



Victoria Canoe & Kayak Club Newsletter

Victoria Canoe & Kayak Club
355 Gorge Road West
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Website: www.vckc.ca

November 2010

General Meeting November 2, 2010 7:30pm

Seasons of the Pacific Coast

Maureen Gordon, crew member of Victoria's classic schooner Maple Leaf, presents a photo odyssey along the British Columbia/Alaska coast. Maureen will talk about the natural events that occur in each season, resulting in the spectacular wildlife we are lucky to live so close to.



Canoe Program Report

Thanks everyone for coming out to the October meeting where we showed a video of the history of running rivers with canoes and kayaks. We saw some amazing current and archival footage and interviews with pioneers in the field as well as boat-makers. And I think everyone enjoyed it, even at its 98 minute running time.

We ran a Flatwater 1 course on the weekend of October 23-24. Thank you to Ellie and Herb for instructing. About half a dozen students were signed up and I know they had a fabulous time and learned a lot. We also offered a couple of other courses in October on both Flat and Moving Water.

The following course is currently scheduled and if there is something you would like to have us instruct, such as another Flatwater Level 1 Basic Tandem, please don't hesitate to contact me. We will do our best to accommodate requests and may already have enough interested to try offering another Basic Tandem course. In order to take one of our courses you must be a member of VCKC.

Flatwater Level 3 Advanced Tandem

November 6/7

Keep your eyes on your email inbox or the newsletter where any trips that are planned for November will be advertised (see page 6). As always, the destinations will be wind, weather and/or water level dependent, and a fun adventure with great company!

Next Canoe Program Meeting:

Monday, November 15 at 7:30 pm

Ken Gibbard will present a slide show on his trip to the Yukon on the South MacMillan-Pelly Rivers with Kurt Frost in 1986 which resulted in a rather famous home-made paddle. Come and see the trip behind the fabled Goofer's Trophy which hangs on the clubhouse wall!

Yasmin Rampuri
Canoe Program Director

Lost???

Mavis Pillar is asking that members check out the "lost and found" bin in the basement for any belongings they may have lost or misplaced as it will be cleaned out after the upcoming General Meeting. Anything not claimed by that time will be given away or tossed.

Also on the subject of lost items, Mavis wonders if anyone knows the whereabouts of the the club mega phone.

And under the heading of 'misplaced', on cleanup day in October the toolbox from the downstairs locker disappeared. It was out on the black bench downstairs in front of the locker and someone moved it ... somewhere. Mavis would like to know what happened to it since she was using tools upstairs during the cleanup and she would like to put back.



Cleanup Crew - October 23
(Photo: Wendy Clapp)

Book Review

Robert Brown and the
Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition

Edited by John Hayman

Published by UBC Press in 1989.

I recently bought this largely because of the title. I had heard of plans to re-enact the canoeing portions of the first exploratory trip down the spine of Vancouver Island a 100 years ago, so was primed to be interested in the early exploration of Vancouver Island by settlers. The book will be of interest to members who have paddled in the Cowichan Bay area, on the Cowichan River and Lake, and perhaps to the kayakers who have paddled the west coast of the Island parallel to the West Coast Trail.

The first chapter deals with the background and character of Robert Brown, the leader of the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition (VIEE) and with the antecedents to the Expedition. Some new facts, for me, but not a reason to buy the book. The meat of the book is in the journal that Brown kept of the Exploring Expedition in 1864 so that he could report back to the expedition's organizing Committee back in Victoria.

Brown describes the Cowichan Valley at a time when there were a few settlers on the delta, but no built trails up the valley or indeed to Nanaimo. It is entertaining to try and work out where the various farms and settlers he mentions were living and working in relation to the river and the present communities. He and his group took five days to go up the river, the main party on foot, but two people lining and poling a canoe with all their expedition's equipment. He mentions portages and we can guess where these were—Skutz Falls, probably Last Drop. Some names are still familiar today—Saatlaam, Squitz (Skutz) Falls, Qualis—mainly being Indian fishing sites.

Brown was, of course, guided by First Nation people and he seems generally sympathetic to their situation as the settlers moved in on their traditional territory. There appear to have been many fewer First Nations than in the past, largely

due to smallpox, but also to war between the tribes. There is an interesting story told to Brown by an Indian to the effect that, in the old days, there were no canoes, and people lived peacefully by fishing from shore and hunting. Then a stranger came and taught the local tribes how to make dugouts, after which there was much more warfare as the different tribes came into contact in a way that they never did when restricted to land. First time I've heard of canoes as being the cause of war!

Kayakers may be interested in the description Brown gives of paddling out through Nitinat Narrows into the Pacific and hence down to Port Renfrew, and thence to Sooke with a different canoe. In both cases, the trip was done in a First Nations canoe, paddling by the local Indians. This is not territory that very few people nowadays would contemplate paddling by canoe.

The latter section of the journal describes exploration up in the Comox area, where the taking of a canoe up the Puntledge River seems to have been a heroic feat—it is a river with many ledges—not good poling and lining territory at all. The Brown River in this area is named after the author.

A recommended read for those members who paddle the Cowichan River and Bay. Cost is about \$20.00. I bought my copy at Crown Publications on Superior Street.

Alan Thomson

*Time for Christmas cheer and
fun is around the corner—*

VCKC's Christmas Party

Tuesday December 7

at 5:30 pm

*More info to follow on our
website and in the December
newsletter*

Hope to see you there!

Flat Water Trip Report Discovery and Chatham Islands October 9, 2010

Jill sent me an e-mail asking if there could be a trip to Discovery and Chatham Islands. Being delighted to have someone suggest a destination, I said 'Sure' and put it on the list as the first flatwater trip in the Fall. The Club has had trips there before but it is often an 'iffy' proposition, there being two crossings involved, currents up to six knots in Baynes Channel and always the prospect of wind.

Earlier in the week, the weather forecast for October 9 was not good with a strong wind warning in effect. By Friday, the same winds were forecast

but it was fairly calm on Willows Beach. As the predicted wind speed during the day on Saturday was 15 knots, and sailflow.com showed winds under 10 knots, I decide to keep to the plan. There were two canoe—the big club canoe with six paddlers, a tandem canoe, and five kayaks—one of them a double. Thanks to everyone's assistance with the big canoe at the clubhouse, we were at Cattle Point by 9:15 and on the water shortly after 9.30 am.

We set off towards Great Chain Island via the various buoys and markers and then headed along inside the Chain Islets. There was some swell and lumpy water in Mayors Channel but little wind and no breaking waves. Coming to the end of the Chain Islets, there was a line of standing waves out in Juan de Fuca Strait. I wanted to avoid them so we took a diagonal line towards the channel between Discovery and the



Chathams. For quite some time I couldn't understand why the line of waves was there. It was only at lunch time that I realized that in spite of having written out the tides and currents in the e-mail to the paddlers, I had managed to get mixed up and thought it was flooding. I persisted in thinking this even when I remarked that the waters in Hecate Passage looked as if they were running south (ebbing). I attributed this to there being a back eddy or counter-current. Wonderful how we cling to an idea in spite of the evidence!

No matter, we crossed safely to Discovery and then paddled down towards Commodore Point. From the safety of the kelp bed there, we could see across Rudlin Bay to Sea Bird Point, the south east tip of Discovery Island. We decided not to circumnavigate the island as we had a relatively inexperienced kayaker and the tandem canoe might be in trouble if we got into big waves. So back up the west side of Discovery and then through the pass towards Griffin and Alpha Islet. Still little wind and no rain. We

paddled up the outside of the eastern Chatham Island and into Puget Cove and the lagoon behind it. The water level let us enter the lagoon, something we often can't manage. Lunch heralded the start of the afternoon rain, but we sat under some arbutus trees and kept pretty dry.



The trip back to Cattle Point went via Jemmy Jones Island and the Uplands waterfront. By then there was some wind from the north,

but nothing much, and the currents in Baynes Channel were, as predicted, quite slow. We landed at the take-out about 2pm just as the rain became heavy, so our timing was great.

What did we see? Lots of seals, a sea-lion, plenty of bald-headed eagles and kingfishers, plus the inevitable herons. We may also have seen some Harlequin ducks and scoters, but there was uncertainty about the former—could it have been a Golden eye? As a colour-blind person, I don't feel qualified to express an opinion. I like flowers and trees—they don't move and can be examined at leisure. What didn't we see? No dolphins or otters, no other paddlers and only a blurred sun behind the clouds.

Thanks to Arthur, Pat, Diane, Susan, Duane, Herb, Maris, Tony, Ron, Barbara, John and Jill for coming out on this paddle. It was especially nice to snatch the trip in a short window of relatively good weather. By 5pm, there were two wind-surfers out on Oak Bay.

Alan and Linda Thomson



The Wilderness First Aid Experience

A couple of weekends ago, Susan Zedel and I attended a 20 hour Wilderness First Aid course presented by Alert First Aid of Victoria. The course ran 6-9 in the classroom on Friday and 8:30 -4:30 in the field on Saturday and Sunday. As Susan and I had previously held certification, this course was more or less a re-cert for us. The instructor, Alison, was very knowledgeable and possessed of a mildly diabolic sense of humour, as well as a gift for getting the point across in her presentations and in the mildly gory and challenging scenarios she put together. For those of you who have not attended a scenario-based course like this before, be prepared for a steep learning experience and opportunities to wrap

your mind around some interesting situations—all designed to get you hands-on using your knowledge of first aid in real-life locations.

We were fortunate to have magnificent weather—more like a Hawaiian weekend with 17 degrees, sun, and dry bandages rather than the last time I did it with 5 degrees, rain, and a roll of soggy duct tape.

I came away with renewed confidence in my First Aid skills and a tuned-up CRR certification. I highly recommend such a course for anyone travelling beyond the 15 minute urban emergency response zone (which is just about anywhere you are not looking at more than 3 houses on a paved street).

Club members can get 10% off the public course prices with discounts on supplies as well.

Doug Linton



Sunny Friday morning on the Gorge

(Photo: Wendy Clapp)

Courses and Trips

Here are some proposed dates for courses. Please email canoe@vckc.ca and let me know which courses you are interested in. We are able to offer more courses this fall if there are enough people who would like to take them.

Flatwater Level 3 Advanced Tandem

November 6/7

If you are interested in becoming a flatwater or moving water instructor, please contact Ellie James directly at ejames@bgcvc.org. If there are sufficient numbers a course will be put on.

Canoe/Kayak Flatwater trips are planned for Saturday, November 6 and Sunday, November 21.

Usual arrangements:

- * Meet in the parking lot by the Clubhouse at 9:00 am;
- * Call or e-mail Linda and Alan Thomson by the Thursday evening before a trip if you would like to take part. And let me know if you need a boat or partner;
- * Check the weather forecast for likely wind and rain conditions (250) 363-6717 or -6880 by telephone or the Environment Canada Internet forecast. Bring clothing suitable to the day;
- * Bring lunch and hot drinks, too.
- * The Club's website (click here) tells you what is expected of trip participants.

Trip destinations have not been chosen and will, as always, depend on the weather forecasts. If you have any favourite trip you'd like to suggest, let Alan know. A reminder note will be e-mailed to all section members the weekend before the planned trip. Alan Thomson's email: 3135thom@islandnet.com.

Moving Water Trip

Thursday, November 11

Once again VCKC will offer a Remembrance Day observance and paddle on the Cowichan River.

Water levels are returning to normal fall levels and hopefully will be suitable for a voyageur canoe. Everyone must have a wet or dry suit and a helmet, in addition to the usual PFD and paddle.

The meeting place for this moving water trip will be at the Clubhouse, not the usual Millstream Park and Ride as we will need everyone to help move the big boats.

Time - 8:30 am at the Clubhouse parking lot; 9:30 am at Serious Coffee in Duncan; 10 am at Stoltz Pool. The plan is, as usual, to observe two minutes silence at the Burma Start memorial at 11 am.

Please contact Tim Marks at timmarks@telus.net if you wish to paddle in the Voyager.

Tandem and solo canoes are welcome, of course.

Please contact Tom Staebell at thestaebellfamily@shaw.ca or 250-655-7113 if you plan to take part.

Paddlers must have passed a Moving Water course and be properly equipped—canoe with airbags, bailer, painters, throw bag, as well as a helmet and wet or dry suit.



Cruising Southern Waters— Paddling in the southern U.S. Circa 1912

In cruising in Southern waters I have found what I considered legitimate causes for alarm in the shape of sharks, snakes, alligators, and porpoises. One day, when sailing in the Gulf of Mexico, off the mouth of the Caloosahatchie river, my canoe was suddenly surrounded by a school of sharks, all travelling in the same direction, and so numerous that their sharp dorsal fins appeared to be cutting the water in every direction as far as I could see. Sitting perfectly still, I spent ten minutes of terror. Some of the great fish passed so close that I could have hit them with a paddle, and it seemed impossible that they should avoid coming into collision with the canoe and crushing in her frail sides. At last they disappeared as suddenly as they had come, having, much to my satisfaction, paid no attention to me or my canoe.

I have encountered many snakes in Florida, but always found them fully as anxious to avoid me as I was to keep clear of them, and always very ready to get away if allowed to do so.

Alligators have never been known to enter a boat already containing a man. Dozens of them have rubbed up against my canoe at night in Lake Okeechobee; but at the splash of a paddle, or any disturbance, they have quickly disappeared. The theory that they will attack a boat is probably the result of the fact, that, if disturbed while sunning themselves on the bank of a stream, they rush savagely and blindly for the water, rather than to retreat on shore, even if they hasten towards the threatened danger by so doing.

Strange as it may seem I have been more thoroughly frightened by porpoises than by any of these others. Porpoises are probably the most harmless and timid fish of their size in the world ; but the finding one's self in a canoe in the midst of a school of these uncouth monsters produces anything but a comfortable sensation. It seems impossible that in the midst of their clumsy gambols they should not bring destruction upon your frail craft. It is at night, however, that these fish occasion most alarm. Your canoe is anchored close to shore, in some quiet bay, and you lie peacefully smoking your after-supper pipe. By the moonlight, or the phosphorescent gleam of the waters, you note a number of porpoises at play some distance from shore. Suddenly one of the creatures, as though moved by an uncontrollable impulse, leaves the rest, and, heading directly for you, makes an insane rush for the shore. He does not roll along in the usual way, but comes straight as an arrow, his body half out of water and his powerful tail working like the screw of some great steamship. He contents himself with coming close to you, and then, as he gets into shallow water, sweeping round in a semicircle and quietly moving off; but you think he is not going to stop, and that you are doomed to destruction; for you know that you might as well be struck by a cannon ball as by one of these powerful fish under full headway. I have never been able to account for this peculiar action on the part of porpoises, and have no idea whether upon these apparently aimless and furious rushes, they are in pursuit of prey or simply amusing themselves.

(an excerpt from *The Outing Magazine* - 1912)



Friday morning in the sun

Photo: Wendy Clapp

VCKC Executive

<p>President Bon Lee 477-1381</p> <p>Acting Vice President Mavis Pilar..... 778-430-4390</p> <p>Treasurer Sam Ludmer 298-7004</p> <p>Acting Secretary Marie Lansdowne.....</p> <p>Past President Linda Thomson..... 592-4170</p> <p>Program Directors</p> <p>Canoe Program Yasmin Rampuri 655-4859</p> <p>Sea Kayak Program Doug Linton 727-0216</p> <p>Dragon Boat Program Jack Louie 598-1569</p> <p>Acting Outrigger Program Dave Schweitzer email</p>	<p>Voyageur Program Alan Thomson 592-4170</p> <p>Marathon Canoe Program Ron Williams 592-6456</p> <p>Education, Safety & Standards Doug Linton 727-0216</p> <p>Membership Graham Lloyd 381-5090</p> <p>Clubhouse & Grounds Sandy Rattray .. 386-9144</p> <p>Directors-at-Large Michael Fox 391-0160 Irena Jazwinski 388-9757 Diane Nishimura (Soc.) .. 383-3080 Mavis Pilar 778-430-4390</p> <p>Executive Volunteer Positions Harold Gillis (Newsletter) 598-9488 Dave Whitehead (Boat & email Locker Storage)</p>
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November 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
31	1	2 7:30 PM General Meeting	3	4	5	6 Trip: Flatwater Canoe Course: Flatwater L3
7 Canoe Course: Flatwater L3	8	9 7:00 PM Executive Meeting	10	11 Trip: Moving Water	12	13
14	15 7:30 PM Canoe Program Meeting	16	17	18 6:30 PM DragonBoat Committee Meeting	19	20
21 Trip: Flatwater	22	23	24 7:00 PM GWI meeting	25 7:30 PM Outrigger program meeting	26	27