

Christmas Cruise – December 18 – January 2, 2004

Day One – Dec 18 – Richmond Marina, Cloudy with fog patches

We departed around 915 and arrived in Richmond Marina about 330 PM. We encountered fog 20% of the time on the river but Nobeltec and Radar got us through it. Mark met us there where upon we showed off the Catch-up with its new motor with a ride down the middle arm. CA took Kona walking on the dyke while we were gone. He also gave us a ride to the Husky Station for propane and gas top off. That night we went to Peter and Bea's Party and then returned by taxi. (\$34).

Day Two – Dec 19 – Richmond Marina, Cloud, mostly sunny

Due to forecasted gales we decided to stay in today and had Peter pick us up on the way walking down the dyke and drive us to Steveston. He stayed for dinner and then we went to bed early. Or at least CA did, I visited Ross for a half a dozen rum and cokes.

Day Three – Dec 20 – Degnen Bay, Cloudy some sun

We departed about 830 thinking that the weather would be much improved. When we arrived at the North Arm Mouth, the waves were splashing on the jetty. The captain figured things would improve but it didn't. It was a rocky ride all the way to Gabriola. Eight foot waves at 3 min intervals and then 4 ft chop. CA gave the captain the wheel, got sick and laid down the rest of the way. We had to tack north and go through the islands past Silva Bay to get to Gabriola Pass. Upon our arrival in Degnen, we gave Kona a walk and then tried our luck fishing around Breakwater Island and Roger Reef looking for bottom fish for our crab trap. We had a peaceful night and awoke mid morning.

Day Four – Dec 21 – Degnen Bay, mostly sunny some cloud

We had a leisurely breakfast, missed the slack, and decided to dive Breakwater Island on the ebb. After a mid afternoon lunch we took Kona for a walk and then dove Breakwater Island. Everything went well. Went out into the Strait to get cell phone reception and CA called her sister Denise to firm up Christmas dinner plans. Took Kona off again and met Vern (the dock night watchman) who lives aboard his sailboat. Turns out he and his former wife used to live in Mission. His former wife still does and works at one of the local hardware stores – Debbie Roy.

Day Five – Dec 22 – Degnen Bay, mostly sunny some cloud

Went out onto Flat Top Islands and planned to dive there but changed our minds when we noted the current over the reef. Dove Brant Reef instead. Took Kona for another walk and talked with a man we saw on Flat Top Islands earlier in the day. He lives in a mobile home and has an old boat and an aluminum boat he log salvages off of and fishes. He told us about the prawning off Carlos Island. Later in the afternoon we dropped a

prawn trap off and left it over night. Had dinner, read in bed and lights out around midnight.

Day Six – Dec 23 – Degnen Bay, cloudy, no rain

After breakfast we made off to check our prawn trap. When we arrived we couldn't see it anywhere but there was a man in a small dingy picking up his traps so we talked to him and asked if he had seen our trap. He pointed it out and as it was it was very near where we had marked it on our GPS – we hadn't closely watched the screen. Retrieved 30 prawns and set trap again for the day. Dove Carlos Island and then picked up 60 more prawns at the end of the day. Took Kona off to walk and spoke to the same commercial fellow we talked with yesterday. He inquired how our prawning had gone and whether or not we made good fish and chips. "Busted" prawn heads, made dinner, filled tanks, planned tomorrow's dive and tucked in early for an early dive tomorrow (0900) in Gabriola Pass at Joseph's Point.

Day Seven – Dec. 24 – Coastal Marina, visitors dock, Boat Basin, Nanaimo, cloudy, rain.

Woke up early and had a quick breakfast, took Kona to shore and got suited up to dive. Got to the dive site too early so came back to the FnC for 15 minutes to stay warm. After the dive we prepared to make away to Nanaimo. We made our way through False Narrows with the help of Nobeltec. At one spot CA got too close to the shore and the depth alarm sounded at 7 feet. The Captain took over and we made it out easily. Arrived in Nanaimo at 1330 and walked over to the Wharfinger's office to pay \$70.00 for two nights of dock space. After that we walked to the nearby mall and CA went grocery shopping while Kona attracted attention in the mall with Rick. After shopping we relaxed and CA prepared a roast beef dinner with all the trimmings for our Christmas Eve dinner. A nearby yacht, "After Eight" (approx. 120 ft) had several family members on board doing the same thing. Made phone calls to wish people a happy season and firmed up plans for pick up with Peter and David. Brother Barry will be picking up in Tsawwassen at 1215 tomorrow. Called a taxi for pick up at 930. Informed them we would be traveling with a "guide dog". Retired early after filling stockings.

Day Eight – Dec. 25 – Coastal Marina, visitors dock, Boat Basin, Nanaimo, cloudy, rain. (FnC at dock, Captain and crew on the Bonus Points)



Woke up early and prepared "egg-muffins" for breakfast. Opened stockings, secured the vessel and jumped in the cab with our seeing eye dog at 930 bound for Tsawwassen. Arrived on schedule with Kona guiding a "blind" CA off the ferry. Drove with Barry to Denise's and enjoyed a Christmas dinner with the family. After all festivities were concluded we headed to Captain's Cove to spend the night aboard the "Bonus Points". Retired at 1200 and had a restful sleep.

Day Nine – Dec. 26 - Conover Cove, Wallace Island, cloudy.

Woke up and took Kona for a walk across the freeway to the restaurant on the other side hoping to get a coffee and a muffin to go. Not open until 1100. Returned to the BP, cleaned up all evidence of our being there and were again picked up by Barry to make the ferry at 1015 and made off for Nanaimo with our guide dog, Kona, leading CA onto the ferry. Called ahead for a cab to pick us up and were escorted off the walk-on ramp by the cab driver who came to pick us up. Returned to the FnC and headed for Wallace Island to rendezvous with the Bonus Points. Went through Dodd Narrows at just the right time as luck would have it. Smooth ride while CA prepared a meal to share with the Captain and crew of the BP on our arrival. Enjoyed appies on the BP and then back to the FnC for supper. Stern tie in the cove and sat on the bottom as a low low tide took us to less than 3 feet of water. All mud bottom so no problem. To bed by midnight.

Day Ten – Dec. 27 - Conover Cove, Wallace Island, cloudy.

Had a leisurely wake up and planned a prawn off with the BP and a hike around Porlier's lighthouse. Set out in the Catch-up, laid prawn traps and had a picnic lunch on the rocks overlooking Virago Point. Checked our prawn traps after a period of about 2 hours to find the BP trap with one prawn and the FnC with 12. Mark plans to use a sock next time for his bait. Returned to Conover Cove, walked all dogs, had appies on the FnC and a lovely barbequed steak meal compliments of the BP. Very tired and subdued crowd this night despite the efforts of "Captain Swivel Hips" to get the crowd more lively. Both Captain's will try to synchronize their energy levels as New Year's approaches.

Day Eleven – Dec. 28 - Conover Cove, Wallace Island, Sunny in the afternoon.

We dove Panther Point today and then afterwards went into the nearby bay for oysters. CA still in her dry suit dove down like a duck to get them on the bottom. We picked up Mark and April at the Conover Park sign at the bay entrance, delivered them to their boat and then returned to the FnC to get undressed. We later went over to the BP for eat our soup and drink their malt wine. After that we went back to the FnC for India style dinner and a pre new years party. We were in bed by 100 AM.

Day Twelve – Dec 29 – Telegraph Cove – Light rain all day

We took our time rising today. We went for our Island walk to today to Chivas Point and immediately upon our return we weighed anchor and proceeded to Thetis Island. The journey was very smooth. We arrived just before dark and anchored in Telegraph Cove while the BP took a slip at Thetis Marina because to the ease of off loading of dogs and young pup. CA made a wonderful Russian Chicken Dish which we all enjoyed on the FnC.

Day Thirteen – Dec 30 – Telegraph Cove – Overcast, no rain

We dropped a prawn trap today (with Mark) and then went diving in Porlier Pass. Mark came with us so that we could dive Virago Wall without using a shoreline. We did anchor and the tides were well predicted. Mark video the whole trip.

Day Fourteen – Dec 31 – Telegraph Cove – Sunny

It was a beautiful day. We decided to go kayaking for the afternoon. The water was absolutely calm. We took it easy and only traveled to the ferry dock and returned. Upon our return we dressed for New Years Eve dinner and party. It was outdoors on the BP (smoked salmon) and then roast beef dinner on the FnC. After a quick clean up were back on the BP for more beer. We didn't get to the Thetis Marina Pub until 1100. There were only 5 couples there from 3 boats, 2 in the marina and one from the Telegraph Marina. Karaoke was the entertainment but we added one of our party CD's to the mix which made the party. We didn't get home until 400 AM and we slept in until well past noon the next day.

Day Fifteen – Jan 1 – Telegraph Cove – Overcast and cold

A very sluggish day. The captain was only able to go for a walk to the Ferry Dock with Kona and load up Kayaks. A cold front has hit us dropping temps during the day to 4 deg C. Weather is not great for traveling with 10 – 20 kt winds in some areas. The inlets all have Gale warnings. We must be patient and wait for good weather for our crossing. If there is delays CA will have to find alternative transportation and/or miss a day's school.

Day Sixteen – Jan 2 – Captain's Cove – Sunny



The next day was pretty well the same situation but we decided to poke our noses out at Porlier Pass and turn back if it got bad. Mark wanted to go the Montague Harbour and then take it from there with the possibility of putting the girls onto the ferry. He's been onto that idea for 2 weeks starting with our Xmas visit. The captain's prediction turned out to be right and it was an excellent crossing from Porlier to Sandheads. There was an ebb tide to content

with at Sandheads but no wave action since there was little wind. There was although outflow winds in Howe Sound and south of Tsawwassen. We encountered two male Californian Sea Lions on the breakwater.



We decided to get water at the fuel dock in Steveston just in case we encountered frozen lines at Mission Harbour. That put us back on the water a little late which resulted in the last hour to Captain's Marina in the dark. Luckily there was little debris in the river that night.

That night we had Kodiak (Dennis) and Mark/April over for dinner on the FnC while at anchor in our usual spot.

Day Seventeen – Jan 3 – Mission Harbour - Sunny

With left early next morning at 900 AM and had a wonderful run up the river with a flooding tide. We averaged 8 knots putting us into Mission by 200 PM. There was a thin sheet of ice encountered on our way which did not prove to be damaging to the hull.



Returning upriver encountering thin sheets of ice

Conclusion

This was a very successful cruise. As usual weather threatened us with a ruff crossing to the Gulf Islands and a cold snap up the river. We made it with no significant problems. We were lucky that the only significant rain occurred during our trip to Nanaimo and our Christmas ferry ride. The rest of the trip was good weather wise. We got a lot of diving in although it was mostly at high slack with the resulting reduced visibility and at the end we had one day of kayaking in the sunshine at Thetis Island.

The FnC performed well. We didn't have an anchor light throughout the trip, no big deal, not many boats out there to hit us. We had just enough propane to keep us warm with one extra tank bought at Thetis Island. Memorable moments were the dive on Brant Reef and peaceful Degnen Bay. There wasn't much action at Thetis Island but we still had fun at New Years with the limited people there and the partying on our own boats.