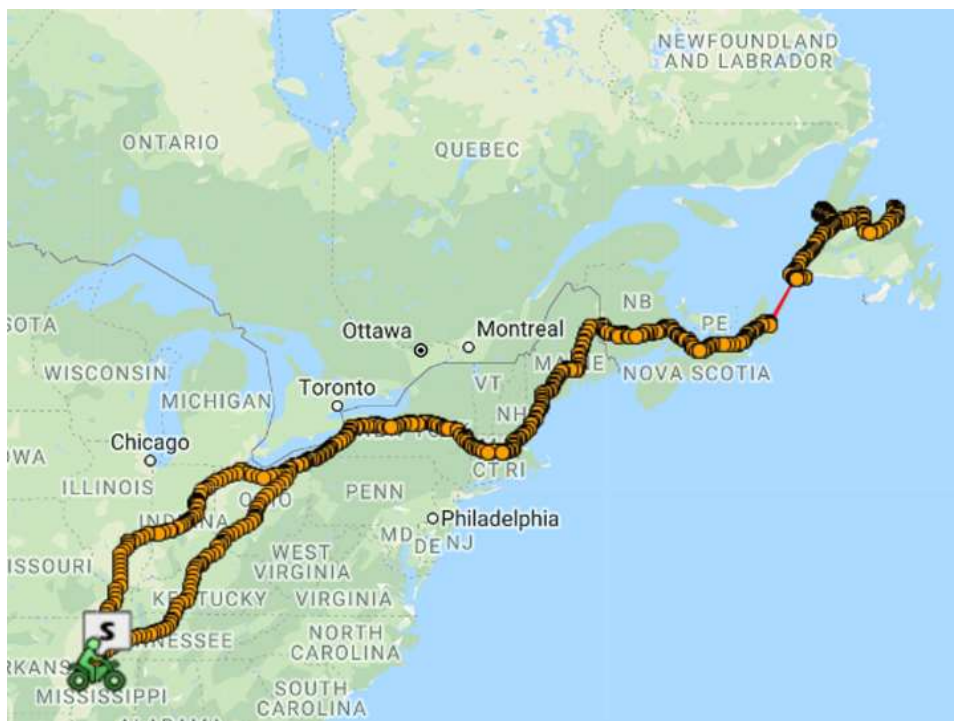


Ridin' the Rock (Newfoundland)



5,888 miles from Hernando, MS to Twillingate, NL and Back

This summer was unusually hot and humid, not only where I live in Mississippi, but all over the rest of the country. When I was planning a summer trip, I was asking myself "Where do I want to go?" How about Texas? Too hot! Out west? Too hot! The Midwest? Too hot! What about Canada? Well, I had been to several provinces already, but I have never been to Newfoundland. Known as "The Rock", Newfoundland is a large island off the east coast of Canada. A month before my trip, the weather in Newfoundland was showing lows

in the upper 40's and highs in the mid 60's. This is exactly what I was looking for to get out of the current heat wave in the U.S.! Since I would be riding solo, I wanted to include some Iron Butt rides into the adventure. This would allow me some extra time on "The Rock".

I had some family business with my brother and sisters on Thursday, July 26 in Indiana, but after that, I had scheduled time off for the next 10 days. So, I planned my trip to Newfoundland accordingly. I would leave after work on Wednesday, July 25, and ride 400 miles, stop for

the night, then finish the trip to Gas City, Indiana the next morning. This would give me time to spend with my family on Thursday evening. After that, I had the next 10 days to myself.

From Gas City, Indiana, it was 1,671 miles to the Newfoundland ferry according to Google Maps. Hmm, if I left early on Friday morning, July 27, I should be able to make it to North Sydney, Nova Scotia by Saturday evening. Marine Atlantic provides ferry service from North Sydney, Nova Scotia to Port aux Basques, Newfoundland. If I ride hard, I could make the departure time at 11:45 pm Saturday, July 28. Documenting my ride and completing at least 1,500 miles within 36 hours, would be the requirements for an Iron Butt Association (IBA) Bun Burner 1500 (BB1500). That would also allow me enough time to stop at a hotel Friday evening for some sleep and a hot shower. So, that's what I did!

That Friday morning, I jumped out of bed an hour earlier than my wake-up call! It was 3:30 am. I was wide awake! So, I climbed on the bike and rode down the street to a local gas station. Since it was cooler (60's) this early morning in Indiana, my tire pressure monitoring system light on my Gold Wing was illuminated. The gas station had an air pump, so I aired up the tires. Then, I fueled up the bike and checked my gas receipt to ensure it had all the correct information

(date, location and time). I also began a ride log by documenting all the information from the gas receipt. By now, it was 4:30 am, my official start time according to the receipt per IBA requirements. I was ready to ride!

Most people automatically think an IBA ride is a race. It's not! It's more like the tortoise and the hare. The more you keep the wheels in motion, the more ground you cover. Believe it or not, I ride the bike just like I drive a car. When I stop for gas, I fill up and take care of business. That's it! Then, I get right back on the bike and go! No breaks! The less breaks I take during the ride, the more sleep time I get that night! You can cover a lot of miles this way!

From Gas City, Indiana, I rode 1,298 miles (odometer) to the Canadian Border at Houlton, Maine in 19 ½ hours. I arrived at 1:00 am (ET). My plan was to get a hotel room here in Houlton, then cross the border into Canada in the morning.

For some reason, I jump out of bed with excitement on rides like this! Most of the time, I don't even set an alarm or ask for a wake-up call. I was up and ready to ride by 7:00 am (ET) on Saturday. This worked out perfect! At the border crossing, there were only two cars in line in front of me. The line moved quickly. When it was my turn, I handed the lady my passport, she asked me a few questions, then let me go on my way. The whole process only took a few minutes!

Now, I am in New Brunswick, Canada! I'm pumped and ready to ride in this beautiful country! I enjoyed the leisurely ride through this province and into Nova Scotia. Not much traffic at all.

By 3:50 pm (ET), I stopped for an end receipt in Wagmatcook, Nova Scotia for a total of 1,731 miles (odometer) or 1,668 miles corrected (according to Google Maps) in 35 ½ hours. This would qualify me for the IBA BB1500. I was also ahead of schedule according to my trip itinerary. I was only a few miles away from North Sydney. Now, I had plenty of time to scout the local area and eat a good meal before loading the ferry.



Cod Tongues on the Menu

I ate dinner in a restaurant overlooking the ferry terminal. An appetizer on the menu looked appealing to me since I am into odd local cuisine. Cod Tongues! And yes, they are what they say they are. I asked! Not bad. Pork scrunchions (cubed pork fat) added some flavor. Much better than the pig ear sandwich that I ate in Jackson, Mississippi a few years ago!

After dinner, I rode into the ferry terminal. The huge parking lot is the

staging area to board the ship. Painted lines defined the many different rows. I was to park in row five, the motorcycle row. This is where all motorcycles line up to be boarded first. There were a couple bikes already in line. These riders were from Newfoundland and were returning home. The ferry was huge! There must have been over 20 semi-trucks with trailers lined up in the staging area to board the ferry too! Not counting all of the cars!



Staging for the Ferry

Once on the ferry, I was invited to the lounge by a couple of Newfoundlanders. One offered to buy my first Iceberg beer (Newfoundland beer made with water from icebergs). After a few minutes of fellowship, I went to find my chair for the night.

When I made ferry reservations, I had a choice of a cabin, a reserved recliner or general boarding. Since the cabins were sold out, I reserved a recliner. This chair was located in an isolated room on the ninth floor of the ship. My ticket had to be swiped to unlock the door. In the room were about 100 reclining chairs similar to first class airline seats. I found my chair, got out my blanket and pillow that my wife,

Karen, had packed for me. Then, I crashed! There was still an hour before departing, but it didn't matter to me. I was tired! The 113 mile ferry ride from North Sydney, Nova Scotia to Port aux Basques, Newfoundland takes about 7 hours.



My Bed for the Night

I did wake-up for a brief moment around 3:00 am. I looked around and heard about 100 different people snoring. Good! I didn't feel so bad about my snoring! I went right back to sleep. At 5:30 am, I woke up ready to go! I went down to the 7th floor where the restaurant was just opening for breakfast. I watched the ocean waves through a large window beside me as I ate a nice breakfast. Soon after that a general announcement stated that we would be docking soon, get ready to depart the ship.

Since motorcycles are first on, they are first off or close to it. By the time, I went down to the third floor where my bike was parked, removed the tie-downs, donned my raingear and boots, it was time to ride off!

It was foggy as I rode off the ferry at 7:00 am. A fine mist was in the air, but that would soon clear up.

My first stop was at the Welcome Center just a mile or two away. There, I changed out of my comfortable clothes and into my riding clothes. Plus, I had to take some obligatory photos at the "Welcome to Newfoundland - Labrador" sign.



Welcome!

From there, I rode to Rocky Harbour. This was about 200 miles north of the ferry terminal. I would check into my hotel, then find a place to eat a moose burger. The Newfoundlanders on the ferry told me to try a moose burger if I got the chance. I was not disappointed! The moose burger tasted more like a regular beef hamburger with no gamey taste to it. It was excellent! I highly recommend them! After lunch, I rode outside of town to explore Gros Morne National Park.

Gros Morne National Park lies on the west coast of Newfoundland. Besides its beautiful landscape, the park is known for the Tablelands area. The Tablelands is a desert like area of unusual rock formations created by the earth's tectonic plates colliding and forcing the earth's mantle up to the surface millions of years ago. This place was unique! After riding around and checking

out the rest of the park, it was time to head back to the hotel in Rocky Harbour and chill out.



The Tablelands

Although the landscape in Newfoundland was beautiful, it was the warm and friendly people that really stood out! In the lounge of the hotel at 8:30 pm, they hold a "Kitchen Party". Not only does the host play music and tell stories of Newfoundland, but he gets everyone involved! They bring out all kinds of homemade noisemakers (spoons and crude tambourines made of sticks, wire and flattened beer bottle caps). This gets everyone involved in the music and fun! The host goes around the room asking where everyone is from. This particular night, everyone was from Canada (as far west as Vancouver), with two exceptions, me and another table. The other table was from Scotland. After the introduction, two couples from Nova Scotia invited me to their table for the evening. They were a lot of fun and we asked a lot of questions about the region where each other lived. Another couple from Toronto, at a table next to us, asked me if I had been "Screeched In" yet? I said "No". Well, they

were going to get me screeched in with their friends!

There were about a dozen visitors that were screeched in that evening. Being “Screeched In” consisted of reading a humorous oath (no mistakes while you read this oath aloud or you start over), singing a song (a few lines of any song of your choice), dancing a jig (with the barmaid), kissing a cod (a large frozen fish the barmaid brought around to the “Screechers”) and drinking a shot of Screech! Then, you are considered an honorary Newfoundlander!

Jamaican Rum became a mainstay of the traditional Newfoundland diet after “The Great Exchange”. Long before any Canadian liquor board was created, salt fish from Newfoundland was being shipped to the West Indies in exchange for Jamaican rum. The rum was eventually to be known as Screech.



Screeched In

It was a fun evening and a good way for me to relax from the past couple days of hard riding! The other Canadian visitors were friendly and fun loving. I really appreciated their hospitality!

The next morning, I was up early. I jumped on the bike and headed north to Twillingate, the “Iceberg Capital of the World”. This would be a 260 mile ride to the north central part of the island.

I would spend two nights in Twillingate. It was a quaint little village of about 2,000 people. I had hoped to see an iceberg, but I was a month too late.

I did go out on a two-hour whale watching cruise and saw a couple of humpback whales. The cruise around the coast of Twillingate was beautiful. There were several steep cliffs and smaller islands to see. Other than the 2 whales, we did see several different types of birds including a bald eagle. The eagle had a huge nest on the side of one of the steep cliffs.

Back at shore, I attended the Split Peas Show. The Split Peas are a group of women entertainers. The show features Newfoundland music. They also tell stories of Newfoundland traditions. During intermission, they served toutons (fried bread, similar to a biscuit) with partridgeberry jam and a cup of tea. It was another evening of fun!

I learned a lot about the Newfoundland culture. Newfoundlanders are the real deal when it comes to a sense of community. I couldn't imagine living through the harsh winters up there. But, they do it and take care of each another!

Now, it was time to head back to my hotel room for my final night on

“The Rock”. The next morning, I would ride back to the ferry terminal in Port aux Basques, a 400 mile trip.



Split Peas

I head out the next morning and make it to the southwestern coast by mid-afternoon. This gave me time to explore the area. The southwestern corner made me think of what Scotland might look like, rolling hills of rock with green vegetation growing all over it. I ride over to Rose Blanche-Harbour le Cou to visit their lighthouse. The Rose Blanche lighthouse is made of granite. It was abandoned in the 1940's, but fully reconstructed in 1999. It was well worth the ride over to see it! From here, I head to the ferry.



Route to Rose Blanche

I arrived at the ferry terminal early. I had several hours to wait until the 11:45 pm departure. Like the trip

over, I reserved a recliner. Once onboard, I found my chair and crashed.

Around 5:30 am, I jump up and head to the restaurant onboard the ship. I need to eat a good breakfast since I have a hard time stopping to eat when I'm riding!

My plan going home was to complete an IBA Saddle Sore 2000 or SS2000 (at least 2,000 miles in 48 hours). Once I departed the ferry, I stop at the first gas station available. I change out of my comfortable clothes and into my riding clothes, fuel up, check my gas receipt, confirm my start time and write it in my ride log. Start time – 6:25 am (ET) Thursday, August 2 from Bras D'or, Nova Scotia.

Like before, I only stop when I need gas, take care of any personal business and then back on the bike. I did stop at a hotel in Rensselaer, New York at 12:30 am for the night. This was right at 1,036 miles (odometer). The next morning, I jump up out of bed at 5:30 am ready to ride! As I walk out of the hotel, the manager, who was behind the counter when I checked in, asked if I was leaving already. I said "Yes!" He asked where I was off to, I said "Mississippi!" He just shook his head in disbelief.

The ride home was uneventful with the exception of traffic in a few cities. 18 ½ hours and 1,275 miles (odometer) later, I arrive in Hernando, Mississippi at 12:09 am (ET)! For a total of 2,311 miles

(odometer) or 2,220 miles corrected (Google Maps) in 41 hours and 44 min. My total trip ended up being 5,888 miles (odometer).

Even though it was unusually warm in Newfoundland (low 80's) it was cooler than the heat and humidity of the south! It was a great trip! I would recommend "Ridin' the Rock"! The scenery is awesome and the people are even better!



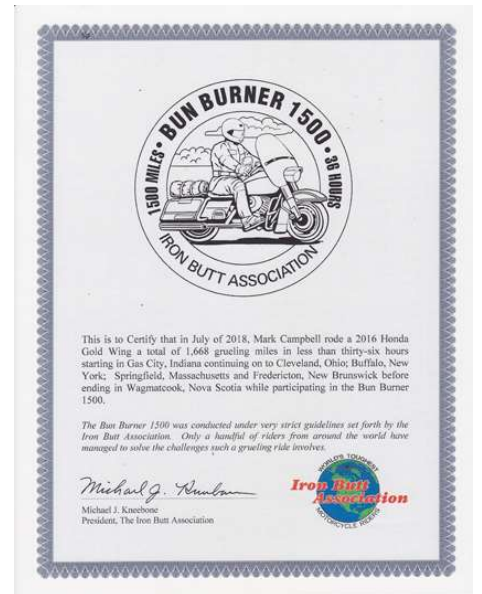
Iceberg Beer



Twillingate



Moose Burger



BB1500 Certificate



SS2000 Certificate