



# VOYAGEUR TRAIL NEWS

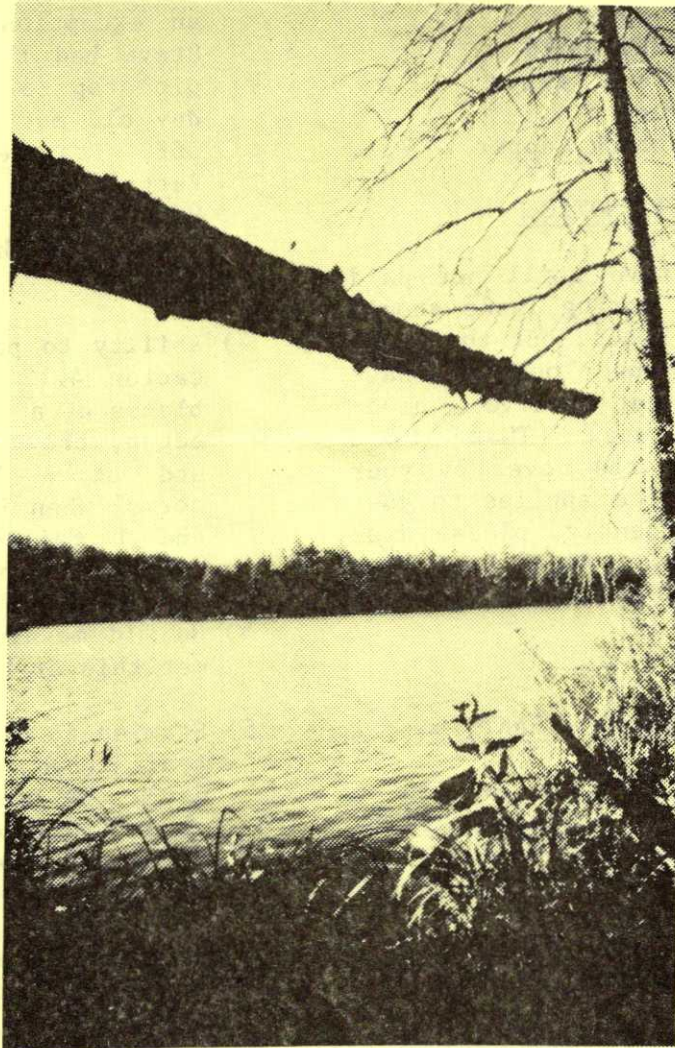
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AUTUMN 1987



WILSON LAKE, ECHO RIDGES SECTION

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MEMBERSHIP NOTICE

Many members have still not paid for 1987 yet. The spring issue should have been the last issue, but the usual warning was not given. Those who have not paid dues will not receive a newsletter after this one. There is a stamped reminder on the cover by your address if this notice applies to you. If you have paid recently, please disregard this notice. Also note that dues for 1988 are due anytime after November 1.

AN EXCEPTIONAL WORK PARTY

Normally work parties are quiet social occasions. The workparty led by Paul Syme on June 6 didn't follow this pattern.

To begin with, requirements to join this workparty were as follows:

- 1) Great dedication to the VTA.
- 2) Willingness to work long hours for \$4.35 per hour less than minimum wage.
- 3) Ability to get up early on Saturday morning. The gathering time was 8 a.m. at Churchill Plaza. This meant

that Betty Nassoly had to get up at 6 a.m. in order to arrive on time from Brimley. Steve Dominy had problems with this early start. He had some excuse about his alarm clock not going off and how it was Guy Smith's ring at the door that woke him up. I believe Paul was ready to go without Steve, but made an exception in this case because Steve had the tools. Steve made a pit stop to buy juice and a bag of day old muffins, so at 8:20, we set off with Betty, Steve and I in Betty's car, and Guy and Ellen McCarthy in Paul's. At 10:20, we arrived at the trail after shuffling cars.

- 4) Ability to paint blazes to specification 4.12 subsection b(iii). ie. blazes of a specific size with sharp edges, brown edges when on a birch, and at a higher elevation than normal when in a valley. Betty, Guy and I failed this test and were assigned pruning and saw work.
- 5) No mid morning coffee break (we all met this criterion).
- 6) Stamina to clear and paint six km of trail (two km is the norm for a day). We started at a good pace of about one km/hour despite the removal of blue flagging by previous hikers. We pondered whether a plant was False Solomon's Seal or Solomon's Seal and stopped to consider the cause of death of a cow 100 yards off the trail, but we soon realized that we had no time for these diversions.
- 7) Only 15 minutes for lunch. Paul prospected the route ahead, so his stop was only five minutes. I had enough time to collect a piece of puddingstone from the banks of the Mississauga River.

- 8) Only one after lunch stop allowed. This was taken in sight of Warnock Lake. Soon afterwards, we climbed to a beautiful view of the Missisquoi River valley which would have made a great stop if we had realized this.
- 9) Pleasure in feeding mosquitoes or determination to use liberal amounts of insect repellent.
- 10) No supper until after 7:00 p.m. We stopped at 5:12 p.m., and hiked a fair distance to the cars, which were reached at 5:45, just as it started to rain. We found we could all squeeze into Betty's VW Jetta to reshuffle cars. Steve's generous offer of muffin's was accepted by many, and this kept the pangs of hunger away until we reached the Sault at 7:15 p.m.

Despite the arduous days work (most work parties end around 4:00 p.m.), the rewards were many. They included a beautiful day in the country, pleasant company, impressive sights of lakes, rivers and forests with tall ferns and the satisfaction of a job well done. Three people were lucky enough to find an Ovenbird's nest.

Patrick Capper

#### MINK OIL VERSUS SNOW-SEAL

On a recent canoe trip along the Pukaskwa shore, we woke up at 3:00 a.m. to the sound of very close vigorous chewing. Upon investigation, I heard an animal running through the underbrush. When we arose at 6:00 to pack, we found that the animal (we suspect it was a mink, marten or member of that group of mammals) had chewed through the vestibule wall to take a bite out of the top of my boot. The

boots had been borrowed from our friend Steve Dominy, who was kind enough to treat them with Mink Oil before giving them to me. Erika's boots, which had been freshly treated with snow seal, were not touched. About 15 years ago, I bought a small piece of rip-stop nylon backed with an adhesive for quick field repairs. Every time we camped out, I looked at this piece of technology and reluctantly took it along. It finally paid off. The backing still pulled off and the patch stuck. The tent is well repaired and even colour coordinated, and since I patched the tent inside and out, the patch will probably outlast the tent itself.

The main lesson in this story is that, depending on your fancy, if you want some adventure, or a nibbled boot (or toes if you sleep with your boots on), treat them well with mink oil.

Dieter Ropke

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

Annual General Meeting - The Annual General Meeting this year is scheduled for October 24 in Schreiber. Everyone is welcome to attend. Discussion will include the possibility of formation of a Club in Thunder Bay. People from the Sault Ste Marie area east who want to attend can contact Steve Taylor at 759-2480. A hike is also scheduled.

The following events have been organized by the Saulteuax Club and everyone is invited to attend.

November 14 - Hike new section of trail off Hwy. 17 N, weather permitting. Meet at K-Mart Plaza beside gas bar at 10:00 a.m. with lunch and appropriate clothing.

December 12 - If weather permits we will ski the Gros Cap area. Meet beside the gas bar at the Market Mall (Second Line) at 10:00 a.m. with lunch.

Jan 16 - Explore the bays of Walls Lake on skis and have lunch beside a warm fire (bring weiners). Meet 10:00 a.m. at Market Mall by gas bar.

February 13 - Bushwhack on skis North from Nettleton Lake into a winter fantasy-come-true. Intermediate in terms of difficulty. Meet at 10:00 at Market Mall by the gas bar with lunch.

Please note that trip leaders are unpaid volunteers. You are encouraged to participate, but at your own risk. Always be prepared for any type of weather. In winter, it is always a good idea to bring extra dry socks, an extra dry sweater and a pack to put clothes in if you get too warm. Dress in layers that you can remove or add and try to wear clothes that will allow your sweat to evaporate.



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TREKK sleeping bags. The availability of these quality products in addition to the fine line of SAWYER canoes and GREY OWL paddles make SUPERIOR WATERSPORTS a good economical source for your outdoor needs. Brochures on these products are available upon request. Also available this season through our affiliation with SAWYER Canada will be the fine lines of Mad River, Oldtown, Bluewater, Scott and Jensen canoes. Call Tom or Joe for details.

### MEASURING BRITAIN BY FEET AND POUNDS A Quasi Travelogue

Standing atop a moor absorbing the vastness of the landscape before me, it was difficult to picture this land as it had been 500 years ago. Then, these rolling hills were covered with mighty oaks and beeches of such dimensions that early shipbuilders would stroll through the forests, carefully selecting trees which had a trunk and limbs shaped to fit part of a ship's hull. Each of these trees became a rib of one of the all-powerful British sailing fleet ships.

The mighty oaks have all but vanished from the British landscape. They have been replaced with grazing fields for the farmer's livestock. Should one encounter a collection of trees, they are likely to be evergreens, and of a type more familiar to American rather than British soil.

Travelling has always offered me immense refreshment by bombarding my mind with such anomalies. I find it necessary, occasionally, to retreat from my everyday routine to something completely different. Britain certainly fit the bill in every way. While the language was similar to ours, it takes a little interpretation to fully comprehend it. For example, on my

second day in the country (17 April 1986) I received a piece of advice from a dining companion at a Bed and Breakfast (a.k.a. B and B). It was "Better get yourself a broolly, mate". Fortunately, the lead-up conversation had been about the deplorable condition of a 'limeys' favorite topic, the weather, (our editor would fit right in over there!) or I would never have guessed my acquaintance was speaking of an umbrella.

I was fortunate to have had a British friend serve the dual role of travelling companion and guide upon my arrival. This made learning the local jargon a much less painful experience. Since this friend was also an avid hiker, I was quickly introduced to the joys of walking in Britain.

The local maps certainly make walking a cinch, once one gets to know how to read them. Ordnance Survey maps are available for every square centimetre of Britain, and provide all possible sorts of pertinent information. From these maps, one can determine the location of the nearest church, public telephone, youth hostel, castle, battle site, orchard, coppice forest, and even whether a forest consists of coniferous or non-coniferous trees. Of course, all these landmarks and more may be needed to help you follow an obscure footpath. Contour intervals are 5 or 10 metres (1:10000 or 1:25000 scale), which sure beats the 50 foot intervals we have become accustomed to in Ontario. Footpaths may vary from a signposted, well-trodden track to nothing more than strategically-placed stiles consisting of stones protruding a little farther than the rest to form steps in a stone wall. The luxury version of this stile type would also have a 20 cm gap between 2 stones along the top of the wall. This makes a huge difference in

the ease with which one can spot them as one wanders haphazardly across an open field. After a couple of long detours in search of these elusive stiles I became quite adept at estimating their location from the map, taking into account the position of farm houses, trees (as each is mapped individually), and gates. As the farmers were required to provide public rights of way across their farms, I felt obliged to stay as close to these rights of way as is humanly possible.

To progress from following indistinct footpaths in the Peak District to walking along the Coastal Path on England's south coast on a sunny Sunday is like going from Hawk Junction to Toronto. The Coastal Path follows along the top of the range of cliffs to which the White Cliffs of Dover belong, dropping down periodically to a lovely expanse of sand beach. No wonder the area is so popular! Pub to pub hiking is a breeze here, and B and B's abound in every village. Besides hiking, this area is renowned for its rock climbing, although a couple of the locals informed me that they would give their right arms to climb in the Rockies.

For the lover of peace and solitude, the closest thing England can offer the hiker is the Lake District, about 2 hours drive north of Manchester. While the area consists of only a handful of large, cigar-shaped lakes, the becks (rivers) and tarns (small, crystal-clear lakes found amongst mountain peaks) make the experience unforgettable. The strenuous climbs throughout this area will constantly reward the 'fell walker' (the valley slopes are dubbed fells here) with spectacular vistas and endlessly varied terrain. This region also has the highest concentration of youth hostels in Britain, some of which are only accessible by foot. The highest

point in England is found here (about 3200 feet), and weather and temperature can change dramatically over the course of a day's climb amongst these peaks. In fact, one such climb which Clare and I made had us starting the walk in T-shirts on green grass and ending it bundled up in all our clothes on the snow clad peak of Mount Helvellyn. The elevation change was only about 2200 feet (900' to 3113')!

Before I left Britain, I had the good fortune to meet up with another friend in Bangor, Wales. John had attended university there and knew the surrounding area like he knew his thesis subject (he confided to me that each weekend he would speed along the narrow roads through the Snowdonia mountains to visit his wife-to-be). As a result, John was a willing and very capable guide to an area which I suspect offered some of the best hiking in Britain. I was unable to explore the Snowdonia area on foot, but I strongly recommend it to anyone planning a walking holiday in Britain. Here, the peaks rise to over 3600', and apparently from the top of Mount Snowdon one can see the Isle of Man and the mountains of Ireland. If such strenuous walking does not appeal to you, consider exploring the area by pony, a popular mode of travel in parts of Wales.

I found the public transit system in Britain to be very efficient. Even in the more remote areas with narrow, winding roads, some form of transit was available. In the Lake District, mini-buses were quaintly named Mountain Goats.

If you are planning a trip to the British Isles, I would advise carrying traveller's cheques in pound sterling. Thomas Cook is widely accepted, although I had no trouble cashing my

American Express. If you want to avoid a commission charge (1 pound per cheque), stick to Lloyds or National Westminster Banks, or the American Express/Thomas Cook offices, if you can find them. If you don't have cheques in pound sterling, NW Bank charges 2 pounds 50 per cheque. I don't know if Lloyds have a similar policy. Many store merchants will accept travellers' cheques in payment for a purchase. It's a good idea to take with you from home at least 20 pounds cash to cover miscellaneous expenses. If you live in a small city like the Sault, be sure to arrange for this a week or two in advance, as they may not have any sterling on hand. Other than that, the best advice I can leave you with is to be sure to first look right when you cross a street and remember that if you are a passenger in a car or bus you enter on the left side of the vehicle. I was given more than one strange look from a driver as I opened his door and almost sat on him!

Got your wellies, your broolly and your knickers packed yet, mate? Cherrio and happy tramping!

Steve Dominy

(Steve spent 30 days gathering first impressions of modern and historic Britain in the spring of 1986).

#### TRAIL MIX

Material for the next newsletter should reach the editor by January 1, 1988.

The Michipecoten Club successfully carried out an adventurous project this summer. Those who visited Lake Superior Provincial Park may have picked up a park newsletter this summer (those who didn't should have). This

newsletter was created by the Wawa based club. They solicited advertising, co-ordinated articles and saw to the printing. The end result was a well received newsletter and a profit of a few hundred dollars.

Gail Rice wrote in to encourage people to attend work parties. She noted that considerable work is usually accomplished in a fun atmosphere which gives people a chance to meet new friends and renew old acquaintances. On two work parties this summer in the Red Rock Section, Gail says that many large limbs from wind and logging were removed by many hands and backs and a chainsaw. Lunch involved relaxing by the shore of Lake Superior with the waves coming in. Candies, gloves and water were shared while the conversation touched on past hikes, other places people have been to, new additions to families and new jobs and homes. Some people go often and others once a year, but it all helps to keep in touch with our trail and friends. Gail added that some people are extremely dedicated to trail maintenance. She even saw one such soul vacuum the trail. An unusual work party is described by Patrick Capper elsewhere in this issue.

Those who attended the Go To Blazes day workparty in the Sauteaux Section made note of a large number of small green worms which were chewing on maple foliage. This worm (actually a caterpillar) was reported by many people around Algoma during the past summer. It was seen in numbers large enough to severely defoliate trees and to create a green rain of frass. The culprit turned out to be Bruce Spanworm. Entomologist Vince Nealis stated that this spanworm appears to come and go in cycles. Next year it may be gone from the areas hit hard this year, but it may show up somewhere else. I also

noted that there were a lot of large iridescent black beetles running across the forest floor and eating these worms. Vince noted that these beetles (Ground beetles of the genus Calosoma) are a major predator on spanworms. No-one could tell me if the defoliation from these worms is sufficient to kill trees. It is likely that severe defoliation by itself can limit growth for the period of the outbreak of spanworm, and that death can result if defoliation occurs in conjunction with other tree stresses. Incidentally, the spanworm moth emerges in fall. If you notice a large number of light grey medium sized moths flying around your porchlight in October or early November, you can note that they were probably chewing maples in the spring.

Many people ask why the trail takes strange jogs in some areas. This October, I was repainting blazes in the Echo Ridges Section around kilometer 50 when I noticed what appeared to be a cruel joke by the previous blazer. There was a blaze on a tree in the middle of a rather large pond. The explanation for this occurrence came in the form of a startling slap of water, as a beaver slammed its tail on the water and dove under. I elected to reroute the trail to the North around the pond. Probably some time in the future, the beaver pond will be gone, and people will wonder about this strange jog in the trail.

Roddie Larsen passed along some information on food for the pack after the last issue of the VTA News, which was devoted largely to food. It seems that Alpine Aire (a supplier of some of the better freeze dried food) has come out with "Saturday Night on the Trail", a series of complete gourmet outdoor meals. You get a dinner for two, which comes in a gift box, and includes such delicacies as California Shrimp Dip

with Sesame Breadsticks, Beef Cassoulet, Potato Leek Soup and/or Chocolate Fondue. Even a candle is included. This sounds like it would make an excellent gift for a camping acquaintance.

You may wish to mark in your guidebook the following notes which were passed on by Patrick Capper. He hiked with his son and Darcy Ortiz in the Echo Ridges section from the Garden River Bridge to Echo Lake. The trail could be followed, but one has to look carefully for blazes in the open areas of the reserve. The "huge white pine stump" at 23.6 km was not located, and campsites at 26.4 and 27.2 km now have cottages on them. A short unpainted portion near Wahbenose Lake caused problems but has since been painted by Patrick and Tom Allinson. To hike at a reasonably good pace from the bridge to the Echo River took 6 hours. Also, a piece of trail near the falls on Maude Creek had to be rerouted this summer along the road due to some logging.

#### SAULTEAUX VOYAGEUR TRAIL NORTH

Although it is not described in the guidebook as yet, the north trail warrants a look-see. It leaves the east-west trail at 2.1 km, as mentioned on page S2 of the guidebook. The Trail can also be accessed by driving North on the Walls Lake Road until one encounters a cable strung across the road. Good parking is available 200-300 m South of the cable.

The Trail crosses the road just south of the cable, then meanders North, crosses the stream from Prince Lake and eventually reaches Lake Superior's Whitefish Bay 1.5 km further along. The next 2.6 km provides superb hiking. One can either walk the shore or walk the trail about 30 m inland. The terrain is flat.

When the north portion of the trail was cut, we often encountered vestiges of an old trail along the lake. In places one can detect a double track. I have talked to various people regarding this old trail and subsequently believe that there once was an old Indian trail from Gros Cap to Goulais Bay. I am interested in learning more about this historic trail. If anyone has knowledge on the subject please contact Tom Allinson, preferably between 8 and 9 am.

Toward the northern end of this shoreline section, there is evidence of mining activity. There is a bore hole and a couple of claim posts in this area. (Incidentally, steam power was used to operate the diamond drill). A little further North, the Trail heads inland. The shoreline trail continues North and at .9km from the Voyageur trail turnoff, one reaches the Prince Dennis township post.

The Trail passes through a pine forest and climbs away from the lake. It then cuts across some old skidder roads, crosses a stream, and then traverses a cutover area. It reaches an old road, follows it, passes an old cabin and reaches an old beaver dam and lake. The trail wanders uphill and down dale for another 3 km and emerges on the Red Rock road beside a marine radio tower installation.

The shoreline section is ideal for photography buffs, especially when there is a storm on the lake. Remember to take along a jacket as it can be cold by the lake, even in midsummer.

Portions of the trail need work but the paint blazes are relatively good. anyone desiring more information may contact the writer, Tom Allinson, at 942-8823.



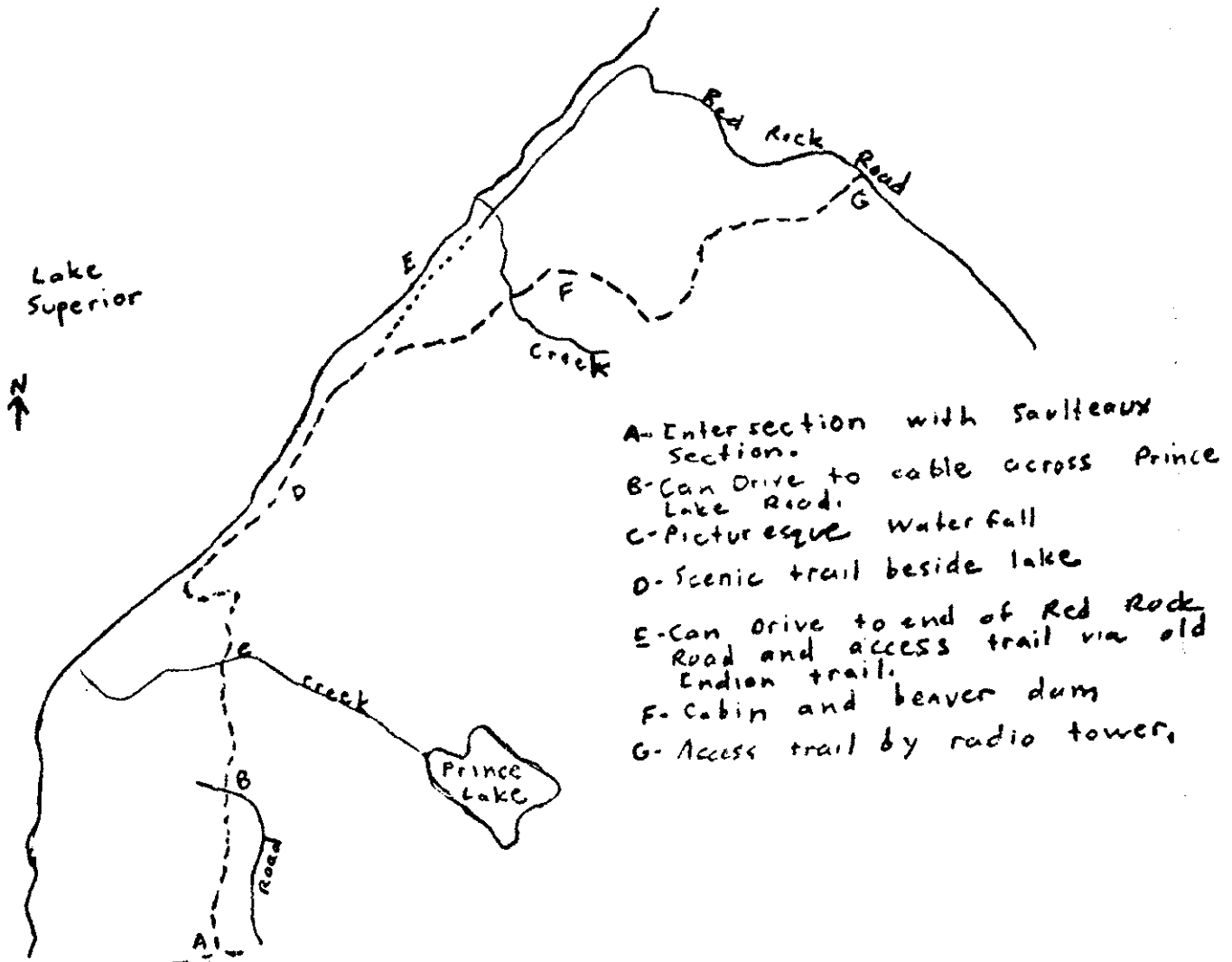
Listed below are some features along this trail and corresponding distances.

DISTANCE	COMMENTS		
0 km	Start of trail on Red Rock road (near radio tower).	5.5	Trail runs generally in a NW to W direction.
.5	Voyageur Trail Logo (NB these occur every .5 km). Trail now goes through rolling country, hardwoods.	6.5	At access road, it is about a 20 minute walk to the end of Red Rock from here.
.6	Come to old road and follow it to .8 km, then leave to West. Note- There are several old skidder roads, recognizeable as tracks along the ground referred to throughout this section.	7.0	Trail is now in an area that has been badly overrun by skidders.
1.1	Pass through logged area, leaving it at 1.3 km.	7.2	Trail has been going downhill and now enters a flat area and pine forest.
1.7	Cross open logged area.	7.7	Reach Lake Superior and head SW.
3.0	Trail comes to old road and follows it.	7.9	Remains of 2 or 3 old cabins in the bush in this vicinity.
3.2	Trail comes to old beaver dam and small lake, then swings North and picks up old road.	8.1	At this point one encounters a survey post (kl). There is a sandstone point on the shore, also large sandstone rock a few feet out from shore. Inland a few feet there is a steel pipe in the ground, (possibly a well or a core hole?)
3.3	Pass by old camp and the road improves.	9.2	One comes to a small stream, crosses same on the shore and picks up trail a few feet inland once more.
3.7	Leave road and head in westerly direction.	9.5	A small fire ring is beside the trail. At this point one leaves the sandstone beach for a gravel beach.
4.0	Cross road and enter cutover section.	10.3	At this point the trail leaves the lake and follows and old road.
4.5	Trail leaves cutover section.	10.5	Trail leaves the road at the top of the hill and heads South.
4.9	Come to stream-there is a spring near a cedar beside the stream.		

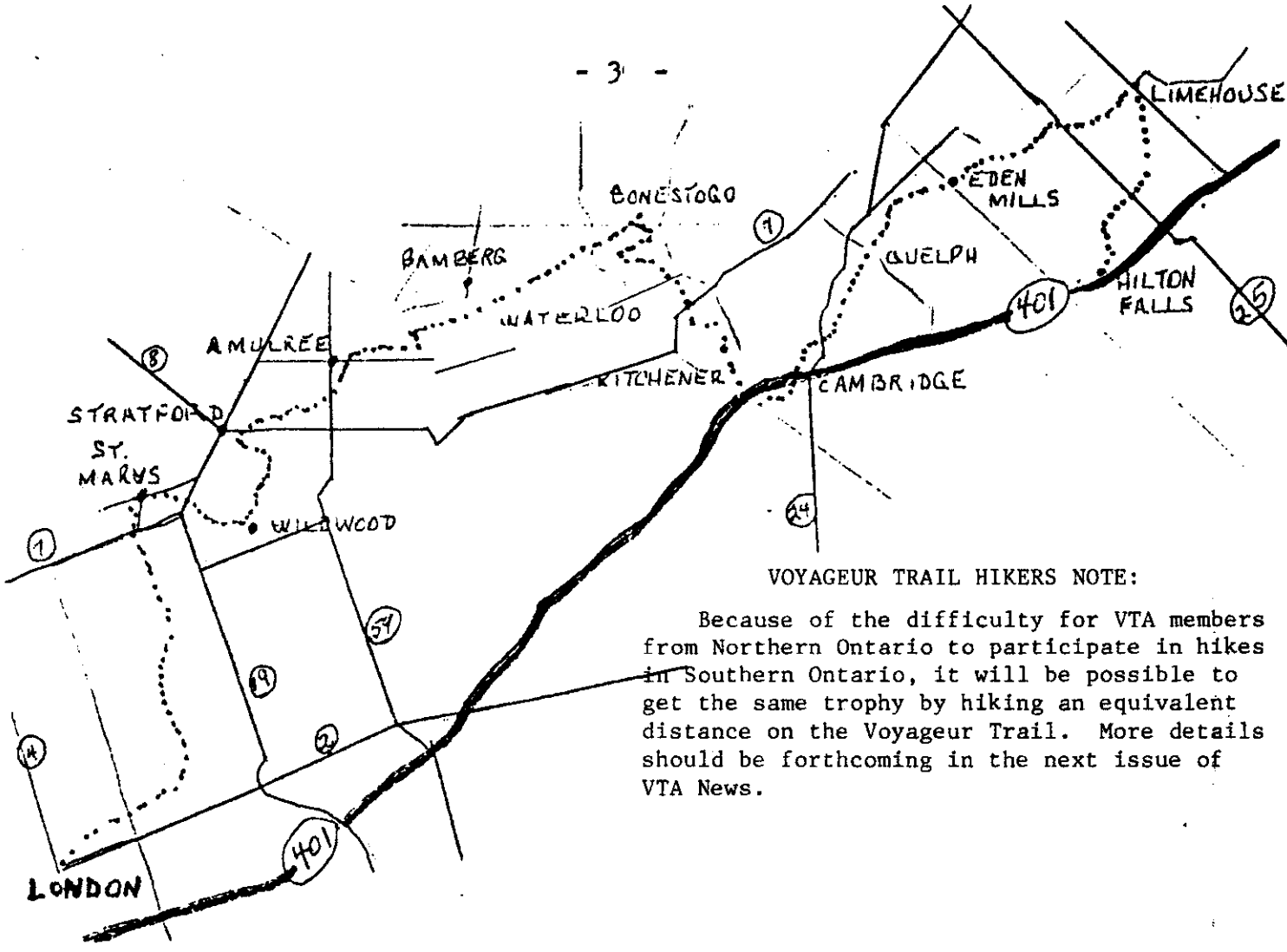
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|------|---|------|--|
| 10.8 | Climb hill.   | 13.4 | Trail crosses roads at 13.4, 13.6, 13.8, 14.1 and 14.9 km.                 |
| 10.9 | Come to road and follow for 300 m.  | 15.2 | C. Coe's stake. Trail is off and on old roads in this vicinity to the end. |
| 11.8 | Trail crosses stream coming from Prince Lake.   | 16.0 | Trail swings SE just beyond logo and then shortly thereafter swings South. |
| 12.3 | Cross small stream. A few yards further on cross road.                                    | 16.5 | North trail meets the East-West trail (approx. 10 miles).                  |
| 12.6 | Cross Road. Walls Lake road 200 m east.   |      |  |
| 12.9 | Cross road.   |      |  |
| 13.2 | Trail crosses road that has cable across it. Note that one can drive a car to this point. |      |  |

Tom Allinson

THE NORTH SECTION - NOT DRAWN TO SCALE



- |      |             |                 |   |
|------|-------------|-----------------|---|
| #8.  | June 19/88  | (Avon Trail)    | Bamberg Rd. to Amulree (21 km)                            |
| #9.  | July 10/88  | "               | Amulree to Stratford (22 km)                              |
| #10. | Sept. 11/88 | "               | Stratford to Wildwood (22 km)                             |
| #11. | Sept. 24/88 | "               | Wildwood to St. Marys (17 km)                             |
| #12. | Oct. 16/88  | (Thames Valley) | St. Marys to Auto Wreckers (15 km)                        |
| #13. | May 1989    | "               | Auto Wreckers to Fanshawe Golf Club (15 km)               |
| #14. | May 1989    | "               | Golf Club to Adelaide St. (15 km)                         |
| #15. | May 1989    | "               | Short hike from Adelaide St. to U.W.O. to the CONFERENCE. |



VOYAGEUR TRAIL HIKERS NOTE:

Because of the difficulty for VTA members from Northern Ontario to participate in hikes in Southern Ontario, it will be possible to get the same trophy by hiking an equivalent distance on the Voyageur Trail. More details should be forthcoming in the next issue of VTA News.