



Canadian Rockies Tour – September 2016 – the New England Seven

(by Pete Sturtevant, Poem by John Kelley, photography by Rafe Loosigian)

Over a year ago, seven couples from AHC New England started planning another Healey odyssey across Canadian Rockies. This group has toured beautiful areas across North America and Europe in the past. This will be the first Healey Tour without our leader Dominic Falconeiri, who we lost in 2015 and who was one of the founding members of this group. Dom's brother in law, John Kelley has picked up the mantle to help assure the group continues the tradition of great Healey adventure tours. We had toured the US Rockies two trips in the past and all were very interested to see and experience the Canadian Rockies.

We chose to start our trip in Whitefish, Montana and end up in Seattle two weeks later. Our truck driver does not have Canadian operating rights, so starting and ending in the US was required. We made the decision to focus on Alberta and British Columbia for our trip and to avoid the big cities in both provinces. Our planned drive was 1200 miles with ten destinations traveling as far north as Jasper National Park in Alberta.

To keep our family and Healey friends in the UK aware of what we were doing, I wrote a daily blog of the adventure and posted on Facebook with pictures and the experiences of the day. This article consolidates the two week adventure into a single chronology of events.

Day 1 – Whitefish, Montana - We had two excellent flights from Boston to Minneapolis to Kalispell Montana, where we met Brett Leonard, the Owner Operator of Motor Age Transport. His '67 Autocar tractor transported our seven big Healeys, 2600 miles from Massachusetts to Kalispell, MT in five days. This is the start of our journey to a small B&B with 9 rooms called, the Good Medicine Lodge in Whitefish. The owner Woody went out of his way to make us feel at home. After dinner it was time for the hot tub and a game of Jenga by the fire pit.



The Healeys lined up in front of the Good Medicine Lodge in Whitefish, Montana

Day 2 - Fernie Hot Springs, BC - We fought wind, rain, hot and cold temps much of the day. We kept the tops down the whole 200 miles from Whitefish MT to Fernie Alpine Resort BC. The most spectacular part of the day was the 50 mile drive through Glacier National Park to the summit at Logan's Pass. Breathtaking views of the glacier with narrow windy roads up through the mountains with a beautiful lake at the bottom. As we headed north we ran through an open range park to the Canadian Border and had to be careful of the cows just walking, or standing, in the middle of the road. This open range reminded me of the New Forest, in the UK.



Day 3 – Radium Hot Springs, BC – We drove north today from Fernie, BC to Radium Hot Springs, BC. The drive is less than 100 miles. It was cool and damp again for much of the day. The quality of the roads in the Canadian Rockies is great, but there is pretty heavy traffic with cars and tractor trailers on the two-lane roads. As soon as we arrived at our hotel early afternoon, a mother and young Rocky Mountain sheep came walking down the mountain.

Radium is known for its two natural springs : Cold at 90 degrees and Hot which is 105. The group all went to the Hot Springs which was only 4 km's from our hotel. The scenario up the mountain was beautiful but much was hidden in the clouds. The Hot Springs didn't feel as hot as what you experience in a Jacuzzi, but it was great. The springs are naturally fed, but they use some Chlorine to assure it is clean and safe.

Day 4 – Banff, AB - We arrived in Banff, AB hoping to see some bears, but haven't seen one yet. It was a cold drive from Radium Hot Springs. The scenery is beautiful but we are missing much of it because of all the fog and low clouds. We finally saw the sun yesterday afternoon while in the great town of Banff which is nestled amongst the mountains.

Day 5 – Lake Louise, AB – So far today, has been the best day of our Canadian Rockies tour in spite of starting out with some rain. The Lake Louise is a beautiful shade of blue/green and is spectacular. We went to the ski area a few miles away and took the chairlift to mid mountain provided a beautiful view of the lake in the valley of the mountains. It started snowing and we keep hearing from the locals about the bears, but haven't seen one yet!



The group at Lake Louise, AB

There is an interpretive center on the mountain which provides great insight into the wildlife in the Canadian Rockies. We saw our first snowflakes of the season on the mountain. The trip down the chairlift provided spectacular views of the mountain peaks and Lake Louise. After leaving the lake we made a stop at an event more beautiful lake called Moraine. This lake was smaller, but the venue was even better while surrounded by 10 peaks and a glacier. We climbed up a rock formation which was the equivalent 35 floors for an even better view of the lake.



Moraine Lake

The locals recommended some great Healey roads through Bow Valley which we used as we headed south. After arriving back in Banff we stopped to see the incredible Fairmont hotel which costs \$ 800 per night. Although we didn't stay overnight there, we did get to enjoy appetizers and a drink and experienced a little of the luxury. This is where we saw a huge Elk grazing on the grass next to the hotel. Finally, we saw some wildlife!

Day 6 - Banff, AB - Yesterday was the best day weather wise on the trip thus far, as it was sunny and the temperature was in the low 60's. We started the day by going on an amazing 2 hour horseback riding (really horseback walking) along the beautiful Bow Valley River and up some steep trails overlooking the mountains.



After lunch the group drove out to Johnston Canyon, which was highly recommended by all the locals.

It was a beautiful waterfall, as you can see from the pictures, but not sure it was worth the 4-mile hike back and forth to see the falls.

← *Marlene Beyer at Johnston Canyon*

Day 7 – Jasper, AB - We had a great drive 180 miles north from Banff to Jasper. The weather forecast was sunny in the morning, and we started the trip with the tops down, and hit rain within the first 15 minutes. As long as we kept driving we stayed dry even with the rain, and it created beautiful rainbows when the sun broke out.

The roads are excellent in the valley bottom set through the spectacular glaciers on both sides. As we were driving along in the distance we noticed a snow Avalanche from one of the Glaciers on the left. It was spectacular even from several miles away up the mountain.

Rt. 93 is the route from Lake Louise to Jasper and is 120 miles long and there is only 1 store and gas station along the way so you better plan properly. We stopped at the visitor's center where you can walk across the glacier and we parked the cars in a row with the mountains as a backdrop. It was a great photo opportunity.



Panorama at Canada Glacier Park

Day 8 – Jasper, AB - Ready for day 8, we all packed a picnic lunch and headed out to explore Jasper National Park. Tops down and off we drove around to see the local lakes and looking for wildlife. All the locals "guaranteed" we would see wildlife, like bears, elk, mountain goats, deer, etc. We only saw a chipmunk, which was very disappointing!

The snowcapped mountains and glaciers were spectacular as we drove 30 miles out to Maligne Lake. We took our picnic lunches and headed to the tables overlooking the lake and Majestic Mountains in the background. Sun was out but it was cold up in the mountains and then it started to snow! There is crazy changeable weather in the Canadian Rockies.

Day 9 – Field, BC - We woke this morning to beautiful sun but only 27 degrees in Jasper. We left for the 150 mile trip south on Rt. 93 through the Jasper National Park toward the small town of Field. Southbound was so much more majestic than going north two days ago. The beautiful sunny skies could have made a difference as well! All the cars are running great and this has been a great vacation despite the cold and rainy weather off and on.

Our first stop of the morning was at Athabasca Falls which were incredible. So much better than the falls at Johnston Canyon which we hiked 4 miles to see three days ago! There was still a frost on all the signs and the sunny was shining bright on the rushing water over the falls. The pictures don't do it justice and the video with all the sounds of the crashing water is great.



The incredible Athabasca Falls

It's amazing the people you meet on Healey journeys and how excited they get when they see the cars. Of course we let people sit in the cars for photo shoots! There were people from all over like the young German couple that just got engaged, an old gristly guy that apparently is our neighbor and the 3 Asian girls traveling together just to name a few. It was so fun to see the excitement on their faces.

The rest of the drive south was great and we arrived in this little town of Field around 4 PM. Field has a total population of 300 people. The Inn where we stayed was called the Truffle Pig. The Inn was the only one in town! We had great local beer and dinner at the Inn.

Day 10 - Kelowna, BC - started the day with frost on both sides of the windshields in Field BC. The cars all reluctantly started in the dark after the frost overnight and it was cold drive for all. We packed banana bread for breakfast and a picnic lunch for the drive to Kelowna. Kelowna is in the heart of BC wine country and the 250 mile journey should be worth the trip. A local guy we met at the bar recommended a great scenic route to Kelowna and the weather forecast is great with temps into the 70's finally. The drive included 2 ferry crossings on the Arrow River. There were lots of spectators on the ferry. The drive was amazing.



The Healeys attracted a lot of spectators on the ferry crossings on the Arrow River

As we pulled into Naksup BC we found a lovely town park on the water with picnic benches for lunch. One of the cars had front brake issues but the area was perfect for nursing the BN6 back to health. The sun was shining and we were back in the cars within an hour.

Day 11 – Kelowna, BC – Today was the best weather day of the trip, while we explored the vineyards south of Kelowna. Temps in the high 70's and not a cloud in the sky. We all had a leisurely breakfast and we're all lined up in front of our hotel by 10:30 with our picnic lunches to explore the south coast of Lake Okanagan. There are great driving roads in BC with no potholes or frost heaves. It is hard to believe their roads are so much better than ours in New England, and their winters are just as harsh.

There are over 200 vineyards in The Okanagan region and we headed south and stopped in Peachland (real name) and met some locals down on the lake. They gave us some great recommendations on what to see.

We decided to check out the Tinhorn Creek winery. Because of the altitude, the Healeys didn't like climbing the hill to the winery but we all made it to the top. What a gorgeous view of the valley and manicured landscaping and lawns all around the vineyard. The people were so nice at the vineyard and taste several great wines before selecting a chilled Pinot Gris for lunch with our picnic lunch surrounded by the grape vines. It was amazing how many types of grapes they grow at the vineyard.

Day 12 – Hope, BC - We left Kelowna yesterday morning under glorious sunny skies from the Delta Okanagan Resort. Some of the locals recommended a very scenic route on 3A and Rt. 3 headed to Hope BC. Hope is the town where the first Rambo movie with Sylvester Stallone was filmed. The drive southwest was great with a very curvy roads through the mountains. There were large elevation changes on great Healey roads.

Our first stop was a great fruit stand called “Bears” at the function of Rt. 3 through the orchards of peaches and apples. It was a lovely drive and we found a picnic area nestled in the mountains along a river with a beach.–As we started our next drive we saw a baby bear cub on the same river bank. The cub was pretty small and looked right at us as we drove by. We didn't see the Cub's mother, but we are sure she was pretty close by. We can check seeing a bear off our list now!

Day 13 – Bellingham, WA - We are back in the US in Bellingham WA 100 miles north of Seattle. The drive down from Hope was pretty except for the 25 mile stretch on the busy Trans Canadian highway to reach the US border. It took about 20 minutes to cross the border and no one had to go to secondary screening.

The Oxford Suite hotel in Bellingham is only a year old and all the staff met us as we drove up the driveway to see the convoy of Healeys. They had special designated parking for our cars right outside the front door. Several members from the AHCA Cascade club are meeting us in Bellingham this afternoon to show us the local attractions while in WA State. They arrived promptly at 4 pm with 5 beautiful big Healeys including Tweety which is the ride of their event coordinator Lois Buhman. Lois' beautifully restored BN6 is a lovely pale yellow.

The whole group of 14 from both clubs went to dinner to Anthony's at Squalicum Harbor was a lovely spot for dinner. Great dinner choices and most had pacific Salmon or Halibut. It has been great to meet new Healey friends from the pacific NW.

Day 14 – Seattle, WA - What a great adventure! Today was a perfect ending to our wonderful adventure driving Healeys, while conquering the Canadian Rockies. Lois "Tweety" Buhman drove "topless" today in the driving rain. We drove 100 miles today from Bellingham to Newcastle around great twisty roads, but unfortunately visibility was poor in the morning.



Lois "Tweety" Buhman drove "topless" in the driving rain—what a smile !

Lois and the Cascade club hosted a great post tour party with appetizers, dinner, and dessert at their home in New Castle. After dinner, John Kelley shared a poem he wrote to capture the essence of our Canadian adventure.



John Kelley reading a his poem about the essence of their Canadian adventure

The Healey Seven In memory of Dom Our Trip through the Canadian Rockies 2016

This is a story about the Healey Seven, Who started out in Montana and thought they were in “Heaven”
Riding through Glacier was a first for part of the crew, Cindy, Peter, Thalia and Rafe to name a few
The “Road to the Sun” through Logan’s Pass, and then to Saint Mary’s we were done in a flash
The next step in our journey was Fernie – our first dip in a hot tub,
Imagine being in Canada, eating Boston grub in a Canadian Pub!
Over another 100 miles to Radium Hot Springs, seeing beautiful ladies clad in only strings!!!!
On to Banff and Lake Louise (Dom, wish you were near, to help us out here)
At Lake Louise we saw all the sights, A Gondola ride that was very nice
Into Banff we drove for three days of fun, we have great memories second to none!
Our horseback ride was over the top, with mountain views that never stopped
From Banff we journeyed to Jasper, viewing the great glaciers, ice fields and roaring falls,
A journey by foot you had to have BALLS!!!!
We watched our Patriot’s come through with a win, as we drank many a brew, too proud to have a few!!!
Jasper we left and journeyed to Field, a place Bob and Jill choose- not to be cold!!!!
The windshields had ice – my car gave me some trouble, but Dave was right there on the double!
On to Kelowna and then we had trouble.
Bill’s car had a problem, solved by Bob and his crew, – Bill you have a prize waiting for you!
A nice picnic on the beach saved the day, and once again we were all on our way
In Kelowna we were surprised – A Sedona it was not, but all the wineries certainly hit the spot!
The “French Bistro” was great for all to adore, except for Maureen, who could not wait to get out the door!!
We traveled to Sunshine Valley, a place called Hope. Thalia is now happy that her window is not broke!
We had a great picnic and heard a great splash – Dave and Eddie dove in the river with a dash!
Off to Bellingham and Seattle our adventures await, Peter has plans we cannot wait!
We drove into Bellingham and what a surprise, Lois and the Cascade Healey cub were by our side!!!
They showed us what hospitality was all about, planning our dinners and driving about.
On the road to Newcastle another dinner awaits and a ride to the airport to complete our date!
We are most thankful to the Cascade crew, friendships and memories we wish can be renewed by visiting in
New England in a year or two!!
I gave this story a shot thanks to Deb and Maureen, A Dominic I am not!
Traveling with friends is what it’s all about, Memories that we treasure and truly care about
So my friends, my traveling buddies, you are the best of the crop, Maureen and I love you a lot!!!
We share so many memories that truly are great; the doors are wide open to plan for our next escape!!

We had a great adventure with lasting memories of the Canadian Rockies, starting in Montana and ending in Washington. We experienced weather below freezing and a frost in Field BC, snow in Jasper and Lake Louise, followed by sunny skies and temps in the mid 80's in Kelowna. The cars all performed well for the 1850 miles over the two weeks.

Now we will need to start the planning for our next Healey adventure!