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Publications Mail Sales Agreement #40064277 • May/June 2017 • Published and printed in Canada

May/June 2017 \$5.25



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CANADIAN HISTORY from COAST to COAST

In honour of Canada 150, explore historic landmarks from British Columbia to Newfoundland

By Hermione Wilson

Canada is a country with a rich and colourful history you can see and touch from coast to coast. On the occasion of Canada's 150th birthday, here are some stops to add to your itinerary when you're on the road this year. As with all Parks Canada National Historic Sites this year, admission is free!

Barkerville Historic Town

Where: Barkerville, British Columbia

Established: 1862

Historical significance: When English prospector William "Billy" Barker struck gold in 1862 in an area near Richfield, BC, a ramshackle town, which later bore his name, was born. Barkerville burned down in 1868, but the residents rebuilt it because there was so much gold in the area they didn't want to leave. Most of the town's 135 buildings are original, dating between 1869 and about 1930, including St. Saviour's Anglican Church, the oldest surviving wooden church in BC still in use, and the Chee Kung Tong National Historic Site, which is one of the oldest buildings in town and the oldest ethnic Chinese structure in the country

Special events: On April 18, the site will take part in the National Canadian Film Day celebration, when Reel Canada will allow rights-free Canadian films to be shown all on one day. On July 1, Barkerville will mark its 150th Dominion Day, as it was the first in Canada to do so on the first year anniversary of Confederation in 1868. On August 13-15, there will be a re-enactment of an historic cattle drive that was led by Chinese cowboys and their First Nations guides. The memorial ride will be captured in a documentary film.

Pro tip: Barkerville operates three different campsites which are all within walking distance of the town. There is a wheelchair-accessible trail that leads from the campgrounds to the park. There are both power and full hook-up sites, and dry sites. If RVers are planning on bringing a big rig and don't want to walk, they should bring a second vehicle because there is no shuttle between the campsites and the park.

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E-mail: info@rvgazette.com Website: www.rvgazette.com

Newsstand Price: \$5.25/issue

Subscriptions One year:

Canadian subscriptions for 2017: \$22.00 + GST/HST
U.S. subscriptions: \$40.00/International: \$60.00 (Canadian funds)

The *RV gazette* is published by the Explorer RV Club. For the year of 2017, Explorer RV Club members pay the annual subscription rate, plus applicable taxes, when they remit their Explorer RV Club membership dues. Individual subscriptions are purchased directly through the office of the *RV gazette*, Subscription Department, P.O. Box 800, Beaverton, ON L0K 1A0.

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2017 Explorer RV Club www.explorer-rvclub.com

A division of Wayfarer Insurance Brokers Limited

Canadian publications mail sales agreement #40064277

Postage paid in Toronto

ISSN 1484-1339 Published and Printed in Canada

Next issue: July/August 2017

Newsstand distribution by Distacor.

Call Toll-Free 1-800-668-7724 for retail outlets.



Canada 150 on Tour

Last issue I told you about some of my first camping memories. My parents always said we should see our own country first so consequently, all of those trips were two-week journeys headed somewhere different every time. Rest stops and visits were built-in along the way and involved many of Canada's historic sites and points of interest. In honour of Canada's 150th birthday this year, we've done the work for you! Follow our writer, Hermione, as she takes you through some of Canada's many important historic sites, coast to coast (p. 22). Of course, admission to the sites is free this year in honour of our nation's birthday; what better time is there to tour your own country than now?

We also introduce you to Adam and Kate. Just over a year ago, this young couple gave up their radio careers for a life on the road and they've never looked back. They too, take us on a journey across Canada, from PEI to where they are now located in Tofino. I don't want to give too much away so turn to p. 28!

If you want to venture south beyond our borders, try Minnesota, the Land of 10,000 Lakes, as it's known. Many of Minnesota's most scenic spots have been preserved as state parks, and most of the 75 state parks and recreation areas have campgrounds with tent and RV sites. Or, stay in one of the state's approximately 500 privately operated campgrounds, most of which are located beside a lake or river.

No matter where you choose to go, may you have many lasting memories as a result.

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