

## My Hidden Mickey Surprise: When Thoughts and Dream Collide

by Heidi Bamford, PassPorter Guest Contributor

I am vaguely aware of a particular saying that goes something like this, "If you are looking for something, you are sure to find it."

This did in fact happen to me two summers ago as I was walking along the beautiful, sandy, dune-laced beach near our cottage in Southampton, a small village on the western bottom part of Ontario's Bruce Peninsula. Early mornings on that long stretch of beach are usually empty save for a few swimmers brave enough to embrace the cold, clear waves; and some noisy seagulls, searching for washed-up breakfast scraps. I love these solitary beach walks, since they give me some "alone time" to focus on the things I like to think about (Disney!), rather than having to focus on the things I need to think about in the normal course of a day (tasks at work, housework & you know the drill!). Southampton is noted for its brilliant sunsets, but the sharp, clean, morning air; wide-open blue sky meeting shimmering, blue-green water is also spectacular and provides a great backdrop for thinking special thoughts.

One day my morning walk was leading me towards the village center, clearly marked by the towering flagpole that stands at the end of Southampton's main street, nearly touching the beach. The fluttering, massive Canadian flag pointed toward charming Chantry Island, with its nineteenth century lighthouse and keeper's cottage clearly visible. But my thoughts were focused elsewhere; on an upcoming vacation to Walt Disney World that would be our first-ever "girls-only" trip with my two teen daughters (then ages 15 and 17).

□ We planned our visit for October, coinciding, not accidentally, with the annual Epcot International Wine and Food Festival. Memories of all the wonderfully delicious places we had dined on past visits to Epcot kept popping up in my thoughts; fish and chips at the Yorkshire County Fish Shop, beef tenderloin and macaroni baked in Guyere cheese from Les Chefs de France, wood-fired pizzas and creamy candele from Via Napoli, fish tacos and chicken enchiladas with tomatillo sauce from Mexico's San Angel Inn; all those incredibly wonderful meals in one spot! Though we had never been to Le Cellier in the Canada Pavilion, I was hoping to at least have a chance to sample their famous cheddar cheese soup at the kiosk I knew would be set up for the festival.

□ Continuing my walk and reverie, I smiled as the daydream turned from

food to the special events we have always enjoyed at Epcot. Looking towards the giant, flowing flag with its red maple leaf, I instantly recalled our many visits to O Canada!, the circle-vision show with Martin Short; as well as the rollicking, hand-clapping, foot-tapping music of the band, Off Kilter. I was now eagerly longing for the day when our first all-girls trip would arrive!

I thought to myself, "Disney and Canada, two of my top favorite travel destinations! How lucky can I be to visit both places in one year?!" With all these silly, sweet, and savory thoughts and memories swirling around in my head, I pulled up sharply, my eyes focusing on the small pile of sand-washed stones under my feet. There, among the varied shapes and colors, I distinctly saw Mickey Mouse on one of the smaller gray stones -- perfectly silhouetted and seeming to smile up at me with his familiar "Hi ya Pal!"; I could just hear him as I scooped up the precious pebble before the next wave could wash away my treasure forever!

□

□Cradling the small stone in my hand, and rubbing the soft, smooth surface over and over again, I marveled that the image did not fade away, as it would if the familiar face had been specks of loose sand or dirt. Mickey was still there, even as the dark color faded to gray while the warm sunshine dried the amazing little stone I held in my hand!

□

□My walk took an abrupt turn, as I headed back to the cottage, excited to share this unexpected discovery with my family, knowing they would see exactly what I saw: a "Hidden Mickey" way up North! For me, finding Mickey along a stretch of beach I loved so well was a sign that these two destinations would remain forever linked in my heart and my life! Melodramatic? Maybe. Superstitious? Possibly. But whatever you want to think of it, this was one of those moments that affirmed my passions and my dreams; a tangible token that stays with me today, reminding me of the places and memories that have been, possibly, the happiest of my life!

*About The Author: Heidi Bamford previously contributed to PassPorter News with articles on [Hershey park](#) and the [Disney Film Festival](#). She lives with her family in upstate New York.*

Article last updated: 05-01-2014

View the latest version online at:

<http://www.passporter.com/articles/hidden-mickey-surprise.html>

Copyright by Heidi Bamford. All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this publication may be stored in a retrieval system or

transmitted in any form by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act. Resale of this guide is strictly prohibited without the copyright holder's permission. If you purchased this publication from someone other than PassPorter Travel Press, please call 877-929-3273.

View more PassPorter Articles online at <http://www.passporter.com/articles/>