

Saorsa II — 2010 Cruise

Part 010

2010-07-01 15:37 EDT (19:37 Z)

Where does one begin? What variety of experience we have; what richness of life's joys and challenges. We proceed on our Journey. Oft times with humbled awe at the beauty and power of our natural world.

In sailing terms, a rather dull passage from our snug anchorage at Rivière-au-Renard to l'Anse à Beaufile. Practically no wind at all, so we motored the entire distance.

In other aspects, quite wonderful. We saw a few (at least three, probably four individuals) pilot whales, some dolphins, many sea birds especially gannets, and we passed between Rocher Percé and Île Bonaventure.



Illustration 22: Rocher Percé appears on the horizon ...

The photos one views of this place (including mine) simply cannot do it justice. As we headed south past Cap des Rosiers the unmistakable form of Percé appeared out of the mist, still low enough on the horizon

that the hole was not visible. As we got closer, the form sharpened, the hole became visible, and then the entire grand apparition was before us. On the most basic level, just one seriously (delete expletive here) big chunk of rock. But, when seen as we saw it, stunningly beautiful in its grandeur.



Illustration 23: ... and passes astern.

Then a short run around the corner and we docked in the pretty little basin at l'Anse à Beauvils. Other than dodging a few bouys marking the location of lobster pots and a little anxiety over the depth of the basin, it was an easy approach and a rather smooth and graceful docking manoeuvre (insert shy blush here).

Again, we were fortunate in our timing. That very evening there was a live performance in a small venue not five minutes walk from the dock. The blues ensemble “*Monkey Junk*” put on a steamy concert of **very** hot blues. In true and the finest impecunious cruiser fashion, I sat within earshot in a nearby lounge listening for free!

We stayed in Beauvils two days. Our time was spent partly on plotting our tactics for the next stage of the cruise.

From where we were on the north shore of Chaleur Bay, we needed to head south towards the Northumberland Strait. A logical intermediate stop lay at Shippegan, but the lift bridge there is too low to pass under. So we are faced with a non-stop passage of about 120 miles with no safe shelter in between.

We decided to sail to Chandler on the north shore of Chaleur Bay to bunker diesel, take on victuals, water ship, and position ourselves for that long next step. Based on the forecast, the move around to Chandler should have been an easy fifteen mile day sail around Cap d'Espoir and into Chandler. We even thought we would need to motor the last half as the forecast was for diminishing wind (honestly, that's what the forecast said).

After leaving Beauvils, we set all plain sail and started on a very pleasant sail, full-and-by on a starboard tack romping along at five or six knots over a long slow easterly swell.

As we approached Cap d'Espoir, the wind freshened and in the space of less than fifteen minutes we were down to a double-reefed main and clawing down the heads'l as the boat coped with confusion caused by the nasty short waves thrown up by the 25 knot winds crossing the existing easterly swell.

For the first time, I watched in amazement and horror as wind and wave combined to put my Mistress on Her beam ends and submerge Her side deck. Never before, in the eleven years I have sailed with Her, has such an event come to pass. Never, have I put Her in harm's way and failed Her in such a manner. In that moment, She held and kept me safe, I will remember, always.

Myra, in her laconic way, commented, "At least the mast didn't go in the water".

We carried on, motor sailing to windward under a double-reefed main the remaining distance to Chandler.

2010-07-02 13:30 EDT (17:30 Z)

Indescribable grace and elegance. The most beautiful of mankind's creations. A sailing vessel driving through the water with the power and strength She draws from the wind itself. A constant cascading rumble from the bow wave; the water licks along Her delicious curves; the wake vanishes astern in an unending series of eddies.

We left Chandler this morning after a quick stop at the fuel dock. We bunkered 65 litres of diesel and then set out sou'east to cross the mouth of Chaleur Bay and on to the Northumberland Strait.

Just now, we're about six miles east of Miscou Island making a course of West-by-South sailing close hauled under all plain sail in a west sou'west Force 3.

The forecast for today was good, but the nor'west wind has not come. (again, our thanks to Environment Canada for an inaccurate forecast). We could use a nor'westerly now, as we need to head up a point or two.

This passage will be about 120 miles, about 24 to 30 hours. We cross Chaleur Bay (just done) and then west sou'west down the coast of New Brunswick past Tracadie Bay, Miramichi, and on to Shediac.

To the north, the far shore of Chaleur Bay is fading in the haze and dropping lower on the horizon. A small bump to the west is all that is visible of Miscou. The rest of the horizon is crisp and unbroken.

A little wind shift has arrived and the wind vane is dutifully following. We're now making south sou'west about three-and-a-half knots.

I made a large pot of my 3-alarm chili last night. Very good (insert lowered gaze and shy blush here).

Saved enough for another three meals. We'll boil a handful of pasta and then fling in the leftover chili for a quick one-pot meal. Good passage making fare.

Shot a noon sight with the sextant today, but I was a little late getting on deck. My noon latitude was off by

five miles. I can and have done better.

Another hour left in my watch. Time to plot our position and update the log.

2010-07-06 15:12 ADT (18:12 Z)

All plain sail set full-and-by on a port tack making three-and-a-half knots in a light sou'easterly breeze, course of east by south-east. Sailing over the Grande Digue Bank about two miles east of Cap de Cocagne on our way from Bouctouche to Shediac.

It's been an interesting few days since I last put pencil to paper.

We completed our passage from Chandler to Bouctouche without incident in about 28 hours, a distant of about 120 miles. The sailing was very good for about the first twelve hours and we covered the fifty or so miles to Shippegan under sail alone.

As dusk approached, the wind faded and headed us, so we started the engine and ended up motor sailing under double-reefed main and engine for the next 16 hours. A bit of drudgery punctuated by an uncomfortable sou'westerly swell that bounced one up and and down on the berth while off watch trying to sleep.

I really can't write much about the passage other than standing three hour on-off watches was very tiring. During the 28 hour passage, I managed to get about two or three hours sleep.

A vivid recollection of standing at the chart table at 02:00 (yes, I had the middle watch, **again**) updating the ship's log and plotting our position. I was using the Faber-Castell pen that N. had given me as a parting gift while munching dark chocolate from a Ritter Sport bar she had also included. Fond memories and a strong reminder of great kindness from friends.

At dawn, the nor'west tip of Prince Edward Island was visible as were a few lobster boats clearing their pots. We were entering the Northumberland Strait.

As we motor sailed in a southerly direction, we decided to turn in at Buctouche Baie and find a dock up river at the marina in Bouctouche. As it turned out, a very happy decision; for Bouctouche is a charming town with a vibrant Acadian culture, friendly people, and some delightful public spaces. We found the marina, its surroundings, the town, and the people so pleasant we decided to stay for three days.

We visited "*Le Pays de la Sagouine*", an Acadian cultural centre, historic site, and music venue.

Damn, wind shift... back soon.

2010-07-06 20:50 ADT (23:50 Z)

Anchored now in Shediac Harbour near Pointe-du-Chene.

We had a pleasant but brief sail on the way here from Bouctouche. Very settled conditions. We had no difficulty setting the anchor in eleven feet of water at half-tide on ten fathoms of chain.

Very pleasant just now as the sun approaches the horizon. Very light sou'easterly breeze with gently rocking of the boat.

Meat loaf and Cabernet Sauvignon for dinner. The pan is hung over the side to soak so it can be washed easily in the morning. I've done the rest of the dishes and sit now at the aft end of the cockpit quietly contemplating.

The anchor lamp is topped up with oil and is ready to be lit and hung on the fore stay.

The centre at *Le Pays de la Sagouine* was a wonderful experience. We experienced a blend of cultural education, delightful music, and interesting lessons in history. Music, food, dancing, all provided an enchanting and charming glimpse of Acadian culture. Such vibrant passion. More... please!

Yesterday, we took a walk about in a beautiful park setting given to the town of Bouctouche by the Irving family. The grounds were encircled by a dry stone wall (Scots and Welsh stone masons strike again) that accented a breathtaking stone chapel, all set within a magnificent arboretum and formal garden.

The chapel, a memorial to the late K.C. Irving, was a stunning example of impeccable craftsmanship. Stone walls, slate roof, cherry wood interior, oak floors, fir beams, brass chandeliers, and beautiful stained glass windows.



Illustration 24: Irving Memorial Chapel in Bouctouche, New Brunswick

The grounds contained a wide variety of trees and a gazebo set within an Elizabethan rose garden. The whole setting was simply lovely and provided hours of delightful walking.



Illustration 25: Gazebo set in an Elizabethan Rose Garden in Bouctouche, New Brunswick

(interrupted here by the yacht “*Chiquita*” with Jamie and Carolyn on board) They are local yotties and were just swinging by to say hello and find out about this strange boat anchored off their town. They shared some local knowledge and pointed us to the best place in town for lobster.

End of Part 010.