

Fri 28/05/99 3:57 PM

Hi Everyone,

Yesterday was a long day, but we are finally here! The Canada 3000 flight was pretty good, the best part being that they do not charge for sporting equipment... so the bikes (in a large hard shell case), a big box and 2 large duffel bags went without extra charge.

We stayed at the airport hotel last night and this morning built up the bikes, packed up and headed into town --in the pouring rain (bouncing back off the pavement rain)-- certainly appreciated the Gore-Tex jacket, pants, socks, gloves ...

The Compton House B & B is a lovely restored home & cottage. The rooms all have a modem jack, so we will be able to send and receive messages regularly while we're here.

Tue 01/06/99 6:02 PM

The web site has been updated.

We've added a bunch of photos and some stories from our few days here in St. John's. It's been a luxurious start to our trip -- the B&B was really cosy, the people are so friendly, and except for the rain on Friday, the weather has been really good. Thanks to Val, Alex & Gerard for your planning help and to Terry & Denise for showing us St. John's!

We are flying out Wednesday morning to St. Anthony to see the Viking settlement at L'Anse Aux Meadows and then begin our trek down the west coast of NFLD through Gros Morne park.

Fri 04/06/99 6:13 PM

Boy oh boy is it windy here!

We flew from St. John's to St. Anthony on Wednesday, the airstrip is out in the middle of nowhere, 50 km from the town site. So how long do you think it took us to ride into town? Can you believe it was 5 hours!!!! The winds never let up and we were happy to hit 20km/hr pedalling down hill. We saw two moose and one caribou. The only campsite is 7km from town and without fuel for the stove, we kept going into St. Anthony. We stayed at the Vinland Motel, had dinner in their restaurant and were asleep almost right away. It was foggy and wet on Thursday morning, so we thought, well there must be bus tours out to the Viking Settlement. Nope -- the only guy willing to do it was going to charge us \$120. So we hopped on the bikes and rode out here -- 40 km, rolling terrain, sounds easy right? Nope, this was over 3 hour ride. Both days

reminded us of our ride to Bamfield 2 years ago -- never ending rolling hills. We were wearing more layers of clothing than in January at home. The wind was blowing from the north east off the icebergs and it was stinking cold. We know it wasn't below zero because it was still rain, but this morning there was slush on the ground and there's still snow in the hills. People are saying this is an early spring!!! The wind chill at the airport on Thursday morning was -9. Linda, are you glad you're not here????

We arrived at St. Luniere wet, cold and hungry. The owners of the store very kindly made us a cup of tea, we bought some food and warmed up. After St. Luniere the wind changed and was at our backs for a few kilometers. We are staying at a lovely B&B in Hay Cove, 1km from the Viking Settlement at L'Anse Aux Meadows, which we visited today. Also got back into St. Anthony today with Thelma, the owner of the B&B and went to the Grenfell Museum. Grenfell was the doctor from England who brought medical service to Labrador and Northern Newfoundland in the early 1900's.

Everyone we speak to seems to know us -- oh, you're the cyclists we passed on the highway. Saw a BC license plate in the parking lot at L'Anse Aux Meadows -- a couple from Swartz Bay.

Tomorrow we're back on the bikes.

Bruce and Maureen Mol

Fri 11/06/99 2:42 PM

June 2-7

Now I know why flying within the province is really expensive. There were only 3 people on the flight from St. John's to St. Anthony (plus the pilot). The flight is 1 hour and costs \$300 one way -- return is double. The other person on the flight was an Air Lab employee, so we were the only revenue passengers. All our luggage was on the same flight, and again, no charges for excess baggage.

I'm not sure why they say the airport is in St. Anthony. It's in the middle of nowhere, 50 km from the town and not a darn thing in between except moose and caribou and the occasional car. This section of the highway is in good condition. The road was put in only 30 years ago, and paved 12 years ago. Previous to that the only access was by boat.

We cycled into the town and the next day rode out to L'Anse Aux Meadows where the first North American Viking Settlement is. We stayed at the Viking Nest B&B,

in the Snorri room, so named after the first Viking child born in North America, a thousand years ago. It is really interesting, not only seeing the restored sod homes and the artefacts archaeologists have found, but also the research conducted into locating the settlement. We also went to the Grenfell museum, Dr. Grenfell is pretty much a hero in this area for bringing medical services to the people here and improving the living conditions in the late 1800's/early 1900's. I certainly wouldn't want to have lived here in those days! It was very cold around St. Anthony and lots of icebergs in the waters.

At the sides of the highway are little garden plots and wood piles, but no houses. The people live in town, stake out their little area somewhere on the edge of the highway, and they go out and plant & tend to their garden of root vegetables. They chop & stack the wood in winter, leave it to season until fall, when they go back for it. There's no worry of theft, some even leave their sleds and skidoos at their wood pile and no one locks their doors. It is not unusual to leave keys in the ignition when they park the car at the mall.

We had moose soup the other night and it was quite tasty, and the jams from local berries, bakeapple, partridge and squash berries are very good. Except for today, at Reef's Harbour Junction, where 2 -500ml containers of milk were over \$4, food is not as expensive as I thought it might be. Breakfast (omelette, toast, coffee & juice) can be had for \$5, fresh halibut dinner with potatoes, veggies and bread for \$10. BC(!) Hot House veggies are the same prices as at home.

We've started to make our way down the coast towards Gros Morne, into really, really strong headwinds. I think our average speed is in the 7-10km/hr range, which make for long days, but at least the sun is shining. We've met two other cyclists, one from Edmonton and one from Calgary, both going north, with the wind at their backs. Makes us a bit envious! Bruce and Maureen Mol

Quebec

Sun 18/07/99 6:30 PM

Nous sommes arrivee dans le Province de Quebec
Vendredi le 16 Juilliet. Nous cycle trois jours a 100km par jour et nous arrivee Quebec City aujourd'hui. Tres poo-pooed.

Ok that's almost the extent of my high school French. "Ou est le salle du bain?" has been useful.

We've updated the website last week in Fredericton. We have left the Maritimes behind us (Newfoundland seems so long ago). New Brunswick was pretty easy riding, except for the first day out of Saint John. We had more sun than rain, more tail winds than headwinds and more downhill than uphill, we met several other cross country cyclists, and rode the Trans Canada Trail from Edmunston to Riviere du Loup. It was difficult to get accurate information and the N.B. campground guide was the most difficult to use.

A few things we've noticed: Flag Flying – almost everyone has flags, the Canadian flag, provincial flags, the Acadian flag in parts of NS & PEI and occasionally the US or British flag; Lawn Ornaments are everywhere: smurfs, deer, beetles, butterflies, you name it. In southern Nova Scotia and New Brunswick there were more flowers, hanging baskets and yards are well kept; most yards are not fenced and the yards are huge. Every community has at least one church and usually a cemetery along with it. In New Brunswick there is a lot of real estate for sale.

In Quebec, everyone smokes – everywhere! There's big signs in the grocery stores reminding people not to smoke. There's ashtrays everywhere and 'non smoking' sections in restaurants are almost non existent. We stayed on the south side of the St. Lawrence river and followed highway 132 from Riviere du Loup to Levis & took the ferry across to Quebec City. This is probably the best highway we have been on for 'services' that coffee drinking cyclists need. There are regular rest areas and lots of campgrounds. In some places, it is flat as a pancake in the middle of farm land and other times we were right along the river. It is really neat riding along to the sound of church bells! Yesterday it appeared there was some sort of organised ride (looked like a Pedalsport type ride except we didn't see the food stops...) and we saw lots of cyclists. Today we saw two guys, also touring, with some sort of stereo blasting away. We've both had rear flats, Bruce's by the valve and mine a pinch flat.

Tomorrow we are going to explore the city and Tuesday we'll be heading towards Ottawa, hoping to be there next weekend.

Bruce and Maureen Mol

Ontario

Thu 29/07/99 7:33 AM

Hope everyone is having a good summer!

We left Quebec City on Tuesday July 20th and arrived in Ottawa on Saturday July 25th, and yesterday we arrived at Bruce's aunt's in Kingston. (No update on the web page yet)

Quebec City is very beautiful & interesting. We walked all around the old town, including Petit Champlain, the oldest street in North America, and went on the guided tour of the Citadel. From Quebec City we stayed on the North side of the St. Lawrence river and rode through farmlands to Trois Riviere. After Trois Riviere the highway was busier and the shoulders were inconsistent until we reached Montebello. There were lots of big trucks and without shoulders, I hit the gravel a few times. Friday afternoon was the worst as not only were there lots of trucks on the road, but also the people getting out of town for the weekend. The speed limits are higher here - a two lane highway without shoulders and the speed limit is generally 90kph. We were glad to end that day! We camped at the marina at Montebello on Friday night. On Saturday we stopped in to have a look at the Chateau Montebello. It is truly amazing. The building is made of logs shipped from BC and there's a huge stone fireplace in the middle of the lobby. There are many bridges from Hull to Ottawa and we chose the Alexandra bridge which is two lanes for vehicles and has a wide wooden sidewalk with two lanes for cyclists and a wide path for pedestrians. It is quite something to watch the parliament buildings get closer and closer. We went up Wellington street and were a bit choked up looking at the Terry Fox memorial, the eternal flame and the parliament buildings. We called the Dixon's and Bernie gave us directions to their home in Nepean. Bernie & Edna Dixon were neighbours of the Mol's when Bruce was growing up in Transcona, Man. We stayed with them for 3 nights and they truly made us feel like family. Bruce enjoyed talking about the "old days" with them, meeting their family again, and hearing more about his parents and looking at old photos. They took us on a driving tour of Ottawa on Saturday evening and on Sunday & Monday we took the bus downtown and toured the Parliament Buildings, the Royal Mint, and the National Art Gallery. As well as Chapters, Starbucks, & Mountain Equipment Co-op! It was difficult to say goodbye on Tuesday morning.

Moving as slowly as we do, we have seen the terrain change and the changing smells. In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick there are wild roses growing everywhere and the scent is carried on the breeze. Now in the farmlands, the smells have changed to clover, corn, alfalfa, and yes, that dairy farm smell.

We took a south west route to Kingston, and arrived at Tante Gre's yesterday afternoon. Today we are going to look around town and are going to Matt & Sheila's (Bruce's cousins) for dinner.

Someone asked us about the food. The bakeries have definitely improved and we've had some good cinnamon buns, butter tarts, etc.. Food in restaurants has been hit & miss. In Quebec City the food was expensive and mediocre. But we are eating well and no, we haven't lost any weight!!!

Tomorrow we are heading towards Markham, Barrie and Southampton.

That's about all for now! Bruce and Maureen

Mol23/10/99 8:38 AM November 21, 1999 23/10/99 8:38 AM

Alberta

Wed 08/09/99 8:05 PM

It's just after labour day, and here we are in Calgary.

We've had our first glimpses of the mountains and realise how close to being home we are. We had a good trip across the Prairies. The people are friendly and the scenery is beautiful. The sunrises are spectacular, the days were warm and nights were cool & the moon huge. It started to get cooler right on September 1st. A few days we were heading into strong winds, but mostly we've had cross winds, and yes the occasional tail wind.

This is our itinerary for the rest of the trip:

Sep 8-10 Calgary – Jackie's

Sep 10-13 making our way to Banff

Sep 13-20 Banff to Kelowna with Terry & Linda (they'll have a motor home to carry gear & a warm place to sleep) Terry & Linda are taking our camping gear home and we are staying in motels or with friends/family the rest of the way.

Sep 20 Kelowna/Westbank – motel

Sep 21 Penticton – Jean & Dennis's

Sep 22 Princeton – motel

Sep 23 Manning Park Lodge

Sep 24 Hope – The Skagit

Sep 25 Mission – Mom's

Sep 26 Delta – Thomas & Sheila's

Sep 27 Victoria – Mile Zero Yahoo!!!!

We are going to stay with Maureen's Aunt in Victoria for a few days, then will head back to the lower mainland.

See you soon!!!!

Bruce and Maureen Mol

British Columbia

Thu 23/09/99 7:58 PM

Hi everyone,

We have updated the web site with mountain photos & the journal is updated to Sept. 20. We have had a super trip through the mountains. The weather has been excellent – warm sunny days for cycling & cool nights for sitting around the campfire. The mountain scenery is spectacular - we saw lots of elk in the Banff area and although the parks staff said bears had been active in the campgrounds, we didn't see any. We had a great week from Banff to Kelowna with Terry & Linda & a motor home. What a difference riding without all the gear on the bikes. Although I must say, the Rockies were no where near as difficult as I expected, a few hills on the 1A between Banff & Lake Louise, mostly downhill to Golden, then two long gradual climbs to Roger's Pass. The Okanagan was hot and the steepest hill since the scenic route detour in New Brunswick was the 2km climb to Jean & Dennis' – but worth it to see them again. Yesterday was a long day (120km) to Princeton, and I had a flat by Bromley Park. The shoulders in BC have the most glass and debris that we have seen anywhere – period! The climb to Sunday Summit today (all 34km) took a little over 3 hours but wasn't bad – just long and slow. It was perfect cycling weather – sunny, a few clouds and a breeze to keep it cool.

We'll be in Victoria in 4 days to send our last message.

See you Soon!!!!

Bruce and Maureen Mol

Tue 28/09/99 2:20 PM

We did it!!

124 days since we flew to St. John's, 60 nights in campgrounds, 30 motels or B&B's for 37 nights, 27 nights with friends/family, 6208km cycled, 10 ferries, 6 rides in vehicles, 1 rental car, 7 flats, 2 rims, 3 tires. 17 of the 124 days we rode in the rain, 5 bottles of sunscreen, 1 bottle of bug spray. We lost a pot handle, 3 coffee mugs, nail clippers & a knife. The best restaurant

meals were: dinner in Shelbourne NS. with Val & Alex, and breakfast in Wawanesa, Man. The worst road – well that's a toss up – the last 5 km into St. Barbe NF or 85 km between Ogema & Assiniboia, SK. The best road is the new pavement on Mt. Woodside! Most scenic ride – Lunenburg-Mahone Bay, NS; Kingston to Carrying Place, Ont.; and the Rockies. The best part of the trip was being together.

A big THANKYOU to everyone who helped us along the way: Terry & Denise in St. John's, The Skinners in Pasadena, Joan & Bryson in Charlottetown, Al & Merrill in Lunenburg, The Dixon's in Ottawa, Tante Gre in Kingston, Viv & Seb in Markham, The Latornell's in Barrie, The Noel's in Southampton, Jackie in Calgary, Terry & Linda for renting the motor home and travelling with us for the week from Banff to Kelowna, Jean & Dennis in Penticton, Thomas & Sheila in Delta & Auntie Marg in Victoria & all the people we chatted with along the way. Maureen's Mom for storing all our stuff & taking care of our mail, Bruce's Mom for keeping the cats, and the rando group for riding out to meet us on Sunday! (hope we haven't missed anyone). We appreciated the emails from everyone - hearing from people at home and those we met on the trip kept us from getting homesick.

We've felt like we've been coming home since Banff, seeing so many friends & family.

Bruce and Maureen Mol