

City of Ainsworth – 1892-1898

By: Brian Nadwidny

The City of Ainsworth (CofA) was lost in a storm on Kootenay Lake in November of 1898. It was, and still is, the greatest maritime inland lake tragedy in BC history with 9 deaths. Because of that it has been of much interest and has a long history with the UASBC. Due to the efforts of the UASBC, along with The Dambusters Dive Club, Simon Fraser University and CAN-Dive the wreck was found in 1990 using ROV technology at a depth of 110m (360ft). It was dived in 1997 by Bart Bjorkman and John Chluski from the Cambrian Foundation using open circuit equipment. At the time this was the deepest shipwreck dive in Canada. In 2010 the UASBC ran a trip that explored, with ROVs, the scour marks from when the ship slid down the slope to its' final resting place followed next year with another ROV expedition. This one managed to find the wreck and shoot a few minutes of footage of the uniquely staggered stern paddlewheels before the ROV had a major malfunction. In 2019 a privately funded venture was launched with UASBC Interior Director Bill Meekel in observance. Due to the limited visibility the ROV was only able to film the port side of the wreck from the stern to the bow. It showed that the port side main deck was still standing until approximately midships but everything else that was visible appeared to be collapsed. It was surmised that the Wheelhouse had broken free during the descent as there was no sign of it.

Because of the very limited footage obtained over the years it was clear that divers, despite the depth and remote location, would need to again dive the ship to check on its' condition. And thus, the VexNow team was assembled, with the goal to dive and document the CofA in the deeps of Kootenay Lake.

VexNow is a team of highly experienced technical divers from Alberta and British Columbia. Team members have individually or collectively done exploration and discoveries that range from shipwrecks off Halifax,

NS, Inside Passage of BC, caves and wrecks in South Africa and the Reappearing River and Wet Dream caves on Vancouver Island. Several of the team are UASBC members.

For the 2023 expedition the team picked to go in late August/Early September, like the 1997 group. The reason for this is that the lake is at its' warmest, especially in the 10-6m (30-20ft) depths where most of the decompression would take place. Brian Nadwidny, John McCuaig, and Cathie McCuaig went out on August 26, before the rest of the group arrived, and set a down line on the wreck, which was found using known marks from previous trips and a bottom view sonar. The next day the rest of the group arrived. The team structure was as follows: Divers Johnny Ryan (Airdrie, AB) and Brian Nadwidny (Cranbrook/Kaslo, BC)-(called Team Irish). Divers Glenn Farquhar (Langley, BC) and Alan Drake (Vancouver, BC) -(called Team Left Coast). Surface support was supplied by John McCuaig (Edmonton, AB) and support diver was Terina Hancock (Edmonton, AB). Shore support was Cathie McCuaig (Edmonton, AB). Bottom divers were on closed circuit rebreathers with a diluent of 10/70 (10% oxygen and 70% helium).



VexNow Team Members

Photo by John McCuaig

Continued on page 2

On August 28 the dive boat sailed out to the site. It was determined ahead of time that only one team would be diving each day. Team Irish was the designated team for the first day. Upon arriving, a pleasure boat was found to be anchored on to the buoys that marked the downline. It was clear that the line had been moved by this. The line was reset and the first divers went down. At 110m they were greeted by a bottom of silt and mud with no sign of the wreck. It was clear that the downline had missed. A piece of 6" iron pipe with a flange was seen rising from the mud so it was clear that the target was close. After 10 minutes of searching the duo started the trip back up. Dive time was just over 2 hours.

The next day (August 29) another attempt was made. The downline was again reset. Team Left Coast went down. About an hour later the support diver, Terina Hancock, made contact with the team at the 30m stop and the team confirmed via a slate that they had made it on the wreck. The down line was only 10m off of the wreck. For the first time in 26 years, divers had been on the City of Ainsworth. Several minutes of video were obtained which was of much better quality than the ROV's ever obtained and showed much of the starboard side which was of great interest as there was extremely limited footage of that area.

The next day strong winds were blowing up from the south and despite two efforts to get to the site it was determined that the wave conditions were not suitable for diving, especially when a 2.5-hour decompression was in the plan. No dives were done that day or the next as the winds were still blowing quite strong from the same direction. The team took this day off to visit the SS Moyie paddlewheeler in Kaslo and also the JB Fletcher Museum/store in Ainsworth. This turned out to be a thrill for the director of the Fletcher as they have a display dedicated to the namesake ship that was built there, many years ago. The team agreed that video and photographic footage will be shared with the museum for the display.

September 1 the winds abated, and Team Irish were on tap to dive. Everything went well, the down line hadn't moved so divers had no problem finding the ship. Video and still photographs were taken. One interesting thing that came out of this footage was that the wheel and wheelhouse were found to still be on the wreck. Previous assumptions that all that had been swept away during the sinking were proved to be false. Total dive time was 2hrs 45 minutes. One annoying part of this dive, compared to the previous two, was that the thermocline, which separated the bottom temperatures of 2-5c to a much warmer



Maple Leaf Decoration engraved into Starboard Paddle Wheel Cover.

18c had previously been around 20m. This layer was brought shallower by the storm, so temperatures didn't improve until the 10m stop.



Brian Nadwidny
nadwidny@gmail.com

Ships Wheel and Roof of Wheelhouse

Photo by Brian Nadwidny

On September 2 it was again time for Team Left Coast. Once more the divers were able to find the wreck easily and more video footage was gathered. Total dive time was 3 hours.

This expedition was 15 years in the dreaming and making. It was something that had to be done so the story of the City of Ainsworth could be continued. It could not have happened without a tight, highly trained, and experienced team. Plans are to go back again next year with a more fo-cused plan. With input from the experts the team will know more of what to look for, what to film, etc. as there are many questions to be answered. The City of Ainsworth is just now, after 125 years, starting to talk to again.

Captain Nemo Club 2023

We thank the following contributors in 2023

40,000 Leaguers	\$500 +	15,000 Leaguers	\$51-99
Glen and Marjorie Olds	\$17,613	None	
20,000 Leaguers	\$100-499	10,000 Leaguers	\$26-50
Ian Pope & Carole Valkenier	\$300	Vicki Donoghue	\$10
Geoff Batchelar	\$100	Mike Clement	\$10
Mike Brissette	\$100	Paula Teale	\$20
Murray & Ann Maffey	\$100	Jamie Li	\$20
Paul Kraeutner	\$148	Mark MacKenzie	\$20
		Brian Spurling	\$20
		Brian Cross	\$20
		Bruce Morrison	\$50

The Captain Nemo Club recognizes cash donations received by the UASBC during a year.

The categories are assigned dependent upon the amount of the contribution.

To thank our donors the UASBC publishes their names in the Foghorn at year end in recognition of their support above and beyond the volunteer hours they contribute.

You too can see your name in print.

Just send along a little something extra when you renew your membership.

All contributions over the membership amount will be eligible for a tax receipt should you want one.

Please refer to
WWW.UASBC.COM for latest Updates!

Congratulations UAD Graduates

The UASBC ran an Underwater Archeology for Divers course on October 8 & 9 in Victoria.



Congratulations to Quinn Ashford, Lee Critchley, Rory Mackenzie and Curtis Matthew for successfully completing the course.

Photos by J Marc

Shipwrecks Conference 2024

Evolution of Diving & Diving Technology in BC



Location: Royal Colwood Golf Club
Date April 20, 2024

Confirmed Speakers

- Vickie Jensen, - Deep Dark & Dangerous
- Frank White Jr. - Pioneer diving in Victoria
- Bryan Cuthill - Early SCUBA diving in Vancouver
- Jacques Marc - The contributions of Fred Rogers
- Rob Deploy - History of Esquimalt Fleet Diving Unit
- Doug Pemberton - A look back at Dive Clubs



Keynote Speaker James P. Delgado

Topic: History of Underwater Archaeology



UASBC Apparel for Gifts



UASBC Ball Cap – Blue or Green \$20.99

Low profile ball-cap. Navy blue or green in colour with white UASBC logo on front and embroidered



"Archeological Society of British Columbia" lettering on the back. One size fits all.



UASBC Vest-Navy Blue - \$18.00

Only available in small.



UASBC Toque – Blue \$17.99

Navy blue in colour with white UASBC logo on at front. One size fits all.



UASBC T-Shirt \$19.99

Navy blue in colour with white UASBC logo on left side of chest. Sizes available: XL, L, M & S.



Publications – Prices Vary

To order apparel visit the UASBC shop <https://www.uasbc.com/catalog/apparel>

or contact Holger Heitland hh0796@telus.net

UASBC Diver Explorations Spring Schedule 2024

Tentative 2024 Spring Explorations Schedule

(I have not been able to confirm boat charters for all the dates so some changes may occur)

Saturday February 17th or 18th Hampden P5433

In 2023 we did a couple of dives on a recently discovered Hadley-Page Hampden bomber wreck in Saanich Inlet. We have since surveyed the site and identified the wreck as Hampden P5433. It crashed on a training run March 14, 1943, killing all 4 crew members. This is make-up dive for the November 11th dive which was cancelled due to weather. The goal is to view the site and do some searching to the north of the existing site. We will depart from Tulista Boat Launch in Sidney. Charter cost \$100 per person. Limit 8 divers.

Call Jacques (250) 474-5797 or email: jmarc@shaw.ca

Sunday March 9th Fanny Wreck

We will dive on the wreck of the Fanny lost off Discovery Island in 1868. This will be a monitoring photography dive. We will do two dives on site as the wreck lies in 3 separate pieces. Charter cost \$100.00 per person. Maximum 8 divers. There may be some light current. All diver levels are welcome.

Contact Jacques (250) 474-5797 or email: jmarc@shaw.ca

Saturday & Sunday March 23 & 24 – Underwater Archaeology for Divers Course

Underwater Archaeology for Divers (UAD) is a 20-hour and consists of 8 modules online, a pool session and an open water dive. Graduates receive a Certificate of Achievement for successfully completing the course.

To register contact Jacques Marc (250) 474-5797 or email jmarc@shaw.ca

April 6 & 7 - Barkley Sound Wreck Trek

Weather permitting, we hope to visit several sites around Barkley Sound. Namely, the Vanlene (1972) Theipval (1930), Tuscan Prince (1923) and Orpheus (1885) We will stay at a house on Grappler Inlet and dive with Ocean Emerald Charters.

We will travel to Bamfield on Friday afternoon April 5th.

Charter and accommodation estimate is \$500, air and meals will be on top of that.

Maximum 10 divers. Some surge conditions can be expected on these dives so bring gravel.

Call Jacques (250) 474-5797 or email: jmarc@shaw.ca

Continued on page 8

UASBC Diver Explorations Spring Schedule 2024

Saturday May 5th Nanette Survey Dive

On this trip we will visit the Nanette site on Race Rocks. The Nanette was a wooden sailing barque that was wrecked on Race Rocks December 27, 1860. It eventually drifted off leaving much of its cargo on the bottom. We will continue the radial survey on the site that we started in 2023. This dive is suitable for all open water divers. We will depart from Pedder Bay. Charter \$100 per person. Limit 8 divers.

Contact Jacques (250) 474-5797 or email: jmarc@shaw.ca

2024 Spring Victoria U/W Explorers Speaker Series

January 17, 2024, Exploring the USS liberty Wreck, Bali Indonesia

John Roney is an underwater cinematographer just returned from filming in Bali Indonesia. During his trip he spent time exploring and filming the USS Liberty wreck. The Liberty was a freighter torpedoed by Japanese submarine I-66 in the Lombok Strait on January 11, 1942. The damaged ship was towed into shallow water where it sank. Today it is a popular dive site.

February 21, 2024, Speaker To be announced.

March 20, 2024, Total Surprise! The Sunken Ships of Chuuk Lagoon

Ewan Anderson UASBC Communications Director, will reprise his recent presentation on a 2023 dive trip to Chuuk Lagoon. More than 60 Japanese ships and aircraft were sunk by the US Navy in February 1944 during Operation Hailstone. Today the wrecks are a wreck diving mecca. Ewan will share with us what he found.

Please refer to
WWW.UASBC.COM for latest Updates!

Success!!!

By: Jacques Marc

As part of the Historic Shipwrecks of Southern Vancouver Island project I wanted to try document the SS San Pedro with photogrammetry. It is a large site that is badly broken up which meant doing a standard off set survey would be difficult and time consuming.

To this end in October 2022, we went out and cut the kelp off the wreck and returned the following day to complete the photography. Ewan and Kathrine had not been down for more than 10 minutes when the underwater visibility went from great to bad because of the switch from a flood to ebbing current. After several attempts to stitch the photos together to generate a model, Ewan threw up his hands in frustration. It just was not going to happen.

Fast forward to October 21 & 23, 2023. I convinced Ewan we should make one more attempt at doing photogrammetry.

The group Paul Spencer, Jiri Kotler, Leila Bautista, Chris Mills, Lee Critchley, Ewan Anderson and I met at the Esquimalt Anglers boat launch on Saturday October 21. At 09:30. We boarded the Miss Emily skippered by Lyle Berzins for our trip out to Brochie ledge and the wreck of the SS San Pedro. The San Pedro was a large 331-foot steam collier that ran aground on Brochie Ledge on November 22, 1891. Several attempts were made to raise her, but all failed. The vessel was extensively salvaged and abandoned.



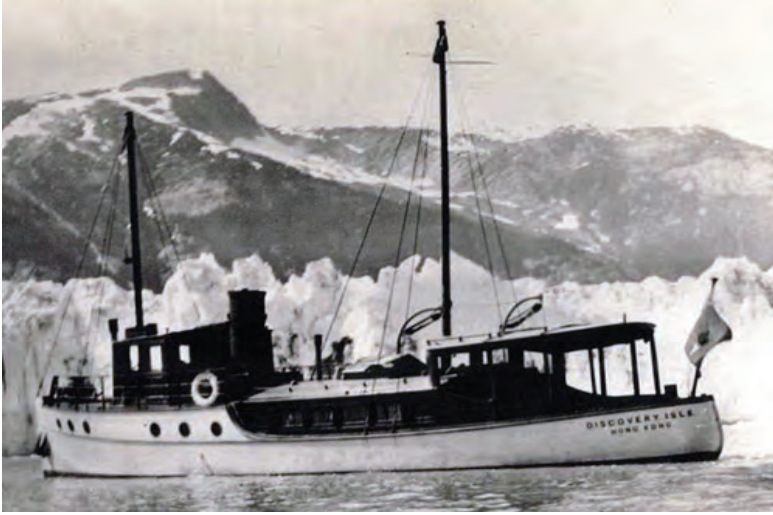
Kelp Cutting team from Day One.

We arrived at 10:30 to find that there was very little current. Slack was predicted for 11:15. Everyone got their gear on and entered the water by 11:00 with a variety of kelp cutting tools. Each group was assigned a portion of the wreck. After 45 minutes the wreck had been cleaned off sufficiently to expose the frames and floors of the wreck.

Following the kelp cutting bee we traveled to Enterprise Chanel to dive the wreck of the Discovery Isle and another site affectionally known as the brick pile. Both sites can be visited on the same dive.

The Discovery Isle was an 80-foot wooden yacht owned by Earnest Beaumont who lived on Discovery Island. It was wrecked December 5, 1950, just west of Gonzales Point. Rod Palm and the McGuire Bros. found the site in the 1970's and recovered the McNab rudder. The UASBC looked for it during the 1990 Southern Vancouver Island survey but could not find it. Local diver mark Heibert relocated it in 2014. There is not a lot left on site, just the engine, shaft two hawse pipes and a few engine room fittings. There was no noticeable change to the brick pile. More research is needed to identify where the bricks came from.

Continued on page 10



Yacht Discovery Isle. (Uncredited Internet Photo)



Engine block Photo by Mark Hiebert

On day two we met at the Esquimalt Anglers boat launch. The group remained the same except Chris Mills was replaced with Clint Van Rossum of Nanaimo. The first dive was off Macaulay Point.

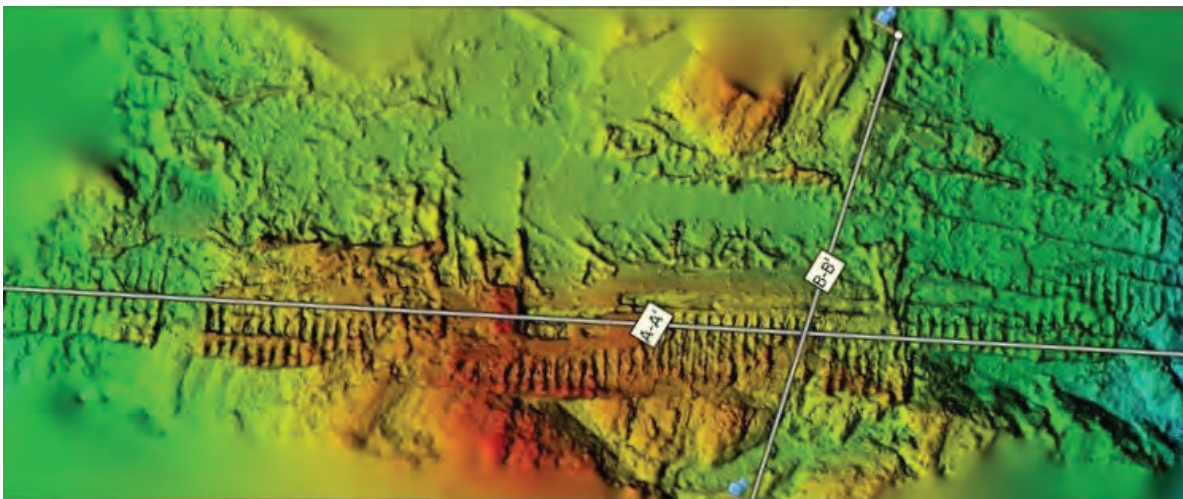
This area was reported to have been used by First Nations as a Reef Netting site. Everyone was dropped off on an offshore reef and asked to swim east and west looking for rock accumulations that did not look natural. The offshore reef was rocky and covered with palm kelp. The area between the reef and shore was featureless sand. No evidence of a reef net fishery was found. If this area was used for a reef net fishery it may be that it is closer to Harrison Island or possibly amongst the Islet off Fleming Bay.

One everyone was back aboard we travelled to Brotchie Ledge. There was still some light current when we arrived. Ewan and Lee went in first as they needed maximum time to conduct the photogrammetry.

Jacques, Jiri & Paul searched for an anchor to the east of the wreck and Leila and Clint searched for an anchor south of the Brotchie Beacon. Paul successfully relocated one of the anchors. He described it as 6-7 feet long with chain attached. Leila and Clint found a large hawser made of rope but no anchor.

Ewan and Lee surfaced after 1 ½ hours underwater. Ewan gave the thumbs up. He was confident that they got something this time. After a couple of days of post processing all our work came to fruition. The model came together and showed 2/3rds of the wreck. It shows a very broken but linear wreck feature on the bottom.

Thanks to everyone for making this a success.



UASBC Revisits Nanette and Smyth Head Reef Netting Site

By: Jiri Kotler

The coast fall exploration program started on 19 August 2023. The plan was to revisit sites of the wreck of Nanette at Race Rocks, and of the First Nations reef net site off Smyth Head. The group consisted of Jacques Marc, Leila Bautista, Kristin Piche, Tara Strachan, Lenny Fairclough and Jiri Kotler. As usual, when planning to visit these sites, the group met at the Pedder Bay Marina. Captain Lyle Berzin had already launched Miss Emily, a charter boat equipped specifically for diving and powered by twin 175 HP Yamaha outboard engines. One by one the divers schlepped their respective gear down a long dock ramp and loaded it on board. With only six divers there was plenty of room to spread the gear.



Expedition group picture prior to departure

The expedition departed the dock at 9:45. The expected slack tide at Race Rocks was at 13:26. The weather was pleasant with a lot of sunshine and little or no wind. The first dive was at the relatively calm waters in a small cove off Smyth Head. The goal was to locate reef net anchors that had been sighted on earlier expeditions. To date 4 anchor stones have been discovered but we only have GPS coordinates for one. By 10:50 everybody was in the water. The marker line was well placed and everybody had a chance to inspect the plum-shaped reef net anchor #1. The others, however, continued to elude discovery. The teams covered a fairly large area of the cove bottom but to no avail.

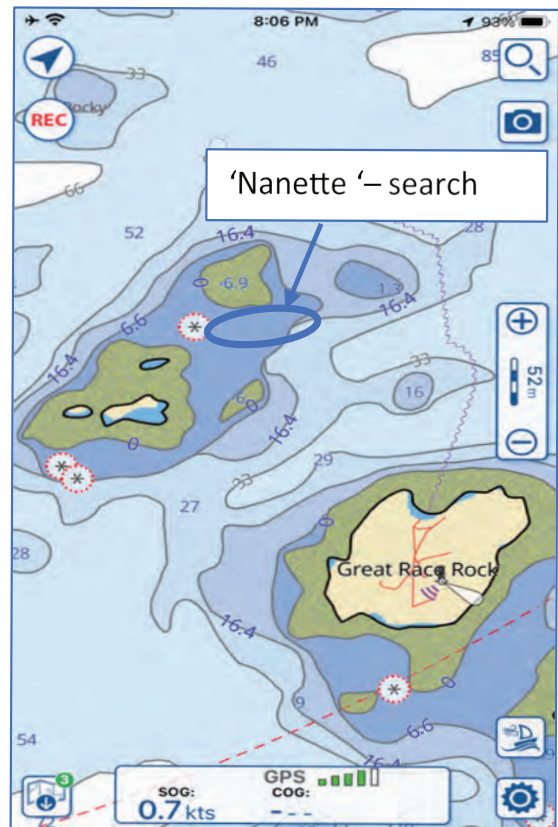
Continued on page 12

A typical dive profile was about forty minutes at a depth of fifty feet with visibility of about twenty feet. Unfortunately, Lenny had to abort his dive due to a serious leak in one of his dry suit booties. As a result, he was relegated to a position of an assistant deck hand.

After an hour or so of surface interval and lunch the group was ready to explore the remnants of the wreck of Nanette at Race Rocks. The wreckage is in relatively shallow waters nestled amongst the rocky islets (mostly occupied by sea lions). There were numerous fishing and whale watching tour boats in the area and captain Lyle gave a general 'heads up' over a VHF radio about the presence of divers.



Jiri Kotler with one of several Lime barrels.



Approximate location of wreckage

Kristin, Tara and Leila resorted to sight-seeing. They explored the numerous 'lime barrels' (congealed white contents of one-time wooden barrels), and two bronze pintles (parts of rudder hinges). Earlier Jacques reminded everybody to keep a 'sharp-eye' for pottery shards, markings of which could add to the wreck's story. Jacques and Jiri spent their time assessing the extent of the brick pile (part of the ship's ballast) using a radial survey method (the anchor pile with good GPS coordinates served as datum). Although not as numerous as on earlier dives in the area divers encountered several curious sea lions. A typical dive profile was again forty or so minutes at a depth of about forty feet with visibility of about twenty-five feet. The timing of the dive was good as the tide started to turn to flood.

By general consensus the second dive was more interesting as there was more to see and explore. The expedition was back at Pedder Bay Marina by 1500. It seemed that everybody was in a 'hurry' to go somewhere so there was no Shipwreck Pale Ale or coffee time to review the day's events.



UASBC Presidents' message

by: **Keith Bossons**

Hi Everyone,

The year is quickly drawing to a close and the UASBC has continued to make significant progress on a number of fronts over the past year.

A survey was completed at the Saanich Inlet crash site of a Hadley Page Hampden bomber that was lost on a training mission during the second world war. Site monitoring dives were completed in Barkley Sound and the Kootenay and Slocan Lakes and technical dives were completed on the SS Beaver II.

We hosted our first Indigenous Maritime Archaeology Conference in April of this year at the Chief Joe Mathias Centre in North Vancouver. The conference was a great success with many interesting talks.

The new Underwater Archaeology for Divers course continues to attract students and has been a great success.

The annual wine and cheese recognition event occurred November 25 in Victoria at the Huntington Manor. It was wonderful evening and nice to see people in person. At the event we recognized Jiri Kotler as Volunteer of the year for his participation on dives, help with UAD courses and for giving lectures at UASBC meetings.



Jiri Kotler receives his 2023 Volunteer of the year award from Keith Bossons

On November 26, we had an in person meeting of the UASBC board of directors where we spent some time focusing on the future and how we can keep the UASBC successful and relevant for many years to come.

Finally, I would like to thank all our members who continue to support the organization and the work we do.

Stay safe and have a happy holiday season.

*Keith Bossons
UASBC President*

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: Keith Bossons

Treasurer: Leila Bautista

Communications: Ewan Anderson

Membership: Guy Shockey

Chandlery: Holger Heitland

Lower Mainland Dir: Tom Beasley

Van. Island Dir: John Middleton

Southern Interior Dir: Bill Meekel

Exploration & Education: Jacques Marc

Archivist/Researcher: Warren Bush

Layout

Anji Smith

Gary Lambeth

Editorial Material

Opinions expressed in Foghorn are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the UASBC. Copyright © 2023, 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



Please refer to
WWW.UASBC.COM for latest Updates!