



UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

VOL. 24 NO. 4 FOURTH QUARTER

You win some, you lose some

by: Jacques Marc

September 16th was the kickoff to the fall dive schedule on the Island. The goal for the fall dive schedule is to visit local Southern Vancouver Island wreck sites.

We will be searching for some new wreck sites and will be reconfirming the locations of some of the older sites explored in the 90s. A search for the Phantom off Gordon Head and a return to the Rosalia were first up. Both are in exposed coastal locations so it is advisable to dive them early in the fall while the weather is still cooperative.

Everyone marshalled Sunday morning at the Ogden

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Searching for the Salvage Chief and the MV Grymes

by: Keith Bossons

On Saturday September 29 a team of UASBC divers from the lower mainland made a trip up the Sunshine Coast to search for and dive the Salvage Chief and the MV Grymes. The divers were Keith Bossons, Les Newman, Glenn Farquhar, Dale Doering and Tim and Shelley Novak. We chartered the vessel B-Line captained by Bryce Christie from Sunshine Coast Tours to get us to the wreck sights.

The Salvage Chief was a 149 foot iron steam powered tug launched in England in 1885. She was bought by the British Columbia Salvage Company in 1907 and was brought to Victoria. On February 7, 1925 she struck a rock pinnacle just off Merry Island while trying to free a raft of timber that grounded on the Island. The pinnacle punched a large hole in her bottom and she hung up on the pinnacle unable to free herself. Efforts to tow her off failed and she eventually sank at that location. The UASBC surveyed and documented this wreck in 1998 and 1999 making a total of 19 dives.

Little is known about the MV Grymes. She was built in the USA as two mast schooner named the Edrie. She was 92 feet long and weighed 75 tons; she was registered in Victoria on April 22, 1912 and transferred to the Vancouver Registry November 16, 1939. She was used as a dive charter boat for a time in the 1980's and was wrecked on a reef at the southern end of South Thormanby Island in the late 1980's or early 1990's. This wreck site had not previously been visited by a UASBC team.

Our goal for the Salvage Chief was to re-locate the wreck and take accurate GPS coordinates as well as note any significant changes since the site was surveyed in

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Fred Rogers in Memoriam

It was with great sadness and the feeling of loss that I learned of the passing of Fred Rogers on April 1, 2012. At 92, Fred passed away peacefully in the company of his family at Nanaimo Regional Hospital after a prolonged illness.

Fred will be remembered for pioneering shipwreck diving in British Columbia. A steel fabricator by trade, he began SCUBA diving in 1954. In those early years you were self taught and had to manufacture most of your own equipment.

Fred completed his first shipwreck dive on the steam tug, Point Grey, in Porlier Pass in the spring of 1955. He became fascinated with shipwrecks and their history. Shipwreck diving exploits took him all over the northwest coast and his contribution to British Columbia's understanding of Shipwrecks is legendary. He wrote 3 books on the subject, the first being *Shipwrecks of British Columbia* in 1973, which was followed by *More Shipwrecks of British Columbia* in 1992 and finally *Historic Divers of British Columbia* in 2003.

When he could no longer dive Fred moved on to other things. From his home in Qualicum Beach he began exploring and mapping the location of the old logging railway grades on the east coast of the Vancouver Island. This resulted in a booklet *Hiking & Adventure Trails of the Parksville, Qualicum and Bowser Area*. After a motorcycle mishap, he decided that something a little less risky was in order.

Never one to sit around, Fred began building small steam engines in his garage. His greatest pride and joy was a miniature Railroad engine. When it got to the point where it took a whole day to do an hour's work, Fred decided that it was time to sit back and do less strenuous things. Fred remained engaged mentally, writing letters to the editor of this magazine and others. Fred was the go to guy for anything to do with Shipwrecks. With his passing we have lost an immense wealth of knowledge relating to the maritime history of this province. I will miss our annual visits to talk about shipwrecks and new adventures.

From one wreck diver to another, Adieu.

Jacques Marc
UASBC



You win some, you lose some (continued)

Point Dive Centre. The gang included Holger Heitland, Jiri Kotler, Paul Spencer, Bob Simpson Ewan Anderson and Jacques Marc (recorder).

After getting the Dive Charter and UASBC paperwork out of the way, we boarded the charter boat Juan de Fuca Warrior for the quick run out to Gordon Head. We arrived on site about 10:00. The plan was to search the foreshore area around Gordon Head and the coastline to the south.

The Phantom was a steam tug that was driven ashore on a reef of rocks off Gordon Head by a Southeast gale on November 24, 1893. The Colonist reported that she was broadside to the rocks and the waves worked havoc on her bottom. The vessel was badly damaged and was declared a total loss. I couldn't find any mention of follow up salvage so presume that most of it remains somewhere along the Gordon Head coastline. Each buddy pair was dropped at a GPS location and were given about 300 meters of bottom to search. Each buddy team was asked to search the bottom at the toe of the slope, i.e. where the rock meets the sand, which is a natural deposition location for wreckage.

Jacques and Paul started at the point and worked their way south. Holger and Ewan were dropped 300 meters South of Jacques and Paul. Bob and Jiri were the last to be dropped

Photos by: Jacques Marc



off. The underwater visibility was poor maybe 2-3 meters. Jacques and Paul didn't find much debris of any kind. Their big find was a steel 4 cylinder engine block. It most likely was used by someone as a mooring.

Holger and Ewan created some excitement for the group. Holger surfaced to report that he had possibly found a boiler part. Some further examination found it to be the cast iron frame from a park bench. Rumour has it they also found a brass shell casing. Bob and Jiri reported finding nothing. We covered off a good part of the search area, but there are a couple of segments that will have to be completed in the future.

Once everyone was on board the Warrior we motored over to Discovery Island and Seabird Point to search for the Rosalia. The Rosalia was a 280 ton sailing barque lost March 19, 1868. She was under tow of the tug Isabel when both vessels encountered heavy seas in Haro Strait. The Isabel became unresponsive due to the drag of its tow. The captain ordered the Rosalia to be cast adrift.

Captain Endeiza of the Rosalia had no idea where he was. After beating about for several hours his vessel was driven ashore on Discovery Island at 5:00 AM. The UASBC located the Rosalia wreck site in 1989, but haven't visited the site in years.

The predicted slack was 1:20. When we arrived at Seabird Point I tried to place the boat over the site of the Rosalia using landmarks and notes from the 90s. However, some landmarks had changed and there was an extensive field of bull kelp which confused the issue. The slack occurred slightly ahead of schedule so all three search teams were put in the water. After a full hour of searching we were unable to relocate the anchor or any of the brass drift bolts that marked the Rosalia site. It is quite likely that the extant wreck material may be under the field of the Bull Kelp. We will have to try again in the early spring once the winter storms have torn the kelp from the bottom.

Despite the lack of success it was a beautiful fall day and getting back in the water after the summer hiatus was great.

Searching for the Salvage Chief and the MV Grymes (continued)

1998/99. For the Grymes, our goal was to see if we could find any traces of this wreck and if so, take GPS coordinates. We met Bryce and the B-Line at the public dock in Half-moon Bay just before 9 am. It was a spectacular fall day. We quickly loaded our gear onto the boat and set off for our first dive of the day. We planned to dive the Grymes first as it was potentially the deeper of the two dives. The information we had was that the wreck was broken up and scattered throughout a small bay from the shallows right out to about 100. We split into three teams to cover as much ground as possible, with two of the teams working into the shallows starting from the mouth of the bay and the third team searching the deeper water at the mouth of the bay.

The visibility was excellent allowing us to visually cover a lot of ground. While we did not find anything that looked



like a ship, Les and Dale located what looked like a large deck winch in the back of the bay and Tim and Shelley located wooden pieces nearby that could also have come from a wooden sailing ship. We took GPS coordinates for both locations. My underwater navigation at the mouth of the Bay however, turned out to be a bit less than perfect, resulting in a rather long surface swim back to the boat for Glenn and I.

With all divers back aboard, we headed back to the dock to change out tanks and have a quick lunch. Once recharged and ready to go, we made the short run to Merry Island to attempt to re-locate the Salvage Chief. This is a potentially tricky place to dive and a dangerous place to navigate a boat. The pinnacle that sank the Salvage Chief along with a few others are still lurking just below the surface waiting for their next victim. The location is completely exposed to the open Georgia Straight and any sort of westerly wind would make this location unsafe to dive. Fortunately, the wind was favorable and we were able to drop our three teams into the water next to the two pinnacles that seemed most likely to

mark the final resting place of the Salvage Chief. She lies in roughly 30 feet of water.

The Salvage Chief had been extensively salvaged over the years and her shallow depth means she has been exposed to the pounding from winter storms. When a UASBC team surveyed the site in 1998/99 they found a jumble of broken up hull and machinery laying in a gully just north of the rock pinnacle that sank her. The survey report published by the UASBC noted that it hardly looked like a ship at all.

We knew the wreck was north of a rock pinnacle but we were not sure which pinnacle. We narrowed it down to the two most likely pinnacles and put dive teams into the water at each location. After a pretty long search we managed to re-locate the wreck, which still looked pretty much the same as described in the 1998/99 report. The visibility was excellent and the reef structure made for a spectacular dive. Re-locating the wreck site was the icing on the cake. We put up a marker float from the wreck which enabled us to get accurate GPS coordinates which should make finding the site easier in the future.

Once we had recovered all the divers, we headed back to the dock where we rushed to unload the boat, break down the gear, load it in our vehicles and make a dash to catch the Langdale Ferry. As we relaxed in the ferry cafeteria on the way back to the lower mainland, we had a chance to compare notes from what was an outstanding trip. The weather could not have been better, we found the wrecks we were looking for, and all enjoyed some great diving with some good company.



Photos by: Les Newman

SEARCH FOR THE 'GEORGE WALTON'

by: Jiri Kotler

The 'George Walton' was a former Liberty ship, built in 1943, and used in the post war years as a bulk freighter. The ship was of a typical Liberty ship construction similar to the 'Jeremiah O'Brian' - the last operational Liberty ship currently moored in San Francisco. It was 441 feet long by 56 feet wide and was powered by a triple expansion, 2500-hp steam engine. The boilers were fired by oil.

In early November 1951 the 'George Walton' departed Longview, WA, for India, via Japan, with a load of grain. Sometime on 6 November 1951 the ship caught fire and was abandoned in heavy seas with some loss of life. Several vessels were involved in a rescue operation, including Greek and Japanese freighters, and the US Coast Guard cutter 'Northwind'.



Eventually a crew from the tug 'Barbara Foss' attached a towline to the disabled ship and proceeded to tow it on a course of 101° (true) towards Seattle. On 18 November 1951 the towline parted and the 'George Walton' was lost. In foggy conditions the ship disappeared from radar screens on both the USCG cutter 'Northwind' and the tug. Although no one actually saw the ship sink, the position given during an ensuing judicial inquiry was 48° 45'06" N, 125° 48' 00" W at a depth of 36 fathoms (just SW from Ucluelet on La Perouse Bank).

Clearly if the wreck were to be found in this vicinity it would only be accessible to technical divers using mixed gases. And like many of the sites on the west coast any dives on it would be highly weather dependant.

During 22-23 September 2012 the UASBC and the Ship-

wreck Exploration Team mounted an expedition with the aim to locate the wreck. The plan was to use a side scan sonar and carry out a detailed search of the area immediately adjacent to the reported position (the position shown on Canadian Hydrographic chart is slightly different from the reported one). The UASBC crew consisted of Jacques Marc, Holger Heitland, Jiri Kotler, Kim and Chris Fenton, and Curt Smecher. Mike Clement was kind enough to provide and operate the side scan sonar equipment while Brian Gisborne of the Juan De Fuca Express skippered the trusted 'Michelle Diane'.

On Saturday at 8 AM sharp we started to load the equipment at the Ucluelet government wharf. Mike preferred to set up as much as possible while at the dock. After some initial juggling the gen-set, reels of tow cables, pulleys, laptops, GPS antennas, power cords and the 'fish' were finally all in place and ready. We departed the dock at 10 AM and headed toward the wreck position – as indicated on the CH chart with a PA note (position approximate). The weather was sunny and calm, and seas were placid with only one meter or so swells.

Jacques had earlier charted two rectangular areas surrounding the reported wreck position – a 'blue' one about 1.5 by 3 miles and a 'red' one about 3 by 6 miles. The idea was to progress with the search from the 'blue' one to the 'red' one as time and conditions would permit.

Mike configured the equipment settings so that it would scan an area about 200m wide on each side of the 'fish'. We towed the 'fish' at a depth of about 25m at speeds between 2 and 3 knots on an 80m long cable. The spacing between individual sweeps was about 200m resulting in about 40% to 50% overlaps. Each sweep was tracked on a chart plotter allowing Brian to maintain the spacing quite accurately. Mike was confident that such configuration was more than adequate to detect a ship-sized object. We began sweeping at about 11 AM and continued until 5:30 PM, having completed 6 sweeps within the 'blue' area.

During the day several cruise and cargo ships passed by. It was a good indication that we were searching near the historical sea route - one the

SEARCH FOR THE 'GEORGE WALTON' (continued)

ill-fated ship must too have followed. We took turns watching the screen with bated breaths - at least initially - waiting for shadowy outlines of the

wreck to slowly appear.

The sea bottom at that area turned out to be completely featureless save a few small sand dunes. This raised our hopes that a shipwreck would really stand out on such flat bottom, regardless of its final resting attitude. After a while the monotony of the search set in and was only interrupted by a periodic refueling of the gen-set and the 180° boat turns to start a new sweep. At the end of the day we were somewhat disappointed that nothing was located but hopeful that the next day would bring results.

On Sunday we again departed at 8 AM and started sweeping by 8:30 AM. We did not have to go through the equipment set up as we had left everything in place the night before (Mike was comfortable with that since Brian slept on board).



This time we extended the search into the larger 'red' area. As time went on the crew's impatience started to grow. A number of us were pointing to various charted 'bumps' on the sea bottom, confident that it sure was the spot.

Thankfully Jacques was able to maintain the search discipline rather than jumping from one spot to another. In that way, by 2 PM when sweeping was stopped, we were at least able to declare with a reasonable level of confidence where the wreck was not. Mike indicated that he would review all the recorded scans in the com-

fort of his home - just to make sure that nothing was missed.

The next step would be to continue sweeps of expanded areas when time, availability of funds and weather conditions favorably coalesce.

In addition, an effort will be made to gather any local knowledge from commercial fishers with regards to snagged gear and unusual bottom profile(s). While it is unlikely that any eyewitnesses still alive may provide reliable accounts of the events ship's logbooks with more information may lay somewhere buried in private or public archives. It should be noted that Foss Towing still exists. It looks like closing of the 'George Walton' saga and paying respects to those who perished with her may take some time to come!

Fall-Winter Schedules

2012-13

Underwater Exploration Speakers Series (Victoria)

September 12, 2012

HMCS Thiepval - Unexploded Ordnance Survey
Charles Moore – Archaeologist

October 10, 2012

Tsunami of 1700: Impact on Nootka Sound First Nations Stephen Holland - Author/Teacher

November 14, 2012

The Empress of Ireland, Canada's Titanic
Rob Field, Archaeologist

December 12, 2008

Funk and Franklin Expeditions
Dr. Tim Ball, Climatologist/Author

January 9, 2013

Minnie Paterson - Mother to Many a Shipwrecked Sailor Jennifer Ferris, Storyteller

February 13, 2013

Technical Diving in HD
Guy Shockley, Technical Diver and HD Videographer

March 13, 2013

UASBC Diving Activities – A Year In Review
Jacques Marc, Explorations Director UASBC

April 10, 2013

Cultural Heritage Management
Ewan Anderson, Heritage Resource Specialist

May 8, 2013

Pacific Marine Analysis and Research Association
Evert Kenk, PacMARA Board Member

June 12, 2013

Join the South Island Chapter of UASBC for its annual Dive and BBQ – Location TBA 2012-2013

Visitors Welcome

Meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of each Month 7 PM at the Maritime Museum, 28 Bastion Square, Victoria, BC.

For further information Contact:

John Middleton @ (250) 743-4495
or Jacques Marc @ (250) 474-5797

Upcoming dive events

Britannia Beach Wrecks

Sunday, October 21, 2012 (All day)

Upcoming Projects

Search for the Tug Chehalis

Sunday, October 14, 2012 (All day)

Search for the SS Enterprise

Saturday, November 17, 2012 (All day)

See uasbc.com for more information.

2012-13

Underwater Exploration Speakers Series (Vancouver)

October 31, 2012

Historical Wrecks of Truk Lagoon
Keith Bossons

Check uasbc.com for updates and additions to this list.

Message from the editor *by: Matthew Bossons*

Hello everyone,

Another summer has come and gone and, although the weather has been phenomenal, now it is time to prepare for the rain. I hope everyone enjoys the stories in this issue and will be compelled to write of their own adventures for the next version of the Foghorn, coming out after Christmas.

I will note that the Fred Rodgers memoriam was supposed to be published in the last issue, but due to deadline constraints was instead given a place at the front of this edition.

My final comment will be to mention my intention of having a photo page in the next issue. This photo page will be made from photos I receive from UASBC members between now and January and will feature the best in underwater photography. If you have a photo that you think deserves to be seen - send it my way! Send your photos to **bossonsmatthew@gmail.com**, complete with captions and photo details with the subject heading 'Photopage'.

Kind regards and Happy Holidays,

Matt Bossons

Foghorn Editor



Photo by: Keith Bossons

A wreck from Truk Lagoon, the topic of this months speaker series in Vancouver.

Foghorn (ISSN 1198-7081) is published six times annually 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.

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