



Seagulls enjoying a meal stirred up by the ship's wash

BRUCE & CONNIE GO NORTH!  
Oct. 25 - Nov. 5, 2025

We drove 3-4 hours per day north starting on Highway 1 (Fraser Canyon). It was a beautiful drive with generally clear skies. We spent our first night at Canyon Alpine, 2 5k north of Dad's first (student) ministry in North Bend (1931/32). I read all 60 of the letters between Mom and Dad (still courting at that time) and have determined that he held services in the school there, 1 in addition to weekend services on alternate weekends in Yale and Hope. In Dad's Oct. 26, 1931 letter to Mom, he notes the striking contrast between the evergreen and deciduous trees. On that day 94 years later we see that things have not changed. 3 North of Lytton, the Fraser Canyon opens up into the Caribou. 4 We continue to our AirBnB off the highway, 20k south of Williams Lake on Felker Lake. 5 6 7

While driving through Prince George to Ft. St. James, we follow the route of the Chamber Singers "Tour 79" 8 This trip was cursed from the beginning with a bus breakdown at Tsawwassen, causing a 5 hour delay, our Prince George "hosts" cancelling our concert and billets at the last minute, leaving us on our own in Prince George. Then came the good news. The best acoustics on the tour were in a cement block gym at Fort St. James! Here, 46 years later, we had a 2 night visit with Kevin and Claire. 9 1 Claire is a real mover and shaker (special needs teacher, administrator and highly competent advocate), currently on leave. She has amazing ideas and is very knowledgeable and eloquent. The next morning, we visited the HBC Fort 2 3, which was the beginning of the town, 150 years earlier. As he had done for several years when they first arrived, Kevin "narrated" the fort tour for us. It was really fascinating although I surprised myself, being able to be on my feet in the breezy weather for 2 hours. They have a lovely house overlooking Stuart Lake. 4 Like me, Kevin has a "man cave" with a new sound system, a large-screen tv & a huge LP record collection see catalogue at:

<https://www.discogs.com/user/Bobnewhead/collection?header=1>  
We watched the latest Downton Abbey movie from my computer (Thanks to Grampa Al's expertise). As the former City Manager, Kevin has also been instrumental in the creation of parks & buildings in the community. After a very fond farewell from Fort St. James, we drove to Telkwa, to our historical AirBnB at "The Creamery" 5 6 7 8 on the bank of the Bulkley River 9. Great fun: we had the whole place to ourselves! On the way to New Hazelton, we entered the area of prominent mountains on the "Highway of Tears". 1 2 3 Our Air BnB was a large warehouse (formerly an animal hospital) in which we occupied an amazingly lovely and complete suite on the top floor, but with an unfortunately long external staircase as access. This seemed in keeping with the steep mountainous surroundings.

Finally, we're at our destination area: Hazelton & Kispiox, the family's home between 1936 and 1942. Art and Donna were born here and I was apparently "conceived" here (I was born in Ocean Falls in December of 1942 - do the math!) Our first day was spent at the village of Kispiox, where Mom and Dad taught and ministered during those years. I had never been here before, but brother Art had been many times in conjunction with his UBC work: founding and running the Native Indian Teacher Education Project and, in more recent years, testing school children in the north. Art put us in touch with Doreen and Jim Angus 4 5, prominent First Nation leaders and administrators in the area. Our visit with them was a wonderful opportunity to connect with the local community, to meet two superb human beings and to gain a great deal of knowledge of the world that my family lived in almost 100 years ago. Doreen then guided us around Kispiox, seeing the totems, 6 school site and other village items of interest. Most important of all, however, was the Pierce Memorial United Church (now needing repair), which was at the center of Mom and Dad's lives during these years. It still stands nobly in the shadow of the Roché de Boule mountain. 7 8 Later that day we visited the 'Ksan Village 9 1, and then the old Hazelton United Church, which is part of the Wrinch Memorial Hospital compound, next to the newer Mountain View United Church. Dad's original church building is now a thriving thrift store 2 3 (DARN!), so we decided to honour the church's memory by buying a bunch of really neat stuff!! Ida, the operator of the thrift store, gave us the phone number of the current minister Phil Muir, mentioning that he is 83 years old. The name rang a bell, so I called him and indeed, he was an old friend from my UBC Union College days, so for more than an hour, we reminisced about our shenanigans in the early 60s in that "hallowed" residence.

On the drive to Terrace, we passed through even more fabulous mountainous countryside, still enjoying partial sunshine. 4 5 The weather worsened as we arrived in Terrace and continued on to Kitimat, with the thought that the weather didn't have to be sunny to visit an LNG plant and an aluminum smelter. We were not disappointed! 6 The next day we embarked on a much anticipated visit north into Nishga lands. The weather wasn't wonderful, but there was enough visibility to experience the unique offerings of what is an amazing corridor between the Skeena and the Nass valleys.

Large lakes and streams, a huge 1750 lava flow, 7 8 9 1 and the lovely Nishga village of New Aiansh made it an exciting and worthwhile trip! Finally, our last drive was on to Prince Rupert. There was enough clearing of the weather to fully expose this most beautiful highway which parallels the Skeena, framed by huge mountains. 2 3 4 The arrival in Prince Rupert was much in contrast. The mountains became low hills and the lakes and seascape was dominated by evergreen trees whose branches extended all the way down to the waters edge. Prince Rupert itself was a surprise to me. 5 A perfect water's edge port was overlooked by hills, making a spectacular setting not unlike Nelson, although with some sadly deteriorating housing. We also explored the Museum of Northern BC with its spectacular First Nations holdings. 6 7 There was nothing left in our trip but to board the Northern Expedition ferry 8 to Port Hardy for an 8pm to next day 1pm journey. It was a really pleasant experience. 9 1 2 A comfortable cabin and very bright and welcoming public spaces made the 17 hour trip (9 hours sleeping in comfortable beds) most enjoyable. As we entered the open ocean between Bella Bella and Port Hardy, it became quite stormy but the ship seemed to have miraculously effective stabilizing, so it was not so bad, in spite of the captain's warning of 3-4 meter waves.