

SEARCH FOR HAIDA GWAI

(Trip Nona with Granny and Gramps July 19, 2026 to July 03, 2026))

A) Day One to Quesnel Friday, June 19, 2026

This vacation was planned by Nona Dawn Kucher for many months with a possible inclusion of her children. When this was not possible, Nona invited her parents, Elmer and Marilyn Verigin to accompany her. This unexpected invitation was enthusiastically accepted by these two mid-octogenarian seniors.



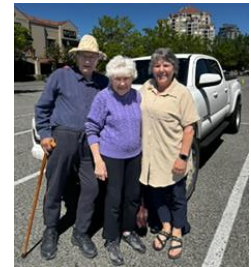
We left Castlegar, B.C., at 0745 and stopped to purchase our habitual Sausage & Eggers with Hash Browns and Coffee at A & W. Then we took our first directional sign to Highway 3 West.

At Rock Creek, our junction was to Highway 33 for Kelowna. It had been prearranged that we would have lunch with Nona's family at the Marriott Grand Okanagan Resort where her daughter Kayla was the Bar Manager.



Garrett and his fiancé Kelcey McNeil met us in the parking lot with their pet dog Berkely, as they were on their way for a holiday weekend at Whatshan Lake. Here is Garrett, Granny, Marilyn, Nona and Garrett's fiancé, Kelcey McNeil, with Berekeley,, in the foreground.

I am pleased to introduce the **'team'** that are to begin their **'Search for Haida Gwaii'**. Left to right, Gramps with Granny Verigin, our Pilot and Care-Giver daughter, Nona Kucher standing at the back end of **'Nick'** our trusted **'Conveyance'**.



We had a wonderful lunch at the Grand with Kayla.

Unfortunately, Kayla was working but took every opportunity to visit in addition while serving beverages.

We are soon on our way again as our planned destination for June 19, 2026, was Quesnel, B.C.



We crossed West Kelowna and took the Kootenay Connector, Highway 97C, to Merritt. At Merritt we took Highway 5 (Coquihalla) to connect to Highway 1 just West of Kamloops, on our way to Cache Creek.

At Cache Creek we went North onto the Cariboo



Highway, Highway 97, to our first 'overnight' at Quesnel. We passed interesting communities named after the stagecoach rest areas at a time when Lillooet was Mile 0 on the Gold Rush Road through the Cariboo. *"...The name Cariboo Road or Cariboo Trail is also informally applied to a toll road built by contractor [Gustavus Blin-Wright](#) in 1861–1862 from Lillooet to [Williams Lake](#), Van Winkle and on to [Williams Creek](#) (Richfield, Barkerville). This route was known also as the [Old Cariboo Road](#), when the Lakes Route from [Port Douglas](#) to [Lillooet](#) had not yet been superseded by the Fraser Canyon route of the Cariboo Wagon Road proper. The mile-house names (e.g. [100 Mile House](#)), in the Cariboo are derived from measurements taken from the Mile '0' of this road, which is in the bend in the Main Street of Lillooet and commemorated there by a cairn erected in the 1958 Centennial Year. It was along this route that an attempt was made to use [Bactrian camels](#) purchased from the [U.S. Camel Corps](#) for freight (1862), and also a tractor-style [Thomson Road Steamer](#) known as a "road train", one of the earliest motorized vehicles...."*

After 864 km, we arrived at Quesnel at 7:00 P.M. to check in at the Ramada Inn. Reservations made online did not inform us that there was no elevator so we packed our luggage up three (3) flights of stairs. Oiyayoi!

B) Day two Quesnel to Prince Rupert

The next morning began at 0800 hours after a disappointing breakfast when Gramps could not



get his glass of tomato juice. They did not have V8 neither but offered Clamato which I did not want.



We turned West into Highway 16 travelling to Prince Rupert, our June 20, 2026, destination. The Highway has recently been named the Highway of Tears. *"...Highway 16 is a highway in [British Columbia](#), Canada. It is British Columbia's important section of the [Yellowhead Highway](#), a part of the [Trans-Canada Highway](#) that runs across [Western Canada](#), from British Columbia's Graham Island east to [Winnipeg, Manitoba](#), via [Edmonton, Alberta](#), and [Saskatoon, Saskatchewan](#). The highway closely follows the path of the northern B.C. alignment of the [Canadian National Railway](#) (CN). The number "16" was first given to the highway in 1941, and originally, the route that the highway took was more to the north of today's highway, and it was not as long as it is now. Highway 16 originally ran from [New Hazelton](#) east to [Aleza Lake](#). In 1948, Highway 16's western end was moved from New Hazelton to the coastal city of [Prince Rupert](#), and in 1953, the highway was re-aligned to end at Prince George. In 1969, further alignment east into [Yellowhead Pass](#) was opened to traffic after being constructed up through 1968 and raised to all-weather standards in 1969. Highway 16's alignment on [Haida Gwaii](#) was commissioned in 1983^[2] and is connected to the mainland segment via [BC Ferries](#) route No. 11.*



A series of murders and disappearances has given the stretch between Prince Rupert and Prince George the name "[Highway of Tears](#)...."

There are numerous billboard signs along the Highway. warning against hitchhiking.

A Totem Pole in Prince George brings significance as in this *article* *"....The family members of Indigenous women and girls who have gone missing or been murdered along the Highway of Tears in*

northern B.C. cried and held hands as a monument created in their honour was unveiled at Cottonwood Island Park in Prince George Friday morning.

Called the Pillar of Hope, the monument commemorates the string of disappearances and murders of Indigenous women and girls along the 720-kilometre stretch of Highway 16 between Prince George and Prince Rupert dating back to the 1960s.

"It's a bittersweet moment," said Mary Teegee, chief administrative officer of Carrier Sekani Family Services, which led the project...."



Canada has three (3) seaport options for shipping overseas, the West Coast on the Pacific, the North Coast, primarily from Hudson Bay and the East Coast along the Atlantic. Prince Rupert has long been a favorite due to its deep seas shore and being 1,000 miles closer to Asia as that market place developed over the years with Grain Terminals at the end of Canadian National Railway Tracks. This was soon followed by Canadian Cellulose Co. Ltd constructing a Sulfite and Acetate Pulp Mill at Watson Island. Then Yellowhead Highway (Highway 16) followed.”,, The full length of **Highway 16 (Yellowhead Highway)** from **Masset, B.C.** to **Winnipeg, Manitoba** is **2,859 km (1,777 miles)....”** The cities, Portage la Prairie, Yorkton, Saskatoon Edmonton, Prince George and Prince Rupert are all connected by Highway 16.



The scenery is stunning as the Seven Sisters mountain range, East of Kitwanga is captured in this photo.

Terrace is also the junction with Prince Rupert to the West and Kitimat to the South.

This is a highway scene at the West outskirts of Terrace.

Prince Rupert is 144 km from Terrace. Many memories come to Elmer as he reminisces the great times we had fishing, hiking, curling, partying and



hunting with his Engineering Co-workers at Watson Island. The expected annual rainfall in Prince Rupert was 96 inches, yet 30 km East of PR, the Sun would shine at Tyee.

This was a reunion photo taken about forty years later with L to R, Jim Holloway, UBC Graduate in Civil. Robert Miller, UofM Graduate in Mechanical. Elmer. UofS graduate in Civil and Ron Ross, UofA graduate in Electrical.

Ron played a Ukulele and guided us in composing a song about 'Rupert with a first verse as follows:

"....Well, I've been from Maine to Prince Rupert,

And Rupert is the best now you hear,

That's where the annual rainfall.

Is ninety-six inches a year."

Chorus:

"Is ninety-six inches a year, my boys,

Is ninety-six inches a year,

Well, that's where the annual rainfall.

Is ninety-six inches a year....!"

There are about twenty verses but Marilyn would not allow me to post them here.

It was a spontaneous reaction, that I started singing this song with gusto as if it was 1964 again while my current audience patiently waited for me to tire. No, they never asked me to continue...



For about 130 km, the fast-flowing Skeena River was on the South side with the CN Railway and Highway 16 adjacent, sometimes interchanging, and the high mountains along the North side. Many tributary rivers flow into the Skeena under highway bridges along the way.

There was little human habitation for exception of occasional Indigenous fishing smoke houses.

"....In a historic moment for First Nations across the North Coast, a totem pole was erected at the Galloway Rapids rest area Oct. 21 in honour of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) and residential school survivors.

Carved by Mike Dangeli, the totem pole raising on the side of Highway 16 brought together a wide array of community members and was followed by a feast at the Prince Rupert Community Centre. For many in attendance, the pole raising was an event of immense cultural healing for the intergenerational traumas of residential schools and MMIWG.

Dangeli, who has carved nearly 30 totem poles in his art career, said it was an amazing



feeling to be back in the Northwest. Dangeli, who has fond memories of fishing on the North Coast, is both Nisga'a and Tsimshian, though carves out of his studio in Chilliwack,,,,,"



This Totem is located about six (6) km East of the Welcome to Prince Rupert entrance sign, on the right-side entering Prince Rupert. We mistook it for the Grandmother Totem located outside of Terrace. Just to be sure, we took a photo of two grandmothers with this Totem in honour of grandmothers anyway.

As we entered Prince Rupert on McBride Street, the directional sign finally confirmed we were on the way to Haida

Gwaii. Nona asked me the question, “do you know how to get to the Crest Motel?”

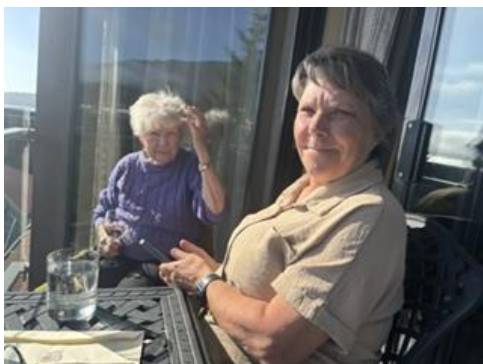
My answer, “ look to the left of the signs toward the Harbour and you will see it silhouetted”.

Nona had no problem getting us there so that we could rest after 833 km travel from Quesnel.



The view from the fourth-floor balcony of our room, looking West toward the Ferry

Terminal about ten blocks from the Motel. You may not have noticed the Chances Casino next door. I am sure it will be checked out later by Granny and Nona.



Yes, our ‘Pilot’ and passenger are enjoying the view and their drink. What was all that singing about rain in Prince Rupert, anyway? Okay, no rain.

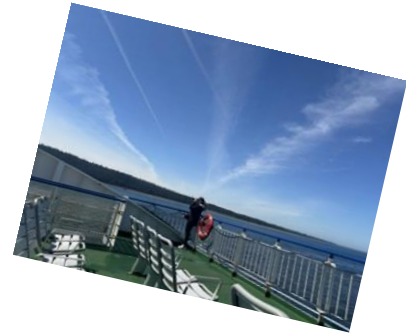
Instructions from our Pilot, “The dining facilities within the Crest are excellent so let’s eat first and then try our luck.”

“We need to be at the Ferry Terminal at 8:30 for sailing at 1000.”

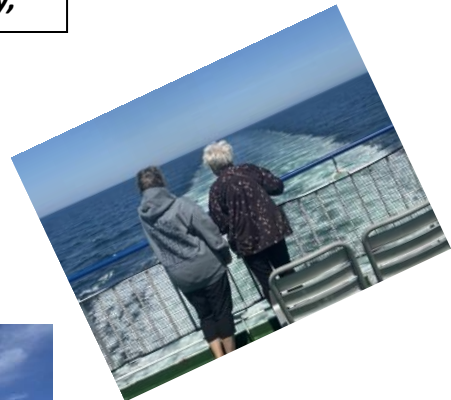
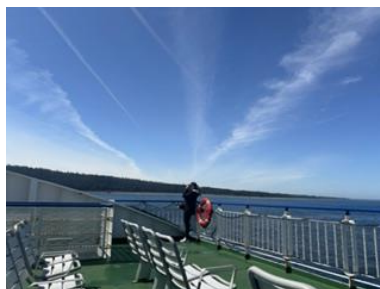
The Harbour view from the Dining Room at the Crest.



C) Day Three - Prince Rupert to Skidegate, Haida Gwaii



*Ferry trip took 6 hours from
Prince Rupert 1000 hours to
Skidegate at 4:00 P.M. Sunday,*



We arrived at Skidegate at 4:00 P.M. The Blue House at Port Clements would not be ready for our occupancy until 3:00 P.M., Monday June 23, 2026, so we needed accommodation for the night of June 22, 2026. Nona had prearranged a two-bedroom unit, Echo Bay lodge at Daajing Giids which was a short drive left of the Ferry Terminal.

A young couple had converted part of their house into a rental suite on the left side with a private covered patio.



Time for some refreshments with a beautiful view of a garden and the Bay..



We were hungry at this time, and the hosts informed us that there was a popular Fish & Chips place located on the docks just before Skidegate.



Off we went on an adventure. There was a line up to this “shack” that allegedly sold fresh Cod from the Fishing Boats moored there. Here we are waiting for our order.

It was well worth waiting for and we satisfied our hunger.



D)Day Four Exploration to Massett

We decided to go out for breakfast as we were told the Blue House at Port Clements would not be ready for us until 3:00 P.M.

“Surely something would be open along the 59 km Highway 16 that would take us to Port Clements.” Wrong!

“Well let’s keep on going another 43 Km to Kilometer 0 in Masset. Something will be open there and we can have a brunch. We would need groceries anyway and we have the time”. No such luck!

We checked out about five (5) different eating establishments in Massett, but none would open until noon. Rats!

There was a modern Coop Grocery Store, so we might as well get groceries while waiting for Masset to come alive. The Grocery Store was well stocked as anywhere in B.C. and so we purchased whatever we thought would be necessary for our one-week stay. The Blue House was fully equipped apparently, so we were happy with our purchases.



We checked out the other places and settled on Mile 0 Pub, mainly for its name as we were yet to find out about their menu. By this time Nona and I decided that a double Caesar was necessary. The regular pub fare was very acceptable.

It was time to head back to Port Clements and just maybe we could check-in earlier. Nona called Adele and she said the house was waiting for us and the key can be found as previously instructed.

E) Move Into The Blue House

“...At the Blue House, guests will enjoy a close-up view of the ocean from inside this recently renovated home-away-from-home, complete with the relaxing sounds of gently-crashing waves and long, drawn-out sunsets that make Port Clements famous. Located just a block from the long dock, a popular place for fishing and crabbing. North Beach is a 40-minute drive away where guests will find the islands’ most popular surfing and swimming destination, and a 20-minute drive from the community of Tlell.

The space

Welcome to the Blue House

The wi-Fi password is Bluehouse. The house has a television.

There is a Bose wifi speaker which can be used with your phone or iPod,

Adele can be reached at 250 981 7051 if you need anything at all.

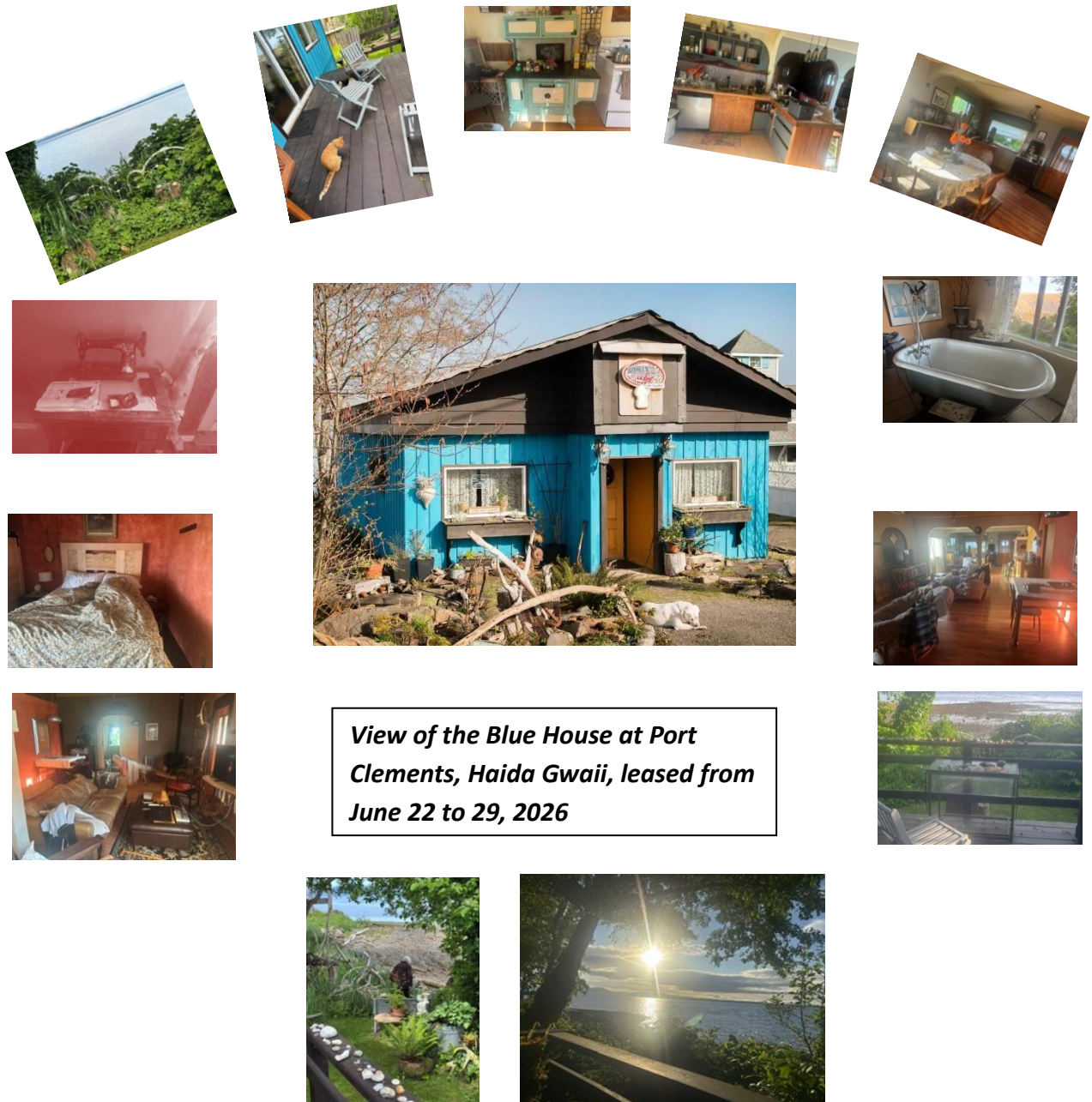
I left the door open and the keys hanging just inside the door, so you can arrive at your leisure. The highway is a beautiful drive, whether you are coming from Skidegate or Masset. Don't feel odd if everyone else is waving at you: we do that around

here. Develop your own Haida Gwaii wave, I generally use a finger peace symbol.

Coffee pot, kettle, and teapot are near the sink.

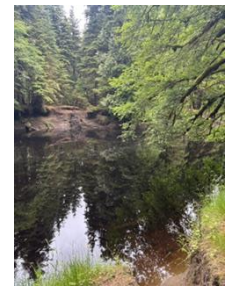
The heater has a control that is used to change the temperature up or down. It is kept on the square table in the middle of the house. Please turn to 68 when you leave.

Garbage Day is Friday and the tins need to be taken to the street Thursday night or early Friday morning. There are many raccoons around so the tins need to be strapped and weighted down with a rock or brick inside the can..."



***View of the Blue House at Port
Clements, Haida Gwaii, leased from
June 22 to 29, 2026***

F) Exploration of the Golden Spruce Trail



***The Golden Spruce Trail about
10 km From Port Clements. The
Missing Hitch-Hikers are not
Forgotten***



“...THE STORY OF THE GOLDEN SPRUCE

[HistoryCulture and HeritageActivities](#)

A LEGEND WITH DEEP ROOTS



For over 300 years, a remarkable *Kayd Sitka Spruce* prospered along the banks of the meandering Yakoun River. The tree was unlike any other in the surrounding rainforest, as a rare genetic mutation bore it striking golden needles instead of the typical evergreen. When conditions allowed slivers of sunlight to permeate the dense foliage, the Golden Spruce was utterly spectacular; appearing to almost glow and glitter from within.

Known by the Haida people as *Kiid K'iiyas* Ancient Tree, the story of its creation [\[read below\]](#) had been a sacred part of the culture's oral history for generations.

Sadly, tragedy struck in January 1997 when the Golden Spruce met its fate at the hands of a deeply troubled forestry engineer named Grant Hadwin. In an overnight act of misguided protest, his chainsaw sliced into the base of the 50-meter giant, rendering it unstable in the gusty winter wind. It fell a few days later.

For the Haida people and the village of Gamadiis Port Clements (which was known as “The Home of the Golden Spruce” at the time), the sense of grief and loss was profound. While the community gathered in mourning, the heartbreaking story garnered headlines internationally, spurring a massive manhunt for the tree's killer.

Hadwin was promptly arrested and charged for the malicious act but disappeared after being released on bail. He was last seen paddling his kayak north towards Alaska. Despite the discovery of his wrecked kayak the following summer, no trace of the avid outdoorsman was ever found. Theories and rumours continue to swirl around Hadwin's disappearance, but his whereabouts (or likely fate) remains a mystery.



Salvaging what remained of *Kiid K'iiyas* proved difficult, but collaborative efforts to take grafts from the original tree was ultimately successful. One of the two surviving saplings returned to Gamadiis Port Clements in 2001, and the other resides at [UBC's Botanical Garden](#) in Vancouver. The only timber collected from the felled giant was used for the creation of another Canadian icon – the [Voyageur Guitar](#).

Kiid K'iiyas Golden Spruce Creation Story

A young man's disrespect caused a terrible winter storm. The two survivors – a young boy and his chinaay (grandfather) left in search of a new home. His chinaay said to him “Don't look back! If you look back, you will go into the next world. People will be able to stop and admire you, but they won't be able to talk to you. When you get too old and fall down, you'll grow up again. You'll be standing there till the end of the world. Don't look back. Having walked a long way, the boy looked back. Then his feet grew into the ground. His chinaay tried to help to no avail, and the boy urged his chinaay to go on without him. As he left, he said to the boy “It's alright my son. Even the last generation will look at you and remember your story”. The boy became *Kiid K'iiyas* - the Golden Spruce.

**Source: HaidaNation.ca, April 2016*

Today, the Golden Spruce Trail faithfully serves as a tribute to the enduring legend. Passing by still-standing giants and mossy enclaves, the path leads to a viewpoint over the Yakoun where visitors can view what remains of the once-magnificent tree overhanging the riverbank.....”

G) Balance Rock



"...Another one of the Haida Gwaii' spiritual wonders is Balance Rock. A large bolder left behind from the glacial retreat of the ice age. Many decades later it still sits perfectly suspended on another rock's pointed head, guarding the shores of Skidegate, Graham Island.

Defying all odds for many centuries, one must scratch their heads and ask, "How come not even the powerful forces of a Haida Gwaii storm, with its thundering waves and high winds, are still not able to knock the rock from its magical perch?" Huh ... why is that?



There are some who refer to Balance Rock as the centre of spirituality. It is one of the many natural spiritual forces at work on Haida Gwaii. The best time to view the rock is at low tide. The beach surrounding Balance Rock is very rocky but still it is a place people seek out for snacking, beach combing and some solitude when thinking..."

H) Haida Gwaii

"....Haida Gwaii is a group of islands. It is off the west coast of British Columbia.



This is Haida Gwaii.

Haida Gwaii means "islands of the Haida people." It used to be called the Queen Charlotte Islands.

Haida art is famous. Many people have seen Haida totem poles.

Haida Gwaii is beautiful. It is a good place to travel.

There are no buses on Haida Gwaii. There are some taxis. You can drive many places. To go

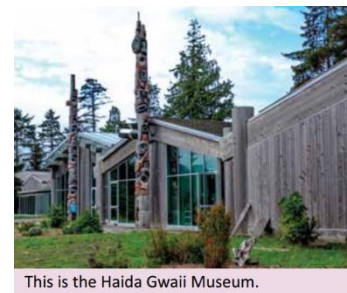
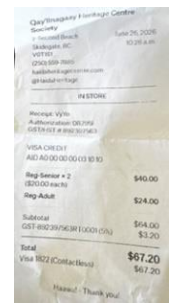
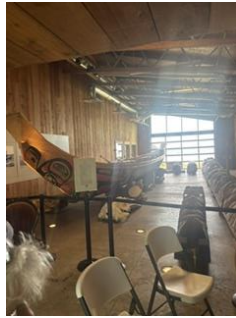


some places, you must take a boat.

There are two ways to get there. You can take a ferry from Prince Rupert. You can also fly from Vancouver...."

I) Haida Gwaii Museum. Skidegate

Upon payment of the entrance fee, there is no guided tour, but the displays are identified by the Sculptor or Artist. No photographs are permitted in most of the display areas.



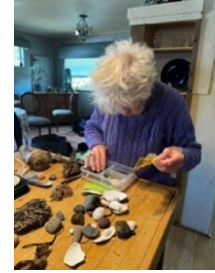
J) Agate Beach – Naikoon Provincial Park, Near Masset

Elmer was under the weather and so Nona and Mom went “Rockhounding” to Agate Beach:

“...Many come to visit this vast rocky, sandy beach to browse and identify various rocks, stones and pebbles while exploring up and down the shores. The salty moist breeze, the miles of sand and rock, the rhythm of the waves, the rolling of the rocks and the squawk of the seabirds makes for a great day exploring when visiting Agate Beach.



The stones, pebbles and rocks on Agate Beach are plentiful, come in all sizes, are multi-colored, many are round and smooth from many years of exposure to the west coast winds and powerful oceans. The waves come crashing down onto the shoreline, raking stones back and forth, up and down the beach creating beautiful music polishing stones. High tides have pushed the rocks far inland forming a coastline ridge of rock and driftwood.



Many arrive at Agate Beach to find agate rock. A hard task for most is to pick an agate rock out from the millions of beautiful coloured rocks spilled over the beach. Agate colour varies too - from a clear-white, to yellowish-amber, greens and red. The same colours as many other rocks too. The trick is to find an irregularly shaped stone, translucent with pock marks.

Agate is created from solutions of silica at relatively shallow depths and low

temperatures. It is a rock that is sensitive to the physical and chemical conditions surrounding it. It is associated with the opal. Fossilization, soil formation, and alteration of existing rock can all create agate. A pretty rock when polished and often used in jewelry..."

K) History of Haida Gwaii Islands (formerly Queen Charlottes)

"...The Haida Gwaii Islands, formerly known as the Queen Charlotte Islands, have a rich history that dates back to the 18th century. The islands were first explored by British explorer George Dixon in 1787, who named them after Queen Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. The islands were later known as the Queen Charlotte Islands.

In the 1800s, the Haida people faced a significant decline in their population due to diseases brought by Europeans, leading to the abandonment of many towns. By 1900, only a small number of Haida people remained.

In 2010, the islands were officially renamed Haida Gwaii as part of an agreement between British Columbia and the Haida people, recognizing their deep connection to the land. This change was a historic step in acknowledging the Haida Nation's traditional land title across Haida Gwaii.

In 2024, the British Columbia government transferred ownership of over 200 islands to the Haida people, recognizing their traditional land rights. This transfer was a significant recognition of the Haida Nation's aboriginal land title throughout Haida Gwaii.

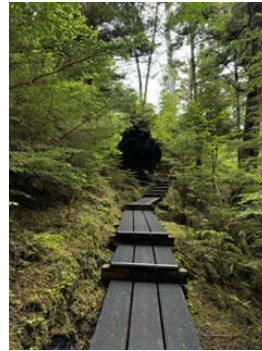
The Haida Gwaii Islands continue to be a vital part of the Haida Nation's identity, with the Council of the Haida Nation working towards full independence, sovereignty, and self-sufficiency. The islands are also home to unique wildlife and natural beauty, making them a place of great interest and respect..."

L) Taaw Tldáaw (Tow Hill)



"....SGaanuwee | Supernatural Beings inhabit all corners of Haida Gwaii. You can find many of them very easily. Just a half-hour drive east from Masset you will find Taaw Tldáaw | Tow Hill. You can drive a well-maintained gravel road through old-growth forests, then follow a boardwalk to Taaw's foot. With a flooding tide and strong swell, you will see Kwahtsiisda | The Blow Hole throwing sea spray high into the air. You will find Hl'yaalan 'Llnagee | Hellen Village on the eastern bank of Hl'yaalan Gandlee | Hellen River..."

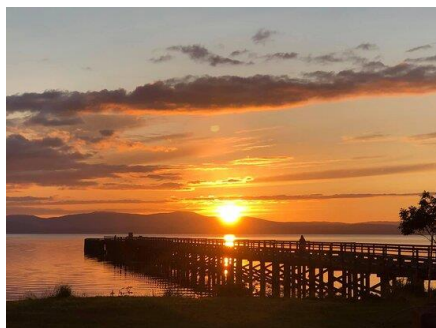
Granny and Gramps were not “up to par” but Nona decided to brave this Tow Trail on her own. Not sure if G & G would have been able to climb the stairs. Nona enjoyed the scenery very much as can be confirmed by her photos:



“...This pristine sandspit, accessible from Tow Hill, invites visitors to explore at their own pace. Walk along the beach from Tow Hill for about 7 kilometres. Due to its length and sandy beach, this route is generally considered moderately challenging and takes an average of 4 hours to complete out and back. It's a great place to catch a crab for dinner after your long walk....”

M) The Axe and Anchor Pub

Port Clements is limited in restaurants but this one was just about 300 meters from the Blue House and we had several outings there with a beautiful view. Nona had her Birthday Dinner there on June 27, but unfortunately, Granny and gramps were in the ‘sick bay’.



N) Various Curio Stops Between Skidegate and Massett

There were many tourist shops that warranted stopping to see if any ‘treasures’ were in the offering..



O) St. Mary's Spring Trail

“.....St. Mary's Spring sits beside Highway 16 near Lawn Hill, about halfway between Skidegate and Tlell. The spring was named in the early 1920s by Annie Richardson after a spring she knew in England, and a carved wooden Madonna stands beside it. Local legend says that if you drink from the spring, you will return to Haida Gwaii.



From the spring, the escarpment trail climbs about 40 metres through dense forest thick with mosses and ferns — keep an eye out for fairy slipper orchids in spring. The route is a narrow single-track, roughly 3 km out and back, and takes about 2 hours.....”

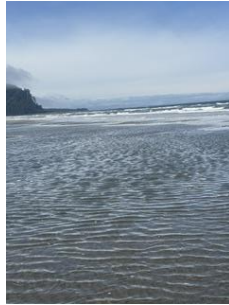


P) Glamping Tourist Gift Shop

Q) The photo of glamping gift shop should be the photo of the bus in the campground.

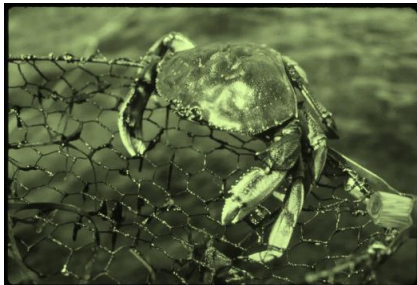


R) Seafood Hunting on North Beach near Masset, Haida Gwaii



Adele recommended North Beach up past Masset to catch our Crab. She had one net and Nona bought another at the Hardware Store in Masset as well as a pair of rubber boots. Away we went and search we did but the Crabs were not going to cooperate as we did not even see any. Adele apologized and reported that the tide was not conducive for Crabs at this time.

We did see two more groups on the beach, but they did not appear to be catching anything neither.



We interpreted this to be like going hunting and fishing.....you have to keep at it, I guess.



We did notice the other groups were wearing hip waders which allowed them to out there; however, we were told later that when the Crabs are “ready”, they are visible on the beach.

S) Day Ten June 29, 2026 - Skidegate to Terrace

We sailed from Skidegate at 1000 hours.



Ferry loading at Skidegate required vehicles to back in



PR modern Dock Loading facilities for railcar and ship



PR Modern Dock Loading facilities



Container loading



Our 1963-65 home in PR for Elmer, Marilyn, Nona and Lori



Highway 16 about 40 km from PR. Typical for 145 km to Terrace. Mountain on left. CNR, Highway and Skeena Raiver



The fast flowing Skeena River Valley provides access for CNR and Highway 16



Highway 16 about 70 km from Terrace

Driving through Prince Rupert (PR) and noticing the developments on the Harbour along with other commercial advances, brought memories to me of the time we were there in 1963 – 1965. The Acetate and Sulfite Pulp Mill on

Watson Island along with the Sawmills at Terrace that were owned by the original Columbia Cellulose Co. Ltd. (CCCL), were a fundamental driving PR commerce along with the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, Fish Canneries, etc. When CCCL became financially unstable and ceased operation, it was a serious tragedy, from which PR needed to recover.

My continued interest makes note of some of the major contributions that contribute to the existence of PR.

1. Coal Loading Terminal

- a. *"...The Prince Rupert coal terminal, operated as Trigon Pacific Terminals, is a major export facility handling metallurgical and thermal coal with an annual capacity of 18 million tonnes.*
- b. *Overview and History*
- c. *The terminal, originally constructed as Ridley Terminals Inc. in 1978, is located at Prince Rupert Port on Kaien Island, British Columbia. It was established to support coal developments in northeastern British Columbia and Alberta, with the first train of coal arriving in November 1983 and the first ship loaded in January 1984. The official opening occurred on June 8, 1984. In 2021, the facility became operated by Trigon Pacific Terminals Ltd., a privately held company owned by AMCI Group, Riverside Holdings, and the Lax Kw'alaams Band and Metlakatla First Nation*
- d. *Operations and Capacity*
- e. *The terminal specializes in metallurgical coal, thermal coal, and petroleum coke, linking Western Canadian producers to Asia-Pacific markets. It operates 24 hours a day, unloading trains at 6,000 tonnes per hour and loading vessels at 9,000 tonnes per hour, with an annual shipping capacity of 18 million tonnes. The facility also has the flexibility to handle additional bulk commodities and is recognized for its low-cost, high-efficiency operations.*
- f. *Infrastructure and Certifications*
- g. *Trigon Pacific Terminals is equipped with advanced bulk-handling infrastructure and is ISO 9001 certified for quality, ISO 18001 for environment, and OHSAS 18001 for health and safety. The terminal's design allows for rapid train-to-ship transfer, supporting large-scale coal exports while maintaining environmental and safety standards*
- h. *Economic and Regional Significance*
- i. *The terminal is a key economic driver for the region, providing employment and supporting local communities, including Indigenous partnerships. It has historically handled significant volumes of coal from both Canadian and U.S. producers, with past agreements involving companies like Arch Coal and Cloud Peak Energy to secure access to Asian markets. Its strategic location on the Pacific coast enables efficient shipping to international destinations, particularly in Asia.*
- j. *Summary*
- k. *The Prince Rupert coal terminal, now operated as Trigon Pacific Terminals, is a high-capacity, strategically located export hub for metallurgical and thermal coal. Its modern infrastructure, continuous operations, and partnerships with Indigenous communities make it a cornerstone of British Columbia's coal export industry, linking Canadian resources to global markets..."*

2. Wood Pellet Terminal

- a. *"...Westview Wood Pellet Terminal is the first purpose-built wood pellet export facility in North America. The facility has an annual capacity to ship 1.25 million tonnes of wood pellets annually to world markets for use in power generation...."*



3. Prince Rupert Cruise Terminal

- a. *"....The main cruise terminal in Prince Rupert is the Northland Cruise Terminal, located in the Cow Bay district on Kaien Island, offering modern facilities and easy access to downtown attractions.*
- b. *Terminal Overview*

- c. *The Northland Cruise Terminal is situated at 263 Manson Way, Prince Rupert, BC, V8J 1A2, and is operated by the Prince Rupert Port Authority in partnership with Global Ports Holding. The terminal can accommodate vessels up to 300 meters in length with a draft of 15 meters, and features a 4,000 square-foot building providing customs and immigration services. A self-adjusting ramp ensures easy boarding regardless of tide levels, and the Atlin Promenade connects the terminal to nearby shops, restaurants, and the Cow Bay Marina.*
- 
- d. *Accessibility and Transportation*
- e. *The terminal is within walking distance of downtown Prince Rupert, approximately 2 km away, making it easy for passengers to explore the city on foot. Taxis and local shuttle services are available for destinations outside the downtown core, such as the North Pacific Cannery or wildlife viewing sites. Ride-sharing services like Uber and Lyft are generally not available in the area.*
- f. *Nearby Attractions*
- g. *Prince Rupert offers a mix of cultural and natural attractions accessible from the terminal:*
- h. *Museum of Northern British Columbia: Showcases First Nations art, regional history, and maritime heritage, about a 15–20 minute walk from the terminal.*
- i. *Cow Bay Waterfront and Harbor Walk: Features working fishing docks, murals, galleries, and seafood restaurants, just outside the terminal.*
- j. *North Pacific Cannery National Historic Site: A preserved salmon cannery located about 20 minutes by taxi, offering guided tours of the historic site.*
- k. *Khutzeymateen Grizzly Bear Sanctuary: Accessible via boat or floatplane excursions, providing wildlife viewing opportunities.*
- l. *Rushbrook Trail and Seal Cove: Scenic waterfront paths for walking and wildlife spotting, ranging from 15 to 40 minutes from the terminal.*
- m. *Cruise Operations*
- n. *Prince Rupert is a key port for Alaska cruises, with ships from lines like Holland America, Princess Cruises, and Celebrity Cruises. The port has a single dedicated cruise pier capable of handling large vessels up to 335 meters, and the 2026 season is projected to be one of the busiest on record. The terminal serves as a hub for shore excursions, including whale watching, bear viewing, fishing trips, and cultural tours.*
- o. *Visitor Tips*
- p. *Currency: Canadian Dollar (CAD) is used; some shops may accept USD at a poor exchange rate.*
- q. *Weather: Expect mild to cool, often overcast conditions from May to September, with frequent rain; waterproof jackets and layered clothing are recommended.*
- r. *Walkability: The Cow Bay district and downtown are compact and easily explored on foot, with pedestrian-friendly paths connecting attractions.*
- s. *Safety: Prince Rupert is considered safe for tourists, but standard precautions and bear awareness are advised when exploring natural areas.*
- The Northland Cruise Terminal provides a convenient and scenic gateway to Prince Rupert, combining modern cruise facilities with immediate access to the city's cultural, historical, and natural attractions, making it an ideal stop for Alaska-bound cruises ..."*

4. Fairview Container Terminal

- a. *"...Pioneering Intermodal Terminal*
- b. *The anchor to the most reliable container trade corridor on the West Coast. Prince Rupert offers shippers an unparalleled mix of speed, reliability, and reach for*



connecting Asian and North American markets. We were the continent's first dedicated ship-to-rail container terminal, and we continue to lead the way in supply chain innovation for our customers.

- c. Fairview Container Terminal is a dedicated intermodal facility, purpose-built to provide a high-velocity gateway for transpacific container trade. Operated by DP World, the terminal provides shippers with a significant advantage over alternative gateways.*
- d. The terminal features two marine berths capable of accommodating the largest container ships with direct and unimpeded access from international shipping lanes. On-dock rail adjacent to the berth provides efficient intermodal operations in building trains of up to 12,000 feet.*
- e. Integrated scheduling and real-time communications between the shipping line, DP World, and CN Rail result in unparalleled terminal velocity and seamless transfer of containers between vessel and train. Served by CN Rail's North American network, the Port of Prince Rupert has fast and efficient connections to central Canada and the Midwestern United States, saving shippers time and money...."*

5. Prince Rupert Grain Terminal

- a. "...Prince Rupert Grain Ltd., is a high throughput, highly automated grain export terminal located on BC's northern coast.*
- b. It serves the export needs of western Canadian grain producers along CN Rail's northern rail line. PRG exports wheat and canola sourced from the Peace River region, northern Alberta and Saskatchewan....."*



6. Ridley Island Propane Export Terminal

- a. "...The Ridley Island Propane Export Terminal (RIPET) is Canada's first propane export facility, located near Prince Rupert, B.C., with a capacity of 1.2 million tonnes per year and direct access to Asian markets.*
- b. Overview and Location*
- c. RIPET is situated on a 24-acre brownfield site approximately 10 km south of Prince Rupert, British Columbia. It leverages the Canadian National Railway network and the deepest harbour in North America, providing Canadian natural gas and propane producers a 15-day shipping advantage to Asia compared to the U.S. Gulf Coast. The terminal is strategically positioned as the closest North American LPG terminal to Asian markets, enabling diversification of export destinations .*
- d. Capacity and Operations*
- e. The terminal can store 600,000 barrels of propane and handle up to 1.2 million tonnes per year. It offloads approximately 112 rail cars per day, with a maximum capacity of 140 rail cars. Propane is transferred to intermediate pressurized storage bullets, cooled, and stored at atmospheric pressure before being loaded onto Very Large Gas Carriers (VLGCs) for shipment . In 2023, RIPET loaded 42 VLGCs, with projections of around 48 vessels in 2024 .*
- f. Ownership and Partnerships*
- g. RIPET is operated by AltaGas in joint venture with Royal Vopak. The first shipment from the terminal departed in May 2019, primarily serving Asian markets . The terminal has a 25-year export*



license from the Canada Energy Regulator, allowing exports of up to 92,000 barrels per day of propane

- h. Expansion and Future Developments*
- i. Adjacent to RIPET, AltaGas and Vopak are developing the Ridley Island Energy Export Facility (REEF), a large-scale LPG and bulk liquids terminal. The first phase will export propane and butane, with potential future phases including ethane and other bulk liquids. The REEF Optimization One project will increase Phase One throughput by 25,000 barrels per day, with operations expected by mid-2027. A second phase could add an additional 60,000 barrels per day, further enhancing Canada's global energy export capacity*
- j. Strategic Importance*
- k. RIPET significantly reduces shipping time to Asia to 10–11 days, nearly half the time from the U.S. Gulf Coast, positioning Canada as a reliable supplier of propane to premium markets. The terminal has contributed over \$28.7 million in property taxes to local municipalities and supports local employment and Indigenous contractor participation*
- l. Operational Challenges*
- m. The terminal has experienced operational incidents, such as a propane leak in August 2025, which was contained without risk to surrounding communities. Labor disputes have also affected operations, including a strike in November 2025, highlighting ongoing challenges in port labor relations*
RIPET, together with the upcoming REEF facility, represents a major step in expanding Canada's liquefied petroleum gas export infrastructure, enhancing market access, and supporting the country's energy export strategy..."



7. Watson Island Bulk Terminal

- a. "...Located on Watson Island in the vicinity of Prince Rupert, B.C., the facility is best viewed as a small-scale rail terminal, moving LPG from rail cars to vessels destined for international markets.*
- b. There is no on-site processing or refrigeration, and the terminal is limited to handling and storage.*
- c. The facility is comprised of approximately 5 kilometres of new rail ladder tracks and three above-ground propane storage spheres. Propane is offloaded and stored at the rail terminal following delivery by CN via its existing rail lines. The terminal is expected to operate at 20,000 barrels per day with a capacity of 25,000 barrels per day. Propane is the only product that Pembina plans to handle at the facility. The propane is extracted off site from natural gas supply in northern BC and Alberta and will be transported from our Redwater Complex northeast of Edmonton to Prince Rupert by rail. The project capital budget was \$250 million.*
- d. Pembina's First Propane Marine Export Facility*
- e. The Prince Rupert Terminal came into service in 2021. Dry commissioning was completed in March and Pembina began loading propane onto vessels destined for international markets in April. The start-up of this facility is a major step in providing new market solutions and helping add incremental value to Western Canadian hydrocarbons.*

Our "Search for Haida Gwaii" did not include the above seven (7) commercial centers in Prince Rupert as this was not on our itinerary. I listed them here to accentuate the progress that Prince Rupert was able to achieve after the shock of CCCL and related wood products ceasing to operate in June 2001. Prince Rupert had

a population of 12,143 in 2026., falling from 15,143 in 2001. The replacement industries are maintaining the local economy.

We drove by the Skeena Kraft (the revised CCCL) Lumber Facility in Terrace which continues to degrade. A very sad sight for Elmer even though 61 years have transpired.

I did not want to see the remains of the Pulp Mill at Watson Island neither.

We arrive at the Wyndham in Terrace at 7:00 P.M. We ate at the White Spot for Dinner and Breakfast. The travelers were tired and did not check out Chances. No, the White Spot did not have Tomato Juice nor a V8 alternative.



T) Day 11 June 30, 2026 Lava Fields

'...he lava fields north of Terrace, B.C., are a testament to the province's volcanic history. The Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Provincial Park is believed to be the site of Canada's most recent volcanic eruption and lava flow, which occurred around 1700. This eruption was caused by the Tseax Cone, which is located east of Crater Creek, southeast of Gitl'kdamix, and about 20 kilometers south of the river's junction with the Nass River. The lava flow followed a creek bed into Lava Lake and then continued down the Kii Sii Aks River to the Nass River bed, where it pooled and cooled, forming a 10-kilometer long and 3-kilometer wide lava plain. This event is estimated to have killed about 2,000 Nisga'a people from two First Nation villages. The park's lava fields are recognized as a Nisga'a spiritual resting place and burial ground, reflecting the park's significant spiritual importance to the Nisga'a community.

The park's establishment as a provincial park in 1992 marked a significant milestone, as it was the first park in British Columbia to be jointly managed by a First Nation and BC Parks. This partnership aimed to protect the park's natural features and cultural significance while providing a space for visitors to learn about the Nisga'a Nation's history and culture.

Visitors to the Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Provincial Park can explore the park's diverse features, including waterfalls, pools, cinder cones, lava tubes, and lava-dammed lakes, while also learning about the Nisga'a legends and geological causes of the lava formations. The park's Visitor Centre at the Vetter Creek Campground offers a self-guided tour map and provides historical and cultural context for visitors.

The Nisga'a Memorial Lava Bed Provincial Park is a unique and significant site that offers a blend of natural wonders and cultural heritage, making it a must-visit destination for those interested in the history and geology of the region....."



We discussed the route we were going to take to visit the Lava Fields. Obviously, we needed to take Highway 113 North of Terrace which was indicated as paved through Ayansh. Our next stop was to be Old Hazelton, so the consideration was to return to Terrace to continue back on Highway 16. I had heard of the Nass Camp as where the Logging had taken place for my year s at CCCL. This made me recommend that we continue on to Cranberry Junction at Highway 37 and then we would be back on Highway 16 at Kitwanga. The short section of gravel road was termed “active loading road” and so it would be maintained.

I convinced Nona that it would a “scenic route” and so we ended up on a road that was very rough with Nona exclaiming that “poor Nickie is not used to this!” It was scenic and very dusty but we did see a bear and as I prepared to catch him on my camera, my camera fell out of my hands and before I recovered the bear disappeared in the woods.

Well it was a shortcut after all.

U) ‘KSAN Cultural Interpretive Centre, Old Hazelton, B.C.

“....'Ksan is a cultural interpretive centre approximately 180 miles east of Prince Rupert, dedicated to demonstrating and showcasing the richness of Gitxsan culture and heritage.

Hazelton, [Northern British Columbia](#)

Experiences Available

180 miles east of Prince Rupert stands 'Ksan Historical Village & Museum, a reconstructed village of the People of the River of Mist the Gitxsan, featuring more than 600 Gitxsan and Wetsuweten artifacts, guided cultural tours, traditional songs and dancing, a carving area, Gitxsan totem poles and a series of traditional First Nation houses overlooking the confluence of the historic Bulkley and Skeena rivers.

Museum - The museum is the oldest component of 'Ksan Historical Village and Museum. Since 1960, 'Ksan's antecedent the Skeena Treasure House, and the present 'Ksan Historical Village and Museum, have been amassing a sizable collection from the surrounding area.

'Ksan's museum collection consists of approximately 600 items. Comprised of both ceremonial and utilitarian materials, this collection illustrates the great diversity within the material culture of the Gitksan. Items include bent boxes, ceremonial masks, button blankets, shaman's regalia, fishing gear, hunting utensils, and assorted lithic artifacts housed in a proper museum facility with environmental controls...'



'.....'The Hagwilget Bridge at Old Hazelton is a testament to the region's rich history and the evolution of transportation infrastructure. Originally built by Indigenous people using only knives and axes, the first bridge was described as a graceful wooden spiderweb. It was later reinforced with telegraph wire and additional wood supports, and the second bridge was constructed with the abandoned material from the Collins Telegraph Line. The third bridge, built in 1913, was a new one-lane wide high-level Caddock bridge, but it swayed violently in the wind and was said to be an unnerving experience. The current bridge, built in 1931, is a single-lane steel suspension bridge designed by Alexander Carruthers and is one of the highest suspension bridges in North America. This bridge has played a crucial role in connecting communities and facilitating trade across vast distances, making it a significant part of the region's transportation history..'

V) Moricetown Rapids



“...The history of Indigenous fishing at Moricetown, B.C., is deeply rooted in the traditions and practices of the Wet'suwet'en people. The village, originally named 'Kyah Wiget, has been a significant fishing camp for thousands of years. The current village was built in the early 1900s but has maintained its fishing heritage. The Witset First Nation, a federally recognized Indian band, governs the area and offers programs and services to meet the needs of its members. The community's fishing practices are closely tied to the Wet'suwet'en traditional territory, which remains unceded. The Witset First Nation is engaged in the B.C. treaty process and aims to enhance member development while pursuing economic opportunities through various agreements with the Province of British Columbia.....

W) Day 11 July 1, 2026 Burns Lake

We were getting hungry and decided to stop at Smithers. We noticed this awesome log structure beside Highway 16 named River House. We ate on the patio and met an interesting couple who were having lunch prior to attending a wedding for their daughter.



We had a great conversation and found out more about what was happening in Smithers and the surrounding areas.



We arrived at Key-oh Lodge at 7:00 P.M., for a well-deserved break.

After a drink Nona checked out the reputed Eating Places and was advised that the Pub was the place

to go.



X) Visit with Jane Markin in Prince George, July 01, 2026

We had previously arranged to meet Jane at 1130 AM and we arrived early enough to set our GPS for 337 Corless Crescent, Prince George.



We have _____. Jane (Fenya) Markin, Nona, Granny and Gramps.

Y) Day 12 Williams Lake



We checked in to the Sandman at 4:00 P.M. and decided to go the



Chances Casino where we would also eat dinner

Z) Day 13 Williams Lake to Kelowna

We arrived in Kelowna about 2:00 P.M. and decided to do some shopping in West Kelowna before heading to Garrett's house. We arrived at the house at 4:00 P.M. The arrangement was to have the Heddle family come and we would order dinner in.



Momma Heddle (Kayla)
hugging son Zane

It was a great time to relax with the Kelowna family.



Rear L to R: Daxx Heddle, Sorayya (Daxx's Girlfriend), Kelcey MvNeil (Garrett's Finace), Nate Heddle Front Row L to R: Zane Heddle, Nona Kucher (Granny), Kayla Heddle

AA) Day 14 Home to Castlegar from Kelwona

We arrived home at 1:00 P.M.

1. Distance from Castlegar, B.C. to Massett on Haida Gwaii, B.C.

"...There are 1,124.08 km (698.47 miles) from Castlegar to Massett in northwest direction and 1,995.59 km (1,240 miles) by car and ferry, following the 16 route.

Castlegar and Massett are 1 day 7 hours far apart, if you drive non-stop for 1 day and take a ferry for 6 hours 59 mins .

Autos & Vehicles

This is the fastest [route from Castlegar, BC to Massett, BC](#). The halfway point is Vanderhoof, BC..."



2. Distance from Skidegate to Masset on Haida Gwaii

“....There are 83.48 km (51.87 miles) from Skidegate to Masset in north direction and 99.78 km (62 miles) by car, following the YH 16 route....”



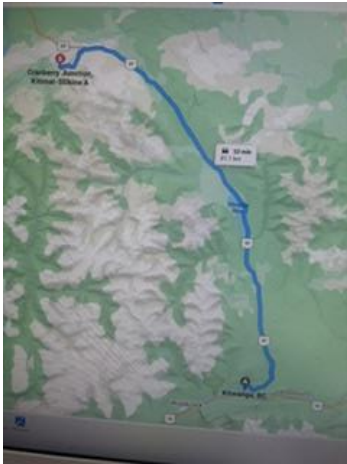
3. Distance from Terrace to Lava Fields at Aiyansh



4. Distance from Aiyansh to Cranberry Junction on Highway 37



5. Distance from Cranberry Junction to Kitwanga on Highway 16 Junction



6. Summation Estimate of Haida Gwaii Itinerary

HAIDA GWAI TOTAL DISTANCE TRAVELLED SUMMARY

No.	Start location	End Location	Dist. (Km)	No of Xs	Subtotal	Total	Comments	
1	Castlegar	Quesnel	864	1	864		Home	
2	Quesnel	Prince Rupert	833	1	833		Overnight	
3	Prince Rupert	Skidegate	163	2	326		Overnight	
4	Skidegate	Port Clements	59	5	295		Overnight	
5	Port Clements	Masset	43	5	215			
6	Port Clements	Tow Hill	66	2	132			
7	Prince Rupert	Terrace	144	1	144		Overnight	
8	Terrace	Aiyansh	100	1	100		Lava Fields	
9	Aiyansh	Cranberry Jtn.	58	1	58			
10	Cranberry Jtn.	Kitwanga	71	1	71			
11	Kitwanga	Old Hazelton	55	1	55		G'San Village	
12	Old Hazelton	Burns Lake	218	1	218		Overnight	
13	Burns Lake	Prince George	228	1	228		Lunch with Jane	
14	Prince George	Williams Lake	240	1	240		Overnight	
15	Williams Lake	Kelowna	445	1	445		Overnight	
16	Kelowna	Castlegar	306	1	306		Home	
17								
18	Total				4530			
19								

As an ***Epilogue***, I need to respond to the initial title we gave to this article, ***did we find Haida Gwaii?***

My answer is yes; we did!

We felt as if we were in another country. The Haida Nation did well in preserving their history as it was evident in all that we observed;

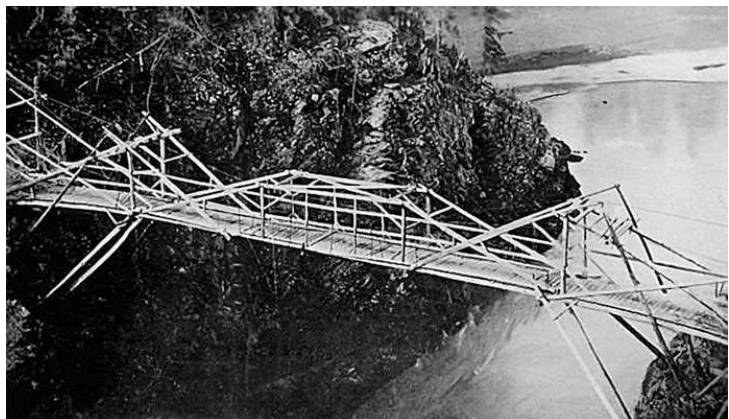
- Nature and old growth
- Atmosphere and attitude
- Identity of all sites and settled communities had Haida translations
- Totem poles

There was a feeling of calmness and peace. Haida Gwaii is relaxing.

The paintings of Haida seamen paddling their ocean-going boats across the Strait and then up the swift Skeena River, all the way to Old Hazelton, is mind boggling. The Haida were a gifted group of people.

Trying to visualize how their “brother” nation at G’San were able to design and construct a bridge at Old Hazelton.

“.....First made of wood and wire hundreds of years ago, the Hagwilget Bridge connected the inland First Nation communities with coastal First Nations communities, resulting in important and invaluable trade networks....”



Their Artists, Sculptors and Craftsmen continue to respond to creativity in their museums and communities with their abundance of totem poles communicating individual stories. Their respect for each totem continues to this day.

Their respect for their elders is an attribute that can be duplicated by the rest of us.

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