

WCCB Fall Trip Report
2016
Severn Lodge, Port Severn, Ontario
Canada

By: Doug Vittum

For the first time in our 30 plus Fall Trip history, we started our trip on a Sunday. This was due to every suitable resort that could handle our group being booked on Saturday for a wedding.

Sunday Sept. 11th was our travel day. Barb and I met John & Bonnie Ford at 9AM at a rest area on the Thruway, and we were off to Exit 48A where we stopped at the truck stop for breakfast and to top off fuel tanks. Bill Olmsted and Crew, (Pam and Judy), Mike and Mary Jo Hanna also pulled in.

With stomachs and fuel tanks full we soon departed for the border crossing, which was much faster than normal. An immediate stop at the currency exchange and some additional WCCB members appeared. Jack Young and Patti Bandi, Bill Frarey and (our surprise for the day), Tom Gruenauer, who was a last second fill in for Bill's wife who couldn't make it. *Now* we have a convoy.

The rest of the trip ran smoothly, as we weaved from the 405 to the 403 to the 427, 401,409 and onto the 400 North, all to avoid the *expensive* 407ETR, which we did nicely.

The group started to arrive about 3PM, and check-in and baggage transfers began. I had to swing into Port Severn and locate a new boat launch as our scheduled launch had been closed at the last minute for paving. As soon as I got to the Severn Lodge, we began to launch boats. A few went to White Falls Marina, just down the road 2 miles, the rest followed us back to Port Severn and used the newly opened Town Park launch. While vehicles and trailers were returned to the Lodge, John and I lead the six boats back through the channels and islands to the Lodge. This is about a 5 mile trip and no-one complained as the area is just beautiful.

Severn Lodge had set up a nice reception for us at the Lodge, and everyone ate finger food and socialized till the 6PM dinner hour arrived.

We then proceeded up the steps and into the dining-room. Our group of 38 pretty much filled the dining-room. A menu at each place allowed you to select an appetizer (ex: Jumbo shrimp cocktail), one of four main entrees, and desert.



Above photo's by Patti Brandi

Travel days are always busy and tiring, but we all made it without any incidents. Having beautiful weather, great food and wonderful boating friends made a hard day very enjoyable.

End of Day 1



With moon overhead, Bill Olmsted's (left) and John Ford's boats settle in for a restful night

Day 2
We ride the Big Chute
We awoke to a clear, sunny, but slightly cooler morning.



View out our living-room window at sunrise



Early birds Lou Smith & Mick Griffith on front deck/porch, with coffee

An amazing and delicious breakfast buffet awaited us at the Lodge. Plans were to meet at the docks, ready to shove off at 9:30AM, to begin the days adventure.



Captains and crew make ready the boats for the day

Departing on schedule, we begin the short ride from Gloucester Pool up to *The Chute* via the Trent Severn River.



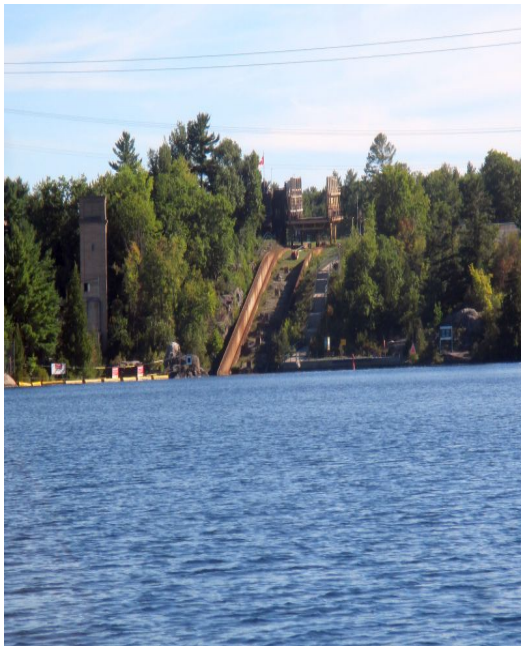
Tom & Pat in their 1930's, 17 foot Gidley outboard Severn Lodge in the background



Ten beautiful Woodies, all in a row, entering the Trent Severn from Gloucester Pool

Since the locks do not open till 10AM this time of year, there was no need to be in a hurry, besides, the area is so beautiful, no one wants to miss anything by going fast.

As we rounded the last curve...there it was. *The Big Chute.*



As soon as we reach the blue-line, the huge platform begins its decent down the steep slope . Looking like a huge erector set platform, on four legs. The platform stays level all the way down. This is possible because the front legs travel on different rails than the rear legs.

As soon as the platform is submerged under water, the Lock Master begins to direct the loading. Using a PA system, he call to the boats Captain when he is ready for the boat. The Captain then maneuvers his craft into the appropriate spot. Other lock-crew members on the platform assist with docking and positioning the boats.

Our only outboard was first. John's 30 foot *After Hours* was second, parked so the stern hung out over the back edge of the platform. John and Sandy's Chris Craft Capri was loaded in the same manner as John's, stern hanging over the back a little.

Once loaded, the platform begins the 50 plus foot climb to the top, travels over White Falls Road, and re-enters the Trent Severn on the other side. Once submerged, the crew directs the departure in an orderly fashion. The entire trip from loading till unloading takes about 25 minutes. Several trips were made to get our group “up stream” over the dam.



Tom & Pat wait for John's boat to load. Going up the incline, Lou Smith stands in “mother-in law” seat of John's boat. Note others in the group waiting on the *blue-line* to left of Lou's shoulder...down below.





These two shots (above & below) by Patti Bandi , show how inboard boats are loaded. Stem rests on deck, and a strap between two hydraulic posts supports bottom keeping strut and prop clear. Boat is positioned so strap lifts where coupler (transmission) and shaft meet.



Here is a picture of the main building for the entire operation. In there are FOUR 200 Hp electric motors, one for each leg. Two 900 foot, and two 700 foot steel cables do all the work. Each cable is about 4 inches thick, and cost \$10,000.00 each. Their life-span is based on use, but averages about four years before replacement.



The group continued their journey upstream for several miles. We passed large, expensive year-round and seasonal homes. We passed basic fishing camps, and places For Sale. The Channel is well marked with buoys, but one can easily see huge rocks below the surface just outside the channel. Captains must be on their toes at all times in these channels.

Our destination for lunch is *The Waubic*. Only accessible by water, it is truly a memorable place. Original property developed in 1919, it was a resort, with a large hotel built up behind the present day restaurant. Fire in 1946 destroyed the hotel. Research indicates the restaurant building was built in the 1930's, and eventually was abandoned in the 1990's. In 2002, along comes George and Jenifer who saw the potential of the building and location. They bought the property and began a multi year renovation and construction project. Today it proudly serves the local and transient boating community of the Trent Severn waterway.

Normally closed except weekends after Labor Day, George and Jennifer opened up for our "Group". Head waitress Karen , handled our party with George assisting. NO-ONE went away hungry.