

Touring New England

with Lynne, Peggy and Elizabeth June 30-July 6, 2009

Departure day dawned gray but not raining so after a few emails we decided it was a go and arranged to meet in Bedford. Peggy, as usual was there early, I was close to on time and Elizabeth gave us cause to wonder if something had happened, but just as we were trying to figure out who to call, she showed up. Construction delays. Peggy had brought us each a bell to attach to our bikes to ward off the road Gremlins.

We took off from the Canadian Tire parking lot at the Sunnyside Mall in Bedford and headed out Highway 102 towards the airport. We all had full gas tanks so had decided to hit the Masstown Market as our first rest stop. Traffic was not heavy so we made it there easily and pulled in for a quick lunch break. First trip adventure---Peggy tried to get a cup of coffee and the pot would not shut off. It just kept pouring and pouring and pouring. Peggy was able to get a staff person's attention and eventually she managed to stop the coffee flow. By this time there was coffee all over the counter and the floor.

We had a nice lunch and hit the road again. Up over the Cobequid Pass and on to Amherst for gas. We flew through New Brunswick with a brief butt break off a side road between Moncton and Sussex. Elizabeth was alerted to watch for the covered bridge at Nackawick and with heightened powers of observation was able to see it this year. We stopped at the Tim Hortons in Quispamsis and did a detour through Rothesay to see my old neighbourhood. It has changed so much that it took a long time to get my bearings, but finally I was able to spot some familiar landmarks and find my way.

Then on through Saint John where, as we had learned that Canadian coins stick to magnets (thanks, Doug), we put them on the map case on the tank where they were easily accessible for tolls. By this time it was getting to be close to supper time and we started to look for a place to spend the night. We stopped to discuss whether we would camp or find a hotel and the mosquitoes nearly ate us alive. Decision made. Motel it is.

The first one we passed came up a bit suddenly and the driveway was gravel so we went a bit further down the road and another one came in sight. It didn't look like much, with an old Cadillac sporting flat tires in the parking lot, but we decided to check it out. The people were friendly and the price was right so after checking in we went to our room. When we opened the door we were all surprised by a fabulous view of the water. It was a newly renovated cottage-like room with full kitchen facilities, one bedroom, living room and three beds. There was a deck with a barbeque off the living room. The Clipper Ship Motel in Pocologan would be a great place to use as a base to explore that area of NB.



We got settled and then went "next door" for supper. Turns out that in rural NB next door is about a km down the road. We passed one place we thought might be the restaurant but it turned out to be a private home. The man kindly offered to throw a couple more pork chops on the barbeque but we declined and kept walking. The Seabreeze restaurant was in the motel we originally had passed on, but it was pleasant and the fish and chips were excellent. There was a seagull on the deck outside who kept his eye on the diners and started tapping on the window when he wasn't getting his share. We all had raspberry pie for desert, but it wasn't anything special (Pie #1). We walked back to the motel and turned in for the night. A good day.

The next morning we headed into St. Andrews by the Sea, a beautiful town with lots to offer. The Canada Day parade had been delayed due to inclement weather so we found a place for breakfast and then wandered around town, into some of the shops, found Elizabeth Street and then up the hill to see the Algonquin, a majestic resort hotel high on a hill. Another place to come back to and spend more than a couple of hours.



Back to the bikes and on to St. Stephen where we crossed the border with no delays. The customs officer had Elizabeth remove her helmet, but not the rest of us. He must have known she had serious helmet hair and needed a chuckle. We took coastal #1 to Lubec where we detoured to see the Quoddy Head Lighthouse, the most Eastern in the U.S. Elizabeth met a friendly couple, with give away southern accents, from Georgia, and Peggy engaged the museum proprietor in conversation about the lighthouse and the number of stripes it has. 8 red and 7 white. Then back on the bikes and into Lubec town where we indulged in soft ice cream at the Atlantic House Coffee-Deli-Sweetery, with a large choice of flavours. Our choices were crème de menthe, blueberry and mocha (Ice cream #1).

We sat on the shore and looked across at Campobello Island, a Canadian owned island, discussing our celebration of Canada Day. A kingfisher demonstrated his prowess for us by diving straight down off the dock into the water. That was a first for me.

As it was starting to get on in the afternoon we decided we had better head for Bar Harbor, but we still were able to take the back roads and enjoy the curves. The sun even came out for a while, but it was still cold enough to need to stop and put on rain gear to break the wind. At Bar Harbor we found ourselves a campground and set up our tents. We registered for two nights so that we could explore Acadia National Park the next day. The staff at Hadley Point was quite impressed by three ladies on bikes with no men. We headed into town for supper and found a place that served “Barbeque” and had a good meal. When we got back to the tents we congratulated ourselves for making the sharp curve in the narrow gravel road without a spill, and since it was quite late, we turned in for the night.



Next morning we headed to Bar Harbor for breakfast where we had the “best blueberry pancakes in the world” according to a couple from Virginia who were there on vacation. We all ordered them and they were good. Our waitress at Jordan’s Restaurant was from Ukraine and very friendly.



We then ventured in to Acadia Park and spent the day touring. Our first stop was Dorr Mountain. We started to climb up the steps of a hiking trail with no idea how high they went. The steps were rocks so were all uneven but easy to go up. At least the first 100 or so. They were pretty steep and Peggy was in the front and kept telling Elizabeth and me that there were just a few more and worth the view. Turns out there are over 1000, and we probably did about 700 and shed 25 pounds of motorcycle clothing before we cried "Uncle". Nice view that high up.



There was also a Nature Center we strolled through looking at lots of native plants and a few creatures. A couple from Boston, parked next to us at the Nature Center, gave us instructions on the best way to get into Boston the next day.



With so much to see, we had to limit our stops to The Precipice, Sand Beach, Thunderhole, and then up Cadillac Mountain. The fog at the top of the mountain was so thick there was no view at all. Must try to go on a sunny day some year. We crept down the mountain

at a slow speed due to reduced visibility and steep inclines and once safely down we rode to one of the carriage roads, one in a system of many developed by John D. Rockefeller between 1913-1940. There was a restaurant conveniently located next to the entrance so we had a late lunch. Did we have pie? No, their specialty pudding, with ice cream. That counts...Pie #2 Ice cream #2. Our waiter was from Mauritania. We met a nice couple from Massachusetts whose son wants to move to Canada.



We took a walk past the Carriage Gate Lodges and up one of the carriage roads, but it wasn't long before Elizabeth realized we were not on the road to Cobblestone Bridge, the first of 12 built in the carriage roads system and the only cobblestone one. We were feeling the need for an ibuprofen break, and it was too far to the other carriage roads, so we headed back to the bikes and went to a grocery store in Bar Harbor, where we picked up steak, salad and cherry pie (Pie # 3).



After we arrived back at the campsite, we congratulated ourselves again for making it around “the curve”, each with both feet on the pegs this time. We cooked the steak on weenie sticks over a campfire, ate our three course meal, and then lightning started. We called it a night and got inside the tents before the rain. It did rain hard that night and the lightning was frightening, over an hour of non stop flashes with some very loud claps of thunder. All I could think was that the lightning would hit one of the trees and we would all die. Peggy was more concerned about drowning or at least floating away as her tent did turn into a boat. Elizabeth put on her rain suit over pyjamas part way through the storm, just in case, and reconciled herself to the fact there was nothing more we could do to be safer. Although the rain was over by morning, the packing up was damp.

We were heading for Boston but chose to wander along the #1 for a while. We crossed the Penobscot Narrows Bridge, (close to Prospect ME) that Vicki had told us about just after we had breakfast. If you take your map case in to breakfast for trip planning, but begin to lose silverware, be sure to check the back of the case instead of borrowing or asking for more silverware. Remember the magnets that hold coins while on the bike?

The next stop was to see Eartha, the world's largest rotating/revolving globe, in Yarmouth, Maine. We backtracked a short distance to Classic Custard, to indulge in some frozen custard, at the recommendation of the Eartha staff. Chocolate raspberry and Mango...Yum. (Ice cream #3)

As it was getting on in the day we decided to get on the Interstate to make some time. A gas stop took us past Peggy Street. The rain started at the NH Mass border and although it only lasted a half hour, it did manage to get us pretty wet.

Elizabeth, in the lead, considered stopping under a bridge as most bikers had done, but thought she would lose her nerve ever to come out again, so kept on biking. After briefly stopping in the town of Lynn for a map check, we hit Boston in the early evening and followed the instructions we had been given on the best route into the city.



Unfortunately, due to rush hour and road closures for the concerts, we pretty much walked our bikes into town, for the most part behind an ambulance with a patient inside. As we were sitting in traffic, a fellow was talking to Elizabeth about her bike and she asked him where we needed to go to get to the hotel. He said to follow him, and he lead us part of the way but it was a bit hairy due to total gridlock, darkness and getting separated at red lights. And then he just zoomed off leaving us where he thought we could find our way, but, in fact, we had no idea where to go. The address had been programmed into the GPS and this time it lead us straight to the hotel. The hotel was right next to Fenway Park and there was a Red Sox game in progress which we could see on the screens. The hotel parking lot was full so we pulled the bikes up to the kitchen door temporarily til the game was over and the spaces opened up. The kitchen staff didn't speak much English but they were willing to try, to talk about the bikes. We got pizza at a restaurant nearby and ate outside at the sidewalk tables. Elizabeth and Peggy were hoping for a cold one after the arrival ordeal, but the restaurant had only been open for a few days and didn't have their license yet. Diet Pepsi was an adequate substitute. It was a mild night and there were lots of people around. We were in the big city.



The next morning we headed to the Esplanade on the Charles River to get our bracelets for the Boston Pops concert and July 4th fireworks. It took about 40 minutes to walk there, under the shadows of skyscrapers, along streets with old buildings and through Commonwealth Avenue Mall. We were enjoying the city and the day. Once there we decided to stay put for the day. It was obvious that the first order of business was to claim a spot, since 500,000 people were expected to attend the event. We staked down our small tarp with mini US flags between the Oval and the river, hoping for good views of the concert and the fireworks.

All the facilities we needed for entertainment, sustenance and relief were there, and it was a great sunny day to enjoy and have the chance to relax. Everyone was in a good mood. Elizabeth scored some Statue of Liberty headdresses for us to wear and wear them we did. Motor Maid blue ones. Among the meals and treats we enjoyed was a four flavour Italian Ice, which was melting, dripping and sticky by the time Peggy got hers, but refreshing none the less (ice cream #4). The concert was wonderful and the crowds were really pleasant. Craig Ferguson, host, was joined by the Boston Pops Orchestra and conductor Keith Lockhart, Neil Diamond and other performers. The traditional 1812 Overture ended with cannons spewing red, white and blue confetti into the cheering crowd.



The fireworks were wonderful and following that we walked back to the hotel with the crowds gradually getting thinner and thinner.



Next morning it was off to Connecticut to Gillette Castle. We took some really pretty back roads, curving around lakes and through the hardwood forests and some lovely New England towns. We got to Gillette Castle just around closing time so we decided to stay in a hotel and come back in the morning. Before we left we did have a chance to meet “William and Helen Gillette” who asked us if we enjoyed their home. We had to admit we had arrived too late to see it but would be back in the morning. They told us to make sure we told the guides to give us a special tour since we were their friends from NS.



In the morning we did go back and told the tour guides, who informed us that the “Gillettes” would definitely be asking them if we had come back. It was a really neat castle, high on the banks of the river with many unusual features. I was glad that we took the time to go see it. William Gillette was the first actor to play Sherlock Holmes and is responsible for many of the features that have come to be a part of his persona, such as the deerstalker cap and curved pipe, as well as “Elementary, my dear Watson.”



Then it was back on the bikes to head for Lewiston and the convention, arriving early in the evening. After hooking up with the other Atlantic Canada Motor Maids at the Ramada Inn, we began yet another series of adventures. In her article, Coleen documented the fun, excitement, hilarity and pride we all shared in being part of the 69th Motor Maid convention.