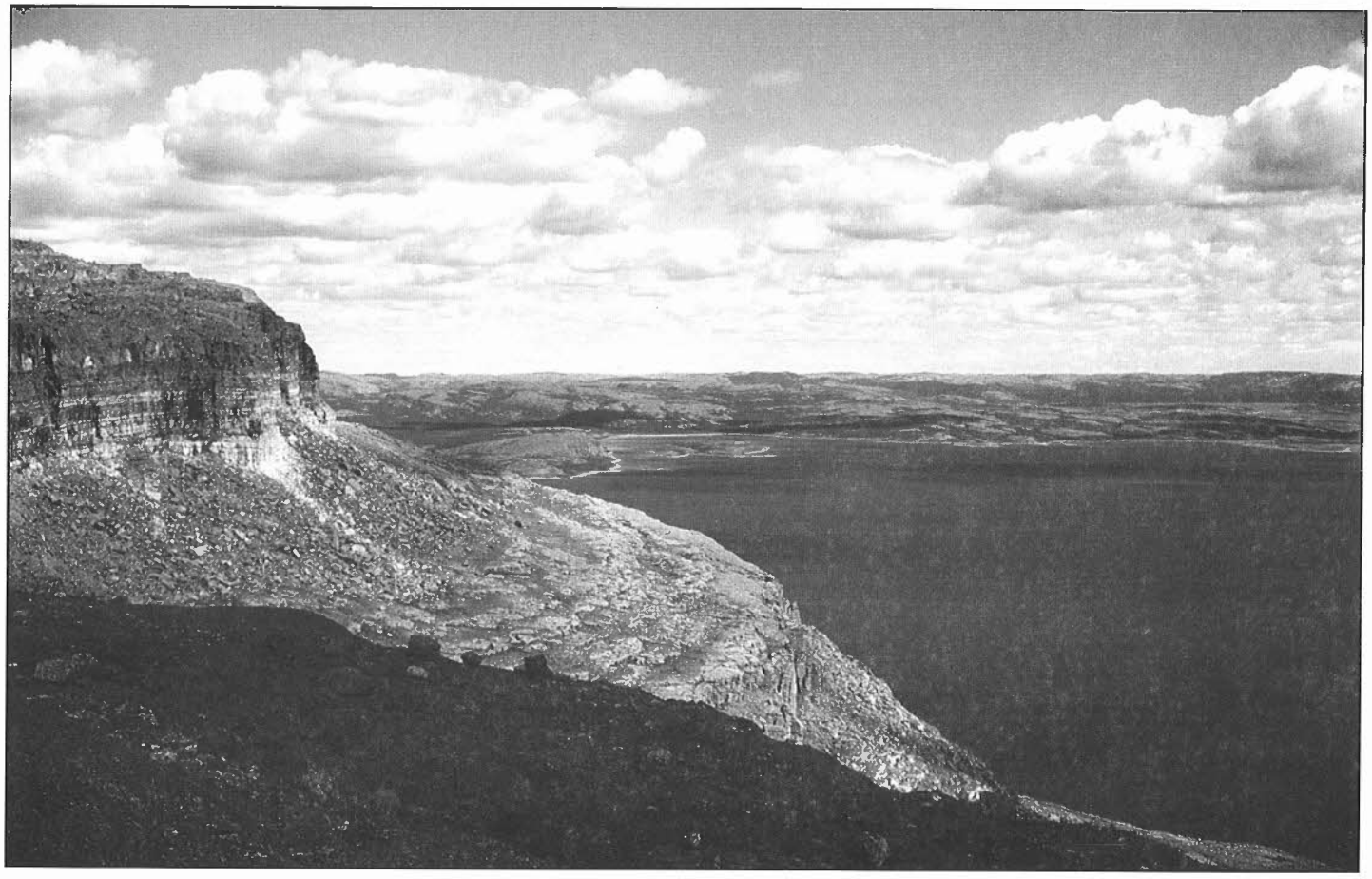
nastawgan

Summer 2002 Vol. 29 No. 2 Quarterly Journal of the Wilderness Canoe Association



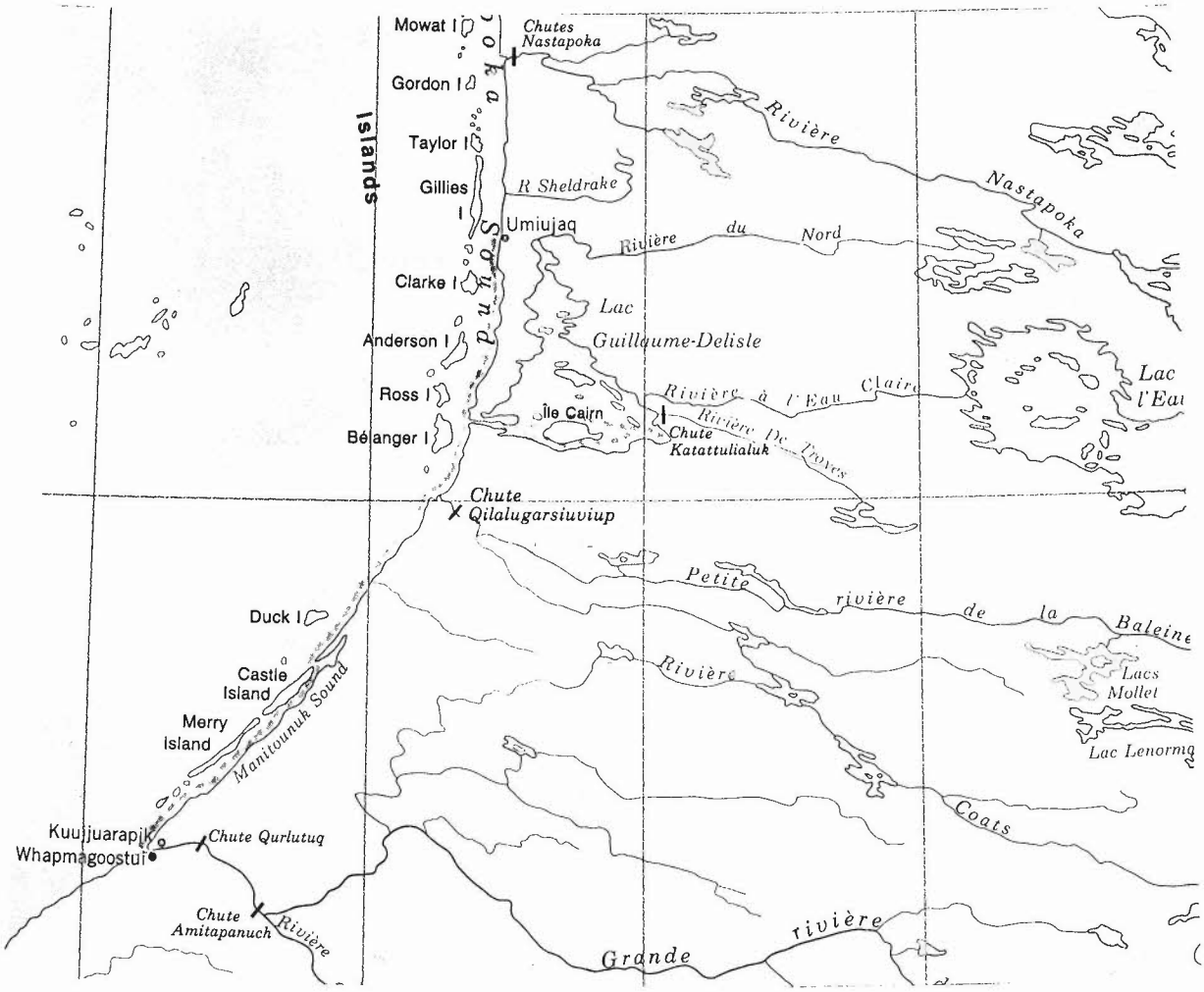
View of Richmond Gulf from the top of the escarpment (near northern end)

RICHMOND GULF REVISITED

Herb Pohl

One of the enjoyable quandaries, when deciding on a northern wilderness trip, is the almost limitless number of options to choose from. In my case the selection process becomes more difficult because of the perception that the sand in the hourglass of life seems to run ever faster and many of the potential choices will only be satisfied through reincarnation. In 1997 the final choice was to try to follow the Caribou River from Richmond Gulf upstream to its headwaters, portage into Clearwater Lake, from there go south towards the Little Whale River and follow the latter back to the coast. At least, that was the plan.

It is a 1500-km drive from southern Ontario to La Grande airport, the jumping-off place for trips beyond the end of the road. The last 600 km of this highway was built by Quebec Hydro to transport the necessities for the construction of the James Bay Hydro facilities. The forest industry was quick to take advantage of the new access road and the traveller is now able to appreciate the mean-



ing of the word "clear-cutting" as practised here—it's utter devastation. Because of the mothballing of Quebec Hydro's planned expansion projects, there has been a pronounced reduction of economic activity in the region since my last visit in 1993. This was particularly noticeable at La Grande airport, which was nearly deserted.

The only airline servicing the communities along the eastern shore of Hudson Bay is Inuit Air, which has regularly scheduled passenger flights. However, because of the notoriously unpredictable weather of the region and changing priorities, the word "regularly" should not be taken at face value. My own experience in this instance is a good example of the surprises one can expect. Upon my arrival at the airport I immediately went to the freight office to send my boat and one of my food packs ahead to Umiujaq on the afternoon transport (Umiujaq is situated on the Hudson Bay coast near the north end of Richmond Gulf). The good news was that Pierre, the man in charge, didn't use the volume formula (for the boat) to arrive at the cost but assessed the boat and pack at 25 kg (which together weighed nearly three times as much). The bad news was that there was no flight to Umiujaq. A few hours later I was told that there would be an unscheduled flight, mainly to fly a group of stranded passengers from the previous day's cancelled trip to Great Whale. The plane would then continue on to Umiujaq with a load of freight—including my boat and me. There was more good news—when I obtained my ticket, the agent informed me that I was only entitled to a 20-kg baggage allowance, and then checked two packs with a combined weight of at least 60 kg through without weighing them. She also advised me to take the third (and heaviest) pack with me as hand luggage.

When we arrived in Great Whale, everyone was ordered off the plane. It is standard procedure at any stop because a great amount of freight invariably has to be moved on and off the plane. What I didn't expect was that among the goods unloaded was my gear as well.

"A slight mistake!" I remonstrated.

"Not so!" was the reply.

"But I am going to Umiujaq!"

"The plane is going to the Belcher's. Umiujaq is completely fogged in."

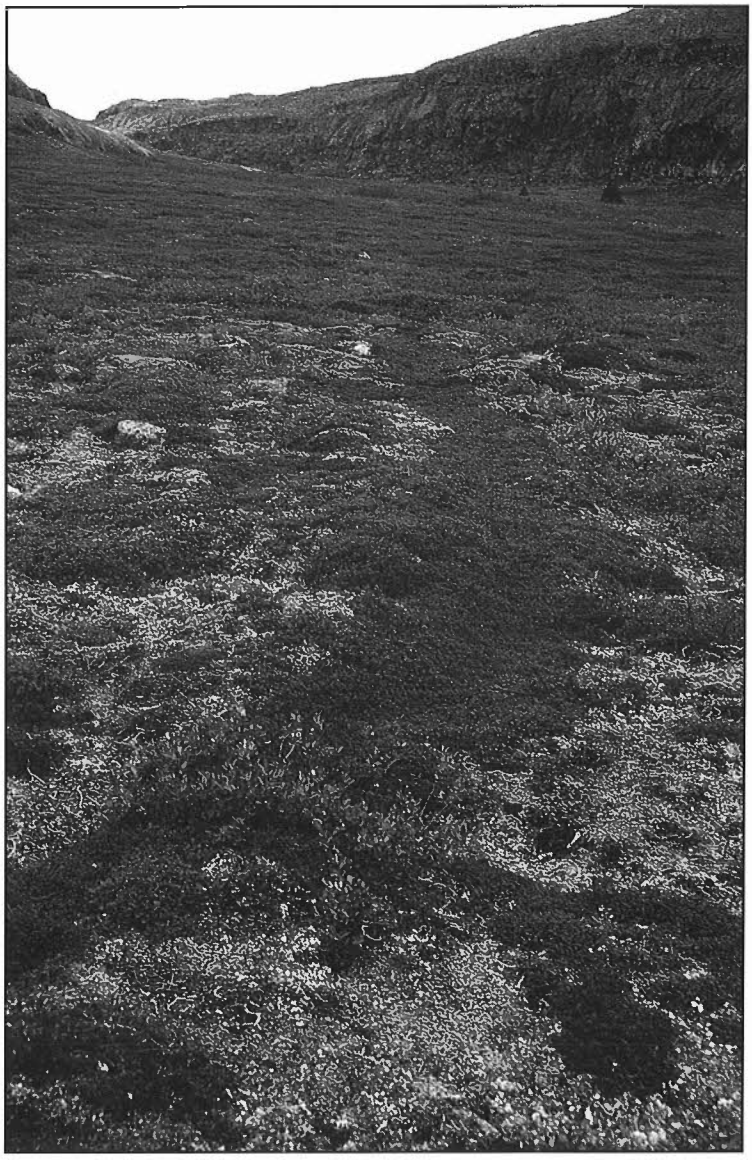
All the freight for Umiujaq was taken off, a load for

the Belcher Islands taken on, and the plane disappeared into the evening sunshine—only to reappear a half hour later; the Belcher Islands were also fogged in. So now the plane was unloaded once again and returned to La Grande empty; and I was told that I'd just have to wait for the next scheduled flight, two days hence.

And so, reluctantly, I set up my canvas cottage among the sand dunes near the runway and watched the locals roar about the countryside with their ATV's until well into the night. Morning dawned wet and dreary. Against all expectation a plane emerged from the low clouds and taxied to a stop. I quickly rushed to the terminal to investigate.

"Yes, the plane is going to Umiujaq, you have about fifteen minutes if you want to get on."

An hour later we landed on the new runway some two kilometres south of the village. A light rain was falling and the place looked dismal beyond words. Fortunately, somebody took pity on me and gave me a ride to Eddie Weetaltook's place. Eddie, who had put me up in 1990, was his hospitable self and soon all my wet gear, hastily thrown into a pack in Great Whale, was spread out to dry. The time passed pleasantly in reminiscences and conversation with several locals who dropped in during the day. I was more aware, this time, of the casual way in which people come and go—enter without knocking or comment and leave the same way, often without ever saying a word, but listening intently.



The old portage trail is still recognizable in many places

Overnight a fresh northwesterly breeze had blown away the clouds. I said my goodbyes and pushed off towards "Le Goulet" and Richmond Gulf in high spirits. The exuberance of starting on another adventure was soon tempered by the early onset of fatigue—the wind which had driven away the clouds had also raised waves of nervous proportions and my heavily loaded boat wallowed about and seemed to have a mind of its own. So, when a lovely little cove appeared along the way I decided to stop "to boil the kettle" and stretch my legs.

It immediately became obvious that the place had found favor with previous generations of travellers. The sparse remains of their encampments bordered a tiny stream which percolated through the gravelly substratum. Within minutes after I started clambering about I was totally captivated by the aura which permeated the place. Despite the noise of the waves, which dissipated their energy on the bedrock at the entrance to the bay, a feeling of sublime tranquillity reigned. Beyond the cove the deep blue waters of Hudson Bay merged seamlessly with the pale blue sky in the mist of the distant horizon. The velvety smooth bedrock of basalt radiated the warmth of the sun's rays. It all invited you to linger and enjoy the moment.

There is probably no rational explanation for the turn of events, but I was so seduced by the setting that right there and then I decided to abandon my carefully planned trip itinerary. To hell with ambitious schedules, this time I was going to do short excursions along the way and poke around the little Shangri La's like this cove. So, barely half a day into the trip, this was the new plan.

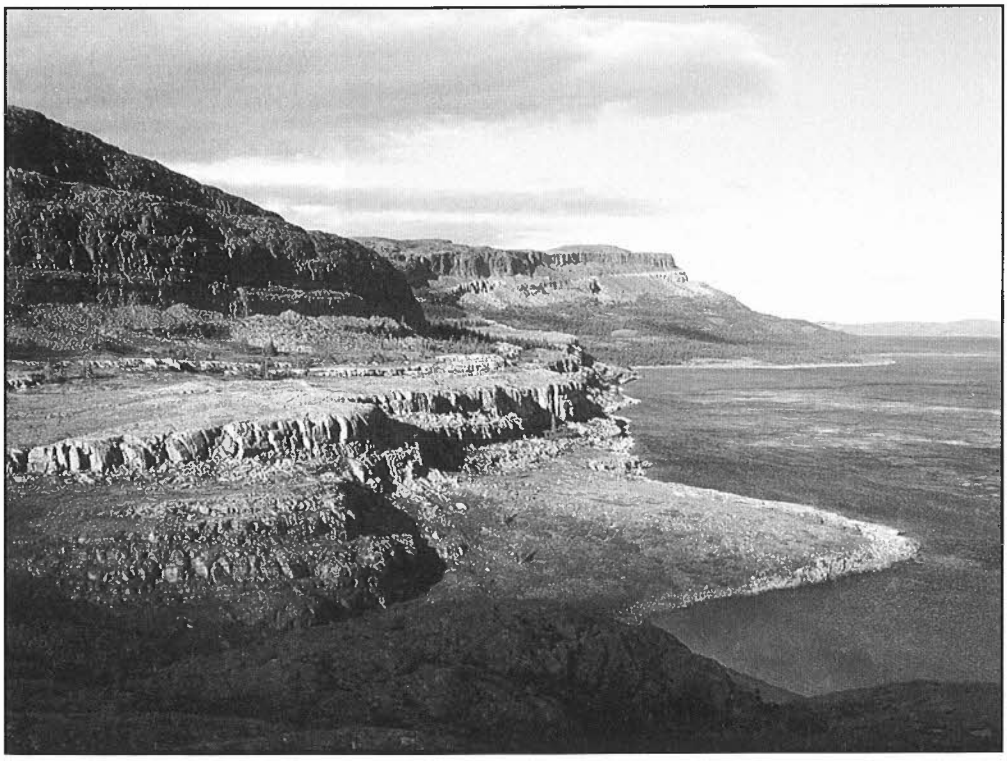
The striking topography of the Richmond Gulf region is the consequence of three gigantic faults running parallel to the coast . The resulting dislocation has given rise to the cliffs of the western shore of Richmond Gulf which rise steeply to nearly 400 metres above sea level. The first goal on my new agenda was to hike to the top of this escarpment. The ascent from the shore of Hudson Bay is an easy, albeit long, walk over ice-scoured basalt, which blankets the older bedrock in these parts. Life at the top was exciting, not only because of the grand view, but also because of the wind. The breeze which had made for difficult paddling at sea level was a roaring gale here, and the photographs of Richmond Gulf taken at the top of the escarpment were taken in a prone position.

Overnight the wind shifted and was now coming from the southwest. As the day progressed the clouds descended lower and lower until they swallowed the ramparts of Richmond Gulf. Finally, fog covered everything and a decided chill crept into the bones. An Inuk in a freighter canoe passed me on his way to the Gulf and seemed quite concerned about my safety, but I assured him I was alright. Some time later the fog thickened. The noise from breaking waves seemed to come from everywhere, all I could see where foaming wave-fronts, which moved rapidly and in various directions. It was a bit unsettling and so I decided to run to shore with the breakers—not my favorite manoeuvre, since you almost always get soaked, but this time I stayed dry.

When I got up the next day after 10 hours of luxurious comfort in the sac, the scene was as dreary as ever. A light rain soon blossomed into a downpour, the agitated sea and head wind combined to ensure that even under the spray cover everything was soaked.. After four hours of hard paddling I put to shore at the first sheltered cove and, having made little headway, decided to wait for an improvement in conditions. With no change by the next morning I set out again and was soon in the midst of the worst turbulence I've ever faced. Point Pamiallualuk is a narrow spur of rock, which juts out some two kilometres into Hudson Bay just north of the entrance to Richmond Gulf. Here the north-flowing tidal current of Hudson Bay collides with a weaker counter current to produce a lot of agitation, which was further enhanced by the strong wind. The collision of opposing waves created not only total chaos but added significantly to the sound effects. Against all expectation I emerged from this cauldron after a few minutes of frantic activity, still right side up, and paddled into a tiny cove immediately south of Point Pamiallualuk. Here the old Indian portage trail into Richmond Gulf begins.

There are several Inuit campsites of considerable antiquity near the start of the trail. The latter follows a glacier-carved trough in the escarpment and is still recognizable in numerous places. It has obviously not been used in many years and in spite of my inclination to follow ancient trails I took the lazy man's option and paddled into Richmond Gulf through "Le Goulet." The Bay people called this narrow connection between Richmond Gulf and Hudson Bay the "Gulf Hazzard" due to the sometimes violent tidal currents and whirlpools. It is certainly a place which demands attention. I had tried to time my passage into the Gulf to coincide with the rising tide, but much to my surprise, faced a strong outgoing current. It would appear that the warmer and brackish waters of the Gulf continue to flow seaward over the top of the more saline and colder waters, which simultaneously enter from Hudson Bay.

The clash of these currents was also mirrored in the air above. The cold, moisture-laden westerlies, which shrouded the entrance to the Gulf in dense fog, continually swept eastward into the sun-drenched interior. Here the army of grey collided with the warm and dry air from the Gulf in a constantly shifting battle. It was easy to see why the natives of the region thought that the place was inhabited by malevolent spirits. My own priority, once past the narrowest part of the passage, was to dry out and quell the rumblings of the stomach and so I headed for the north shore and set up camp.

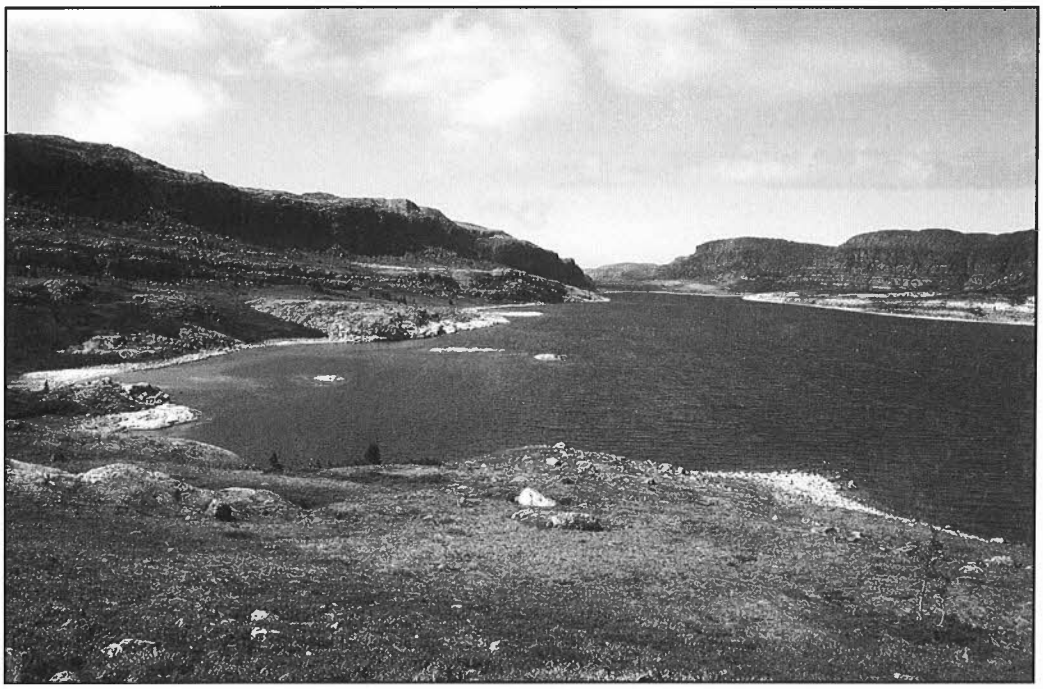


Presqu'île Castle near the entrance to Richmond Gulf

As the day progressed the army of grey retreated westward and the uncertain outline of the landscape came into focus. The north shore of the passage is dominated by Presqu'Ile Castle, which rises steeply nearly 400 metres from the Gulf. The exposed bands of sedimentary rock between the cap of basalt at the top of the Castle and the basement complex at sea level reveal the geological history of the place spanning nearly two billion years. The much more recent work of the glacier which created the opening to Hudson Bay is revealed in the wonderfully sculpted rocks near the present water level. Words fail to adequately convey the impact the scenery had on me, but I was humbled, filled with awe and happiness.

I spent the next two days excitedly exploring this enchanting place, looking over the remnants of human occupancy—several late-Dorset subterranean dwellings, as well as summer encampments—and just revelling at the beauty of the setting. Less well appreciated was the constant gale.

Moving day was windy and wet and highlighted by a bear visit at the next campsite. I was just preparing dinner when I first noticed him. He tried very hard to pretend that he was just minding his own business as he meandered ever closer in the neighborhood. I, for my part, was determined not to share my dinner and getting more edgy by the minute. Finally, when he was within 20 metres, I fired a shell from my flare gun at his feet and he ambled off, but in no great panic. It made for a nervous night.



The bay at the western end of the old Indian portage trail into Richmond Gulf

Two hours of paddling the next day brought me into the south-east corner of Richmond Gulf. Just beyond a sandy shoreline and scattered across a large meadow are the buildings of the Hudson Bay Post and the Pentecostal Church, abandoned in the early 1950s. The latter is a spacious two-story building, its roof and walls still in good condition. Upstairs were several beds with mattresses. I quickly decided to move in for the night, rather than put up the tent, because of the presence of well-used bear trails.

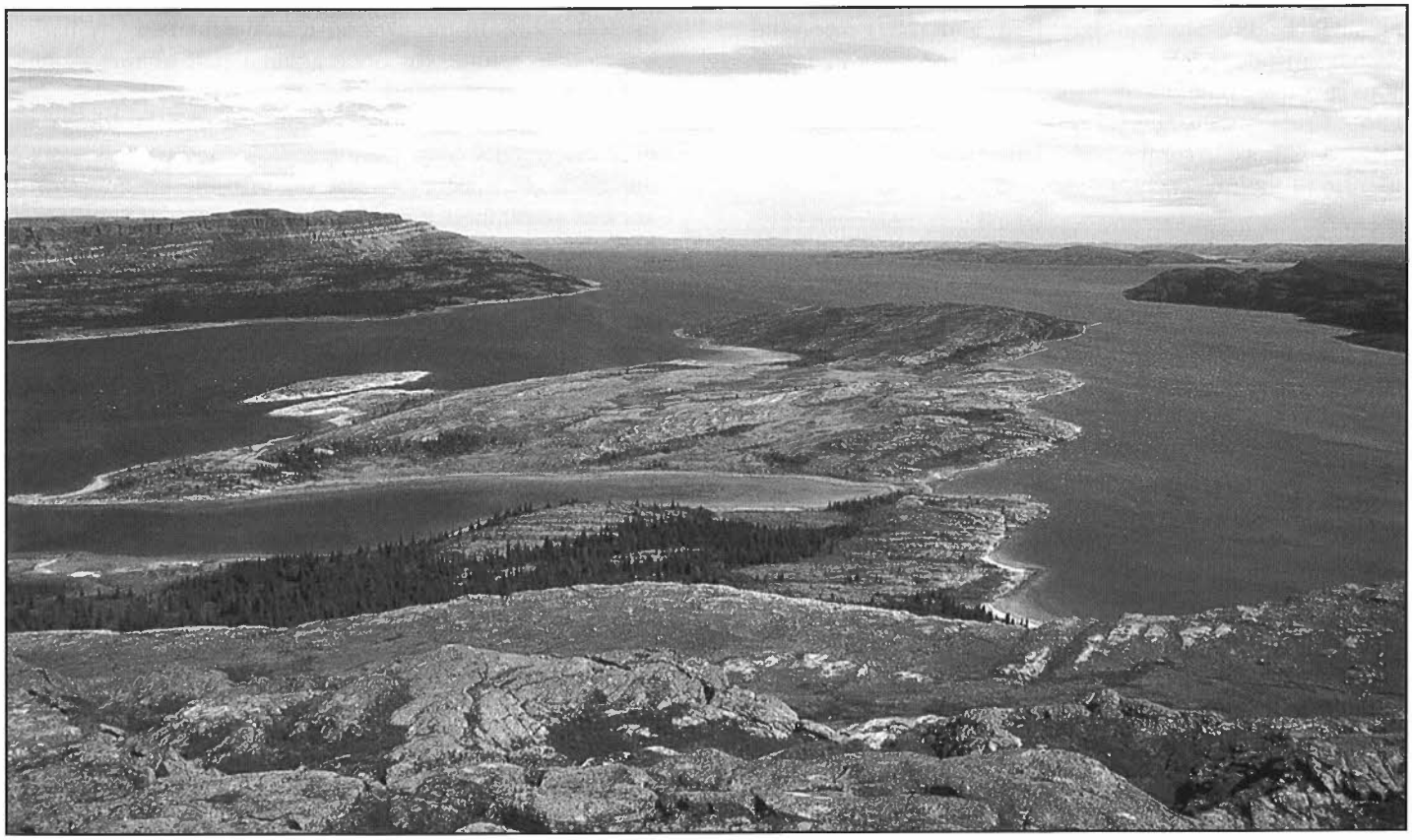
The remains of a late-Dorset dwelling carbon-dated to between AD 1150 and 1300

Immediately behind the old post the land rises in a series of raised beaches of sand and shingles, the oldest of which is well over 100 metres above sea level. A small stream has carved its way through these deposits to the present shore. In the process it has created a tiny harbor, a welcome refuge, for once again I had to run to shore before a strong tailwind.

A short distance north of the old post buildings and near the water's edge I came across another indication of the geological history of the region—the boulders of an ancient streambed cemented together by an outflow of lava and subsequently ground smooth by glacial abrasion. It was the start to an exciting afternoon of roaming the hills above the post, which included a rapid retreat from a rather massive bruin. He was browsing in a little ravine upwind from me and had no idea he had company, which was fine with me. I am sure it was the same fellow who tried to join me in the Church building later on. He gave the well-secured door a couple of solid but ineffectual thumps. This should have reassured me, but did not—he could easily have climbed in through one of the broken windows. So, once again I spent an uneasy night.

Just a few kilometres northeast of the post, Rivière de Troyes enters Richmond Gulf in a foaming cascade from a height of nearly 100 metres. It had been my intention to revisit the place but columns of breakers, urged on by the continuing strong westerlies, were marching into the shallow bay. Instead, I headed west toward Cairn Island. In 1753 the Hudson Bay Company established a post here which became the focus of violent confrontations with the local Inuit. It was here, while continuing on towards Presque Ile Castle, that I met two Inuit in a freighter canoe. Ostensibly they were out looking for belugas and

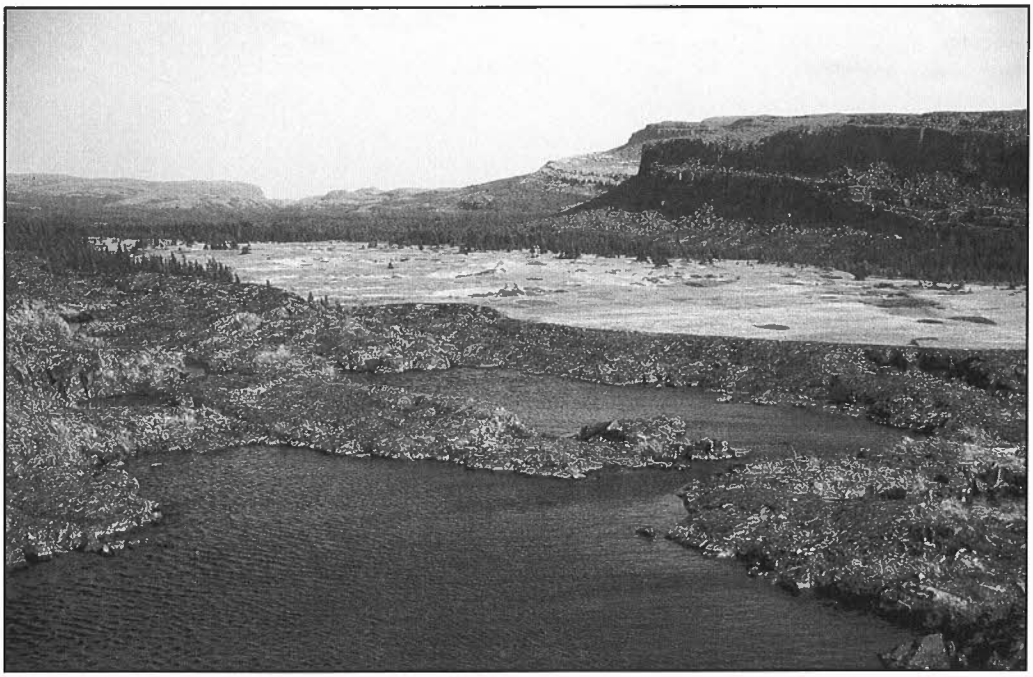
View of the abandoned Hudson Bay post



Last view of Richmond Gulf; Presqu'île Castle at top left

With the prevailing westerlies, landing or launching is often exciting

...the rocky shoreline a white band of froth...



The valley of Rivière Kajurtuit; one of several places where glaciers have breached the escarpment

had the artillery to pursue the hunt. But belugas rarely venture into the Gulf and they would know that. My read of the situation was that the owner of the freighter canoe, a resident of Umiujaq, was taking his visitor from Povungnituk on a sightseeing tour. By claiming to go on the hunt he was entitled to get gas for his outboard motor at a subsidized price.

We had a long and friendly chat; my only complaint was that during our conversation we were constantly carried eastward by the brisk wind. It meant an extra hour of hard paddling for me. It also threw my timing off—I had planned to pass through Le Goulet during high tide, a period of relative calm. By the time I came abreast of the Castle, the tidal current was racing along at surprising speed. The sound of breaking waves seemed to come from everywhere, but the waves responsible for the noise seemed rather ordinary. It was an aural illusion created by the amplification and reflection of sound waves from the surrounding walls of rock. Nevertheless, I was quite happy to leave this region of mischievous spirits behind.

Home that evening was on an exposed point just a few kilometres south of Le Goulet. After 12 hours of hard paddling, the camp chores seemed to take forever and it was dark when I finally crawled into the sac. During the night it rained; the wind shifted and grew in intensity. It provided a welcome excuse the next morning to call this a lay-over day. I had to find a more sheltered area farther inland for the fireplace and after a very late breakfast decided once again to journey to the edge of the escarpment for a last look at Richmond Gulf. Before noon, the sun came out and made the four-hour round trip a visual delight. This time the wind blew even harder and I didn't dare to go near the precipice lest I be blown down by a sudden gust. By late afternoon I was back at the sheltered fireplace, pleasantly fatigued. Here the swish and slap of the breakers running up the shore was barely audible. The low sun radiated warmth and color; the little stream nearby murmured, and I had the most intense feeling of contentment and happiness imaginable.

Sometime during the night I woke. The faint Aurora Borealis flickered in the starry sky and all was quiet. For the first time since I started out, the wind had died down and, encouraged by the prospect of easier paddling, I went back to sleep. I was up in the pre-dawn dusk with the intention to make this a serious travelling day, but already the wind had reappeared and was getting stronger by the minute. In the first two hours I barely covered three kilometres. At the end of the third hour I was making no progress at all, except in the worry department. It was a glorious day, the sea ruffled silver, the sky deep blue, the terraced land various shades of green—and the rocky shoreline a white band of froth. There was the rub.

At long last I noticed a small opening among the rocks near the shore, and beyond, a sheltered lagoon. Just in time too, because the weather was starting to deteriorate. Within a few hours a tremendous rainstorm was buffeting the tent so fiercely that I feared for its survival. Conditions gradually moderated during the night, the wind shifted from SSW to NW and by morning it was bitterly cold. With the greatest reluctance I put on my wet clothes, cooked breakfast on an equally reluctant fire and retreated back into the tent to escape the bracing wind. During the day, showers alternated with brief periods of sunshine. At one point the sky cleared completely and a cold sun illuminated a wild scene of waves crashing onto the inhospitable shore. But before long the world was again reduced to a small sphere of grey.

It was about noon the following day. After several hours of wallowing about in irregular slop, I was approaching the mouth of the Little Whale River. As I rounded the last spur of rock, which defines the north shore of the river, a sudden squall swept down the valley and out to sea. Almost instantly the water became agitated and frothy. I was only about 100 metres from shore, but it took half an hour of intense effort to get there. Once ashore, I noticed two tupeks a little farther inland and one of the occupants came over to greet me. He was a short, powerful looking man with a deeply lined, weatherbeaten face and taciturn demeanor. At one point in our walk

towards the tents, and anxious to break the silence, I pointed to an indistinct footprint in the sand and said "Bear!"

"Inuk!" answered my companion, without a hint of condescension or reproach. It was the imprint of his own sealskin boot made on his outward journey. I am sure they all had a good laugh about it later.

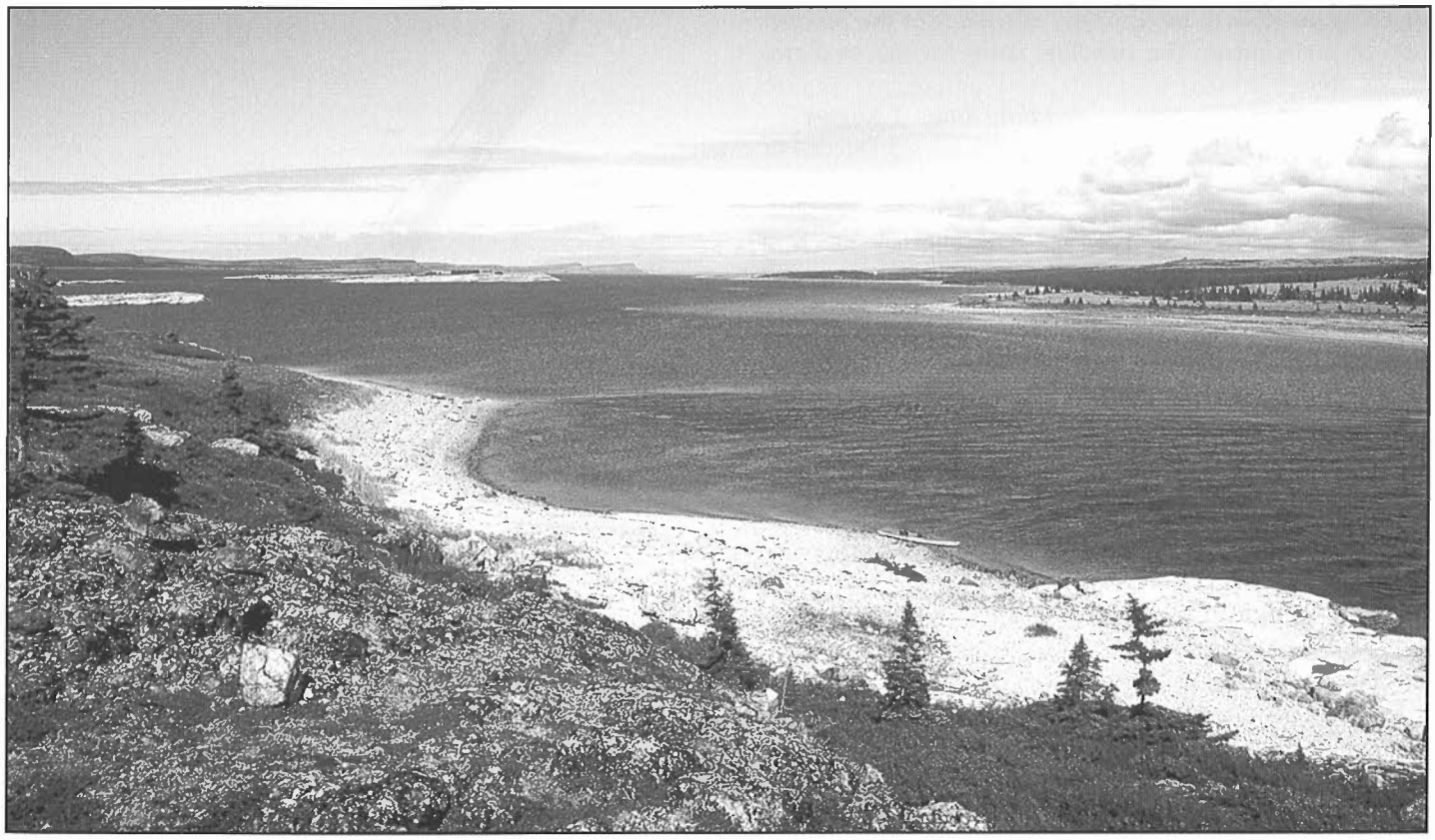
Once inside the tupek I was offered tea and muktuk and a place at the stove. The latter was particularly appreciated because once again I was soaking wet. The two families had come here to hunt belugas and intended to leave some time ago. Now they were only waiting for an improvement in conditions to return to Kuujjuaarapik (Great Whale River). With typical Inuit hospitality they also offered to take me along, an invitation I declined as politely as I could.

Progress, for the remainder of the journey, was as slow as ever. Strong westerlies and periodic off-shore squalls provided all the paddling excitement I could handle. There are many places along the coast, which are attractive even in somber moods, but when the sun makes an appearance and illuminates the landscape, the scene is one of irresistible beauty. My impulse under these conditions is to roam far and wide, to drink in as much of it as possible. Invariably this means that at the end of the day one is utterly exhausted.

One of these privileged events occurred at the mouth of Rivière Second, which ended with a little extra excitement while I was returning from a hike and still a long way from the campsite. Looking down from a high vantage point I could see that my boat, which I had left in a well-sheltered place next to the tent, was now some distance away and upside down on the foreshore flats. I made it back before the rising tide could add a long walk to Kuujjuaarapik to the agenda.

The journey ended as it began, in pouring rain. And just as three weeks earlier, the people at Inuit Air kept my costs at a very acceptable level; total return costs were just a bit over $ 500.

This was the first time that I travelled without an agenda, no time restrictions, and an excess of food. With more than enough excitement on the water and a surfeit of interesting side trips I should have been very satisfied, but something was missing. Somehow it just didn't seem right not to have an ambitious linear objective; that one could decide willy-nilly to spend an extra day here or there. Nevertheless, this trip provided an enjoyable change of pace and a worthy learning experience.



Near the end of the trip: looking north on Manitounuk Sound; one of the Painted Islands in the foreground

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Nastawgan is an Anishinabi word meaning 'the way or route'

The WILDERNESS CANOE ASSOCIATION is a non-profit organization made up of individuals interested in wilderness travel, mainly by canoe and kayak, but also including backpacking and winter trips on both skis and snowshoes. The club publishes a quarterly journal, *Nastawgan*, to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas of interest to wilderness travellers, organizes an extensive program of trips for members, runs a few basic workshops, and is involved in environmental issues relevant to wilderness canoeing.

NEWS BRIEFS

NASTAWGAN MATERIAL AND DEADLINE Articles, trip reports, book reviews, photographs, sketches, technical tips, or anything else that you think might be of interest to other readers, are needed for future issues. Try to submit your contributions by e-mail, on computer disk (WordPerfect or MS Word or text files preferred, but any format is welcome), or in typewritten form, but legibly handwritten material will also be accepted. For more information contact the editor (address etc. see WCA Contacts on the back page). Contributor's Guidelines are available upon request; please follow these guidelines as much as possible to increase the efficiency of the production of our journal. The deadline dates for the next two issues are:

issue:		*deadline date:*
Autumn 2002		4 August
Winter 2002		3 December

MULTIPLE YEAR WCA MEMBERSHIPS are now possible, albeit with no discount. This will help alleviate much of the (volunteer) administrative work, save your time and postage, and also hedge against future fee increases. Contact membership secretary Gary James for more information.

CANADIAN CANOE AND KAYAK FESTIVAL on Victoria Island near Ottawa, 9–11 August; contact George Wieringa, 613-235-9998; info@canoekayakfestival.org; www.canoekayakfestival.org

MUSKOKA CANOE SYMPOSIUM in Ontario cottage country, tentative date 13 July weekend; contact Jodie Lalonde at Turtle Paddle Works, 705-385-8211.

HOPE TO SEE YOU AT THE FALL MEETING

The WCA Fall Meeting is a great time to get together with fellow WCA members to share stories of summer paddling adventures and to wind down the paddling season. We're still finalizing the date and location for the Fall Meeting (we're looking at a weekend in mid to late September), but hope to have information out to you shortly. Also look for updates on the WCA website at wildernesscanoe.ca.

BOARD REPORT

Your Board of Directors (compassionate communicators, all) has decided to re-institute the previous policy of reporting to you between Annual General Meetings via Nastawgan. At their recent meeting there were two "hot button" issues.
Our website, so long absent after the demise of the server, is now up and running well. The controversy surrounds what links we should permit to other websites. Should we include sites which contain commercial content? Should there be a "maximum amount" of commercial content? The problem is compounded by the fact that some of our own members (even Board members) have commercial websites and don't want to be in a conflict of interest position. Our webmeister, Jeff Haymer, and George Drought, the Board liaison, are working on a formal policy. In the meantime Jeff will continue to use his discretion, focussing on the relevance of sites to canoeing/kayaking rather than the amount of commercial material. Those of you interested in the latest gear can doubtless find the info, even without links from the WCA webpage. Do you have an opinion? Why not contact Jeff via the WCA website http://wildernesscanoe.ca.

The second, and perhaps broader, issue arose from the decision at the last AGM to go with liability insurance for the protection of WCA directors and trip organizers. It concerns the whole question of what constitutes adequate risk management in this litigious age. We seem to have come a long way from the days when being a trip organizer meant being "a friend organizing an outing for friends." What qualifications should a trip organizer have? How formal? If we require a portfolio of certificates, will anyone be left (or willing)? What policies will ensure that participants have the equipment and skills for a given outing? How can we preserve the informality which most of us treasure, while at the same time demonstrating to a hypothetical law court that we have been duly diligent in minimizing, and warning participants about, the undoubted hazards? Stay tuned—these issues won't be easily resolved! The Outings Committee (Chair, Bill Ness) would be interested in your views.

One interesting suggestion, under consideration by the Board, is to encourage, through financial incentives, the acquisition of leadership skills. Other organizations—the Barrie Canoe Club is an example—reimburse, in stages, the cost of courses taken by members to upgrade skills useful to the organization, when those skills are subsequently put to use for the benefit of other members. Should we do likewise?

Other matters of lesser weight are under consideration. In response to many requests from the membership, Doug Ashton is looking into producing more WCA golf shirts (t-shirts, sweatshirts, whatever). There are a bewildering number of options available. Also in the works are plans for upcoming WCA events, the fall meeting, the wine and cheese evening, and even the 2003 AGM. Stay with us for future bulletins.

Bill King, WCA Secretary

PADDLING LINKS

If you know of a website you think is worth introducing to others, please send its address to *Nastawgan*, and include a short description of the contents of the site.

In **www.canoe-odyssey.com** John Donaldson accounts his present-day experiences retracing the cross-Canada canoe exploits of Alexander Mackenzie between 1789 and 1793.

A Paddle

It is a work of art, we use to guide
Our solitary craft, through
Silent narrow channels,
And drift us through our reveries.

It moves us over the silvery
Shining pond, where only the loon,
Will call to us, to thrill us
With its haunting sound.

It helps us glide through mists
Of morning dew, and thoughts;
To let us wander, in our trail
And forget what is left behind.

Its shape is solid, reassuring,
While the fluid water under bow,
Lifts us gently, in time with
The gentle waves below.

A paddle gives us Power
To surge ahead and rise
Above the crests, and conquer,
Then glide the valley just beyond.

This paddle is a part of us,
Responding to our pulse.
To move ahead, then fall behind
Exhilerating as we reach towards

Our destination, yet afar,
And settle into cadence, and thrill
Of each successive stroke,
Our campsite thus approaching.

This paddle is our escape
From things which can oppress us,
To help us get away from all,
Only to renew our soul.

Peter Köhl
August 31,1995

HOOKING UP WITH THE LOCALS

A Boat-Assisted Sea Kayaking Tour of the Newfoundland Southwest Coast

Bob Henderson

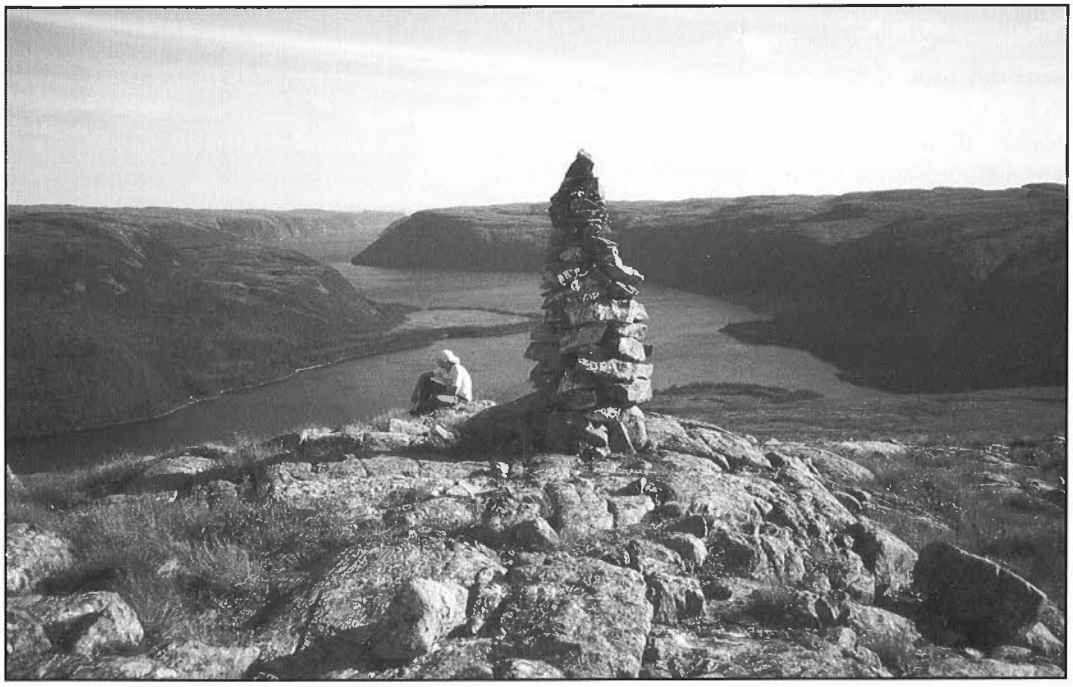
I know what you're thinking, "a boat-assisted tour?" This flies in the face of the ever self-reliant ethic of the self-propelled traveller. The sea kayaker on a rugged remote coast loves the independence to travel at will. It is a raison d'être, a modus operandi. But here, on the southwest coast of Newfoundland, I suggest to you, staunch, competent individualists, that independence is not the best way to go. For one, this is an exposed coastline from Burgeo, east to Francois, including the six-kilometre open-water crossing to the Ramea Islands from near White Bear Bay, which should entice any serious sea kayaker. Fresh water is sparse (if it's been a dry summer) at the few available pull-out sites. Campsites are fewer still, but spectacular. Continuous cliff-faces with stretches exceeding 10 km are common.

Wait, that's all part of the challenge, right? True, but; in the right hands you can jig for your cod chowder lunch, before embarking on a sea kayak day tour. You can meet up again at Brimball Storehouse, well known (to locals) for periwinkle gathering and clam digging, to ensure a appropriate appetite to your shore lunch. You can hike out of a local camp (cottage) to Jane's Hill near the head of the White Bear Bay up onto the open chateau and become dizzy with the local place names for each valley, pond, ridge line, etc. Each place name seems to have multiple stories and none of this is recorded on a map. You can return to Ramea on the island fishing boat as the fog rolls in—it seemed to roll in at some point each day when we were there—or, if conditions allow, travel on GPS back to Ramea knowing support is available. Once back in town, Martha may be waiting with a traditional jigs dinner of boiled potatoes, turnip, carrots, and cabbage with cornbeef and moose. Or, you can chat with the men on the docks, who appear to be a permanent fixture.

Yes, here on the Newfoundland southwest coast, for reasons of travel smarts and the knowledge and friendship qualities gained through local hospitality and partnership, one is best, I reckon, to hook up with the locals. This means lots of fish, good cheer, a local insight to places, discovery of isolated graveyards, great food, and fine stories. Here, we discovered a kind of hospitality that you are smothered by as a peaceful, charming reminder of core human values of care and respect for others. Legendary hospitality is a reality here.

Did you wonder why after the terrorist attacks of 11 September, the hospitality of the St. John's and Gander hosts for the re-routed air passengers was newsworthy? Recently back from our August time in Ramea, we did not wonder about this news item. It's a good kind of hospitality— smothering.

On-shore instructions



Hiking, Jane's Hill

Here's the deal. I was looking to find a sea kayak outfitter for rental purposes somewhere in a choice sea kayaking destination in Newfoundland. I expected to end up in the Bay of Exploits or Bay of Islands with outpost communities and an island archipelago to explore. Strangely my Newfoundland inquiries had me talking by phone with Bob Vlug of Eastern Outdoors, Saint John, New Brunswick. With local Ramea guide, George Rossiter, Bob is offering trips out of Ramea, a small collection of islands, eight kilometres off the coastline and 16 km by ferry from the road access community of Burgeo on the southwest coast. The area was new to me, but Bob's enthusiasm was infectious, so we struck a plan for a family oriented trip right there on the phone. Bob had the boats as well as the local contacts, and talk of seals and puffins, abandoned and settled boat-access-only communities, and an outpost base in Ramea to start and finish were enough for me to guarantee that my family would have an "authentic" Newfoundland experience—whatever that is.

Following this serendipitous phone call, I set out to review our newly anticipated family travel destination with a jolly bounce to my step that all travel planners with a new-found destination know well. The maps were, well, daunting. Except for the fiord-like bays—and even these were questionable—I pondered the wisdom of a family trip with few take-outs and sheer cliffs next to open seas. Hmmm, now I knew why I hadn't read of travels in this area. (Scott Cunningham's Coastal Adventures, Nova Scotia, does offer a camping-based week-long trip along this coastline.) No doubt, this would be stunning, ever-overwhelming terrain with a settlement heritage to match. It turned out Bob and George were planning, all along, for this to be a boat-assisted trip to maximize visits to the area's highlights.

We would return to Ramea in the evening, and take a few nights at the head of White Bear Bay (30 km in from the coast) where George, Bob, and others have camps. There would be no camping, though; we would do things more the local way. At first, I felt a loss of independence, freedom, and wildness. But I put my trust in the local wisdom. I remembered that cliff-lined exposed coastline and my eight-year-old son who prefers to hide under the cockpit with the first hint of rain. Hey, he carries his own snack food. He fits in that space and he's noticed that we move at the same pace whether he paddles or not. What would you do? I didn't relish the idea of an emergency run for the nearest landing with a snacking freeloader in my heavily loaded boat.

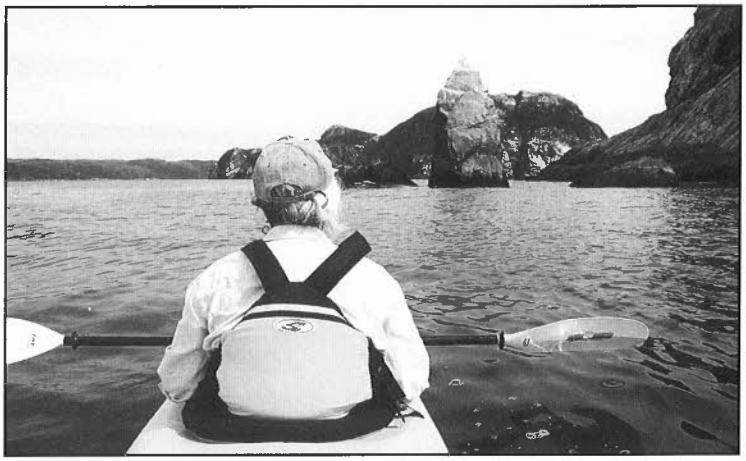
Harbour Island graves

So here are the highlight destinations:

The Ramea archipelago offers a great day tour. Even with the winds blowing at 30 knots (56 km/h), we managed a full afternoon of exploring the islands all within a two-kilometre radius of safe water. Across from Ramea townsite is the former community of Harbour Island. Evidence of the old school, houses, the old docks, and the cart track joining all was visible with George's direction. We also visited old graves from the 1800s on prominent hills by the harbor. That day, it was a wild and exposed place just across from town. This experience on day one gave us a good opportunity to ask George lots of questions. All these human signs would have been lost to us otherwise. Apart from the graves, the community here moved to Ramea as part of Joey Smallwood's 1950s resettlement initiative. Many houses were moved on ice pans towed by boats. The Ramea group also offers hiking on Big Island and a trip out to Copper Island to see the puffin colony.

Another highlight was travelling into the fog (as tic [thick] as shit in a jug, one might say) at Fox Island Harbour for a shore lunch. Again, graves on prominent hills help establish a sense of a former small community of homes. This choice pull-out spot is surrounded on three sides by cliffs. A wild place made eerie and beautiful in an approaching fog.

Hiking up Nor-West Brook's waterfall entry into White Bear Bay was an exciting family time. One can walk easily on the exposed rock of the fall in low-water season, swimming in a variety of choice pools, pondering a surrounding land of giants. A lovely little creek in a massive fiord with 200-metre cliffs makes one feel oddly small and bedazzled.



On southwest coast

We had seven days in the Ramea area and amazingly ran out of time. We didn't sea kayak amongst the 300 island off of Burgeo or visit its estuary and sandbanks. We didn't visit other boat-access-only communities such as Grey River and Francois.

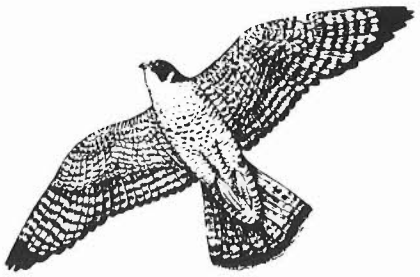
But, we'll be back and we'll listen closely to local advice for the safety factor and for the learning factor. Boat-assisted sea-kayak travel with local guides opens many doors of heritage and politic that are so easily missed. In short, Bob Vlug and George Rossiter have a great package of experiences to offer a traveller seeking an "authentic" Newfoundland experience. Rule number one, hook up with as many locals as you can, take their advice, and be open to whatever the day brings. It's not a land for schedules and pre-determined destinations.

Loading boats in White Bear Bay

REVIEWS

CANOE TRIP: Alone in the Main Wilderness, by David Curran, published by Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, PA, 2002, softcover, 133 pages, US$14.95.

It takes a lot of confidence to write a book about canoe tripping based on five two- to three-day trips on three rivers in the Maine woods: the Moose, Seboies, and especially the Allagash. Many canoeing books talk at length about high adventure and heart-pumping thrills experienced on mighty rivers and lakes in the far mysterious North. But Curran presents us with something different, a gentler and easier-to-identify-with approach to the craft of adventure writing. And he does it well. This book is a pleasant account of his experiences and thoughts while on his relatively uncomplicated solo trips, showing us that memorable adventure can be experienced anywhere; it all depends on how one approaches one's trip. Curran presents much useful information on how his trips were planned and executed, what the country he travelled through looks like, and how much he enjoyed, most of the time, meeting the creatures large and small, humans included, living in canoe country. Unfortunately, the title of the book is not very inspiring and I regret the absence of photographs.



CANOEING A CONTINENT: On the Trail of Alexander Mackenzie, by Max Finkelstein, published by Natural Heritage Books, Toronto, 2002, softcover, 298 pages, CAN$25.95, US$18.95.

In the world of recreational canoeing, Max Finkelstein is revered as one of the most experienced and widely travelled paddlers around. That he richly deserves this recognition as a modern-day explorer is now made all the more obvious by the publication of this remarkable book, an eminently readable and thoroughly researched account of his 200-day solo canoe trip (accomplished during the three summers of 1997 to 1999), retracing Mackenzie's pioneering 1793 canoe trip between Montreal and the Pacific coast. Max takes us into his often lonely world by sharing his thoughts and feelings, by describing (usually very well) his many encounters with a diverse cast of characters he meets on the way west, but above all by showing us his great love for the country he travels in. The book is illustrated with a large number of simple but effective black-and-white photographs, as well as several maps; a few more detailed maps would have been useful. This is a delightful book, to be enjoyed by paddlers and non-paddlers alike, not in the least because it so well emphasizes the importance of what Mackenzie had achieved so long ago. (By the way, editors, it is canot *du* maître and canot *du* nord, not *de*.)

ONTARIO'S LOST CANOE ROUTES, by Kevin Callan, published by The Boston Mills Press, Erin, Ontario, 2002, softcover, 166 pages, CAN$19.95, US$13.95.

I've lost count of the trip guidebooks Callan has produced over the years; must be seven or eight by now. This impressive number probably makes him the most prolific of writers presenting us with so much useful and up-to-date information on where to go paddling in the wild. This book again lives up to the quality we have come to expect from Callan and his publisher over the years; it is packed with detailed trip descriptions, maps, background information, and interesting tidbits that make his books such a delight to read. The 15 rather obscure rivers discussed in the book are all located in the Shield country of central and near-north Ontario, from Wabakimi Provincial Park to the York River south of Algonquin Park. The photographs, both black-and-white and color, illustrate the printed word well, and I'm especially impressed by the quality and clarity of the numerous maps. Good work, Kevin; what's next?

(A must-read for Callan fans, and who isn't, is the article "Secrets of Algonquin" in the March/April 2002 issue of *Explore* magazine.)

Reviews by Toni Harting.

LET'S FACE (MOOSE) FACTS

We don't know about you but when warm weather returns to Algonquin Park there are certain signs of spring that we especially look forward to seeing again. Trout lilies along the portage, the flush of green poplar leaves on distant hill-sides, and a few brook trout on the end of our line are a few obvious ones. But, for the past ten years or so, there has been another one that we have become particularly fond of as well. That is the late May sight of a newborn moose calf with big brown eyes, and long gangly legs coming down to the water's edge under the sheltering belly and watchful gaze of its giant mother. It's hard to imagine a more appealing picture or a better symbol of life's renewal after a long winter of cold and snow.

It's hard, as well, when viewing such a beautiful scene, not to be caught up with the idea that all is happiness and bliss in the world of Algonquin Park moose. After all, this is what we want for our own families, and it's only natural to extend those feelings to other creatures and to expect that the generally happy state of human affairs should apply to them as well.

This being the case, it is also normal to be upset when we see evidence that things are not always as rosy for Park moose as the appealing cow-calf scenes might suggest. For example, especially in March and April most of the moose we see are very scraggly-looking, with often quite large patches of bare skin around the sides and shoulders. Even more distressing, we usually find a few moose carcasses floating in our lakes every spring and for the last few years we have found a dozen or more dead moose on land, usually emaciated and curled up where they lay down for the last time. No one likes to see such sights and visitors who encounter them quite understandably ask what might be responsible. Sometimes, too, it happens that visitors express the idea that something should be done to prevent such losses. Here we have to part company with our concerned visitors and, at the risk of sounding heartless, we must point out that premature deaths among our moose are completely natural and normal.

Our intention here is not to shock anyone but merely to underline certain aspects of life in the real world, and to point out that facts are facts, whether or not we like them or attempt to ignore them. To take the case of our Algonquin moose herd, for example, we have to realize that even if our animals enjoyed the absolute best of health, great numbers of them would still die every year. The simple fact is that in a population numbering somewhere between 3000 and 4000, as ours does, at least 1000 calves are born every year. This is all well and good but, if the moose population is truly holding steady, the annual birth of at least 1000 moose necessarily means the annual death of at least 1000.

To be more specific, at least one quarter of the Park moose alive on 1 June 1990 will be dead by 1 June 1991. We humans would be horrified at the thought of over a quarter of our friends and relatives dying over the coming year, but that is precisely what does happen, and must happen, each and every year in a moose population. Sometimes we have to pinch ourselves to realize that moose live in ways so different from our own. Moose, and almost all other forms of wildlife, die (and are born, of course) at rates so rapid that we can scarcely imagine what it would be like if we were in their position.

Seen in this light it won't really mean very much if visitors find a dozen or two dead moose in the Park this spring. To be cold-hearted about the situation, why get excited over a few proven moose deaths when we know from undeniable, simple arithmetic that the real number that have died since last spring is at least 1000?

We are sorry if we appear brutish to you in portraying reality this way and we will admit that we have oversimplified a bit. As a matter of fact, the real world is even more heartless than we have described. So far we have talked about the moose population as if it were stable—with the many births balancing the many deaths every year. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that this will always be true. Obviously, if births exceed deaths the moose population will grow. We had this sort of situation in the late 1970s and early 1980s when moose rose in a few short years from being a rare animal to their present abundance. (This occurred because the Park's deer population had collapsed in the 1970s and moose were then no longer subject to attacks from a parasitic brain worm that was carried harmlessly by deer but was fatal when transmitted to moose.) Such periods of population increase are very dramatic but they just can't continue to the point where moose totally overwhelm the environment. Long before then something will happen to raise the death rate, lower the birth rate, or both.

As a matter of fact, we think our moose population stabilized around 1985. We who enjoy seeing moose would all agree the increase in our Park population was a desirable event. But who is to say that things can't turn around again, with deaths exceeding births and the population going down as a result? At least two things could cause such a turnaround and may, in fact, actually be causing one right now.

One is the return of the white-tailed deer inside—and definitely, outside—Algonquin. We hinted earlier that moose were originally rare because deer and the brain worms they carried (fatal to moose) were so abundant. Only the virtual disappearance of deer in the 1970s allowed moose to reach the high numbers we saw in the 1980s, and now there are grounds to suspect their return will again spell big trouble for our moose. So far we have no reason to think it is happening, but no one knows what level the deer population would have to reach to

start pushing the moose death rate above the moose birth rate and therefore cause a decline.

The second and perhaps more immediate problem faced by Park moose is that of winter ticks. The larvae of these little animals get on moose in the fall (often tens of thousands on a single animal) and grow through the winter by sucking moose blood, before mating and dropping off onto the ground in April. Depending on the severity of the infestation, moose rub the hair off their hides in late winter in an effort to get rid of the irritating ticks. Having large hairless patches can put a moose at severe risk if there is cold wet weather in late winter and some of the dead animals we have been finding in the past few springs probably died because of their heavy tick loads. Other tick-infested areas of North America have had significant late winter die-offs of moose and, although it hasn't happened here, the possibility can't be ruled out, given our obviously high population of ticks.

So where does this leave us? What does the future hold for Algonquin's moose? Unfortunately, neither we nor anyone else can answer these questions because, perhaps surprisingly, so much depends on the weather. Whether or not deer numbers continue to rise, for example, and with them the danger of brain worm, depends mostly on our winters. Strings of mild winters mean an expanding deer population and eventual risk to moose but that can quickly be reversed by just one bad, deer-killing winter with deep snow.

With ticks also, much depends on chance. When the engorged female ticks fall off moose in April they die if they land on snow but survive if they land on dry ground. If the summer is hot, ticks may die if they are in open, sunny areas (which is where moose are most likely to bed down and possibly get reinfected in the fall). And, of course, whether or not tick-infested moose actually die depends very much on how cold and wet it is during their late winter "hairless period" when they are most vulnerable.

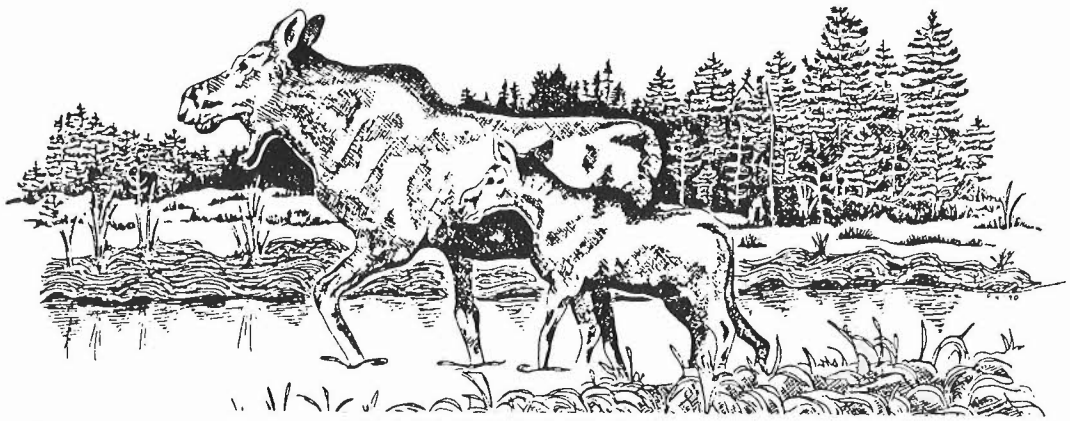
The truth is that moose, like all wildlife, are subject to many controlling influences, some of which allow their numbers to increase and others of which may force their numbers down. Brain worms and ticks are only two of the forces that happen to act on moose.

Some people find it hard to accept that we can't do anything about animals like ticks and brain worms that we think of as "nasty" and help other animals, like moose, that we happen to like. But, as we said before, moose populations can't keep growing forever at the rates they are capable of under ideal conditions. Deaths, whether through starvation, disease, or predators will sooner or later unavoidably equal the death rate. This means that in any attempt we might make to play God, the best we could hope for would be to save moose from premature deaths from brain worms or ticks—only to see them die from some other premature and unpleasant agent of death.

We are not saying it is easy for everyone to accept these ideas and yet accept them we must if we are to have a realistic notion of how the real world operates. We have always believed human beings are much better served by facing facts as they are, not as we might wish them to be, and we would even go one step further. Although it may seem like making a virtue of necessity, we would suggest that there is endless wonder and fascination to be derived from an age-old system whose underlying reality of pitiless competition, suffering, and premature death produces so much apparent harmony, beauty, and tranquillity for the human observer.

Perhaps you will think about these things the next time you paddle by an appealing little newborn moose calf and its mother at the edge of your favorite fishing lake. It may not be your first instinct to dwell on the notion that the calf, very likely, and the cow, quite possibly, will be dead within the coming year. But you can also take heart from the knowledge that they will probably both be replaced as well. Death and birth in the world of Algonquin Park moose are a bittersweet combination but they are facts and they are as old and as real as life itself.

Reprinted from the 26 April 1990 issue of Algonquin Park's *The Raven*, courtesy of the Ministry of Natural Resources.



RIVIÈRE BAZIN

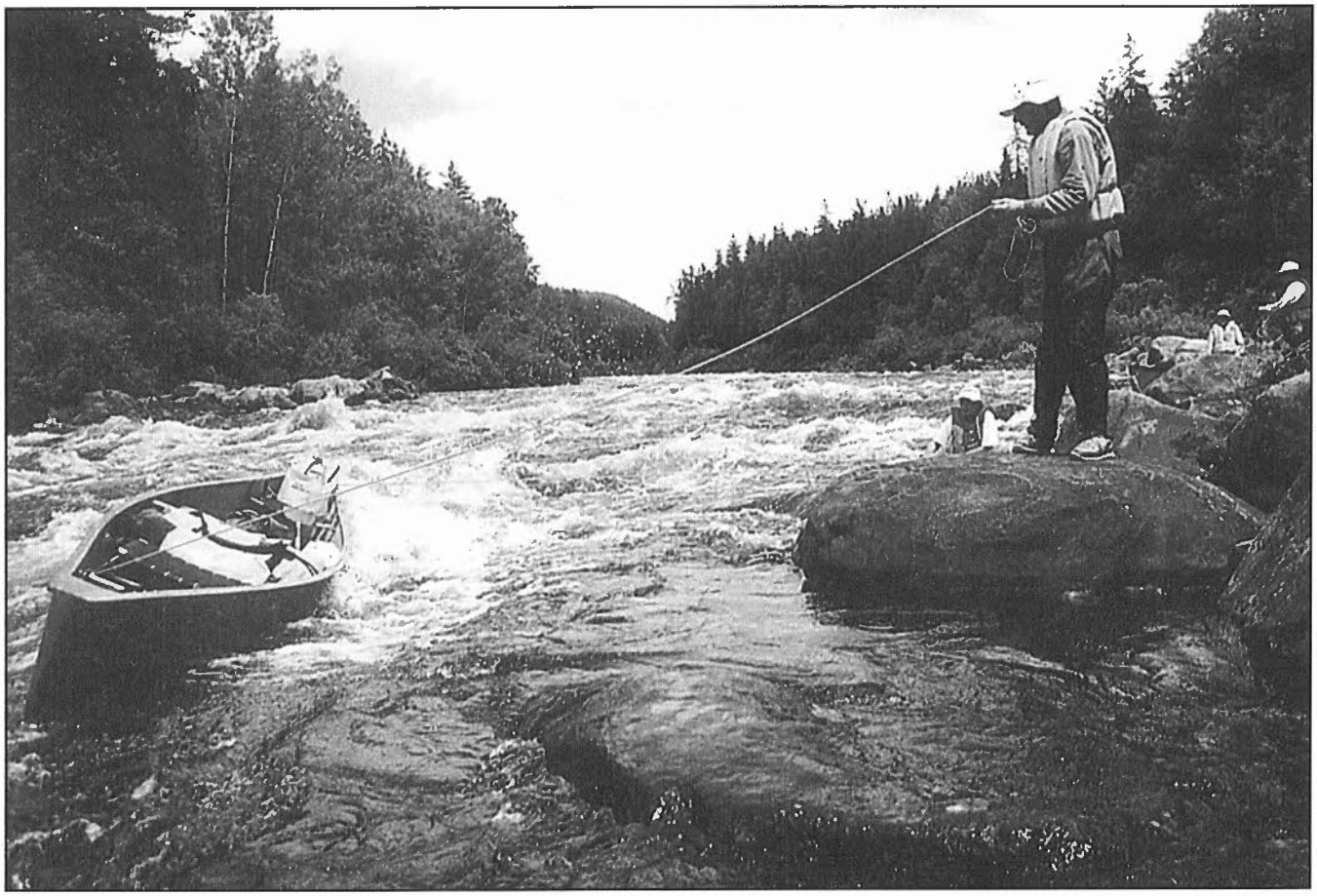
Paul Hamilton

Prologue Six canoeists make their way from various Ontario locations to rendez-vous at a motel in the town of Mont-Laurier, deep in the Gatineau hills. There is barely suppressed collective excitement of the coming adventure that will take place from 14–20 July 2001. The canoeists are: Doug Ashton, Scott Young, Gerry Lannan, John Bilyea, Diane Hamilton, and Paul Hamilton.

Day 1 The first morning we drove 45 minutes north to the village of Ste-Anne-du-Lac to Air Melancom (819-586-2220) to arrange for them to shuttle our cars to the take-out and load up for the flight up-river. We packed all our gear and lashed the three canoes to the pontoons of the two venerable old DeHavilland Beavers. The hour-long flight to the village of Parent was a treat for me as I love old planes, but the constant engine roar and the air turbulence were not enjoyed by all. We landed on the river near the village of Parent and lunched on a gravel beach in a light rain before proceeding down river.

At Air Melancom we had been told that it had been raining very steadily for the previous two weeks and the water was up about two feet over normal levels. We immediately noticed that water did seem high. We ran the first few rapids, graded Class I and II, and realized, as Gerry said, "This is definitely not the Credit River!" Some of the Class I rapids were washed out as we proceeded down river but most II's and all III rapids were huge with big holes and large standing waves. Scouting from shore was very hard because of the heavy alder bush growing right to the water, which left very little shoreline. Scouting from the canoe became the norm except with particularly serious-looking rapids; then we landed and fought our way downstream through the bush to survey for routes. We had one portage the first day, some lining, and many eddy hops. We met and overtook a party of Quebecois canoeists early in the day, only to discover they had sent on an advance canoe to secure the only campsite for miles around. So we had to turn back upstream to search for a site that was supposed to be at the last rapid. We ended up bushwhacking in the dense pine bush around 7 p.m. Any port in a storm! We were later fortified by chef Doug's excellent dinner; everybody hit the sack right after eating, exhausted by a strenuous first day.

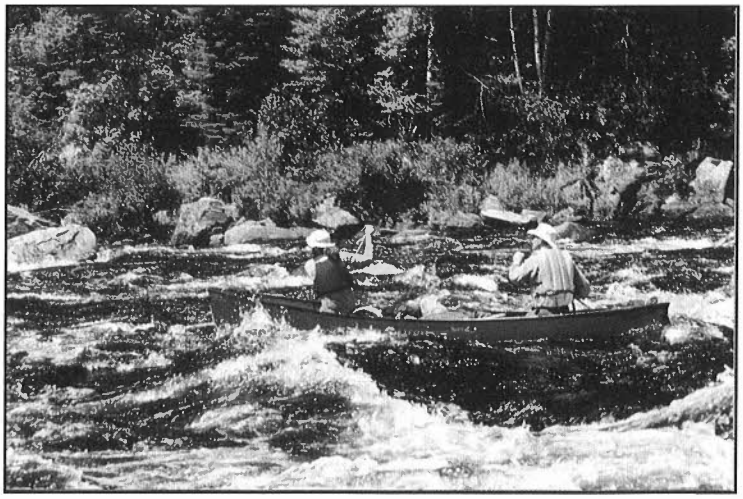
Day 2 We broke camp and were on the water by 9:00 a.m., running down to an abandoned power dam and a long sandy portage. The Quebecois group were portaging when we arrived and Doug took the opportunity to speak to one of them about campsites, which are few and far between on this river. This group of nine with five canoes needed a lot more space than our party. They were aiming for one campsite, so we told them we would



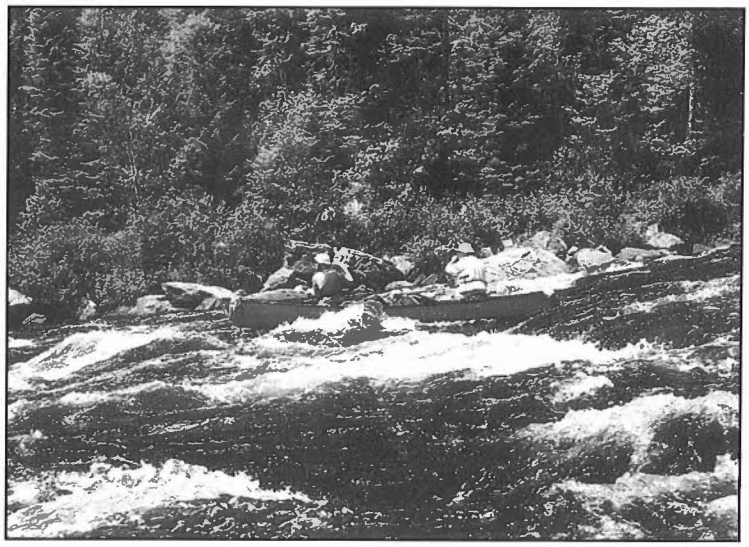
take the other site marked on the map. The rest of the day was relatively easy with I and II rapids and we made camp at 2:00 p.m. at the site agreed to earlier. It was a large, very sandy area with hordes of no-seeums to pester us. The light rain ceased and the weather for the rest of the trip was pleasant. Diane misplaced her glasses and we spent a half hour looking until Gerry found them in the hood of her bug jacket. We could hear the sound of ATV's in the distance, as there is a road running along the shore of the river for the many hunt and lumber camps.

Day 3 We awoke to fog but it cleared off by the time we hit the water. There were a number of tougher II and III rapids to contend with today. One in particular we had to land half through the rapid and line out the rest. Very big water. The dynamics of the group were becoming apparent. The Doug-and-Scott (a kayaker, but we let him come anyhow) team are both very fit and were ready to run almost anything relying on both strength and skill. The Gerry/John team with their Kevlar Dumoine without thigh straps were far more conservative, always looking for the sneak route. The Paul/Diane team, although experienced, are quite conservative when tripping and usually were leading the way down the sneak routes. We were lining the bottom half of one rapid when John slipped and swam out the rest of the rapid, fortunately with no ill effects. He looked quite refreshed actually! We could not locate any of the three campsites marked on the map, so we eventually camped in a boat trailer put-in. Not a great site with three tents in a row and very buggy. We had Diane's famous sweet-and-sour curried rice with nuts for dinner. Always delicious.

Day 4 The morning came with brilliant sunshine and we were on the water by 8:00 a.m., anxious to escape the early morning bugs. We ran down a series of rapids with no problem until we came to a long II rapid that became

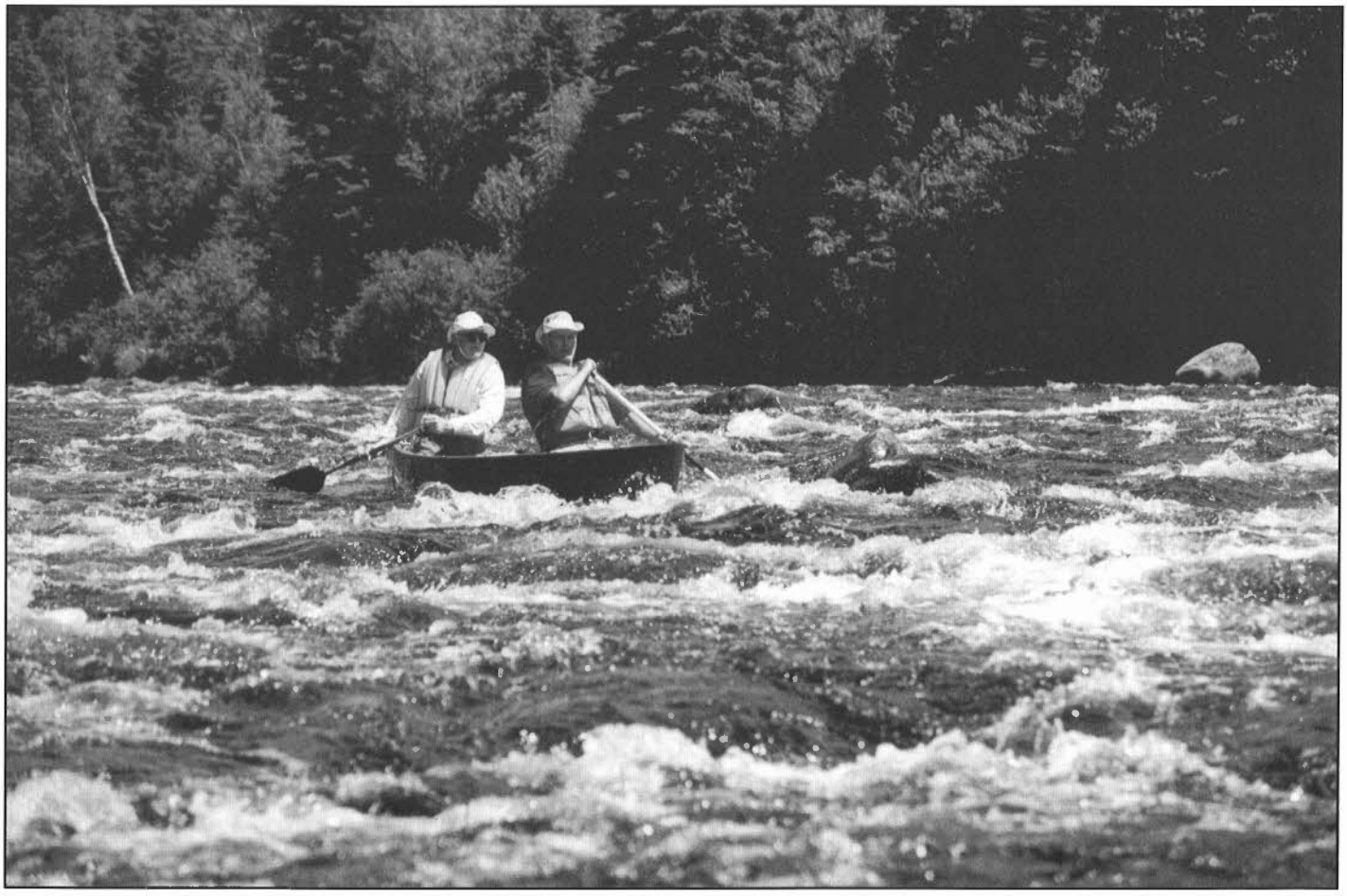


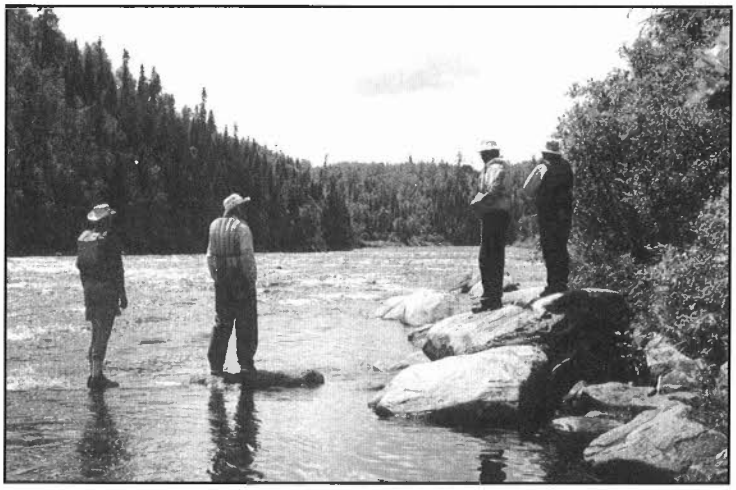
a III. Doug and Scott ran down with seemingly no problem. All of us missed Doug's "Don't Run" paddle signal! Gerry and John had a wild trip down and hit the only tongue through a large ledge. Diane and I missed the tongue by a couple of feet going over the ledge, but we stayed upright despite the huge roller. There were more rapids that we lined and ran until, when lining, I spied what looked like a perfect campsite about twenty feet above the river downstream. We camped here but had to leave the canoes floating for the night. This campsite was actually part of the road that had grassed over. We had just made ourselves comfortable when an ATV came along and wanted passage through our tents. John had to take down one side of his tent to let him pass. Despite the clear skies it suddenly clouded over for a heavy downpour. Fortunately we sensed there might be rain and had put up the tarp.



Day 5 The beautiful morning made it all the harder to leave as this was the first really nice campsite. However, we had a pleasant, serene early morning paddle, it was perfectly still and quiet. Later we ran and lined down through a whole series of II and III rapids mostly scouting from the boats. By this point we had lost track of which rapid was which as there were so many. We caught up to the Quebec group who seemed to know the river well as they rarely scouted. Generally we watched what they did for guidance. There was one tricky section above a ledge where we lined to a rocky point, then got back in the boats to make a blind and difficult eddy turn around the point to where we could line again over the ledge.

By late-afternoon we made for the only site around only to find the Quebecois group already encamped there. They very generously made space at the site for the six of





us. We gratefully accepted as we were exhausted from the day's exertions. They were from a small mining community, Amos, north of Le Bazin, and although we had some language difficulties, we were able to talk about our canoeing adventures. As it turned out, only one in their party, a 16-year-old girl, had done the river four or five years before. Later that evening, our new friends strung a long copper wire out about twenty feet for their radio telephone. One of their party had an adult son who was very ill in hospital. They had the call patched from the airport receiver in Amos to the local hospital.

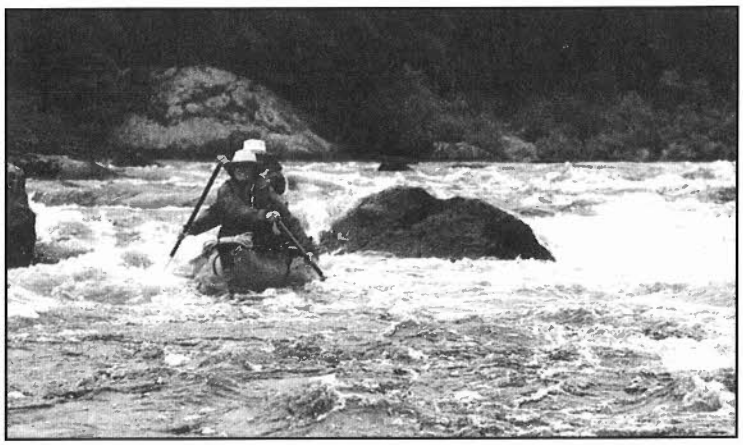
Day 6 We arose again to a lovely sunny morning. We were blessed with very nice weather, not as hot as it had been in southern Ontario. All of us knew that today was going to be a very heavy, challenging whitewater day. We were immediately into some II–III rapids where at one point Diane and I almost dumped running down a very tricky side channel. There was almost continuous strong whitewater now as the Bazin was approaching the confluence with the Gatineau River. All of us were involved in a lot of rock dodging as the rapids were very long and hard to scout. We came to a particularly wicked-looking rapid where Doug wanted to get some action pictures. Diane agreed to hike downstream to photograph them coming down. But Doug backpaddled for an eternity above the rapid, and kept looking up; it made everyone else look up too, but we couldn't figure out what he was doing. Afterwards he said he was waiting for the sun to go behind a cloud so as to get a better exposure for the picture. A true artist! Scott then agreed to hike back upstream to run down with me (Diane had thought the better of running through this maelstrom). What a wild ride!

Many long II's later, the confluence with the Rivière Gatineau appeared. We made camp at the confluence on a very large open site just upriver on the Gatineau. Some nighthawks came to visit our site to sample the local mosquitoes.

Day 7 Up at 5:00 the next morning for a quick start down the 10 miles to the take-out. There was a heavy fog on the river, causing very limited visibility. It was an eerie feeling to hear the moving water and not be able to see 10 feet in front of you, but fortunately we knew there were only swifts left to negotiate. The fog burned off several hours later. Our vehicles, which had been shuttled by the air service, were not exactly where we had expected them to be, and a little scouting was necessary. However, we soon found them about half a mile down from where we thought they would be about 10 a.m.

On Doug's van there was a note in French referring to something about the lights, fuses , the battery, and to look under the hood before departing. The lid of the fuse box was off and one fuse was missing. A piece of insulated wire replaced the missing fuse and off we went down about 40 miles of very rough bush road back to Ste-Anne-du-Lac. At Air Melancom we found that the guys who did the shuttle had locked all the doors to Doug's van with the highlights left on. They had tried to pull the fuse out to turn the lights off, but in the process had managed to lose that fuse. We got everything sorted out and headed back to Ontario. We parted company after a farewell lunch in Mont-Laurier.

It was a fantastic wilderness trip, typical of Quebec: rough country with few campsites and numerous, voracious bugs.



Diane and Paul Hamilton (paulanddiane.hamilton@sympatico.ca) are proud to announce the birth of their son, Colin James Hamilton; born 26 April 2002 at 12:14 p.m., 9 lbs 14 oz. (4,490 grams). Mother and child are both doing well and proud Dad is looking forward to that first canoe trip; it's a good thing we bought that flatwater boat last year! Advice from experienced paddling parents is welcome, as well as any experienced baby gear that might be hanging around.

FOOD FOR PADDLERS

Doug and Lisa Ashton hosted a very successful Food Seminar on 6 April 2002. The first half of the three-hour seminar included information on menu planning, tips for packing, camp ovens, and food dehydrating. Various products and dehydrated foods were available for sampling. A handout was given to all participants, which included the above information as well as several recipes. The second half of the seminar was spent sharing recipes and resources. The next several issues of *Nastawgan* will highlight recipes and ideas from the seminar. The following recipe is from Doug Ashton. He prepares this with fresh food early in a trip. However, the recipe lends itself well to using dried foods and could be used at any point in a long trip.

Doug's Special Pasta

3 cups bowtie pasta
1 large portobello mushroom
½ medium red onion
1 green or red pepper
1 small zucchini
1/4 cup unsalted cashews
4 tablespoons olive oil (for saute and mix)
1 package Clubhouse Herb and Garlic mix
1/4 cup parmesan cheese

Saute vegetables until tender. Cook and drain pasta. In a paper cup (for ease of cleanup) mix oil and sauce mix. Toss all ingredients together in large pot to warm for serving.

If you would like to share your favorite tripping recipes, please contact Barb Young, 12 Erindale Crescent, Brampton, Ont L6W 1B5; youngjdavid@rogers.com.

photo: Bob Knapp

THE JOHN SMITH STORY

On the twenty-ninth of September, 1934, nineteen-year-old Francis Formanger went for a walk along the beach near his home on Long Point, a slender finger of land extending northwards from the Port au Port Peninsula in Western Newfoundland. As he walked along he noticed something white at the water's edge, and went to investigate. What he found, to his great surprise, was a human skull. He walked a little further and found a leg, and just beyond that, the body of a man, quite a large man, missing one arm and the leg and head which Francis had just discovered. The dead man was dressed in jeans and a khaki shirt.

Uncertain as to what to do, Francis picked up the skull and carried it home. That way no one would disbelieve him when he told the story of finding a body along the shore. He showed his father, who immediately got some men to go back with Francis to retrieve the remains. Two men carried a hand barrow to bring back the body. A hand barrow is a homemade device that looks a little like a stretcher, only wider. It is normally used to carry fish.

The men picked up the remains and brought it back to Mr. Formanger's fish store. A fish store, by the way, is not a shop where fish is sold, but rather a storehouse where fishing gear is kept and fish is cleaned, washed, and salted. There were no papers on the body to identify the man, so they just kept the remains, hoping that they would find out something about his identity. Many local people came to see the mysterious remains and speculate on the origin of the person. Francis says that one neighbor, Henry Harview, came down the first evening, at about the time when it was getting dark. He asked Francis which of the man's arms was missing. Francis said he did not know. "Well, go in and have a look," Mr. Harview said. But neither Francis nor anyone else would dare go into the building at dark to see which arm was missing.

After a week there was no news, so they made a rough coffin out of slabs and buried the body in a field on the Formanger property. There was no burial ceremony after the fish store wake, but they erected a wooden cross to mark the grave.

The news spread all around about the finding of the body, and even reached Toronto, where a Mr. Joe Duffenais, formerly of Black Duck Brook, was living. Mr. Duffenais heard about a missing canoeist and contacted the man's mother. It turned out that the man, twenty-four year old John Smith, had been trying to reach St. John's from Peterborough, Ontario, by canoe. His plans were to stop in St. John's for provisions and paddle from there to Ireland and then on to Peterborough, England. His sixteen-foot canoe, The Pride of Peterborough, was loaded with five hundred pounds of fresh water and food, or hard tack, as the newspaper of the day called it. He hoped to paddle twenty-five miles a day, believing that his canoe, with the help of the prevailing westerly winds, would make the trip in two to three months. He thought that his light craft could weather the seas better than a larger vessel. He planned to keep near the shipping lanes so that there would be ships in sight sometimes.

He had canoed down the St. Lawrence River, Mr. Formanger says, shot seven lots of rapids, and come across the Gulf of St. Lawrence. According to the map, he would have had to start in the Otonabee River at Peterborough and go from there into Rice Lake, out through the Trent River, and into the Bay of Quinte, Long Reach, and Adolphus Reach before reaching the open water of Lake Ontario, a little southwest of Kingston, where Lake Ontario empties into the St. Lawrence River. From his home to Lake Ontario, by water, is a distance of at least 110 miles.

His canoe was found, intact, at Point La Fontaine, near Port Saunders on the West coast of Newfoundland's Northern Peninsula, around the twentieth of August, a month or so earlier than his remains were discovered by Mr. Formanger. Mr. Formanger and the other people in Black Duck Brook and the area were unaware of this at the time. The newspaper, The Western Star, said that he had last been seen leaving Gaspe, but Mr. Formanger's son, Don, told me that they later heard that Mr. Smith had been picked up by a ship after leaving the St. Lawrence River. The crew of the ship told him that a storm was coming, and wanted him to stay on the ship, but he insisted on completing his voyage by canoe.

The Formanger family received a letter from Mr. Smith's mother, who thanked them for burying her son. She said that she could not afford to visit his grave or have his remains sent back to his home. This happened, as you probably realize, during the Great Depression, when almost everyone was poor. Unfortunately, the letter has not been saved.

We do not know why young John Smith set out on his adventure. It seems foolhardy, now, and even more so when we realize that he was not wearing a life jacket or personal flotation device when he was found. Was he simply an adventurer? Did he hope to become famous or wealthy by his voyage? Did he have any idea of the kind of seas he was bound to encounter at some point on this long voyage? A lot of unanswered questions remain about John Smith and his ill-fated canoe trip.

Researched and written by Donald Gale, Southwest Region Cabot Committee.

Submitted by Bob Henderson.

WANT TO ORGANIZE A TRIP AND HAVE IT PRESENTED IN THE AUTUMN ISSUE?
Contact the Outings Committee before 12 August!

WCA TRIPS

For questions, suggestions, proposals to organize trips, or anything else related to the WCA Trips, contact any of the members of the Outings Committee: Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, bness@look.ca; Barry Godden, 416-440-4208; Ann Dixie, 416-512-0292, adixie0405@rogers.com; Gisela Curwen, 416-484-1471, gisela.curwen@utoronto.ca

WCA trips and other activities may have an element of danger of serious personal injury. You are ultimately responsible for your own safety and well-being when participating in club events.

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All Season **HAVE PADDLE WILL TRAVEL**
Barry Godden, 416-440-4208; Steve Bernet, 519- 837-8774; Harrison Jolly, 905-689-1733. ----- We paddle wherever the good whitewater is from ice-out to freeze-up. Usual locations (depending upon the season) are such rivers as the Upper Black, Gatineau, Ottawa, Petawawa, and Beaver. We also go south as far as West Virginia to rivers such as the Gauley. While some rivers we visit require advanced skills, many of these rivers can be paddled by reasonably skilled intermediates with some coaching and judicious portaging. We're friendly people who like to help newer paddlers develop their skills. Give one of us a call to find out where we are going.

All Season **FROST CENTRE CANOE ROUTES**
Ray Laughlen, 705-754-9479.----- There is some superb lake paddling in the routes out of the Frost Centre near Dorset. As I live in Haliburton and have a flexible work schedule, I visit the area frequently, especially during the week. If you would like to paddle with me, give me a call. Outings are suitable for novices.

29 June – 1 July **ALGONQUIN PANHANDLE**
Anne Bradley, 519-855-4835; Elsie Carr-Locke, 416-463-9019, book before 21 June. ----- Perhaps we can avoid summertime crowds by checking out this area of the park. Be prepared for some longer portages. Limit four canoes.

July–September **MINDEN WILD WATER PRESERVE**
Bill Ness, 416-321-3005. ----- I'm frequently at the Gull on weekends through the summer, so if you would like some paddling companionship at Minden, give me a call. I'm sure that you can persuade me that paddling is more important than staying home to paint or mow the lawn. You need to be at least a strong intermediate to run the lower course, but the bottom can be played by novices.

13–14 July **OXTONGUE RIVER**
Anne Bradley, 519-855-4835; Elsie Carr-Locke, 416-463-9019, book before 5 July. ----- Moving-water trip parallels Hwy 60 in Algonquin Park. Suitable for novices. Limit four canoes.

13–14 July **INTRODUCTION TO C-1 FREESTYLE**
Steve Bernet, 519- 837-8774, book before 1 July. ----- For all you budding rodeo stars. If you have a low-volume C-1, or can beg, borrow, or rent one, and want to learn how to do those flashy rodeo moves, this is your opportunity. This weekend at the Minden Wild Water Preserve will teach you the basic freestyle moves. Suitable for intermediate or better C-1 paddlers. Limit five participants.

27–28 July **FLATWATER INSTRUCTIONAL WEEKEND**
Michael Kerwin, 416-516-6853, book before 15 July. ----- Here's a great opportunity to refine your flatwater canoeing skills. Participants may earn ORCA flatwater certification. The workshop will be held in the Toronto area. You are required to provide your own canoe, PFD, and paddle. We will require a minimum of four participants for the workshop to take place. Maximum of eight participants.

27–28 July **PALMER RAPIDS**
Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, book before 20 July. ----- A lazy weekend by the water at one of Southern Ontario's best-loved novice-intermediate play spots. The bugs and the crowds have gone by now, making Palmer a really great getaway destination for the family.

There's a sand beach and warm, clean water for the kids. If you're new to moving water, this is a perfect opportunity to get some practice. I'm happy to do some informal instruction. No limit.

1–6 August **GEORGIAN BAY – PHILIP EDWARD ISLAND/ FOX ISLANDS**
Don Andersen, dhandersen@aol.com, 716-873-4476, book before 1 July. ----- We will be exploring the Collins Inlet, Mill Lake, and the south shore of Philip Edward Island. Be prepared for hiking with lots of photo ops on rugged islands with respectable relief. We will be putting in on the "Chic" river in Killarney Park. Suitable for competent novices who can manage windy conditions and waves. Limit seven canoes.

3–5 August **OTTAWA RIVER**
John & Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, book before 27 July. ----- We are fortunate to have access to the most beautiful campsite on the river. The Ottawa is big water and many of the rapids are quite difficult. You should be at least a strong intermediate paddler to safely enjoy it. We recommend that you join us on some of our spring trips to develop and practise your skills before attempting this river. Limit six boats.

10–11 August **HERB AND GUN LAKES**
Anne Bradley, 519-855-4835, book before 2 August. ----- Flatwater loop trip in area of Leslie Frost Provincial Natural Resource Centre near Dorset. With luck we may find blueberries. Limit four canoes.

17–18 August **CANOE TRIPPING CLINIC**
Barry Godden, 416-440-4208, book before 1 July. ----- Are you interested in getting your ORCA Canoe Tripping I certification? Join me for a weekend clinic that will improve your skills and enable you to earn your ORCA certification. As well as the weekend, participants will be provided with two weekday classroom sessions. There will be preparatory readings required of attendees to enable them to more fully benefit from the clinic. Limit of six participants.

24 August – 1 September **TEMAGAMI AREA**
Anne Lessio, 416-293-4116 or alessio@istar.ca, and Gary James, 416-512-6690 or gmjames@attcanada.ca, book before 2 August. ----- We will be following a modified version of Kevin Callan's *Temagami Experience* (Up the Creek, p. 77). Starting on Tupper Lake with a climb up Maple Mountain, we will then travel through Willow Island Lake to Diamond Lake and on to Obabika Lake. We will spend two nights in the old growth area and have time to explore the area. We will finish the trip in Ferguson Bay of Temagami Lake. Temagami is known for rugged portages, so come prepared. This trip would not be suitable as a first long trip, but is suitable for novices who are in good shape. We will meet once or twice in Toronto to plan the trip and finalize equipment etc. Four of us are looking for one or two other canoes to explore this beautiful area.

31 August – 2 September **OTTAWA RIVER**
John and Sharon Hackert, 416-438-7672, book before 24 August. ----- Please see description above for details.

September **MISSISSAGUA RIVER**
Bill Ness, 416-321-3005. ----- One of the prettiest whitewater river trips in southern Ontario, with gorgeous scenery during the fall colors. This trip used to be a fall favorite before the dry summers of the last few years. There certainly are no guarantees as to water, so I have left the exact date open so we can try to co-ordinate with Mother Nature and the guy who controls the dam. We might get lucky. If you want me to put you on my list of interested participants, give me a call. Suitable for experienced novices

8 September **BURNT RIVER**
Bill Ness, (416) 321-3005, book before 1 September. ----- Between Kinmount and the village of Burnt River, the Burnt is a placid stretch of water with a few small riffles and a couple of larger scenic drops, which are easily portaged. This leisurely Sunday paddle makes an excellent family outing or a gentle introduction to canoeing for non-paddling friends. Limit six boats.

16–21 September **CENTRAL FRENCH RIVER**
Anne Bradley, 519-855-4835; Barb Maughan, 519-893-0380, book before 6 September. ----- Wolseley Bay to Hartley Bay with possibility of a side trip to Georgian Bay if we make good time. Limit four canoes.

28–29 September **ANSTRUTHER LAKE LOOP**
Doug Ashton, 905-654-0336. ----- This will be a relaxing paddle through a string of small lakes in the Apsley area. The rugged landscape and trees in their autumn colors should make this a memorable outing. Don't forget your camera! An enjoyable family outing for all ages and abilities. Limit of five boats.

5–6 October **EELS CREEK**
Anne Bradley, 519-855-4835; Barb Maughan, 519-893-0380, book before 27 September. ----- Leisurely trip from Haultain to Stony Lake with a hike to Petroglyphs Provincial Park. Limit four canoes.

20 October **LONG LAKE AREA**

Bill Ness, 416-321-3005, book before 13 October. ----- There is a group of small lakes in the rugged Kawartha countryside north of Peterborough and just west of Apsley that make a wonderful fall paddle. Multiple routes are possible depending on the weather and participants' interests. There are a number portages, but they are well marked and not particularly difficult. As the lakes are small, and the portaging easy, it can be a good outing for the family.

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FOR SHORT-NOTICE TRIPS, CHECK THE WCA WEBSITE BULLETIN BOARD

Suddenly find yourself with a free weekend and want to go paddling? Need a partner for an upcoming trip? Take advantage of our website bulletin board (http://wildernesscanoe.ca) to post notices for impromptu trips or partners required. Also, bookmark this page to regularly check for new posted outings. This service is a valuable addition to our regularly published quarterly outings list. We encourage members to use it. However, please note that only members may post notices. As these activities are not pre-screened by the Outings Committee, they are considered privately organized affairs and we can take no responsibility for them.

CORDE DU ROI

Standing around the campfire. Normally would be sitting, but I'm trying to dry off the pants. And the quickest way to dry them is to take them off and hold them near the fire.

It was a tough day for the pants. Lots of lining. In addition, the two portages that we did today were surrounded by wet bushes. All in all, it was a day that guaranteed the pants would be wet by evening.

The pants are corduroy. The encyclopaedia says that corduroy is a strong durable fabric with a rounded cord surface. Velvety to the touch. The name corduroy comes from the French corde du roi—the king's cord or rope. Cloth this elegant was thought to be suitable for royalty. I figure that if it's good enough for kings, it's good enough for me. And definitely good enough for wilderness canoe trips.

On earlier trips we ended up wearing blue jeans. Over time, we've found that they just are not the right pants for wilderness canoe trips. When wet, blue jeans stay wet. They are very tough to dry out. And the moisture that they hold saps heat from your body. Makes you feel colder than you really should feel.

Blue jeans are also too tight to perform most wilderness functions. You just can't do the stretching that you need to do. In the wilderness you are always reaching for something, carrying something, or putting something down somewhere. Usually stretching to the maximum that your body will allow you to stretch.

Blue jeans also won't allow you to carry stuff that you need to carry. Their body hugging design means that you can't get much into the pockets. You are forced to carry all the other stuff that you need in either a shirt pocket or in a jacket.

Got the pants dry and put them back on. Looks like everything else that needs to be done before turning in for the night has already been done. The buddies said that they were going to hit the sack, but to wake them up if anything important happened. Told them that I would.

I'm just going to sit by the fire for a while and revel in the warmth of my now dry, elegant corde du roi pants. I haven't been invited to a coronation yet, but at least now I'm dressed for it.

Greg Went

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

This PRODUCTS AND SERVICES section is available, free of charge and on a first come, first served basis, to members as well as nonmembers for their announcements regarding items for sale, special products, discounts, services, courses, etc. Contact the editor if more information is required.

DISCOUNTS ON TRIPPING SUPPLIES WCA members who present a membership card will receive a 10-percent discount on many nonsale times at:

- Algonquin Outfitters, RR#1, Oxtongue Lake, Dwight, Ont.
- Rockwood Outfitters, 669 Speedvale Ave. West, Guelph, Ont.
- Suntrail Outfitters, 100 Spence Str., Hepworth, Ont.
- Smoothwater Outfitters, Temagami (Hwy. 11), Ont.

Members should check at each store to find out what items are discounted.

CANOEING VIDEO Classic solo canoeing with Becky Mason; approx. 40 minutes; $39.95 + tax + shipping. Tel. 819-827-4159; fax 819-827-8563; redcanoe@istar.ca; www.wilds.mb.ca/redcanoe

PADDLING ONTARIO ALLIANCE is a dedicated group of more than 20 adventure tourism operators who have joined forces to promote Ontario as the world's finest canoeing and kayaking destination. Respected names such as Algonquin Outfitters, Canoetours, Smoothwater, Wabakimi, and others offer everything a paddler looking for a unique adventure could want: flatwater, whitewater, river tripping, sea kayaking, eco lodges, history, self-guided trips, and more. The Alliance members provide first-class access to destinations in the whole province, offering safe wilderness experiences that excite and enlighten. More information in: www.paddlingontario.com

HERON DANCE A quarterly wilderness journal. Watercolor art, interviews, excerpts from the best of nature writing, essays. Introductory annual subscription CDN$30, renewals $40. Send to: Heron Dance, 52 Seymour St., Middlebury, VT, 05753, USA, or call 1-888-304-3766.

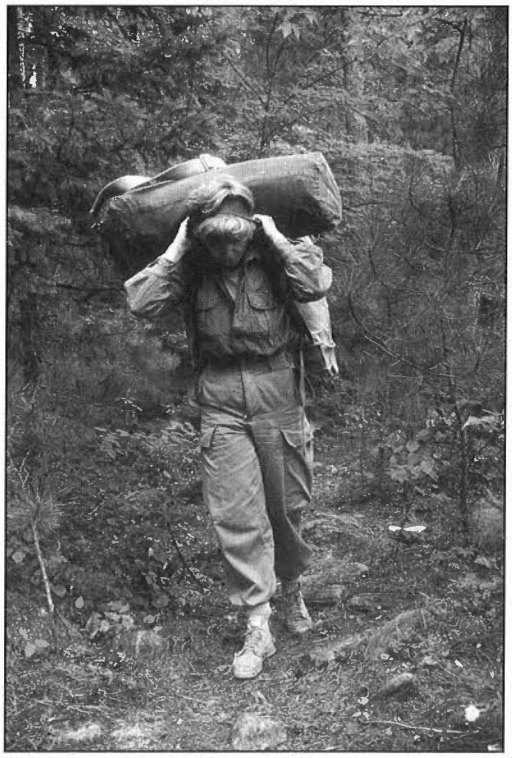
WOMEN'S TRIPS Thelon River, 13–28 July 2002, women of all ages. Baffin Island, summer 2003, cultural trip, boat travel and hiking. Pukaskwa Park canoeing, 2003. Contact: Judith Niemi, Women in the Wilderness, tel. 651-227-2284, judithniemi@hotmail.com

WHITE NIGHT WRITERS' WORKSHOP in Hofsos, Iceland, June 2002, 2003. With poets, essayists, ornithologists: David Arnason, Robert Bly, Bill Holm, Judith Niemi, John Weier. Contact: Judith Niemi, see item above.

THE LODGE AT PINE COVE is the ideal starting point for a short or long visit to the heart of the French River east and west of Wolseley Bay. The completely renovated lodge has a number of rustic log cabins nestled on the heavily forested shore of the serene cove. The facilities include: log cabins and rooms, restaurant and pub, showers, canoe rental and launch, guided trips, swimming, fishing, complete outfitting, interest tours (astronomy, birding, flora, etc.). The Lodge at Pine Cove, Box 91, Noelville, ON, P0M 2N0; tel. 705-898-2500; alex@frenchriver.com; www.frenchriver.com; www.frenchriveroutfitters.com

CANOETOURS We offer a fine variety of fully provisioned and equipped canoe trips, such as two-, three-, and seven-day trips, single trips, corporate trips, day trips with overnight stay at a lodge, and more. We also have canoes and kayaks for rent. For information, contact canoetours@hotmail.com and www.canoetours.com

BLUEWATER WILDERNESS EXPEDITIONS is a touring service that provides all-inclusive travel packages in the Bruce Peninsula. We offer access to local natural attractions and activities including canoeing on the Rankin River, kayaking on Lake Huron, camping on the rocky shores of Georgian Bay, climbing, wilderness backpacking, and hiking some of the best parts of the Bruce Trail. We provide three-, four-, and seven-day packages to our clients during the summer months. Information: www.bluewaterwildernessexpeditions.com.



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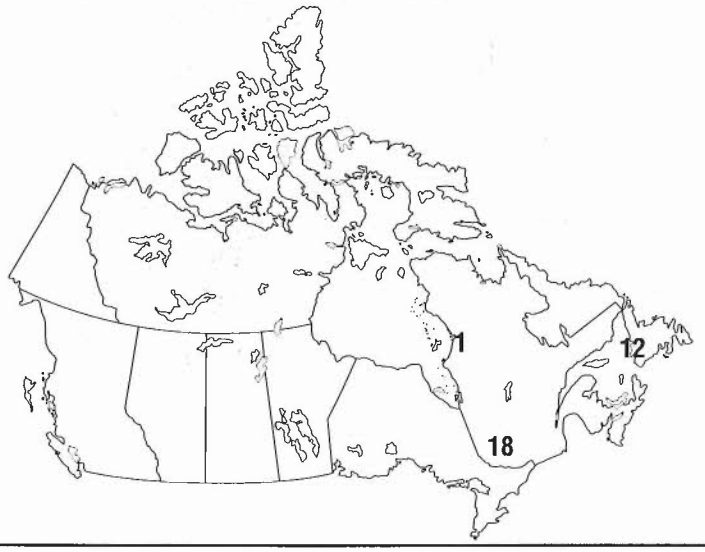

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