

Canoeing the Coast

by the First Paradise Venturer Company (NL)

With practice, planning, and pluck, Newfoundland's First Paradise Venturers placed third in this year's Amory Adventure Awards for their coastal voyage from South Broad Cove to Minchin Cove. Using only a voyageur canoe and a kayak, they spent seven days enjoying one of the most beautiful areas in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Here, in their own words, is their story.

"This trip was introduced to the group by an advisor, and all Venturers took an immediate interest. We worked together fund-raising, training, and preparing for the trip. First Paradise has been involved with canoeing for a number of years, and all of us have much experience with canoeing and canoe safety. Since we had already done both river and pond trips, we were ready for something different! A coastal trip in a voyageur canoe would certainly be something to remember.

It's All in the Planning

After several months of intensive training in advanced canoeing skills, we began the detailed planning of our trip. We wrote to Newfoundland Council asking to borrow their 26-foot

voyageur canoe – they gave us permission right away. We added a double kayak, since there wasn't enough room in the canoe for everyone.

We then wrote to Terra Nova National Park stating our plans to travel through their site. Outlining our planned route, we asked their permission to stay in the park, and for their assistance if we needed it. A safety boat was organized in case of an emergency.

A day to remember

The first day began early (7:00 a.m.) as we packed all our equipment and headed off to Salton's Wharf, our point of departure. It was a mad flurry of activity. By 1:30 that afternoon,

we were out on the water – scarcely believing it was all happening at last.

After two hours of steady paddling, we reached South Broad Cove. We pitched camp, and enjoyed our pork chops, rice and corn – which tasted great in the outdoors. There was another flurry after supper – we noticed the tide was quickly coming in, and the small stream that separated the canoes from our campsite would not last long. In record time, we had all the equipment moved to the boats. You'd think we would have been exhausted by the end of that day – but when we got to our tents, we still managed to lay awake talking for at least an hour.

*Yes, but will it all
fit in the canoe?*



Photos courtesy of the First Paradise Venturer Company (NL)

Rise and shine

We woke early and travelled fast the next day. Our speed was good for the second day of paddling, and we saw many amazing and beautiful things along the way – like terns, majestic bald eagles and Minke whales. The Lion's Den was our scheduled campsite for that night – but we were delayed by strong headwinds that fought us all the way. Despite our determination, we had to take a break.

While on our rest stop, we discovered a cave in the cliff face large enough to paddle into. It was dark inside, but really cool. We discovered a tunnel that led out of the cave with its unique life featuring starfish close enough to the surface for us to really get a good look. It was nothing short of incredible.

After six hours of hard, steady paddling, we arrived at the campsite. Ravenous by then, we wolfed down our supper and fell into bed.

Mud-swimming

This was the only day of relaxation we had. We decided to use it getting clean – washing dirty clothes, and going for a swim.

Little did we know the sparkling pond we chose, that looked so appealing, had a bottom covered with three feet of thick, gross mud. If anyone was within earshot that day, they would have heard our yelps of disgust.

The Northeast wind

By 7:30 a.m. the next day, we had left the Lion's Den behind. From here we went to Swale Island, using the sail we had designed to help speed our progress.

Stopping for lunch on Seal Island, we cooked a quick meal and headed out to South Broad Cove, where we would spend the night. The safety boat was sent ahead to scout, and it

soon reported that we couldn't afford to leave the protection of the land to head out into the cove. It was far too windy, and we couldn't chance it. The company headed to the campsite, wind whipping our faces, lead by the safety boat. We left the canoe on a beach just outside the entrance to South Broad Cove.

*All that remains
of the sawmill*



Minchin Cove

It took an hour of hard paddling to reach our next destination: Minchin Cove.

Historically, this was the most interesting of all the sites. We came upon an old water wheel, and two underground cellars – remnants of what used to be a small, thriving community – now abandoned and forgotten.

Just a few minutes' walk from our camp for that day was a beautiful, refreshing pond. Compared to the previous day's fiasco, this water was a real pleasure – sparkling clean and warm from the sun.

We decided to hike up Mount Stamford. Our journey was heralded by a lone moose, as curious about us as we were about him. For a long time, we rested at the top of the mountain, drinking in the spectacular scenery. These are moments that come only once in a lifetime...and we knew it.

Final day

This morning we woke and packed up our tents, knowing it was for the

HISTORY OF MINCHIN COVE

Minchin Cove was once a small logging community. From the 1870s to about 1910, the first inhabitants made their lives there, building a sawmill, a school, a church and a cemetery. Despite all their hard work, the settlers left very little evidence of ever having been there at all.

A second influx of citizens made the cove their home from 1927 to 1950. The King family from Sandy Cove came to build a sawmill and harvest the surrounding forest. The work ethic of the people was strong, life at the sawmill was hard, and the people survived on their own vegetables. It was not an easy time, and not much remains today.

last time. The tide was too low to leave from the beach, so we had to walk around to the park wharf where we loaded the canoes and headed back to Salton's. It was a beautiful morning for paddling, without any wind or wave on the sea. On the way back, we became a photo opportunity for a boatful of passing tourists.

At the end of the day, we were tired, hungry, and longing for a hot shower and bed. We ate at the local diner that night, swapping stories and having laughs about the trip. We were sure we'd never have any trouble remembering this trip."

Congratulations to the participants: Matthew Carroll, David Carroll, Melanie Groves, Brian James, James LaFreniere, Matthew Moores, Bethany Morgan, Timothy Morgan, Advisors Joseph Carroll, Paul James, Craig Moores. X

Happy to be home!

