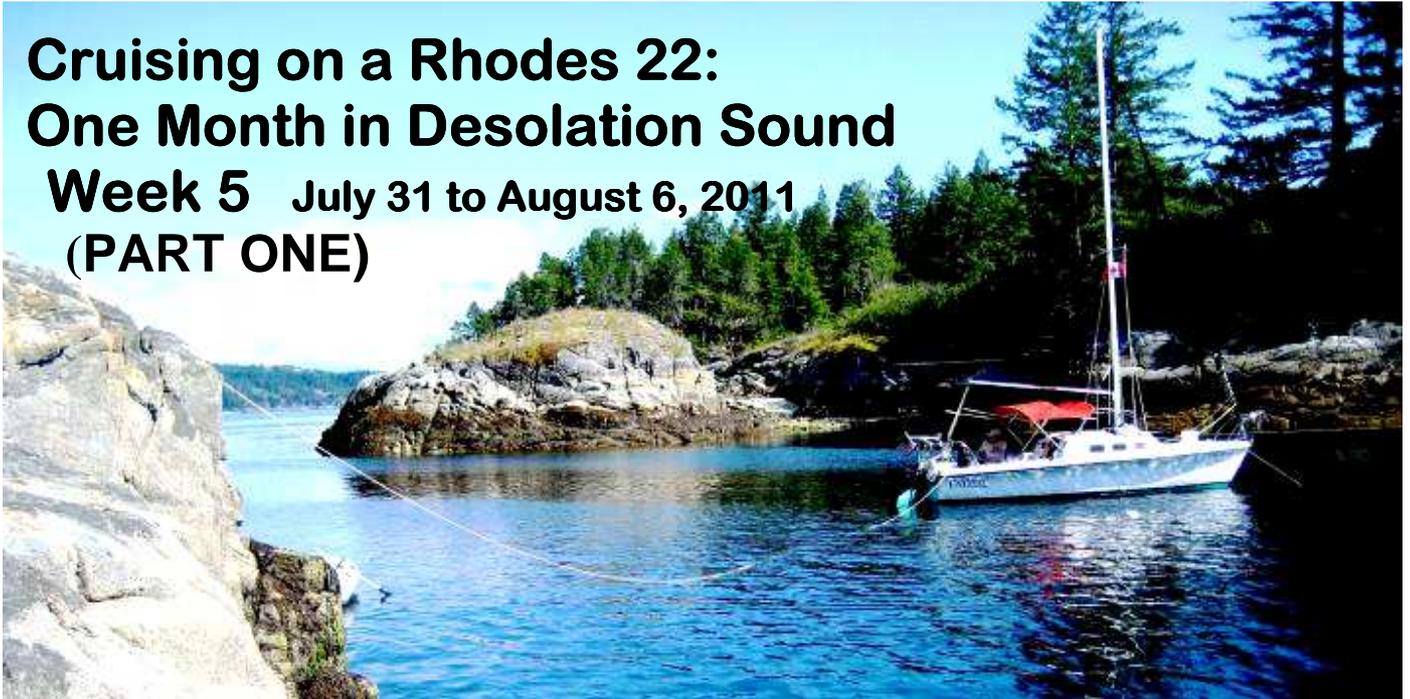


Cruising on a Rhodes 22: One Month in Desolation Sound Week 5 July 31 to August 6, 2011 (PART ONE)



Michael left in the morning and Pat returned that afternoon of the 30th. We spent the night in Lund and early the next morning left for Butte Sound about 25 miles to the north. Again we had a good following wind for the first third of the trip and

then got the motor running for the last portion. It was mid afternoon when we approached a cove that looked interesting and deserted. It was on the eastern side of Butte Sound just before the sound took a sharp turn eastward. Interesting it was, deserted it wasn't. A very large lodge and a number of private 4,000 sf rustic "cabins" clustered around the cove with a dock, a number of boats and a couple of float planes. Not what we were looking for.



Approaches to Butte Inlet

However to the NW across the sound was a deserted lumbering operation at the mouth of a small creek in a valley with the rare feature of level ground. The glacial deposits had filled the bottom of the valley and even extended offshore a bit so we could anchor in only 60 feet. The bottom then shelved steeply to only eight to ten feet deep at high tide. We would have to anchor off a bit, something we hadn't done much of at all.



We ran a line ashore to a large log entangled in a lot of drift wood and massive stumps. There were a number of old log booms anchored in the small bay and a huge pile of pulpwood logs piled into a large pyramid that lay abandoned and weathering into a tangled mound of silver gray. After rowing around to inspect a small stream that took a short leap into the sound we returned to shore and wandered along some abandoned logging roads.

A long line to shore south of Moth creek

Again there was that odd feeling of “not being alone” and we kept shouting “Hey Bear” and other inane phrases so as not to startle Smoky and his friends. Well, something must have startled one because in the middle of the trail was a really big mound of bear poo. It



Pickin’ Bear-ies

was full of berry seeds, other seeds, hair, and a size 12 hiking boot. Ok, maybe not the boot. It wasn’t fresh, well that was good news though it might mean it was time for him to come back for a second deposit. We moved back to the shore and found a tiny dredged inlet that would make a safe little haven for the boat the next time we sailed up this way.

It was getting toward sunset and we decided to cook up some dinner. Pat was



8’ Drift-stump with flower



Old log booms Butte Inlet

getting up to work out the kinks. I was greeted with a beautiful sunrise. The light at these high latitudes is beautiful and the air can be crystal clear one moment and then the light becomes diffused and ethereal as fog moves between the light and the viewer.

the chef and I installed the pop-top cover in anticipation of mosquitoes and chilly temps as we were getting up into the mountains. Butte Sound or Inlet is a lot like Toba Sound in which I sailed with Michael the week before. Perhaps it was not as steep but the not too distant mountains were as large and even more snow covered.

It was distinctly colder here in the evening than most of Desolation sound and the extra fleece helped.

A bit stiff and sore, I found myself



Fantastic morning light



Sunrise Butte Inlet



Approaching Aaron Rapids

was not too bad at first and we assumed we would proceed down the north side of the island then turn south and go with the current through Yuculta Rapids. Great plan but for a bit of detail; the current was with us through Aaron Rapids but for some strange reason it turned out that it flows south to north through Yuculta Rapids. Not what we were counting on. We thought we were about 45 minutes before slack water. I failed to notice

A nice breakfast and ready for the next adventure. The goal was to wander over to Octopus Islands through some challenging narrows. It was all in the timing. With tide and current tables for each cut and rapid, what could go wrong?

If you look at the NW section of the chart collage with Butte Sound, a bit south is Stuart Island with a narrow channel called Aaron Rapids. We motored down to the opening and with the current with us we decided to go in a bit early. It



Whirlpools to the front of us

the small asterisk on the time chart; something about adjusting for daylight saving times. We were almost an hour and half too early as we shot through Aaron rapids and then attempted to go through the next rapid. At that time the flow was around 6 to 8 knots with lots of upwelling, side and counter currents



Whirlpools off the port bow

and very big and powerful whirlpools. Talk about feeling confused and very uncomfortable. To compound matters I had gotten a lift from several whirlpools and a counter currents so we were actually making progress toward the Yuculta Rapids when our luck ran out and we realized that both banks of land were passing us very rapidly, either that or we were suddenly going backwards at 4 knots.

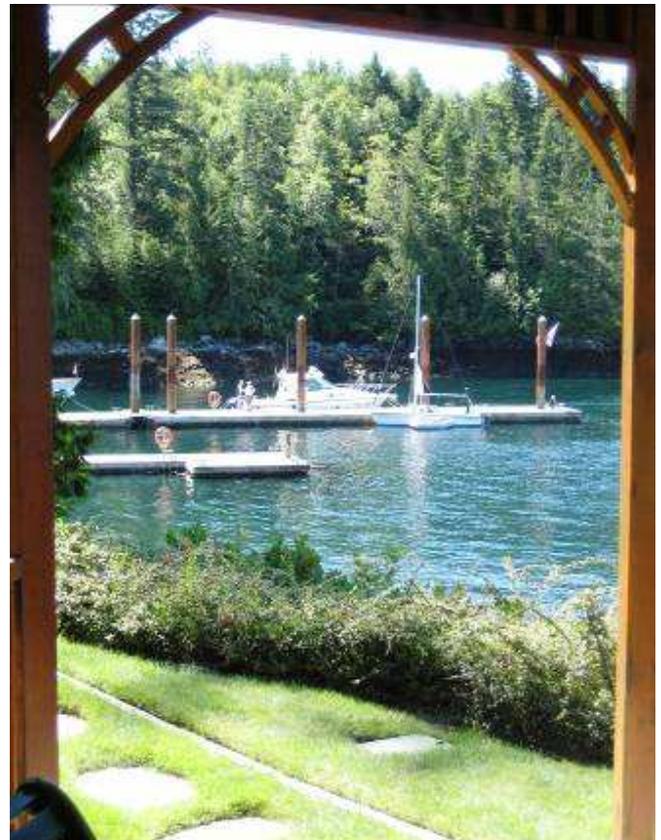


As we were squirted out of Arron rapids and turned south we noticed a large private dock on the NW shoulder of Stuart Island in a small cove. There were a couple of 80 foot power yachts and a clubhouse. When we realized our predicament we powered over to the dock making use of a counter current and came along side. A man came down and took our line, welcomed us ashore and made a wry comment about biting off more than we could chew. I couldn't agree more. At the end of the dock we were met by the

Sanctuary

owners of the yachts and the owner developer of the compound. He owns the largest construction equipment auction house in the world. They were sitting down to a breakfast and insisted that we join them. They were very welcoming and gracious to a couple of vagabonds that sought shelter. After an interesting conversation about the entertainment provided by people who mistimed the rapids. After the lovely breakfast they suggest we might want to wonder around on shore (just stay on the paved ways and respect the privacy of the owners).

Well it was interesting to see how the other half, no the other 1% lives. It really



Safe and sound



Breakfast is served, nice company



was a “park like” setting. No real vehicle traffic and most everyone flew in on their own plane to the landing strip. The landscaping was beautiful and



Hmmm, does this mean me?

reminded me of Buchart Gardens in Victoria on Vancouver Island. There was emerald grass and beautiful flowers and statues of deer that turned out not to be statues at all. We hiked to the narrows of the Yuculta Rapids and even when it was close to slack water there was whitewater and overfalls. Soon enough we were back at our boat and we left a few minutes before slack water working our way against a 2 knt current. After a short time we were





A few minutes before slack tide Yuculta Rapids

through and it was about then that we found an article describing the rapids as one of the most dangerous on the west coast during full current run. Now, though not exactly peaceful it wasn't bad at all; we knew that in a half an hour it would be awful.

We proceeded down aptly named Calm Channel to our next challenge, Hole in the Wall. (better than Hole in the Boat I supposed). To improve our chances of not drowning, we decided to wait out the time to the next slack

tide. We pulled into a cove just north of the entrance and went ashore to explore for a couple of hours and just snooze. As with almost anyplace in that part of B.C., there were lots of signs of old logging activities but not any buildings or roads. We did some, well beach combing isn't the right word, since there wasn't much in the way of beach. Maybe rock combing would be better. About 5 hours later we were ready to try our luck with tidal rapids once more at Hole-in-the Wall.



A calm and quiet spot to wait the turn of the tide



Entrance to Hole-in-the-Wall



Rock combing above the kelp

TO BE CONTINUED