

### Day 3, July 27; Cap-aux-Meules Village in the Iles de la Madeleine Archipelago:

**The Maasdam Arrives at Cap-aux-Meules:** We were sailing in the waters of the Canadian province of Quebec in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. About 8am the Maasdam dropped anchor in the harbor near the village of Cap-aux-Meules on the chain of islands known as Iles de la Madeleine. The maps below show the location of Cap-aux-Meules. The archipelago is also known by the English name of Magdalen Islands.



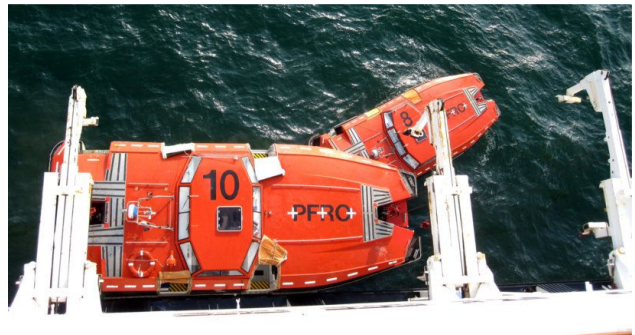
The map on the right shows the anchorage of the Maasdam near the Cap-aux-Meules town.



We were happy to see that the fog we had been passing through yesterday had lifted and the sun was shining brightly. The pictures below show the low lying features and village of Cap-aux-Meules that were visible from the deck of the Maasdam.



The Maasdam had anchored more than a mile from the shore because the harbor was not deep enough for large ships. The davits holding the ship's tender boats were extended from the side and boats were lowered into the water to provide transportation to shore.



**The visit to Cap-aux-Meules:** Just when things appeared to be going so well our fortunes changed. A thick fog bank moved in to the area and shut down all boat traffic from the ship to shore. After about an hour a system of local police boat escorts and radar was set up to allow the transfer of passengers on the tender boats to the pier at Cap-aux-Meules. Many people had scheduled guided tours of the islands so they were anxious to get their delayed day on the island started. We had not scheduled any tours so we waited until the rush subsided and then took a tender boat in to the pier about 12 noon. On the right is a photo of passengers on our boat making their way off the tender boat and across the small pier at Cap-aux-Meules. The large ship in the background is a passenger and auto ferry boat for inter island and mainland connections.



The fog was quite thick with visibility limited to a couple hundred feet. There was a visitor's information station that had been set up by the local chamber of commerce to help us enjoy what the island had to offer. The attendants in the information center gave us a map of Cap-aux-Meules showing its one main street which is Route 199 of the Canadian road system. We proceeded to walk toward a shopping mall shown on the map about a mile down the main street. The first thing we encountered was a traffic jam, shown on the right. The traffic jam was not a total gridlock but it was clear that most of the inhabitants of the island had cars and were using them.



The temperature was pleasant and as we walked along with other ship passengers the fog lifted somewhat so we could see the buildings along the street. Cap-aux-Meules is part of the French speaking Province of Quebec and the conversations between natives were all in French. However, when we stopped at the souvenir and grocery stores there were usually English speaking people to help us out. There

was a nice series of craft displays in the outdoor market shown on the left. Some of these people did not speak English but they were gracious and tried to be helpful. It was clear that the town was glad to see us and they did everything they could to make us feel welcome.

The buildings along the street were a mixture of business fronts and private homes. They were relatively small and in good repair. Many of them were freshly painted with bright colors. The photos below provide an example of what we saw.



The ranch style home shown below was a rarity.



We are always interested in knowing the price of gasoline in the places we visit. It is a fairly uniform product,

regardless of location, so it provides some measure of the relative cost of living compared with the US. Shown below is a sign at a gas station showing a price of \$108.4 Canadian for a liter of Ordinaire (regular) gasoline. At the current exchange rate you can buy 1 Canadian dollar for 98 cents US so \$108.4 in Canadian dollars per liter works out to about \$4 US per gallon. Considering the rather remoteness of



these islands we thought the price was comparable to what you would find in a similar remote US location.

We were looking for a cork screw to replace one that we broke when opening a wine bottle a couple days ago. Stopping at a small souvenir shop we found a nice sturdy stainless steel cork puller for about \$8 US. The store clerk was very friendly and helpful. While in the store another customer came in and we engaged in a conversation as he inquired about where we lived in the US. We have heard many times about how unfriendly and rude the French speaking people of Canada and France can be. However, in the contacts we have made over the years they have been polite and friendly.

After walking a little over a mile from the pier the sidewalk along the main road came to an end at a small shopping center. We didn't see any shops of interest so we crossed the street and returned to the pier. The road paralleled the shoreline which was about a block from the street. At about this point we met our friend, Jeff, who had already completed his guided tour earlier this morning. As a consummate photographer he obligingly took this picture of us with a church in the background.



As we neared the pier there was a prominent hill between the street and the shoreline that had a viewpoint facility at the top. This feature of the town had been described to us during the port lecture on the ship yesterday. The city has erected an elaborate wooden staircase up the side of the hill that is supposed to have about 180 steps. Shown in the picture on the right are the hill and the attached staircase. We didn't bother to climb the stairs because the fog was still pretty dense and there was no view of the surrounding area to be had.



Fishing boats were moored in the pier area. A primary industry for this maritime region of Canada is fishing. These boats looked like they were of the hard working variety and not the pleasure yachts like those we had seen in Boston a few days ago.

When we arrived back at the pier we took a picture of Barbara and her library card with this colorful backdrop advertising the beauty of Iles de la Madeleine.

The poster promised some wonderful scenery in the area so we regretted even more that the place had been shrouded in fog while we were visiting.



After a short wait we caught the tender boat and made our way back to the Maasdam. The tender boats were brought back on board about 5pm and the ship was made ready to pull up anchor. This was the first time the Maasdam had visited in this area so the local people were very interested in seeing the ship. The fog had dissipated by this time and many small fishing and pleasure boats came out to the Maasdam to get a better view. We took this picture of a collection of the small boats that had accumulated.



Although the fog during our visit was a disappointment the friendliness of the people

and charm of the village left us with a good feeling. It is a place that we were unaware of just a few months ago and we would not have chosen it for a family vacation but we were glad that the cruise had brought us to Cap-aux-Meules.

On another subject we wanted to record that our friend, Ben, in San Diego passed a test we had hidden in the blog entry for Day 1. We had included pictures of Fenway Park in Boston and, as everyone knows, the famous Boston Red Sox baseball team has its home in Fenway Park. Ben is an athlete who always keeps current on the sports scene so we cleverly referred to the baseball team as the Boston Red **Socks** to see if he would notice the mistake. In this morning's email his reputation was secured as he informed us that our Red **Socks** should be called the Red **Sox**.

About 6pm this evening the Maasdam got underway for the port of Bonne Bay on the Canadian island province of Newfoundland. We should be there in the morning to continue our exploration of this part of the world.