

Gander to Deer Lake
NEWFOUNDLAND
CANADA



FIR TREE

DAY SEVEN GANDER to Bishop Falls

Sunday July 26/09 D81.81km +5.11km about town

M 47.2 A16.4 PT5h RT6.5 h od 474.53km

Keith's 29 today.... Seems just like yesterday he was a little boy like Quinn and Teague. Seems we never get to see enough of the boys... will have to make more effort in that regard. The Yerex party was fun to see all the "cousins" grown up and the next generation coming along. I remember my grandma saying "life flys by" and I think she was right! Hug the one beside you!

Rained again most of the night ... and they say they are in a drought! Just some facts to make you humble.

Edmonton has more people [almost double] the number in all of Newfoundland { we were told 500,000-most on the Avalon Peninsula }

Bus service only available on the Trans Canada Hwy [St John's to Port aux Basques] none available up to the Northern Peninsula, no trains, no ferry to the north {other than to Labrador}

No ferry to St Anthony one of the most interesting areas of the Island, no buses or tours {I guess we will have to cycle both ways}No shoulders except on TCH { trans Canada Hwy 1} Very few services on the TCH as it is relatively new.

More miles of coastline than could cross Canada 4 times!

I'm sure more lakes ...oops...Ponds than all the other provinces put together.

It is a unique harsh land you can see just by looking at the smallness of the trees {they are logging trees barely 6 inches}, the lack of population inland, the state of the roads where the water is eroding and undermining the hwy faster than they can fix it. It is populated by friendly, modest living family orientated, interesting people who stop to ask you if you need help in the grocery store, on the street, just everywhere. Few horns are honked at us, other than to say hello. Not one dog has chased us yet! Other than the hills everything is grand! – and today Gander to Bishop Falls was about as flat as I think it gets here... we had a couple of 2km or so mild climbs but some great down so the 80km went by quickly... into camp and set up by 1430 and the average is climbing up... due to maybe getting a little in shape, but more to the terrain. The weather unfortunately isn't very warm... 12C raining at 8am... up to balmy 18C by mid day. Virtually no services all day... Appleton and Glenwood have an ice crème store with 150 flavors.... Not something I wanted at 15C, but no restaurant... Notre Dame Junction has an info center with picnic tables so we ate our sandwiches and headed off in a misty rain... not enough to wet the jacket, but enough to keep the jacket on. Bishop Falls is a interesting spot. They have a municipal campsite along the Exploit's river ... very quiet with open sites, some serviced with water and power. Nice wash house that could use a little paint, but hot showers and okay clean. Nice picnic shelter for supper. We came across 2 U picks but needed to phone as they were not living on site. Cute signs to give Angus and Karen ideas... they had signs up to 50km away. Not much sign of farming other than one dairy farm seen with about 8 barns so must keep the cows inside.



Bishop Falls started in 1909. The river has salmon fishing. The trans Canada trail... Railway trestle bridge is the longest in NFLD and here since 1909. The ATV's use the trail which is a Provincial Linear Park, so it is impossible on a loaded bike as we found out. The bridge is neat and services some homes on the south side of the river so they can drive a car across it too. This town is in the Guinness book of records for being the longest town without a traffic stop light in North America {maybe 8km} More trivia... Alex Faulkner was the first NFLDer to play in the NHL born here.



Saw a neat photo of this bridge all lit up at night with Christmas lights.



We rode the trestle, went to value mart, showered and visited with a couple who moved back here from Calgary { to Stephenville} they are in town for her 25 school reunion and are interested in cycle touring or at least riding across NFLD. They have used ATV's on the trails with there children, but he is really keen to cycle. She is hoping it will help her loose a little weight... aren't we all! He was a computer programmer and she is an accountant. Newfoundland women remind me of Scottish women in build... shapely... large busted, and shapely legs... probably from walking these hills! A fellow told us that the North of Nfld is like northern Scotland.... And that the Hwy 430 is all along the coast and you can see for long distances so not to worry about the shoulder... and he is a trucker! So I will go with the flow. Next few days more remote so must carry groceries!

I don't think we have lost anything on a trip... I lost my new slipper shoes [left at the last info lunch stop], so only have my cycle shoes to wear.... Will have to look for a light pair of crocks.

DAY EIGHT Bishop Falls to Badger [Catamaran Pk CG]

Monday July 27/09

D 57.76 km M 37 A 16.5 PT 3h30 RT5h od532.29 km



Had a good evening in Bishop Falls, off to bed early to rain thru the night once more. 12C on waking with 100% humidity. The Black flies and mosquitos are devouring me! No chance to talk with our new friends as they were out partying late last night. We scrambled to the picnic shelter, packed up, had a quick breakfast and headed off with the wind at our backs [not strong, but enough] Short ride [18km] to Grand Falls/Windsor to grocery shop at Dominion. Nice to get good produce... hard not to buy too much! Need food for a couple of days as more remote. Grand Falls was established in 1905 when WW1 the British newspaper mogul, Harmsworths, needed alternate source of newsprint for their newspaper empire. They established a pulp and paper mill in Grand Falls that lasted 100 years, just closing this

spring. It incorporated with Windsor in 1991 and is the Central Nfld's shopping central, and a tourist destination especially for the salmon festival.

Never changed from the front high gear all day. Gentle great ride. Met a fellow from Ottawa going east... did across Canada in 3 pieces. Just finishing up the last stretch. Told us of a ferry that leaves Labrador and goes into many ports landing in Quebec. Sounded fun to go to more remote, boat access only spots.

Finally saw Momma Moose with a calf... too fast for photo!

48k 16.5/37.5 3hrs to Badger [named after Badger Brook] where there are 3 restaurants, couple motels and a convince store and a gas station! Had no idea. The Mic mac Indians were known to have used this area as a camp site. In 1894 the Newfoundland Railway came thru this area and opened it up for the first settlers and development of logging. We have seen a few logging trucks.... The logs are so small they are carried sideways on the trucks... cut all the same length, but smaller in diameter than a telephone pole. We had lunch by the Irvings picnic tables and road on for an early camp at 1400. Really relaxing day. Set up camp under cloudy sky, went for a swim in the indoor pool [cold], did our laundry and met a woman who lives in Windsor, but comes up here for the entire summer for past 5 years. People stay here like at a summer cottage [\$1600. for the season includes everything] The sites are large and private... although we are on a corner lot [\$19] big enough for 5 tents. Nice touch is a picnic table and 2 wooden deck chairs... to sit in the liquid sunshine. They have satellite internet that was a little sporadic with the clouds and rain over supper, but Ken was able to put up our photos on the web and I called Jessie with Skype, but reception was poor. Never got over 20C today, but they promise 5 days of nice weather coming up... looking forward to it!

Hard to take photos in the rain!

DAY NINE Badger [Catamaran Pk CG] to Sheppardville Junction Motel

Tuesday July 28/09

D 77 km M 45 A 20.1 [16.2 in pm] PT 4h45 RT6h od 609.37 km

Rained all night once again but this time pelting down... awoke at 0530, updated log, so thought I would go internet and send Don the updates to the route...not so fast...at 8 got invited over for toast and tea and then a thunderstorm started and it rained for 2 hours. We finally set off at 10am. Joan and Bramwell Russwell were really interesting couple from about 1 hours drive away. They come here for the summer just to be at the lake, spend the winters in Florida and any other time they have a granny suite that they built onto their home and their daughter with family live in the house and they stay in the suite if home... once a month thru the summer and a month each end of being in Florida... sounds great to me! She worked as a nurse so we enjoyed comparing notes on nursing each side of Canada.



They seem to be having the same problems as out west... too many minimally trained workers doing jobs that take more training. Fewer and fewer nurses trained in the area staying in the area. They I think are the typical Newfoundlander, kind, giving, interested in others... no NO TRESPASSING SIGNS or KEEP OUT or PRIVATE seen. Stopped raining so we headed off and it was easy cycling, with a slight wind at our backs, but it started to rain

really good. We are counting hills now at <10km/hr so only one hill all morning with an average of 20.1km/hr and 43km traveled in 2 hours... this was our day 9 destination, but decided to eat lunch and go on as the rain stopped. We continued on Day 10's itinerary and could have made the campsite but decided a motel night was in order after 8 tent nights. [Ken says his butt isn't broken in yet!] Not the best motel but he is the only choice so can't be too picky... clean with hot showers, some tv, no internet but a restaurant and pub. I think it was over priced at \$100 as the one we had in St John's was much nicer for \$14 more. Oh well he has us as no other place for 100km. Will add 20km to tomorrow [looks like all down hill] and have one spare day to use up later. The afternoon was a 3 hill time, but without the head wind it might have not been so tough.

We are following Mile by Mile Trans Canada... a little outdated, but not too bad. The elevation guide is too dense 250km in about 6 inches so hard to know how steep the climbs are. A lot of downhill tomorrow.

PS: after sleeping on the bed [too soft, saggy and lumpy], neither hall door or outside entry door locks, truckers stopped in the parking lot and idled, no fan so with window open the highway loud.... This is not a repeat motel! There is a reason he isn't in the guide book.. Should have continued on to the CG which it turned out was closed, but free range right there on the river! Someone told us there is a book on backpacking in NFLD... would be a good one for cyclists to get.

DAY TEN Sheppardville Junction Motel to Deer Lake

Wednesday July 29/09

D98.71 km M 41.9 A 16.5 PT 6 h RT8h od 708.09 km

Up off the lumpy bed by 0630 and off 0740! Gradual up up and downs into a mild head wind to Birchy Lake our destination for yesterday. [2 <10kph hills.] It was gated off and the first NO Trespassing signs we have seen. Was a nice spot just past on both sides of the bridge where one could stop on a bike. We continued on to Junction 420 where there is a gas station with restaurant. French toast and tea. Met a couple from Kaleden, BC.... I think everyone saw the ads for NFLD! They drove here, spent 2 weeks and are headed home before summers end... a long way to come for a short time. They turned away from going up north as the thunder storm was really bad on the shore and their large 5th wheel was really blowing when driving. We are told the weather is to improve.

Left lunch and set off for Deer Lake. Raining Vancouver style mist on and off of the morning seems to have quit. Saw a babe moose just standing inside the trees about 10 feet from me. Didn't move. I don't think he had a mommy close by... he didn't look as well as the last one we saw.



now I see his photo I think he looks starved or at least scrawny. Very big ears they have!



2 < 10kph hills and the rest down into Deer Lake. I was not looking forward to a over 90 km day, but this one was great. Shopped for groceries and headed to the Municipal campsite to a site right on the river. The rates are better at \$12 than the North RV Pk, but no laundry or internet.



Bull rushes already in bloom

Got warm this afternoon to 25C under blue skies. Set up and made mashed potatoes with soy nuggets for dinner. Also found jam made from the Partridge berries we saw... it is mixed with apples, but very yummy. \$3 for 250ml



I spent the better half of the afternoon trying to get a photo of these trucks with the tiny logs... it's hard to take photos and balance while riding! Loggers have the logs long ways.... Stick trucks have them sideways on the truck.



Stick truck

They give you room if they have it to give! Looking ahead at the mountains on the Bay of Islands.

DAY ELEVEN Deer Lake

Thursday July 30/09

REST DAY

We have such a nice spot here we decided to stay. Looking ahead we are trying to find a way to get more days in Nfld. Our plan now is to check out a bus we have located that runs up the Northern Peninsula... we will ride up and over to St Anthony and then bus back to Corner Brook and omit Labrador for this trip.... We are told it is the breeding grounds for black flies and I have my quota!