

Day 4 July 28, Bonne Bay Newfoundland, Woody Point, Email Problems:

Maasdam Arrives in Bonne Bay: About 6am the Maasdam started into the entrance of the fiord that makes up Bonne Bay, Newfoundland. A drizzle of rain was falling with occasional thunder and lightning. The ship continued along the narrow waterway with tall mountains on either side. About 7am the ship dropped anchor and settled into a stable position. The deep water of the fiord allowed the Maasdam to approach within a few hundred yards of the village of Woody Point as shown in the photo below.



Although the water here is deep enough for large vessels, the pier facilities aren't large enough for the Maasdam so we had to anchor out and use tender boats to get in to the town of Woody Point.

The maps below show the locations of Woody Point and the anchored Maasdam.





Touring the Village of Woody Point: Woody Point village is surrounded by the huge Gros Morne Canadian National Park. Visitors to the park contribute most of the tourist activity which is the primary economic support for the community. Fishing is a secondary economic input. Attesting to the possibility of a tourist industry here was the Woody Point Motel that we spotted on shore from the deck of the Maasdam.



About 10am we caught a tender that took us in to the passenger landing at Woody Point. The temperature was comfortable and short sleeves were adequate but we wore raincoats just to ward off the occasional light mist that fell.

This was the first time that a cruise ship as large as the Maasdam had visited Woody Point and we had been told by Maasdam staff that the Woody Bay visitor's bureau had worked hard to make us feel welcome. It turned out that the local preparations for our arrival were indeed extensive. The main street of the town had been blocked off to vehicle traffic so that arts and crafts shops could be set up in a convenient location for the cruising shoppers.



The arts and craft vendor stalls were lined up at the head of the pier and a local musician provided entertainment broadcast in the pier area by loudspeakers.



The thoroughness of preparation was attested by some remaining signs that were posted to make sure parked cars did not get in the way of preparation for our arrival on July 28.



In addition, a reporter from the ntv television station (“First with the news in Newfoundland”) was on assignment in Woody Point to record the inaugural visit of the Maasdam and its passengers, as shown below. The sign below the car door indicated that we could have caught their broadcast on the evening newshour at 6:00 PM. Unfortunately, we had already left the area by that time.



In spite of the damp conditions there was a festive mood about the whole occasion that was enhanced by the dancing Mummers who greeted us at the head of the pier. We soon learned that these Mummers represent a unique Newfoundland tradition. They cover their faces with pillow case masks and dress in a humorous way such as with clothes inside out and backwards. In a way it is vaguely similar to the US tradition of Trick or Treating at Halloween. They celebrate the two weeks before Christmas by parading around the neighborhoods playing practical jokes and in general making a light hearted

nuisance of them selves. Shown below are a couple photos of the Mummers who enthusiastically danced for us today.



The Mummers are apparently considered an important part of Newfoundland culture because some of the craft shops had Mummer dolls that were for sale.

The one room city library was on the main street and it was popular among the cruise passengers when they found that the library offered free access to the Internet. Because of the limited number of computers at the library, some passengers returned to the Maasdam so that they could bring their laptops over for a free emailing session. We didn't partake of this feature but Barbara did take the opportunity to get a picture of her library card visiting the E.J. Roberts Memorial Library in Woody Point, Newfoundland.



We hadn't gone far when we were approached by a man offering to take passengers in his yellow school bus to an arts and craft shop located several miles south of Woody Point. It seemed like a good opportunity to get a free tour of the countryside so we hopped aboard along with about 20 other people. After about a 10 mile journey along the two lane road bordering the south arm of Bonny Bay we came to our destination. We had arrived at the Pic a Tenerife Craft shop. The shop, named after a nearby mountain, was filled with all manner of crafts from moose antler jewelry to beautiful quilts. Barbara was particularly attracted to the quilts shown in this picture below.



The neighborhood surrounding the Pic a Tenerife Craft shop was simple and well kept as was typical of all the areas we saw

during our visit to Woody Point. The photo below, taken from the porch of the craft store, shows our bus transportation and the area around the craft store. A winter's supply of firewood is stacked behind the bus.



Next to the craft store was a rushing mountain stream that made a deafening roar as it tumbled over the boulders in the streambed.



After purchases were completed in the craft shop the bus driver collected us and we headed back to Woody Point.

In Woody Point we completed our tour of the small town which supports a local population of about 7000 people. A non-operational lighthouse on the edge of the town caught the eye of many people and we had to explore this feature shown on the right.



Going back in to town we saw this huge collection of lobster and crab traps stacked on the dock next to one of the houses on the shoreline. We had heard recently that lobster fishermen were hurting because the market for that expensive food had fallen rapidly with the current economic downturn. We wondered if the fact that these traps were not in use was caused by the hard economic times.

There was also a cemetery with white headstones as shown below. Some tourists were busy examining the headstones. Our San Diego friends, Dave and Elsie, in search of ancestors have trained us to be inquisitive about the names of people on headstones of old



cemeteries. Today we joined in the headstone examination. It was interesting to us that the Roberts family name is prominent around town in Woody Point and Orlin has ancestors with that name. It turned out that many members of the Roberts family now rest in this serene Woody Point cemetery.

The weather had improved as the day wore on but we were thinking it was about time to wrap up our Woody Point activities and head back to the Maasdam. There was a long line of passengers waiting for the tender boats on the pier. After about a 30 minute wait we were able to board a boat and return to the Maasdam.



Later we spent some time evaluating our day. We thought Woody Point was rustic and lacking in some of the amenities that we expect in some of the well worn tourist sites we have seen. However, the lack of glitzy marketing and high pressure sales tactics combined with the simple charm and genuine friendliness of the people left us with a contented feeling. We had enjoyed ourselves immensely while visiting this place we probably would never have found except for the itinerary of this cruise.

Just before dinner in the evening the Maasdam raised anchor and we cruised out of Bonne Bay into the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Tomorrow morning we arrive in Red Bay, Labrador for a visit with a Canadian town even smaller than Woody Point.

Problems with Email: On a subject removed from Woody Bay we wanted to mention our problem with responding to email we receive from family and friends. We can receive email but we are experiencing some difficulty sending out our responses to email. We are working on a solution but so far our success is intermittent. Therefore, we are asking blog readers who may send us email, please don't be offended by the lack of a timely response to an email sent to us.