



The Spit

We left our mooring buoy in Montague at 10:35am bound for Sidney Spit. 13.60nm later at 1:45pm we arrived and tied up to a mooring buoy. Sidney Spit is a 1 mile long sand spit connected to Sidney Island extending north. At low tide the whole spit is exposed but at high tide the middle of the spit is covered by water. When you are anchoring at low tide it feels somewhat protected but at high tide you look out across to the USA with not much in your way. It's a fun place to anchor and the sand beaches are awesome to explore.

We took off in the dinghy to explore the spit and surrounding island. At the beach we spent time throwing rocks at floating wood (trying to see who could hit it first) searching for sea glass, building driftwood forts and walking the beach.

As the sun went down Skylar and I took the dinghy out for some fishing. We stayed out until well after sunset having "guy talk". The sunset was awesome that night!

Trip Log – 247.33nm



The spit looking south
toward Sidney Island





Hummingbird Sting

We left Nanaimo at 8:30am to catch the last of the ebbing tide south through Dodd Narrows. As we rounded Jack Point we were exposed to the Strait of Georgia, and things got just a little sloppy. It quickly diminished as we cruised toward the

narrows with a flotilla of boats moving south toward the narrows. As we flowed through with no issues the water got flat calm for our 27.87nm cruise to Montague Harbor on Galiano Island. Montague is a huge bay with lots of mooring buoys and plenty of room to anchor. We snagged one of the last mooring buoys close to land, and away from the pack. It was a lucky find with the place packed on a hot day.

We took off in the dinghy to find a beach. With the dinghy towing our kayak we searched for the perfect little beach to hang out for the remainder of the day. This harbor has some of the nicest beaches in the islands. Many of them are ancient midden beaches where the first nations people would dump all of their clamshells. Over the years these beaches would become almost pure shells and take on a beautiful white color. We sat in the hot sun while the kids played in the water. Ava and Julie convinced me I needed to be decorated with seaweed. I reluctantly agreed and a few minutes later I became "Seaweed Man".

Galiano Island has a funky little restaurant called the Hummingbird Pub. It's a few miles away from the harbor but they have this old school bus that will pick you up and take you to dinner. The bus is in pretty bad shape but the driver plays loud music and everyone sings along while traveling to the pub. When we were here a few years ago we took the bus and it was a lot of fun.

We decided dinner tonight at the Hummingbird Pub would be great, and the kids would enjoy the bus ride. The 5:00 pickup time came and went. At 5:20 a blue mini van pulled up, rolled down the window and said get in. What? There were 3 seats left in the van and 8 people waiting to get in. The driver said the bus had broken down and this was all they had. He wanted everyone to squish in. No way Julie was doing that especially with the stink flowing from inside the van. The dog hair on the seats was so thick it was providing some serious insulating value! The driver said he would come back

and gets us, but would be another 15min before he could make it back. Despite my better judgment I convinced Julie to stick it out. He returned to pick us up and we all climbed into the dog kennel. He was actually a very nice guy, telling us all about the island as we drove to the pub.

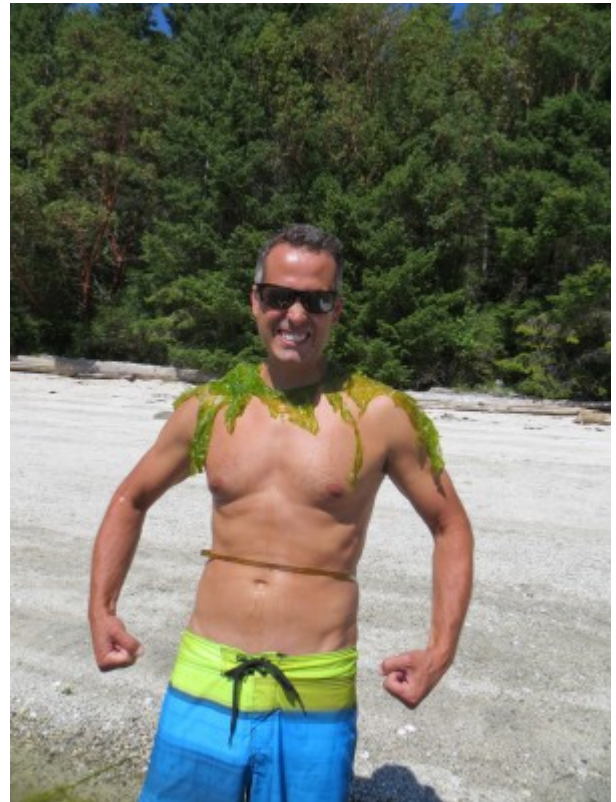
As we walked up to the front door, a guy coming out said to me "don't have the seafood". I said OK and thanked him for the tip. What a great way to start your dinner, boy was I excited for this meal! We all figured the only safe thing on the menu was a hamburger so 4 of them came to the table. While taking a bite of hamburger Skylar decided to try and eat the bee that landed on his burger. The bee wouldn't have it, and stung Skylar right on the lip! The burgers were marginal at best and the place looked like any maintenance tasks have been put off for quite a while. I think over the last few years the place has really gone down hill. We caught a real bus they hired in for an uneventful ride back to the harbor. It sure was quite the experience though.

Trip Log – 233.73nm





Back through Dodd Narrows



Seaweed Man!



Ava waiting for the bus



Hot in Nanaimo

I woke up at 5:10am to get the boat ready to leave and of course make coffee for our cruise to Nanaimo. 5:45am we

departed Thetis Island Marina to catch the slack water at Dodd Narrows. Julie and the kids still slept in their beds as I shoved off the dock with the navigation lights on and before the sun came over the horizon. The early morning departure was dead calm with an eerie warmth in the air. The forecast was for 85 degrees today! I love leaving early while everyone still sleeps and I am alone in the pilothouse, the feeling is so quiet and peaceful. Julie loves it too, lying in bed knowing we are on our way to the next destination.

Dodd narrows is a narrow stretch of water between Mudge Island and Vancouver Island. Unless you want to go out into the straight of Georgia this is your only option to get to Nanaimo. A lot of water passes through here. Currents can reach 9 knots and opposing wind and current can create massive standing waves. It's best to transit the narrows at slack water. The previous day I used my Raymarine chart plotter to find out when slack water was at Dodd Narrows. It said 7:04am was slack. Just to be sure I also used Navionics on my iPad to confirm the time. It gave me a different answer, 7:35am. Why would they be different? So I got out the old paper tide tables and that said 6:21am. Now I was really confused. I asked the fuel dock attendant and he confirmed the 7:35 time. I also went online and confirmed 7:35 with other sources but also found some other times as well. There must be something I am missing but I'm still not sure why I got different times. My Raymarine chart plotter is all messed up because its wrong on all tide tables not just Dodd Narrows. Must need to be updated or something so that's now on the long list of "to do's".

As we approached the narrows it was just about 7:20am. I was still not feeling all that confident in the 7:35 slack water time. To make matters worse no one was around us ready to go north, and quite a few boats were coming south through the narrows. I held off for a while hoping someone would lead the way north and confirm my timing. I knew I could run past

slack some because the water would be flooding at that point pushing me through instead of running against me. Finally at about 8:00 a sailboat and a powerboat passed me by going north. I pulled in behind and followed them through. It was no problem at all as we flowed right through in about 2 knots of current. It does get pretty narrow but only for a short period of time then you're out of it.

At 9:17am and 18.01nm we pulled into the Nanaimo Port Authority docks right downtown. We've never been here so we were excited to get out and explore a new town. What a nice town, with lots of great shops and restaurants. Located 50 feet from where our boat was docked sat Penny's Palapa, a small Mexican restaurant literally floating on the docks. Halibut tacos at Penny's that night were awesome!

With the town explored, we decided to stay a second night so we could explore the water around the town. Just east of Nanaimo two islands shelter the town from the Strait of Georgia, Protection Island and Newcastle Island. All of Newcastle Island is a provincial park with a dock, beaches and lots of hiking trails. We were excited to get out there and see the island. First though we took a Dinghy tour down the shoreline of Nanaimo harbor. From where our boat sat the protected harbor runs north up to Departure Bay. We ran the dinghy up the harbor and looked at all the boats to Departure Bay. The wind was blowing about 20 knots and there was a fair amount of chop in the bay. Our dinghy handled it well, something we never could have done in our old dinghy.

After lunch it was off to Newcastle Island. We hiked along the beach for a while until we came to a place the kids wanted to swim. They jumped in and swam for a while until it was time to go. Back at the dinghy we cruised over to Protection Island for a beer at the famous Dinghy Dock Pub. I've read a lot about this floating restaurant and always wanted to go there. What a great environment with the only way to get there being by boat! Not sure about the food but the beer

sure was good.

The next day was another 85 degree day! We contemplated taking off but in the end decided to stay for a 3rd night so we could enjoy the hot day at the beach again. First though we had to take care of some necessary chores. Nothing like sitting in a hot non-air conditioned laundry room when its 85 outside! 5 loads later and a trip to the grocery store, we were done, ready for our departure tomorrow. At least the kids got to play at a huge playground while Julie went to the grocery store. What a trooper, she even brought all the groceries back by herself!

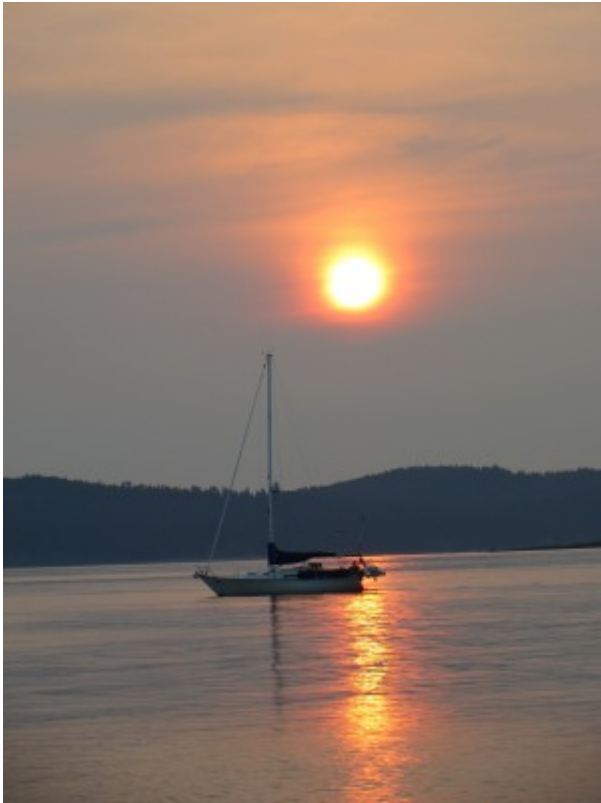
Then we were off back in the dinghy to Newcastle Island. It was so hot I even swam in the freezing water and I'm a wimp. The kids found a log and used it as a half submerged canoe and paddled around the bay. They would paddle around then purposefully tip it over falling in the water. They loved it!

What a hot day! We all felt a little heat exhaustion as we ate dinner on the boat and went to bed ready for the turn back south tomorrow.

Trip Log – 205.86 nautical miles



Dodd Narrows. Its actually



much narrower than it looks
in this picture



Chicken Man! aka Skylar



Ava's gummy skewer





View of Nanaimo from
Newcastle Island



