



Part One ended on a rainy Sunday evening, with Charis on a mooring at Point Bay Marina in Charlotte VT. We watched one more lovely Champlain sunset, hoped for better weather and tried not to think of all that could go wrong the following day.

The next step in our adventure was to drop the mast and secure it on deck. This is to allow the boat to fit below the many bridges we pass along our way down the canal – some as low as 15 feet above the waterline!

Monday dawned clear and warm, with light winds... perfect conditions for removing sails and preparing the boat for un-stepping the mast. We'd hoped to make an early start, but needed to wait for repairs on the yard's travel lift (the mast crane is attached to the top of PBM's travel lift).

Once the yard crew was ready for us, we motored the boat into the bulkhead. Bruce stayed on board to help while I took the dogs (and the camera) out of harm's way... hard to say which of us had the more nerve-wracking job: "lifting" or watching!

Believe me, these photos don't come close to explaining what it feels like to see a 55 foot mast suspended above the deck of your boat. But all went well, the crew at Point Bay was great; we were secure and on our way by 3 PM.



After one last backward look at the big lake...



... it was time for the next leg – a 50-odd mile motor down the southern section of Lake Champlain to Whitehall, where we would pick up our canal crew and begin our trip through the locks.

Since the late start prevented us from reaching Whitehall on Monday; we stopped instead at the Champlain Bridge to anchor for the evening. Our obligatory trip ashore with the dogs gave us a great opportunity to walk the grounds of the two revolutionary era forts at Crown Point, NY.



Tuesday morning we pushed on south of Crown Point, where Lake Champlain becomes a much narrower body of water. Another more famous revolutionary era landmark, Fort Ticonderoga, is perched high above the lake.



Just below Ticonderoga, we reached Chipman Point Marina. This is the furthest we'd been on the lake thus far... from here we passed into unknown territory.

As we proceeded south, the lake gets narrower and narrower, increasingly like a river. Lots of blue heron, egrets and other wildlife... and only a very few boats.



The Narrows of Dresden was a particularly interesting and ominous spot (sadly the photo doesn't do it justice). Perhaps it was our combined mood of adventure and longing for the familiar that we were leaving behind, but this spot reminded me of that scene from the first Rings movie (you know the one!)



Finally we rounded the bend approaching Whitehall, where we met up with Pam's brother Ted, who would help us get safely through the Canal itself.

That is where we will pick up the story next: Lock 12 at Whitehall and our trip through the Champlain Canal.



To be continued...

The crew of s/v Charis: Pam & Bruce, Shadow & Shelby