

Charles Summer 25 #8:

Return Visits



We've been to some great places throughout Nova Scotia.

Great Village was not one of them.



But there are many places that are so great, they bear repeating.

So, after we'd visited Parrsboro, we returned to some places that we knew we'd enjoy spending time in again.

First on that list was The Ovens Natural Park. In fact, because we were concerned that this place would be booked solid, it was the only place we reserved ahead of time.

The Ovens is a campground as well as a tourist destination about a half an hour from Lunenburg. It gets its name from the sea caves that were carved out of the cliffs by the relentless pounding of the ocean. Apparently, from the sea, the caves looked like ovens.

Many hikers and families come to walk the trail along the coast and venture down the stairs to get a closer look at the caves.





When the water comes crashing into the caves, it can sound like booming thunder or canons. It's thrilling.



But there are other attractions. One is just the beauty of the cliffs and the sea.



There's also another historical significance to this beach – and an attraction for tourists. Back in the 1860s gold was discovered here. Shipping magnate, Cunard quickly claimed the land, and literally scooped up as much of the beach as possible and shipped it to England, yielding as much as 2500 ounces.



But they didn't get everything, and visitors to the beach can rent equipment to pan for gold. Every day there were people panning, and they find tiny bits – which add up if you do it often enough.



Another fun feature of The Ovens is the ownership. Since the 1980s, the park has been owned by the Chapin family – as in Harry Chapin. Steve, Harry's younger brother, who is also a musician, runs the park along with his wife. And in the restaurant, The Ol' Miner Diner, there's live music almost every night.

When we were there this time, Steve performed with his old friend Rich Look. The two had written jingles together for years, and they performed some for us that night, which was fun.



And when you're not hearing music, you might hear the bleat of the goats from their pen. (In past visits, they've wandered free in the playground and amongst the parked cars.)



And then of course, there's the fact that every so often, the Bluenose sails by. How much more Nova Scotian can you get?



During this return visit, we got a fair bit of fog, which seems to be a regular companion for us this year.



But even in the fog, it's beautiful.



After a very restful 5 days, we continued with our return visits.

I think it's against the law to go to Nova Scotia's South Shore and NOT stop in at the LaHave Bakery. So, we didn't want to take any chances. It was, as always, very busy.



And then of course, we had to stop in at the LaHave Book Store, which is attached.



And, despite their charm, those are not the most colourful aspects of LaHave.





And speaking of colourful, Lunenburg is another place we're always happy to return to.



The view of the town from across the bay is literally iconic.



But we have another reason for returning every time we're in Nova Scotia. For four summers now, Stephen Findlay and his Lunenburg Theatre Collective have been producing a show. (One year, they premiered a play that Jim wrote for them.)

So, when we're in Nova Scotia, we make sure to time our Lunenburg visit to coincide with the show's run.

This year, for the first time, the performance was in the recently restored Lunenburg Opera House. It was nice to see their production on a proper stage in a proper theatre.



And the show, *Tiny Beautiful Things* was quite a departure from past shows, which have tended to be light comedies.

I think audiences were, at first, taken aback at the serious nature of the show. But in the end, they, like we, appreciated the power and the heart of the story, which was well told. Thanks to word of mouth, by the end of the run, they were selling out.

Worth the return visit to Lunenburg, but we never need much persuasion.



The outrageous colours and pure charm of Mahone Bay are enough of a reason to visit this famously beautiful town again. Even when the main street is torn up as it is now.







And Chester's quiet elegance is always a draw.



We spent a lovely afternoon working, with this as our office view.



And then enjoyed a walk through town visiting a few of the establishments.



The last time we were in Nova Scotia, we discovered Annapolis Royal for the first time and were smitten. We happened to be there for the Saturday Market, which was so lively and interesting, we decided to time our visit this time on a Saturday as well. (This is of major significance if you know that Jim normally has very little interest in going to a market.)



Once again, we were impressed with the liveliness and fun of the market.





And we managed to get there in time for the news of the day from the Town Crier. She was delightful! (video attached)



Of course, markets aren't for everyone. They can be exhausting.

We wandered around town, and agreed that it's now on our "must return" list.





And then there's Digby.



We remembered that we'd been to Digby Neck last time we were out here. But not Digby.

So, we booked at the Digby Campground, and when we checked in, the woman asked if we'd been before. When I said no, she kindly showed me the map and circled things, like the walking trail from the campground into town, and the best restaurants to go to. (She noted The Crow's Nest restaurant, which we had already planned to go to, partly because of recommendations from others, and partly because of the theatrical name.)

Then, as we took the trail into town ...



... suddenly things looked familiar.



And when we got to town, we realized that we had indeed been at that campground, had walked on that trail, and had been in this town.



Some of the features were different...



I'm sure I would've remembered – and photographed – this!



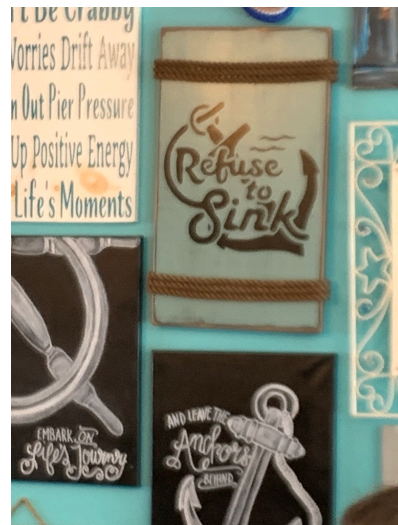
But this view was definitely the same. (I'd taken almost exactly this same shot!)



And then, when we got to The Crow's Nest...



There was a kind of familiarity about the place.



And when we were led out to the back deck...

We realized that it's the same place we ate in last time we were there.
We even sat in exactly the same spot!



And likely ate exactly the same things.

So ... here we are, at that stage in life, when return visits are just as much fun, especially when you don't remember you've been there before!

