



West Coast Dives

by: Ewan Anderson



was out of control. While the crew was eventually rescued by the US Coast Guard, the Nika was left to drift and eventually sank at the entrance to Barkley Sound.

The wreckage of the Nika sits in approximately 25 – 30 m of water next to a series of unnamed rocks on the east side of the Ucluelet Harbour entrance. The wreck is relatively easy to find, sitting in sand at the base of a wall. The first recognisable part a diver sees is the propeller, then it's a long swim up the prop shaft to the remains of the engine - the Nika was 282'! Because we were diving within no decompression limits, our time on the wreck was extremely limited. Being new to the site, I probably spent a little too long on the aft section and barely made it past amidships before Jiri tapped his watch and signaled it was time to go.

After a relaxing lunch anchored on the north side of Francis Island, we investigated the wreck of the former RCMP patrol vessel, the MV Ganges. The patrol boat was built in 1958 and after its service with the RCMP, was run privately. MV Ganges was run up on the rocks across the harbour from Francis Island on July 11, 2008. Pieces of the wreck are dispersed among the rocks and kelp beds in less than 10 m of water. The most obvious wreckage is the fuel tanks, sitting on the sandy bottom. However, hundreds of other parts can be found throughout the rocks and weeds. Interestingly, the remains of a much older vessel may be located here – at least one iron rigging attachment was spotted in a crevice in the rocks.

That was it for diving for the day. We dropped off our tanks at Subtidal Adventures, checked-in to the Little Beach Resort and headed out for dinner. A fascinating heritage tour of Ucluelet followed our pub dinner. During the Second World War, Ucluelet was part of a chain of Allied defences along the west coast, which included a large seaplane base and anti-aircraft defenses in the inner harbour and

The UASBC expedition to Ucluelet started with an early morning departure on Saturday May 10, followed by a long drive from the east coast to the west coast. The entire team – Bronwen, Eric, Bob, Paul, Jacques, Jiri and me – arrived on time and ready for diving at the government dock in Ucluelet. Once aboard the dive boat, skipper Brian Gisborne steamed out to our first stop: the wreck of the Nika.

The Nika was a wood steamship built by the US government for transporting supplies during the First World War. Although the war ended shortly before the Nika was built, it saw private commercial service for several years on the west coast. After departing Seattle on February 13, 1923 her rudder was disabled in a storm and an SOS was sent out. A fire started sometime on the 14th, while the crew were assembling a jury rudder, and by the next day it

Wow, what a summer, and it ended with a bang. The search for Franklin's expedition has finally been rewarded with a result. While we aren't quite sure which ship has been located, its authenticity has been verified. I am quite certain that this will be the most significant maritime archaeological discovery of this century. We can count on Parks Canada taking up to twenty years to fully survey the wreck.

Okay, so this wasn't our discovery, but we have a good friend, Marc Andre Bernier, who was directly involved. I can not make any promises, but we are making every effort to have Marc Andre come to Vancouver and share some of the story with us. We hope that he will find the time for us and then we'll have the 'problem' of finding a venue big enough to hold the huge crowd that will want to attend. Again, no promises, but this may all come about fairly quickly in October.

We also will be having a Wine and Cheese gathering again this year. It will be in Vancouver at the tail end of November. There are still some arrangements to be ironed out, so keep your eyes peeled for notifications of the particulars.

On the education side of things, we will be holding a NAS 1 course in Sidney. This is right soon in the first week of October, the 4th and 5th. We have also been contacted about holding a course in Vancouver. Again, check the website for details

The Explorations schedule has a couple of dates for dives on southern Vancouver Island. It is nice that we still get new information handed to us about where things may be located. Some times these tips bear great fruit, hopefully that will be the case with the Sidney Spit rail cars. At other times they don't pan out, but turn into a good excuses for a dive.

Just in case you might be looking for something to do in winter, the Society for Historical Archaeology will be holding its conference in Seattle in January 2015. We already know that two of our members, Tom Beasley and Jacques Marc, will be presenting papers at the conference. Robyn Woodward is one of the chairs for the gathering (and may be present as well) so we have a considerable presence. Our Society may organize some transportation to the event. Again, stay tuned.

There certainly should be enough activities to keep us all quite busy this Autumn. I'm sorry that I haven't provided more particulars about the things I mentioned. The President needs to 'delegate', so it is others who have been organizing all this good stuff. It just all goes past my nose, so I get to 'salivate' first. Have fun.

West Coast Dives (continued)

radar at Amphitrite Point. We drove around the campsite in town looking at some of these installations. Someone remembered a bunker hidden in the woods behind the sea-plane base, so we all hustled into the bushes for a look and a walkthrough – you'd never see it unless you knew it was there – very cool!

Jacques had another surprise for us near little beach: a short walk from the road is another wreck, covered in young hemlock trees and salal bushes and jutting out over the rocks above the high tide line. It must have been some storm that tossed this vessel over the rocks and up the



beach. Recording and identifying this wreck could be a very rewarding challenge.

On Sunday we started with a boat ride up the coast to Florencia Bay. The weather continued to be very agreeable – sunny, warm and calm. Our next dive was a search for the wreck of the Florencia. The brigantine was disabled in a gale off Cape Flattery on November 12th, 1860, which began a month-and-half-long odyssey of attempted repairs, attempted rescues, gales and the loss of her captain. The vessel was eventually lost on Florencia Islet in Florencia Bay and her remaining crew rescued and taken to Victoria. The wreck has not been located since, so this was a search dive. Two teams of two and one team of three explored the south and southwest shores of the islet. Two teams came up empty, but Eric and Bronwen spotted a heavily encrusted anchor chain on

the west side of the islet, possibly from a large ship. It may be a promising lead in future searches for the wreck. The islet is also promising as a recreational dive site – encrusted with bright anemones and sponges and riddled with small caverns and caves. The trip back to Ucluelet was just as relaxing as the trip and included the extra bonus of some whale sightings.

Our final dive was on the wreck of the Pass of Melfort, a steel 4-masted barque lost east of Amphitrite Point on December 26, 1905. The vessel was bound for Puget Sound but was carried north by heavy winds, seas and currents. The Pass of Melfort ran aground in darkness and was quickly smashed to pieces – only a few spars and the stump of a mast could be seen the next day. All 29 crew were lost. Although conditions on the day of our dive were idyllic, looking shoreward at the jagged black rocks it was not too difficult to imagine the horror of trying to handle a ship here in heavy weather.

The wreck site is well-known and Jacques provided everyone with a detailed briefing of where to explore and what to find. The dive started on the anchor and windlass near the centre of the cove, which is a mix of rock and sand. From there we worked our way northeast over a rockier sea floor to a series of narrow channels, which are cluttered with the Pass of Melfort wreckage. Even in calm conditions, the gentle surge can make handling camera equipment a challenge and bumping into the rocks seems to be unavoidable.

Overall, Ucluelet is a great place for exploring and understanding our maritime heritage. Inclement weather would make diving operations a challenge, but luckily there are quite a few land-based points of interest in town. Special thanks to our skipper Brian Gisborne, the folks at the Gray Whale/Subtidal Adventures for filling our tanks and our bellies, and to Jacques Marc for his organisation and leadership.

Explorations Schedule Fall 2014

Sunday - September 14

Southern Vancouver Island –We will dive on the Race Rocks mystery wreck in front of Great Race to look for more artifacts and survey those that are known. Our second dive will be on the wreck of the Twenty First of May wrecked in Pedder Bay in 1881. Charter cost \$80.00 per person. Maximum 8 divers. There may be some light current, but all diver levels are welcome. Call Jacques (250) 474-5797 or email: jmarc@shaw.ca

Sunday - October 19

Southern Vancouver Island - We will visit Sansum Narrows to search the shallow water for evidence of a B 24 Consolidated Liberator bomber that crashed into the water during a training flight October 4, 1944. Our second dive will be to look for the remains of the steam tug Chehalis that burned in Sansum Narrows July 25, 1932. Charter \$80 per person. Limit 8 divers There may be some light current. All diver levels are welcome. Call Jacques (250) 474-5797 or email: jmarc@shaw.ca

Sunday - November 16

Southern Vancouver Island – New information has come to light regarding the possible location of several railway cars off Sidney Spit. We will go to the reported location and search for the remains. We will do a second dive on the GB Church artificial reef. Both dives are suitable for basic open water divers. Cost \$80 per person. Limit 8 divers. Contact Jacques (250) 474-5797 or email: jmarc@shaw.ca.

October 4 & 5th NAS-1 Course

A Nautical Archaeology Society (NAS) Level 1 course is being offered in Sidney BC (Victoria) at the Greenglade Recreation Center. Participants must have completed NAS Introduction to participate. Lectures include: search & survey techniques, documenting shipwrecks, artifact conservation, 3-D survey techniques, project and a case study. The practical session will involve surveying the reef balls opposite the Sidney fishing pier and plotting up the results. Cost: UASBC Members \$125. To register contact Jacques Marc (250) 474-5797 or email: jmarc@shaw.ca.

PLEASE REFER TO WWW.UASBC.COM FOR THE LATEST UPDATES!

A Grand Adventure with the Parks Canada

by: Jacques Marc

In the fall of 2013, Parks Canada Underwater Archaeology Service contacted the UASBC about doing some contract research work on Shipwrecks within Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve. The project involved taking various existing shipwreck data bases and editing them into one solid database documenting the shipwrecks within the Park reserve. With assistance from Ken McLeod in Ottawa and UASBC archivist Alison Gilchrist, we were able to narrow down the list of vessels and then produce research files on each of them. After this initial phase of research, Johnathan Moore the archaeologist in charge of the Gwaii Haanas project asked me to conduct additional research to try identify where two fur trade era wrecks and one gold rush era shipwreck were lo-

we learned that there would be a one-day delay leaving, as the zodiac needed a new engine. We spent the day prepping the boat for the 14 day trip. While discussing trip details the captain informed us that the engineer couldn't cook if his life depended on it.

Oh oh, this did not bode well! Jon proposed that we might all have to take turns doing the cooking. I volunteered making mention that I do the cooking at home, on UASBC projects and have fed 100s of Boy Scouts in camp situations. That clinched it. I became expedition cook. I quickly made up a menu and went shopping to get food for the trip.

On Tuesday morning with local media in attendance there was a photo opportunity and then we were underway. Our first destination was Ellen Island at the South end of Moresby Island where there is a Parks Canada cabin and dock. Ellen Island became the base of operations for day trips to various sites in the south area.

Day two saw me don a ton of diving gear and do a check out dive with Fillipo Ronca the dive safety officer. Being scientific divers, the Parks Canada team must dive with full communications and bailout bottles. This meant getting used to a 100 cubic foot steel tank, a 27 cubic foot bailout and an Orcatron communications system. I managed to make it through most of the protocols, all-be-t it was a bit awkward doing some things using strange gear.

In the days that followed, we used Klein 3000 side scan sonar and a magnetometer to search various potential anchorages for the wreck of the Ino. The Ino was a small 100 ton Brig attacked by Chief Koya's tribe in Houston-Stewart Channel in the spring of 1794. All 10 crew members were killed and the vessel plundered. Fur trader John Kendrick makes mention of the wreck in July 1794 while at Friendly Cove. While the Gwaii Haanas II carried out the remote sensing work, I had the opportunity to go ashore on Gordon Island and in Bowles Bay to visit some old village sites.

When the remote sensing had been completed, we spent a morning doing some dives off the village of Ninstantins on Anthony Island. We later toured the UNESCO World Heritage site. It has a very spiritual



cated. This involved collecting, and reading through numerous fur trade journals from the 1790s period. Despite putting in more than 40 hours of research time I was unable to produce X marks the spot. The best I could do was narrow down the general area as to where the vessels were lost.

Early in the spring of 2014 Jon called me to learn if I would be interested in accompanying the Parks Canada team to Gwaii Haanas to search for some of the very wrecks I researched. As you can imagine it did not take me long to make a decision. Opportunities like this don't come along every day. Unfortunately, as a result of the timing I had to postpone our UASBC trip to Quatsino Sound.

On Sunday June 9th I flew up to Sandspit and travelled to Queen Charlotte City where I was to meet the team and board the Gwaii Haanas II. The Gwaii Haanas II is the Parks Canada vessel that services the Park. On Monday morning,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

A Grand Adventure *(continued)*



feeling with the Memorial Totem poles reaching for the sky. One can just imagine what it would have looked like in its prime.

After covering off the more exposed outer coastline, we moved into Houston-Stewart Channel to search for a wreck indicated on an 1863 British Admiralty chart of the area. Despite shore walks at low tide, side scan work and magnetometer work, we did not find anything. Either the wreck was plotted incorrectly, we searched the wrong area or it was not large enough to leave a trace after 151 years.

After spending most of week one at the south end of Moresby Island we began making our way north visiting a number of old sites along the way. Ikeda Cove was particularly interesting. It was the site of an old copper mine. We dove at this site to determine the extent of the old dock facility. When the mine was in operation, a surplus sternwheeler hull (G.M. Dawson) was floated into the bay and beached as accommodation for the miners circa 1910. We managed to squeeze in a bit of time to survey it. There is not much left after 104 years, but it is an important piece of history just the same.

Moving further north, we visited the abandoned mining community of Old Jedway in Harriet Harbour and the site of an old Clam Cannery at Jedway Bay. Very little remains at either site. Even underwater, there is little evidence that people once lived there. Next we travelled north through Dolomite Narrows to Section Cove, then to the Bischof Islands in Juan Perez Sound and on to Lockeport.

Lockeport was the site of another mining community and a cannery in the 1920s. We did a quick dive to scan the site and headed to Cumshewa Inlet. On the way we travelled through Louise Narrows. What an experience! Imagine reaching out to touch the trees on either side of a 65 foot boat and yet still having enough water to travel through it.

Once at Cumshewa we travelled to the old village site at the entrance to the Inlet. This was the location where a small schooner called the Resolution was taken by the Haida in 1794. Nine of the crew members were killed but one man was held for a year as a slave. He was later rescued and his story recorded. We spent a day doing side scan work off the old village site but no enticing targets presented themselves. We were supposed to follow up on day two with a beach walk at low tide and a mag search. Unfortunately, the zodiac engine died and the Southeast wind began blowing with it forecasted to reach 45 knots. We hightailed it to Queen Charlotte City. Nothing could be done to fix the boat engine on the weekend and the wind continued unabated for 2 days. I decided that it was time to head home.

I waved adieux to the Parks Canada team. They managed to get one more day in at Cumshewa before their time was also up. In all an excellent trip. A fun group, beautiful scenery and some diving too.

Victoria Meeting Speaker Series 2014

SEPT 10

OCEAN NETWORKS CANADA TOUR

DR. Maia Hoeberechts, Director User Services, ONC

Ocean Networks Canada operates the world-leading NEPTUNE and VENUS cabled ocean observatories which stream live data from over 850 km of fibre optic cable laid on the ocean floor off the West Coast . These observatories collect data on physical, chemical, biological and geological aspects of the ocean over long time periods, supporting study on ocean and climate change, earthquakes and tsunamis, pollution, port security and shipping, resource development , marine life and more. Please join us as Dr. Maia Hoeberechts, the Director of User Services gives us for a tour of their operation at the Technology Enterprise Facility in Room 155, 2300 Mckenzie Ave., Gabriola Rd. We will meet at 6:45pm sharp, in the parking lot in front of the facility.

Please RSVP by Tues. Sept 9 so we have an idea of the number who will be coming.

OCT 8

DIVER ALERT NETWORK (DAN)

Danielle Claar DAN Instructor and PHD Candidate, Baum Lab, UVIC

In her capacity as a DAN instructor, Danielle, will talk to us about safe diving practices. Danielle is also a NAUI instructor and a Phd candidate in marine science. She has led a team to conduct a survey of a Hawaiian Sugar Steamer off NW coast of Hawaii and currently works for the Baum Lab at UVIC where she conducts ecological surveys at sites around the world.

NOV 12

UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY

Carole Valkenier, Diver and UW Photographer

Carole has been a diver and UW photographer for many years. She has done photography for many marine research projects such as Marine Ecology Station, Vancouver Aquarium, Artificial Reef Society and contributed to Diver Magazine to name a few. Carole will give a slide show from her extensive UW photography collection gathered from sites around the world and will share her personal perceptions of our fragile underwater environment.

DEC 10

A Long Dangerous Coastline: Shipwreck Tales from Alaska to California -Anthony Dalton

Author Anthony Dalton has written over 14 fiction and non-fiction books including|A Long Dangerous Coastline, Fish Trade Fleet and Graveyard of the Pacific. Anthony will be talking about the numerous shipwrecks that have occurred along the coast of North America.

Jan 14

HOW STORMS IMPACT THE COAST

DR. DAVID ATKINSON, PROFESSOR, UVIC

David will talk about how storms impact our coast. Storms produce many of the shipwrecks we dive on and they also alter, cover and uncover the wrecks and artifacts which lie on the bottom. Come and listen to Dr Atkinson as he describes how waves and storm surges affect people and our environment.

FEB 11

FIRE AT SEA: HMCS PROTECTEUR

AL DELISLE, CPO Canadian Navy and Re-breather Diver

Al will give us a first-hand account of the March 2014 fire on board HMCS Protecteur, 600 km north of Hawaii. He will talk about how it started, the problems fighting the fire, and the aftermath.

This edition of the Foghorn marks my last as its organizer and editor. It has been an enlightening experience that has been both fun and beneficial to my desired career goal as a journalist.

I am leaving for China in just over a month's time and will be passing the reigns of this newsletter on to someone else (if you're interested feel free to shoot me an email - bossonsmatthew@gmail.com).

Best of luck to everyone at the UASBC in the coming years endeavours, I look forward to see all of you at society functions upon my return.

Foghorn (ISSN 1198-7081) is published quarterly by the Underwater Archaeological Society of British Columbia (UASBC), c/o the Vancouver Maritime Museum, 1905 Ogden Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6J 1A3 www.UASBC.com. The UASBC is a group of volunteer avocational and professional underwater archaeologists who conserve, preserve, and protect the maritime heritage lying beneath BC's coastal and inland waters.

UASBC Executive

President Eric Young
Past President David Hill Turner
Treasurer Keith Bossons
Communications Dir. Dean Driver
Membership Secretary Holger Heitland
Lower Mainland Dir. Tom Beasley
Van. Island Dir. John Middleton
Southern Interior Bill Meekel
Education Dir. Bronwen Young
Exploration Dir. Jacques Marc

Editing and Layout

Matthew Bossons

Editorial Material

Opinions expressed in Foghorn are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the UASBC. Copyright © 2014, the Underwater Archaeological Society of British Columbia. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted without the publisher's written permission

