

Around Vancouver Island: the mate's view

Some notes by Harold Brochmann

Weeping wives and well wishers were gathered at SSISC's dock on July 1st, 2000 to see Dick Pattinson and myself off on *GWAIHIR*, and Dick's 11th voyage around Vancouver Island.

GWAIHIR—the name is taken from Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*—is a Gram-pian 26; well designed and strongly built. The Yanmar 2GM diesel engine is usually run at 2400 rpm, driving *GWAIHIR* at 5 kn (knots). 29 revolutions of the engine are required to drive *GWAIHIR* forward one metre. We anticipated a 700 nm (nautical mile) voyage, so each of Yanmar's two cylinders will be called upon to fire some 33 million times over the next month.

That night we pull into Schooner Cove where we are well received by the new management. Over the next several days we are to make use of their hospitality to a greater extent than intended.

Next morning, Yanmar, instead of responding in her usually enthusiastic manner to the starting motor's call, squirted water out the air intake, and refused to go. Being unusually perceptive, Dick and I realise that this situation called for consultation with a professional. But today is Sunday, and it is the July long weekend to boot, so this may have to wait. As luck would have it, we managed to contact the proprietor of a local diesel mechanic shop in Parksville who agrees to come right over and see what he can do—at \$60 per hour. Plus parts and tax, of course.

Al turns out to be a student of European history. He is particularly interested in, and conversant with, the events in Europe in the late thirties and early forties. In the course of that afternoon Yanmar is almost completely dismantled and Dick and I learn more than we would ever want to know about the events of WWII. In deference to my background, the dissertation is focused on the occupation of Norway.

At the end of it all Al announces that, "This engine will not be working for several days". Judging by the number of parts scattered around *GWAIHIR*'s cockpit, this does not come as a surprise. Then Al announces that it's time for a beer, and we retreat to Schooner Cove's pub for a lecture on different styles of naval cannons. Seems that the British ones took longer to manufacture and fired powder and shells as separate components, while

the German ones used cartridges. The lecture then went on to detail the implications of these technical features for the contest between the *BISMARCK* and the *HOOD*.

The next day we waited impatiently to hear good news from Al. Instead we were rewarded with a visit for the pur-

bank account was drastically (and I say drastically) depleted in the process. Our patience was at a low ebb so we immediately cast off and headed for Comox. Poorer and, as it turned out, not much better off.

Although Yanmar didn't squirt water at Comox, her enthusiasm for start-



Dick Pattinson and Harold Brochmann on GWAIHIR, ready to cast off

pose of removing a few more pieces of Yanmar amid much speculation as where the water had come from. At the same time we heard an extensive dissertation on the virtues of various types of diesel engine designs and manufacturers. Petter, Yanmar, Mitsubishi, Mann, Allison, Gardener, BMW, Volvo, Kubota, Faryman and many, many other brands were compared in the utmost detail. There were occasional digressions to other engine related matters such as aircraft and tank engines. For a brief period we were treated to the inside story of Rudolph Hess. But mostly we were learning about marine diesels.

As the third day came and went we were getting slightly discouraged. One whole day was spent twiddling our thumbs while Al went to Vancouver and Bellingham, of all places, to look for parts. On Thursday Yanmar's reassembly started while we gained detailed insight into various mergers and corporate takeovers in the diesel manufacturing world. I am left with the lingering impression that these educational experiences contributed to the number of hours it took to take Yanmar apart and putting her back together again because it was not until noon on Friday that Yanmar was announced ready to start—which, after much protest, she finally did. Dick's

ing was not much greater than it had been at Schooner Cove. We decided that maybe the fuel tank, being steel, was letting debris into the fuel supply, so off we went to Canada Tire to get a new one. This was probably a good idea anyway, but didn't make any appreciable difference to the starting procedure.

I shall belabour the tribulations with Yanmar no more except to mention that although she ran perfectly all day for the rest of the trip—once started—we went through hell getting her going every day. This meant that we cut the trip shorter than intended, were constantly on the lookout for mechanical consultation, and our overnight stops were, whenever possible, limited to places where we would have access to power for battery charging or at the very least to supplementary batteries for connecting jumper cables to.

As we rounded Chatham Point north of Campbell River we ran into winds that made our intended destination, Helmcken Island, impractical to reach before nightfall. We dropped anchor in Beaver Inlet, off Loughborough Inlet. I had picked up 5 lbs of factory reject chicken legs at \$1.72 per kg at Campbell River. Terrible stuff, but made edible by the addition of Thai curry paste and coconut milk.

Beaver Inlet makes a good anchor-age. There are three houses there. Two have that abandoned-long-ago look. The third has large south facing plastic covered windows with what looked to be potted green bushes growing inside.

While setting the anchor I became aware that *GWAIHIR*'s anchor chain is painted white. I make no claim to having seen other than a very small fraction of the world's anchor chains, but this must be unusual.

Next morning, after our customary breakfast of All Bran and irradiated milk, Dick dug out his coffee can toaster built after a design provided by a fisherman from Suintula. Placed on top of the kerosene burner it quickly produces all the kerosene flavoured toast you can eat. When this product is smeared with peanut butter it makes memorable fare.

It became our routine to listen to the weather forecast and consult Dick's barometer and the charts with our first cup of tea around 0630 each day. On this particular morning the weather channel told us that the winds at Helmcken Island were 4 knots, and the barometer there read 1020 millibars.

We now digress slightly to put this information in perspective.

This morning *GWAIHIR*'s barometer indicated air pressure of 31.1 inches of mercury. The weather reports give pressure in millibars. So in order for *GWAIHIR*'s barometer to be useful we must convert between the two units of measurement.

Standard atmospheric pressure is taken as 29.921 inches of mercury.

$29.921 \text{ inches} = 29.921 \text{ in} \times 2.54 \text{ cm} = 76 \text{ cm}$
As the specific gravity of mercury is 13.6, this is a pressure of $76 \text{ cm} \times 13.6 \text{ g/cm}^3 = 1,033.6 \text{ g/cm}^2 = 1,033.6 \text{ g/cm}^2 \times 10,000 \text{ cm}^2/\text{m}^2 \times 0.001 \text{ kg/g} = 10336 \text{ kg/m}^2 \times 9.803 \text{ N/kg} = 101323 \text{ Newtons per square metre or Pascals} = 1013.23 \text{ hectoPascal or millibars.}$

Incidentally, $1 \text{ lb/in}^2 = 6.894757 \text{ kiloPascal}$. The standard automobile tire pressure of 32 lb/in^2 is equivalent to 221 kiloPascal.

Back to the weather forecast. 31.1 on *GWAIHIR*'s barometer is equivalent to $31.1 / 29.92 \times 1013.23 = 1053.19 \text{ millibars}$; i.e., our pressure was much higher than theirs and so the wind was bound to blow away from us. That, and the low wind velocity at Helmcken Island, meant that Johnstone Strait was a breeze so to speak. Port McNeil was within easy reach.

As it turned out the wind speed indicator at Helmcken must have lost a few of its vanes because by the time we had re-entered Johnstone Strait it was blowing closer to forty than four. We bounced along, wiping sea spray

from our eyes and clawed our way into Port Neville, far short of our intended destination.

Along the way we passed Yorke Island where during WWII a gun was placed for the purpose of sinking Japanese battleships making their way south along Johnstone Strait to invade North America. From the island one can get a 20 mile clear view of an approaching enemy. I am not familiar with the technical details of the artillery once installed on Yorke Island, but I would be very surprised if it came close to matching the firepower of a Japanese battleship. I suspect that if any such intruder would have the stupidity to enter this tactically suicidal waterway it would still retain the ability to obliterate such a 'Fortress Canada' well outside the range of the defenders. Ah, the military mind.

Port Neville consists of a government dock already fully occupied by mostly American sailboats seeking refuge, a falling apart private dock with a 'DON'T MOOR HERE' sign and a post office. Dick seems to know everyone in these parts, so we were soon tied up at the private dock and enjoying hot tea, great ginger cake and pleasant conversation with the post mistress and her family. We traded some Danish Esrom cheese from Campbell River for a dozen eggs laid by non-factory reject chickens and in the morning set off on a longish trek that brought us to Port Hardy.

Along the way there are some interesting sights. A crew from the Coast Guard (more likely a private contractor these days) are busy painting a light beacon. They spill a bucket of paint all over the rocks. Makes the beacon a lot more noticeable. We discover what is probably an unrecorded petroglyph at $126^\circ 30.0'$ on the west side of Cracroft Island. I suspect it must be unrecorded because Dick hadn't seen it before and he seems to know where all of them are. We pass encampments of whale lovers who drift along near Robson Bight in inflatables with hydrophones recording whale songs. The sun shines. It's a delightful day. We drink tea, eat Betty Sharp cookies, laugh and kibitz about things in general.

I mentioned that the Grampian is well designed and built. To my surprise I discover that whoever installed the plumbing has placed the head discharge though-hull in front of the water intake. Brilliant.

We were getting increasingly apprehensive about the @*!%#@# engine. It takes more than an hour's worth of cranking, threatening, swearing, spraying starter fluid and sometimes pray-

ing to get it started each day. What if we got stuck in some isolated bay on the west coast? Dick's son has a substantial boat in Comox which could tow us back to Salt Spring in a pinch, but going beyond Port Hardy didn't seem reasonable if this was a likely prospect. We decided to press on regardless.

The telephone booth at the head of the government dock in Port Hardy sports a poster advertising the Needle Exchange Program available to all intravenous drug users. This phone booth is right next door to I.V.'s (sic) pub.

The person managing the Harbour Master's office was not aware of the shower facilities located within fifty feet of where we stood and sent me on an extensive excursion to the community pool, which I never did find.

The mooring fees in Port Hardy, by the way, are \$1.83 per metre for pleasure craft and \$0.32 per metre for 'commercial' vessels. The legitimate commercial status of many of the derelict craft at the docks is doubtful.

Last year I had accompanied Dick on my own boat, *WHISPER*, on a cruise to Seymour Inlet, on the mainland north of Port Hardy, so the territory covered so far was relatively familiar. But from now on we were heading into what for me was the unknown. There were real possibilities of running into nasty weather. Ocean swells and fog were a certainty.

The next evening saw us tied up to a float in Bull Harbour on an island off the northernmost point of Vancouver Island. Bull Harbour was once a thriving community. There were fishermen; there were shipping facilities, a radio station and an Indian reservation. Some of the houses remain. The people are gone.

Tied up behind us was a US cruiser of major proportions from Idaho or Montana or some such place. I always wonder why and how some of these behemoths are registered so far from the oceans they ply. *GWAIHIR* would have fit nicely into either of her several staterooms. This is only a slight exaggeration. We were invited on board and given a tour of the navigation facilities which consisted of several computers with their backup systems, inverters, converters and generators. Paper charts are now passé. Charts on compact disks and large screen laptop computers interfaced with your GPS is the way to go. Coffee can toasters are a thing of the past. Our hosts had the pop-up variety. They also had

a huge electric heater to make the suitably coiffured resident poodle more comfortable. The wine cellar was well stocked and the furniture in keeping with the décor.

The skipper of this vessel and I got into an almost heated discussion about LORAN. This navigation system will probably be dismantled in the near future due to the superiority of the now universally available GPS system. I was trying to make the point that some nations are hesitant about this move because it would make navigation everywhere in the world totally dependent on the US military who control GPS. Unless I misinterpret, I think my host found this suggestion provocative. *In vino veritas.*

On leaving Bull Harbour for Cape Scott, four hours away, one has to cross an extensive shallow gravel bar with some impressive current swirls. This means that you have to leave at the time of high tide. In our case this meant a 05:00 departure. *GWAIHIR's* barometer read 31.1 inches of mercury. Not unsurprisingly we were wrapped in thick fog for the first few hours. It was at this time that I started to develop a heightened respect for Dick's navigational skills. He is good. He is cautious. His judgement right on.

Come to think of it, I can say quite a few other complimentary things about Captain Dick. I'll save the details, but there are very few people I can think of with whom it would be such a pleasure to spend a month confined to such small quarters. I don't think a single negative word crossed his lips during the entire voyage. Well, that's not quite true. In a moment of particularly intense frustration at the @#!*@ motor I once overheard him say something along the lines of "I'm so p... (mild expletive deleted) off at that engine". My own attitude towards Yanmar also left something to be desired.

The fog lifted as we rounded Cape Scott and we continued south in a brisk breeze to Winter Harbour in Quatsino Sound.

Winter Harbour was once a thriving fishing community. "In the old days", Dick informs me, "the harbour was filled with trollers and seiners unloading their catch at either of several processing facilities." The facilities are still there. Crumbling. There is one working fishboat in sight. The man-and-wife crew wave in a friendly manner as we pull in to the dock. Eight brand new aluminum fishing machines with GPS, VHF and new 60 HP engines are tied up at the wharf. They bear the insignia of the local fishing lodge. I see no guests at the lodge. Busi-

ness must be slow.

In the harbour is anchored a very large red and white Coast Guard boat. It's big. Several of the crew are on shore stretching their legs. I strike up a conversation with one of them. He tells me that when the fisheries patrol boats were small and painted light grey—same as many of the fishboats—it was possible to stage surprise inspections of fishers to see what they were up to. "Now they see us coming ten miles away". Many fishers are now turning to bottom fish like cod and snapper. The stocks of these are dropping fast because they tend to be found in particular localised places, and with GPS and echo sounders, fishers can return to the exact same spot they found fish before and clean the local population out completely. These species regenerate very slowly.

He also tells me that large foreign processing ships wait out at sea for local fishers to legally set their huge seine nets for them. The ends of these nets are then handed to the processing ships which haul onboard enormous quantities of hake. The alternative would be to land and process the hake into fillets o' fish here. But this is not what is happening.

Dick used to fly into Winter Harbour to fix radios. "I used to spend the night in that house right there—Lucy Boatel's."

It's morning. We eat kerosene flavoured toast with peanut butter with a second cup of tea as we note the *GWAIHIR's* barometer reading (31.1 inches of mercury) and listen to the weather report.

Weather broadcasts heard at various places around the coast are not the same as we hear on Salt Spring. Most of them are read by real people as opposed to being a computer generated sequence of separate words. They also mention weather conditions at various ocean buoys, the locations of which we are not familiar. Since coming home I have discovered that the names of some of the places where these buoys are to be found are not known to the compilers of BC Gazette's 37,418 Place Names in BC. Farther south we encountered US weather reports issued at Cape Flattery. The voices used in these are entirely synthesised by Macintosh computers.

We found, incidentally, the discrepancy between official and *GWAIHIR's* barometer readings notwithstanding, that Environment Canada's weather projections and our observations of actual conditions were often at odds. In fact, on a couple of occasions the wind was from a direction opposite to

that predicted.

At this point I must make an editorial observation which may lead to my censure as a raving sexist. Weather reports and Coast Guard communications are sometimes undertaken by female persons. The audio frequency limitations inherent in VHF receivers and old men's ears, particularly under marginal conditions, make these voices markedly less understandable than the alternative. I was reminded of this a couple of nights ago as ABC News broadcast examples of conversations which take place between air traffic controllers and non-English speaking pilots. One would think, given the potential cost of misunderstandings, that elocution lessons would be mandatory for air traffic controllers, as it is for BC Ferries' terminal announcers.

GWAIHIR carries a large selection of charts covering our entire route and then some. Each chart has been prepared to a particular scale. Small scale ones (for example 1:14,000) show a lot of detail, while large scale ones (for example, 1:150,180) are good for an overview. Those who are familiar with topographic maps used for orienteering will recognise that 1:10,000 is a common scale. On such a map 1 centimetre on the map corresponds to 100 metres on the ground. Another scale in common use before the metric system was adopted was 1:63360. On these maps 1 inch on the map corresponds to 1 statute mile (equal to 8 furlongs, 5280 feet, 1760 yards, or 947 Roman paces (on which the mille passuum was based)) on the ground, i.e., there is logic in the scales used.

Fortunately, even though the British navy did the original charting of the BC coast, we have been spared the Admiralty Mile (which is 1.00064 nautical miles) and the league, as in 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea. Not a very plausible title for a book by the way, as this corresponds to 69,000 statute miles, or some 111,000 kilometres.

This table shows the various scales found on the nautical charts *GWAIHIR* carries, together with the ground distances in statute miles, nautical miles and kilometres represented by 1 inch and 1 cm. To illustrate: on a 1:40,000 scale, a chart distance of 1 inch represents one half a nautical mile. This seems a logical choice of scale; but I can't for the life of me figure out why a chart would be produced to a scale of for example, 1:77,918. Take a look at the table on the next page.

The fact that some charts show depths in fathoms, others in feet and

Scale 1:	14,000	36,493	40,000	52,280	52,860	58,088	60,000	77,511	77,918	90,000	150,180
1 in = x mi	0.221	0.576	0.631	0.825	0.834	0.917	0.947	1.223	1.230	1.420	2.370
1 in = x nm	0.192	0.500	0.549	0.717	0.725	0.797	0.823	1.063	1.069	1.234	2.060
1 in = x km	0.356	0.927	1.016	1.328	1.343	1.476	1.525	1.970	1.980	2.287	3.816
1 cm = x mi	0.087	0.227	0.249	0.325	0.328	0.361	0.373	0.482	0.484	0.559	0.933
1 cm = x nm	0.076	0.197	0.216	0.282	0.285	0.314	0.324	0.419	0.421	0.486	0.811
1 cm = x km	0.140	0.365	0.400	0.523	0.529	0.581	0.600	0.775	0.779	0.900	1.502

yet others in metres I can live with; but the oddity of the horizontal scales chosen is annoying me. In September I shall make an expedition to the Hydrographic Division in Patricia Bay and become educated on these matters.

While ranting on about cartographically related matters, I observe that harbour speed restrictions in most places are invariably posted in nautical miles per hour. In Ganges Harbour we have given kilometres per hour greater prominence. This is presumably to flaunt our cultural independence in front of visitors from south of the border and their floating palaces from whom these signs are primarily intended to protect us.

Every morning at 07:45 is 'Sched Time' on *GWAIHIR*. 3.750 Megahertz, lower side band. Dick, you see, is a ham from way back. He talks to friends in Sidney and on Salt Spring. Those versed in electronics will be interested to know that the mast and rigging is made to resonate with radio energy through the use of a little black box of Dick's design.

We pass Brooks Peninsula, considered the second hazard of the trip and tie up to a buoy at Columbia Cove. The scenery is becoming more and more attractive. Spectacular mountains with snow covered tops and mist-wrapped logging scars.

Columbia Cove's buoys are such that one is better served by tying up along side them than hanging from the them in the usual manner. One of the other boats there drags its anchor overnight.

We spent a pleasant evening listening to sounds made by various sea creatures on the bottom under us through *GWAIHIR*'s hydrophone. How many yachts do you know of that are equipped with hydrophones? Not many, I'll bet.

A short walk from our anchorage is a magnificent beach which I recall visiting while on a kayak trip to these parts many years ago. At that time there were still glass net floats to be found. Now all flotsam is plastic. Aside

from the usual assortment of bleach and detergent containers, we find Japanese mineral water bottles, a container which once held *haarwasser* and also a plastic barrel for shipping apple juice concentrate of all things. Most interesting was an 8 foot cylinder of propane the valve of which I opened and let out many kilocalories worth of gas.

On the way back to the boat we see wolf tracks and bear scat. I'm glad Dick carries the flaregun on these excursions.

South of Brooks are Bunsby Islands. Idyllic.

Then there is Kyoquot and other places with names such as Naspati, Yule, Acous, Mahope, Checkalis, Malkscope, Ououkinsh, Hisnit, O'Leary, Aktis, Jurassic, Porriit, Gregoire, Tatchu, Kapoose, and Moos.

We drop anchor at Rugged Point and board *GWAIHIR*'s dinghy for a short exploration along the shore line. This craft is a Zodiac made in Mollineux, France. The plate on the transom informs me that despite its modest length and width, it is rated at 330 kg and has a capacity of 3 adults plus one child. I find it very difficult to understand where all these people would sit. This craft is really quite small and, I feel, precarious with just the two of us in it. While putting along minding our own business we are intercepted by a Coast Guard person who with textbook politeness enquires how we 'fellows' are doing. In deference to our years he also called me Sir. I'm finding this salutation increasingly annoying. Not his fault. But then we are informed that we are in breach of maritime safety regulations because *GWAIHIR*'s dinghy is not equipped with a 15 metre heaving line, flashlight and flares. Fortunately, as there are no cooking facilities in the dinghy, we are exempt from the requirement of carrying a fire extinguisher. My challenge to demonstrate how one might throw a line 50 feet from an inflatable of this size is declined.

Our next stop is Zaballos. This town was the centre for some gold strikes in

the 30s. We re-provision, have a shower, do the laundry. We also eat chocolate sundaes at the hotel restaurant. Such luxuries.

A couple of hours farther on we pass Esperanza where we re-fuel and, just a little later, pass now-abandoned Ceepeecee. Interesting name, no? The California Packing Company—later changed to Canadian Packing Company—ran a pilchard reduction operation here, producing fertiliser from salmon food. Dick worked as a radio opera-

tor there in 1938. Pointing to the creek that runs by, he observes that at that time there were so many salmon spawning there that you could practically walk across on their backs.

I ask how fish boats managed to navigate the narrow passages at night in the old days. They couldn't have had all these solar operated navigation lights. It turns out many of them were operational even then too—using carbide/acetylene flames.

We pass an enormous warehouse-like structure on a barge. What on Earth can it be? We speculate, but neither of us hit the mark—it's a logging helicopter repair hangar!

As we move south the visual impact of the hills changes. Where before there were logging scars, many hills are now bare with only patches of trees remaining here and there.

There are dozens and dozens of inlets to explore. The names are fascinating: Zuciarte, Tlupana, Vernaci, Verdia, San Rafael, Strange, Hisinit, Mooyau, Muchalat, Descubierto, Matute, Clotchman, Anton, Pretty Girl, Cateface, Matilda. There are a few active settlements. Most are abandoned.

Want to get a flavour of this part of the world? Board the coastal vessel *UCHUCK* in Gold River, spend the night in Kyoquot and return the following day. You'll pass through some of the most fascinating scenery around.

In keeping with our high standards of hygiene, I have decided to wash the dishes this week.

At the south end of Nootka Island is Friendly Cove. There was a large village here once named Yuqot. One family remains. It is a beautiful place with considerable historic importance.

We enter Hotsprings Cove. The place is crawling with visitors brought in from Tofino in high speed Zodiacs. The bay is chock-a-block with boats. A boardwalk leads from the dock to the actual hotsprings, about half an hour away. The sign tells us that water seeps

down 4 km and then is forced to the surface here, emerging at 50°C. The actual springs consist of three cracks in the rock, each 2' x 8' or less. The dozens of bodies trying to enjoy this bit of nature simultaneously makes for a less than relaxing setting. Been there. Done that.

At the dock is a boat, the *COURTNEY GIRL*, selling shrimp at \$1 per lb. Those who know me will recognise that I do not handle this kind of temptation well. These turned out to be factory reject shrimp because they were quite small, and therefore very time consuming to peel. But it only took an hour of intense effort to produce the main ingredient for a magnificent shrimp casserole. There were several pounds left over for breakfast.

Yanmar showed a greater than usual reluctance to start the following morning and we towed *GWAIHIR* to the Indian village across the bay, where we ran into Steve Charleson and his son Josh. A battery charger was located and while waiting for the batteries to recover from their efforts we sat around eating shrimp and learning about the conservation efforts of native fishery technicians. Incidentally, although each of the houses in this village seems to be equipped with TV satellite dishes and computers, they don't have telephones... using instead a particular VHF channel. One huge day-long conference call.

As we approach Tofino the water gets shallower and the swells more noticeable. There is constant fog. There are reefs and rocks everywhere. Micrologic, *GWAIHIR*'s GPS unit, is in constant use. Don't even think about navigating here without being really comfortable with your GPS unit and in possession of a small-scale chart.

We become aware that the number of crab traps is getting ridiculous. In some places they are thicker than in Ganges Harbour. Steve Charleson had commented on this. He pointed out that crab boats now routinely tend 300 or 400 traps whereas before they might have had 50. The landed catch of crab is about the same. These facts point to one thing: the crab populations are collapsing.

Getting into Tofino in the fog is not a task for the faint of heart, but we make it. Across the dock from us is a marvellous looking wooden fishboat called *BEOWULF*. It has unusually tall masts. I enquire from one of the locals why this is so and am told that a boat over 50 ft in length is required to fill the various requirements of the steamship inspection certificate. Sailing vessels are excepted, and these are defined

in terms of the height of their masts. Whether this story is true or not I do not know.

I ask one of the local fishers what he catches these days. The answer: "dog-fish."

As we left Tofino in the fog we ran into an ex-Saltspringer named Chris who works as a caretaker on an island owned by another Saltspringer. During the ensuing conversation we drifted around in the fog and became completely disoriented.

The backdrop for Ucluelet is a mountain that is completely denuded. Not a single tree has been left standing. The government dock has a sign which directs all vessels to moor with their bows facing out so as to make towing them easier in the case of fire. This regulation is not enforced.

We spend two nights here because we have decided that the cause of our problems might lie with the fuel injectors and there is a very good diesel mechanic here who was hard to track down, this being the weekend. As it turns out, the fuel injectors were not at fault. The second night we are invited to dinner on a boat from Victoria. Paul and Elizabeth turn out to be good company and we spend a pleasant evening chatting about common interests.

Just behind us is the *CANADIAN PRINCESS*, now used as a resort. When this vessel was a hydrographic survey ship, club member Jim Sinclair was a stoker on it.

The crossing from Ucluelet to Bamfield takes us through the Broken Islands. I had kayaked here on several occasions some years ago.

Bamfield was the terminus for an ocean cable that reaches all the way to Australia. Now it is the northern terminus for the West Coast Trail and there are a lot of tired hikers in the local hotel recovering from their efforts. The wharfinger is most anxious to do a good job, and he sends boaters landing their dinghies without PFDs back to get them. Good for him. The public washrooms are so far away that most potential customers give up and hide behind bushes.

The next leg of the trip is very long. There is only one possible stop, at Port San Juan, and apparently this is not a good place either. We had a brisk tailwind all day and we never saw the coast because of the fog until we made landfall just before dark.

Sooke Basin is a nightmare of sandbars, buoys, unrecognisable markers and crab traps. If you go and haven't been there before make sure you have a good harbour chart and

keep your wits about you. The government dock is the second one on the left. Just up the road from the dock is a monument to a Scots bio-contaminator named Grant who settled here in 1849 and planted the first broom in this area. The local marine store lends us a 1940s vintage battery charger to get us going in the morning.

From here we can practically smell Salt Spring and at 19:00 that night we tie up at *GWAIHIR*'s home dock.

An afterthought.

Although we did have the Genoa up once or twice, it is not realistic to say that we *sailed* around Vancouver Island. If I had the wherewithal to make regular return trips—and there is much unexplored territory left—I'd opt for the advantages of a power, as opposed to a sailing, vessel.

If you deduct the time we sat waiting for engine repairs, it took three weeks for this circumnavigation. This is much too short. As a first exposure I would suggest going in the opposite direction. At five knots we took two very long days from Bamfield to Salt Spring. Consider starting your explorations in Barclay Sound.

Post Script dated August 25th, 2000. This morning's National Post has an item on page A4. I quote in part: 'Port Alberni. Local officials are saying that the absence of hake off the west coast is a natural disaster.... Hake is a small dark-grey fish used to make artificial crab meat and fish sticks.... Fishermen cannot find the hake.'