

FOG HORN



Underwater Archaeological Society of British Columbia

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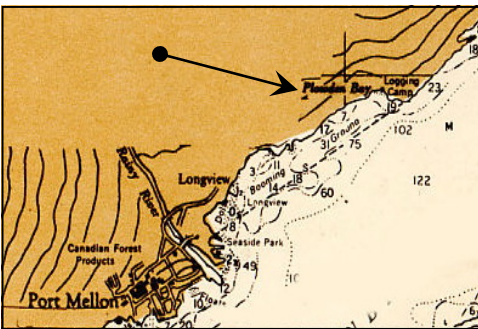
Plowden Bay Mystery Wreck

Story: Matthew Bossons

Anton North

I glanced up, the water above me shining a dull emerald green. Light from the surface caught amongst particles in the water above created a blanket of green light that did little to pierce the hellish black below.

Bright rays from flashlights scanned the remains of a skeleton, the forgotten shell of a wooden vessel resting in the cold waters of Plowden Bay near Port Mellon on Howe Sound.



The wreck lay on a downward slope, and on such an angle that the side resting higher on the slope had begun to act like something of a retaining wall. Silt from a near by stream had buried much of the upper side of the boat.

The ship's wooden deck had collapsed in recent years, which was unexpected. The last UASBC divers had seen a much different wreck in 2005. Their records indicated a more intact vessel, what I saw was simply the bones of a boat forgotten by time.

The vessel's exact purpose is unknown, but we can speculate on possible jobs. Someone suggested the vessel may have been a WWII YMS-class mine sweeper, and after its purpose had been served during the war it was likely condemned to live out its days as a fish packer. If that was the case it would explain why much of the boat was stripped of its engine and machinery.

During the surface briefing we were described a wooden ship, roughly 140' long, laying precariously on a slope. Its bow to the north was in the shallowest water, while its stern, facing south, rested in somewhere between 65 - 75 feet of water.

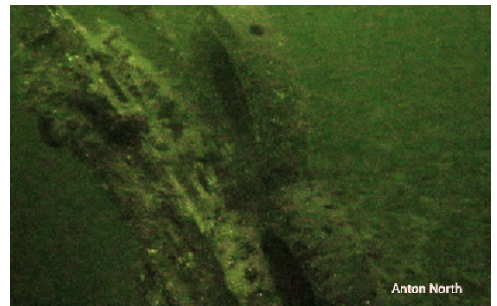
Although the majority of the information we were given was correct, we learned that other materials were also used in addition to wood.

Gazing through the billions of tiny particles suspended in the water, our lights penetrated the wreck and it became clear that the bottom of the vessel was not wood. My light shone against a rough, grey surface and as my dive partner slide his dive knife along the surface we discovered it was concrete.

Divers next discovered that metal, either steel or iron, had been used in several different areas of the boat. Most obvious was on the bow, where it was discoloured a dull orange and flaking.

Metal was also noted inside the hull of the wreck just above the concrete bottom, although it was hard to identify in the murk.

A hazard of diving in murky water with steel wreckage are sharp edges. As I headed for the surface, with a substantial rip in my dry suit, now full of cold ocean water, I took one last look at the wreck criss-crossed with measuring tapes of di-



Rubber tires indicate that the wreck was a working boat.

vers working below. It was not a captivating wreck, but it was interesting.

Diving this wreck was not the most memorable dive I've participated in, but it served as my first time working and surveying a wreck for the UASBC, which proved a lot more interesting than I initially thought it might be.

President's Log

David Hill-Turner

2011 has started off as a banner year for the UASBC. We had a great turnout and reception for our booth at Divers' Weekend at the Vancouver Aquarium. There have been several dives in the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island the recognition of the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the Robert Kerr garnered us some medial attention. It is also great to see some new names associated with organizing expeditions and writing articles.

There are also new names on the UASBC's board of directors. As my term as director expired in February, Eric Young, of Vernon, was elected President by the board. For the time being, he will also continue as treasurer. We also welcome Bill Meekel to the board. Bill is the new director for the Southern Interior, a merger of the Thompson/Okanagan and Kootenay regions. Chris Fenton, of Port Alberni, was also formally elected. Chris' interest is

technical diving and the board welcomes his thoughts on working on deeper dives. Chris also launched us into Facebook and I encourage you to sign on and "friend" us. Thank you for volunteering to serve on the board.

As your board is spread through the province, we have noticed the alarming increase in the cost of our bimonthly teleconferences. In addition to reviewing our website and adding Facebook, the board is experimenting with using Skype to reduce the costs of board meetings.

Earlier this year we were received disappointing news that our proposal to the Heritage Branch to carryout specific projects was declined. Many of you are aware that funding to culture, heritage and amateur sport groups has taken a beating over the past 18 months. Prudent budgeting means that the UASBC is in a good position to weather the economic downturn in the short term. In the coming months, the board will be reviewing its priorities, how it does business and exploring new funding opportunities. We also rely on the creative thoughts of our members and if you have ideas, or a few spare dollars, we would love to hear from you!

I have enjoyed my years on the board as Communications Director, Vice President and President. I would like to thank the board, members and our supporters for your interest and support for the UASBC.

BTW, if any of you have an interest in writing or journalism, Foghorn is looking for you!



The UASBC participated in the Divers' Weekend at the Vancouver Aquarium in January. Thanks to Jennifer Ingram, Tim & Shelley Novak, David Johnstone, Anton North, Nicole Ortmann, Joel Schurman and David Hill-Turner for volunteering at the booth.

Shipwrecks 2011

The Underwater Archaeological Society of B.C.

9 AM
Saturday, April 30, 2011
Fort Langley National Historic Site
Fort Langley, BC



Tickets available at
uasbc.com

Bruce Watson: The Maritime Fur Trade, 1740-1812
Richard Mackie: Barques, Blankets, and Beef: The HBC Coasting Trade, 1821-1858
David Stone: Archaeology of the Fur Trade Steamer, HBC Beaver
Tom Beasley: The Tonquin: Still a Mystery after 200 years
Anthony Dalton: The Fur Trade Fleet
Dr. Shelley Wachsmann: Deep Submergence Archaeology: Fleets of Antiquity

Woodward lecture

Sea of Galilee Boat: A Ship Out of Time

Dr. Shelley Wachsmann
Institute of Nautical Archaeology, Texas A & M University



uasbc.com



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David Hill-Turner

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UNDERWATER EXPLORATION SPEAKERS SERIES



Explorations Spring 2011

Victoria Speakers Series

Victoria Meeting location:

Victoria meetings are the second Wednesday of the month at the Maritime Museum of BC, 28 Bastion Square at 7 PM.

March 9, 2011

UASBC Diving Activities: The Year In Review

UASBC Diving Activities, The Year In Review by Jacques Marc, Explorations Director UASBC: Jacques will provide a slide show and talk on the expeditions, research and work that the UASBC has been involved in over the past year.

April 13, 2011

Maritime Cultural Heritage Management

Maritime Cultural Heritage Management by DIANA COOPER, Marine Archaeologist.

Diana will talk about cultural resource management and community based involvement in our submerged heritage, drawing upon her work on Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

May 11, 2011

Tour of Whites Dry Suit Manufacturing. Doug Maynard - Whites Manufacturing

Doug will give us a tour of White's Manufacturing operation and show us how they make those great dry suits and specialized gear for organizations such as the US Navy Seals.

We will meet at their plant at 6:30PM at 6820 Kirkpatrick Crescent (off Keating X Rd), Saanichton, BC

Vancouver Speakers Series

Vancouver Meeting location:

The UASBC meets on the last Wednesday of the month at the Vancouver Maritime Museum, 1905 Ogden Street at 7:30 PM

March 30, 2011

The Graveyard of the Pacific

Anthony Dalton, author, Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and a Fellow of the Explorers Club. He is National President of the Canadian Authors Association.

Anthony will be speaking about the history of shipwrecks along the west coast, from California to Alaska, including the Inside Passage and the southwest coast of Vancouver Island.

April 27, 2011

Underwater Recording of Coastal Reef Sites.

Charles Moore and Andrew Mason Golder and Associates, Burnaby.

First Nations' people around the Salish Sea left an archaeological record on the seabed of a unique fishing method known as reef net fishing. Golder has initiated a pilot project to locate and record the clusters of anchor stones that mark these sites using sidescan sonar.

May 25, 2011

Dive Log of the Sea of Cortez

Jennifer Ingram -UASBC.

Jennifer has made four trips to this fascinating area of North America. Featuring the images of several photographers, it will be an opportunity see its unique geology and diverse marine life.



Visit uasbc.com for current information on expeditions, training and lectures.

March 27, 2011

RCAF B24 Consolidated Liberator

We will explore Sansum Narrows for the remains of an RCAF B24 Consolidated Liberator that caught fire during a training mission on October 4, 1944 and exploded between Maple Bay and Cowichan Bay. The UASBC has dove the site and found wreckage down to 80'. We will conduct scooter searches in the 100'-150' range looking for the bulk of the wrecked plane. This is a joint project with SET and is open to members holding a Technical Diver 1 certification or higher and are experienced with strong current.

Contact Chris Fenton 250-720-6997 or dive@shipwreckexplorationteam.ca

Saturday April 16 - Victoria

Join us for a two tank boat dive on the San Pedro off Brochie Ledge and on the S.F Tolmie off Harrison Island. The San Pedro was 331 foot coal collier lost in 1891. The S.F. Tolmie was a 245 foot four masted auxiliary schooner lost in 1946. These are easy dives just 10 minutes running time from Ogden Point in Victoria. Cost \$90 per person. Limit 8 divers. Contact Jacques (250) 474-5797 or [email: jmarc@shaw.ca](mailto:jmarc@shaw.ca).

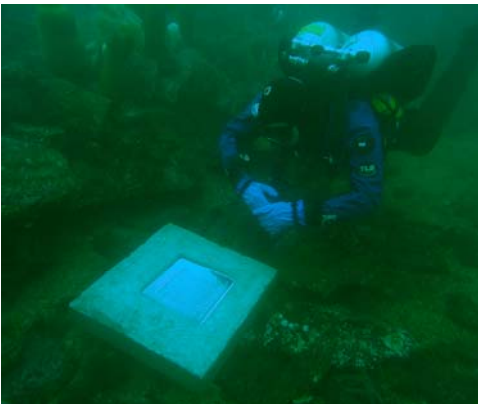
June 9-13 Expedition to Nuchatlitz on the West Coast of Vancouver Island.

The focus of this trip will be to search for and explore 5 different wreck sites along the West Coast from Nootka Island to Kyuquot Sound. The list includes: Treis Ierarchai, Northern Light, Westport Straits, Louisiana & Speedway. Thursday and Monday will be travel days to Tahsis and Nuchatlitz and return. We will stay in a rustic Cabin at Nuchatlitz and make day trips to the various wreck sites aboard the MV Notorious. Cost \$600-700 per person. Limit 8 divers. Prerequisite NAS Intoduction certificate. Contact Jacques (250) 474-5797 or [email: jmarc@shaw.ca](mailto:jmarc@shaw.ca).

Ship that "Saved Vancouver" gets new plaque.

There are many shipwrecks on the coast of BC and one is of particular significance to Vancouver. In October 1885, the barque Robert Kerr arrived in Vancouver one year after leaving Liverpool. While being towed from Victoria to Hastings Mill in Burrard Inlet, she struck San Juan Island. The damages were extensive and the ship was purchased by Hastings Sawmill and became the temporary home of mill owner, Capt. Soules. On the day Vancouver was incorporated, she was dressed in flags and bunting to celebrate the event. On June 13, 1886, many of Vancouver's citizens, fleeing for their lives as the city was consumed by fire, found refuge and a temporary home on the ship.

In 1888, the Robert Kerr was sold to the Canadian Pacific Railway and converted to a barge. She was a familiar sight in Burrard Inlet for many years, hauling coal from Vancouver



Island for the trans-Pacific ocean liners. On March 4, 1911, the Robert Kerr departed Ladysmith for Vancouver. Passing north of Thetis Island behind the towboat *Coulti*, the deeply laden Robert Kerr struck the top of a reef. Her luck ran out with this stranding and she was abandoned after much of the coal was removed. Today, she is one of 8 wreck sites designated as a Heritage Site.

All wrecks two years old or older are protected, designation as a Heritage site provides an increased level of protection



l-r: Peter Luckam, Holger Heitland, Jacques Marc and Chris Fenton prepare to place two commemorative plaques.

To celebrate the March 4th centennial, Jacques Marc, Chris Fenton and Holger Heitland joined Peter Luckham of 49th Parallel Diving and Andy Lamb from Cedar Beach Ocean Lodge to place a new plaque on the Robert Kerr and a plaque on the nearby steam collier, Miami. The forecast called for 50-70 knot winds in the Strait of Georgia. At the Robert Kerr site the waves were about 1 meter high. Peter got the Red Urchin anchored over the site and the team was able to successfully place the Kerr plaque on the inside of the wreck near the stern. After a brief photo opportunity the team moved over to the Miami site. Being more exposed it was difficult to get the anchor to hold so it was decided that the *Miami's* plaque would have to wait for another day.

Ship information

Launched at Quebec City in 1866 for the Hudson's Bay Company

Length: 190.6 ft
Beam: 38.4 feet
Draft: 23.7 feet

Class Report: Intro to NAS

Report: John Campbell

I, along with fellow GUE (and SET) divers, Randy Parke, Anton North, Greg Nuttall & Jason Kolba, attended the Underwater Archaeological Society of British Columbia Introduction to NAS (Nautical Archaeology Society) workshop in Victoria. The day started with a history of the UASBC and their efforts to identify, document and record BC's underwater and foreshore wrecks. The theory and principles of their research and conservation were discussed along with some of the methods used for identifying sites of importance. The class continued with the instruction in the use of different tools and techniques to survey wrecks and historical sites

The fun part was the in-water session. Two stations were setup in the pool and we had to measure and document some 'artifacts' that had been placed there. This involved carefully measuring each item at strategic points so that we could transpose the items location & sketch to an accurate scale plan later. We moved onward to another station and had to draw a diagram of some objects beneath a grid system. I'll say this, there are many better artists than I. Proper trim and buoyancy skills were critical in staying in one place for several minutes so you could sketch the articles. After the pool, we returned to the classroom to plot our notes onto paper. This took some time to do but we were pleased with the outcome as most of the drawings and measurements lined up when transposed over top of each other.

It was a great exercise. The class concluded with more information regarding the UASBC's ongoing projects and then legalities that protect the wrecks and artifacts in our waters. Everyone had a great time and learned much about how these treasures are being documented and catalogued for further study.

I'd like to thank Jacques Marc & John Middleton for sharing their knowledge and inspiring us to go out and explore. They have given us a taste of what's to come and some tools to use in helping to identify and document our future exploits.