

Sailing around Vancouver Island

By Dick Pattinson, *GWAHIR*



Part 1: Heading north

Interested in sailing around Vancouver Island? Well there are certain factors which will inhibit actually sailing and make motoring necessary at times. There are tides, winds (or lack of), and distances to contend with. There are only a few safe places to spend the night, or, perhaps, days if waiting out the weather. It is essential for safety to travel to these places. Unlike kayaking, where you can go ashore almost anywhere, a sailboat must anchor or tie up at a secure spot.

The total distance is over 700 nautical miles when you consider the courses into and out of anchorages and inlets. Depending on the tide, it is best to start

out as early as practical. Particularly if you have to beat against a strong afternoon wind.

The normal summer weather pattern is to be calm at night, with sea-fog which clears up about ten o'clock followed by a westerly which builds up in the late afternoon.

Fuel is fairly easy to obtain on the east coast of the island but after that the stations are few and far between. After Campbell River or Quathiaski Cove the next fuel station would be Blind Channel, then Kelsey Bay, Minstrel Island, Lagoon Cove, Alert Bay, Port McNeill, Sointula, and Port Hardy. Then there is a long stretch up Goletas Channel, past Bull Harbour, and around Cape Scott and down to Winter Harbour to the next fuel station. That's a long way. Then it is a long way from there to Kyuquot for the next fuel supply. After that there is a station in Esperanza Inlet at the Mission, or, alternatively, up Zeballos Inlet to the town of Zeballos. At the head of Tahsis Inlet the town of Tahsis has fuel. From this area it is necessary to make a long run out around Estevan Point to the next fuel stop at Ahousat. Tofino is not far from here and then Ucluelet at the other end of Long Beach, both with fuel stations. Bamfield would be the next supply. Fuel could be obtained at Port Renfrew by carrying it down from the fuel

station. The Marina across the bay has a doubtful access for sailboats. Sooke has a fuel outlet and then it is back into civilisation at Victoria.

After leaving Ganges, I usually try to, at least, get through Dodds Narrows on the first day. It takes me 7 or 8 hours depending on the tide and the wind. Not being a purist, I motor or motor-sail if the wind is not favourable enough to give me four knots or so. This part of the journey could be broken up with a stay at Wallace Island or Pirates Cove. However these locations are within easy reach of Ganges, and, after all, it is the West Coast that we want to explore. The Nanaimo Sailing Club and Schooner Cove Club offer reciprocal privileges. Try and get inside moorage at either of these places for a good night's rest. Sometimes I anchor in Brickyard Bay on the west side of the entrance to Nanoose Harbour. The next destination is Comox partly because of family ties. If there is a strong north westerly blowing in the Strait it is usually better to go up the coast to where you can turn out above the Ballenas Islands (to avoid Whiskey Golf) and then cut across below to the lower end of Texada. The westerly winds are usually weaker on the east side of Texada. From Comox it is a nice step if you can make it past the Seymour Narrows in a day. It may be necessary to wait in Quathiaski

Cove (or Campbell River) for the tide to turn to ebb. Try and get at the entrance to the Narrows at high water slack for a good push north. If time is short, anchor in Plumper Bay (avoid Deep Water Bay) or Kanish Bay. At Chatham Point the better anchorage is across from the light behind Turn Island, rather than in the kelpy anchorage at Otter Cove south of the light.

At Chatham Point an alternative course is possible by turning to the starboard and going up Nodales Channel. Johnstone Strait may be unsuitable because of the wind and the other route offers some respite and also a possible overnight at Shoal Harbour in Cardero Channel, or some other spot farther on where there is a floating restaurant. In pursuing this course one comes to Mayne Channel where there is a fine restaurant and a store that sells fresh home made bread and buns. This is also called Blind Channel. On continuing farther through the rapids here and at Welbore a nice stop is at Douglas Bay in Forward Harbour. From here proceed to Sunderland Channel which takes you back to Johnstone Strait. Port Neville is a place to overnight as well as to view the petroglyphs at Robbers Nob.

From here one can get to Alert Bay in a nice run up Johnstone Strait. Watch for the Orcas in this area, particularly around

Robson Bight. At the head of Port Harvey there is a good anchorage. Alternatively one can turn to starboard at the Broken Islands and travel via Havannah and Chatham Channel to Minstrel Island. Check the tide book for the narrows as it runs quite swiftly and the Channel *is* narrow. You have to line up the beacons at each end. Fuel up at Minstrel or alternatively at Lagoon Cove a short distance away through the 'Blow Hole'. From here proceed down Knight Inlet to the old Indian village site of Mamalilikula on Village Island. It is worth a visit. From there proceed down Canoe Pass out past Double Bay and on to Alert Bay.

At Alert Bay there is usually room behind the breakwater. This is the best spot to avoid swell from passing vessels during the night. There are three 'Super Markets' here, restaurants, showers, etc. The tallest totem pole in the world stands at the head of the Bay near the site of the former Community House which was destroyed by an arsonist recently. Other alternatives to Alert Bay are Port McNeill and Sointula.

Port Hardy is the next destination and the last chance for supplies and fuel before going around the Cape to Winter Harbour.

Part 2: Port Hardy North

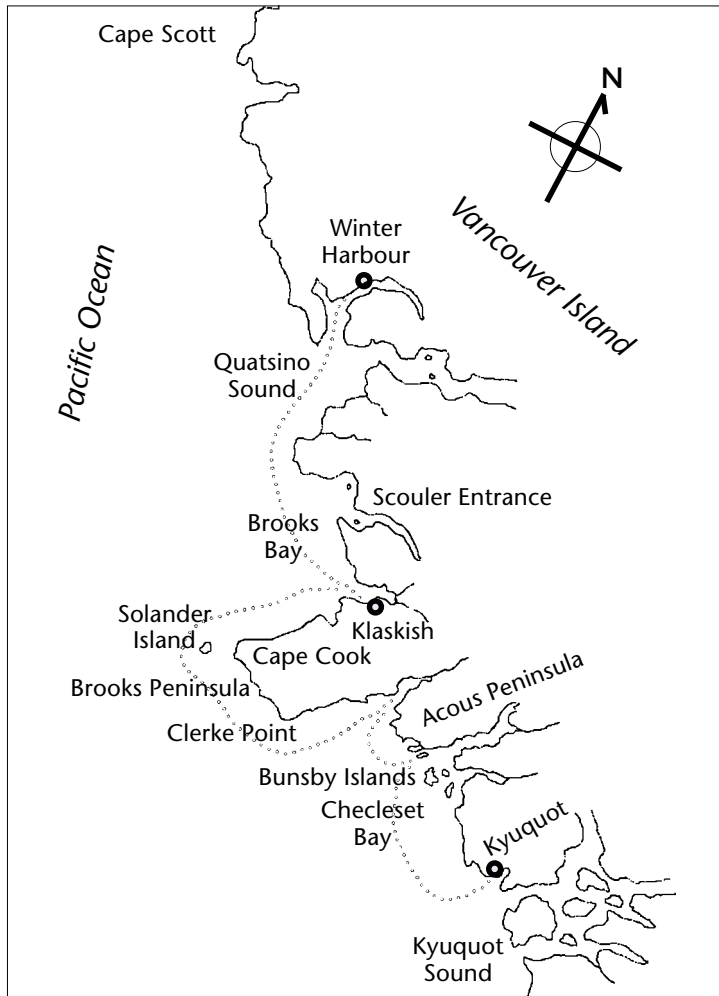
Port Hardy is the last chance to replenish your fuel and other supplies until you arrive at Winter Harbour, at least two or more days later depending on the weather and your inclination to enjoy poking around. I usually get my supplies at the grocery store near the Seagate Hotel. They will drive you down to the boat basin with a reasonable purchase. The boat basin is the place to stay. You have a choice of the government (municipal) floats or a marina. The latter's floats are quite decrepit but the other floats are usually taken up by fishing vessels. Of course you can tie up alongside a fishboat without any trouble. The Marina does have marine supplies and more important ... showers, which you have to pay for whether you stay there or not. Fuel supplies can be obtained at the marina, or from a barge located at the entrance to the boat basin. I use the latter. Fishing in the harbour or at the entrance is sometimes quite good.

On leaving Port Hardy one travels up Goletas Channel. The run to Bull Harbour is only 24 nautical miles. There is a place off to the side in Christie Pass called God's Pocket where meals are served. It is on Hurst Island. A bit farther on, if the weather should turn bad, one can anchor in Port Alexander on Nigei Island.

Further along there is an interesting site although there is nothing to see. It is Loquilla Cove where one of the early explorers came upon a deserted Indian village where he buried something under a big tree on the shore. Someone in the Provincial Museum, reading his diary in recent years, went there and found the object.

At the end of Nigei Island, Bates Pass flows into Goletas Channel. This is the spot to get out your trolling gear and try for a salmon. Up Bates Pass on Hope Island is an abandoned Indian village. The beach in front of the village is composed of small smooth stones where the Orcas beach themselves to scratch off any unwanted growths they may have. The only other place where this is done is at Robson Bight in Johnstone Strait. The village may be worth looking at. Next stop is Bull Harbour.

There is an interesting petroglyph at Cape Sutil which is on Vancouver Island out past Nahwitti Bar or the Tatnall Reefs. There is a bay to



the east of the cape where there is a good anchorage. The petroglyph is right at the point on a large boulder. There was a report that there are several petroglyphs around the area but I have only seen one. Some travellers, to avoid Nahwitti Bar do go around it by traversing through Tatnall Reefs with one eye on the sounder and the other on the chart, or on the GPS waypoints.

Part 3: Bull Harbour

Bull Harbour is located on Hope Island which is an Indian Reserve. It was formerly leased by the Department of Transport for a marine radio station which was operated there for many years. When the lease ran out it was not renewed and the buildings and much of the equipment were abandoned. There is a sign at the beginning of the road from the dock which welcomes you and is signed by the Indian Nation.

The light at the entrance to the harbour is called

Godkin Point and the entrance is guarded by steep cliffs. Keep to the right at the island blocking the entrance. As you round that, you will see a float with a blinking navigational light on it. This light and the float belong to the Federal Government. You may use it, but it is also used by draggers and packers who arrive at all hours of the day or night and who resent your being in their way. The bright lights and noise are not worth the convenience of using the float and in the morning you may find fish offal thrown on board your boat.

Further into the harbour there is a marine wharf where the ramp to get ashore is located. This wharf is too high for all but the biggest of vessels. The most satisfactory anchorage here is to drop the hook in the harbour and use the dinghy to get around. However, check your depth and remember that in these northern latitudes there is a much greater range of tides than around Ganges.

The ideal time for leaving Bull Harbour for Cape Scott is early in the morning around five o'clock when it is high water slack. This is the best time to cross Nahwitti Bar as it will be calm and you will have a tidal push toward your destination. You will notice the ocean swell as soon as you cross the bar. It is not bad but it is there to remind you that you are headed for the West Coast.

However, do not leave Bull Harbour without exploring the site. You can leave your dinghy at the ramp and walk up the road along the east side of the bay. You will come to a helicopter pad which is settling, then a power house which is empty. Further along, as you start to turn the corner to the left, you will pass the water supply which are ponds, and remains of the pumping and purification plant. Then the houses start along the left side of the road. They are in various degrees of repair. The old station is located where a ramp runs out into the bay. The last operating station is located farther west at the end of an overgrown trail which is practically impassable. Don't bother with it. Across from the station, on the right hand side of the road, is Roller Bay where the seas come crashing in, coming all the way from Japan. You will notice that the boulders are polished from the constant grinding. If the tide is down there is a nice walk along the beach to the westward. After the end of the houses, I noticed a dog's grave. 'Woofer, a friend to all'.

Part 4: Around Cape Scott

Well, you have looked in the tide book under Tofino and figured out that high water slack is at five a.m. in the morning on the Nahwitti Bar. The weather reports

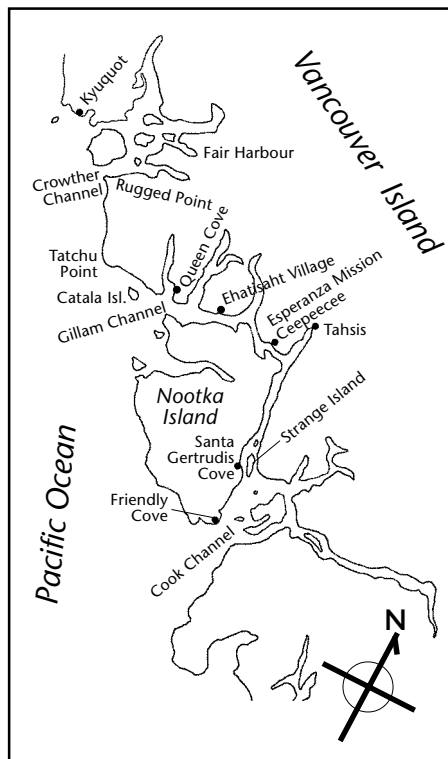
are favourable. The weather looks alright. Then go for it!

Be all ready to go before high slack as it will take a while to get out to the Bar. The following are fishermen's comments on the coast from here to Winter Harbour: Cape Sutil - popular fishing anchorage. Excellent in a westerly but some surge in strong winds. Excellent for crabs. Fishermen's Bay is good in moderate westerly. Nissen Bight (extreme south bay) has a trail to Hansen's Lagoon and Cape Scott. Good beach-combing beach to west. Anywhere from Nahwitti Bar to Cape Scott, in close to land, is good in strong SE winds. Watch at Cape Scott as sometimes strong SE winds will come up Goletas Channel. In a strong SW it is possible to anchor in Experimental Bight but watch for wind change to Westerly. There are nice sand dunes and a trail to the lighthouse. However, carefully choose a spot to be able to get the dinghy off the beach without swamping it. Guise Bay on the other side of the Cape is another possible anchorage but has rocks on the approach. This anchorage is terrible if the wind should switch, as are most one direction anchorages.

Now for Cape Scott. Stay outside of the 18 fathom depth to avoid rocks. There are strong currents at times which do not correspond to the tide book. Definitely forget passage with opposing wind

and tide. Don't bother with the Scott Islands, appealing as they appear. They are covered with a thick impenetrable forest so that there is beach-combing only. Hansen Lagoon may be used as an anchorage in any light wind or moderate to strong SE. Check the chart for suitable depths. The next safe anchorage is Sea Otter Cove. Do not attempt to enter it through the first (west side) entrance but go down around Winnifred Islands and enter the marked channel. It is narrow and can be easily missed. Inside there are numerous mooring buoys but the Cove is quite shallow so keep an eye on the chart and sounder. Remember the greater tidal range in these latitudes. Often it blows stronger in here than on the outside. Some feel that Hanna Point bay is a better anchorage in a westerly and it is easier to observe the outside winds. If there is a strong south easterly then use the south side of San Joseph Bay. At the head of the bay a trail from Holberg comes out and there is an interesting cave, rock formations and a cabin. There was a settlement here in the early days. In a light south east one can anchor at Commerell Point to explore Raft Cove. There is a cabin on the south side of the entrance. Farther down we come to Grant Bay. This is a good anchorage in a westerly. There is a nice beach, a cabin, and a trail over

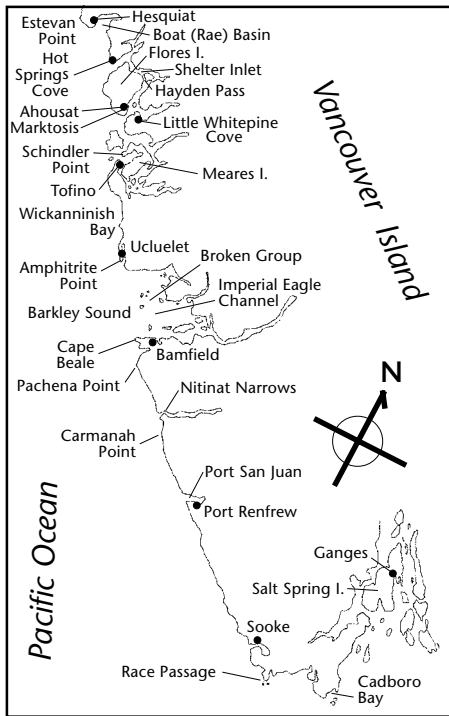
to outer waters of Winter Harbour.
Entering Winter Harbour one goes



around Kains Island between it and Robson Rock. Some fisher folk with local knowledge enter through the passage behind Kains Island but one look at the chart should discourage most people. Be

aware of Pinnacle Islet and keep clear. On the north side of Matthews Island is a popular anchorage. The floats and docks in Winter Harbour are left around Greenwood Point which is an Indian Reserve. During fishing season the floats are crowded. The first one is the old B.C. Packers float and above the jetty is a store with about everything you need including a liquor outlet. The prices are high, but hey, this is at the end of the road from Port Hardy. Sometimes there is a restaurant operating nearby. Take time to walk the board walk along the shore-line to view the quaint scene. There is also a trail nearby to Botel Park which runs through the woods and comes out on a beach at the entrance to the harbour. The headquarters of W.D. Moore logging company are nearby. This is a family operated enterprise which has been going for many years. Patrick Moore, the forestry advocate, is the third generation of the family.

After Winter Harbour, where you will have topped up your fuel supplies and provisions, you have two choices. Explore Quatsino Sound with its settlements of Quatsino, Mahatta River, Port Alice, Coal Harbour and Holberg, or head south to continue around Vancouver Island.



Part 5: Heading south

When one heads out of Winter Harbour, and down past Kains Island, be aware of Robson Rock and South Danger Rock as shown on the chart. Lawn Point is an interesting spot. Although I have not been ashore there I have flown over it and taken pictures. It is well named as it appears to be grass-covered but the grass

happens to be shrubs and bushes. It looks as if you might land there and as a matter of fact, during the last war a warplane did just that, under weird circumstances.

The story was told to me by Ottootel, a fishman from Winter Harbour. It seems that the plane landed on the point and, before it could stop rolling, crashed into the line of trees at the back of the 'field', setting the trees on fire. The crew managed to get out as not all the plane burned. Fishermen found the aircraft sometime later when they went ashore just looking around. They found about eight bodies sitting around the site of a campfire and their dog tags had been removed. The authorities were notified and the Canadian Army came in and blew up the aircraft with explosives. The fact that they were all dead when there was seafood available was something no one could figure out. Sometime before they were found, a troller from Winter Harbour saw a person on a raft out in Brooks Bay and offered to pick him up. He was told to stay away—the fellow did not want to be rescued! Later on when the plane and bodies were discovered, the fishermen figured that it was a plane taking an army payroll to Alaska and one of the crew high-jacked the money and was waiting for an accomplice to pick him up. What a story!

Anyway, I was interested in going

ashore but never made it. Otto said that it would be hard to find anything now with all the growth and the fact that it was blown up by the army. The last time he was there he said he looked around and found that he was standing on part of the wing. My son has been ashore there but was not looking for the aircraft. He did take a dandy panoramic series of slides of the scene from the beach. In the distance one can see Solander Island and Brooks Peninsula. To explore the site, I think the best way would be to anchor the main boat in an out-of-the-wind bay near Newton Entrance and go to the point by Zodiac or dinghy.

One popular anchorage in the area is at Klaskino Anchorage. A large scale chart, Scouler Entrance, is handy for this exercise as there are a few rocks in the area. From the anchorage, one can go exploring in a small boat. There used to be a beautiful waterfall in the creek south of the anchorage but a few years ago it was ruined by the 'smash-and-grab' loggers from Mahatta River. They are clear-cutting a lot of the coastal forests in this area. Near the waterfall is also a substantial 'hunter's' shack.

Caution is necessary to get out of this location. There is a passage to the west of Morris Rocks. When crossing Brooks Bay, get a GPS reading for Hughes Rock and keep clear. The entrance to Klaskish

Anchorage is marked by Donald Islet, which has a light on it, rather hard to see but it's on top of the islet. There are can buoys on the ESE side of McDougal Island but for the most spectacular mooring go farther into the inlet and up through the narrow entrance into the inner basin. There are at least a half dozen buoys there in this land-locked paradise. There are supposed to be a lot of crabs in this basin near the river mouth. One fault with this location, which is surrounded by high hills, is that strong winds sometimes come down off of these hills at night.

Due to the western exposure to the northwest side of Brooks Peninsula, I don't like to tarry there. A more or less straight course from Donald Islet down between Clerke Islet and the Clerke Reef leads one down past Hackett Island which looks like someone did hack it in two. In behind Guilliams Island is a nice beach with a stream flowing through it. In one of my adventuresome moments I landed my seaplane in this creek for a look around. There was a wrecked fish-boat on the beach which I recognised as having done some work on.

One cannot miss Solander Island. It is off Cape Cook and is a bird sanctuary. At one time there were hundreds of birds there. A lot of them would fly out to look the boat over. When we went by in 1997

they were conspicuous by their absence. Some boats go between the island and the cape but I think the more prudent passage is outside of the island. Imagine the job of servicing the light and radio equipment perched on the top of the island!

Part 6: Past Solander Island

Check the chart and stay out from the rocky shoreline from here to Clerke Point. A GPS waypoint off Clerke Point would lead you past the shallows at the point. The next course is for Jacobson Point as just around it, tucked in behind the island, are mooring buoys. On the way, try trolling past Quineex Reef. It is recommended to tie to a mooring buoy if there is any prospect of westerly gales at Cape Cook, as the winds come down off of the mountains right into Columbia Cove. On the way into the Cove you will pass a former Coast Guard vessel on the beach. The bottom on it was getting thin so the Coast Guard sold it to a west coast logger who, unfortunately, ran it aground. It is deteriorating over the years.

This is the spot where Phil Hume and an accompanying boat got quite a scare. They passed a dive boat on the way in just opposite the wreck. The sullen fellow on board did not return their wave. That night after they had retired they

were awakened by gunfire. There were different types of automatic weapons being used. They were afraid to go on the air to call the Coast Guard. Next morning when they looked around the corner there was not a sign of anyone nor of any boat. Hijackers of a dope cache? Ask Phil about it.

To get to a dandy sandy beach, complete with a fresh water stream for bathing, take the dinghy and go into the arm to the west. Figure on the tide doing something, like going out and leaving your dinghy high and dry! The trail entrance is on the south side of the little inlet and is marked by a B.C. Parks sign. You might leave your dinghy on the north side going in, due to the shallowness, and walk the shoreline down opposite the sign where you can usually get across on a log. The trail takes about 25 minutes to walk and comes out on a fantastic stretch of sand. At the western end the stream flows down out of the woods. There are all kinds of interesting items for beachcombing. I got a hard hat from Japan last year! There was even a weather buoy there, which I reported to Tofino Radio, but it was there two or three years later so I guess it was not worth salvaging.

O'Leary Rocks usually have a lot of sea lions lying on them. A small boat would be handy to get close. The idea is to get

around this rocky area and into Battle Bay where you can drop the hook and explore. The most interesting place, to me, is out near the end of Acous Peninsula. To get there, go ashore near where it shows a passage between the main island and a smaller island to the left. The passage may be flooded at an extremely high tide but to me, it looks like this rarely happens. It is rather difficult going as the grasses and shrubs have grown over logs and ditches but it's really not that bad. Anyway, after traversing this passageway, walk along the beach to the right and around the bay. You will come to a site out near the end where the Indian village once was. Look carefully into the trees and you should see the only remaining standing pole. Nearby there is another pole lying face down. It has been that way for a long time as a tree is growing on top of it. At the site you can see the outlines of where the big dwellings were. This walk should not be attempted if the tide is high as you cannot get along the shoreline. In that case take the dinghy and go by sea.

Quite awhile ago another fellow and I flew over there and landed in Battle Bay. We had heard about the village site and wanted to explore it. We walked through the passageway and could hear a motor running. "Good," I said, "there's a camp there and we can get a cup of coffee."

We walked along the beach and up to the grassy area, but no camp. There was only a motor running off a big drum of gasoline. It was driving a generator which was powering a radio beacon setup. How weird—not a soul around and this machine running steadily. No tents, no buildings, nobody. We figured it was a temporary radio beacon for some reason. And no coffee!

There is a small creek coming into Battle Bay from the west. When the tide is in it's a pretty site. This is where the natives used to gather for their potlatches. I read this somewhere. There is a burial island which is interesting in the fact that there are the remains of canoes, although most have disintegrated. On one there are three skulls, covered with moss. The location of this island is marked IR on the map and is SE of the village site. Take the dinghy to this spot.

To the north of Skirmish Rocks, where a creek flows into Battle Bay, is a place where kayakers are flown in. Max Fitch and I watched a Beaver fly into and out of there one afternoon and could not figure what was going on until we walked along the beach. Around the Bunsby Islands you will see sea otters floating on their backs. This is where they were introduced a few years ago and they are spreading out from there. There are various anchorages throughout this area. To

leave for Kyuquot, go through Gay Passage and there is a clear, straight course down the coastline. Near where you turn, there are several sea caves.

Spring Island may be worth a visit but the only thing that wasn't bulldozed into the water when the Loran station was closed is the helicopter pad. To explore the other nearby islands it is suggested that permission be obtained from the natives, across the harbour at Kyuquot. Getting into Kyuquot is easy when you follow the beacons which start at Rolston Island. There is a good government dock at Kyuquot and they even take garbage. The store is well stocked and there is a fuel station and a restaurant. It is to the right from the head of the dock. A trail leads along the shoreline in both directions and it is a good way to stretch your legs after boating. Kyuquot is the destination of the *UCHUCK THREE* from Gold River and there is a B&B above the store for the passengers.

Part 7: South from Kyuquot

On leaving Kyuquot, one can retrace a course back to the 'outside', which is the safest way, or go behind Rolston Island like the *UCHUCK THREE* does. Kyuquot Sound itself may be entered via Crowther Channel or farther down the coast via Kyuquot Channel. The latter is wide open

while the former is a bit tricky at the entrance. Inside Kyuquot Sound are many interesting spots and it is 'inside water' which means it is a lot smoother going. The kayakers make use of Fair Harbour to get out to this part of the coast as there is a road connection from Zeballos to this former logging camp townsite. People at Kyuquot sometimes get their supplies via this route. On Hohoae Island there is a protected anchorage in Dixie Cove. For a very well protected anchorage go to the entrance of Amai Inlet on the left hand side where there is an unnamed four fathom secluded cove. Amai Inlet had a gold mining prospect but it did not amount to anything. Cachalot Inlet was the site of an early cannery. Chamiss Bay is the site of one of the earliest logging camps in the area and is still operating.

I usually bypass Kyuquot Sound but do anchor at Rugged Point, in the cove behind the light. From this base one can walk through the woods on a good trail to the outside coast for a walk on sandy beaches which extend down as far as Kapoose Creek. Once I found the skeleton of an old sailing ship which had been wrecked, but the following year the ribs and keel were reburied in the shifting sands. There are some intriguing offshore islets which border Clear Passage. This is the best passage to take in leav-

ing Rugged Point. Go close to Grogan Rock to avoid a shallow spot on the port side. The open ocean is reached by turning out after McQuarrie Islet.

The next inlet of interest is Esperanza Inlet. It can be entered two ways. If the weather is clear and not too much sea is running, go down past Tatchu Point and the foul ground called High Rocks and turn in when the magnetic reading on Peculiar Point is zero. This will take you in between High Rocks and Obstruction Reef. Then turn to the starboard to go behind Catala Island through the Rolling Roadstead. The other course, which is bit longer but a lot less worrisome, is to go to the entrance can bouy and then turn into Gillam Channel. Go ashore on Catala Island at the small peninsula off Rolling Roadstead. Nearby are some interesting caves and beaches to explore. Queen Cove makes a good place to over-night. It is quite protected and reached by going through Birthday Channel. This spot at one time had a cannery and part of the remains can still be seen on the left hand side. A swimming lake is nearby through the woods at the head of the bay. An old Roman Catholic church is nearby at the small Indian village on the right hand side of the entrance.

Part 8: Esperanza Inlet

This inlet runs in from the sea on the north side of the large Nootka Island. I have not investigated the Nuchatlitz area south of Queen Cove. There is a village site and a float on one of the islets where a native lady made baskets—but she may not be there now. The area is quite shallow and has numerous rocks. Let's leave this area for another time and proceed along Esperanza Inlet. Believe it or not, before the war, two brothers had a thriving vegetable garden on Center Island and sold their produce to local camps. Further along, we pass the site of Ehatisht Village where there once stood one of the best carved totem poles on the west coast. When it fell, it was taken to Victoria where two copies were made at the museum. One copy was returned to the tribe, who now live at the head of Espinosa Inlet. The story is that they burnt it up as it was not supposed to be kept once it had fallen.

At the end of the inlet we come to two channels. Zeballos Inlet running north to the frontier type town of Zeballos. In the late 1930s this became an instant town as rich gold discoveries were made. The whole countryside was staked, and a lot of money made on speculation. The gold mines ran out of ore but then a rich iron ore mine was developed farther up the

valley. It too ran out after shipping all the ore to Japan. Logging took over and is now the mainstay of the town. There is a source of pie and ice cream at the hotel which is the drawing card for me. I think it is worth a trip there for the ambience, and is not far from our course around Nootka Island.

The other channel is Hecate and it leads us past Esperanza Mission operated by the Shantymen Society. I usually get my fuel replenished here to help them out. Sometimes there are coffee and muffins available. Just past the mission we come to Ceepeecee, the site of a former cannery and pilchard reduction plant. This is where I had my first paying job working as wireless operator and oil man in 1937. Through the Tahsis Narrows we come to Tahsis Inlet where, at the head, the town of Tahsis is located. A pulp plant is the economic engine. Proceeding down the inlet we pass Tsowwin Narrows, a constricted point in the channel which is well marked. Further along we come to Princesa Channel at the north end of Strange Island. A large scale chart of this would be helpful as there are a couple of rocks which need to be avoided. Keep close to the north of the light and then favour the Strange Island side of the pass. If there is any doubt keep proceeding down Tahsis Inlet to Eliza Passage. I have found that

Plumper Harbour makes an excellent spot for a worry-free night. It is very well sheltered though a bit deep. An active logging camp is located there.

Proceeding south down Cook Channel one can go between Saavedra Islands and Nootka Island. Santa Gertrudis Cove is favoured by many as an overnight spot but there are rocks to avoid, going and coming. A stop at Friendly Cove is a must. This was Chief Maquinna's village when Captain Cook was there. Now there are only a couple of houses and the Roman Catholic church which has stained glass windows sent over from Spain (in recent times) and inside a lot of Indian totem designs. Over on the ocean side there is a nice walk along the shoreline to a fresh water lake. Of course there is the brightly painted Coast Guard Nootka Lightstation which is still active. There is a lot of sports fishing activity in the area.

Part 9: Around Estevan

The next 'hurdle' is Estevan Point. This point is located on the Hesquiat peninsula as it juts out from Vancouver Island. On the western side there are a series of shallows and rocks which must be avoided. Early morning is a good time to make this passage unless it is foggy. In the summer the westerly wind comes

up later in the day and helps you along. Get out past the Perez Rocks before altering course to go past the light station. A few carefully placed waypoints on the GPS will help a lot. You may be close enough to notice that the tower is not a solid cylinder but formed by buttresses which are wider at the bottom. This light station was shelled by a Japanese submarine during the last war, but no damage was done. This has been denied by some people saying that it was an allied ship trying to make people realise that there was a war on. However I have seen the log of the Japanese submarine in a museum in Eureka, California. The translation states that Estevan was shelled, a freighter was hit in Juan de Fuca, and a town in northern California was shelled before the sub went to the south Pacific, where it was captured by the U.S. Navy.

The native Hesquiat village at the eastern end of the peninsula was the shipping point for Estevan supplies and had a plank road running along the shoreline to the light station. This consisted of two sets of parallel planks spaced for the vehicle, and it was difficult to navigate. Supplies had to be brought ashore from the *MAQUINNA* or other vessel in a small boat or canoe. Passengers were piggy-backed ashore by the villagers. Nowadays the supply ship traffic is handled by a helicopter. The village is deserted. At

the head of Hesquiat Harbour in Rae Basin is where 'Cougar Annie' lived. She outlived several husbands and had a thriving dahlia bulb business, shipping all across Canada through the post office she was able to have established there. Recently there is a move afoot to refurbish her gardens.

Farther to the eastward we come to Hot Springs Cove. There are mooring bouys or a float to tie to and a well maintained board walk to the hot spring. The best time to take this twenty minute walk is early in the morning or in the evening after the tourists have gone back to Tofino by plane or speed boat. The board walk has been rebuilt by B.C. Parks and many of the cross planks with ships names on them have been replaced.

Part 10: Hot Springs to Tofino

On leaving Hot Springs Cove, check the chart to avoid a couple of rocks lying off Sharp Point, and then proceed northward up Sidney Inlet. Fishing may be worthwhile just past Sharp Point. Turn to the starboard at Starling Point and proceed along Shelter Inlet. This is the inside passage to Tofino and it is, to my mind, more interesting than going farther south by the outside route. Hayden Pass is well marked for a safe

transit to Miller Channel. On the starboard side, farther down, is Matilda Inlet, the site of Ahousat (a general store, café, and oil station operated Hugh Clarke). The prices in this store are very reasonable I have found. I believe the carved store sign was made by someone from Salt Spring in exchange for a boat motor. The large active Indian village of Marktosis is just across the channel. At the head of the inlet is located another hot spring. It is contained in a concrete basin about eight by sixteen feet with about four-foot walls. It is lukewarm and a far cry from the Hot Springs Cove spring, and hardly worth visiting. Nearby is the trail to pretty Gibson Marine Park on the south east corner of the island. The trail was in terrible shape several years ago so I never attempted it again.

A nice, secure overnight anchorage is in Little Whitepine Cove. Go past Bawden Point and follow the shoreline down to the inner basin.

To get to Tofino, proceed down Miller Channel—which becomes quite shallow. It is a great crabbing area and a sharp lookout is necessary to avoid the numerous floats. Follow the markers in Calmus Passage to Dunlap Island, then follow the port hand shore down Maurus Channel. We are getting into shallow waters now so keep a sharp eye on the chart and beacons. Proceed past Schindler Point to

the red can buoy before turning to port into Heynen channel. Don't be tempted to steer directly for Tofino, which you can clearly see across the water. Opposite the village of Opitsat you will see a green beacon. Turn at right angles here and follow the marked channel down past the Deadman Islets into Tofino Harbour. Take care in approaching shore installations as the tidal flow at times is quite strong. There are government floats available but for the first night my choice is Weigh West Marina. The fee is higher but you get the use of showers, washing machines and dryers. There are excellent dining facilities on the premises. You are now back in civilisation.

Part 11: To Ucluelet and beyond

Leave Tofino for Ucluelet via Duffin Passage, which is at the west end of town just past the government wharf. There may be a lot of crab trap floats for the next few miles. I usually follow the navigation buoys in Templar Channel but according to the chart it's all fairly shallow. A GPS point halfway between Lennard Island and Frank Island would be a good point to steer for, and then another waypoint off Gowlland Rocks. Then it's down along the coast past Wickanninish Bay to the next GPS point

at the whistle buoy off Amphitrite Point. Turn into Carolina Channel and carefully follow the buoys into Ucluelet Inlet. There are several floats to tie up to but the best, I believe, is the government boat basin just past Lyche Island.

When it is time to move on, proceed southeast out of Ucluelet Inlet and into Newcombe Channel and then travel down the east side of Chrow island until clear of Sargison Bank shallows. Now set a course for the entrance of Thiepvál Channel in the Broken Group. There are many interesting spots in the group which I will not get into here. Proceed through Thiepvál Channel to Wiebe Island and then head for Satellite Pass which is across Imperial Eagle Channel. Pass Wizard Island on either side and cross Trevor Channel to Bamfield. There are two government floats in Bamfield, one on each side of town. The west side one gives access to the interesting boardwalk which runs along the shore to the store and the coast guard station, and, if you feel up to it, a walk to Brides Beach. On the east side are the two oil stations, boat supplies, motel, café and store. At the entrance to the harbour you may have noticed another channel on the left hand side. This is the entrance to Port Desire. There are two mooring buoys in there or you may anchor. It is a nice anchorage and a road leads a short

distance to showers and east Bamfield. This is my choice.

Part 12: The last leg

When it is time to leave this area we need to consider the distances involved. There really are only two places to overnight between here and Victoria. The first is Port Renfrew which provides fair shelter at the head of the bay. The other is Sooke which, although quite shallow, is a very good refuge.

Leave Bamfield early in the morning. There usually are a lot of sports fishing boats heading out to Cape Beale for the early bite. Cape Beale has a lot of rocks around it and it is advisable to set a GPS waypoint out past it so that when it is reached one can turn to the port and head down the coast line past Seabird Rocks and Pachena Point. A few miles farther down there is a spectacular waterfall at Tsusiat River. A major light station is Carmanah Point. Get a GPS reading on the buoy at the mouth of Port San Juan in case of mist or fog. There are no tie-up facilities in Port Renfrew. The wharf is too high and has no floats. The best anchorage is farther in behind a rock breakwater, formerly a log dump. Anchor in three or four fathoms taking the tide into account. A good meal may be obtained at the hotel near the wharf. There

is a marina across the bay at Gordon River but I have not investigated it.

There is a certain amount of tidal current in the Strait of Juan De Fuca and it is best to take advantage of it. Jordon River is the next sign of civilisation but it has no sea access. Sooke Harbour should be entered with the help of a large-scale chart. There are certain buoys to line up with to avoid the sandbanks. There are government floats to tie up to. Alternatively, one could anchor just inside the spit at the entrance but then you miss the opportunity of eating at Mom's Café. This establishment is famous with boating people.

Departure from Sooke should be timed so that you have a favourable tide at Race Passage. From there, a course can be set for Esquimalt (one of our reciprocal clubs), Victoria Harbour, or Cadboro Bay (with the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, another of our reciprocal clubs). From there, I think the best way home is through Baynes Channel, Sidney Channel, Moresby Passage, then past Beaver Point and home.