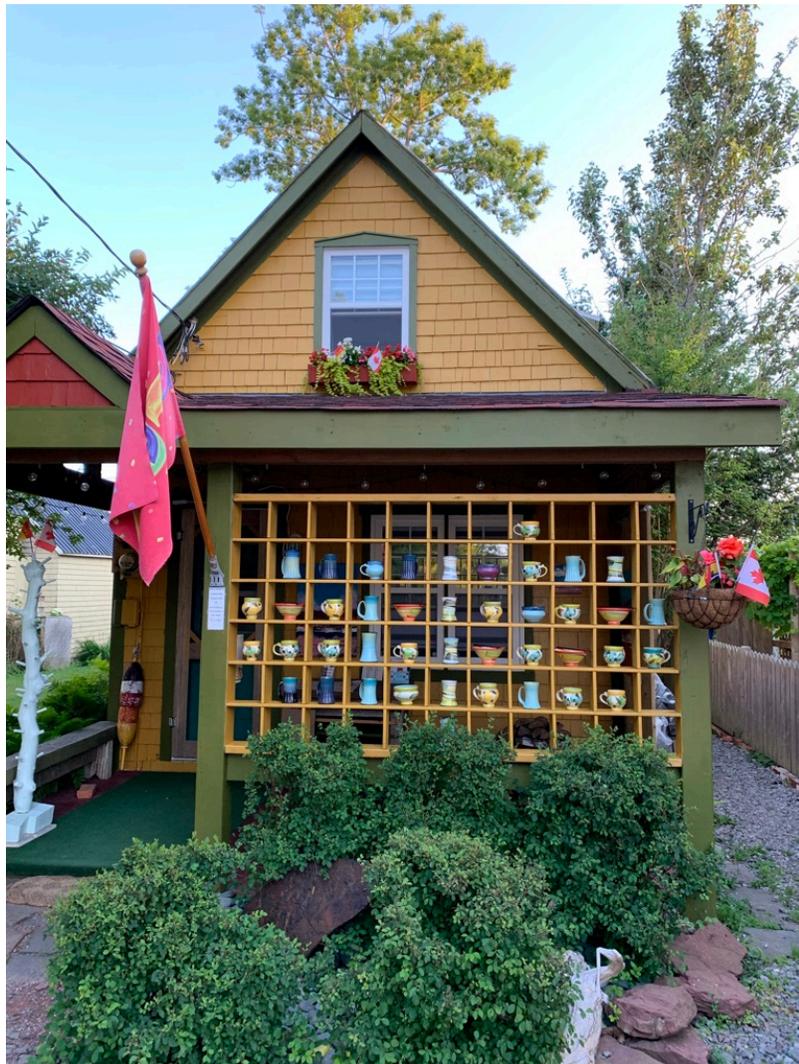


The height of the docks here gives you an indication of what the water level is at high tide.



The town is full of picturesque homes and shops.





And we met some lovely, if somewhat shy residents.



And to nobody's surprise, we found a nice restaurant by the water.



And they served seafood!



However, there were some real surprises ahead. For instance, did you know there is a Queen of Canada? And I'm not talking about ER II. I'm talking about Romana Didulo, a conspiracy influencer based in British Columbia, who has proclaimed herself "Queen of Canada," "commander-in-chief," "Head of State and Government" and "president and national Indigenous chief of the Kingdom of Canada." She's even recently promoted herself to Queen of the World.

Well, guess who arrived in our campground in St. Andrews? Yes! Her Majesty herself! With her entourage – a total of three big RVs and another car with more staff.



Sadly (not), we did not actually get to meet or greet our commander in chief. But apparently she has nearly 66,000 followers, known as "I AMs."

We AM NOT.

Much more thrilling was the spectacular full moon that rose out of the bay that evening (fortunately, it happened when there was water in the bay so we saw its brilliant reflection). The photo doesn't nearly capture the magic of its colour as it peeked over the horizon. You can tell by the people running toward the shore what an exciting moment it was.



And there was one more surprise for us that day. This comes from the “Maybe We Should Do More Research Department.”

Okay, so we didn’t do research before coming to St. Andrews ... or really for most of this trip. In fact, we have friends who send us more information than we tend to gather ourselves.

For example ... When our friend Scott heard we were going to be in St. Andrews, he sent a message recommending that we check out a place called Ministers Island. I really meant to read the information more carefully, but I guess something else distracted me. (Squirrel!) If I’d paid more attention, I might have been able to tell Jim exactly where to go when we were trying to find a nice place to park by the water.

Instead, we scanned the GPS and spotted Bar Road, which looked like it led to a parking area that fit our requirements.

We followed the GPS directions and were delighted to discover what seemed to be the ideal parking spot. Right on the water, looking out on what seemed to be a spit of land. Best of all, we practically had the place to ourselves! Perfect!



There were some signs that provided information about the area, but in traditional fashion, we didn't really absorb them as much as we should have. They mentioned something about water on the bar, but we didn't really understand what that meant.

So, we sat there happily writing and enjoying the view, and after a while we noticed that the water was definitely receding.



Then we noticed that other cars were arriving.

And finally (we're a little dense) we realized that the "bar" was the sandbar that's created as the water recedes. And the cars that were parked there were actually lining up, waiting for the bar to reach all the way across to the island – Ministers Island, the very place that our friend Scott had suggested we check out.



After getting assurance that it was safe for us to drive Charles across the bar, we set out. So ... to our surprise (and perhaps Charles' surprise), we drove across the ocean!



And when we got to the other side, we were on Ministers Island, which, as the sign says, was the residence of William Van Horne, the (American) man who was responsible for linking Canada together with the Canadian Pacific Railroad.



It's quite a property, with an impressive barn...



Some impressive looking horses...



A cow that looked like she was posing for a Maude Lewis painting...



And a grand home on lovely grounds.



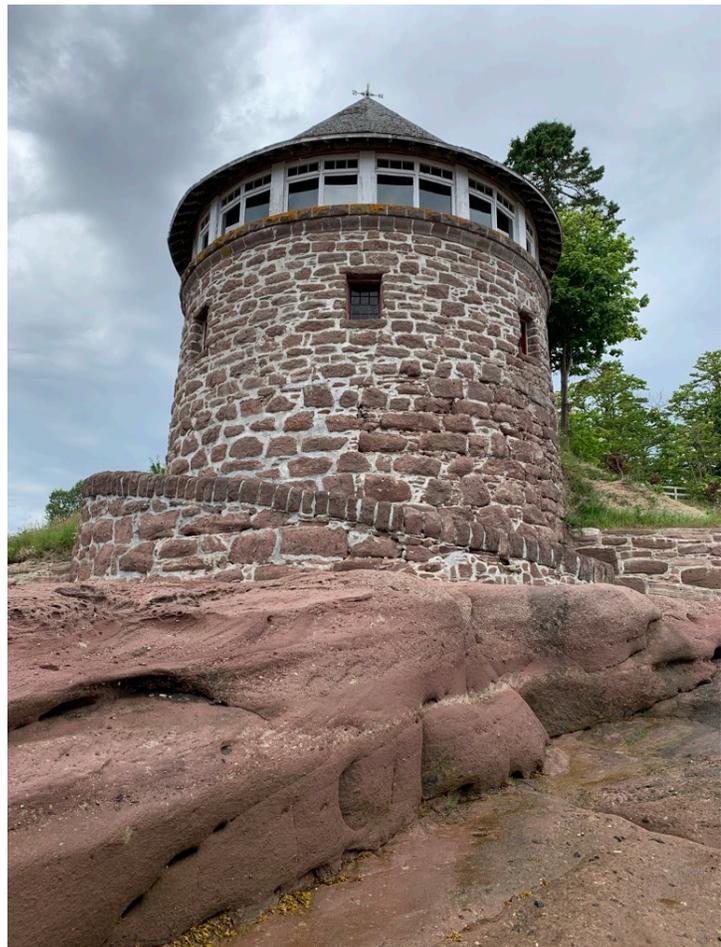
Before there was electricity on the island, power was supplied by the carbide gas pump in the smaller building, and water was pumped by the windmill beside it. (The information plaque beside it claims that, were he here today, Van Horne would have been a strong supporter of solar and wind power. Maybe, although I don't suppose he'd be as wealthy if he supported such concepts today!)



The stable and carriage house.



The bathhouse was built above the beach, and provided change rooms and a view of the water...



And below, the rocks created a natural saltwater pool that was filled whenever the tides came in.



There were views everywhere, which Van Horne appreciated because he was an avid amateur painter.



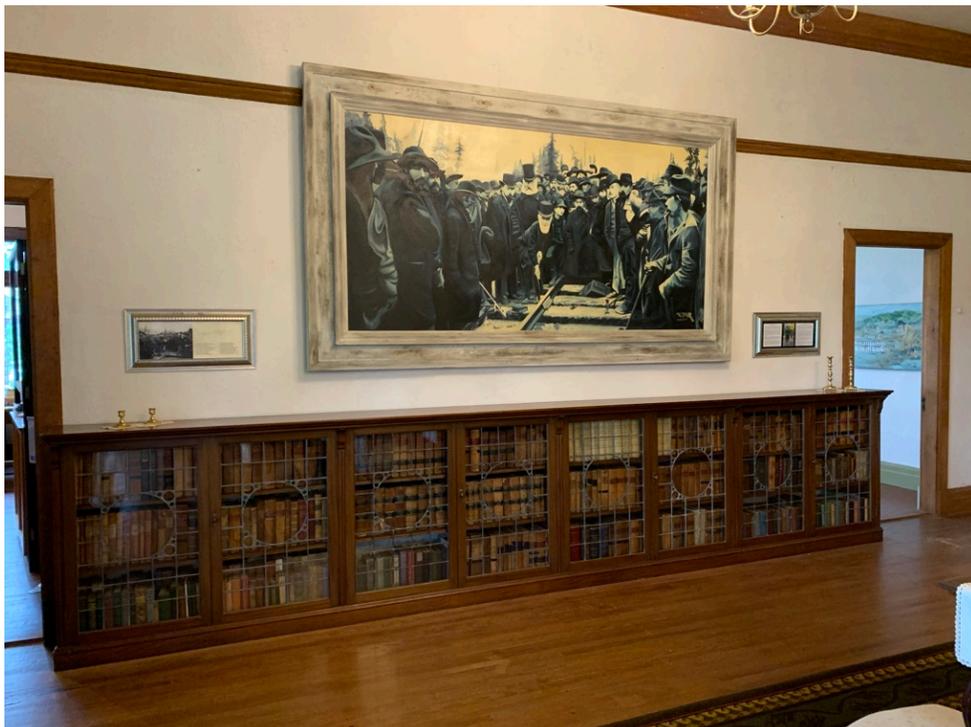


And what we saw of the inside of the home was also impressive.





Interesting to see the famous “Last Spike” photo here, with Van Horne just slightly to the left of Donald Smith.



It was a really fun little adventure, and we learned a lot about a lot.

Number one lesson: Next time, listen to Scott.

When it came time to leave, we were relieved to see that the bar was not only still there, it was even wider than it was when we drove across.



So, despite what the GPS told us, we did not have to worry about finding the button that made Charles amphibious.



It was a day filled with surprises, and by the time we got back to our campground, we figured nothing much could surprise us anymore, not even deer in our hood.



But then the next day...