

Lakeside Dental News: 2015

Ninety-nine years ago, on April 24, 1916, Ernest Shackleton and five companions launched a 20-foot boat from Elephant Island into the wild storms of the southern ocean and into the coming Antarctic winter. The ship that carried them, the Endurance, trapped in pack ice, had sunk 5 months earlier, leaving the 27-man crew marooned on the pack ice off the shore of the Antarctic Peninsula. They had their supplies from the ship and three lifeboats. They set up camp on the ice floes and slowly drifted north.

On April 9 their ice sheet broke up and they took to their boats making their way through ice and gales to Elephant Island, landing on April 14. This was a desolate place, far off any trading routes and food was running low. Their only hope was to get word to a whaling station located 1300 km away on South Georgia Island. So the boat carrying Shackleton and five crewmembers was launched.

The ocean south of Cape Horn stretching to the Antarctic Peninsula is known to be the most storm-swept piece of water in the world. The 20-foot lifeboat, with small sails, set out to navigate through ice flows, violent late-season storms and towering¹ waves. Capsizing was a constant threat.

After fifteen days of wild sailing and brilliant navigation they reached South Georgia. There they crossed a mile high mountain range in winter conditions with 50 feet of rope between them. They got to the whaling station, from which they arranged to return to Elephant Island with a rescue ship. All 27 men were saved. No lives were lost.

This is one of the all time great stories in the annals of great explorers. If you are not familiar with it, I recommend further investigation.

I recounted this story to give a sense of perspective. What follows is a report of a fine “seafaring” adventure that I shared this summer with some good friends. And by the standards of a dentist in his mid-sixties, it had some mildly heroic components to it; however, I do want you to know that I know about Shackleton and fully acknowledge the enormous gulf between their “adventure” and ours.

¹From an account of the story:

On the eleventh day (May 5), a tremendous cross-sea developed and at midnight, while Shackleton was at the tiller, a line of clear sky was spotted between the south and southwest. Shackleton wrote, “I called to the other men that the sky was clearing, and then a moment later I realized that what I had seen was not a rift in the clouds but the white crest of an enormous wave. During twenty-six years’ experience of the ocean in all its moods I had not encountered a wave so gigantic. It was a mighty upheaval of the ocean, a thing quite apart from the big white-capped seas that had been our tireless enemies for many days. I shouted ‘For God’s sake, hold on! It’s got us.’”

Some Background

Georgian Bay is about 190 kilometres long by 80 kilometres wide, covering approximately 15,000 square kilometres making it 80% as large as Lake Ontario. It is bounded on the east by the Canadian Shield, bedrock granite whose distortions form The Thirty Thousand Islands. The western border is formed by the limestone cliffs of the Niagara Escarpment, which create the Bruce Peninsula. It is a wild and majestic place.

One of my earliest memories of Georgian Bay was a car trip with my family, crossing from Manitoulin Island to Tobermory, at the top of the Bruce Peninsula. It was a hot, sunny July afternoon, with a stiff wind blowing out of what was likely the southwest. We were on the *Norisle*, a 215-foot ferry carrying 50 cars. The boat was heading straight into what I remember as one of the largest waves I had ever seen. The bow of the boat would rise up and then fall, slamming into the next wave, sending a great sheet of spray far from the ship. I was 12, standing near the bow, transfixed for about a half an hour. Then I developed a strange sense that all was not well. The first inklings of seasickness entered my consciousness. By the end of the passage I was very happy to be on the unmoving ferry dock in Tobermory.

Growing up in Kitchener, it was not long after a bunch of us turned 16 that we were exploring the cliffs of the Bruce Peninsula, a few hours drive to the north. The Niagara escarpment, pushed down by two kilometres of ice during our most recent glacial period, started rebounding when the ice sheet retreated some 11,000 years ago. This is still underway. It is a long ragged tear line in the geological bedrock, rising up out the waters of Georgian Bay creating a spectacular--and back then a largely undeveloped--shoreline. Just the kind of place that some young guys would like to explore. The Bruce Trail had been pushed through a couple of years before, giving us access to remote rock beaches that made great camping spots. And the water off the Bruce has the sort of blue clarity that we associate with the Caribbean.

My first experience with the east side of the Bay, the Thirty Thousand Island side, was up near Honey Harbour. For years we spent Labour Day weekend at a family event run by a YMCA camp located on Beausoleil Island. The island, a national park, is 8 kilometres long. The openness of the terrain allowed this young kid to wander unfettered through Tom Thompson landscapes: rocks sculpted by glaciers and trees bent by the wind.

In my first year at the University of Waterloo I discovered the map library giving me access to detailed topographic maps of Georgian Bay. I was particularly fascinated by the Bustard Islands south of the French River, a cluster of some 550 islands in an area of about 3 kilometres by 3 kilometres located a couple of kilometres offshore. The following spring I was alone in a borrowed canoe heading out to those islands. It was just after Victoria Day weekend. There were still remnants of ice in sheltered areas and I was paddling straight across open water through swells quite a bit larger than I wanted them to be. The paddle lasted two or three hours but then I was there, in the calm shelter of a tangle of hundreds of islands. Three or four had cottages, the rest was crown land. I had met a trapper on the way

out, and he gave me the coordinates to his winter trapping shack. I stayed there for a week. And, by the end of that week I was hooked on the Bustards. I have been back, in a canoe with a tent, many times, the last adventure about 2 years ago.

Finally, in 1988, I ended up with Bekanon Island, a small property that I share with two other families and a former spouse. It is our own little chunk of the Bay.

So, that is the end of my (lengthy) introductory remarks. Georgian Bay is a place that I know and love. Part of what makes Georgian Bay particularly compelling is that, in addition to its wild beauty, it has a definite edge. There is danger. It has enough weather, waves and unforgiving shoreline that if you don't treat it with great respect, it will get you.

Some of the best parts of good adventures are uncertainty and the unknown. Disneyland is at one end of that spectrum and Ernest Shackleton's story is the other.

So it is that some years ago I started thinking about circumnavigating Georgian Bay in a Zodiac, an inflatable boat. I knew a number of people that had gone around the Bay in serious, live-aboard cruisers, but I didn't know any who had tried this in something bordering on small.

In the spring of 2013 I visited CO2 Inflatables in Oakville, advertised as Canada's largest inflatable boat dealer. I was looking for a boat that would hold several people as well as substantial gear (fuel, food, camping stuff etc.). This was a fact-finding mission. Part of my goal was to do this on the cheap. I had hoped to find something used but still serviceable costing a few thousand dollars. I was shown a bunch of very nice "hard-bottomed" inflatables that had a fibreglass hull and inflatable sides. The Coast Guard uses these. These were several times my intended budget. Also, I found out that used inflatables, available for purchase, hardly exist: people buy them, love them and never sell them. As I was leaving, my hopes flagging, I saw a fine looking boat sitting alone in a different building. "What about that one?" I asked. The response was that it is a new model from Zodiac, fully inflatable with a rubber, not fibreglass bottom. It has an aluminium floor and it deflates, folds and stores in a large bag. Also it was listed at about one fifth the cost of the boats that I had been looking at. Bingo! Brand-new, right in the middle of my price-range, and it had no trailer or winter storage issues. I left with a down payment in place.

That summer I started getting to know my boat. It is 14 feet 9 inches long, is rated for 8 people and with a 20hp outboard on the back, moves along quite briskly (40 km/hr with 2 on board in a following wind). It handled 2 - 3 foot waves nicely, floating like a duck over the swells. Still, there are waves, and then there are waves. Summer ended, we deflated the boat and put it away, starting to think seriously about the circumnavigation.

It was late in that fall that I took to waking up at about 4:00 in the morning, thinking about the planned excursion, and wondering if I was planning on doing something particularly stupid. It kept me awake. Why was it that I had never met anyone who had circumnavigated the Bay in a small boat? Had many tried, but none returned? At 4:00 in the morning my brain likes to tell me how badly things could possibly go and then finishes off with a medium dose of free floating anxiety. You've got to love a brain like that.

So I had to start talking about the trip. As you tell people what you are planning, you begin to paint yourself into a corner. After a while, the thought of all the bad things that could happen isn't really that much worse than the thought of telling everyone that, after all your talk, you are now backing out. It's a strategy that has some flaws, but overall, it works.

The expedition, as planned, needed some crew. I chatted up a bunch of friends and eventually ended up with 4 guys, long time pals, who would be on board in two one week shifts: Max and Carlos for the first week and Peter and David for the second. The hand-off would take place in Wiarton. We would go in early July when the days are long and autumn gales are still far off.

Logistics got planned. How far is it between marinas and so how much fuel do you have to carry? There are some long, marina-free passages. Food, charts, GPS, camping gear, safety gear and repair gear (2 inflatable patch kits) were all added to lists of things to get done. Although we planned to use onshore accommodations when possible, we also considered the possibility of being marooned on the backside of some island for a few days while a storm blew itself out. Long to-do lists were completed and eventually we were ready to go.

On July 3 Max, Carlos and I left St. Catharines early, got to Wright's Marina in Britt late morning and took the water taxi out to Beganon Island. We were up in the northeast corner of the Bay, just below the multiple mouths of the French River. It was pouring rain. Wayne, a big guy from the marina, was along for a couple of hours. We dragged the deflated boat out of storage and onto the wet rocks. It inflated nicely. With Wayne's help we got the outboard installed, the Zodiac pushed out into the water and the engine started. Then the sun came out - we took this as a good sign.

The Trip:

Day 1: Friday, July 4: Independence Day

We wake up at 6:00, load the boat, tie things down and by 8:15 we are underway. Max and Carlos get their brains wrapped around navigation charts and the care and feeding of our hand-held GPS unit. Currently, the GPS is way smarter than we are.

We head south to Britt, pass the lighthouse station and after this we are on "the outside". Much of the trip along the Thirty Thousand Islands is back in behind those islands. Here, due to shoals and reefs it isn't possible, and we are 1 - 2 km off shore in long blue waves coming from the west, looking for the next red channel marker. We start out uneasily, wondering how things will be, but with time, settle into a more relaxed outlook. After 20 km we head for Alexander Passage, the beginning of our travel inside the islands. The entrance is narrow and shallow with shoals and breaking waves all around. The shallow entrance turns our long waves into waves that are tall and steep. Tall and steep enough that twice the bow of our inflatable actually bends as we surf into the front of the wave ahead of us. Is this normal? Shooting down these waves, rocks and breaking seas all around, keeps you focused. And then it is calm. We are on the inside. Flat water past islands that look like Henry Moore sculpted them. We relax. This is now fun. Our first night is in a cabin at Spring Haven Lodge, a bit north of Pointe Au Baril. Carlos undercooks some cowboy steaks on the BBQ. We wash this down with some red wine and fall asleep early. We have travelled 70km.

Day 2: We depart at 6:30 hoping to get ahead of the convection winds that build as the sun rises and the land heats up. Journal entry: "Big steep waves once we got to the bay – large swells hit shallows and build up. The Zodiac handles all of this with relative ease. It is great being out here in unruly conditions, blue sky, surfing down the front of following waves." We end up in Parry Sound, tied up at the public dock, staying in the Midtown Hotel. Parry Sound is a beautiful place with a huge CP train trestle high over the town. Long trains cross it regularly. 65 km.

Day 3: The alarm is set for 4:45 for an early departure. Journal entry: "Our longest passage to date. And arguably our most enjoyable. We set out in spite of high wind warnings from the Government Marine advisory web site. We decided that if we hit a spot where things got too interesting we could turn back or camp. Open waters got pretty steep when waves hit shoals or shallows, but once away from shore the swells were wide and easy." We stop in Honey Harbour for fuel. On the first part of our expedition we pass few other boats. The numbers climb as we go south and the waters around Honey Harbour are like a crowded highway. From here we cross to Midland and the Silver Star Motor Inn. We have a great 3-course dinner for \$20 at The Library, a converted Carnegie library, now with a new purpose. Tomorrow's forecast is for wind gusts up to 65km/hr. Time to be prudent. We will stay here for an extra day and wait for the weather to pass. 95km.

Day 4: We explore Midland while the wind blows. A warm sunny day. We return to The Library for dinner.

Day 5: A dreary, wet and windy day. We head up to Christian Island and then cross 34 km of open water heading for friend David Bacher's place near Thornbury on the other side of the bay. It's good to have a GPS programmed with a bearing. David Bacher and I were in dental school together and shared accommodations in London for 4 years. Now he and his wife, Caroline, live on the shores of southern Georgian Bay. Some old friends live nearby and we have a fine dinner together. 70km.

Day 6: We set off in the lee of Cape Rich. There is a lot of wind, but we are sheltered. Until we hit the north shore and we make our way into steep oncoming waves ending up in Owen Sound. We are staying at the Between the Maples B&B overlooking the Marina. They have one room and we will share it. Better than a tent. We head into downtown for dinner and spend some time cruising up the Sydenham River that runs through the middle of Owen Sound. We idle under bridges, following the twists in the river getting an alternative view of the city. We eat at Rocky Raccoon's, a restaurant run by two brothers from Nepal. Fine curry. 65km.

Day 7: From journal: "Our first calm day. The flat water leaves us almost giddy. Clear sky, cold air and hot sun. Amazed at how few boats are out – except around Honey Harbour we pass almost no one". We are heading up to Wiarton to meet up with David and Peter: my crew for the second week. We arrive in Wiarton and Peter and David are waiting. We

celebrate with white fish from Howell's Fish². We floured it and cooked it in butter on a picnic table in a park with the Zodiac tied up nearby. That evening, after an outdoor dinner of jumped chicken in the back of the Pacific Hotel, our accommodations, Max and Carlos headed back to St. Catharines in the car that delivered Peter and David. 50km.

Friday, July 11, Day 8: A 5:45 breakfast at Tim's and we are underway by 6:30. It's quite cool, and very flat. The water here, and up to Tobermory, is remarkably clear. We can see down 30 feet or more. We round Cape Croker and head off to Barrier Island, a place that I have seen from the mainland for 50 years and have wondered about. From the journal: "Surreally calm on our way to Barrier Island. A beautiful strip of land with wonderfully lush poison ivy overlooking the shingle beach. Wild flowers blooming profusely." We arrive in Lion's Head in time for lunch: wings and beer at the local pub. We stay at the Lion's Head Beach Hotel. That evening there is a public concert on the water's edge, 60 seconds from our back door. 67km.

Day 9: Off to Tobermory. We head north under the limestone cliffs of the Bruce Peninsula. It's almost all pristine wilderness: long beaches with rounded limestone and the cliffs looming overhead. The water is transparent and we float over boulders far below us. We stop at Dyer Bay and then head north to Cabot Head, at the top northeast corner of the Bruce. We beach in Wingfield Basin, the only safe anchorage between Tobermory and Lion's Head. We tour the Cabot Head Lighthouse. The federal government is out of the manned lighthouse business, and the facility is maintained and run by the Friends of the Cabot Head Lighthouse. The lighthouse keeper pays \$375 per week and is in charge of the property: maintenance and greeting visitors. There are 2 weeks that are still not booked.³

At Cabot Head we turn west and head into a stiff wind. We are no longer in the lee of the cliffs and things get choppy. Lunch is a fine affair. Being in a Zodiac we are able to paddle in behind some cottage sized boulders at the foot of the cliff and in the resulting calm have a fine shore lunch of rye bread and summer sausage. In Tobermory the Harbour Master, Carla, finds us one of the last rooms in town. Plan B was to head out to Cove Island and camp there. 72km.

Day 10: A lightning storm started during last night's dinner and continued until dawn. Good not to be camping. Also, a strong wind is blowing from the northwest with storm advisories. We spend the day exploring town and watching the FIFA World Cup Finals: Germany over Argentina 1:0 in extended time.

² Howell's Fish is run by Tom Howell, following in a business started by his father and grandfather, both commercial fishermen. As a very young guy I used to drive here from Sauble Beach, where we rented a cottage for summer holidays. I have a fond memory of stepping from July heat into the dark cool of their icehouse filled high with ice cut from Colpoy Bay the previous winter. It was covered in sawdust to keep it from melting.

³ In Grade 8 we all took a vocational aptitude test to see what we might be good at. The scores were analysed and my outcome indicated that my highest calling was to be a lighthouse keeper. And you think... A dental office, with a window perched 50 feet above Lake Ontario. I've been headed in this direction for a long time.

Day 11: We leave Tobermory in a west wind heading out to Lonely Island, located, as the name implies, out in the middle of the Bay. Initially the island isn't visible, but with time it appears on the horizon and grows. We get to a Coast Guard station abandoned in the early 80s. The collapsing docks give us a little shelter for the Zodiac. We explore: sidewalks, foundations and supports for large drums of diesel fuel remain. We make our way up the old path cut through the woods and up the cliff to the lighthouse, clad in painted cedar shingles; it is now serviced by helicopter and powered by solar panels. And Lonely Island is lonely. A fireplace was built out of beach stone by some of the last lighthouse keepers. They had piled up carefully cut firewood, contained by vertical stakes. The firewood is still there but the bark has fallen off. Nobody much has been out here in the past third of a century and the wood stands beside the fireplace, unburned. We pitch our tents on the concrete platform by the dock. Dinner consists of sirloin strip loins and Kraft dinner, and some very good red wine. We build a fire from wood tossed up on the rock beach and sit there in the lingering light long after the sun has set. "A wonderful sense of remoteness and isolation." 45km.

Day 12: We have overnight rain with a "strongish wind out of the north". Our Zodiac, tied up to the disintegrating government dock is bouncing around in the oncoming waves. We set out in a straight line for Killarney, 45 kilometres distant. The swells are steep initially but diminish with time. Killarney, settled in 1820, was the heart of a thriving fishing industry. It only had water and air access until 1962 whereupon it was connected to the rest of the world more directly following the construction of Highway 637. When you walk around the town it feels like it is still part of another time. 46km.

Day 13: We head home, completing the last part of the loop back to Beganon Island. Along the way, half way down Collin's Inlet we pass a guy in a small double-ended rowboat with a mast and sail. He is rowing up into the wind. I ask him where he is headed. He says Chicago. His home is Tennessee and over a period of five years he has paddled down the Mississippi, out to Key West, up the intercoastal waterway and was now crossing the Great Lakes. He travelled about 1000 miles a year, and next year he would finish what is called The Great Loop paddling from Chicago down the Mississippi back to home. His name is John Guider and if you Google him you can follow his progress. It gives some perspective to our two-week adventure.

Once we leave the shelter of Collin's Inlet, we are again on the outside for about 25 kilometres. Here we were in the steepest waves we had encountered. A stiff wind is blowing from behind and twice we surf down the front of one wave into the back of another burying the bow of the Zodiac, allowing 10 or 15 gallons of water to join us on board. We break out the hand pump and move the water back into the bay. After our second incident, we slow down so that we stay between the waves. We pull into the Bustard Islands, and sheltered from the wind and waves, have a picnic lunch on the rocks. Three hours later we pull up at Beganon Island, have a fine dinner of pork chops, onions and mushrooms. 85km.

Day 14: We motor back to Wright's Marina. A couple of weeks ago we moved tentatively. Now we had the deep comfort of really knowing what we were doing. Gear gets loaded into the pickup truck and we drive south.

Summary: We travelled a bit over 700 kilometres, used 180 litres of fuel for an average of 4 kilometres per litre (or about 8.5 miles per gallon). Our average transit was about 65 kilometres.

Over the past months I've talked to my four co-participants, all separately. It's interesting: we have all come away with a sense that we really don't have words for: sort of an amazement in having been out there, in a world that isn't far from home, but is an entirely different place. Far out from shore, in waves, you have a chance to see things differently. And I think that we are haunted, in a good way, by that memory.

The Rest of the Newsletter:

Life at Lakeside Dental continues to be good. Being a one chair dental office is certainly less efficient than other, multi-chaired, offices that we have worked in, but we celebrate our inefficiency. Being able to focus our attention on one person at a time is a privilege and gives us all a sense of satisfaction that was less available elsewhere.

Barb MacLeod, my co-worker, assistant and friend for the past several decades, is entering the next stage of her retirement. Last year she went from four days to two and beginning in April she will be fully retired. Actually, not fully retired, because we hope that she will continue to be available to help us out when holidays, illness or special projects leave us a person short.

On Toothbrushes

Q: Should you be using a stiff toothbrush or a soft one?

A: A soft one. I have written about this before, but we still have the occasional conversation about putting down the stiff brush and using a soft one instead.

The reasons:

1: You brush to remove plaque. Plaque is soft. Plaque is the layer of bacteria that cause decay and gum disease. If you ever went away for a few days and forgot your brush, and we all have, you will notice that about day 3 your teeth are fuzzy: this is plaque build-up.

Wiping your teeth with a Kleenex makes them smooth again. You have removed the newly formed plaque. If Kleenex can wipe off the plaque, so can a soft brush.

2: A stiff brush, used vigorously, can drive the abrasive particles up against teeth and roots and wear grooves into your teeth.

3: A stiff brush, used vigorously, can damage your gums and with time, push them down the tooth. (Have you heard the expression long in the tooth? This is one way of achieving that.)

4: Soft bristles bend easily and will go down further between the teeth than stiff bristles. We are currently recommending a very soft brush with bristles designed to find their way a good distance in between the teeth without damaging the teeth or gums.

So, if for deep-seated psychological reasons (and I know that there are some of you out there) you feel the need to use a stiff brush: go ahead, but we really think that it isn't a very good idea.

Parking

As mentioned before, feel free to park in our driveway. It leaves the street less parked up. On the other hand, parking on the street is just fine as well.

Dental Implants

Dental implants are the most rapidly growing field in dentistry. Implants are used to replace missing teeth. A titanium implant is placed in the bone in the location of the missing tooth. Bone likes titanium and grows up and into the structures of the implant fixing it in place. This process is called osseointegration. This now forms the "root" for the proposed tooth. A connecting piece called an abutment is attached to the implant and a crown is placed on the abutment. Look this up on Wikipedia under Dental Implant. There is an extensive and well researched article that discusses all aspects of implants.

The first implant was placed in 1965 by Ingvar Branemark, a Swedish researcher. About a decade previously he was doing unrelated research and placed a titanium appliance into the femur of a rabbit. When he went to retrieve it (it was an expensive appliance), it couldn't be removed: the bone had grown into and around it holding it tight. A light went on and the field of dental implants was born. Osseointegration is now also used in joint replacement procedures.

It wasn't all straightforward. I took a course on the newly developing field of implants around 1990. A five year retrospective study showed a survival rate of about 50%, meaning that after 5 years, half had failed. But those were early days. Now the survival rate in healthy individuals with good bone with no complicating issues is around 95% after 10 years: not perfect, but a vast improvement.

I placed my first implant about 8 years ago under the supervision of Dr. Peter Fritz. It is still in place and when I last saw the patient a year ago it was functioning very well. Since then I travelled to London on a number of occasions to look over the shoulder of my friend Dr. Tom Davidson, an early implementer in the field. He has limited his practice to implants and related dentistry and gets referrals from about 60 dentists in the area. Under his supervision I placed a number of implants, and since then we have started to place them in our office. I'm currently taking a nine-day course from Dr. Steven Diana in Georgetown.

In all areas of dentistry, there are situations that are relatively easy and there are situations that are complex. As a general dentist it is important to know when to undertake a procedure and when to transfer responsibility to a specialist, or someone else, who has a clearer understanding of this aspect of dentistry than you do. It is this way with many aspects of what we do, and it will continue to be that way with implants. We plan to take on straightforward situations in our office and refer the complex ones.

Implants are expensive, with much of the cost incorporated in the components themselves. These are not inexpensive! And, interestingly, we have come across two cases recently in which low cost implants (placed and restored elsewhere) fractured in the body of the implant. I have never seen this with the (pricey) implant components that we have been involved with, but this made it clear that this may not be an area where you want to go to lowest cost components.

The field of implants is continuing to evolve at a very rapid rate, with improvements being incorporated continually. A lecturer recently said that concepts that he was teaching five years ago are no longer current, and much of the thinking and techniques from 10 years ago are completely out-dated.

We here at Lakeside Dental want to thank all of you for your continued support of our one chair operation with a pretty good view here on the edge of Lake Ontario.

David Bergen and Team