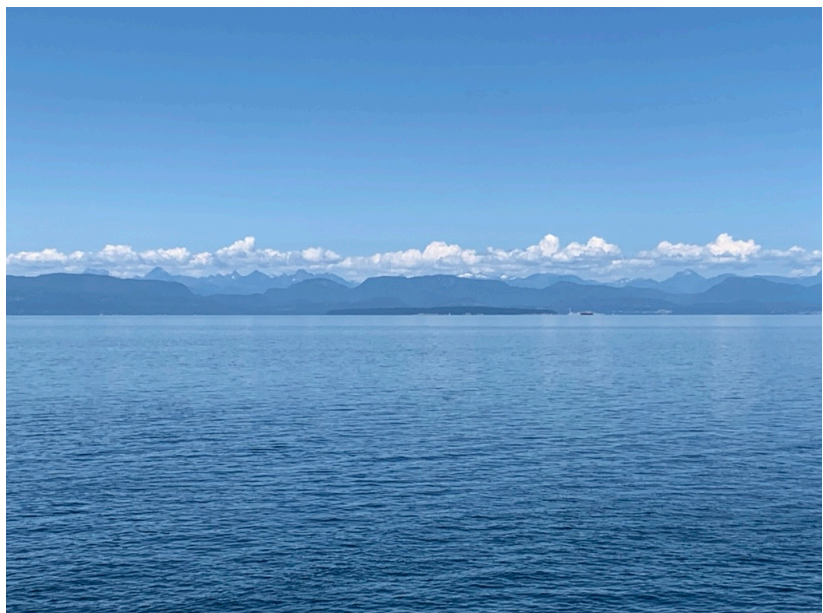


## Kate & Jim's Travels with Charles

### Episode #6: Powell River – The Least Laid Plans

Our commitment to ***not*** planning continued with our journey to Powell River. We had assumed that after Salt Spring Island, we might visit another island or two and then cross back to the mainland. But during our stay on Salt Spring Island, we asked our hosts, the Logans, what suggestions they might have for places we should visit. They told us about the ferry that goes to Powell River, which is at the northern end of the Sunshine Coast. Then, they suggested, we could drive down the Sunshine Coast. Neither of us had done that before, so suddenly that was our plan!

We had only heard of Powell River once – when we found out that our friend Tom Carson was from there. Tom is the amazing Executive Director of Smile Theatre, one of our most beloved organizations, delivering music and musical theatre to seniors in nursing homes, hospitals and seniors' residences. That seemed like a good enough reason to go to his hometown. So, we took the ferry from Salt Spring Island to Vancouver Island, drove up to Comox and onto the Little River ferry. Ninety minutes later we were in Powell River.



This is a gem of a town. Very pretty, with all its mountainous terrain overlooking the ocean.



But it's also quite modern and vibrant. Look what we found there – something that was unavailable in many parts of Vancouver Island!





They have, we found out, a very active cultural life, with a great, cohesive community. It also boasts a very attractive climate. In the winter it rarely goes below freezing (usually hovering around 6 or 7 during the worst of winter) and it lives up to its status as a member of the Sunshine Coast region.

We found a great campsite beside Willingdon Beach, a public park, right on the water – with an amphitheatre yet! - and all available to everyone.





The campground was beautiful, with each site surrounded by giant trees, and ours looked out, through the trees, to the ocean.





And once again, the sunset cooperated.





So, the nomadic life continues to work for us. Although there are some usual rules you run into in some of these places.



And we did have some unusual drop-in guests. We were apparently there in the height of inchworm season, and they kept dropping out of the trees and crawling around in their comical (and musical) way, measuring our campsite for us.





We also discovered that Tom Carson's brother and sister-in-law live in Powell River. We called them to say hello, and they immediately became our hosts and tour guides.

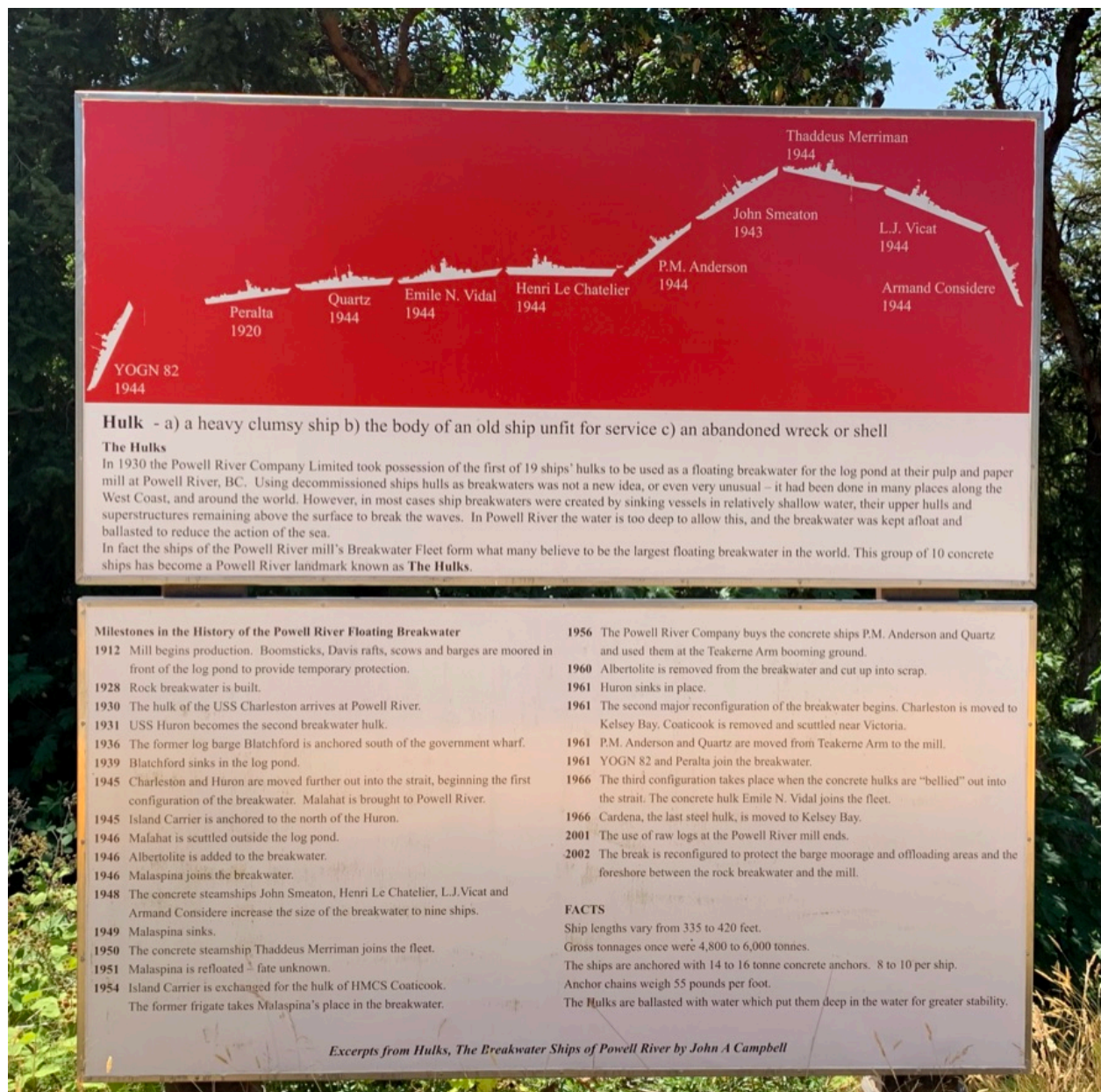
Roy and Shelly Carson couldn't have been nicer hosts. They drove us around town and gave us some of the history. Powell River was western Canada's first pulp and paper mill, and as Roy explained, the company, from its inception was very focussed on building and maintaining a strong community. They built good housing, and a large community centre and promoted cultural and community events. And that community spirit lives on today.

They drove us up to this promontory over the plant, where there's an impressive breakwater made of sunken concrete ships that were built for the First and Second World Wars.





Here's more information about where the ships came from, for people like my brother Ted who will really want to know this.





One of the other great things about Powell River is its access to all kinds of natural wonders within minutes from town. Roy and Shelly are very active and adventurous and take advantage of all that the area offers. They drove us to Inland Lake and we went for a nice (i.e. easy) hike around the lake, until we found a perfect picnicking spot. And they had a whole picnic spread for us packed up in their backpacks!







Roy bravely took the plunge into the lake. Others of us were only willing to dip our feet into the refreshing water.





The whole walk was beautiful and invigorating – and something we'd never had known about if it weren't for Roy and Shelly.





But that wasn't the end of their hospitality. The evening ended with us going back to their comfortable home, where they ordered dinner and we enjoyed a lovely evening on their terrace.



When Shelly found out I'd never paddleboarded, she was determined to get me out on her paddleboard, which would have meant carrying it down to the beach from their home, and then back up the hill to their home afterward. Sadly, or fortunately, they plied us with too much alcoholic hospitality for paddleboarding to be an option.

We were delighted to be the recipients of such generosity.

If you're ever going to the Sunshine Coast, we highly recommend Powell River. And perhaps you'll be lucky enough to run into our lovely hosts Roy and Shelly.

If we had planned all this, it couldn't have gone better.