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The Islands' Adventure Magazine

ISSUE #16 June-July, 2001

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Issue 16 June-July, 2001

Publisher/Managing Editor
Philip Stone

Assitant Editor
Ryan Stuart

Art Director
Sheahan Wilson

Associate Editors
Tanya Storr, Greg Shea

Feature Contributors
Andy Smith,
Harold E. Macy, Colin Dionne,
Rob Wood, Ryan Stuart,
Philip Stone

Photography
Greg Shea, Colin Dionne
Philip Stone, Don Serl

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Editorial & Advertising Inquiries to:
Wild Isle Magazine
P.O. Box 482, Heriot Bay, B.C. Canada V0P 1H0
Tel: 250 285-2234
Fax: 250 285-2236
eMail: wildisle@island.net
Web Site: www.wildisle.ca

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Next Deadline
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Adventure Resorts and Lodges,
Mountain biking @ Mt Washington

EDITORIAL



Just enough time to tap in a few words before laying this issue to bed and catching the ferry to head over to Gold River for the *Great Walk* weekend.

Sounds like this is the year to do it, what with the '*Blossoming Boot Festival*' in Gold River to kick things off the walk itself and associated celebrations. The people of these two coastal hamlets are to be congratulated for perservering through what must be a very difficult time with mill closures and the uncertainty that has brought.

Truly the *Great Walk* is a bright point in the calendar for Tahsis, Gold River, all the participants, entourages and of course the many organizations that benefit from the funds raised in sponsorships.

I feel something of 'road to Damascus' experience regarding the Great Walk. As an avid backcountry dweller the

idea of pounding 63.5 km of gravel has previously seemed more grate than great. But when the call went out from our local Quadra Daycare for a walker to help raise funds for their operations I felt a pang of guilt for my snobbery and realized that this is no mean feat. In fact I see now after several lengthy training walks that 63.5 km is going to be a damn long way and is certain to put some of those epic days in the mountains to shame.

So onward to the starting line tomorrow morning at 4 am, with Tahsis as the Holy Grail and 1,100 knights in Polar fleece armor (I hope not GoreTex™ armor!).

This issue I hope catches your eye in improved content and glistening with new energy. I have been joined by Ryan Stuart as mentioned last issue in bringing you *Wild Isle*. Ryan's enthusiasm for the magazine has enabled us to cover more ground than ever before, better serving our readers and advertisers. Look out in coming issues for more great reviews, community and business profiles and a whole host of new initiatives that we will be able to accomplish with extra hands on board.

Philip Stone

WILD ISLE

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FROM THE FIELD

COUSTEAU FILM FESTIVAL

Announcing OCEAN AWARENESS FESTIVAL 2001 in the Beautiful Comox Valley, Vancouver Island. This three day event will feature numerous speakers, a film presentation, dinner show and other water related activities. The proceeds from this years events are being donated to the Philippe Cousteau Foundation and Local Reef Enhancement Projects and Dive Mooring Buoys.

This years guest speakers include:

Alexandra Cousteau: Granddaughter to Jacques Yves Cousteau. Marty Snyderman: Skin Diver Magazine / National Geographic. Andrew Georgitsis: Presenting Expedition Britannic. Travis Swanson: Previewing 'Expedition Sixgill Shark'. Bill Coltart: Presenting 'Deep BC' into the Emeralds Seas.

The schedule is as follows:

July 6, 2001 7pm Film Presentations at the Sid Williams Theater July 7, 2001 FAM dives to Hornby Island and Campbell River (ONLY \$25 CAD and includes shuttle service)

July 7, 2001 6 pm Fundraising Dinner and Show

July 8, 2001 MORE FAM DIVES

Full packages including 2 nights hotel, theater ticket and dinner ticket are selling for only \$149 usd / \$199 CAD. At this point we are expecting the dinner show to sell out quickly so register today! Booth space is available for a minimum \$50 donation at the theater presentation.

For more information or to order registration forms please call toll free 1-877-800-3483 or (250)338-6829

North Island Tourism Market 'Untapped'

If Lynn Phillips, executive director of North Central Island Tourism Organization, accomplishes her goals, tourists and the dollars they bring will be a year round industry for north central Vancouver Island. Phillips just returned from Rendezvous-Canada, an international tourism industry show in Toronto, where she promoted tourism businesses between Knight Inlet, Sayward, Kyuquot, Gold River, Oyster River, the Discovery Islands and Campbell River.

"The operators (at Rendezvous) view everything as a new product up here," said Phillips. "This is an untapped market. We have inadequate infrastructure, we can't accommodate what will happen here."

The lack of transport for car-less people to access the hiking in Strathcona Provincial Park and the insufficient facilities to accommodate large cruise ship stop-overs, which she says will begin this year in Campbell River, are proof of the lack of infrastructure. Solving that problem is one of NCITO's goal and to that end, Phillips said, the north-central Island needs to become a year round tourism stop. She said conferences and specialty off season trips could fill the shoulder season vacancies.

Although, NCITO works hard to promote the area internationally, helping their member businesses market their product is also needed, said Phillips.

"The biggest thing we need to tell our members is that the guy next door is not the competition. It is the other destinations that are the competition."



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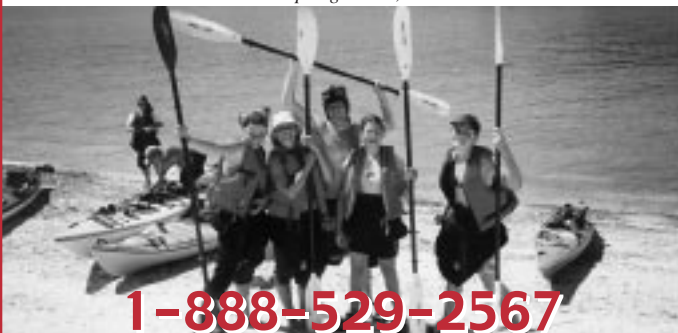
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Squamish Climbing Festival of Grande Proportions

A climbers' festival scheduled for this July 6, 7 and 8th is being organized in conjunction with the Squamish Rock Climbers Association. On Saturday July 7th there will be a barbeque and get together celebrating the 40th anniversary of the first ascent of the Grand Wall. The venue for the evening is Totem Hall (Squamish First Nation) located across from the Chief. Ed Cooper will be the guest of honor. He has recently confirmed he will be attending. As part of that evening we are planning to take a group photograph of the pioneer Squamish climbers. Anyone that has been involved in either a first ascent or first free ascent at Squamish will be invited to join in the photograph. So mark the 7th on your summer calendar and plan to attend. Please spread the word. A list of the Squamish pioneers will be circulated in the next few weeks. We will need help tracking everyone down. We estimate that the fixed cost for the event will be around \$2000. This includes travel expenses for Ed to come up from California. If you have any ideas how we could raise the money or have any other input please contact John Howe at 604 220 5105 or via email: jchfor@mountain-inter.net

HAPPENINGS

Every Sunday	Mountain Market - Arts and Craft Fair	Mt Washington
June 3	Vancouver Island Cross County Mtn. Bike race series #IV (250) 286-6340	Campbell River
June 9-24	Cadillac VanIsle 360 Yacht Race www.vanisle360.nisa.com	Nanaimo to Nanaimo
June 10	Edge to Edge Marathon (250) 726-4641	Ucluelet
June 10	Port Alice Rumble Mtn Rage Mtn. Bike (250)284-3391	Port Alice
June 17	Snowden Slug Slam Mtn. Bike, www.slugslam.com	Campbell River
June 22,23,24	Vancouver Island Paddlefest (250) 246-0754	Ladysmith
June 30	Ecowest Adventure RaceII	Mt. Washington
June 30 & July 1	Canada Day	Mt Washington
July 6, 7 & 8	Squamish Climbers Festival	Squamish
July 14	2nd Annual Beer Festival	Mt Washington
July 20	Eco Adventure Showcase	Mt Washington
July 21 & 22	Family Picnic and Glacier Paintings	Mt Washington
July 28	Mountain Luau	Mt Washington
August 3 - 6	Adrenalin Fest - Mountain Bike Clinics	Mt Washington
August 4 & 5	Strathcona Offroad Triathlon (250) 923-7911	Campbell River
August 11	3rd Annual Wine Festival	Mt Washington
August 16 - 19	Mountain Musicfest - Rock and Country Music	Mt Washington
August 18 & 19	12-hours of Fat Fun Mtn. Bike race (250) 286-6340	Campbell River
August 25 & 26	Mile High Arts Festival	
September 1	Full Moon Sunset Ride & Dinner	Mt Washington
September 22	Harvest Dinner	Mt Washington
October 6 - 8	Thanksgiving Turkey Sale	Mt Washington

GET LISTED

If you want to have your event in HAPPENINGS, send us a fax at (250) 285-2236 or email at wildisle@island.net with all the dirt.

VANISLE: Round the Island in 15 days

The third edition of the Cadillac VanIsle 360 Yacht race will set sail from Nanaimo on June 9. The 10 leg, 580 nautical mile, race circumnavigates Vancouver Island over 15 days. Sail boats will set sail north up the Strait of Georgia, through Johnstone Strait to Port Hardy around Cape Scott, south down the exposed outer coast to Victoria and back to Nanaimo for the race's finish on June 24.

There is no specified course to follow so the race is a tactical fight from port to port. The boats will stop in 10 ports over 12 days, a few sections are night sails. Ports of call include French Creek, Comox, Campbell River, Hardwicke Island, Telegraph Cove, Winter Harbour and Ucluelet. Check out the race specs www.vanisle360.nisa.com

Laid Back Paddling In Print

For those interested in kayaking, especially Vancouver Island kayaking, there's a new book fresh off the press. Written by Paul Grey and Gary Backlund, *Easykayaker—A guide to laid-back paddling* is chock full of useful kayak related information. In *Easykayaker*, Paul and Gary share their combined 75 years of local knowledge, local history, local launch sites and favourite paddling routes.

A companion website, www.easykayaker.com provides links to key information such as weather and tides as well as links to local accommodation and outfitters.

The book aimed at readers looking for information on paddling the mid-Vancouver Island area as well as parts of the West Coast. Written as a guide for beginner and intermediate level kayakers, it contains information on choosing adventure outfitters, motherships, renting and buying kayaks, equipment, safety, kayaking and camping etiquette, and a whole lot more.

Paul and Gary, both turning 50 this year, did extensive research into the demographics of local kayaking and found that the majority of sea kayakers are over 40 and self-described as beginner or intermediate level. Most paddle for moderate exercise, to enjoy our magnificent natural environment and perhaps to learn a little more about local flora and fauna. The section on kayaking with kids is based on the authors' experience in making kayaking fun for their own children plus a few words of wisdom from their children's viewpoint.

The second half of the book describes kayak routes and will provide the reader with an interesting and informative account of Backlund's and Grey's adventures. They document, in useful detail, day trips from 21 launch sites on eastern Vancouver Island plus longer trips to Jedediah Island as well as Nootka Sound and the Broken Group Islands off the West Coast.

The official book launch is at this year's Vancouver Island Paddlefest, which will be held at Transfer Beach in Ladysmith on June 22 - 24, 2001. *Easykayaker* retails for \$15.95 and is published by Greyswan Publications. Overall *Easykayaker* is a good resource and an interesting read if you enjoy kayaking or think you might want to give it a try. *Easykayaker* is available at outlets across Vancouver Island or you can email Paul and Gary at ekayaker@island.net to find a location near you.

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View Point

by
Andrew Smith

- the view is not always clear -

STRATHCONA DISTRICT BACKCOUNTRY UPDATE

The summer season will soon be upon us and with the unusually low snow-pack this year, the backcountry areas in our parks will probably be open earlier than normal. For this reason I wanted to give readers some updates concerning backcountry areas in the Strathcona District.

Backcountry "camping" fees are increasing to \$5.00 per person /per night (age 16 and older) wherever fees apply, including Cape Scott Park and specific areas within Strathcona Park. Marine sites on Strathcona Parks' Buttle Lake are also subject to the camping fee starting this year.

While backcountry fees are relatively new within the Strathcona District, they have been implemented in other parks around the province for a number of years. The basis for the fees, is the high cost of servicing and maintaining backcountry areas. Much like the vehicle accessible frontcountry campgrounds where fees are collected to help cover operational costs, backcountry areas require similar support and in fact are much more costly to maintain. Due to the broadness of areas and restricted access for easy patrolling and maintenance, operational costs are quite high.

The backcountry fee in most cases only supplements these high costs, falling well short of covering actual needs. Backcountry fees were implemented in both Strathcona and Cape Scott parks last year but district staff chose not to charge the full \$5.00 provincial standard, preferring instead to defer full implementation until 2001. It should also be realized that while these fees only apply to specific areas in Strathcona

and Cape Scott Parks at this time, there will undoubtedly be other parks and backcountry areas (i.e. some parks in Clayoquot Sound area) added to the list as recreational use increases, necessitating the need for more facilities and maintenance services.

In Cape Scott the fee applies to camping in all trail accessible areas and within 500 metres of all official park trails. This fee only applies to camping. There is no day use fee.

In Strathcona Park, the fees apply to the Forbidden Plateau core area, Bedwell Lake, Elk River/Landslide Lake and Buttle Lake areas. In the Buttle Lake area camping is restricted to the 5 designated sites at Rainbow Island, Mt. Titus, Phillips Creek and Wolf River and a new site on Upper Campbell Lake.

In the Forbidden Plateau core area, no random camping is allowed and visitors must use designated sites. In the Bedwell Lake area, campers must use designated sites if stopping anywhere prior to Little Jim Lake. Beyond Little Jim Lake up to Cream Lake and Price Creek, the fee still applies, but hikers may random camp in appropriate spots.

While other areas of the park may be open to random camping with no fees, we encourage visitors to minimize impacts on the backcountry areas by utilizing designated campsites where they exist and practicing No Trace Camping ethics in all situations. Fee collection vaults with instructions can be found at trailheads and boat launches. Parks Maintenance Contractors will be maintaining backcountry facilities and monitoring camp use.

While the trail up to Della Falls from Great Central Lake is not closed, due to facility damage we would prefer visitors reconsider using this trail. Should resources become available, repairs may be started this season.

For those who have been waiting to hike the Bedwell Lake trail in Strathcona Park, you will be happy to hear that a new bridge was constructed over Thelwood Creek last season and this season work will continue on repairs to damaged facilities. As a result the trail will be open this year (after toilets have been replaced/repared once snow is gone), but visitors should be aware there may be temporary closures in some areas depending on what work is being done.

Trail condition reports are updated and posted on the following website approximately every two weeks during the summer months - www.elp.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/explore/parkpgs/strathcn/updates

For more information about Strathcona District trail conditions or where fees apply, you can contact BC Parks, Black Creek office at (250) 337-2400.

If you have a point of view about fees or any other park related topic, please contact Andy Smith, BC Parks, Extension Officer at Tel: (250) 337-2405, Fax: 337-5695. E-mail:

Andy.Smith@gems6.gov.bc.ca or send letters to BC Parks, Strathcona District, 1812 Miracle Beach Drive, Black Creek, British Columbia, V9J 1K1.



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by Harold E. Macy

Taking a hit from the Nimpkish River, by Destiny River Adventures.

Hot. Summer is finally here. The

adventure begins when I get the idea to go whitewater river rafting. I noticed a new rafting company bus parked near the UBC Farm, so, I called them up, got the information and organized a group.

The Intrepid Crew: Judy, Josh, his best friend Andrew, myself, Shirley and Dave Green and two of their boys Jason and Byron, Adam, a young forester who has been helping me in our woodlot and his wife Trish, who is seven months into their first baby rounding out the crew, no pun intended.

The strong and capable guides: Jim and Jim, Jim's son Brandon, and his buddy Jason, both about 13. Hmm, two Jims, two Jasons.

The Run: The Nimpkish River, two hours north of Campbell River. The 22 kilometer section we will paddle is Class (III). Class (I) is a drift with a bamboo fishing pole and umbrella. Class (V) is sphincter-clenching and un-runnable. So the Nimpkish is an intermediate. When pressed for details, Jim admitted, with a wrinkling at the corners of his eyes, there were a couple of "drops and splashes".

The name of two-Jims company was Destiny River Adventures. It has a sort of quasi-spiritual sound to it, that is reassuring, as if "He" is watching over us. Or ominous as if two-Jims are really the legendary boatmen of the River Styx ferrying souls to The Other

...AND THE NIMPKISH ANSWERS WITH A FACE FULL OF WHITE WATER

Side. What the heck, I'd already plunked down a deposit so we go, right?

We all meet in Campbell River and board Destiny River Adventures bus, a 36 passenger school bus which was retired from Hollywood movies in the blockbuster film "Wrongfully Accused". The back third of the seats were removed for storage, a toilet, change room and an equipment rack holding all sizes of wetsuits, booties, PFD's (personal floatation devices or life jackets to us common terrestrials) and helmets(!). Noting the latter item caused deep introspection amongst certain members of crew who tried to envision a situation where one would even NEED a helmet.

Now in my opinion, the real Vancouver Island starts north of Campbell River when the road climbs up a low range of hills, past Roberts Lake and drops down into the Sayward Valley. When we cross the bridges over the Salmon and White River the Crew looks a bit more closely at the smooth surface and calm ripples. The guides don't even glance. A long grinding ascent out of Sayward, climbs up to cross the headwaters of the Tsitika, Adam and Eve Rivers (more spiritual

allusions) before descending into the watershed of the awesome Nimpkish.

Forests and lakes are the only highway billboards after Sayward. I have always loved the Nimpkish because of its scale. Wide and brawny, generating its own weather, deep in the granite and limestone breastbone of the

Island. Ringed by peaks rivaling the majesty of the Rockies, the landscape absorbs the harvested blocks of timber in its sweep, even welcoming the panorama opened up the young forests which my profession audaciously thinks we can "manage".

We leave the government pavement and head toward the river put-in point on a dusty gravel forestry road. Jim switches on a two-way radio to advise the logging traffic of our rather elephantine presence. It is simple mathematics: Our bus is eight feet wide, the loaded off-highway logging truck is 16 feet wide, the road is also 16 feet wide. These huge trucks are a bit like the Exxon Valdez in that they are long and heavy and do not react favourably to quick maneuvers or obstacles like raft buses. The land adjacent to the road is usually a drop to a canyon on one side and a rock face on the other. Hence, the need for deep and meaningful communication between the truckers and our dear Jim is not a figment of the '90s sensitive guy, but rather a necessity for survival. This was evident soon enough. After a bit of radio squawking, Jim eased the bus into a wide pullout. We

sat there, engine idling, Crew chatting. With a tornado of gravel and limestone dust, a CanFor truck hammered by, ladden with enough wood for three bungalows. It missed the bus, but seemed awfully close.

For the last few kilometers on the pavement and now going gravel, Darlene, wife of a Jim and partner in Destiny, went to the gear closet at the back of the bus and began handing out wetsuits and booties. The more modest members of the Intrepid Crew stood patiently swaying in the aisle, waiting for the change room, looking all the while, like some chic mobile boutique where neoprene in basic black with accents is simply "in" this season. The rest of us tugged, pulled and insinuated our bodies into our new membranes leaning over the seats.

By this time we had reached the launch spot, and clambered out of the bus. While the guides unloaded the boats, we stood around like a pod of bewildered seals. Soon enough Jim had gathered us "Beside the River" for a skill and safety drill and to assign boats. He breezily informed us of all the possible mayhem awaiting us. He confided that he is required by law to tell us all this. But there was that little twinkle in his eye again. Darlene came around and cinched up or PFD's until our eyes bulged. You'll want them tight, she assured us, then walked away to drive the bus to the lake and our paddling terminus, leaving the WHY lingering in the air like the powder dust from the road.

Jim 1, Dave Shirley, Judy, the son and friend of Great Guide Jim, Byron, Andrew and I were one boat. Josh, Jason, Adam and Trish were in the larger other raft with Jim 2 on the sweep oars—with the groceries too, I made note.

We eased into the current and began to practice paddling in response to Jim's commands. Left side forward, right back, all forward, all back and combinations thereof. Once we reviewed where the right and left sides of the boat were for those slow of learning, we moved into the centre and fastest water.

A dyslexic drunken water spider would've had more grace than our initial 8-legged paddle. However, we soon picked up the rhythm and listened to Jim's lore and continued lessons in raftcraft. Dave and I were the bow paddlers, and as such got several facefuls when we hit the first set of rapids. "A little warm up series," Jim said.

The river became mesmerizing. The panicky race of the merganser on still section and eagles aplenty. I counted two of the four nests Jim 1 challenged us to find. We began to experience the little drips and splashes Jim 1 had told us about. Before each technical section, Jim 1 would explain in great detail the choreography of the fluid tango between the fickle hydraulics of the watershed compressed and frustrated by legdes, house-sized boulders and rock walls. He'd go through what he

expected of us, his engines. All forward, then left back and right forward, then all back.

And then we are attacked by the other boat.

Wearing a wetsuit, helmet and PFD gives one the sense of invulnerability. Each boat was armed with hand-powered water cannons and, for close action, the bailing buckets and paddles. The boats drift alongside and the broadside salvo's commence. This brief encounter got our minds loosened and temporarily distracted from what awaited ahead. Jim 1 told us of the Slot, Tubesucker, Haystack and Iron Mine each a feature worthy of a name.

Imagine a huge landscape—hundreds of thousands of hectares—ringed by mountains holding a record snowpack from the winter before, with hundreds of meltwater rivulets joining to form creeks which meet and merge,

We paddle like fools and drop weightlessly into the maelstrom.

tumbling ever downward. The creeks stop in dozens of lakes, and wetlands, where cutthroat suck bugs and hungry bears root for tubers and roots. The Nimpkish takes all the offerings and shoulders them towards the awaiting sea. All this brash energy thunders down the riverbed, scouring out centuries old river banks, shifting hundreds of tonnes of gravel and sand around the clock, unbridled and headstrong.

From a geological perspective, Vancouver Island is in a squeeze play. The North Pacific tectonic plate is like an unwanted drunk trying to make conversation. It leans against the Island and shoves it against the unbudging posterior of the Continental Plate, who, being very prim and stodgy, sniffs volcanically and ignores the lout. Caught in the middle, the Island holds up its basaltic shoulders, wrinkles its limestone brow and emits little sighs of around 4.7 on the Richter scale.

One sigh created the Slot where all the force of the upper Nimpkish is squeezed between two sheer walls. The juice gets angry

and builds all sorts of aqueducture—pillows, stacks, and waves everyway but Sunday. We paddle like fools and drop weightlessly into the maelstrom. Up and over a huge wave, the wall looms, we turn diagonal and shoot through. Following the drop is a series of bouncy, crashing haystacks which drench us, head to foot but we manage. Right side back, left forward and we slip into the ever dependable back eddy to watch the other boat pound through.

Not far below, we pull into the shore for lunch. Fuel is definitely needed. We turn over our boat, empty the water, set out the food, open the coolers. Relax. Watch the emerald crystal-clear water flowing over the smooth rock, currents boiling, hums of water burp to the surface and rotate downstream. Gazillion gallons a minute rushes by in such a big hurry as if there is a performance down at the tidewater and seating is first-come.

After a big lunch, we insinuate ourselves back in to the PFD's and push off from shore. Before running the next rapids, we put Judy up in the very bow, in the "Princess Seat," between Davie and I, where there is the maximum thrill and waves. Slamming through the troughs and hissing crests, Judy gets several facefuls of pure Nimpkish. Jim 1 assures us the river is "twice as warm as when we started the season. It is up to EIGHT degrees Celsius."

The headwind picks up as we approach the lake. The indomitable current begins to get piled up by the wind gusts and forms three-foot waves, foam blowing off the top in long streamers. The raft climbs the front, breaks through the crest in an explosion of spray and plunges deep into the trough. Again and again as we claw our way around a gravel spit. By now we have been paddling steadily for four hours and my elbows and shoulders cry for a rest.

Once we are well into the lake, Captain Bligh gives us the long-awaited order to cease paddling. He pulls out two industrial-strength trash bags from his pack and has each pair of galley slaves slop one over their paddles and hold them upright and taut. Viola, we are sailing downwind at a fair clip.

The bus awaits at an old logging wharf. We stumble out of the boats, help carry them up to the bus and have another snack. Walking on wobbly sea-legs, we stretch and loosen cramped muscles. Onto the bus for the ride back to town, the Intrepid Crew is much quieter and more subdued than the mornings adventurers. As we retrace our route, several of us nod off in various positions of contortionism.

Back in Campbell River, we give our appreciation to the guides and helpers, express our desires to do it again on steeper water and head home. The next day, my knuckles were dragging but I relived the escapade to whoever would listen.



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www.wildisle.ca/magazine/thisissue/16Jun-Jul01/1610.html



*Joe Bajan high
on a winter attempt on Mt. Waddington, by
Don Serl.*

An ear splitting crack rocked all of Joe Bajan's body. Blood shot through his veins. Adrenaline sharpened all his senses. It's not a sound one wants to hear high on the on South face of Mt. Waddington, or anywhere in the mountains for that matter. Joe and Don Serl sat exposed on a 55 degree snow slope trying to make that decision all climbers hate to make – turn back or press on. With that crack the decision was meaningless, their lives were in danger.

Joe looked around expecting to see the entire snow slope they sat on slide off the face of the mountain. Nothing moved, the snow was still. "My next thought was that the headwall above us had cracked off and was heading our way," he says. Joe peered up toward the headwall, expecting a shower of rocks and boulders that would surely kill him. He said he

**My next thought was
that the headwall above us
had cracked off and was
heading our way...**

JOE BAJAN

His motivations may change but his goal remains the same – enjoy the adventure.

looked because if you are going to die, "you might as well see it coming." Nothing came. His heart rate was slowing down and then a CF-18 fighter plane raced by.

There is an air force training space near Mt. Waddington and the crack was a plane breaking the sound barrier on its trip home!

Joe and Don retreated after their blood pressure dropped, leaving the summit for another day. They had been trying to do the first winter ascent of Waddington. It was the kind of expedition, remote and challenging, that still fuels Joe's passion for the mountains. Although, Joe can't pin down any one motivation for why he does the trips he does, there is no question Joe loves adventures, and he has enjoyed some amazing ones.

Joe's adventurous spirit was sparked on an Outward Bound skiing and climbing course during the winter of 1971-1972, when he was 16.

"It was the toughest course I have ever done, the weather was atrocious. It was a hard intro to the mountains," but a good one. He learnt a lot about winter camping and the cold and quiet wilderness sparked his passion for the mountains. He did another Outward Bound course that winter and joined the Island Mountain Ramblers that summer. With the Ramblers, Joe summited his first peak, Elkhorn and was hooked on mountaineering and the mountains of Strathcona Provincial Park.

"Topping out on Elkhorn and looking south at all the peaks of Strathcona, it's a buzz. What a sight it is, you can see the ocean on both coasts. It's a real kick going up there." From the top of Elkhorn one of the peaks Joe could see was Mount Colonel Foster. That would be his next summit and one that he has returned to over and over ever since. On those first few trips Joe met two men, both older than him, that would be his mentors, friends and climbing partners, Mike Walsh and Ralph Hutchisson.

Joe's climbing ability improved quickly, which he says is from climbing with people like Mike Walsh. Joe believes that if Walsh had kept climbing he would have been a super star climber, one of Canada's best. Joe says it was his "audacity and stamina" as well as a competitive streak that made Mike great. And it was young ignorance that allowed Joe to follow Mike up things that he shakes his head at in retrospect.

"On Mt. Arrowsmith there is a ice pitch we called 'Sunday Stroll', because we did it on Sundays." Mike had all the gear and was leading up to the base of the climb, one ice axe in hand

and the rest of the gear in the pack on his back. Instead of stopping and putting on all the gear at the base of the climb Mike started cutting steps. "He was cutting steps and hand holds up this ice that was getting thin, steeper and mankier. It was true ice climbing and he is chopping steps above his head. We got about half way up

and he move aside and says 'you finish it off.'" Joe lead the rest of the climb, both of them were unroped and there was no protection.

Joe went back a few years ago and said, "it was almost

scarey that we did it. I didn't know any better when I was young and he was my teacher."

With Mike and Ralph, Joe was soon attempting international climbing adventures. In 1975 Joe bought a VW van and the three of them flew to Germany, picked it up at the VW factory and began an odyssey through Europe and the Middle East to Afghanistan. Joe remembers that trip as his greatest adventure. "Your first big adventure is kind of like your first girlfriend, you never forget it."

The trip was memorable for reasons beyond the climbing. They were some of the last westerners to freely travel through the Iran and Afghanistan. They saw things that no westerner will ever see again. "When we left Iran, we had this feeling like the place was going to blow up. Eighteen months later it did." In Afghanistan the three men saw the now destroyed world's largest buddha's, Joe even has photos. It was adventures like Afghanistan that motivated Joe to travel not just for the climbing but for the experiences that went along with it.

Even his most memorable climb is memorable for much more than just the climbing. While climbing Tyrahu in Peru, Joe enjoyed an incredible bivy 100 feet below the summit.

He put up the first route on the north face of Tyrahu, which is one of the classic peaks of the Andes. From start to finish the entire expedition was difficult. Just getting to the mountain was an expedition, there were cliffs that had to be ascended five minutes from base camp, the jumbled icefield after the cliffs rival Everest's Kumbhu Icefall and the actual climbing, 5.9 on granite and ice with crampons and a full pack, at altitude to boot, was some of the hardest Joe ever did. But what Joe remembers most of the experience is the surreal night he spent 100 feet below the summit. "The mountain sits on the watershed, one side drains into the Amazon and the Pacific, the other into the Atlantic. We spent the night watching lightning strikes over the rainforest, and we watched the most beautiful sunrise ever."



Joe Bajan and son Adam, enjoying the views on the summit of Mt. Colonel Foster.

Joe loved to travel and climb, but he always returned to the mountains in his own backyard.

The island is an "unknown jewel," he says. "In the Andes you run into more people than you do here." Joe considers Colonel Foster his backyard. He has climbed it enough times that he probably knows it as well as his backyard.

The Dirrettissima is Joe and Ross Nichol's line up a prominent gully to the main summit of the Island's own Mt Colonel Foster. It was the first winter ascent of the mountain, motivated by competition. Doug Scott and Rob Wood, both prominent climbers at that time were planning on doing the same route to claim the first winter ascent as their own. But Joe was not keen on having a non-Islander holding that title. He snaked Scott and Wood, climbing the 70 degree ice route to the main summit.

Joe's competitive edge has been one motivation for his climbing, but his motivations are as numerous as his many adventures. He started climbing because it was "different" and because he loved the feeling of being alone and self sufficient. Today he climbs for different reasons. Since his son Adam was born, Joe has been taking him to the mountains. At first on his back but soon Adam was scaling the peaks as Joe's partner. "I took him up Elkhorn when he was nine and Colonel Foster when he was 12."

Joe valued the friendships he made in the mountains with his climbing partners and he is motivated to gain the same friendship with his son. "I have two goals with my son. One is that he is a good human being. The other is that I want to be as good a friend with my son as I was with Ralph." Ralph Hutchison is 26 years older than Joe but they climbed as equals for 30 years. Ralph, now 71, still gets out and climbs.

Despite the few close calls father and son have had while pursuing peaks Joe and Adam have always pulled through, under threat of Joe's wife killing him if anything happened to Adam. Joe doesn't just want a father-son relationship, he wants a personal one as well. "Friendships in the mountains are one of the cherished things in life."

At 16, Adam is the same age as Joe was when he started climbing. Joe says that more and more Adam is a partner and friend on their adventures, not just his son.

With their developing relationship Joe and Adam have developed new motivations. They are exploring the mountains of the Island. It is a rediscovery of peaks that Joe hasn't visited for years, and for Adam it is discovering the adventures that have kept his father climbing for 30 years – remote, pristine wilderness that still holds potential for new routes and new adventures.

"There are a few routes on the Island that still haven't been done," says Joe. "I plan on doing one of them."

Whatever that route may be it will surely be an adventure of Joe Bajan proportions.

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The Golden Hinde

WILD ISLE Route Guide



South East Couloir

Photos: Above- Golden Hinde east aspect from Mt Washington, February, Below- Golden Hinde north aspect from The Comb, October, Bottom Right- Golden Hinde north west aspect from North Glacier, October. Philip Stone.

Quick Facts

Elevation: 2200m/7219 ft - Vancouver Island's highest peak.

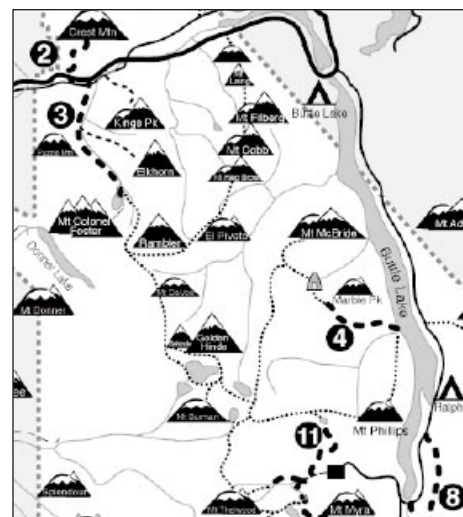
Map: 92F/12, Grid ref: 0104

Standard route: South East Couloir via Burman Lake, approach either via Phillips Ridge from Westmin-Boliden, Marble Meadows Trail from Buttle Lake (boat access) or Elk River Trail from Highway 28 - Gold River.

First Ascent: E. Anderson, W.R. Kent, W.W. Urquhart, 1913 or 14

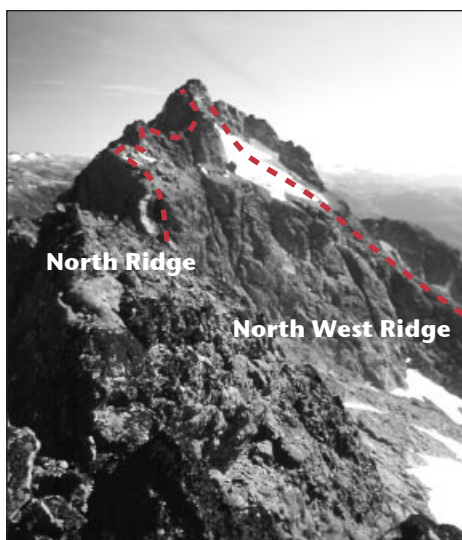
First Winter Ascent: R. Sliker, C. Barner, P. Stone February 1993

Named for: Sir Francis Drake's ship, of the same name, in which he sailed along B.C.'s coast in 1579. Originally called the "Roosters Comb" for it's appearance from the east.



Approaches to the Golden Hinde.

- 11- Phillips Ridge Trail
- 4- Marble Meadows Trail
- 3- Elk River Trail



North Ridge

North West Ridge

Climbing Routes

Summer

South East Couloir: 4th class 250m (II), Anderson, Kent, Urquhart 1913 or '14.

South Face: up to 5.4 (5 pitches) 300m (II) Sanford et al 1985

West Ridge: 4th class 500m (II) Davis, Foan, Gibson, Lund 1969

West Face: 4th class 300m (II) Rutter, Smith, Hunter 1976

North West Ridge: 4th class 400m (II) FRA: Roberts 1993

North Ridge: up to 5.9 300m (III) Bajan, McEwan 1970's

Winter

South East Couloir: AI 2 250m (II) Barner, Sliker, Stone 1993



The Golden Hinde

N Ridge

NW Ridge

W Ridge

W Face

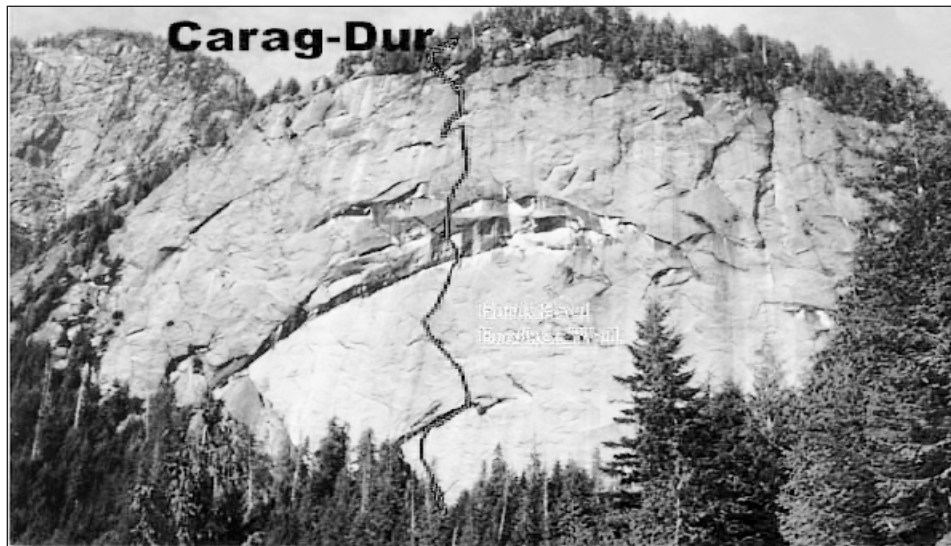
Powell River's **Big Walls**

THE ELDRED VALLEY IS HOME TO SOME OF THE LARGEST GRANITE FACES IN NORTH AMERICA. COLIN DIONNE GIVES US A MINI GUIDE TO THE SOME NEW TEST PIECES AND SOME OLD CLASSICS.

Powell River's Eldred Valley contains an extensive array of granite big walls that easily rival Yosemite. The area is easily accessed via two wheel drive vehicle (high clearance) and should appeal to any climber with an exploratory bent. Several routes have been put up ranging in difficulty from III/5.9 to VI/5.11/A4+. 1999 saw the completion of three new routes:

Delusional Reality (III 5.9+) This route is an enjoyable outing involving 12 pitches of moderate cracks and slabs on the right-hand buttress of the formation Psyche Slab. As a party from Courtenay discovered the hard way, bring two ropes! Pitches 1-6 were first climbed by Michelle Thibeault and Colin Dionne in 1996. The final 6 pitches being climbed by Christie Lepitre and Colin Dionne in 1999. The 1999 addition to the route is known as Infectious Grooves. Big Fun!

Funk Soul Brother Wall (VI 5.7/A4+) Matt Maddaloni and John Millar put up this twelve pitch aid route over eight days on the formation Carag-Dur. Carag-Dur, although it is among the smaller walls in the valley, it easily rivals The Chief. Any party attempting this route should remember to bring at least 40 heads and 25 bird beaks. Good Luck.



On the Virg. (IV 5.9+) Aaron Black, Victor Ting, Kris Wild & Colin Dionne plucked this late season gem in October. Ten pitches of exceptionally clean rock lead to the alpine summit of the isolated dome Amon Rudh. A three hour deactivated road hike is the walls greatest defense. If you want an exceptional wilderness experience this wall is for you.

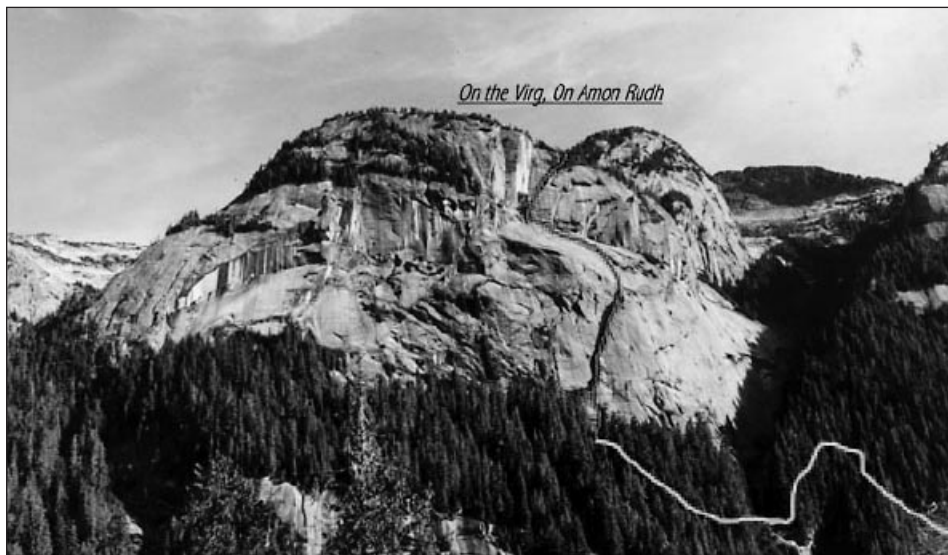
Other Eldred classics from the stone age include:

Psychopath (III 5.10) The first route in the valley put up by Rob and Casey Richards, Lisa Padgett, and John Hagen in 1988 on Psyche Slab. This ten-pitch mega-classic is known for its traditional aesthetic appeal. It has no bolts, fixed anchors or other blemishes. If you plan on retreating I hope you're rich.

Mainline (VI 5.11/A4+) The classic first ascent of the formation The West Main Wall. This 18 pitch mixed aid/free project was completed capsule style by Rob Richards and Colin Dionne in 1993, following an epic retreat in 1992. The epitome of good style this hard core route still awaits a repeat. Only eighteen bolts were used many of them quarter inchers. Definitely not a route for the faint of heart!

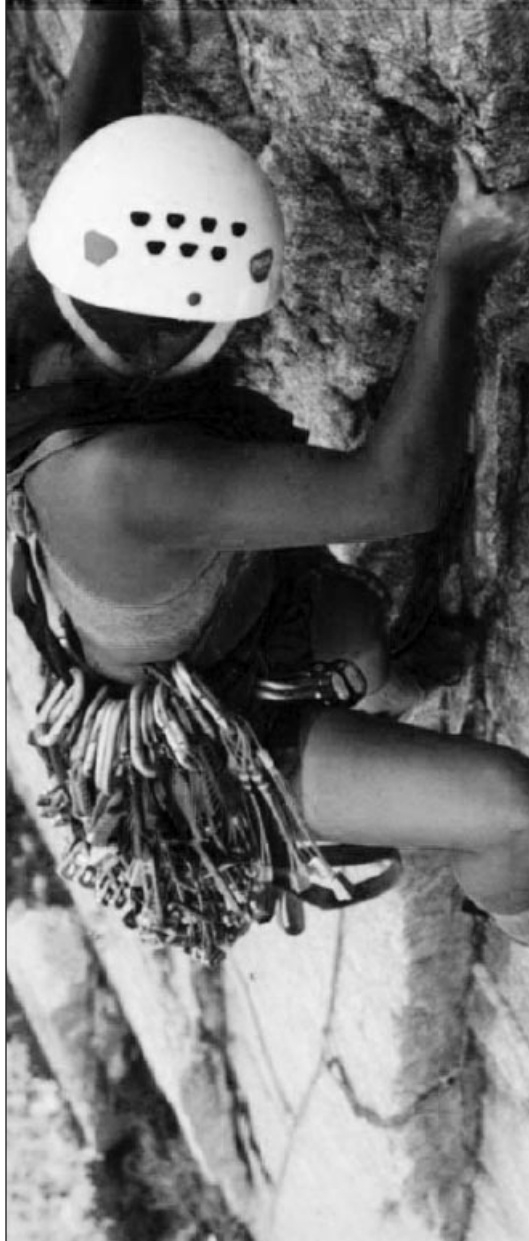
Sanitarium (III 5.9+) Michelle Thibeault and Colin Dionne put up this ten pitch trad slab route in 1995 to facilitate rappelling off of Psyche Slab. Ten full rope raps will get you to the ground after summiting on any of the Psyche Slab routes. This route is excellent to familiarize yourself with the valley.

In addition some bouldering has begun to develop along the road in the vicinity of the Eldred walls. Some exploration should reveal many boulders to the keen eyed. Also several trails lead to many alpine objectives. There is a virtually limitless supply of rock climbing hidden among the granite peaks surrounding the Eldred.



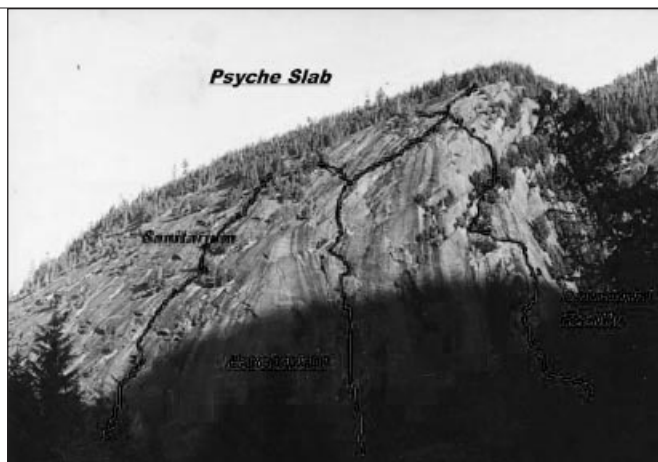
WILD ISLE

In Our Backyard



To reach the

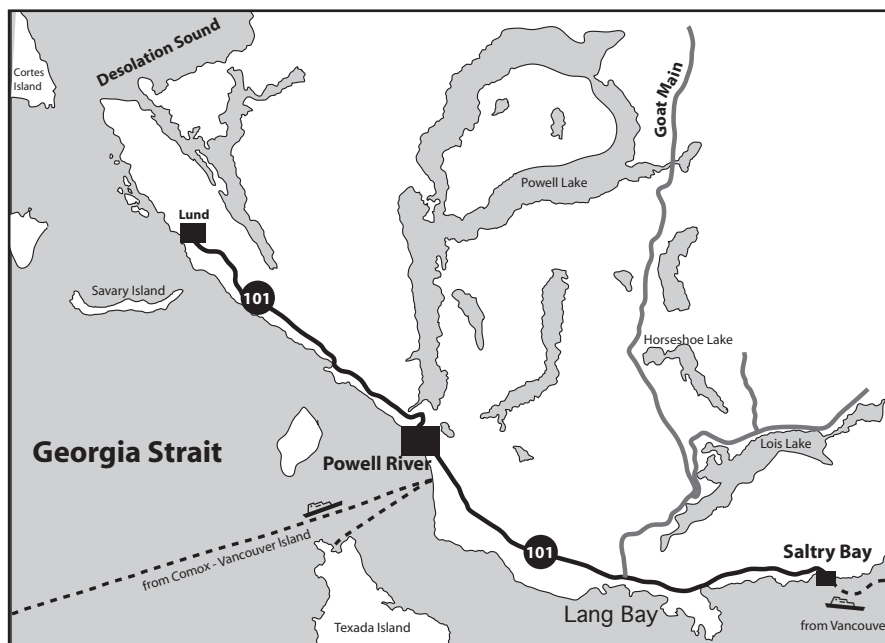
Eldred, travel via B.C. Ferries to Powell River, then go to Lang Bay, approximately 15 km south of the Westveiw ferry terminal, or if landing at Saltery Bay 10 km north. From Lang Bay store head about 1 km north to the Goat Lake main logging road. Follow the Goat main for 35 miles (logging rd signage is in miles in Powell River). After this pleasant two-hour drive you can't miss the walls. Access to Psyche Slab is from the pullout at mile 35. The West Main Wall trail starts at 36.5. The logging road is closed to the public from 5a.m. until 8p.m. Monday until Friday. Generally speaking traveling when the road is active should be avoided, as 100 tonne logging trucks pose a serious objective hazard.



Traveling up in early morning (before 6am) or down in the evening (after 6pm) is OK, however use extreme caution at all times on the logging road.

For more information, access or logistical support please contact Colin Dionne at Fjord Coast Expeditions in Powell River. Phone: (604) 487-0487 email: fce@prcn.org

turn to Granite p. 21...



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Having our cake...

Wild Isle file photo

If we could all just learn to get along British Columbia would have the greatest outdoor playground in the world. Rob Wood explains:

Inspired by a recent trip to Nepal, Australia and New Zealand I find myself taking a fresh look at some previously frustrated and disillusioned ideas about how we Vancouver Islanders could keep our Natural amenity and make a living from it as well.

First of all, on arriving home in this beautiful weather I am reminded that the BC Coast is one of the most beautiful places in the world, and we are dealing with a priceless asset. Sure the Himalayas are impressive, but it doesn't have the ocean. Australia has exotic and spectacularly diverse landscapes, but it doesn't have big mountains right by the ocean. New Zealand, especially the South Island comes close, it's a mini version of BC, complete with a wild, mountainous coastline and beautiful interior pastures but it is not as big, diverse or wild as BC. I have showed off our mountains to friends who have visited just about every mountain range in the world and they all agree that as far as natural beauty is concerned the BC coast is supreme.

Where it starts to get murky, however, is the man made environment. Here we have a long way to go. Even Nepal, one of the poorest countries in the world, has a hospitality infrastructure that puts ours to

shame. Last year 25,000 people visited the Everest area up one single trail. With an average stay of two weeks, that's 350,000 bed nights and over one million meals all of which were prepared with primitive equipment and materials carried up on

Being pro industry does not mean being anti tourism or vice versa.

human backs with no wheels or internal combustion engines. Buildings, though basic, are invariably beautiful. Meals though lacking in variety, are wholesome and nicely presented. Guides, porters and tea house staff are polite and cheerful. Sure they have problems but the overall experience for visitors is that the human element compliments the awesome natural beauty.

Both Australia and New Zealand have hospitality infrastructures that are well ahead of ours. They have store fronts in every town providing detailed information on a full spectrum of outdoor recreation activities

both public and commercial as well "as on the spot" bookings for transportation and accommodations. The ambience is upbeat and positive. You get on a bus and the driver introduces himself and proceeds to give informative and humorous commentary on the journey. When you get to your destination there is a whole range of accommodations, motels and lodges, which are complemented by backpackers' hostels, with self-help low budget facilities that are packed with young people from all over the world. At a gas station or in the restaurant, attendants ask you which trail you went up or which lake you fished.

Sure they have competing industrial and commercial pressures but somehow they seem to get along without being at each other's throats. Being pro industry does not mean being anti tourism or vice versa. Forty per cent of Tasmania is protected, not only by National Parks, but also by World Heritage Sites, and most of the rest of it is beautiful too. Their forest practices code was volunteered by the forest companies so they all have a commitment to it and it applies on private land as well as public. They have a much higher jobs per cubic

...and eating it too

meter ratio, impressive secondary value added wood products and their pulp mills do not stink. Towns and villages blend into the landscape and look like they belong and their fast ferries are exported all over the world.

So where does that leave us? Still polarised and squabbling amongst ourselves, while our natural amenity is reduced at every turn, sold out to technology and the corporate economy, along with many of our traditional jobs. Government bureaucracy gets in the way of local initiatives and the media pours fuel on the fires of confrontation. Surely it's time for local residents to work together to find creative compromises while respecting each others' interests. Examples from other countries prove there are ways to work the land and sea sustainably that create jobs while maintaining natural beauty. Just a slight shift from conventional polarised positions, a bit of give and take, could open up positive possibilities.

Adventure tourism is the one branch of the economy that is improving but it is held back by having to compete with the two already fiercely competitive demands for

land use, Parks and logging and though we

have oodles of superb territory there is very little access to it, and the relatively few trails and campgrounds are already getting overused. Unfortunately, neither side is prepared to give anything up, but there are some beautiful alpine areas above the working forests that are not actually in parks. Especially on the mainland coast, and some down the East side of Strathcona Park that are privately owned. Fitting between the protected wilderness and the working forest these areas could be used for tourism/recreation infrastructure not only for more hiking trails but also for a lot of activities such as horseback riding, snowmobiling, trout fishing, mountain biking, downhill skiing, heli skiing, heli hiking and motor boating that are not currently allowed in parks. Instead of 'deactivating' logging roads, couldn't commercial recreation help pay to keep them open, providing better access to remote alpine areas (eg. Mt. Cain) and help spread the load away from the few already heavily impacted areas?

So far the logging companies that own these lands have not seen the potential for making money, but increasing demand from cruise ships stopping at Campbell River, jumbo jets flying into Comox, and the rest of the world catching on to what Vancouver Island has to offer, it's possible they might see the light. If adventure tourists were seen by the logging (or aqua culture) industries as potential customers for their products and ambassadors for their good will (instead of threatening adversaries) it might be in their own best interest to cooperate and create a good impression at least in sensitive

areas such as transportation corridors

and places where visitors stay. Tour operators would be more inclined to encourage visitor's to take an interest in local industries allowing them to draw their own conclusions.

If Park budgets are being cut so much they can't afford to maintain trails, bridges and campgrounds, couldn't each park have its own fund so that visitors could donate direct support for the facility they are using (as they do in New Zealand) and commercial users help by paying more? For example, what about the Cross Vancouver Island sponsored race from Tofino up the Bedwell Valley through Strathcona Park to Buttle Lake and down to Campbell River. (The Cross New Zealand South Island race generates megabucks). If hiking or kayak campgrounds are reaching capacity, instead of limiting use why not have huts which accommodate more people with less impact and have commercial users help pay for them (again as they do in New Zealand).

As witnessed in Australia, new development in housing, commercial facilities and even industrial sites do not have to be ugly blights on the landscape. Surely if local residents could at least have a say, we could steer development towards answering the needs of community and respecting local environments while creating jobs and prosperity at the same time. Wouldn't it be great to have access to some of our prime timber so we could build characterful and inviting buildings for ourselves and for the tourists, to stay or shop in, while they feast on our supernatural cake?

- Rob Wood

Rob resides on Maurelle Island where together with wife Laurie he runs Ocean to Alpine wilderness adventures. Building design is the other passion Rob pursues when not exploring the hidden corners of the Coast Range.



WORKING



Above: M.V. Lady Rose pulls toward Bamfield Wild Isle File Photo

*Below: M.V. Uchuck III steams through the calm channels of Nootka Sound
Courtesy Nootka Sound Services*



The water ways around Vancouver Island are a wild and beautiful place that begs to be explored. But accessing this playground can be difficult. It often requires a long and nerve racking drive along working logging roads, wondering when the next loaded truck will come barreling head-on.

After surviving the drive a long sea kayak paddle may remain. Both the drive and the paddle take up precious holiday time that would be better spent relaxing.

Plying the waters of some of the inlets and islands around Vancouver Island are working freightboats. They carry supplies to remote logging camps, settlements and towns, and they provide a fast, reasonably priced and, most importantly, relaxing way of exploring the remote beaches, islands and inlets of Vancouver Island.

The freighters provide a unique way of beginning a sea kayak trip, beach hike or a more adventuresome cruise passed beautiful scenery.

Jump on board for the morning, the full day or for multi day trips. The options are as varied as the different water ways the boats work, some drop off passengers right on the edge of the open Pacific some explore raging tidal currents of long forgotten settlements, some will even launch boats right off the deck into the open waters.

These boats work the waters of the Inner Coast, Nootka Sound and Barkley Sound.

Because the boat are working while they cruise, itineraries and schedules are subject to changes and delays.

The M.V. Uchuck III

The bears face peered out of the grass, the whites of its eyes staring right at me. It seemed to be hiding, stalking its prey, with its fangs glowing from under the green cover. I couldn't control myself I had to move closer. As I walked through the grass I noticed an eagle, a whale and a wolf all hiding with the bear

The toppled remains of the totem pole lay partially hidden in the waist high grass. The bear's face growled menacingly from half way up the grounded pole. I was captivated by it and the other features carved into the weathered log. I wanted to stay and study the intricacies some more but the ships whistle blew. I knew my friends would be boarding. I ran to say good bye.

Three hours before, five of us had jumped onto the M.V. Uchuck III, a retired war ship, in the Gold River harbour. The boat laden with oil drums for fishing lodges, food goods for family homes, a canoe packed full of fishing gear and 30 passengers chugged down the Muchalat Inlet towards Friendly Cove. On the two hour and fifteen minute trip out to Friendly Cove the Uchuck stopped to unload the oil drums and load waste from fishing lodges and private homes. The passengers enjoyed the tables and small cafeteria below deck and the views of forested slopes and calm waters on deck.

Friendly Cove is a small outpost that that sits on a point overlooking the open ocean. The old native settlement is now home to one native family, two docks, three lighthouse keepers, a defunct but beautiful totem pole and a small church. The church doubles as a museum documenting the early history of Nootka Island.

In 1778 Captain James Cook hit land after sailing from Hawaii. He landed at Friendly Cove, where there was a large First Nations settlement. Cook traded with the the First Nations people for otter fur and so began the lucrative fur trade.

While the Nootka Sound area has a long history, it also has multi day coastal hikes, limitless sea kayaking, in the shelter of Nootka Sound or on the rugged, exposed west coast, salmon fishing and wildlife viewing opportunities.

From the dock at Friendly Cove the Nootka Island trail begins. The wild trail traverses beaches, hugs cliffs and meanders through old growth forests, tracing the west coast of the island.

Sea kayak adventures can be launched from the Uchuck, which can lower fully

FRIEGHT BOATS

loaded kayaks and kayakers from its deck with a crane. Or sea kayak trips can begin from the dock at Friendly Cove and travel in any direction, destinations could be white sand beaches or hidden coves, breaking waves or waterfalls.

The Uchuck has expanded its services this year which is good news for sea kayakers and cruisers.

The boat now continues from Friendly Cove north to Tahsis and on to other remote villages, logging camps and settlements. It even runs an overnight trip that goes as far as Kyuquot and Fair Harbour. These areas are even more remote than Nootka Sound and offer the chance to see sea otters, totem poles and native villages. This area also offers unlimited potential for sea kayakers, beach hikers and cruisers who just want to watch the west coast scenery pass from the comfort of the deck.

The Uchuck leaves from Gold River harbour, which is 100 kilometers west of Campbell River on Highway 28. For more information, schedules and reservations call (250)283-2325 or (250)283-2515 or on the web at www.mvuchuck.com



Marine Link

Want to go cruising, but don't want the ho-hum, same-old same-old that other cruise lines offer. The M.V. Aurora Explorer is a refitted landing craft that delivers cargo to many of the logging camps, fishing lodges, remote settlements, fish farms and villages on the mainland and islands of the Inside Passage. It passes tidal rapids, whales, grizzly bears, towering granite peaks, waterfalls falling into the ocean, old growth forests, rustic settlements and historic sites.

The Explorer has five separate routes, with cruising times ranging from three days and three nights to five days and five nights.

Trips leave from Menzies Bay just north of Campbell River and travel as far abroad as the Fraser River, Bute Inlet and the Queen Charlotte Strait.

For the passenger on board the trips provide a glimpse into the many characters that live and work along the route. With stops at logging camps and fish farms the passengers experience the working coast and day to day operations of a working freight boat.

There is a chance for passengers to meet inhabitants of small coastal settlements and view ancient First Nations villages or petroglyphs.

And of course there is always relaxing on deck or below watching the spectacular marine and mountain environments passing by.

Accommodations aboard the cargo boat is comfortable but not "luxurious." Meals are provided, and can be fresh seafood, traded or caught along the way.

Drop offs can sometimes be arranged. For more information and bookings call (250)286-3347 or at www.marinelinktours.com

Lady Rose Marine

Serving the Pacific Rim waters of Alberni Inlet, Barkley Sound and the Broken Islands and the communities of Bamfield and Ucluelet is Lady Rose Marine. They operate a small fleet of vessels notably the M.V. Lady Rose and M.V. Francis Barkley from their base in Port Alberni. The 105 ft Lady Rose holds a historic record being the first diesel powered vessel to ever cross the Atlantic Ocean which she did in 1937.

Now transporting passengers and freight down Alberni Inlet to Bamfield, Ucluelet and points between, a voyage on either vessel is a journey through history, scenery, wildlife and adventure.

From Bamfield trekkers can depart southward along the world renowned West Coast Trail, 73 km to Port Renfrew. In fact, unless you are obsessed with completing the WCT from end to end, heading in from Bamfield and hiking to Nitinat Narrows and then turning around and returning to Bamfield is arguably more interesting than continuing on to Port Renfrew. A trip to and fro on the Lady Rose with car parked in Port Alberni is a logistic delight!

Sea kayakers and cruisers can continue further out from Bamfield to the magical archipelago of the Broken Islands and Barkley Sound. The Lady Rose can transport kayaks or even offer rentals for the ultimate in convenience in exploring the Broken Group.

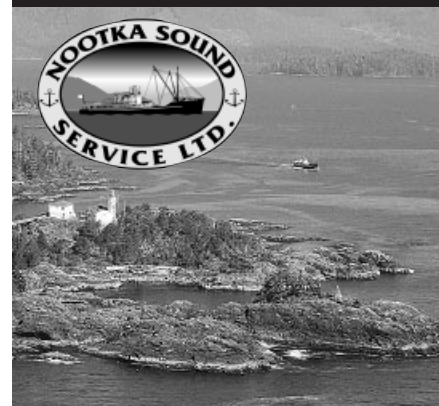
For more information and reservations, contact Lady Rose Marine in Port Alberni at 250 723-8313 or by fax to 250 723-8314 and on the world wide web point your browser to www.ladyrosemarine.com



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Aboard the MV Uchuck III



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July 7 to Sept. 15

Depart Gold River: 10:00 am / Arrive back in Gold River: 4:00 pm
Includes a 3 hour stop in Friendly Cove

WEDNESDAYS

July 4 to Sept. 12

Depart Gold River: 10:00 am / Arrive back in Gold River: 4:00 pm
Includes a 1 1/2 hour stop in Friendly Cove

Adults: \$40.00
Children 7 to 12: \$20.00
Children 6 and under: Free
Group Rates Available

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REVIEWS

Canadian online gear shopping



The only kind of shopping I like to do is gear shopping. Me walking into an outdoor store is like a kid walking into a candy store. I run around picking up everything. If anyone were to listen they would hear me say, "I want that. I want one of those. Oooh that looks nice."

Today I don't even have to leave home to get that feeling. The Internet is full of sites that sell outdoor clothing, gear and accessories all with a click of a mouse. But that doesn't mean they are all equal and it doesn't mean they all take Canadian dollars.

When one types in "outdoor gear" on their favourite search engine, hundreds of sites will be listed off with a variety of subjects. Unless the search engine is a Canadian site it is not likely any of those hundreds of hits will be Canadian.

Wild Isle has hunted through the Internet and found a handful of online sites that sell gear in Canadian dollars.

The sites were judged on ease of use, selection, general appearance, shipping cost and time, search engines and how easy it was to find things on the site.

Purchasing information wasn't reviewed because all the sites worked almost identically. They required shipping and billing information, payment information and an e-mail address. The only thing that varied was payment options which will be listed with each review. Help on each site is available through e-mail for most and a phone number on some. All the sites responded to their emails the next day with useful and informative help.

Pacific Trekking, www.pactrek.com

All 80 of the regularly priced items on this site were clothing as were the 40 clearance items. The site did not have a great selection but made up for it with really inexpensive prices. There was only one Gore-Tex jacket but it was \$200. The clearance items were even cheaper, a down jacket was selling for \$59.

The site was laid out simply. The items were separated into self explanatory categories, kids room, rain room, all weather, cold weather, sleep wear and clearance. There is no search

engine, but the site is so small it is not needed.

There is an index that lists all the products on the site. Information on individual products was brief but descriptive. More information is easily available through e-mail help. listed on every page. Shipping is \$7.50 and payment is Visa, Master Card or American Express. This site is a good spot to stop if you are looking for a bargain.

Hikers Haven, www.hikershaven.com

This site has a larger variety of items, but the selection is limited to gear used for hiking, and even that is questionable. The only rain gear available is yellow rubber rain wear, it is great for rainy days in the garden but too much like a greenhouse for hiking in. The gear is separated in to categories but the pictures to enter the categories are not representative of the gear for sale.

For the footwear icon, there is a light hiking/trail running shoe. I expected to find hiking boots and shoes but there is not a single shoe, boot, sandal or flip flop for sale. Instead the footwear department is insoles and water proofing products. There is no online help or search engine of any kind that I could find on the site. An Ask the Expert section is the closest thing to help I could find. Questions about different products and advice for trips can be received by e-mail. Shipping is \$7.95 - 19.95 depending on size of product.

Hikers Haven takes payment by Visa, Master Card or American Express.

Europebound, www.europebound.com

Gear and assessors for everything from hiking to camping to traveling can be found on Europebound's site. It is easy to use and looks good too. Everything is laid out in categories and there are at least 30 of those. Scrolling, going up and down on the screen, runs through all the items in each category, each comes complete with a description. More information can be accessed with a click on the picture, but there is not that much technical info. More information can be received, by e-mail, on any item. Selection is not a problem

on this site, there are 30 or more day packs to choose from. Icons at the bottom of every page return the user to the home page, last page and the main product page. The biggest drawback, no search engine. Europebound takes Visa, Master Card, American Express, money orders, Dinners Club card. Shipment takes 3 to 5 days and costs \$5.00.

Mountain Equipment Co-Op, www.mec.ca

With the launch of their site in March, MEC has dwarfed the other Canadian sites with their selection and diversity. This site is huge so it is a good thing the search engine works so well. Ambiguous searches like jacket, worked almost as well as specific searches, like model names. There are well over 1000 items on this site, which include just about everything that is in the catalogue or store, with the exception of boats. There are two ways of browsing the site, by products or by activity. With each there are helpful hints, like how to layer properly and more technical information like the essential gear for ski touring. There is also links to related products. The only drawback to this user friendly site is that membership, \$5.00, is required. Shipping is free with Canada Post, 3-12 days, or \$10.00 for courier delivery, 2-5 days. MEC takes Visa or Master Card.

Valhalla Pure www.valhalla-pure.com

Clothing is the easiest to find and access on Valhalla's site. But just like the store down the street there is quite a bit more. Climbing gear, packs, tents and sleeping bags are available, although selection is limited. Easy navigation makes using this site a breeze. There is an index of all the items on the site which can help searches and items are divided into simple categories, like tents, packs, etc. But finding what you are looking for if you are unsure where it would be categorized can be a pain. The search engine only works with brand or model names, Gore-Tex jacket, stove, tent and boot turned up no results.

Shipping costs \$8.50 - 12.00 and takes one to two weeks. Valhalla Pure only takes Visa.
- Ryan Stuart

Granite Playground access

...from Big Walls P. 15

To reach the climbs: Psyche Slab: Follow the Goat Lake mainline to the pullout at mile 35. Two trails lead to the slab from the vicinity of the pullout. To approach the left side of the wall walk about 75m up the road to where a faint trail leads across the ditch on the right hand side of the road. This trail is just before a left hand curve in the road. The trail heads very directly to the wall staying to the left of a small gully. It arrives at the base of Sanitarium. To approach the right side of the wall, walk approximately 100m down the road from the pullout at mile 35 to a trail just before the bridge across B-branch creek. This trail leads up to the center-right area of Psyche Slab in the vicinity of the Falkland Crisis and Psychopath. To reach Delusional Ceality, head into the gully to the east of the wall. Delusional starts at the bottom of the gully. A well worn bear trail traverses below the wall from the Sanitarium trail across the base of the wall intersecting the Psychopath trail, and heads up the gully to Delusional. Approach should take 15 minutes. To descend from the summit of Psyche Slab rap Sanitarium (two 55m ropes) or take the Gorilla-snot trail which follows the gully immediately behind and to the west of the summit area. Descending the Gorilla-snot trail may take as long as three hours.

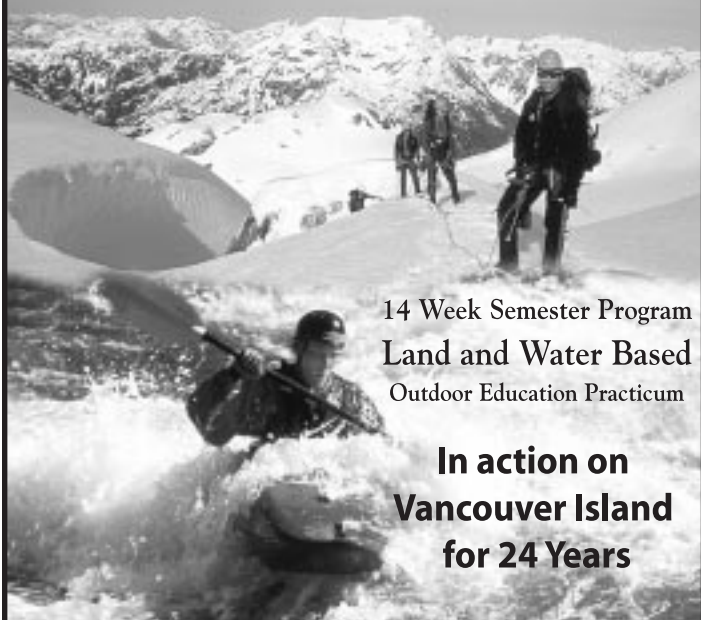
Carag-Dur: Park at mile 35.25 (not signed). You will know you are there because the road curves to the right and Carag-Dur is very prominent across the river. An old overgrown road heads down to the river at this location allowing a crossing of the Eldred with the help of a 30-foot extension ladder. Once across the river locate a seldom used, flagged trail, that leads up to the base of the wall below the Funk Soul Brother Wall. Some exploration for the trail will pay off, as some of the terrain below Carag-Dur is very gnarly. Approach takes about 1 ½ hours from the West Side of the river. To descend, follow the summit ridge down to the north until you reach the top of a prominent gully heading back to the south along the base of the wall. Thrash across the base of the wall until you reach the approach trail.

West Main Wall: At mile 36.5 a rough road leads down to a large clearing by the river. From the end of the clearing a faint trail leads about 30m into the bush, revealing a cable crossing the Eldred. From the opposite bank head down stream about 75m until you come out on an old road. This road forks after a short distance, go right. After about 300m the road forks again this time take the left (uphill fork). After some time you will come to another fork to the left, this fork can be difficult to spot, it is below the extreme right margin of the Mainer, if you walk past it the road will peter out quickly. The road should now be traversing below the wall from right to left. About 100m before the end of the road you will find tent-platforms amidst some large alder trees. A flagged route heads up through the logging slash and slide debris from this point dumping you at the base of the wall about 100m to the left of the Mainline. Approach takes about 2 ½ hours from the West Side of the river. To descend follow slabs and gully south from the summit, enter the forest on the south side of the drainage when practical. Continue down until it is possible to traverse the creek and logging slash back north to the road end landing on the approach. Allow a full day for the descent.

Amon Rudh: Follow the Goat Main to mile 40.2 then turn right on the D-branch turnoff. Follow D-branch to a major fork about a mile up from the mainline. Take the left fork, which leads across the bridge to the north side of the D-branch valley, continue up a long water-barred grade until a major gully stops further vehicular access. From your truck begin hiking up the road, after about ½ mile the road forks back to the west. Follow this deactivated spur to its terminus close to the east-end of Amon Rudh. Head up and left through the slash into the old growth forest, continue up and left until it is possible to traverse across to some large boulders in the forest, descend into the gully below the wall. A faint trail leads from the top of the major waterfall through the forest to the start of On the Virg. Approach takes about three hours. To descend rap On the Virg.



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