

## **WEEK 5 PART 3 SAILING DESOLATION SOUND**



### **Lunch at Quadra Island, Moulds Bay**

We left a short time later and sailed south a few miles to Moulds Bay on Quadra Island. Quadra Island is separated from the very big island of Vancouver by a narrow strait. At one time there was an underwater obstruction on the bottom of the narrows which caused such violent overfalls and whirlpools that every year



### **A mysterious sail boat Cortes Island, Vancouver Island and snow behind**

several people would die there. Right after the Second World War, it was decided to do something about it. A tunnel through the solid rock from the shore out to the obstruction was constructed. During this time a workboat with 9 men drifted into the area and before they could be towed to safety the boat was sucked under with loss of all hands. A short time after, WWII surplus explosives from the U.S. were trucked up and the tunnel was packed with TNT. When they set it off it was the largest peace time explosion in the world. Where

once stood an underwater rock pinnacle, there now is an underwater crater.

Moulds Bay was a perfect spot for lunch as it was well protected by a small off lying island and a headland making it almost landlocked. There were iron rings drilled into the rock so a boat could easily and securely attach a line to shore. A couple of hours latter we headed to our evening's anchorage at Manson's landing on Cortes Island. We threaded our way past some low lying islets to approach Manson's landing. Our initial idea was to tie up to the floating dock outside a shallow lagoon but when we got there it was just too crowded. It was at this point



**Rocks to port, entrance to Manson lagoon**



**Sand spit to starboard**

we noticed the lagoon on the map. Though  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the lagoon dries at low tide if you had “extensive local knowledge” it was possible to wind your way into the entrance and follow a narrow channel to an area of 20 foot deep water. Heck the boat only drew 28 inches, what could go wrong?

Since the tide was coming in the narrow entrance if we ran aground we would refloat. Good seamanship so far. On the flip side the water was really rushing in at 5 knots and since our engine wouldn't idle we would be screaming into the lagoon in a very dramatic manner. Add a wildly gesturing guy up forward and it was quite an entrance. We could see people walking around in the lagoon in knee deep water. The channel was a darker blue and appeared to be about 6 feet deep initially. It was also quite narrow probably less than 20 feet wide.

We passed by a couple walking in ankle deep water by about 8 feet, I think we startled them. I could see the bottom which was sand, gravel and shells rushing by on either side, so far so good. Pat indicated I had to make a hard turn to starboard which I did and I could still see the bottom rushing by, only this time it was at right angles to the direction I wanted to go. Depth dropped to 3 feet then 2.7 feet and 2.5 and bounced between 2.5 and 2.4 for a couple of minutes until we located the channel again. By now the current was slower and we had the necessary control to stay in the 4 foot deep channel and reach the “pot” of the lagoon where we anchored. Needless to say we had it to ourselves.



**Safely in the “pot” of the lagoon**





**Tied up at Manson's Landing dock**

The next morning we left early on a high tide so it was less critical that we stay in the narrow channel except for the actual exit as there were now a number of rocks (not sand and gravel) just below the surface of the water. We exited without incident and found a spot alongside a "project boat" on the dock outside the lagoon at Manson's Landing. The chart showed Hague Lake a short walk away and a number of the locals said that the store nearby had ice and other necessities. Also there was a "great hamburger stand that served the best burgers and milkshakes on the islands". (I would say it was an understatement) We hiked uphill a ½ mile to the store and got some drinks and ice. The stand wouldn't open for a while so we planned to come back. On the walk back a local stopped and offered us a ride to the dock. We loaded up our stuff and then headed back up for lunch. The food was great and the people real characters including the dogs. We didn't listen to our mamas and decided to go swimming at the lake after eating. A short walk brought us to the provincial park on the lake. It was shaded by big old trees and had a wonderful sandy beach. The water was in the mid '70s, very nice! We just lazed around for a while and then returned down the hill to a different scene from when we left. The tide was out and it was a dramatic difference. We splashed around on the sand bars and then returned to the boat for the last sail and overnight anchorage before the end of this great week.



**Hague Lake, warm and fresh**





**Small islands in the lagoon high tide**

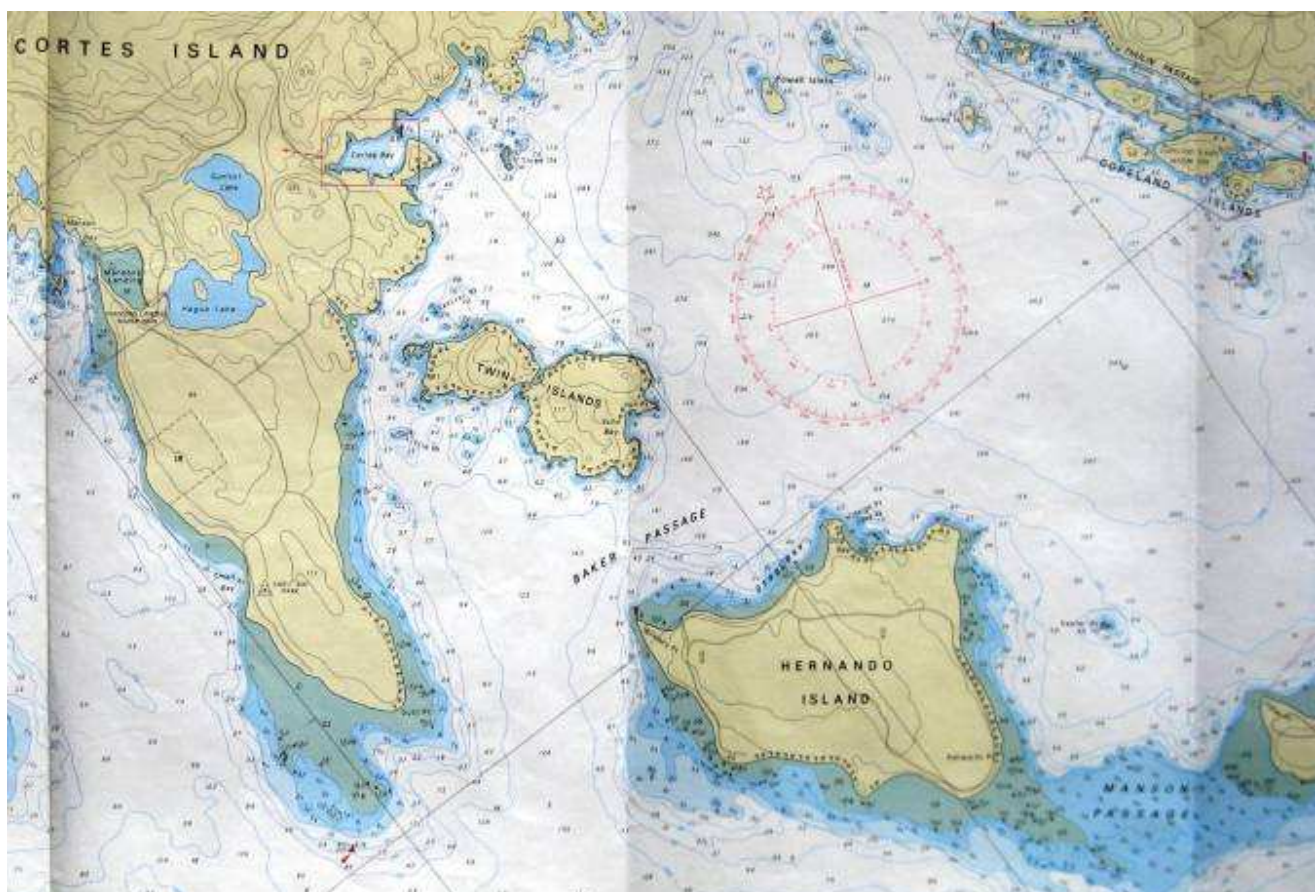


**Same islands low tide**



**Sand spit at the entrance to Manson's Lagoon, Vancouver Island in back**





**Cortes and Hernando Island. Manson's landing in NW corner, Copeland Is. NE**

We decided to sail to the Copeland Islands as it was located close to our haul out spot and yet had reasonable privacy and tranquility. We had to sail from Manson's Landing south around Cortes Island giving the tip a wide berth, passing well south of a nasty shoal. The wind was NNW so it was a great sail and when we rounded the can buoy we headed NE through Baker Passage, then a broad reach to the southern most of the Copeland Islands. We found what appeared to be a perfect spot and anchored in 50 feet of water with the usual line ashore. We were the only boat in the cove and from our spot no other boats were visible. After going ashore we found that on the other side of the island there were 15 more boats crowded together. We were so clever to have found our cove! Or, did they know something we didn't? That evening as we sat on the boat in the growing darkness a young woman carrying a bulky box like thing hiked up to a bluff facing the fading light to the west. She was only 50 yards away and did a most unexpected and beautiful thing. She began to play the accordion. Please, no accordion jokes! Every one of her selections was poignant and romantic and perfectly suited to the slowing fading light. I did not recognize any of the compositions but they were totally mesmerizing. After about twenty minutes and in near darkness she stopped and gathered up her instrument and returned to the other side of the island.



**Our last night, listening to remarkably beautiful accordion music**



**Time to head back**



**My inspiration**



**Tasty dinner, our last in Desolation Sound**



### **Samurai Lemon Slicer**

Dinner was delayed due to the entertainment but afterwards Pat set about fixing a special last meal of fresh picked green beans and some of the best sausage I have ever had. Of course we needed lemon for the beans. Pat had the lemon, I had the knife. I proceeded to do my best impression of John Belushie's Samurai Deli Chef. It was at that point Pat threw the lemon. I took a wild downward swing and voila' two perfect lemon halves. Kinda like plucking that fly out of the air with chopsticks, only more tasty. With a great meal and quiet evening we dozed off to sleep.

The wind shifted out of the south and a swell started to come in causing the boat to really rock as the swell wrapped around the point of the cove. The wind held the boat at about 60 degrees across the swell making for a very uncomfortable

movement. Hmmmm maybe that is why everyone is over in the other cove. I rigged a bridle causing the boat to rotate until we were facing the swells and the motion settled down to a much more tolerable level and we drifted off to sleep.

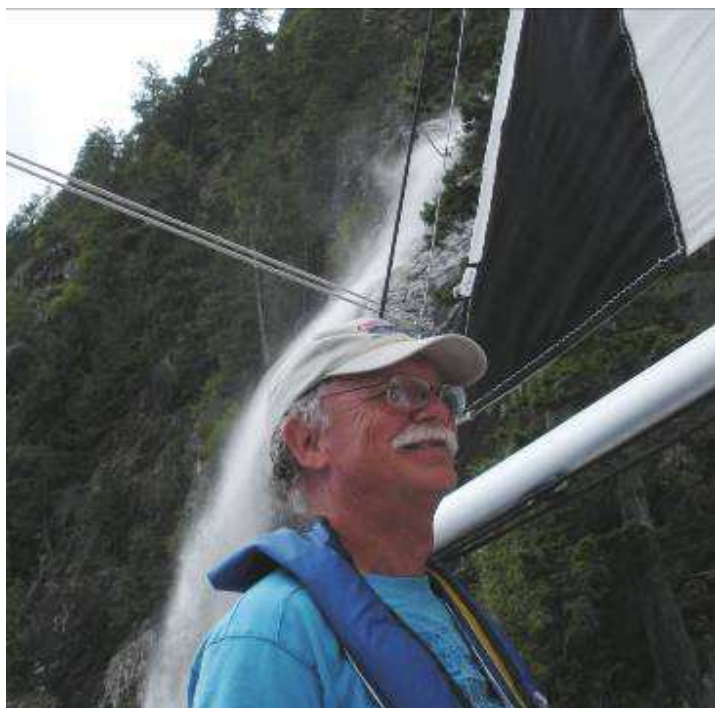
Next morning we were up and motored out to Lund for the haul out. It went off with only one problem when the rudder came loose and dragged up the ramp bending one of the gudgeons a bit. The rest of the trip was without incident except for the \$250 ticket I got for parking in an alley outside of my sister's place in Vancouver while we went to dinner. And yet everyone was so kind at the impound office where they took the boat and trailer, I couldn't be too mad. I think this trip has really made me very mellow for a long time to come.

Pushing the limits a bit more than I am comfortable, coming up with interesting arrangements for the use of the boat, sharing with family and friends in a truly awe inspiring setting have really paid off in this exceptional summer. I have found that you do not need a great deal of skill and experience (see reading tide and current tables properly) just some planning, a good boat and sense of adventure. If there is something to be gained from this story for others, I think it would be to stretch your perceived limits, challenge yourself, and share that experience with those you love and trust.





**This says it all**



**Without the hat I would be all wet**



**Never grow old and say “I should have....”**