



We decided to go to a small, historic mining town near Courtney to learn a little more about this area before we leave on Wednesday. [Cumberland](#) was (once upon a time) Canada's smallest and western-most city and from 1888 to 1966 it was the hub of 9 bustling coalmines. Miners came here from the US, Europe, China and Japan making Cumberland's Chinatown once one of the largest in the province. In 1912 to 1914 the mines were devastated by a strike and the business section of the village has been destroyed by two fires, one in 1932 and the other in 1933. As the coal mining industry declined, so did the population and now Cumberland is a tourist town, which oozes in history. There are a number of well-marked, scenic walking trails around the town that lead through forests, over various waterways and by some interesting sites and houses. We wandered through several antique-filled shops and enjoyed lunch at the Miners Bakery and Diner (the butter tarts are to die for!)

After lunch we headed back to the campground but stopped along the way at [Miracle Beach Provincial Park](#), a few miles south of Salmon Point. We had wanted to visit it ever since we arrived in the area but we never seemed to have time until now. Miracle Beach is a wonderful, huge, oceanfront beach with a combination of sandy and rocky areas, great for walking, playing and beachcombing. Being a provincial park, there are clean showers, washrooms and picnic tables as well as well-marked hiking trails. (There is a campground attached though we didn't explore it.) The tide was out while we were there so we saw seashells galore, seaweed, sand dollars, jelly fish, thousands of tiny crabs and even a couple of oysters.

It was an interesting day and it reinforced for us the knowledge that there is wealth of recreation for every level of interest here. Vancouver Island is a diverse Canadian playground worthy of a lengthy visit by all. We are indeed blessed!