

Cape Breton Nova Scotia



It's 625 but in Newfoundland 655h !



DAY Thirty Port Aux Basque Ferry terminal to North Sydney KOA CG

Tuesday August 18/09

D 27.37 k A13.9 M 40.9 PT1 h50 AT3h OD2026.7 km



Trucks were idling engines all nite and they were moving things around, but we didn't hear much. Was a good choice to stay here as it would not have been fun riding these roads in the dark. Hwy 105 has a good shoulder but it disappears when they put in a passing lane. Here and in most of NL they drive way over the speed limit. Not many RCMP so no deterrent. Washrooms with showers open all nite at the ferry plus TV if interested.



We left and followed Ken's good directions to the Atlantic Super Store for groceries... we were out of most everything. We are 2 days ahead so we decided to just go to the KOA and have a ½ day off on the beach swimming in the St Andrew's channel ... it was warm enough and it was 38C with the humidex added in... if you sit quietly and don't move it's not too bad but cycling in it is deadly. The bridge was a surprise with no shoulder and 2 lanes.... Went like

mad fiends. North Sydney had good shopping so we got stocked up as headed for the Cape Breton Highlands.. Cabot Trail. Calling for thunder showers!



wow they are way ahead of us expecting people to compost at the ferry terminal!

Were able to get hold of Dagny so touched base with home... Happy B Day 61 to my mate



enjoying the beach

DAY Thirty-one North Sydney KOA CG to Dino's One stop Ingonish CG

Wednesday August 19/09

D 86.43 k A15.4 M 48.3 PT5 h30 AT8h OD2113.1 km



Avoid KOA's they are too expensive and never consistent in things offered... He stuck us in the back against a rock wall that was avalanching all night as the temperature dropped... woke us both up at one point in the night... it did give us shade early, but no view and what a view there was from this site... did cool off over night which was really nice.

The sun came up brilliant RED due to the haze I guess



Scary crossing this bridge yesterday ... no shoulder

Headed up up and up 240M in 7 km on TCH 105. Left before 0730 so 18C and foggy/ dull. Tent damp. @ 17km turned off [road surface bad] to take the Englishtown ferry which is just a 5 minute boat ride across a point... no services in Englishtown, but Jersey Cove has a lot of artisans... leather crafts, pottery, jewelry, etc... The ferry has a guide chain to keep it from blowing down the river. Didn't really need a driver from the looks of it. Bikes and us were free.

Continued on to the Cabot Trail... flat until the church below



@ 24km St Annes United Church has a tea house.... Not run by the church. We had 3 of the hugest blueberry pancakes each.... Disappointed not “tea cups” Lots of tea pots on display, but the tea bag was in the cup! Not a quality tea house! Met a fellow hitchhiking from Edmonton looking for a job on a cruise ship as a cook



@46k 2h53 15.9/42.6 Wrecking Beach has a store We had our picnic lunch and met a young couple touring on their first ever tour... from Ottawa... they rented bikes in Sidney for \$100 for a week each... not bad bikes...in very good shape and they were given a repair kit too. They could be picked up at the end of their circle route so they don't have to ride back to Sydney for the same price. Also met a fellow going clock wise who said we had a hill coming. Well the hill started suddenly and there was a huge switch back that caught me off guard and not geared down so I had to stop and go down hill to regroup and head up up up up up up... I think you get the picture... I had to stop several times in the 10km ... grades of 12% and 10% and never dropped below 9% to get a break over the 10km... summit 57.4 43.7/14.8 3h53 1<10 to ,5 for 2km hard cycling 1 hour up up up.... Did I say it was up up up! 35C with humidity coming out the ying yang That almost did me in but I perservered and only pushed about 10ft to get going after getting caught unaware on the big 12% switch back. Saving grace was little traffic and one guy rolled down the window and offered to pull me up!



Seem to be using old churches for coffee houses and shops all over here.

Started down and the run off was really nice... 63km was Knotty Pine cottages and small store... boy that pop was great! Right on the ocean.

@ 70km Variety Store apples \$1.50 each Also a liquor store and restaurant with bakery.. Discovered I deleted some of my log.... Have a PDF so will have to retype it when I get home ... not too bright!

Note about the National Park... they want \$8 per person per day for the park and \$28 to camp = \$44 + tax to put up my pup tent! No power or anything extra.... No way.... All the towns are out of the park so tonight we are in Ingonish at a private CG... will see what we do tomorrow night. Was 82km to the CG but the other was going back for diner.

There is a good store..... Fresh Mart which sell Super Store PC products just as coming into Ingonish... got some Tangerines that tasted oh so good on a hot day.

We went out for supper at a restaurant right on the shore on the patio... very huge portions of spaghetti... Yummy! It is 30C at 2030 and very dark already.... We lost a ½ hour since leaving NFLD! Suggestion of thunder showers again tonight, but no sign of them yet.

DAY Thirty-two Dino's One stop Ingonish CG to Pleasant Bay Hostel CG

Thursday August 20/09

D 65.56k A 12.5 M 53.7 PT 5h14 AT9h OD 2178km

Thunder storm started last night about 10pm with lightning and then started to pour rain for a couple of hours... need to spray the tent as some drops coming thru when rains really hard.... Not enough to wet anything

Started out north towards Neils Harbour at 15km It is 2km off the road to the grocery [opens at 9am] and pharmacy opens at 0930... so didn't not wait. Just over 1 hour to here ... rolling with lots of ocean views

Started up out of Neils harbour 8km 6% grade then 4k 8% down... getting very hot 25C with humidity. Not sure the name of the mountain.

At 35km [13.3/53.7 2h39] is 2 country markets at Cape North. Also CG and Restaurant which was closed... stopped for muffins and ice cream as really getting hot. Seemed to be a lot of down here

@46km Big Intervals Tent only CG in National Park.... No water other than the river... stopped for sandwiches and headed on..... the up up started... 5km at 13% up to 52km then down 3km at 13% met a woman from Normandy France that was on a 5 month trip thru Scotland, Greenland, Iceland , now here ending in Montreal... about 40 travelling alone with huge load... said she pushed up the 13% grade [going away from us].... We met her at a rest stop about 2km from the top... I ended up pushing for ½ km as the wind in my face on a 13% grade did me in.... got going again





this was an emergency shelter at the top of the pass



At 59km is the shelling a replica of one on Isle of Skye



The CG MacIntosh Brook was at 62km where we intended to go today... it is in the park and we wanted to go on to Pleasant Bay where the French lady told us was the hostel allowing camping... We stopped in Pleasant Bay at the grocery for pop and headed for the hostel looking like rain, but it all blew over... the black flies did not!

DAY Thirty-three Pleasant Bay Hostel CG to Cheticamp Island CG

Friday August 21/09

**D49..76 k looks short, but lots of up up up A 5.5- 12.6 M 54.6 PT 3h 52 AT6h
OD 2228.5 km**

What can I say.... Started to sprinkle at 5am but never amounted to much. Packed and off after breakfast at the hostel. Seems like 0715 is our usual leaving time now. The up hill starts in about 1km from the hostel and it is a douzzy. Average 5.5 M32.7 6.12km at the top from sea level to 355m or 1102ft...

I have discovered you can sweat from every inch of your skin surface... head, pits, back and bottoms of your feet!

This is Mt McKenzie which switches back and forth with rest stops as you go up... it is interesting to see they have tiny signs with the % and km for cyclist... so 12% for 4km going up!



photo of a post card sent to Teague of the climb today!



view from one of the rest stops looking back at Pleasant Bay

@14km the average is up to 9kph 1h30min to a boardwalk over the bog. We are back into the Cape Breten Highlands National Pk. After here it is a sort of plateau where it goes up 100 and down 100 and repeats about 30 times... oh we are not at the top. We are at 455m or 1500ft at 15km for the top off French Mtn by 10am. I am really glad we started off early when was a bit cooler. Down French mtn to the shore but more up with spectacular views and some CG right on the ocean. Once out of the park, Motels, cabins and stores started popping up.... Cheticamp seems to go on for about 10km before you are really at the town. Stopped for Veggie cesideas [?] which were scrumptious looking out over the bay.



11% for 6km



Hot hot day



Arrived at our CG after leaving town and crossing over to an island Plage St Pierre Campin on Cheticamp Island... kind of expensive \$29.38 for a pup tent with no services, but the place is packed and we are happy to have a spot. Set up and sprayed the fly with water repellent as had a few drips last rain storm, and headed for the beach for a couple of hours R&R.... only needed a light salad and bagel for supper as lunch was filling.

Another tough day being passed by motor cycles and convertibles.... Ken wants to tell George to get that car out of the garage and drive it up here... would be a great ride.... It is a great ride! If the sweat wasn't dripping in my eyes! The pounds are just falling off!

Ken on the great downhill!





DAY Thirty-four Cheticamp Island CG to Port Hood

Saturday August 22/09

D93.66 k A 13.8 M50.7 PT 6h46 AT10h OD2322.10 km

Happy Birthday to Angus!

Noted Gaelic bilingual signs on east side of Cabot Trail and then French Acadian on the west St Lawrence side... also now back to Gaelic as the second language.

We left Cheticamp CG at 0715 into the wind. Expecting a hurricane BILL to hit tonight, but people don't seem to be too concerned.

@ 10km Grand Estange coop They had a weird SCARECROW display by a small café [not open Saturdays- sign of Seventh Day Adventists in this area]



@25km 2hr 12.9/48k we stopped at Margaree Harbour for breakfast.... Lt after bridge... talked to the waitress and she suggested to change our route and stay on the west coast of Cape Breton to the Canso causeway... suggested it was flat.... Will have to send her a postcard to let her know that is not the case! Anyways went down route 219 which was up 200ft, down, up , down repeat.



@56k over 4h we got to Inverness and sent Granty and Vera a post card... had a picnic lunch in the wind accompanied by some local guys just passing the day away. Saw "Nesbitt" on mail box and wondered if Cherylann has reli's here. Also Aucoin [said Oh Quinn] on almost every mailbox.

@ 78k reached Mabou Freshmart and thought there was a CG close by but it has closed.... We are fairly tired from pedaling into the wind... looked up in the camping book and phoned Port Hood to see if they were open and they were... we are still watching the Hurricane progress and they say it should hit tomorrow afternoon. Road very busy due to a death of a fiddler well known here and they had a memorial ending at 4pm and we are still on the road. No motels. Had a near miss by a guy passing right at us with no shoulder to speak of and a guy behind us! No damage thanks to Ken's observations.



@93.66 reached the CG 6h46m on road 13.8/50.7 gorgeous site right on the ocean.... Oh not for us as it is so windy... they found us a very sheltered spot, we went for a swim in the ocean [1930] as the sun is setting, washed our clothes , showered and into the tent. Very long day Hot 30C wind into our face most of the day like breathing in a furnace.

DAY Thirty-five Port Hood to Port Hastings Skye Lodge

Sunday August 23/09

D46.97 k A 14.4 M47 PT 3h16 AT4h OD2369.2 km

As we changed our route to the shore we continued on route 19 into the wind and hoping to get to the Canso Causeway before the wind and rain starts due to the hurricane BILL. We packed up in cloudy skies and headed out at 0730 into a brisk wind. There is really no services here on Sundays, but At 18km Judique has a gas station and a Store for other days of the week. Lots of farms, few cows but no other animals seen... I think they were farms years ago and now are acreages. Nothing at all the other points... Campbell, Long Point, Craigmores, Cragnish,.... Troy has a small store we stopped at and that was a mistake... they said it would hit at 3pm the storm, but yesterday they had estimated 11am and at 1130 it started to pour just as we were leaving the store.... The head winds doubled and we still had 4km to get to Port Hastings or the causeway. We were told that to cross the causeway in this storm would not be a good idea as no shoulder and the surf would be splashing over the wall. This is the first Hotel in over a month of travel, but really necessary! We were dripping wet and I went into the Skye Lodge and got the last room! The hydro crew is expected here for the night as the storm is increasing in intensity and they will have access to helping reinstate power from here. We are very glad to be inside as the petunias are almost blowing out of the ground and the trees are laying sideways... the rain is sheeting down now as I look out the window! Winds are 60kph and gusting to double that at least.



Phoned Dagny and emailed out to say we are okay. The news channel says this could be the eye of the storm yet.



Hurricane BILL.... Pouring , wind blowing up to 100kph

Just some observations: NL minimal population, just getting into tourism, friendly, laid back, use crown land as if they own it, ditches no garbage maybe because it all blows away!, ocean views taken for granted.... Love to camp, family orientated, no perennial flowers or scrubs by the homes.... Maybe to keep the black flies down, Hilly but doable, foresty big employer, few dogs! Accepting of minimal services... ie no bus, train, planes to north of province.

Cape Breton: more into tourism with shops, artisans, lots of cabins and accommodation using the ocean views, more populated, especially on the west shore, more Private Property signs, very hilly, large mowed areas around homes [for flies?], some farms, Cape Breton Highlands National Park very expensive but the locals get a 50% discount if pass bought in April, but the camping is expensive at \$28 for a pup tent—are able to get camping in the towns which are not part of the park. Windy.... Not worried about the hurricane storm coming.