

THE VIKING TOUR

Newfoundland/Labrador

OR



The Ride Goes On Forever

The above was shot from a road pull out in Labrador. The thing that looks like an iceberg is an actual iceberg and in the background is a forming fog bank. Both of those items were quite common on this trip.

After doing Alaska I had been in every Canadian Province and Territory except Newfoundland/Labrador and that was a trip that needed riding. We almost did it last year, but the available time was too late and we went to California. This year Newfoundland/Labrador was the only target. Barbara and Paul decided they wanted to go and they went so far as to trade in their bike for a trike. So we launched into the planning. In order to miss a lot of the heat across the plains we decided to go in June. Research indicated that while we would get rained on it probably wouldn't snow.

The last of May and early June was a busy time for me. Angel was getting married in Albany and Jessica and Nick were going to China. I rode to Albany and got Angel and Clancy married then hurried back here to help Nick and Jessica pack and put them on the plane. After doing all of that, it got a little quiet around here and on the 6th I pulled out heading for Denver.

After a couple of days mowing lawns and fixing things, Bobbe and I loaded up and headed out on the 9th. We stopped for breakfast at Johnson's Corner, took the back roads to Brush and headed north to Rapid City. Bobbe wanted to see the Badlands. The first time we tried that she lost her appendix, and then the next time we took the wrong road. This time we would get it done.

From Brush we headed north across the grasslands. This part of the country had a wet spring and everything was green and growing. Our first stop was at Scotts Bluff. Scotts Bluff is, as the name and photo indicate, a bluff. It was and is a landmark on the way west. They have a nice informative visitor's center and a road up to the top of the bluff. After taking a break, looking at the displays and riding to the top of the bluff, we headed for the next stop the Agate Fossil Beds National Monument.



This one is also in Nebraska and is for sure out in the middle of nowhere. It is another of the places where, a long time ago in a Galaxy far away, a bunch of strange looking animals would up dead in a dried up waterhole. Sort of like the LA tar pits without the tar. It was an

interesting stop but the actual dig site was a pretty good walk from the visitor's center, so we just took in the center and called it good.

From there we were heading for Rapid City. It was a very nice ride. All day we had been riding through the grasslands. After good spring rains, everything was green and growing, grass as far as the eye could see. It was warm, but not hot: all in all, a very pretty ride. It was along about sundown that we pulled into a motel on the east side of Rapid City, unloaded and walked over to a very nice steakhouse and toasted our first of many days ride.

This guy was standing right outside the restaurant. It is a very well done sculpture, made out of about any shape and type of metal all welded together.

As per our normal we did not get up and going at the crack of anything. At this



point we were heading for Chicago to meet up with Barbara and Paul. From Rapid City we were going to ride across the Badlands. However, as I have mentioned there was plenty of rain in the spring so the Badlands were looking like pretty good lands with good green grass all over the place. We were avoiding the interstate on a back road so we only hit a small portion of the park. We passed a sign on a dirt road directing us to the actual park so after 6 miles of dirt road we were actually in the park.

This is a shot of some different colored soil but even in this you can see all of the grass growing everywhere. We continued on through the park, it was a nice relaxing ride with all sorts of eroded forms.

Eventually we left the park and headed SE across South Dakota. At one point we hit a little road construction, but nothing serious. It got a little warm in the afternoon, we took one wrong turn, but eventually we pulled into Sioux City Iowa and checked in for the night. We were both a little tired so we settled for some of KFC's finest and called it a day.

The next day we were going to wind up in Chicago at Barbara and Paul's. Most of the ride would be interstate but we did have one stop. There is a thing called Freedom Rock just a little bit west of Des Moines Iowa and a couple of miles south of I-80.



Essentially it is a big rock sitting on the NE corner of an intersection. As you can see, it has been painted on all side as a tribute to our servicemen and women. It gets changed every now and then. No charge, I didn't even see a donation box. There is a website related to the rock if you want more information.

After Freedom Rock it was time to make some miles, and that is what the Honda is good at. Smart phones are a good thing. Barbara had sent us the good directions on how

to find their house, and that really helped. It warmed right up in the afternoon, and at one point we pulled over for about ½ hour to let a rainstorm pass. We did not know that little storm was an indicator of things to come. So, following instructions, we had no problem at all finding the house in Naperville.

It was good to see Barbara, Paul and Jamie and we spent the evening catching up on everything. Paul had a Harley and had traded it in for a trike and this trip was to be its first one. Unfortunately Paul's back was giving him problems and they would not get to be coming along. We were all disappointed at the news, but we all agreed that starting off on a long trip with a bad back was not going to result in anything good. I have, at times in the past attempted to ride with various ailments including a bad back. None of those times have turned out to be pleasant. Paul is not getting out of the bike riding and there will be other times and places.



business

The next day we woke up to passing storm fronts with the forecast of rain to come. We waited a bit for the rush hour and a couple of storm cells to move through and then we moved on ourselves.

Again, following directions, getting out of town was no problem. We were heading for the Eternal Flame and Niagara Falls and it was to be mostly Interstate Highway. For that day, mostly what we did was make the miles. We got sprinkled on, but nothing serious.

However, and it is a big however, during the night things got serious. From all of the reports, you would think we were back in Oklahoma or Kansas with all of the tornados and such. For us, the result was that in the morning it was raining fairly heavily and looked to be doing so far sometime.

We were looking for the Eternal Flame which burns in Chestnut Ridge State Park which is just a little bit out of Buffalo. It is a gas seep that has been there for quite sometime and people light it. It also has a website that will tell you all about it.

After giving up waiting for the rain to clear we finally suited up and pulled out. It was raining quite



heavily but the bad part was the fog which made riding interesting. Keep in mind there we were real close to Lake Erie. Eventually we got tired of the interstate and pulled off onto the back roads. About this time the rain had pretty much slacked off, but as we rode some very nice back roads the fog entered with a vengeance. Slow and steady is the name of the game. Eventually, after a bunch of poking around, we did find the park only to find out that the flame was down at the end of a $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ mile muddy trail and at any rate, was under water.

You can't win them all so we went on down the road to Niagara Falls. By the time we got to the falls it had stopped raining and the sun was out.

Things have changed a bit since I was here the last time which was in 1984 with DD and Corbin and the side car. At that time, you could just ride along a shoreline drive and stop wherever you wanted. Not so anymore, it is all geared to tours and you can only park at certain places. Finally, we did figure out where the falls were and how to get there and after several wrong turns and back tracks we were there. We were even able to park for free and walk over to the falls. The falls are as impressive as ever and I still don't want to go over them in a barrel. We looked around a bit and after taking several wrong turns headed east on a very nice road.

Highway 18 runs along the south shore of Lake Ontario. It is a two lane road with not a lot of traffic. The



sun was out, the temperature was good, and little wind. It was very pleasant to just roll along.

This is an old lighthouse that has been closed and turned into a museum. It is part of a state park that we stumbled across. The museum part was closed

while we were there but we took a short break and looked around. Due to being on the south side of the lake and only a few feet about the lake level, this has to be an interesting place when the storms roll in. Highway 18 is a nice road, but it was getting late and we were getting low on fuel so we dropped south to a more main road and finally made to Rochester where we checked into a motel and walked over to a seafood restaurant for a very good meal and a toast to a good days ride.

The next morning dawned clear and made for riding, so we did. While heading east through Rochester we rode by the remains of Kodak. At one time Kodak had to be the mainstay of the economy of Rochester. No more, there are closed buildings with Kodak's name on them all over the place.

The further east we went the more rural it got. Most folks, myself included, hear New York and think of the city and all of that mess. Well, turns out a good large part of the state looks nothing like New York City. We stopped for gas and lunch in Rome and then headed off into the Adirondacks which is as lightly settled as many western states. It was a very nice road with lots of views, not a lot of traffic, little towns every now and then and not much else. It is a good thing we gassed up in Rome as one of the things

missing was gas stations. We found this on a nice curvy downhill. I saw it as I rode by and had to go back up the hill and turn around so we could get a photo of it. No sign, no explanation if you are driving fast and not looking you will not see it. Bobbe did a good job on this photo.



We crossed over into Vermont at Ticonderoga. They had a very interesting statue there, but unfortunately they set it in the middle of a traffic circle with a lot of traffic so we really couldn't get a good photo but we did find the ferry across Lake George. Not much as far as ferries go but it did the job and I like ferries. Notice that the bike is not strapped down that will come later.



Riding in Vermont, or driving for that matter, is pleasant. It is a very rural state without a lot of big highways or towns. The roads just curve around uphill and down through the little towns, quite pleasant but not good for making time. We wanted to make it to Montpelier for the night as Vermont is into Bed and Breakfasts and not so much motels. It was getting late and it didn't help that the road I had picked off of the map did not exist or at least exist where shown on the map. It also didn't help when we ran into 9 miles of road construction which was rough but thankfully dry. When we finally made it into Montpelier we found the selection of motels was limited but we did get a room in the Econo Lodge, our most expensive of the trip. We did get directions to a very good Italian place where we got a good meal and a couple of stiff drinks.

The next morning we headed across Vermont, New Hampshire and most of Maine. We had come this way a few years ago and it was as nice as ever. We tried to ride up Mt. Washington but there were

having some sort of race either up or down so we would have had to wait, not our favorite activity. After a discussion we decided to stop in Bangor for the night, make our reservations for the ferry and then the next day get close enough to N. Stanley that we would have no problem making it in time. A very good idea as far as it went.

We made it into Bangor in the early afternoon and landed in a nice motel next to a casino. We unloaded and even though neither of us is really into casinos we walked over and risked the family fortune. Then it was back to the motel for a really nice meal in the onsite Irish Restaurant. Making the reservation for the ferry was no problem and we settled in for the night.

To make a long story shorter: it would have been a better idea to ride on to Calais than stop in Bangor as it turned out to be quite a bit longer ride to N. Stanley than I had thought. Bobbe made me put that in.

We left Bangor and made it to Calais and ran into a problem. Bobbe's communication system shorted out. She could talk, but could not hear. It turned out to need a replacement part that we could not get. Other than a longish line we had no problem getting into Canada and promptly lost an hour.

We discovered that in this part of Canada roadside burger/chicken/fish/etc joints are quite popular. As it was lunch we stopped at one and had an interesting lunch. We pulled into the village of St. Andrew to get down to the Bay of Fundy. This is a view of the Bay of Fundy with the tide out, but not as far out as it sometimes gets. The Bay of Fundy has the most tidal fluctuation of any place on the planet. At times if the moon and everything is correct the Bay will actually drain and you can walk on the sea floor. Before you try this you had better make sure you have timed things correctly or be ready to swim. Canadians, like most other people are friendly and like to talk. While looking over the Bay we talked to a fellow from Nova Scotia and he told us that we had a bit further to go than we (I) had thought. With that discovery



we went back to the 4 lane and headed east.



We stopped for gas near the town of Amherst and this was sitting out front. It is a Blueberry, and guess what: they grow a lot of Blueberries around there. There are a lot of marshes, what we would call swamps, and they

all have names and that is where (I am guessing) is where they grow the Blueberries.

A little bit further down the road we ran into a section of toll road. It is out in the middle of nowhere, and only about 30 miles long, no explanation, no change in the road, just pay the toll.

After looking at the map we figured we could stop at New Glasgow for the night. It looked large enough to have a selection of motels and it was about 90 miles from N. Stanley. We figured even with bad weather we could make the ferry in time which turned out to be a good idea as it looked like rain was coming in, and it did.

We checked into a nice Travel Lodge, at a reasonable price, had a sort of nice meal next door, with a nice drink, settled in for the night and awoke the next morning to a rain that was not going anywhere.

With a ferry to catch we suited up and hit the road. It was not raining real hard, was not cold and the traffic was not heavy. Also, there was little fog as a couple of days ago. Also, for some strange (Canadian) reason they decided to put up plenty of signs directing us to the ferry which we found with no problems. Checking in was no problem and we went to the head of the line and in short order were on the ferry strapping the bike down. Two side notes: one, Newfoundland is ½ hour ahead of Nova Scotia and the ferry runs on Newfoundland time. We had not thought of that. Two, wet painted steel had a very poor friction coefficient and not fun to ride on.

There were just two bikes on this ferry, us and a guy from Quebec on a Harley. We tried to talk but English was not his language and our French pretty much sucks so we just got out of the gear. Bobbe went up to get the good seats while I strapped the bike down. Or rather I watched while one of the crewmen handled it. He put four straps on it and it looked good. At least I hoped the weather was not going to be so bad as to require more than 4 straps. The ferry is a pretty good sized boat, those are full sized semis in the photo and the crew is good. They had it loaded and on the way in short order.

Bobbe had found us a couple of good seats where we could look out and be comfortable. There is a full restaurant, bar, snack bar, gift shop as well as internet access (slow), so we did not suffer nor did we see much as for the most part it was raining and foggy. For landlubber me, the seas were not large so I even managed to eat a snack. In a little over 7 hours we were pulling into Port Aux Basque Newfoundland, ready to go explore some more.



Quebec on a Harley. We tried to get the good seats I watched while put four At

found good look out full

The rain had sort of let up while on the ferry and it was only raining a little when we landed. Port Aux Basque is not a large place and according to the guide book the motel selection was not great. We decided on the Motel Port Aux Basque as we found it easily, they had room, a restaurant and the book said it was good, and it was. The room was not bad as was the restaurant and the drinks were good. We ate and then went outside and walked around. We were both looking forward to what was coming.

The first thing we discovered the next morning was that it was still raining, foggy in spots and did not look to be stopping anytime soon. So, after a good breakfast at the motel we suited up and headed north. It was a very interesting ride. For the most part there were few if any trees and a lot of mosses and low growing shrubs, primarily because there was little if any soil. It was mainly a few inches of poor soil sitting on bedrock, the result of the last ice sheet. There was no farming as there was no soil to farm. As we went further north there were places, valley floors, where there was some soil and then it was used for hay.

We continued on north with the rain coming and going, never real hard. We took a little side trip to Stephenville just to see what was there. Surprise, Stephenville was there as well as a mostly abandoned airport with a U.S. jet mounted on a pylon. No explanation, just the plane. That done we pulled back on the big road where the rain started again. We pulled into Corner Brook for gas and lunch. Lunch was at Jungle Jim's which turns out, is a chain across Newfoundland and the food is pretty good.

A little bit on down the road at Deer Lake our route split. Pulling out of Deer Lake I had found a moose bumper to follow. The road started climbing and the scenery changed to trees and scrub brush, it also began to rain more. It was here that we saw our first moose. As it was spring there were no big antlers or anything. Our lead car saw him and hit the brakes, I followed. The moose was standing beside the road waiting from traffic to clear or stop and then he (?) walked across the road and he refused to pose. It is truly amazing how quickly an animal that large can get lost in the brush.

We were heading into Gros Morne National Park. According to Google Translate, Gros Morne is something like very somber or something similar, I would guess that would be as the settlers had a tough time getting through here. The road kept climbing, more trees started showing up and in a bit it looked like parts of Colorado, Wyoming or Montana. Also, the rain started letting up, not quitting but letting up. The photo above was taken a short distance from the Visitor's Center for the park. As you can see, a storm is rolling through. It also is a reminder as to how quickly the weather can change. Not an hour before this we had ridden out of the rain and were giving thoughts to getting out of most of the rain gear. We did not get wet out of this cloud, but we did decide to leave the gear on. By the by, the water there is not a lake, that is the ocean.



We did the visitor's center which was interesting and again headed north. We wanted to make it somewhere near St. Barbe before calling it a day. After the park, the road pretty much stays right by the ocean and it is windy. With the wind coming off of the ocean, it is also cooler and the rain clouds come and go. The route was certainly scenic with a bunch of coves with little towns that have picturesque names.

Of the many things we found interesting was the custom of people planting raised bed gardens right beside the highway. Not in their backyard by any stretch, just right off of the roadside. Also, apparently the gardens are a source pride as most of them were very well kept. Another thing we found interesting was the way they built these houses. Consider: here is a place where high winds are a fact of life, even more so than western Oklahoma. Also, it gets very cold and the snow gets very deep. You would think that the housing construction would take those things into account. However, this is not the case. Most of the houses were wood construction, few brick, sitting out by themselves unprotected from the wind and roofed with asphalt shingles. If anyplace called out for standing seam metal roofs, this would be the place. However, along this place we did not see a one. Later on we would see how the Vikings build, those boys were smart.

We stopped for fuel in Hawke's Bay and ask about motels to the north. The folks at the station recommended the Plum Point Motel. We looked in the book, and it was recommended, it also was about the only one. So it was back on the scooter and back into the rain and eventually we arrived at the Plum Point Motel, they had a room and a restaurant and we checked in. The room was adequate and the restaurant quite good so we had a nice meal and toasted our first full day in Newfoundland. We also took to opportunity to a load of laundry.

Seafood is big at the restaurants in this part of the world. Look around and it is not too hard to figure out why, and I have to say, normally it was very good. One of the things we noticed on the menu at Plum Point was Cod Tongue. It turns out that it is just exactly what it says it is: the tongue out of a cod fish. It is considered very tasty. We ask and got a detailed description but neither of us could bring ourselves to try it. Why change, I don't suck crawfish heads, eat mountain oysters or scrapple so now, I don't eat cod tongues.

The plan for the next day was to go to Labrador and that requires a ferry ride. There are not a lot of roads in Labrador and what there are for the most part are not paved. What we wanted to do was go over on the morning ferry and then back in the afternoon just to say we had been there. We did not have far to go from Plum Point. We stopped by the post office to mail post cards and then rode over, in the rain, to St. Barbe, got our tickets and got in line, in the rain. Good plan, mostly didn't work. It turned out they had to fuel up the ferry, actually, a good idea. They said we could go back to the office and wait, it was dry and the restaurant had coffee, and we would be loading last so we would have plenty of time. We did all that and when we were notified we went back to the ferry and waited some more. They let Bobbe walk on board and eventually, I got to ride the bike in on the wet painted steel. The tie down was interesting. A crewman came by and tossed a couple of straps my way. He was watching while I strapped the bike down, before I got done, a horn blew and all of the crewmen went somewhere. By the time I got done I almost was locked in the hold. I found Bobbe and we settled down for the trip. Due to the fog and rain we didn't see anything until we were pulling into the harbor. Fueling the boat had taken quite a bit of time, it looked like we were just going to ride off of the ferry, buy a ticket and ride back on, bummer. On the way out Bobbe was talking with the Gift Shop operator who informed us that the ferry

was making an extra run with some hazardous cargo and we could go on that one. That was great, it would give us time to get off and ride around and see what we could see.

When we first got off of the ferry we were surprised to see all of the road signs in French, then we remembered that it lands in Blanc-Sablon Quebec. But, make a right turn, ride a bit, and there you are in Labrador.



As the photo shows, it was foggy: it was also misting but not actually raining. Those are fishing boats pulled up for repairs. I thought they were quite small until I saw a full sized pickup by one.

There are no trees in this part of Labrador. As we rode east we would top a hill, go down into a small town, up a ridge, down into a small town, all of them picturesque. We stopped for

lunch in one that was large enough to have a motel with a restaurant and had a very nice meal.

Everywhere we looked there were icebergs floating around the bays. We rode on and looked around at sights there were, to us, very stark and strange. It was very easy to imagine some skin clad humans chasing large ice age mammals coming across a hill.





We got off on this road because of a sign talking about a lighthouse. As you can see, it is gravel. It was very doable until we came upon a couple of places where melt water was running under the road and it made riding very interesting. We gave up on the lighthouse but did get this cool shot of an iceberg. We also found a monument to the oldest burial site in the new world where a person was buried with grave goods. They had found were some one had buried a child with

some items from its life as opposed to just tossing it in outside. From the anthropologic point of view, this is a big deal.

We had decided that we had to head back to the ferry at a certain time, and it was time. We slowly headed back, and eventually found a place to change some money. By this time the fog and mist had cleared, and it was approaching warm. We got out of the pants and were thinking about the jackets but kept them.

We made it back to Blanc Sablon, got our tickets, made it on the ferry and settled in for the trip. No tie down issues this time. There was a motel with a restaurant at the ferry office and we were going to stay there. However, when we got there they had no power and had no idea how long it would be. With that

discovery we rode back to the Plum Point motel and checked in. Interestingly we got a nicer room for less money, wonder how that works? So again, we didn't order the Cod Tongue but had a good meal and toasted another very interesting day.



The next morning we were go to see L'Anse Aux Meadows, the place where the Norse landed long before anyone had ever heard of Columbus. The sun was shining, a light wind blowing overall a perfect day for riding. We rode north out of Plum Point and along the south side of the Strait of Belle Isle. It was a very nice ride and in short order, without even getting lost we found the site.



It is a very interesting site, but there is not all that much to see. There is a very nice visitor's center, a hokey reproduction village and the excavated remains of the actual Norse buildings. At least the reproduction building indicated that the Norse knew how to build buildings for this climate. The excavations show where the actual building were, but the excavations were done many years ago and about all you can see are grassy indentions with a sign telling you what was there.

To me the park service put a very interesting spin on things and that was the most interesting part. They started

out when our ancestors moved out of Africa. Some went east into Asia, Russia and some went north and west into Europe. Approximately 100,000 (give or take a few) years later when the Newfoundland locals came in contact with the Norse the human race actually completed the circum-navigation of the earth. I had never heard or read it being put that way and I find it very interesting. After I thought about things for a while I realized I liked it for the same reason as I like the Smithsonian. The Smithsonian does not do replicas they have the real thing, like the hat Lincoln wore the night he was shot. Here, with the exception of the recreated village, is the actual place or at least close to the actual place where Europeans stepped onto North America.

This is a sculpture at the site which I am sure means something about east meeting west or some such. Note that we still have on our riding pants but the sky is blue and all in all, a great day for a ride.

We spent quite a bit of time looking around the visitor's center, took in the movie and then walked down to the actual dig site and even took in the recreated village



complete with re-enactors.

After that, it was lunch time. On the way out Bobbe spotted a sign for the Valhalla Lodge so we rode over to give it a try. It turned out to be a very good restaurant with all of the usual seafood goodies. I wanted to stay awake so I just had a very good bowl of chowder. The waitress was quite talkative and told us how the locals go out to the icebergs and chip off ice for



local use. In fact, according to her the ice in Bobbe's drink was iceberg ice. The photo above was taken in the restaurant parking lot. It was quite scenic: you are not going to see that scene in Oklahoma.

There are all sorts of interesting names for the places. For instance, after leaving the restaurant we stopped for fuel in Dark Tickle. Try and figure out how it got that name. Shortly after leaving Dark Tickle we saw our second moose of the day. He (?) was just standing by the road. By the time we got turned around he was gone just like the others. We were now heading for St. Johns and were retracing our steps. Roads are sort of few and far between. We did find a new one and it took us to Plum Point via the interior. Once we got away from the coast it warmed up quite a bit. It was also rough, but we made it to Plum Point and then headed south by the coast. The wind blew and the temperature cooled, mostly the wind blew, but it did not rain. We had been this way the other day so we didn't pause often. We intersected the TCH in Deer Lake and called it a day there. The motel had a nice restaurant so we checked in, had a nice meal and toasted yet another great day's ride.

The sun was shining in the morning when we left for St. Johns. Even for us it would be hard to get lost as all we had to do was follow the TCH and get off when we got there. We stopped for an interesting lunch in Gander and visited a bike shop as Bobbe was getting tired of no tunes. No luck with the electronics. We also had a nice stop at Terra Nova Park. Other than that, it was mostly trees and as we have noted before, after about the first 100 miles, a tree looks like a tree.

One thing to note, there was some sort of motorcycle get together in Gander. Before we hit Gander we seldom saw a bike. After Gander we passed at least 40% of the world's supply and they were all heading north, in flocks.

As we got closer to St. Johns we got closer to the ocean, the wind picked up and the temperature went down, nothing serious but I got back into the jacket. As normal we didn't know for sure where we were going so we pulled off on a likely exit that didn't turn out too well. Bobbe's thought was that there had to be something near the airport so we rode over and it turned out there was. We settled in and had a nice meal and drink at Clancy's and toasted a good day's ride.

We had made our reservations on the ferry and figured the time we had to be there. Then we looked around to decide what we wanted to see while we were at St. Johns. We settled on Cape Spear, The Witless Bay Ecological Preserve and Bobbe wanted to check on repair of the headset. That decided we checked the maps and routes, that done, we called it good.



With only getting lost three times and having four arguments we eventually found Cape Spear. As the sign says, this is the most easterly point in North America. Any further east and you better be able to breathe water. Cape Spear also has been a place for lighthouses and coastal defense guns. It was interesting coming in. The wind was blowing and it was cooling fast. We were considering putting on the warm pants. Then, a cloud came over, the wind changed, the temperature went up and everything was good. This is apparently a popular place with everyone including the locals: which is understandable as it is a very pretty place. While we were getting off and on the bike we got the usual questions about did we ride it all the way? It seems to be quite well known that a lot of people fly and ride, trailer or any

combination. They always seemed surprised when we said we rode all of the way.

You can tell from the look on Bobbe's face that the wind has not changed yet. That is the North Atlantic behind her, somewhere in the distance is England.



We looked around a bit, checked out the old gun emplacements and climbed to the top of the hill to see the lighthouse. There was also the usual gift shop that had some interesting displays of different types of lenses for lighthouses.

That done we headed back into town to visit the Honda shop and see what we could do about the intercom. We found the place, and it turned out there is not much we are going to be able to do until we get home as the part will have to be ordered.

Then we headed for Witless Bay, a short but interesting ride down the road. Dark Tickle and Witless Bay, you have to love those names. It was a pleasant ride over to Witless Bay, and then we made a little discovery. Namely there is not much to look at. The Ecological Reserve is a set of islands right off of the coast. You can



get on a boat and ride around the islands looking at the birds but you are not going to ride a bike over there and there is nothing to see on the mainland.

It being about that time we decided to stop for lunch at the Captain's Table where they advertised they had the world's best fish and chips. We gave them a shot and they were very good but the world's best might be questionable.

Note the boat in the photo. There were no signs saying for kids not to play on it only one saying to be careful. There must be a shortage of lawyers in

Canada either that or maybe the Canadians still believe in personal responsibility.

Now it was time to head for the ferry at Argentia. It was an uneventful ride over to the ferry. This is a large ferry and though we were quite a bit early, lines had already started forming. There were a bunch of bikes from all over on this trip even one Harley rider from Snyder Texas. We also found out that bikes did not load first so we wound up waiting a while. Eventually we got on and on this trip we did have to strap



the bikes ourselves but they did furnish the straps. While I was doing that again, Bobbe went up to get the lay of that boat and find a couple of seats. After a bit, I found her and the ship set off. Like the ride over, this ferry had a full service restaurant, bar, snack bar, all of the necessary stuff. They even had entertainment in the lounge which we enjoyed while having a couple of drinks and watching the ocean glide by. We were not able to reserve a room so were going to be sleeping in the TV room which was not that bad, in my opinion. The seats reclined, and had plenty of leg room. For sure I have slept in worse places. Eventually the night passed, thankfully it was smooth. We went upstairs for a light breakfast and to watch the landing.

We got off of the ferry with no problems and headed out for Calais Maine. At this point we were retracing the route in and had decided to make some miles. We stopped in New Glasgow to pick up a set of ear buds for Bobbe. If we couldn't talk she could at least listen to music. I picked up a set of sneakers as the zipper in my boots broke and we also got out of the gear as it had warmed up nicely. Shortly after Amherst we hit a weather front. First it cooled and we got into the jackets then it started spitting rain, but it sort of looked like we would miss the actual rain. A bit before St. John (New Brunswick and no s) we gave up on that idea and got into the gear. For the record, putting on totes over sneakers is not easy. As we rode through St. John it rained, not real hard but hard enough. The rain stopped before we got to Calais but we left the gear on. We crossed the border with no problem and as we had gained 1 ½ hours since we got off of the boat we decided to ride on to Bangor. We pulled into the same motel we had stayed at on the way over, checked in, unloaded and went down to the restaurant for a good meal and a drink.

We were heading for Gettysburg and knew from prior trips that if we took the back roads we would not make any time especially when we got further SW. So, the next morning we loaded up and hit the big road and stuck with it all day. We made the miles but did not really see all that much. It got a little warm in the afternoon but we stuck with it and wound up in Scranton Pennsylvania for the night. The motel did not have a restaurant and neither of us felt like riding around looking for one so we ordered a pizza, picked up a bottle of wine and kicked back in the cool room.



The next day it was a short ride to Gettysburg, we arrived about 10 which barely beat the crowd. The place has changed quite a bit since the last time I was here, as it should as I was here in 1984. Considering the battle took place in and around Gettysburg and the town had grown considerable since then, the Park Service has done a pretty good job. There is a very nice museum and a couple of films, of course a gift shop, and a fair restaurant. They also have several drives that go

around to different places on the battlefield with the normal statues and monuments. Bobbe wanted to see the statue of Robert E. Lee and I wanted to see the place where Pickett's Charge took place, fortunately those two things were in the same place. Of course, you can't get there from here, or at least we couldn't. Well, after several wrong turns, map consults and such, we did find them both. In the process we went through several drives and saw a bunch of monuments. Opposite of R.E. Lee's monument is the field where Pickett's Charge took place.

That charge is one of the things that never should have happened but did. Lee was losing he knew it as did about everyone else. However he decided that if he threw enough men into the fight here he could turn the tide and all would be well. Nice thought, but, it never had a chance. They lined up around 10,000 men on one side of an open wheat field and charged across it. On the other side the Union Troops were dug in, backed up by a bunch of cannon and they had a field day. I have read different numbers from different sources, but of the approximately 10,000



who started across that field somewhere between 2-3,000 made it back the rest were killed, wounded or captured.

From the first time I read about this charge it has bothered me, even more so after I became a soldier sent off to fight a losing war. You will notice that Lee did not charge across that field. I have read articles about how bad he felt about ordering that charge and losing all of those men.

I'll bet he didn't feel half as bad as the guys who made that charge.

Some things never change.

Gettysburg done, we loaded up and moved west. By now, it was more than passing warm, especially going through the towns. We were on the back roads until we met up with the Pennsylvania Turnpike. This was the second time in less than a month I was on this road. We eventually hooked up with I-70 and headed west. We had decided to stop for the night in Wheeling West Virginia. As we closed in on Wheeling a very nasty looking cloud formed in the west and about 15 miles shy of Wheeling the bottom fell out. We were near an intersection with a Truck Stop so we quickly pulled in. How hard did it rain?

Well, it rained so hard that the water coming off of the parking lot could not run off fast enough and it flooded the restaurant, really. We sat there for a bit and decided what the heck: we ordered a truck stop quality dinner and used the phone to book a motel a little past Wheeling. After eating it was still raining so we got into the gear and eventually found the motel with no problems. They didn't have a restaurant but they did have a bar. We snuck our drinks back to the room (twice) and let it rain all night.

The next morning dawned overcast and misty but not actually raining. By the time we stopped for lunch in Indianapolis it was getting warm and we had long since lost the jackets. All along the road it was evident that this has been a good year for rain. Everything that was supposed to be green was, there was water in the ponds and rivers and the cows were belly deep in grass. This was my thought as we headed west and watched the clouds build. About the time it started sprinkling the traffic was stopped for road construction. Thankfully there was an exit and a truck stop so we pulled off for some fuel and head scratching. We convinced ourselves that it was only going to sprinkle and it looked like the traffic was at last moving so we put on the jackets and pulled on the highway. We got about 3-4 miles and were stopped again and it started raining for real. So we put on the rest of the suits and got into the flow of traffic. We ran out of the rain just into Illinois and all was good until we got into St. Louis and a really nasty looking cloud popped up. We pulled off and waited a bit but it never rained where we were so we joined the rush hour traffic on slick wet streets. After a while it cleared up and we rode onto Columbia Missouri and called it a day. We stayed in a decent Howard Johnsons and had a nice meal and a drink in TGI Fridays which was right there by the motel.

The next day started off good, sucked in the middle and wound up fine. We wanted to time getting into Kansas City after the rush hour, and this we did. Things were fine riding through the Flint Hills, everything green and growing. We stopped for lunch in Salina with the thermometer reading 95

degrees. When we came out about ½ hour later it was flirting with 102. By the time we got to Hayes in was 106 and I had seen 108 for short periods. Before we got to Oakley I had seen 110 with a pretty steady 106-107. This is not fun in any book. While we were coming into Oakley a cloud had popped up and we were hoping for rain. That didn't happen but the wind did switch to strongly out of the NW and the temperature dropped to less than 100.

Well, everyone is tired of that stuff. We sweated and survived. As the photo indicated we made it to Bobbe's and kicked back at the end of a long hot day.

Everything was as it should be, the dogs were happy to see Bobbe, all or at least most of the plants were doing fine, and it was a lovely Colorado



evening, sort of like it was trying to make up for the day.

The next day I left out for the return to OKC. Not much to say about that part of the ride. The temperature only got to about 100 and only then for a short time. I made about the usual time and had no problems.

It was the end to another great ride, and I didn't even hit an Elk. Newfoundland and Labrador were great no two ways about it. I am going back via the Trans-Labrador highway, probably next June. Like all rides, this one had good points and bad, the trick is to forget the bad. The trip was one of our longer ones, longer than I had thought, but not our longest. OKC to OKC was a little over 9500 miles: the trip to Alaska was about 300 miles longer, essentially not much difference. We had no mechanical problems except the communications gear we didn't even burn out a headlight. What we did see is a bunch of very interesting country and have experiences that we can always remember.

Now it is time to get to working on the next ride.

Not all who wander are lost.