



Issue #7 Summer 1999

Free

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**Diving Race Rocks
Pilgrimage to 'Holy Cross Mtn'
On The Threshold in the Nuchatlitz**



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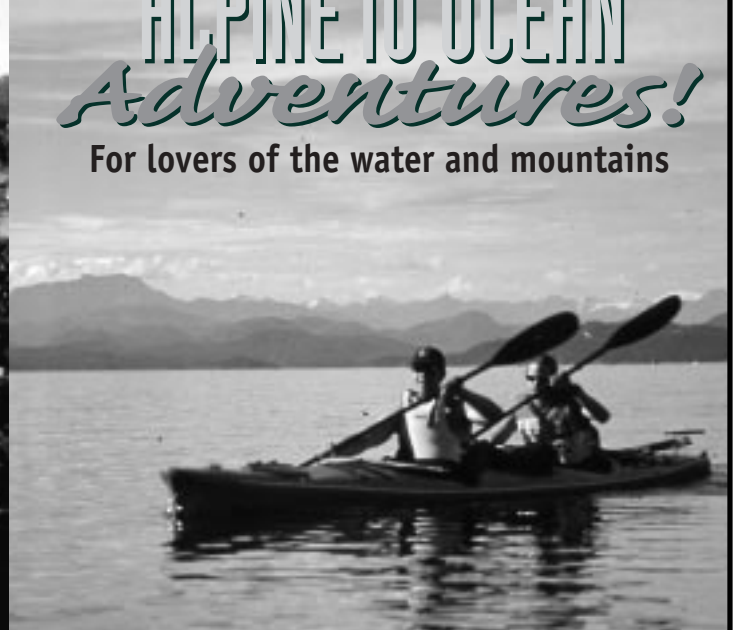


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CONTENTS



Cover: Sharon Taylor and Andrew Wright
paddling in the Nuchatlitz
Photo: Corrie Wright

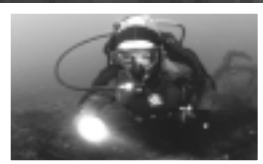
Contents: Mt Waddington and
the Franklin Glacier
Photo: Philip Stone



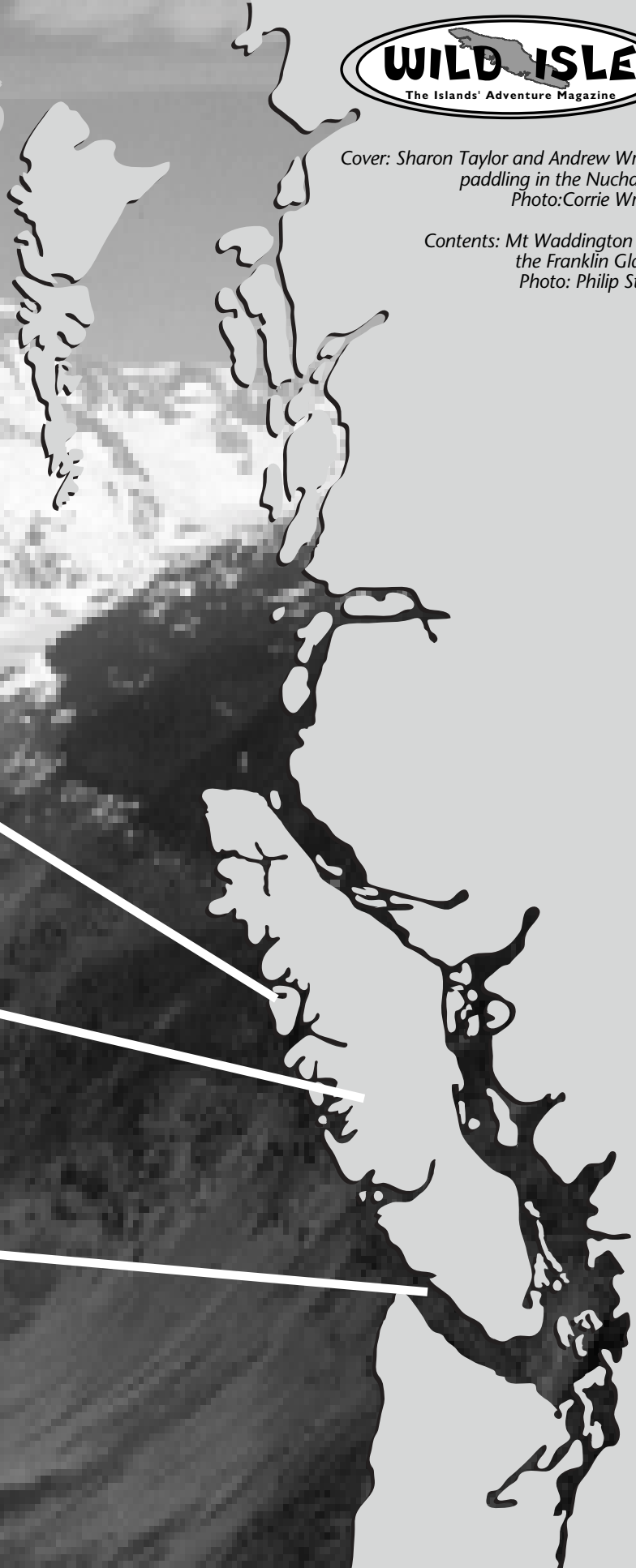
Nuchatlitz
p8



Mariner
p10



Race Rocks
p6





#6 Spring 1999

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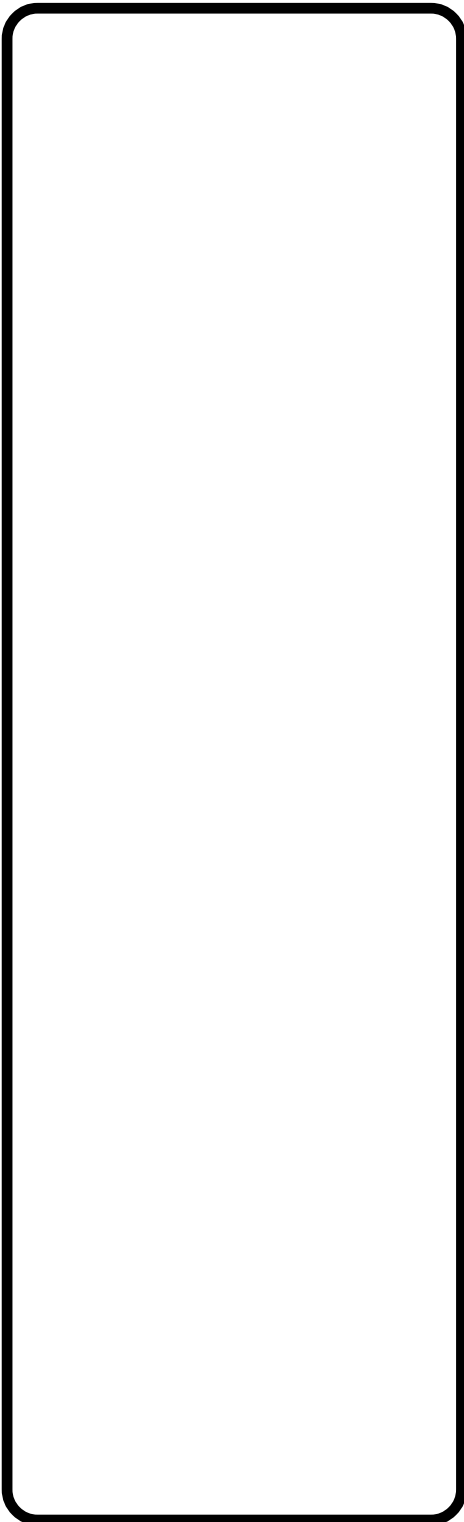
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Next Deadline,
for Fall Issue,
13th August 1999



ICA Folk Fest '99 Stands Tall in the City of Festivals.

Victoria has been called the "City of Festivals." Especially during the summer months, the city is alive with music, dance, and other arts events. The ICA Folk Fest is the paramount event of the Festival season. Folk Fest has always demonstrated a commitment to promoting local talent, but in recent years it has been attracting major international acts as well. International, traditional, folk, popular and modern styles sit side by side. FolkFest embodies the artistic spirit that transcends countries and borders. According to Jean McRae, Executive Director for the Inter-Cultural Association, "The spirit of the festival cannot be duplicated. Visitors to Victoria are struck with the diversity and richness of our cultural communities. There is an aura of discovery around this eight day event." Festival goers wander from a variety of great multi-cultural musical performances to the Food Fair, the Arts and Crafts Market, the ICA Beer Garden, and back again. In the words of Artistic Director Tracey Summers, the festival resembles "a great big global town fair."

This year, the main message that organizers want to stress to the public is "Keep the Festival Free!" Organizers are determined to preserve the free community-based nature of the festival. Just how do they propose to do this? "By delivering high quality musical acts, attracting huge numbers of people, and fundraising through beer gardens, and the sale of buttons and programs" says Production Coordinator Tyl Van Toorn. The other main resource for festival organizers is the large volunteer base. Volunteers put up posters, direct traffic, hand out information, and do just about everything that needs doing in order to ensure the success of the event. So there it is folks. Support your festival! For information on ways to get involved, call the Inter-Cultural Association at (250) 388-4728, or check out the festival homepage at www.island.net/~folkfest. For information about the ICA in general go to www.island.net/~ica. The dates of the festival are: June 27-July 4 at Ship's Point/ 11:30am-6:00pm community programming/ 7:00-9:30 professional acts. July 1-3 at Market Square/ 12:00pm-4:00pm, free community programming/ World Beat Dance Party 9:30pm-1:30am, gated shows.

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Working in partnership with BC Parks, 'SWI' inspires awareness, appreciation, and stewardship of the natural world through education and participation. To learn more about programs and volunteering opportunities

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View Point

Andrew Smith

The view is not always clear

It's that time of year again to start planning our summer activities such as hiking, biking, climbing and camping. Perhaps your recreational pursuits will take place in a Provincial Park or maybe not. However, wherever you go there's something you should always take with you. It is something which is easy to pack and weighs nothing, but is probably one of those most important items to accompany you anywhere in the world. What I am talking about is the -Leave No Trace (LNT)- ethics.

Ethics are not rules and regulations which you are forced to comply with or face the consequences. Instead, ethics are something you practice or do when no one is watching. Ethics come into play when, in the middle of nowhere with no one around, you stick that energy bar wrapper in your pocket rather than drop it on the ground. The latter of course would make you feel lousy and absolutely guilty. That feeling is not because the long arm of the law would reach down out of the sky and grab you. The feeling comes from within, where due to personal experience, education and life's circumstances, you have developed an inner passion to do what is right. After you strip away all the environmental protection measures such as , rules, laws, signage, brochures, formal education and physical facilities, it is ethics which are at the core of any successful protection initiative.

Realizing the importance of LNT ethics, BC Parks Strathcona district has made it a priority to promote

Seaward Kayaks Ltd. Celebrates its 10 year anniversary in 2000.

Seaward Kayaks Ltd. will bring in the millennium with a celebration of their tenth anniversary of manufacturing high quality composite touring kayaks. In the year 2000 the Canadian based manufacturer will introduce their tenth kayak model, will host a photography contest and will complete the set up of a manufacturing division.

The Legacy K2 (18' length, 29.5" beam, 15" depth) is perfect for paddlers who want a shorter, stable-touring double with a large hatch opening. This new K2 is ideally suited for day paddling or weekend to eight-day trips.

Seaward Kayaks is hosting a photography contest (June 15th to Oct. 15th, 1999). Any photos sent in with Seaward Kayaks present are eligible to win a Seaward Shirt, a mesh gear bag or a set of Kayak Car Top Carriers.

The rudder manufacturing division will be moving from Summerland, BC to the new Ladysmith, BC Location at the end of June 1999. for almost two years Seaward Kayaks has been manufacturing and distributing touring kayak components to quality orientated kayak builders.

For a tour of the Seaward Kayaks facility on Vancouver Island, BC, please call 800-595-9755 or email: seaward@seaside.net

the underlying principles of LNT. The district has aligned itself with the Leave No Trace movement in BC and United States and hopes to help educate group leaders and others interested in expanding the initiative internationally. BC Parks is not the lead agency and although the Canadian program has been developed and introduced by Paul Whitfield and Bruce Thomson, both long term Scout Leaders, it has always been their intention to train group leaders who can go on to teach others and have the program spread like a good virus. In April 1999, the Strathcona district hosted the first workshop on Vancouver Island targeting teachers and group leaders who may be using provincial parks for group field excursions. The interest was overwhelming and quite encouraging to see. However, the district has identified a need to reach more teachers due to numerous experiences where school groups lead by teachers have been ill prepared for their venture into the parks and left impacts behind when leaving. Just recently a large school group visited Forbidden Plateau in Strathcona Park and due to their lack of care and unpreparedness, left a rather unsanitary camp behind. Should these types of impacts continue, the agency may be forced to place more controls on park users. Certainly this is not the preferred route and BC Parks would much rather protect provincial parks relying more on personal ethics than the enforcement of regulations and restrictions.

Not to leave you hanging or wondering and without going into any great detail, here are the 7 key principles of LNT:

1. Plan ahead and prepare
2. Camp and travel on durable surfaces
3. Pack it in, pack it out
4. Properly dispose of what you cannot pack out
5. Leave what you find
6. Minimize use and impact of fires
7. minimize noise and visual intrusion

If you are interested in finding out more about the Leave No Trace Program or express a viewpoint concerning this issue please contact Andy Smith at: BC Parks, 1812 Miracle Beach Drive, Black Creek, B.C. V9J 1K1 Phone: (250) 337-2405, Fax (250) 337-5695, e-mail: asmith@prkparksvl.elp.gov.bc.ca

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THE RACES WILD

Words & pictures by Jett Britnell

Race Rocks is a forbidden-looking group of exposed, current-swept islets, situated just six kilometers off the southern tip of Vancouver Island, in the ever-cold emerald waters of Juan de Fuca Strait. Aptly named for the awesomely strong 4 to 10 knot rip tides that sweeps a perfect race around them, they are the stuff of legend. Unpredictable weather and violent seas have driven numerous ships aground here over the last century and tales abound of careless divers who were swept away by the treacherous tidal flow. Which begs the question, why are so many eager to dive here?

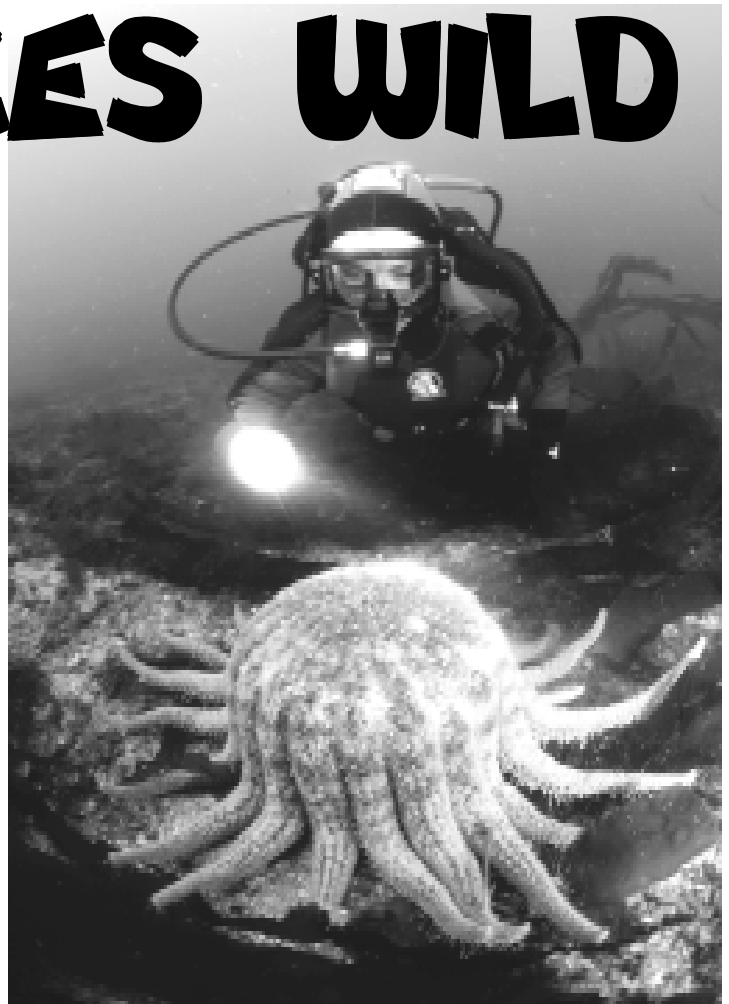
The answer is quite simple. Race Rocks is renowned for being the most exciting diving area on the whole southern half of Vancouver Island. If proper precautions are taken, it is perfectly safe to sport dive here. But, there's more. Race Rocks' nutrient-rich waters supports such a tremendously rich and unique diversity of marine life that it was declared an Ecological Reserve in 1980. Hence, these waters have experienced less abuse and degradation from the encroachment of humankind than other coastal regions.

A palette of natural wonder entices divers to brave Race Rocks' fast-flowing tidal waters. Places like West Race Wall are emblazoned with a flourishing array of marine invertebrates such as, yellow sulfur sponge, beige finger sponges, lacy basketstars, deep purple and bright pink hydrocorals, colonial ascidians, small clusters of pink soft corals, Puget Sound king crabs, purple, red and green sea urchins and over 65 species of hydroids. Anemones are equally plentiful here and include, painted teal anemones, crimson anemones, striped brooding anemones and sporadic patches of strawberry anemones. Schools of black rockfish, kelp greenlings, ling cod, sculpins and friendly wolf eels fearlessly pose for the camera.

Several hundred harbour seals live here throughout the year. Stellar sea lions, California sea lions and elephant seals also haul out on Race Rocks' guano-covered islets to bask in the sunshine. The sea lions begin to appear around September, their numbers growing steadily through October, with the population peaking to about 1,300 individuals by the end of October. Many will have departed by the end of December though there will still be a couple dozen hanging around during our visits in mid May and early June. Divers are often entertained underwater by frolicking seals and sea lions. Every now and then, transient Orca whales browbeat these shores to terrify and devour the beefy pinnipeds.

Race Rocks is a transition zone between the open ocean and the protected inner coastal waters of the Strait of Georgia and Puget Sound. This confluence contributes to the local marine environment's extraordinary intensity and complex variation. Underwater visibility is often exceptional with water temperatures ranging from 8 to 11 degrees Celsius. The Races also serves as a nesting colony and a brief migratory stopover for glaucous-winged gulls, pelagic cormorants and approximately 500 other species of sea birds.

Great Race Rock, measuring only 200 metres across, is the foundation for Race Rocks' most notable relic. It's crowned with the first Canadian navigation light installed on the west coast. Towering 32 metres into the sky, Race Rocks' black and white painted lighthouse was built from granite blocks that were shipped all the way around Cape Horn from Scotland in 1860. Many feel this rugged outpost is the most beautiful beacon to mariners on the Pacific Coast. A six-pound iron cannon that was salvaged from the wreck of the Swordfish by divers in 1978 is also on display here. The 177-foot Swordfish slammed into nearby South Bedford Island during a severe gale on November 6, 1877.



Race Rocks is considered to be an advanced dive. Clearly, one must be equipped with a thirst for adventure and a healthy dose of common sense to dive here. Weather, wind and tidal conditions dictate when you can dive safely here. Normally it is best to avoid strong ebb tides and dive on a slack tide that's changing to a flood. Dives should be conducted only during slack water intervals and with a boat tender standing by to assist if you require assistance. Diving here without a 'live boat' standing by to pick you up is akin to playing an aquatic form of Russian roulette. Therefore, I highly recommend that first forays here be with a reputable dive operator who is familiar with the area and has dived many times before.

One such operator is Shallon Marine Services. Owned and operated by Kevin Vankleemput, Shallon is a scuba diving, sightseeing, and research charter operation based in Victoria, B.C. Kevin's 32-foot Canadian Coast Guard certified vessel can carry up to eight divers. Kevin himself has dived Race Rocks many times, and his degree in marine biology makes him eminently qualified and knowledgeable about the natural characteristics of this exposed site.

Shallon has scoped out seven dive sites within the reserve, with several more being explored to determine the best and safest way to dive them. Great Race is a pass on the north side of Great Race Rock. It's the most popular dive because it is the easiest and the fish swim in to say hello. Rosedale Reef extends from Great Race to the south, south east. A more challenging dive with less predictable currents and shallow rocks. The marine life though is phenomenal. Kevin also claims if you find the right valley you might discover some machinery from the wreck of the IDAHO, or possibly the remains of other shipwrecks that sank here. Red sea urchins dominate the seascape at Central Race. This is also the best place

Race Rocks

Ecological Reserve

Race Rocks was designated a Marine Ecological Reserve in 1980. The reserve encompasses an area of 220 hectares, which includes all the rocks, reefs, and islands except for Great Race Rock where the lighthouse stands. No collecting, harvesting or spearfishing is permitted in the intertidal or subtidal zones down to a depth of 36.6 metres (120 feet). Boats are not allowed to anchor in the reserve due to the fragile nature of the underwater community. Underwater photographers should resist the temptation to disturb or rearrange marine life in order to obtain a better shot. All divers are encouraged to weight themselves properly and to maintain proper buoyancy in the water so that their gauges or fins do not drag across the bottom.

Much of the credit for the establishment of this ecological reserve goes to the science students, members of the diving activity in Coast Watch and the diving faculty of Lester B. Pearson College. Aside from continuously studying and monitoring the reserve's underwater domain, these same individuals also act as volunteer wardens. Since it's virtually impossible to police the activities of everyone in the reserve, divers are asked to report any violations they may have observed to the park's Volunteer Warden, Gary Fletcher, Lester B. Pearson College, Victoria, BC V9B 5T7, Tel: (604) 391-2441 E-Mail: gfletcher@pearson-college.uwc.ca.


To help promote a better understanding of the intricacies of this complex marine ecosystem, several hundred elementary school children from the local school district are invited to Race Rocks each year for an ecology visit. Other kinds of studies in the reserve are welcome. For those interested in doing projects or research on the reserve, permits must be obtained from the Ecological Reserves Coordinator well before the anticipated starting date. Information about the reserve or permits for research may be obtained by writing: BC Parks, 2nd Floor, 800 Johnson Street, Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4, Tel: (604) 387-5002.



to find harbour seals. There's considerably more to see at North Race, and more than likely you'll be drift diving while seeing it.

West Race North offers a beautiful shallow dive through an amber forest of bull kelp. Wolf eels and giant octopus are frequently seen here. West Race Sea Lion Dive is as the name implies the main site to observe sea lions underwater. This site is suitable for divers of every skill level and one that will be long remembered if you happen to see any sea lions. November and December seem to be the best months for such encounters.

Despite the thrill of diving at West Race Wall, I'm looking forward to the opportunity to someday descend on a few of the unexplored pinnacles that Kevin showed me on the depth sounder. One can only imagine what subsea wonders await. In the meantime, if you happen to get swept away in this diver's paradise, remember to go with the flow and enjoy the Races wild. If you've planned it right, someone will undoubtedly be waiting topside to pick you up.

For more information, contact Shallon Marine Services, 2853 Graham St., Victoria, B.C. V8T 3Z3. (604) 479-4276 Fax: (604) 386-2286 



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DWELLERS

ON THE THREE

Words & pictures by Corrie Wright

It was what you might call a typical May afternoon on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The air was filled with a soft mist and cloud obscured the snow capped mountains that flanked the inlet. A small party of jolly coastal adventurers, are busying themselves securing hatch covers and making final preparations before launching their sleek and seaworthy vessels for the outside coast. These craft will carry them on an aquatic odyssey to the interface, steeped in mythology, where the vast expanses of the open Pacific Ocean meets the rugged shoreline of the "wild isle".

The put-in, is on Little Espinoza Inlet (about a 15 min. drive from Zeballos on the Fair Harbour side) where a tidal surge flushes through the narrows. We rode the tail of the ebb down the mist enshrouded fjord, and out into the much larger Esperanza Inlet. From there, a short crossing to Rosa Island the and Nuchatlitz, a spectacular seascape of islets rocks and reefs, off the northern end of Nootka Island.

The current pulled us along the tranquil surface of the inlet. Precipitous

slopes shouldering capes of ancient rainforest, spill down into the emerald waters. The cry of a kingfisher broke the silence as we drifted by secret estuaries and rocky beaches.

This was not my first voyage to this part of the world, and I greatly anticipated the adventure of returning once more to paddle on the "outside". Here the sense of space and curvature that come with being on the edge of a round planet are heightened. And there is little that ails the heart or soul that would not find ease in the splendour of a Pacific sunset.

The islets of the Nuchatlitz boast a number of fine, sand and pebble beaches, making for most comfortable camping however fresh water is in short supply. The sandy bottomed shallows create an appearance of tropical atolls, and there are many opportunities for the intertidal explorer. In addition the area boasts an abundance of cultural and natural history. The indigenous west coast peoples thrived here for thousands of years, plying the waters in their time tested cedar canoes, harvesting the bounty of the sea. Salmon, halibut, whales and otters, the lush forests, and shellfish strewn shores, would provide



hunted to near extinction by Russian and European fur traders in the 1800's. These curious creatures now flourish in this habitat, having been reintroduced from Alaska, in the 1970's. On occasion up to 60 or 70 of the animals may raft together engaging in a most fascinating social behaviour.

One evening as we lay about the smooth surf polished pebbles and sun bleached drift wood enjoying cold beer in the quite ambiance of twilight. One of the party spied a lone wolf combing the beach near our camp. The canine was not in the least bit shy, but still most wild. This vision struck some primal cord deep with in me, and left me calmed with some strange spiritual sensation.

Like so much of Vancouver Island's dramatic west coast, the area between Nootka and Catala Islands and the Rolling Roadstead are well worth a visit. Whether it be the sight of a grey whale blowing off shore or a view of the moon flirting with Venus in the pink hues of the Pacific horizon, you will be left in a sense of wonder. Bonny voyage, keep those beedies peeled and mind the boomers. 🐾

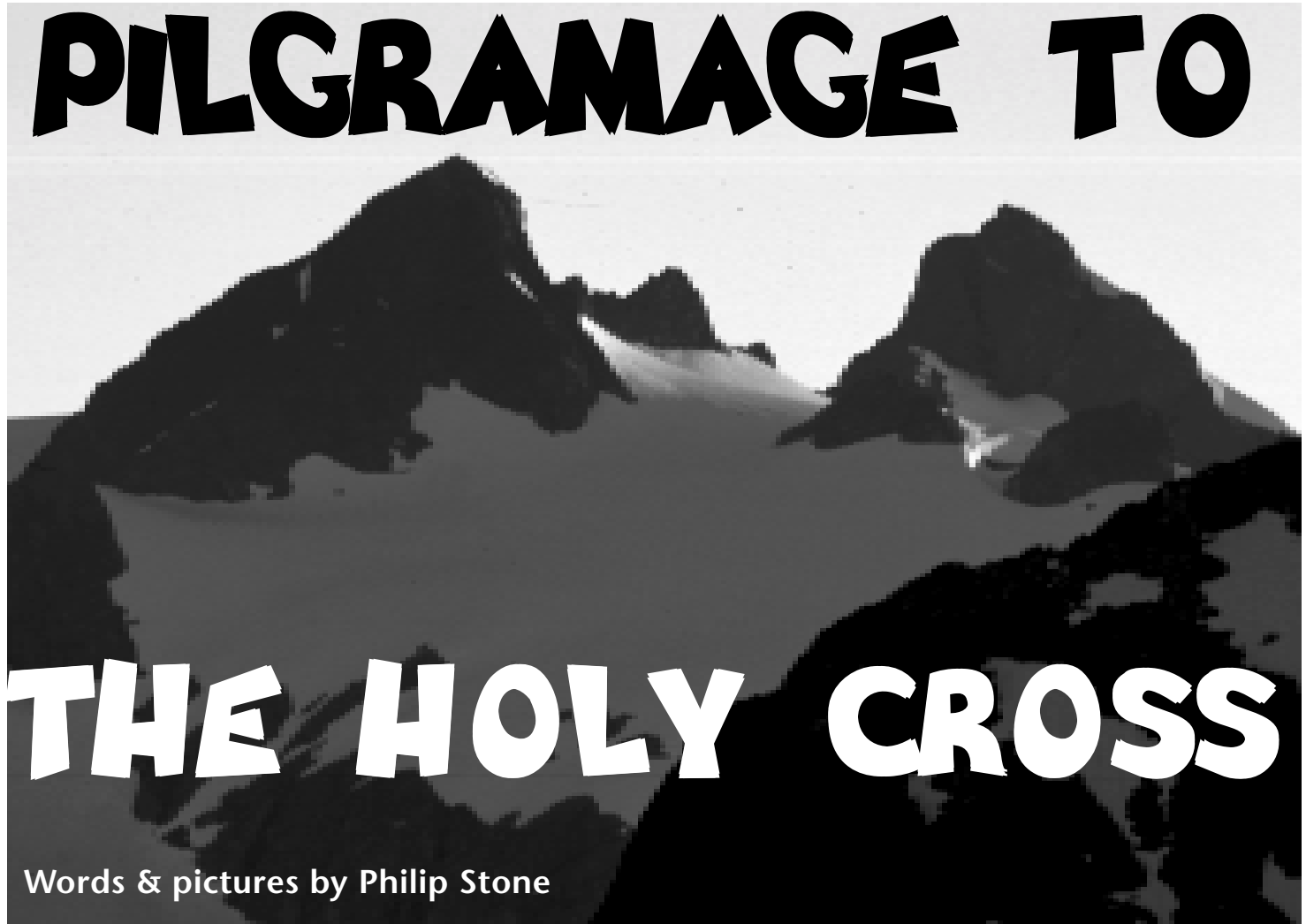
the sustenance to fuel a great civilization and culture. It was a little more than two hundred years ago, that Captain Cook and his HMS Resolution arrived in Friendly Cove (some 30 miles south of Nuchatlitz) and forever changed their way of life. Although there is very little obvious evidence of such a lengthy occupation, a little time and exploration can uncover hints of an ancient culture.

The more recent history of this area saw a significant pilchard industry in Esperanza Inlet. There are shipwrecks and an abandoned WW II military installation on the northwest cone of Nootka Island. The efforts of the industrious west coast loggers have also left their lasting impressions on the steep slopes that rise from the ocean.

The birder can find a splendid array of shore birds and water fowl, oyster catchers, scoots and murre. Hundreds of sea otters feed amongst the nutrient rich kelp beds. Once



PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY CROSS



Words & pictures by Philip Stone

There is always that one trip, peak, paddling tour or ride that seems to be schemed and dreamed a thousand times over but for one reason or another takes forever to happen. My own particular “nemesis” or perhaps “grail” is, or at least was, Mariner Mountain. The aesthetics of the peak and its situation overlooking Clayoquot sound on the Moyeha-Bedwell divide both captivated and eluded me from day one. It jeered from Tofino and shimmered elusively and incessantly from summits in Strathcona Park. On one occasion I was literally flushed out of Herbert Inlet caught between a late spring rainstorm and a rising tide in the lower reaches of Moyeha River. A half-hearted attempt saw a visit to the Noble Creek-Mariner Creek col for a slushy late November night, close, but the weather put paid to that ill conceived foray.

So early last summer, with four days leering at me from the calendar, I decided that enough was enough and a trip to Mariner Mountain was pencilled in for mid-June. I made a few, admittedly last minute, phone calls. They failed to deliver the requisite travelling partner but that was hardly reason to postpone an already much delayed event so June 15th I headed up Highway 28 for the Bedwell Trail planning to visit Mariner via Mt Tom Taylor by myself.

It was easily 5pm by the time I reached Buttle Narrows and stopped to pick up a forlorn looking hitch hiker heading down Western Mines Road. Cristof was visiting from Chile, I forget his particulars but he was looking for somewhere to camp for the night and then a hike the following day. I described where I was

heading and he decided to join me that evening as far as Bedwell Lake which fit both of his objectives with the additional, very convincing fact that he had a ride.

The hike up the Bedwell trail went by in its characteristic blur of lush forest, rushing streams and bent bridges. Thankfully the tent platforms at Bedwell Lake were poking through the surrounding late season snow and we settled into the campsite as the last of the sun glared before sinking behind Tom Taylor. Cristof & I prepared our respective suppers, chatted a while and poured over the map until dark.

Cristof's plan was to make a day trip to Cream Lake then return down the Bedwell trail. I didn't see him again but I hope he saw the spectacular vista of Nine Peaks and Septimus from Cream Lake. I left the Bedwell Lake campsite just after dawn having gobbled down my favourite trip breakfast of cowboy coffee and huge oatmeal cookies. From the lake the Omnimittis trail continues all the way out to the west coast at Bedwell Sound and I followed it a short way before striking off to cross the Bedwell River and head toward Mt Tom Taylor.

The snow coverage was patchy in the sub-alpine forest but where it still lay the snow was hard and made for ideal travelling. The meadows below Mt Tom Taylor's south cirque were alive with babbling streams and blooming lupines. Hiking through these meadows is so picturesque as to be reason enough to opt for this route on to the mountain over the more common but steeper route up the east ridge.

The sky was crystal clear and it got hot quickly as the sun rose higher and higher. By the time I was halfway up the sweeping south ridge the temperature was sweltering. Having left the shade of the trees behind and reaching an elevation where there was still complete snow cover it was with relief that I stumbled upon a small melt pool tucked in an outcrop of granite. Time for a cool dip and early lunch!

Refuelled and cooled down I continued up the south ridge onto the Taylor Glacier and then westward toward

perspective of Nine Peaks that has to be seen to be believed. The sun sank in a clear sky boding well for the next day and I watched the glimmer of the last rays on the windows of boats cruising in and out of Tofino.

Mariner was now tantalising close. From



my perch here above the Bedwell Valley gazing across toward "the mountain formerly known as Holy Cross" with Meares Island, Tofino and the open Pacific beyond I felt excited that my endless day dreaming was well founded and that this was going to be trip I would cherish the memory of.

other side of the valley below? Well it didn't look any easier but at least I was rested now. So I headed down. The route finding was obliging. The side of the ridge I needed to descend was bluffy but at a low point above a small lake, a snow filled gully led down into the forest and was an easy descent. I skirted the side of the lake, eyes fixed on the gully that led back up on the other side of the pass. Following the creek that flows down from the small lake into the pass my progress slowed. Steep, slick gravel and slide alder on the creekside were interspersed with brief sections of boulder hopping in the creek bed required careful negotiation.

the summit. At the final prominent col just below Tom Taylor's peak I dropped down onto the north side of the mountain. The huge crevasses that criss cross this part of the glacier were no where to be seen under a thick blanket of snow. I descended from the col until I could begin traversing underneath the summits onto the wide glacial shelf on the mountain's western flank. The views north of central Strathcona and to the southwest down into Clayoquot Sound were breathtaking and I allowed them to distract me from the appalling distance that Mariner Mountain seemed to be from me.

In the morning light the next day a different perspective unfolded. Tofino looked so clear I was sure I could smell fresh java brewing, and that climb on the

As the ground levelled out the terrain became chaotic. Huge boulders that had tumbled off the surrounding hillsides, tangled trees and avalanche debris choked

The route off Tom Taylor to the west takes a little southward jog along a gentle ridge before descending 500m into a sub alpine pass between two valleys that link the Bedwell River to the Moyeha. Looking down from the ridge and at the climb on the other side of that pass I tried hard not to be discouraged. Convincing myself it was just foreshortening, I dropped my pack, prepared to make camp and went to look back at the view the other way. From here the long rumoured granite walls on Mt Tom Taylor's south west side pulled into view along with a dramatic

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the pass. I weaved a slow path through them and eventually stood at the base of the gully that led back up into the alpine and onward to Mariner Mountain.

By now the sun was high and standing on the snow in the gully I felt like a bug on a solar dish. Plodding up the slope I was startled by a bear that came crashing off the rocks on the right side. It paused to check me out before continuing across the snow and clambering up the other side of the gully and onto the parallel ridge, How I envied the creature for making it all look so easy. The ridge the bear had taken is likely a better option with no snow coverage but the exposure at that time of year on

sloppy snow looked gut wrenching so I carried on up the gully. The gully eventually narrowed before giving way to easier ground above and I had a few tense moments clinging to soaking wet cedars and shattered mossy rock exiting it.

Although the ground was now easier the climb was one of those that goes forever, you think you are about to top out any moment only to crest another rise and see another couple of hundred feet above. And on it went until finally I topped out and was staring right at Mariner. WOW!! the sun glare off the huge Mariner glacier almost knocked me over even from several kilometres away!.

Needless to say the next part of the route involves losing a good portion of hard won elevation down to a col southeast of Mariner Mountain above a stunning lake that feeds into the Moyeha. Reaching this col I had still to make up my mind on how best to tackle the climb onto Mariner. There were three options. 1) to continue along the height of land and then drop onto the south side of the mountain above Noble Creek, 2) follow the same line but take the north side onto Mariner Glacier or 3) descend further into the base of a huge cirque on the mountain's east side, cross it and then climb back onto the main glacier.

After lunch in a sliver of shade cast by a boulder I realized the third option was brought on by temporary, heat induced insanity and so opted to continue along



the height of land and then see what transpired higher up. The glacier on my right looked so attractive but I couldn't see a good place to get onto it and the foreshortening made the exposure below

Campbell River, BC

Trail Map

1st Edition

FEATURING

- * The Snowden Forest
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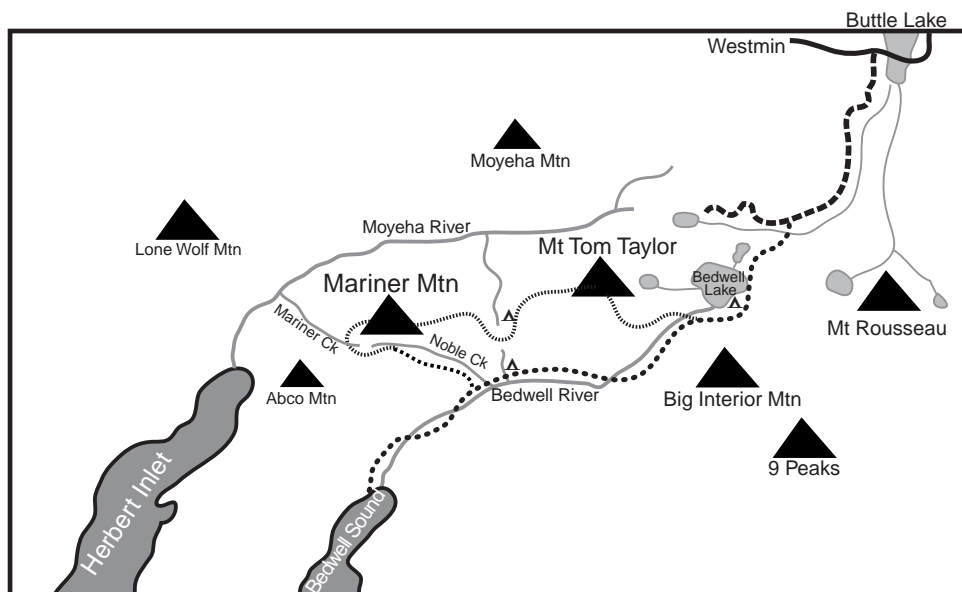
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look outrageous. Sometimes travelling alone presents difficult decisions that in a group would be mute points. Caution was steering me away from the glacier while it remained in the back of my mind the obvious choice. So I wasted at least a couple of hours scrambling around the ridge on the south side peering across steep vegetated gullies and rocky ribs looking for a way around on that side.

With the south option eventually proving fruitless I headed up over the ridge crest to the north side to see what the glacier looked like from there. I could hardly contain my surprise. Standing there on the ridge the glacier led away in a huge sweep of what now seemed like virtually flat terrain. Ice axe in hand and with little more than a hop over a metre wide moat I was off across the awesome Mariner Glacier. The route finding still remained interesting. After crossing and gently climbing a wide section of glacier I was forced back onto the south side of the mountain through a gap between a pair of rocky needles. Then after a steep scramble up another rock needle I was back onto the glacier on the north side again.

By now I was pretty tired and glad to be just wandering around on relatively benign terrain. The threat of crevasses was minimal with ample snow coverage and low angle terrain. I savoured the expanse of the mountain as I weaved my way higher up the glacier and through a small col. This led me onto the south glacier (the one seen from Tofino) and I meandered up to the base of two much larger rock spires, through a gap between them and yet again onto the north side. Looking across this part of the mountain I realized that Mariner doubtless has the largest glacier on Vancouver Island. It dwarfs the Comox and the icefields of the Haihte Range, while combined might rival Mariner's, lack the single expanse of ice it has. The situation above Clayoquot Sound makes it all the more spectacular and I was truly awe inspired as I took in the panorama that surrounded me. Having approached the mountain from such a funky angle I was having a hard time figuring out which of the two spires was in fact the summit. After consulting the map and making a pick I began heading to the base of the summit tower but stopped. Tired and very dehydrated I was having a hard time mustering up the psyche for yet more ascent, and besides I



had seen as much of the mountain as I had ever hoped to, so turning in my tracks I began the long drop into Noble Creek.

Boot skiing down the south glacier and looking out to Tofino, Meares Island and the Moyerha valley was a blast. The heat of the sun diminished as some high cloud moved in from the Pacific and after finding running water lower down I felt invigorated for the descent. The rock slabs above the Noble-Mariner col were covered in deep snow and what is usually a notoriously long if easy down climb was this day an epic bootski that took just a few minutes.

Down and down, into Noble Creek I kept my eyes peeled for a camp spot but the terrain didn't oblige. A few possibilities presented themselves amongst the rocky moraine and patchy snow. I found myself discounting them, getting caught up in the descent. Before long I was in the forest heading down the old miner's trail that follows Noble Creek down to the Omnimitis trail along the Bedwell River. Once on the trail I turned left and began the long slow climb back to Bedwell Lake. By now it was easily 9pm and I continued only a couple of clicks before finding a perfect campsite alongside a tributary creek of the Bedwell River. After a huge supper I bedded down on the gravel beside the creek, virtually drinking the thing dry before falling into a deep deep sleep.

The cloud had continued to roll in overnight and the next morning a light rain was already falling as I packed, ate breakfast and headed out. Just what I needed for a day in the salmonberries! The Omnimitis trail has overgrown a lot since it was cleared by the Friends of Strathcona a few years ago and I chanted loudly to keep the local inhabitants

informed of my progress up the valley. The Bedwell is not also known as Bear (Omnimitis) River for nothing! Time has taken its toll on the trail in other ways too in a few places the river has washed sections of the old logging road bed the trail follows right away. At one point I was forced to wade the icy waters to get around a bluff that now butts right into the river where before the old road ran beneath it.

It is a long haul up the Bedwell Valley but with a lighter pack and a cooling rain it passed relatively easily. Charred from two days in blistering sun it felt great to have water run down my back and have the smell of a sea fog in the air.

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HAPPENINGS

Mid-Island Summer Race Series

- Lost Frog 10 km Trail run July 18th, 10 am Snowden Demonstration Forest Campbell River. \$10 for pre-race day reg, \$15 on the day. Contact- lemmings@island.net
- River Rats Cross Country August 15th 10 am \$10 reg. Contact- almunday@mars.ark.com

Other Races

- Stickman Off road triathlon September 5th contact lemmings@island.net

British Columbia Surfing Events 1999

• Storm Open Shortboard Classic

First comp in a series of three no divisions - lots of surf gear prizes - no boards 7' or over

- 19th of June - Cox Bay - \$10 entry at Storm or at the beach competitors meeting 8 AM on the beach sponsored by Storm - Tofino's Surf Shop
Allister Fernie (250) 725-3344 tf 1-888-504-7873

• Longboard Contest

The longboard contest will be part of a Hawaiian Luau and will be run in the tradition of Aloha.
Sat 3rd of July - no divisions - no boards under 9'
9am start (subject to change) - Cox Bay (alt South Chesterman's) Entry Fee: \$75 includes contest, cap, tee shirt, and all you can eat Hawaiian Luau. Luau only: \$20

- There will be a meeting of the British Columbia Surfing Association in Tofino on the weekend of the Longboard Contest (probably Sunday afternoon) for those interested.***

Surf Divas Clinic

Learn to surf clinic for the ladies. All Womans Surf Camp returns again this summer to the West Coast of Vancouver Island. Learn to surf by all female instructors from LaJolla, CA. first weekend of July sponsored by The Second Wave the forty spots open are filled + 20 on a waiting list

Skimboard Jams

White Rock on Thursday July 1st at low tide.
Jericho Beach on Friday July 2nd at low tide

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