

Sunday May 6

This morning we left for Sooke, BC and the Pedder Bay RV Resort (where we wintered last year).

By coffee time, we were approaching Ladysmith. I suggested to Jen that we stop at the waterfront park there. Well, wouldn't you know it—we drove the twisty road to the park only to find that the Corvette Club of BC was having a "show". Faced with a dead-end road, I turned the rig around and as we started back up the road to the highway, there was a perfect spot for our rig.

While Jen made us coffee, I wandered across to look at some of the Corvettes on display. Back in the early '70s, I had a 1965 Sunbeam Tiger. Once a year, our club, CATS, used to get together with the guys and gals of the Corvette club and try to drink each other under the table. It was a weekend affair; Sunday was the "autocross" where drivers wound their cars around the pylons in the fastest time they could. My old Tiger was never up to the task on Sunday (nor was I for that matter), but it was great fun to watch all manner of Corvettes and Tigers getting bent out of shape.

But I digress.

We arrived at the RV park and set up camp, site #10.



Monday May 7

Today's the day for me to put on my best bib and tucker. I was off to visit 3 colleges in Victoria that purchase Jen's *Legal Keys* textbooks.

I kinda enjoy the sales game. I didn't many years ago when I tried sales for a living. Actually sales wasn't that bad; it was the management of the company that really got under my craw. I had one sales manager who invited himself along on one of my sales calls. After opening his mouth (with that permanent sleazy smile you sometimes see), he almost blew my sale.

Afterwards, I confronted him. And I remember his exact words to this day: "I cannot be responsible for what I say." I told him in no uncertain terms he was never coming on a sales call with me again. And he didn't.

Yes, I did make the sale. It was DHL at Vancouver Airport.

But, again, I digress.

My sales calls went well. I left copies of Jen's new book, *Just Timings*, with each college. Hopefully we will see some orders.

Tuesday May 8

Today we visited one of my favourite stores: Lee Valley. I needed a full extension drawer guide for a new drawer Jen wants in one of our kitchen cabinets.

Chore done; time for coffee. We enjoyed outside at Poncho's Coffee House in Langford.



The next stop was just up the road... another of my favourite stores—Princess Auto. I didn't buy anything but I picked up one of their catalogues. I still enjoy perusing their paper version rather than their website.

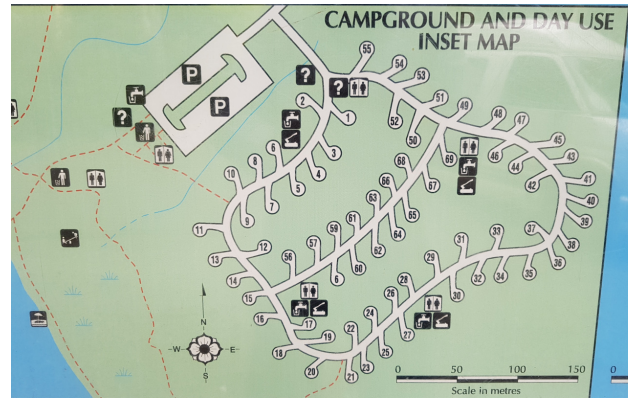
Before we left on this short trip, we'd made arrangements to meet up with our young Czech friends for dinner at Route 14 in Sooke. The meal was absolutely wonderful; the presentation was exquisite.



Wednesday May 9

Today we head north, up the coast to Port Renfrew. The road from Port Renfrew to Duncan is paved. We are looking forward to "doing the loop".

On the drive, we stopped at French Beach Provincial Park and had a look around.



We continued north and stopped at Jordan River where we made coffee. There is a campground here, right on the rocky beach.



Gina Hill from Google Images

If we'd known what was coming, we would have overnighted here. But we didn't; we continued on.

The next park, Juan de Fuca Provincial Park, turned out to be walk-in camping.

At Port Renfrew we found the highway, eventually, to Duncan. Our Czech friends had loaned us their Back-roads map book. They'd pointed out a couple of campgrounds that we could have a look at on the way to Duncan. Needless to say, both campgrounds were closed.

The "paved" road was absolutely atrocious. "Patched" is a more descriptive than "paved".

We literally bounced along. At Mesachie Lake, we turned right, heading for the hamlet of Lake Cowichan. The road was getting better. We went looking for Cowichan Lake Provincial Park. At the end of the paved road to the park was a sign saying the park was another 6.5 kms on a gravel road. I don't do gravel so we turned around and headed back to the highway. Just at the STOP sign, there was an almighty dip in the road which I never saw. The air got a little heated.

We pulled over and I went back to Ali. I didn't take a picture, but our small front storage closet, which has never sprung open, ever, did. A mixture of Downy and Windex covered the lino—what a freaking mess. We cleaned it up and I checked on other damage—my chair had obviously tried to fly. Both front casters were bent.

I won't bore you with any more information. Suffice it to say, we got to Duncan, turned south, and headed for Bamberton Provincial Park and set up camp.



My chair was an easy fix—I just had to straighten the bent shafts and re-install the two casters.

But boy, that was some road. I just think of other travellers, like us, with larger rigs and motorhomes, who venture along this road. There really should be warning signs—a lot of damage could be done to an expensive, and fragile RV.

And besides, there really isn't anything to see

along the way; it is merely a way to get from point A to point B. We won't be doing this again anytime soon!

We decided to stay at Bamberton PP for two nights. It is such a lovely provincial park.

Thursday May 10

The first order of business today is coffee in Mill Bay, 5 kms up the road from the park. We sat outside, under cover, while heavens opened wide. Before we finished our coffee, the sun was shining again. We drove to Cobble Hill and had a walk around.

The Kinsol Trestle

We had seen signs to the historic Kinsol Trestle around the area. I had no idea what this was all about; it is a long way from the E&N railway line that runs (but is no longer used) on the eastern side of Vancouver Island from Victoria to Courtenay. We took the Dayliner (Budd car) from Victoria to Courtenay and back many years ago. For a train buff it was fun, but it was an 8-hour+ round trip.

The afternoon was cloudy but I decided to find the trestle.

Here is the Wikipedia entry:

The Kinsol Trestle, also known as the Koksilah River Trestle, is a wooden railway trestle located on Vancouver Island north of Shawnigan Lake in the Canadian Province of British Columbia. It provides a spectacular crossing of the Koksilah River.

Completed in 1920, its dimensions measure 44 m (144 ft) high and 188 m (617 ft) long, making it the largest wooden trestle in the Commonwealth of Nations and one of the highest railway trestles in the world.

It was built as part of a plan to connect Victoria to Nootka Sound, passing through Cowichan Lake and Port Alberni, when forestry had gained some ground on Vancouver Island and a more efficient way to transport the region's huge, old-growth timber was needed. It was not built, as some mistakenly believe, to serve any nearby mines. It was named after the nearby Kinsol Station which, in turn, took its name from a nearby mining venture grandiosely named "King Solomon Mines", a very small mining venture that produced 18 t (19.8 short tons; 17.7 long tons) or 18,000 kg or 39,683 lb of copper and 6,300 g (203 oz) of silver (from 254 t or 280 short tons or 250 long tons of ore—hardly enough to fill 3 rail cars) over the period 1904–1907 .

The line was started in 1911 by the Canadian Northern Pacific Railway (CNoPR) and while it was designed by engineers, it was built by local farmers and loggers, with investment funds from the Canadian Western Lumber Company, which was the largest lumber company in the world at that time. The trestle was never completed by the CNoPR, and the line only reached Youbou before construction was terminated. The CNoPR was taken over by Canadian National Railways in 1918, and its line and the trestle were completed in 1920 as part of the "Galloping Goose" rail line. The last train to cross the Kinsol was in 1979, and the trestle was abandoned 1 year later.

After reading the sign at the parking lot, I walked the trail to the trestle.

Welcome

From coast to coast to coast, The Great Trail connects over 15,000 communities along its 24,000 km route. The Cowichan Valley Trail is an integral part of The Great Trail route on Southern Vancouver Island. Whether ascending the Malahat Connector to enjoy views from Malahat Ridge, traveling across the Historic Kinsol Trestle near Shawnigan Lake, visiting the western-most point of The Great Trail in Lake Cowichan, or rambling along the E&N rail with trail corridor through Chemainus, the Cowichan Valley Trail offers experiences for all to enjoy.

Where you are

Traveling north, enjoy a short one kilometre walk to the Historic Kinsol Trestle or continue to Glenora and beyond. Traveling south, the CN rail corridor follows the western shore of Shawnigan Lake. To visit the lake, in 4.3 km take the side trail to West Shawnigan Lake Park.

North to Kinsol Trestle - 1.2 km
South to McGee Creek Trestle - 5.3 km



Working Railway Trestle



Forgotten Relic



Resurrected Treasure

Quite the impressive structure!

Across the road from the parking lot was this old GMC motorhome. Looking pretty good for being 40+ years old.



When I got back to the park, the sun started shining.



Here's Jen and some wild Dogwood flowers.



Friday May 11

Today we left Bamberton Provincial Park for home. We enjoyed our 2 days there.

On the way north, we stopped in Chemainus for coffee at the Willow St. Café. Across the street is this painting of Billy Thomas. It does not matter from where on the street you look at him, his eyes follow you. Freaky!



We arrived home by mid-afternoon.

Total mileage: 370 miles

Next week we're heading north to the Campbell River area and Strathcona Provincial Park.

See you there.

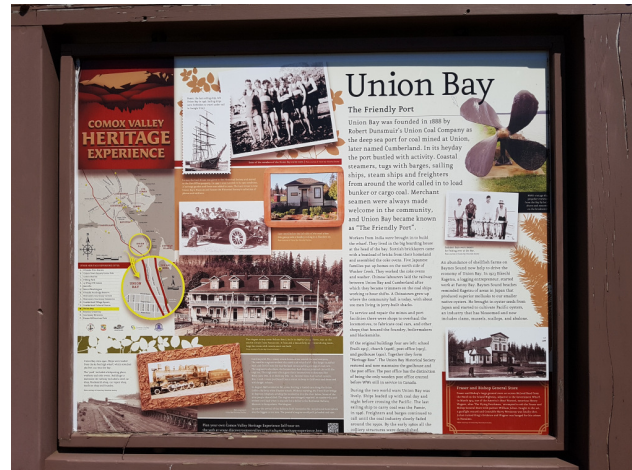


Tuesday May 15

This waiting around for medical appointments is a little tiring.

We decided to head north for a few days and explore Strathcona Provincial Park just west of Campbell River. Of course getting there is half the fun, so up the old coast highway (now Hwy 19A) we went.

About morning coffee time, we arrived at Union Bay, pulled into the parking area, and made coffee. Last fall, we met Howard and Jean who live in Union Bay. They told us that camping by the boat launch was allowed and it's free too!



After coffee, I suggested to Jen that we should drive into Courtenay, do the couple of things we needed to do (an oil change for Alfie for one), and come back to Union Bay and overnight. And we did just that.

I thoroughly enjoyed just relaxing by the rig watching the tide come in. Oh and the other really great thing about this overnight stop? We had strong Shaw wifi. Sunshine, free camping, and connectivity – what else do we need?!

Sometime later, I noticed a small car and trailer backing down the ramp and onto the sea bottom. I couldn't tell immediately what was on the trailer – lots of coloured "boat" shapes for sure. Turns out there were two trimarans, complete with sails. The couple assembled both craft, then paddled out to the edge of the break-water, mucked around for a short time, then came back into shore. After disassembling the two boats, they put them back on the trailer and left. Seemed like a lot of work for such a short time on the water. We figured it must have been a shake-down paddle. Who knows?



After tea, we strolled along to the breakwater. We found this old propeller. It was discovered by some divers. Unfortunately, there was no indication as to what ship it was off or when it was found.

We crossed the highway to look at the Union Bay Post Office and the Provincial Gaol.



To the left of the post office building is the Union Bay Community Church. Behind the church is a lovely memorial garden.



We sauntered down the highway to the "corner" store and look what we found in the cooler! I emailed this picture to our young Czech friends, Jarda & Petra. Small world!

Turning around we headed back to Ali for dinner: grilled cheese for Jen and grilled ham and cheese for me. After dinner, Jen suggested we go across to the Saloon for a brew (Dark Matter) and some dessert: Blueberry Rum Cheesecake.



Back in Ali, we turned out the lights early. See you in the a.m.



Wednesday May 16

The next morning we awoke to a lovely sunrise (well almost). The tide was in and the sun was shining. It's going to be another great day.



Continuing our travels north, we stayed on Hwy 19A. Just south of Campbell River we pulled into a paved parking area and made a cup of coffee. We clambered down over the driftwood and found a reasonably comfortable log to set our duffs on.



Check out this rock – looks like a map of some sort doesn't it?



After coffee we drove to Quinsam Campground just west of Campbell River in Elk Falls Provincial Park. We stayed here last fall. We lucked out and pulled into site #6 on the Quinsam River. We had a short stroll to the river itself, but the sound of the running water was very therapeutic.



Tomorrow we're heading for Strathcona Provincial Park. There are a number of waterfalls in the park that are easy to get to. Hopefully we can see one or two of them without tiring Jen out too much. See you then.

Thursday May 17

Another sunny morning; time for breakfast down by the river.

After breakfast, we drove west towards Strathcona Provincial Park. We passed the Strathcona Park Lodge and stopped at a roadside picnic site overlooking Upper Campbell Lake for morning coffee.




Province of British Columbia
Strathcona Provincial Park
To commemorate 75 years of
British Columbia Provincial Parks
that began when this park was
established March 1, 1911
Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing
August 4, 1986
Honourable Jack J. Kempf, Minister

Continuing our drive we pulled into the parking area at Lupin Falls, walked across the highway, and up the short trail to the falls. Spectacular!



We turned around and headed for waterfall #2: Lady Falls 22kms this side of Gold River. On the way there we drove through Buttle Lake campground (just in case we want to come back here another day to camp). Check out the white flowering dogwood, BC's provincial flower (Zoom in to see all the white dogwoods).



We reached Lady Falls and were disappointed to find that this waterfall was a 40 minute round trip – far too long for Jen. But as we were so close to Gold River, we decided to go check the place out; many years ago Jen did a couple of seminars for the mill in Gold River so it has been a while.

Well not much is happening in Gold River these days. We did a circuit of the highlights and headed back towards Campbell River.

On the way back we stopped to look at Kings Peak. We were surprised at its elevation. I mean, we know there are mountains down the spine of Vancouver Island but we really had no idea they were as high as this (6,711').



We stopped for tea at the picnic site overlooking Upper Campbell Lake.

Back at camp, we settled in for the evening. See you in the morning.



Friday May 18

Another sunny day; a good day for a drive home. We pulled out of the campground just after 9 a.m.

We retraced our route south on Hwy 19A. We stopped in Courtenay to visit Shipwrecked Bead shop and Hot Chocolates – Jen needed a few items. Then it was time for coffee at Mudsharks where we enjoyed the patio.

Continuing south, we stopped at the waterfront at Qualicum Beach and had lunch.

By 2 p.m. we were back in Errington after a fun 4-day trip. Total mileage: 324 miles.

Hopefully sometime in early June, we will be on the lower mainland, heading for the interior of BC and AB.

See you then.