

The Journal Commemorative Model Van

Journal celebrates 175 years
of publishing on the
12th May, 2007

mark this great occasion we
are selling a limited edition
model van.

The Journal vintage delivery
van is produced using the
collectable Lledo diecast.

The model van is 8cm long and
is in cream/green livery.

Special interest to diecast
collectors is the fact that Lledo
models are now produced in
China, this model was
manufactured at the factory in
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The Journal graphics have
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for £100.

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The Journal

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Take a very big

Sports editor Kevin
Dinsdale took the first direct
flight from Newcastle Airport
to Toronto, Canada, to see
what the province of Ontario
has to offer.

FOR too long now, transatlantic travel from the
North-East has usually involved flying via one of
London's major airports.

Apart from a few charter holiday flights to Florida in
the summer months, there have been no regular direct
flights to North America from the region for years.

With return journeys always taking place overnight,
the pain of travelling via London comes when you land
back in the UK – and then face a wait of several hours for
a connecting flight, just when your body clock is telling
you sleep is needed immediately.

Unless you've travelled first class and been able to get
some rest, this leaves jet-lag inevitable and brings an
exhausting end to your trip.

However, that doesn't necessarily have to be the case
now, thanks to Canadian Air.

They have just launched a weekly service to Toronto's
Lester B Pearson international airport, which handles a
third of Canada's air traffic and offers travellers scores of
connections to destinations all over North America.

With return flights priced from around £200, in-
cluding taxes, Canadian Air offer an attractively
priced means of getting across the Pond en route to
many of the continent's more popular destinations.

And Toronto is also a great starting point for anyone
looking to explore Canada – an opportunity which, as a
self-confessed fan of visiting the United States I wasn't
about to turn down in a hurry.

And here's how my voyage of discovery unfolded:

Day one

Depart Newcastle on the 1.30pm Canadian Air flight, by
Thomas Cook Airlines, to Toronto with a journey time of
six-and-three-quarter hours (35 minutes less on the return
thanks to tail-winds). You can be in Canada quicker than if
you were taking a coach from Newcastle to Cornwall and
the comfort on the Boeing 737 is excellent for economy
passengers with leather seating and Skins legroom.

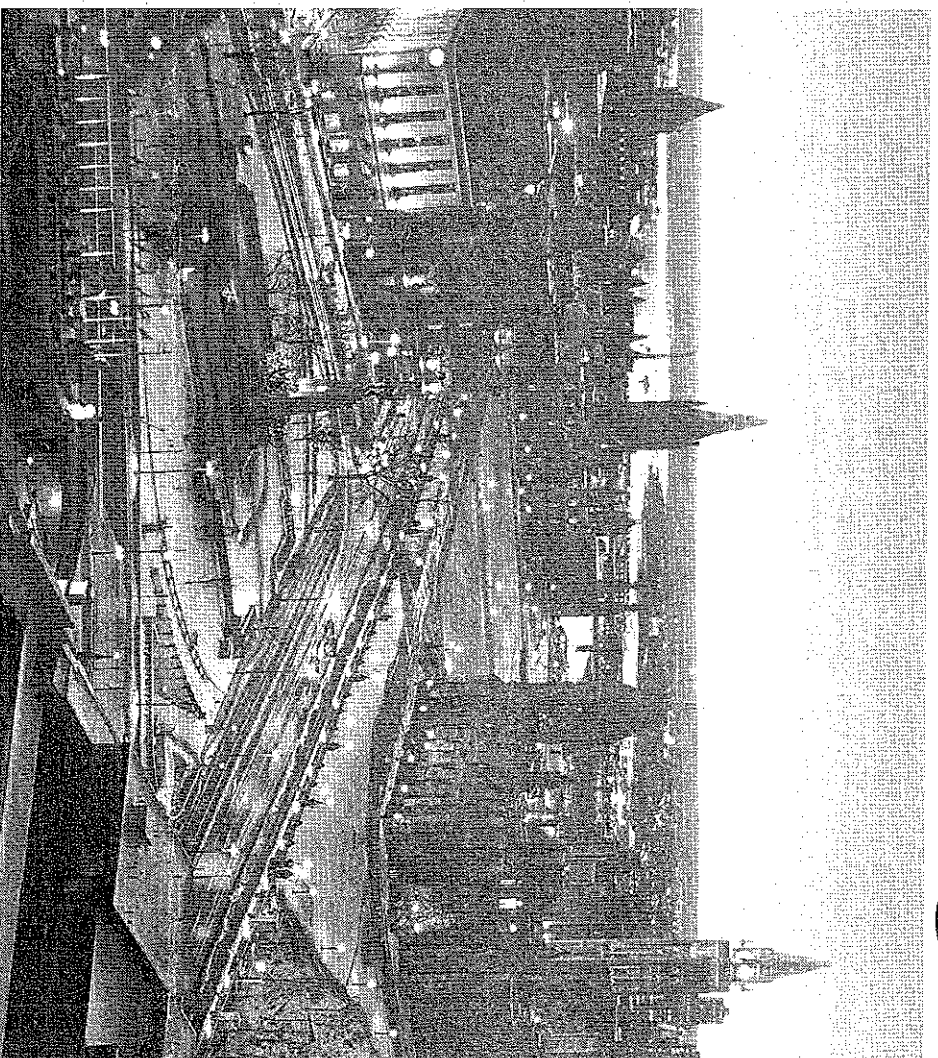
On arrival – mid-afternoon local time – I am met by the
standard long queues at immigration. But these clear
relatively quickly and less than an hour after landing I am
by taxi at my first destination, the very modern Sheraton
Centre Hotel in the heart of downtown Toronto. A rapid
train link is currently being constructed which will take
travellers from the airport terminal building into the heart of
the city in around 20 minutes and at a fraction of the cost
(the taxi charge was £25).

Toronto, on the shore of Lake Ontario, is a vibrant, multi-
cultural city with

www.livingtravel.co.uk

Saturday, May 12, 2007

The Journal



SIMPLY AMAZING: Across the Ottawa river is the city of Gatineau and an ideal way to see

4.5 million people – when the towns which make up its
suburbs are taken into account.

As Canada's financial centre, skyscrapers dominate the
downtown architecture, but these are regularly
interspersed with historic buildings and there is a feel of
Manhattan to the place.

I end the day by exploring the entertainment district
close to my hotel. This offers a wide choice of bars,
restaurants, bistros, cafes and nightclubs and is the
heartbeat of the city at night, especially when one of
Toronto's three main sports teams – the Maple Leafs (ice
hockey), Raptors (basketball) and Blue Jays (baseball)
whose home arenas lie less than a mile away, have a
game with fans pouring out into Queen Street West and
neighbry. The atmosphere is relaxed, the food hearty and
generous and I quickly conclude that I could get used to
the place.

Day two

In the morning I look around some of the other downtown
areas and discover there is lots to do. For shoppers there
are many boutiques and stores and the huge indoor Eaton
Centre, on Queen Street, houses around 250 shops
and restaurants under a glass and steel roof.

Many shopping areas and hotels are also linked
underground by more than 11km of tunnels
known as The PATH.

North of the immediate city centre area,
high-end stores, like Gucci, Hermes and
Chanel can be found on Bloor Street for
those with a bigger budget and more
exclusive tastes. With sterling strong
against the Canadian dollar at the
moment – at around 2.1 to the pound
– there are even bargains to be had
here.

Probably Toronto's most famous
landmark, the 1,815ft CN Tower – a
large 200, beaches, shoreline
parks, harbour islands and several
impressive museums and art
galleries, including the ice hockey
Hall of Fame, are all available to the
visitor.

And getting around Toronto is easy
with many features within walking
distance, while a cheap and efficient
subway system and trams run above
ground are on hand for those travelling
further afield.

In the afternoon, however, I take a three-
hour tour of the city's most interesting sites on
boat with local historian Bruce Bell. He introduces

me to a host of pieces of interest which a short-stay visitor
like myself would simply not have found otherwise – such
as the wonderful Kensington Market, with its wide
collection of food stalls, and amazing aromas, cafes and
craft outlets built on the site of the first city hall, which was
built by British settlers.

Much of Bruce's tour takes in sites which aptly
demonstrate Toronto's distinctly British heritage, including
the Anglican Cathedral of St George.

A visit to the Caroe restaurant on the 54th floor of one
of the four tower blocks which make up the Toronto
Dominion Centre also provides a free alternative to the
spectacular view across Lake Ontario provided at a cost to
visitors to the CN Tower.

Blessed with a beautiful, clear, sunny day I was able to
just make out, probably Ontario's most popular tourist
attraction, Niagara Falls, in the distance. Niagara is about
80 miles by road but can also be reached by bus and train
in about two hours from Toronto and would have made for
an exciting day trip had I had the time.

My evening is spent with a second visit to the
entertainment district for some food and relaxation.

As the hours drizzle away, a tinge of disappointment
sets in that I won't get to see more of Toronto.
But it has certainly found a spot high on my list of those
places I must visit again.

Days three to five

I leave the Sheraton Centre by taxi to pick up a rental car
at the National Office at Union Street train station to enable
me to head off on the next leg of my tour – to the capital,
Ottawa, about a four-and-a-half-hour drive from downtown
Toronto.

Around 50 miles out of the city, I begin to encounter the
sort of landscape which I imagined as typical Canada with
miles after mile of farmland and small settlements –
although I am assured that this isn't truly the sparse
countryside this vast country is famed for, as there are
many large areas or where you can drive for hours without
seeing either a house or another vehicle!

Driving is a doddle with traffic not too heavy and the
highway system, as in the States, both comprehensive
and easy to comprehend and navigate.

Passing through the municipality of Durham, county of
Northumberland and signposts for the port of Newcastle
along the way gives me a feeling of home, but is also
another giveaway clue as to the region's British heritage.
In what seems no time at all, I arrive in Ottawa and my
hotel, the Delta Hotel and Suites, situated about a 10-
minute walk from the city centre.

Ottawa, with a population of roughly 800,000, is a lot
different to Toronto, having a much more small-town feel.
This year the city is celebrating the 150th anniversary of

holiday of the week

TORONTO & NIAGARA FALLS – By air from Newcastle

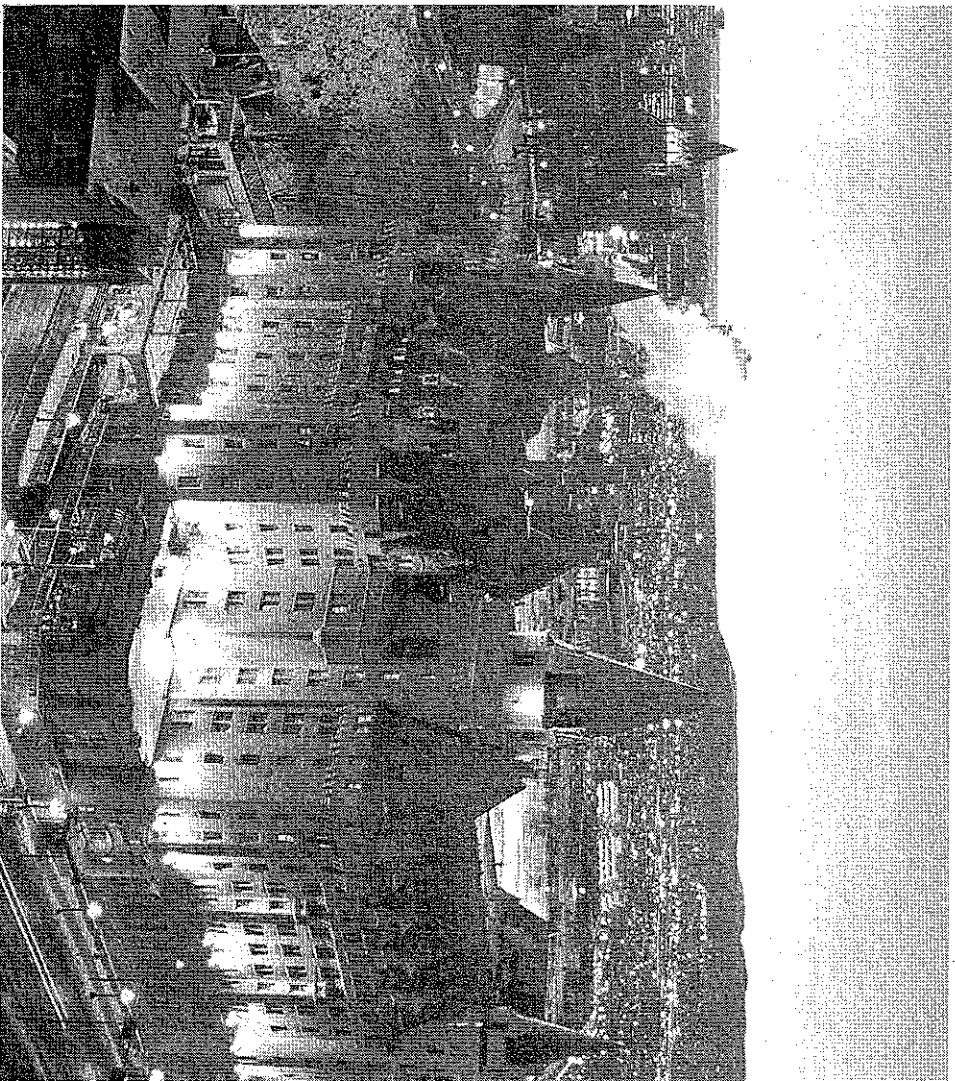
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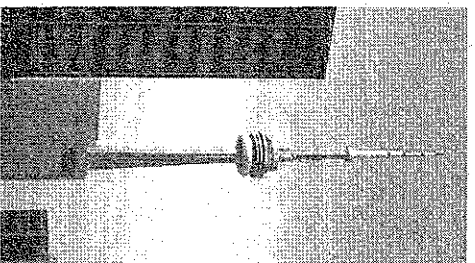
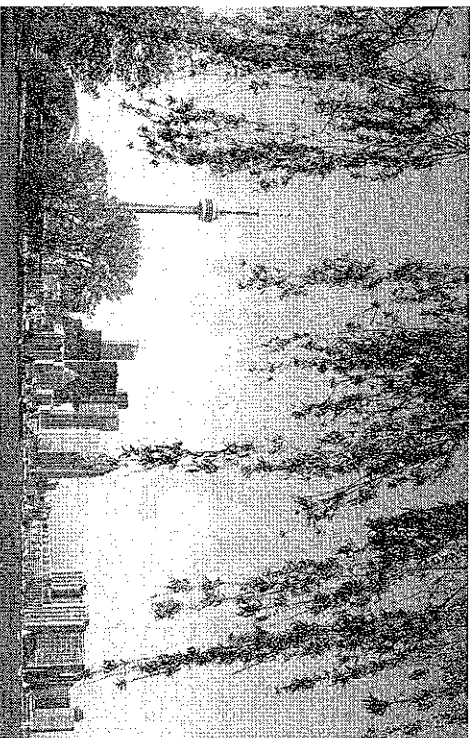
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both is by taking an amphibious bus tour around the city streets and then the water.



A NEW WORLD: Toronto's landmark, the 1,815ft CN Tower and left, the city's stunning skyline.

being chosen by Queen Victoria to be the seat of government and legislation.

Consequently, among its many pieces of interest, are a wide range of government buildings, including Parliament, which are all worth a visit. A great deal more of the general architecture is of the pre-20th Century variety, too – although there are impressive modern structures, such as the US Embassy – which resembles a nuclear submarine from one end – and the National Gallery of Canada.

Situated on the Ottawa River, which separates Ontario from French-speaking Quebec and was once used to transport fogs and timber, it is a city in which Anglophones and Francophones have always lived side by side.

Many other nationalities have since arrived and, like Toronto, Ottawa is a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic city.

This lends itself to an interesting mix, something illustrated clearly in the city's lively Byward Market and nearby Dalhousie Street, which house a very wide choice of culinary delights in its restaurants, cafes and bistros, while there are plenty of bars and nightclubs, too, and a farmers' market during the day. This appears to be the heartbeat of the city and spending some time here is a must for all visitors.

Ottawa is also home to a world-famous annual Tulip Festival in the first three weeks of May with more than a million flowers brightening up the city along a 15km route.

Across the Ottawa river is the city of Gatineau and an ideal way to see both is by taking an amphibious bus tour

(£15 for an hour) which winds its way around the city streets and then dives into the water to give you views from the river.

History is important in Ottawa and visitors can also find the Canadian Museum of Civilization and the Canadian War Museum in the city.

Day six

I head out of Ottawa for my final stop-off – at Canada's first capital city, Kingston. Along the way I take a look at the charming riverside town of Merrickville – complete with a sign forbidding use of snow bikes on the main street, giving an indication of how severe the winters can be in Ontario. You could be forgiven for believing you were in the Lake District here, while a little later in Brockville, on the banks of the St Lawrence river, I encounter a place with a feel of a County Durham market town, such as Chester-le-Street.

Both provide enjoyable interludes on my way to Gananoque, from where I take a one-hour boat trip around some of the famous Thousand Islands dotted around the St Lawrence. Some of these are quite amazing, with a single house built on a plot of land only just big enough to fit one in.

From here, I continue my journey to Kingston, which is very old world and charming. I spend the night in a fabulous former bank building – and then gentlemen's club – dating back more than 200 years, which has been lovingly restored and converted by owners Beate Weatherup and Susan Shaw. Situated just yards away

Passport

WITH weather breaking the sunshine records, short haul operators are slashing prices.

Says Andy Washington, sales and distribution director at Cosmos Holidays: "With seven-night self-catering holidays including return flights, in the Algarve, Zante, Minorca and Cyprus from £99 in the second week of May, and from £129 the week after, packages are selling for less than people pay by putting their own packages together."

At www.deckchair.com, seven nights in a five-star Sheraton hotel on the banks of the Nile, incl flights and transfers from May 14, starts at £299. Jet2Holidays' has seven nights' half-board in Lorei del Mar, Costa Blanca, from £189, ex-Manchester on May 21.

Youravei.com, has four nights' all-inclusive in Palma Nova, Majorca, from Newcastle: £219.

Thomas Cook's "cheepies" includes seven nights' half-board at a two-star hotel in Rhodes from £134 from May 16, and seven nights' self-catering in Turkey from May 17 from £138.

There are long-haul deals available too: Explorers offers seven nights' B&B at the five-star Naama Bay Hotel in Sharm El Sheikh for £299, saving £158, on departures until May 20. From Manchester, there's a supplement of £22.

● **INFORMATION:** Cosmos (0870 787-9414 and www.cosmos.co.uk); Jewel in the Crown (01293 533338 and www.jewelholiday.com); www.jet2holidays.com (0871 386000); www.deckchair.com; www.lastminute.com (0870 443-9902); www.youravei.com (0871 750-6337); Explorers (0845 094-3367); Thomas Cook (0845 070-2530 and www.thomascook.com); First Choice (0870 850-3928 and www.firstchoice.co.uk).

from the St Lawrence River and the old centre of Kingston with its boutiques and restaurants – including the excellent Tango tapas bar on King Street East – the Fortenac Club Inn and its environs is undoubtedly a small slice of Canadian paradise.

Day seven

I leave Kingston's charm behind and head for Toronto, the airport and home.

In a week I have experienced a small cross section of what Ontario has to offer. Given the chance to do so again, I would have no hesitation in grabbing it with both hands.

Travel facts

Canadian Air offers a weekly non-stop flight from Newcastle to Toronto, with prices from £99 one-way (including taxes). Canadian Air provided Kevin Dinsdale's seven day trip to Ontario, which costs from £467 per person. This includes return flights with Thomas Cook Airlines from Newcastle to Toronto, two nights accommodation at the Sheraton Toronto, three nights at the Delta Ottawa Hotel & Suites, and one night at the Club Frontenac Inn, all based on two people sharing on a room-only basis. The price also includes one week's fully inclusive rental of a compact sized car, with a free upgrade to a mid-sized vehicle.

For information and reservations, call Canadian Air on (020) 7616-9933 or (0141) 223-7515, or visit www.canadianair.com

For more information on Ontario, visit www.ontariotravel.net/uk and to request a brochure, please call (0116) 221 832288.

The Sheraton Centre, 123 Queen Street West, Toronto, is part of the Starwood Hotels group. For further information and bookings log on to www.starwoodhotel.com

Bruce Bell tour information is available at www.brucebelltours.com

National Car Rental has outlets throughout Ontario and more information is available at www.nationalcar.ca

Delta Ottawa Hotel and Suites, 361 Queen Street, Ottawa is part of the Delta Hotels group. For further information log on to www.deltahotels.com

Further details on the Frontenac Club Inn, 225 King Street East, Kingston can be obtained by logging on to www.frontenacclub.com

More information on the Gananoque Boat Line is available at www.ganboatline.com

General information on Ontario is accessible at www.ontariotourism.com with specific city sites at www.torontotourism.com, www.ottawatourism.ca and tourism.kingstoncanada.com

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