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Visitors from the Polar Star enjoyed some Newfoundland dancing at the Bird Cove Community Centre while listening to local music.

History & hospitality

Bird Cove welcomes first-ever visit from a cruise ship

By Aaron Beswick

Passengers on the *Polar Star* had a rough ride in zodiacs coming into Bird Cove, but they met a warm welcome in the community.

The Grade 8 class at Viking Trail Academy waited for the windblown tourists by the Big Droke Foundation with a big welcome sign last Wednesday.

Conversation topics varied between the visitors and the local youth.

When Richard Piper of Quebec stopped to talk with Borrea Humber and Mitchell Caines, they covered everything from the breakup of the former Soviet Union to the vegetable content of Mitchell's grandmother's garden.

"This is a real big thing for us," said Darlene Mahar, coordinator of the Big Droke Interpretation Centre. "There are people on the boat from everywhere – hopefully, if they like it, they'll come back and bring other people with them."

Since the cod moratorium, Bird Cove has turned to arche-



The Grade 8 class at Viking Trail Academy in Plum Point was on hand to welcome passengers from the Polar Star to Bird Cove.

ology as a means of economic diversification. The Big Droke Interpretation Centre, a museum showcasing the Dog

Peninsula's past few thousand years of history, employs seven people seasonally.

Since opening in 1997, the

centre has been growing steadily, attracting more tourists and increasing its hold of artifacts as more of the area is dug up by

archeological teams. This was their best year yet – despite lower visitation numbers along the Northern Peninsula, more

than 1,000 people visited the Big Droke Interpretation Centre.

The *Polar Star* is the first cruise ship to visit the area. Interpreter Faye Moores spent the afternoon leading groups from the boat through 12,000 years of history, from the Groswater Paleo-eskimo, to the Dorset Paleo-Eskimo, Recent Indian and the Beothuk.

While tools of white Bird Cove chert and walrus tusk sled runners were used to reckon the ancient cultures, the charm and character of Bird Cove's modern residents of European descent was also apparent.

"We do what we can for our visitors," laughed Ms. Moores as she pretended to shave Sandy Neilson of Brampton, Ontario, with a replica Dorset adze.

From the interpretation centre, visitors went to the community hall for a dance, a feed and a big dose of Bird Cove hospitality. Local musicians reeled through Newfie jigs while the women spread two large tables filled with tarts, cod and bottled moose.



Interpreter Faye Moores led visitors through the Big Droke Interpretation Centre. They are pictured examining a minke whale skeleton.



Interpreter Faye Moores shows a replica Dorset Paleo Eskimo adze.



Leah Hicks-Bradley-Swan and Cadence Lishman, passengers aboard the tour boat Polar Star, listen to the singing of Daniel Payne and archeologist Latonia Hartery.