



Fall 2008

The Journal of Canadian Wilderness Canoeing

Outfit 134



Cross Words

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Cut Down in Algonquin

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You can't take this picture anymore. This past summer a vandal cut down this bronze cross marking the death site of canoeing legend Blair Fraser on Rollway Rapids on the Petawawa River in Ontario's Algonquin Park. This photo was taken in June of 1993 on a sun-soaked afternoon along the scenic river. The story of the cross' disappearance broke on the Web and we'll take you back 40 years to when the cross was commemorated - and remind a new generation just who Blair Fraser was.

Michael Peake

Fall Packet



The latest expansion of Quebec's protected areas, where mining, forestry and hydroelectric developments are banned, means the end of Hydro-Québec's plans to dam the George River.

Under a 2002 agreement between authorities in Nunavik, including the Kativik regional government and the Quebec government, the damming of the George to generate 3,100 megawatts of electricity had been proposed.

The George is an important source of fish - salmon and Arctic char - and its valley is home to the 385,000-head George River caribou herd. The 400-mile-long George flows from a point 1600 feet high, dropping to sea level when it reaches Ungava Bay.

A zone covering more than 3500 square miles in the George River Valley and adjoining Pyramid Mountains is the centrepiece of an additional 6,800 square miles, or 1.07 per cent of the province, designated yesterday as protected areas, bringing to 7.07 per cent Quebec's total. Monts Pyramides would be a provincial park. The George River Valley also includes the Indian House Lake archeological site, which is a point of convergence for the Innus, Naskapis and Inuit living in the region.

Plans call for reaching Quebec's eight-per cent protected areas goal by the end of 2008. Premier Jean Charest said he was making the announcement to send a "strong signal" that his vision to develop Quebec's north will stress sustainable development.

But Anne-Marie Saint-Cerny, director of the Rivers Foundation, doesn't buy Charest's stated commitment to sustainable development, saying his Northern Plan is focused on the extraction of natural resources.

"The George was the last untouched river in Quebec," Saint-Cerny said. "We are surprised." She said she suspects the real reason the George will be protected from development is that it was too expensive to develop, noting that electricity from the Rupert River farther south, which

Hydro-Québec is developing, will cost about 11 cents a kilowatt-hour. In its 2004-08 strategic plan, Hydro-Québec Production said the George River project "does not seem environmentally feasible" and "its cost is also high."

Charest also announced that the 1400 sq. mile Leaf River estuary, with its 55-foot-high tides on Ungava Bay would be protected as a park.
- from *The Montreal Gazette*

The Canadian Canoe Museum held its first Beaver Club Gala fundraising dinner at Peterborough's Trent University on Oct 17. In keeping with the historical traditions of the old club which was a yearly gathering of North West Company overwintering partners, most of the crowd was dressed in period costume.

CCM Executive Director James Raffan and wife Gail, were appropriately attired as Governor and Lady Simpson - the subject of Raffan's latest literary effort. The Hide-Away Canoe Club was well represented by our own Governor - Michael Peake - along with Quartermaster David Peake, in full tump harness, Canon Peter Scott and Piscine Director Peter Brewster clad in buckskin, Director of Golf & Tennis, Tom Stevens, in a military uniform and Guide Andrew Macdonald in a pious canvas number. We were graced at our table by the delightful author Gwyneth Hoyle who so lately brought us *The Northern Horizons of Guy Blanchet*.

It was a delightful even-

ing and is sure to become an annual event. A featured drop-in was H.R.H. The Duke of York wearing a boring business suit. He mingled with guests which included Kirk Wipper and sat and chatted at the table of Al Pace and Lin Ward, noted potter and northern guides. One of the members of the Duke's entourage mistook our nattily attired Tom Stevens for their pilot!



HRH and the Canoe Museum founder, Kirk Wipper (above) and when two Governors collide - James Raffan and Michael Peake. Hint: only one is a real Gov!



Editor's Notebook

The illegal removal of the 40-year-old bronze cross honouring the 1968 death of Blair Fraser on the Petawawa River (see Pages 4 & 5) was a callous act by an obviously skilled canoeist who views himself as some kind of liberating vigilante.

But it was the ignorant act of an ignorant person. Equally distressing were some of the online comments that heralded the desecration. The Internet is still in its relative infancy, as apparently, are many of its users. I occasionally visit discussion boards such as the *myccr.com* forums but am often disappointed in the level of discussion. It only takes a couple of idiots to mess it up. And there are always more than a couple around.

In my obviously angry reply to some of the comments on Fraser and his legacy - one of the nicknamed users flipped me what to him must be his ultimate insult by saying, "Sorry, Dad!"

Funny, and true. I am a father and I am also something of a steward to the memory of men like Blair Fraser and Eric Morse. And some of our younger folk need a good spanking or at least an earnest ear twist when they lessen other people's legacies.

To that Memorial Monkey Wrencher who apparently views any wilderness memorial with disgust - wake up and smell the history. There can be appropriate reminders of those who passed before us. Not all are created equal and, yes, they should be approved and not just plunked there. Yet, in his letter to Algonquin Park admitting the vandalism, he noted that he had placed his own memento but in an inconspicuous and out of the way part of the park.

So, in other words, he did the same thing but by *his* rules. Everywhere was remote at one time. And that's a point he clearly doesn't get. And likely never will. But I know one thing - there will be no memorial anywhere for the likes of him.

Michael Peake.



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Canoesworthy

A few scraps of copper and a handful of nails are the tantalizing first fruits of the latest search for the ships of the doomed Franklin expedition. While heavy Arctic winds have hindered crews on the waters where the 19th-century British ships are thought to have sunk, searchers combing the shores of four nearby islands have turned up a few relics that may have come from the Erebus or the Terror, two of the world's most sought-after marine archeological prizes.

"We found additional small fragments of copper and what appear to be nails and other materials," Doug Stenton, Nunavut's chief archeologist and a member of the team that recently began the search, said yesterday. The findings suggest European presence in the area, and the area where they were found will be searched again, he said.

Sir John Franklin sailed from Britain with the two ships in an 1845 expedition seeking the fabled Northwest Passage to the Pacific Ocean. He vanished along with about 130 crewmen. Although some artifacts and the bodies of some crew members have been retrieved, the fate and whereabouts of Franklin's ships have remained an Arctic mystery, inspiring storytellers for generations.

The latest effort, led by Parks Canada, is a three-year plan to scour the seabed near O'Reilly Island, one of a number of low, gravelly pieces of land off the central Arctic coast. Inuit oral tradition, gathered by team member Louie Kamookak of Gjoa Haven, Nunavut, suggests a ship was stranded in the area.

Inuit tradition indicates that a vessel in this vicinity was observed on fresh ice one spring when the hunters came for their seasonal hunting and the area develops fresh ice every year. That means the ship wouldn't have been crushed by the movement of multiyear ice. As well, oral tradition suggests the vessel wasn't torn apart by Inuit salvaging the valuable wood. They do expect to find a reasonably well-protected, well-preserved hull.

Franklin's ships would be easy to identify because of the metal cladding on their hulls and the steam locomotive engines that were used for propulsion. However, while the nearby islands have been scoured on foot and by helicopter, poor weather has hampered the team's ability to search the waters. Winds of up to 55 kilometres an hour have made the seas both unsafe and too rough for sonar to yield usable data.

The exact location is being kept secret to deter private searchers from finding the ship. Very rich people in the world are said to be very interested in coming here and finding this vessel. Some are in the film business and the government wants to ensure that the ships are protected as vessels of national historic importance for Canada."

Although the Franklin expedition was conducted by the British Navy, Britain has signed an agreement with Canada saying the wrecks of the Erebus and Terror belong to Canada - if they're ever found.

Standing at the edge of his canoe over the frigid waters of the Arctic, Noah Annahatak raised his arm and thrust his harpoon into a 48-ton beast twice the length of his boat. The Inuit hunter's strike helped land the first bowhead whale caught off the shores of northern Quebec in more than a century, fusing a long-sought link to his people's past.

"At the beginning I was really nervous because it's a huge animal," said Annahatak, 42, an expert hunter from Kangiqsujuaq, a seaside village in the province's Nunavik region. "He was right underneath us and I (thought), 'Holy cow, how are we going to kill it?'"

From the launch of Annahatak's first grenade-tipped harpoon, the hunters killed the whale with shotguns and traditional weapons in 30 minutes. It then took about seven hours for the boats to tow the 15-metre behemoth 20 kilometres from the Hudson Strait to a beach outside town.

Annahatak said news of the catch brought many people in the town of 500 to tears. The

► CANOESWORTHY continues on Page 11

Wilderness Memorials - A Cross to Bear?

By MICHAEL PEAKE

Sometime this past summer, on the Petawawa River in Algonquin Park a saw blade sliced through the base of a bronze cross erected 40 summers ago to commemorate the life of a man who sought to bring an understanding of Canada's north to all Canadians.

Blair Fraser, a leading Canadian journalist, whose 1967 book *The Search for Identity* signalled Canada's north as a vital part of our future, died while paddling in Rollway Rapids with partner Elliot Rodger on May 12, 1968. They had missed the takeout, One legend has it that Blair was immersed in a deep discussion on the then-intense Vietnam war with retired Major-General Rodger, of the Canadian Forces.

Their canoe dumped and Blair hit his head on a rock and drowned. That September, in a quiet, respectful ceremony, Blair's fellow Voyageurs erected the cross at a simple gathering at the water's edge - with full permission of park officials. The cross sat at the put-in spot at high water and was seen by countless canoeists, many of whom knew its significance.

In August, the superintendent of Algonquin Park received an anonymous communication which read:

"The rollway cross was thoughtfully removed, as was its spawn: a plaque screwed to a tree in the midst of a falls campsite, and a large freshly carved marble plaque from the "Gourmet Paddlers" on behalf of one of their kin, prominently urethane foamed to a rock at a popular scenic location and adorned with a toy plastic canoe.

"Make peace with your own mortality, park your sense of self importance and recognize immortality graffiti where you see it. Meanwhile, a small, frail, anonymous memento hides in a special spot requiring days of tripping and hiking to reach, on behalf of someone's dying wish. You can appreciate the difference,

"There is more traffic in the park these days. Why not direct your attention to the Industrial Minerals Graphite Mine coming to life just north of Travers?"

Passing Through.

While I find the destruction of the Fraser cross deplorable, this self-appointed *Immortality Avenger* raises some very interesting issues.

The problem with his logic is where do you



Michael Peake

Geoffrey Peake scouts lower Rollway Rapids in June 1993 next to the now-removed Blair Fraser cross.

stop? It's possible to surmise than perhaps some native elders were appalled hundreds of years ago when spirited, artistic youth painted scenes of animals in red ochre on the nearby rock faces. It kind of depends who is doing it and when it is done. This is not a black and white issue. And it's one where coming first counts, such as pictographs. And Blair Fraser's cross.

Of course we can't allowed unfettered adornment of our wilderness to be the rule.

Nor can we allow wanton vigilantes to be the sole arbiters of appropriateness. *Passing Through* certainly has a point but to regard all such memorials in the same way is both wrong and short-sighted.

The subject was first brought to my attention on the Canadian Canoe Routes web page now owned by the Wilderness Canoe Association of Toronto. There were some thoughtless, ignorant comments about the sabotage which,



to me, meant such memorials are needed if only to educate the next generation about what preceded them. Many had idea about who Blair Fraser was. But few would know if there were no reminders of him.

As all this was taking place, another memorial to a famous paddler was being planned and creating some controversy.

The WCA figures into this one as well. One of their leading figures, Herb Pohl, whose passing in Lake Superior was noted in *Che-Mun* Outfit 125 had has a memorial plaque proposed to honour his many feats.

The proponent, another notable paddler, George Luste of Toronto, wants to put a plaque into a rock face along the lower end of the Dog River which flows into Lake Superior near Michipicoten.

Conor Mihell, a First Nation member who lives on Superior is opposed to the idea. He says that the area is now protected by Nimoosh Waterway Park which, he says, would prohibit any such memorial.

In an email he wrote, "I think it would be far better to celebrate Mr. Pohl's life in a place that's accessible by the non-paddling public—those who should be informed about the importance of conservation. Defacing a beautiful rock face (and one that's the site of aboriginal pictographs) in a wilderness area is only going to piss off those who are already converted. I really like the Bill Mason monument in the parking lot at Old Woman Bay It shares his love of wilderness with a much wider audience without altering the beautiful coastline he sought to protect."

He added, "What's more, erecting a monument at the Dog is only going to further increase tensions between locals and paddlers (I consider myself both; I've lived in northern Ontario my entire life). I see Mr. Luste's plans to bolt a plaque on a rock face as extremely hypocritical and near-sighted. The Dog has been long used by local fisherman. Somehow I can't see a plaque celebrating the life of a paddler lasting more than a few weeks in that location."

George Luste, also responding by email wrote, "In canoeing the same Superior shoreline this summer, that was Herb's last trip at age 76, I did feel that a wilderness setting for a plaque dedicated to the wilderness spirit that Herb embodied was most appropriate, rather than in a more public setting or in a museum

or something like that. I do really see it more as a memorial to the wilderness ethos that Herb embodied and not to him personally. At this point nothing is finalized and nothing would be done before next summer in any case."

Both points of view have merit. But the reality in the 21st century many more opinions come into play. I could only wonder what Herb might have thought. I am guessing he would not want anyone to be bothered by a memorial to his memory. Not that I think he would ever have considered such a thing. It is only natural to want to pay homage to someone you care about. But this modern age has seen public displays abound with numerous roadside memorials to traffic and shooting victims. Are they inappropriate - probably not. But for how long. Not months, not years. In many ways the human experience is all about moving on.



Blair Fraser, in his famous two pants shot at the mouth of the Camsell River at Great Bear Lake in 1959. One pair of pants was partially burned from the campfire so he wore both on the chilly trip. In behind is Elliot Rodger, his paddling partner on that fateful Petawawa River run nine years later.

As a devotee of Blair Fraser and his group of Voyageurs, it has been my mission to keep their deeds and memories alive. We they saints of divine paddling? No. They were men who savoured their history and the wilderness that was deemed a valuable resource only in their lifetimes. To their preceding generation, wilderness was an enemy, a barely surmountable wall of spruce, pine and rock, something to be conquered and tamed in order to make a better life. We sure did that.

In my Voyageur files, I have many of their letters including the invoice for the 12 by 30 inch bronze cross they had made for Blair. Shipped on Sept. 20, 1968 from Jas. H. Matthews & Co. in Milton, ON (phone number - Triangle 8-2358) it cost, with taxes, \$84.67.

I also have a copy of a letter from one of the most famous members of the Voyageurs, Sig Olson to fellow member Tony Lovink, the Netherlands Ambassador to Canada. "This is a hard letter to write," he wrote, "for I feel my place is with you on Sunday when you go to the Petawawa to dedicate Blair's Cross."

Sig was unable to make it and he wanted Tony to know of the letter he's written to Blair's widow Jean, so that he might use it in the dedication ceremony. The letter to her reads;

"When you gather on the Petawawa a week from Sunday, I will be thinking of you and of Blair. To tell you how I feel is difficult for Blair (was) much to us all, his gay and indomitable spirit, and his love of the lakes and the rivers of the Canadian Shield. When he left us he took something away that can never be replaced. We will go on without him, but it will never be quite the same again. The first to go of our group makes us more conscious of the strong bonds of love and loyalty that have been welded though our experiences together. Though he can no longer be with us, we know his spirit will be at every campfire, and when we run the rapids of the future, or fight the big waves on the lakes or struggle across the portages, he will be there too.

"So Jean, when Sunday comes and your heart is heavy, try and remember when his cross is erected above Rollway Rapids some part of all of us is left there with him and know that we are all proud we knew him as we did and better for having shared with him and know what "His Search for Identity" really meant."

That's why you don't desecrate a memorial. It stands for ideas and people about which you have little real understanding.



Feel Superior? - Go Pukaskwa Yourself!

Story and Photos by MICHAEL PEAKE

It was a return to a special place. An inspirational spot that has stirred the paddling passions of Bill Mason, ourselves and countless others. Lake Superior has a vast coastline and there is no sweeter spot on this inland sea than the northeastern section of this massive lake that makes up Pukaskwa National Park. And that's pronounced Puk-a-saw by the way.

We'd passed by these ancient shores of wave-formed granite in the infancy of the Hide-Away Canoe Club some 25 years ago. Superior was our more southerly training ground for the Arctic lakes and rivers far to the north. For it provided the cold immensity that beckoned us farther north—but not before we'd tested it in a more accessible location.

In the early 1980s, inspired by Mason's *Song of the Paddle* film and later *Waterwalker* and other mentions of the area, we paddled the Pukaskwa River and later the north coast from Thunder Bay to Michipicoten. We would also do the Dog (University) River as well. This past summer, the next generation of the HACC ventured into the rooms of Lightfoot's 'ice water mansion' accompanied by we older folks.

Geoffrey Peake, the HACC *Chief Guide*, brought his whole family. They are the peripatetic Peakes; living as teachers in China and seeing much of the world in the past few years. Wife Leslie and daughter Megin, 16, and son Brendan, 14, accompanied me and my son Tom, 12, along with brother Sean's youngest, Ginny, 13.

The plan was to start at the headquarters of the Park just south of Marathon. Geoffrey and I had done an article on the newly created Pukaskwa in

a 1985 *Canadian Geographic* magazine piece and had stopped in along our coastal trip to do some research in their library. We are fortunate to have been left such a generous hunk of raw wilderness. But it would take many more years before the park was officially opened after having been designated in 1978. The park was inaugurated in May 1984. It is a large chunk of raw wilderness comprising 464,000 acres. It is the coastline that turned back the Trans-Canada Highway as the road arches well around this now protected area bending from Wawa to the rail line at White River before joining the lake again at Marathon. It, along with the treacherous Rogers Pass section in B.C., were the last two segments of the Trans-Canada highway to open in 1960.

The plan was to be dropped off 50 miles down the coast in a water taxi from Keith McCuaig, whose family has been working the lake for generations. They had a new and bigger boat on order which was to be there a week before we were. But in my trip planning, I kind of felt it would not arrive in time. Call it a hunch or a memento from many a northern trip which promised a boat.

We drove from Toronto with three canoes in two cars. Geoff's rental groaning under the bulk of our 20-foot Old Town Tripper which was several feet longer than the car at both ends. I was carrying the 17-foot Tripper and a resurrected 17-foot cedar/canvas Tremblay canoe which had been stored for 10 years.

Sure enough the water taxi never did arrive for us and Keith was apologetic and no doubt more frustrated than us. So we would now simply paddle



down the coast for a few days and paddle back. With four kids we knew we weren't out to beat any speed records and this was to be a leisurely trip.

Once we got onto Superior's waters, it was such a trip. However, dealing with the less navigable park bureaucracy was more of an "adventure".

As it turned out, our arrival on Saturday July 28 was the 25th anniversary of the park's opening. That was cool. Or so we thought. It meant things were busier than usual and after we checked in and took in some sights, we looked for a spot we could launch the canoes.

First we had to deal with the fees. As a family unit of seven, we could camp in their traditional style park campground for \$25 per night, which seemed reasonable since there were park services etc at hand. However, if we wanted to head out onto the lake, where there are NO services, NO campsites, NO facilities, it was \$68 per night. This didn't seem very fair and it was the first of a triple whammy that struck us as we enter Park World.

After looking for a spot to slip in the canoes and load them up we were guided by an officious paramedic who wound us through the parking lot and a long walk through the woods to the nearby lake. I had opined that there must be some closer spots to load. "Nope, that's it!" was his curt reply and he walked off. Geoff and I jumped in the car and found a perfect put-in right beside the park work office and we just used that.

But what really struck me, and was confirmed to me by a former park employee is this; they really do not want anyone using the park. I realize it sounds ridiculous but it would appear to be true. They are managers of a natural resource and people only get in the way. How else do you explain the pricing? How else do you explain that their vaunted coastal hiking trail is in deplorable shape? How else do you explain that they don't even let the water taxi enter the park cove to pick up people?

All this negativity pushed us into our boats despite the ocean surf noise emanating from hidden big lake. It was too rough to go far as a long point sticks out just south of the Hattie Cove headquarters, so we drifted around and then searched for a campsite and managed to find something on a lumpy island. As we landed a heavy rain began just as the kids snapped open the tents for pitching. Not the best start but with veteran savvy, we persevered.

The next morning was still lumpy as we made our way round the point. It was rolling five footers but with little wind and our years of experience, we

overcame the natural fears of seeing our children in front of us as we bobbed along this inland sea. We ventured deep into the next bay and the wind picked up and went up the small river at its mouth. We then stumbled on a great campsite that was occupied by a pair of hikers. We pushed on a bit later and Geoff's keen eye found an ideal site on an otherwise rocky island with a protected cove. It was a great spot with sheltered cooking and (for the kids) swimming area with a fine view above.

The next morning was Pukaskwa perfection. A flat calm and clear sunny day, ideal coastal paddling conditions and we made the most of it. We even put the two boys in the boat together to see how they did. Too



Tom Peake paddles bow for his Dad and opposite, Ginny Peake at a great lunch stop in Pukaskwa National Park.

much meandering and goofing around ended that experiment fairly soon. We drifted and dawdled down to Oiseau Bay, a huge sandy semicircle into which we tucked into it most secluded southerly corner. The water here was much warmer and the miles of beach inviting. We could hear the winds come up in the morning - strong southerlies but we were totally protected. We packed up and had a look but there was no way to head out so we paddled around for a while and finally made camp about a mile from where we'd been the night before. Geoff

rigged a super rain tarp and we had a nice tea-in-the-tent event. We headed back north again with still bumpy south westerly winds but quite doable and visited Cave Harbour and we in turn visited by a couple of otters who hissed around the boats.

We were again camped right out in the open on a rock slope on the water where the sound played tricks. Lying in the tent the next morning, the roar of the surf told us travel would be slow. But looking outside saw a gently bobbing lake that was nearly flat. It was the sound of the slow surf on the rocks that sound much rougher than it really was. We made it back to that second night's campsite with its gorgeous western views and did a bunch of portrait shots at the lake's edge. I had brought a flash and radio receiver that made for some truly Superior lighting.

The next morning we paddled back to Hattie Cove and tried our best to hurry out of there fast. We brought our garbage back only to find that it had to be streamed into several recyclable categories before being acceptable. This is easy to do in a campground, but much tougher on the trail. It was a wonderful week, the kids all got along great, much better than in the city. We have all seen this before, how the wilderness soothes today's overstimulated kids but we are always constantly amazed by it. Likewise, Pukaskwa itself, despite its bureaucratic problems, proves that nothing can dull its beauty or eternal call.



Cutting the George and Philip Down to Size

By PHILIP SCHUBERT

Readers may remember my *Che-Mun* article [Outfit 127] on my first attempt on the George River in 2006 which ended after my 14-foot solo canoe and I got “eaten”, as *Editor* Michael Peake put it, by the first big-time rapid one comes to on the upper George.

Some people never learn and besides, the unfinished portions of the George were standing between me and completing the retracing of the 1903 and 1905 Hubbard and Wallace trips.

So I had another go at it this summer, solo, same canoe and all plastic barrels. I realistically expected that I would dump from time to time, in spite of my best intentions, and replaced my pack from 2006 with a third barrel. No more sodden pack and the extra floatation of a canoe filled with barrels is helpful when hanging onto the back of an upside down canoe going through standing waves down a rapid!

In the interests of authenticity and history, I decided to retrace Lakes Ossokmanuan, Lobstick and Michikamau before heading down the George.

In this way, fellow Labrador aficionado, Robert Irwin, could simply drop me off a few miles before Churchill Falls where Trans-Labrador Highway 500 crosses the Ossokmanuan Reservoir, as he drove to North West River and the start of his own trip up the Susan River. Researching maps and using Google Earth, I had discovered that this latter reservoir feeds the Smallwood Reservoir about 40 kilometres to the north which in turn feeds the Churchill Falls hydro station and its 3,600 megawatts. I also discovered to my relief that

there are enough strategically placed islands so that one can paddle the 240 kilometres north to Lake Michikamats and the start of the George River without being farther away from land at any point than 1 kilometre.



Of course, in crossing between islands, I was occasionally exposed to huge sweeps of water extending out on both sides for dozens of kilometres, but happily never was threatened by waves exceeding the capabilities of my 14-foot canoe and its spray deck. The rule for me, and anyone doing this trip: If the weather does not look stable don't attempt the crossing! It would be a horrible way to die.

The reality is that no one can see Lakes Ossokmanuan, Lobstick and Michikamau anymore, but I knew I was paddling a few metres above where they used to be and was seeing the same hills as one would have seen in the past.

After 10 days, I had crossed the 240 kilometres of the two reservoirs, struggled over the slippery boulders between Lake Michikamats and Lake Adelaide, and finally made

it to the starting point of my trip down the George in 2006.

At Lake Resolution I found myself in the middle of a caribou migration, the animals swimming across the lake and scaling Point Montagnais, an important indigenous encampment where both Mina Hubbard and Dillon Wallace stopped in 1905.

The water was quite a bit higher on the upper George than it had been in 2006 and I kept coming to rapids I had never seen before. I came once again to the rapid that nearly cost



Wallace and Easton their lives in 1905. It had looked runnable on the west side in 2006 and rather than drag my canoe over the rock filled channel that I did in 2006, simply ran it. There was a nasty little eddy that turned me into the bank with huge standing waves 20 feet behind me, but I got off scott-free.

The waters leading to the Three Gorges were totally different from 2006 and it was physically impossible to access the portage route to the east of the most easterly channel as I had done in 2006. I thus portaged the west side of the most easterly channel which turned out to be an easier route, coming out beside the old cabin, which has been totally destroyed on the inside by bears.

From there I came to my monster rapid and nemesis from 2006. As in 2006, I ran the first kilometre down a channel to the east and then lined back to the main channel. I had intended to portage from there in order to not tempt fate again, but many feet of alders made this look extremely hard. So I finally ran it, looking for sneak routes closer to the edge of the rapid. I had to dodge a few big boulders and piled on through a few standing waves which my spray deck handled nicely, and to my great relief found myself safe and sound at the bottom of the rapid.

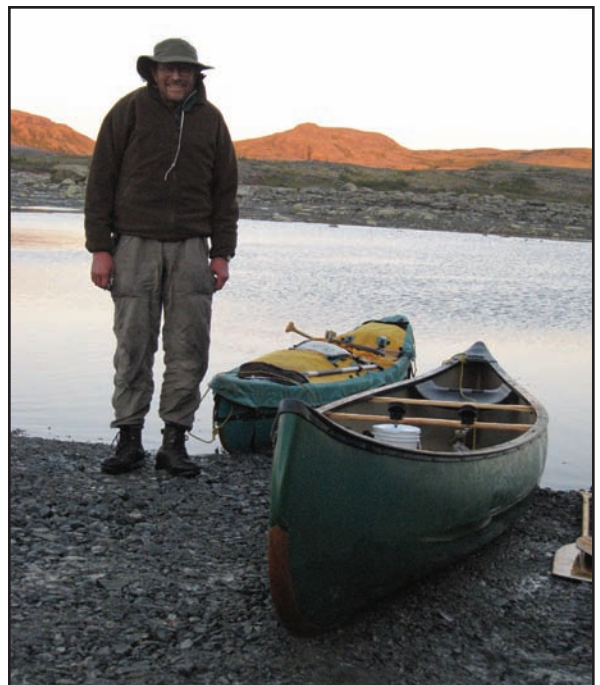
Days later as I came around Wedge Point, there before me like a mirage were white tepees on a ridge. I could see smoke. Serge Ashini and his helpers, busy setting up their traditional Innu camp for visitors, had spotted me as I rounded Wedge Point just before I was battered by the wind and waves of a thunderstorm. Storm over, I paddled across the bay. Serge warmly welcomed me and invited me to join them for supper and to stay the night. I must have looked pretty bedraggled, after many unshaven days and after having been doused twice that day by thunderstorms.

That evening of fellowship is something I will never forget. I then slept for the night in a tepee, joined them for breakfast and then was taken on a visit of ancient tepee rings nearby. At the end of the visit they held a tobacco ceremony to try and secure good luck for me for the remainder of my trip. I resumed my trip with a gift of a bag of rolled oats, as my stock was running low, and a container of lard, as I was realizing that in spite of quantities of precooked bacon and bacon bits with me, I was still not getting enough fat in my diet. I had a feeling for the rest of the trip that there was a force looking out for me. You can see the website for Aventures Ashini at <http://www.ashini.com/en/index.php>.

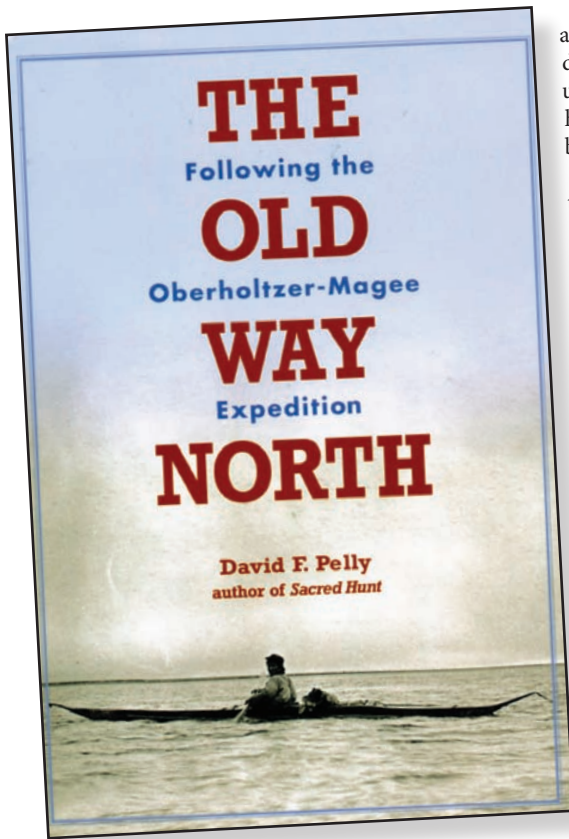
There were other adventures, including a wild last day fighting against a head wind and tidal currents in finally making it Kangiqsualujjuaq on the edge of Ungava Bay, but on day 37, I finally completed the 800-kilometre trip.

Those interested in more details on my trip should go to: <http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF&msa=0&msid=113893678279957440603.00044d767b8b9ebe9a581>

Choose the option "Satellite" and click on the + sign in order to see where I was each evening.



The intrepid Mr. Schubert who succeeded on his second try down the massive George River solo after starting in Quebec - a trip of some 500 miles. Shown before and after his rugged journey where he dropped 28 pounds and found himself emaciated but surprisingly strong.



The Old Way North
Following the Oberholtzer-Magee
Expedition
By David Pelly
Borealis Publishing, 196 pp. 2008
\$27.95 ISBN: 0-87351-616-8

Authors continue to mine that great and fertile period of exploration before the start of the First World War. And David Pelly is the latest to add his deft touch to another of the many great trips from 1912, which *Che-Mun* dubbed some time ago - The Last Great Year of Northern Travel.

Ernest Oberholtzer was born in 1884 in Iowa and later attended Harvard and moved to Minnesota, the far north of his native USA, where he was a major player in founding of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. He was captivated by the far north and was inspired by the travels of J.B. Tyrrell and especially of J.B.'s meetings with traditionally-living Inuit in the late 19th century. This fascinated Ober, as he came to be known.

In 1912, travelling with Billy Magee, 50,

a Cree guide from the Rainy Lake district in northwestern Ontario, he undertook an epic journey. The pair had met three years earlier when Ober began his forays into Canada.

Their 1912 trip was to head into the country only Tyrrell had surveyed was unknown to most Canadians. It was a bold plan and armed with a sketchy map and loads of determination they set forth from Rainy River to Churchill.

David Pelly's meticulous research and easy style of prose takes us along on that journey thanks to the journals of Ober and numerous other sources to help connect the numerous historical dots.

Ober was determined to go to Cumberland House, the first inland HBC post - founded by one of his exploration heroes, Samuel Hearne in 1774. And so began a journey through history. Pelly follows along using Ober's journal entries and then peels off to add a wealth of accompanying historical info which adds great context to the tale.

Their route took them north to the Churchill River and continued north into Reindeer Lake and then all the way up to the edge of the barrens - Nueltin Lake which was the later known as Sleeping Island Lake by P.G. Downes, another Harvard-educated American entranced by Canada's north. The journey continued down the Thlewiaza into Hudson Bay where they had an extremely fortuitous encounter with an kayak-paddling Inuk called Bite - whose picture graces the cover of the book.

Pelly, an expert on Inuit culture, is able to really put some meaning into this incredible, almost miraculous meeting. Ober and Billy were introduced into a very different culture in a spot where food was plentiful and more importantly - they were in expert hands late into their trip in very unfamiliar surroundings and then guided south to Churchill and the link back south.

The book also includes chapters on the Dene and trappers of the area.

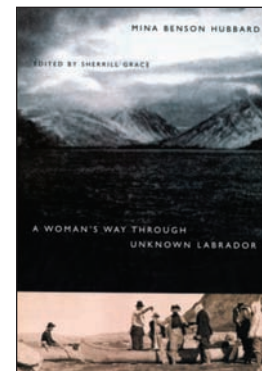
This is a well written, extremely interesting and multi-layered book from an era that was loaded with fascinating people with interesting travels. But it takes a well informed type of researcher to dig into the right places and knowing what to look for and what it means.

A Woman's Way Through
Unknown Labrador

By Mina Benson Hubbard
Edited by Sherill Grace
McGill-Queen's University Press,

The Hubbard and Wallace saga refuses to die - and why would it? It's a very compelling story. We missed this book when it first came out in hardcover in 2004 but were glad to get the re-issue.

For many years it was quite hard to find a copy of Mina Hubbard's version of the



Hubbard-Wallace saga. And while this is a full reprinting of her tale it also adds a hefty section of biography on one of the most intriguing women of the north.

UBC professor Sherill Grace has written a 60 page Introduction

setting up the life and current times of Mina Hubbard, from rural southern Ontario who ended up married to a New York outdoors writer and defied the convention of her day.

The book features a very nice large scale version of Mina's map folded into the back cover and a full array of good quality photographs which despite the non-glossy paper come up quite well.

What is most interesting in the biography notes is what propelled Mina Hubbard to undertake a most unconventional venture. We know she objected to the Dillon Wallace manuscript of his book *The Lure of the Labrador Wild*, but there was also constant media speculation and post-mortems including a lengthy and harsh assessment of Hubbard by Caspar Whitney, editor of *Outing* magazine for whom her husband Leonidas Hubbard worked.

As she wrote in a later story, the inspiration came to her quite suddenly while sitting at a window in January 1905 wishing that she had been born a man and could undertake such a trip. When suddenly "something thrilled through my whole being . . . but it came like a sudden illumination of darkness, and it meant "Go to Labrador."

Out of such moments, legends are born.



CANOESWORTHY *continued*

rush of emotion also reached across Nunavik, where whale meat will be distributed to its 14 villages.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans issued Nunavik a hunting permit last month for one bowhead to be caught this year, with Kangiqsujaq being chosen. Government scientists suggest bowheads in the eastern Arctic are as numerous as they were during the days of commercial whaling.

Twenty-one visitors were evacuated from Auyuittuq National Park this summer due to fears of a flash flood in the area around Crater Lake. On the morning of July 28, a group of visitors returning from their trip came into the park office with photos showing severe erosion of the moraine around the lake, said park manager Delia Berrouard. After seeing the instability of the basin walls, Parks Canada staff became concerned that they might give way, causing the valley to flood.

Given the potential danger to tourists, park personnel began arranging for the evacuation of the visitors in the area at risk. Announcements were made at the park's emergency shelters every 30 minutes to alert tourists of the plans for evacuation. A notice of closure for the region of the park from Windy Lake to north of Crater Lake was issued as well. The Coast Guard and the RCMP assisted park staff with the evacuation. Monday afternoon a helicopter from Qikiqtarjuaq transported 14 visitors out of the area. Three tourists were removed by boat. By Tuesday afternoon, all 17 visitors had been evacuated, along with an additional four visitors hiking around Summit Lake. Most were evacuated by late Monday evening.

Experts working with Parks Canada say flooding and erosion at Nunavut's Auyuittuq National Park are related to a flood that hit the nearby hamlet of Pangnirtung in June. Parks Canada officials say they have never seen anything like this before. "Auyuittuq means 'land that never melts,' but of course now it's melting," Pauline Scott, a spokeswoman for Parks Canada's Nunavut field unit, told media.

Polar bears and glaciers may be icons of northern climate change but they are also swelling the sails of Nunavut's tourism industry. A record number of cruise ships cruised Canada's Eastern Arctic this summer and some remote communities were averaging of two a week.

Industry and government officials say there's still plenty of room for growth, but they're also cautious of overwhelming tiny hamlets with populations barely larger than those in the ships moored off their shores.

A total of 26 cruises have been scheduled for this season - four more than last year, said Mark Young of the territorial government. That's more than 3,000 visitors sailing the Arctic and dropping in on communities from Grise Fiord to Kimmirut. Those figures are tiny compared to cruise boats in Greenland, which expects 55,000 tourists this season in ships that can accommodate more than 2,000 passengers.

Wildlife and majestic scenery are probably the main draws for most Arctic tourists, but cultural exchange is also part of it. Cruise directors get in touch with local officials when they want to visit a community and residents often pull together a program to entertain visitors. Tourists do drop about \$250,000 into Nunavut's cash-starved economy. Most goes to carvers and other artists, but performers and tour guides are also paid.

The Canadian Forces 40-year-old Twin Otter planes will keep flying in the Arctic until at least 2015 and could continue operating beyond that date if the military still does not have a replacement aircraft.

The scheme to replace the four Twin Otters operating out of Yellowknife is no longer a priority for the Harper government and with the planes reaching the end of their operating life in 2010 air force planners have decided to move ahead with some upgrades to the aircraft, according to defence and aerospace industry officials.

To keep the Twin Otters flying until 2017 the military must modernize some of the avionics on the versatile transport plane. To keep them flying beyond 2017, if that is required, planners say the wings of the Twin Otters must be replaced. Both options are contained in the air force's 2007-10 future plans report submitted to the federal government by air force commander, Lt.-Gen. Angus Watt.

The military considers the Twin Otters, purchased in 1970, well suited for the North, particularly since these transports are capable of short takeoff and landings. The Twin Otter's landing gear is easily converted to either wheels, skis or floats, according to the Defence Department.

The aircraft, which can carry up to 20 passengers, are used for a variety of jobs, including search and rescue and supporting Arctic sovereignty missions. The Twin Otter is also used to support Canadian Forces Station Alert, the northernmost permanent habitation in the world, by ferrying supplies and providing medical evacuation services when needed, according to the military.

The Twin Otters are a highly popular aircraft with many civilian firms who use the planes in the North as well. Last year Viking Air Limited, a firm in Victoria, B.C., announced it would start building new Twin Otters. The firm cited market studies indicating there was a demand for more than 400 new aircraft around the world.

The Canadian government and a number of Inuit groups unveiled a pact on Friday that will shelter the habitat of polar bears, bowhead whales and other animals in the country's northern Nunavut territory.

Canada will spend C\$8.3 million (\$7.9 million) on the agreement, which will create three new national wildlife areas on and around Baffin Island, Canada's largest island. The deal will also lead to co-management between the government and Inuit native groups of two existing wildlife areas and eight existing migratory bird sanctuaries across Nunavut, a territory the size of Western Europe.

"We're putting our money where our mouth is in today's action for the environment," Environment Minister John Baird told reporters in Ottawa. Baird said the agreement will also help protect seals, walrus and various migratory bird species.



Michael Peake

Revisiting a favoured canoeing spot with your kids means knowing where to find some of the most interesting areas. Time did not allow us to get to the really special spots further south in Pukaskwa like Cascade Falls and Richardson Harbour and the Pukaskwa Pits but we did pay a visit to Cave Harbour. When last here in 1984 (inset photo) Geoffrey Peake posed in the cave's mouth so we re-created the shot with the next generation. The weather was the same as were the rocks but that tree has grown somewhat over the years - as have the kids.

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