

Big Chute is very unique

It has been just over two years since Parks Canada officially inaugurated its new super modern marine railway system at the Big Chute.

The multi-million-dollar feat in engineering officially commenced operations on the Trent-Severn Waterway a dozen or so miles northeast of Coldwater during brief ceremonies at the Big Chute site on Aug. 5, 1979.

Needless to say since its inception the new marine railway has been put to good use with this summer's traffic well up over other years.

From prehistoric times the Trent-Severn Waterway has been a natural travel route between Georgian Bay on Lake Huron, and the Bay of Quinte on Lake Ontario. The Indians relied on

the system of lakes, rivers and portages for hunting and transportation.

It was natural that the settlers of the Trent and Severn watersheds, like the native people before them, should look to water transportation as a means of communication and as a supply route.

In 1833, Nicol Hughe Baird, a civil engineer, was authorized to survey and estimate the cost of rendering navigable the section from the mouth of the Trent River to Rice Lake. Baird had seen the waterway as a national undertaking of military and political as well as commercial importance.

From these early beginnings, some 90 years would elapse before access from Lake Ontario to Georgian Bay was provided.

At the turn of the century, Big Chute represented the last obstacle in the construction of the canal. In 1917, the first marine railway was set in operation as a stop-gap measure, until conventional locks could be completed.

In subsequent years, however, public pressure for a better facility resulted in many modifications and improvements to the 'temporary' railway while plans for a lock system were continuously shelved. The question of improving the railway has been raised again and again with the growth of vessel sizes and the increased usage of the waterway.

In 1975, it was decided to construct a new and sophisticated marine railway

alongside the old one. The choice of a railway car over other transfer systems was predicated on economic and ecological considerations. It was discovered that the land obstacle at Big Chute had prevented the migration of the parasitical sea lamprey into Lake Simcoe where it would endanger the fishing industry.

The Big Chute Marine Railway can now carry boats of up to 100 feet long and 24 feet wide which weigh as much as 100 tons. The completion of the new Big Chute Marine Railway, the largest operation of its kind in Canada, was designed to improve the service to recreational boaters who frequent the 250 mile long Trent-Severn Waterway.



Marine railway in action

The two kinds of arthritis are rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis. They are not related. Treatment for osteoarthritis may differ widely from treatment prescribed for those with rheumatoid arthritis. Learn the facts. Write to The Arthritis Society, Suite 420, 920 RYonge St., Toronto, Ont. M4W 3J7.

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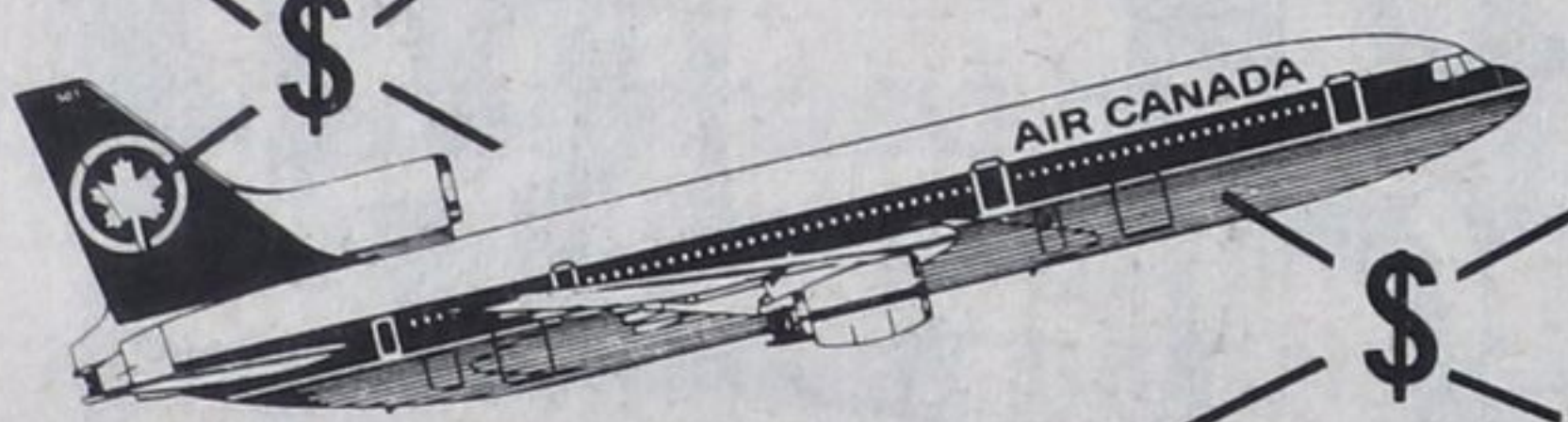
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Investigation

Midland OPP are investigating a case of wilful damage to two side windows of a 1980 Volvo car owned by Michael Kosec of Berney Crescent, Toronto.

The incident took

place between 7 p.m., Saturday and 1 a.m., Sunday. Kosec's car was parked in a row of nine other vehicles on Clearwater Beach Road, one kilometer west of Con. 17 in Tiny

Township.

Damage to the Volvo has been estimated at \$250. There was no damage to any of the other vehicles.

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