

Trip 3 – Episode #6: Serendipity Abounds

After our surprisingly surprising travels through New Brunswick, we were prepared to settle into Nova Scotia, where we've both been numerous times – together and separately.



We were looking forward to seeing some familiar spots and people, and heeding the advice of these “paddlers” we spotted along the way.



Our first landing spot was a place we'd never heard of, called The Ovens Natural Park. It was south of Lunenburg, so we knew the drive would be lovely. And we weren't disappointed.







Getting there was easy: You just follow the signs.



We passed by lovely LaHave, which we'd been to before and hoped to visit again on this trip.





After a very pleasant drive, we arrived at The Ovens. In our typical fashion, we had done zero research, so we really didn't know what to expect. What a great spot!



Right on the water, its grounds were beautiful.





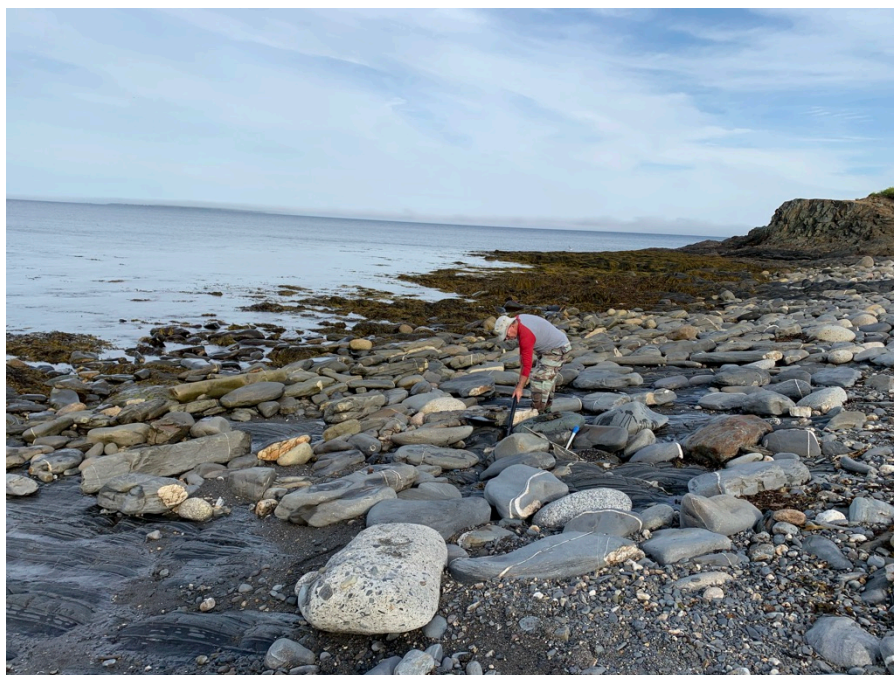


But the place was also full of history. For one thing, there's gold in them thar rocks.



As the sign says, gold was found there in the mid-1800s. But William Cunard (son of the ship magnate) had tonnes of the beach sand dug up and shipped to England where they extracted the gold. So, the people of Nova Scotia got nothing but a rocky beach as a thank you.

But there's still gold and people are still panning. I spoke with this man who said he and his wife had been panning there for 20 years. He showed me the water in his pan, with lots of gold flecks which had sunk to the bottom. He said the largest piece he'd found was 1/10th of a gram, which today would be worth about \$7.00. So, I guess, if you put together all those flecks, it must be worth their time.



But gold panning was only one of the unusual offerings at The Ovens.

First of all, it took us a while to figure out why it was called The Ovens. It turns out that's what they call the Sea Caves carved into the rocky shores. There's a great trail that twists along the rugged coastline, offering spectacular views.



It takes you to lookout points along the way.

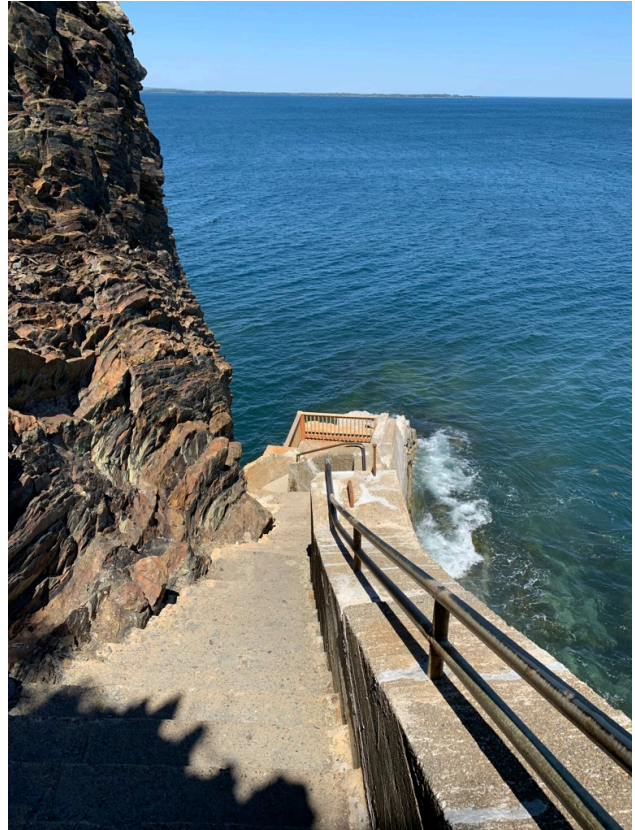


And steep stairs take you down to where the “ovens” are. Each with different names.





When we got to the bottom, we discovered the caves that had been carved by the turbulent waters.



We also understood why one cave was called Thunder and another was called Cannon. The booming sounds that echoed out of the caves were truly awesome. And the mist they puffed out made it seem like they were alive. (The attached video will give you a sense of it.)





It was a great walk.



At the end of it we discovered their fabulous pool, which I later took advantage of.



And then there are the goats, which like hanging around the cars - and apparently sometimes climbing on them!



Being kids, they also liked to hang around in the playground.



There was a definite quirkiness to this place.

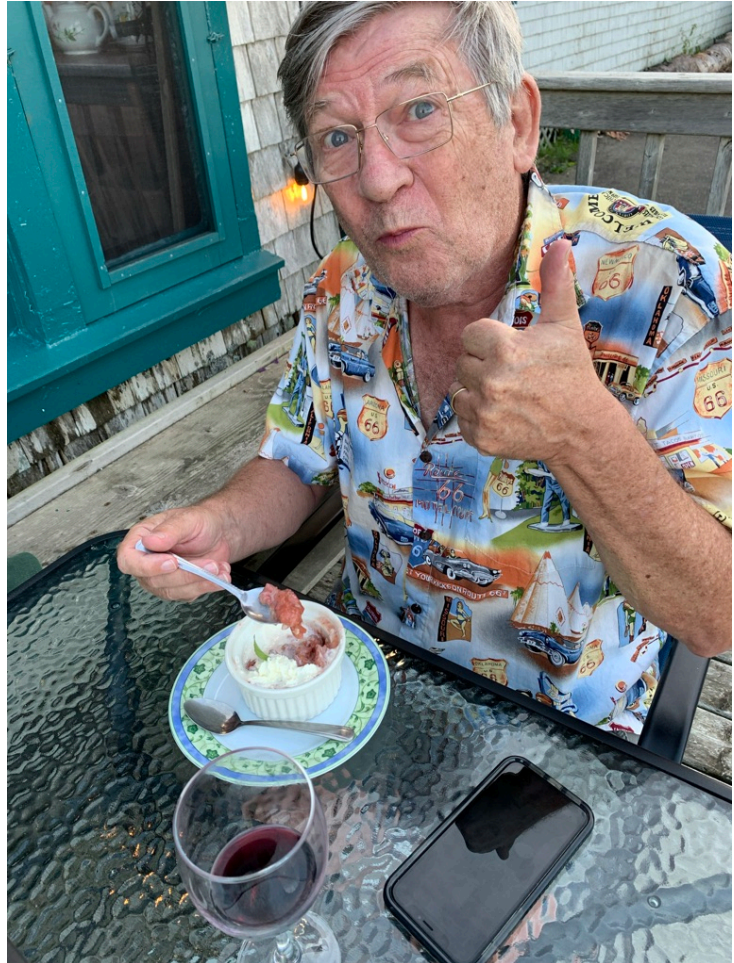
We went to their restaurant which looked like your typical fish and chips place. We found out they had live music, and we expected it would be typical Nova Scotia fare – sea shanties and folk music. The sign said the musician was Steve Chapin and I made a smart-ass quip to Jim that maybe he was Harry Chapin's second cousin.



Nope. It was Harry Chapin's brother. And his other brother Tom also performs there regularly because the Chapin family has owned The Ovens since the late 80s! We had a great chat with Steve as well as his wife Angel who told us the whole story.

Not only was the music much higher quality than we anticipated, so was the food!





And they allowed dogs on the patio. (Look closely and you'll see the pup peeking out of this woman's jacket.)

Then, during dinner, suddenly all the young staff members ran down to the water's edge and performed a weird salute as a particular ship sailed past.



We asked what it was all about and a couple of the young staff told us they were sworn to secrecy.

As we went back to Charles for the night, we discovered that the musical offerings continued.



It was quite a magical time, but there was one more serendipitous happening.

As many of you will know, Jim has been working on a musical about the Bluenose (Canada's most famous racing schooner) for many years. Well, on the next morning, as Jim was sipping coffee out of his Bluenose mug, suddenly, there was the super schooner, cruising past on its morning tour.



It caused shivers to see it glide by. For those who haven't seen it, Jim produced a video about the Bluenose sailpast that you can find at the bottom of this post.

We loved our stay at The Ovens, and could have happily stayed there for several more days.

But we had places to go, people to see, shows to watch and more serendipity to experience.

