

Mystery Wreck at Race Rocks

By Dean Driver



Race Rocks Wreck. Photo by J. Marc

A beautiful sunny morning greeted UASBC divers at Ogden Point 8 am on Sunday Sept 14, 2014. Jacques Marc, Holger Heitland, Paul Spenser, Bob Simpson, Aurora Skala, Jiri Kohler, and Dean Driver loaded the Juan de Fuca Warrior in preparation for launch. The first dive site was at Race Rocks, or Racey Rocks specifically, on the "Mystery Wreck" that had been found a few

years earlier. She came to rest in shallow water approximately 25 foot depth. We donned our suits, paired off and dunked in at slack tide. The group spread out and approached the southeast side of one of the rocks. On the way, Bob and Dean had a wild sea lion encounter in the shallows. Many of the locals were not pleased with our advances and put up a standoff. Bob and Dean retreated smartly to the southeast side to join the team. The site presented itself with a few bricks here and there. Once we got to the site they were everywhere. Sprinkled around were the solidified lime contents of old wooded stave barrels...the outer shells long since gone. The bottoms and top parts of old black glass bottles are easily found around the bricks and lime cylinders. Black glass predates 1870 and suggests the wreck predates this time. Jacques later intimated that the remains could be those of the the Nanette a British Barque that was wrecked on Race Rocks in 1860. What we hoped to find was a piece of porcelain with a manufacturing stamp to help verify the age. Unfortunately, we did not find any pieces of china with any marks on this dive. While hunting for artifacts, we almost forgot about the spirited locals, who then descended on us for a look. Two metal pieces that turned out to be rudder pintels were uncovered and photos were taken. It is unfortunate that this wreck did not reveal more to us on this fine day. Perhaps another look in a different part of the site is in order in the future. After 45 minutes the slack tide was clearly was over and the current

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Another New Year is upon us. Most of the people I know don't actually make resolutions any more, but it still seems like it's a good idea to take stock at least once during a year. January seems as good a time as any to address the issue of renewal.

The first thing is that the UASBC owes a very big "Thank You" to Matthew Bossons. Matt stepped in when we found ourselves without a Foghorn editor quite suddenly. We are very grateful that Matt so capably handled the duties. It seems that every newsletter editor has the same problem: convincing people to provide him/her with material that can flesh out the next issue. Matt was quite gentle with his reminders. Thank You Matt for taking care of us.

Of course this begs another issue: Who is the new editor? We are very grateful that Anji Smith and Gary Lambeth have agreed to use their talents and take on the job. I hope that Anji and Gary will avail themselves of some of the space in this issue to introduce themselves more fully. I'll only say that Anji was attending a NAS course and let it slip that she produced a newsletter for another group. All the tutors' ears perked up and we tried not to appear too eager to offer her the role of Foghorn editor. We are very glad that she has accepted.

Another renewal item that has pushed itself towards us is the issue of funding. It will come as no surprise to any of you that we have not received any funds from any part of the Provincial government in the past two years. We have been forced to look at ourselves and find sources of revenue. A good number of you have given very generous donations. Another hearty Thank You! We have also found that there are other organizations with projects that need our search & record skills. In a few cases they have been willing to pay us for our efforts. We are managing to keep our books balanced.

One aspect of renewal that is presently proving quite ephemeral is a major project. We know that there are some significant wrecks out there. If we could locate one of them the ensuing buzz and excitement could hold our attention for a number of years. No one seems to have figured out a means to 'plan' for some good luck. Sooner or later one of the expeditions that we mount each year will provide the 'hit' we need.

One thing that is nice to note is that after a few years at a lower ebb, the interest in NAS has picked up. We ran more courses last year and the inquiries about future courses continue to come in. Of course once students have the training, we need to provide them with the venues in which to use them.

As I pointed out in the Fall issue there are plenty of things that are happening. The SHA conference in Seattle will be along soon. There are dives planned for the Spring. The Society for Historical Archaeology Conference occurred in Seattle Washington January 7-10th. Several UASBC members attended and Tom and Jacques made presentations.

I hope that your Holiday Season was joyous and restful. I also hope that this period of UASBC renewal will be much more like renewing friendship and not like car insurance.

Mystery Wreck at Race Rocks *(continued)*

began to ebb providing a challenge to us during the late portion of our dive. Releasing our holds from the bull kelp....we gracefully drifted back to the Warrior. Some divers kept most of their gear on, others partially doffed their gear to enjoy the sunshine and mild conditions. Some of us had a bite to eat and discussed the dive and shared what we had observed. The brick pile and lime barrels had been seen before, but at least one of the rudder assemblies was new. Our Captain Gordon took us to the next dive site while we redonned our gear.

The next dive site was on the 21st of May wreck located at the entrance to Eemdyk Passage half way between Cape Calver and Edye Point. The 21st of May was

853 tons (160 feet) and was built in Boston Massachusetts in 1866. The 21st of May was en-route in ballast from Valparaiso Chile to Puget Sound to load lumber. On December 10, 1881 while beating up the Strait of Juan de Fuca and approaching Race Rocks, a squall struck. She missed stays while attempting to tack and was driven ashore on Rocky Point. The mission on this dive was simply to uncover new artifacts before further deterioration occurs. As we descended, the bottom was covered in towel kelp due to the long warm summer. The hunt was going to involve moving the kelp aside for inspection. The divers lined up and swept the sweet spot where wreck items had been found in the past. Bob found a long piece of wood with a metal spike on

one side and a metal extrusion in the middle. Sediment was carefully brushed off for inspection and photographs. Small pins, copper sheathing and other small wood bits revealed themselves past this point as well. Some of the larger artifacts found on previous dives could not be located due to the extensive coverage of the towel kelp. Another visit to this site will be in order, but perhaps in colder conditions to give the kelp a chance to retreat. We concluded the day by retiring to the Swiftsure pub on Belleville street for a pint and to swap stores.



Jiri Kotler with Pintel
Photo: J. Marc

UASBC 2015 Spring Diver Schedule

Sunday, February 15th

Southern Vancouver Island – New information has come to light regarding the possible location of several railway cars off Sidney Spit. We will go to the reported location and search for the remains. we will do a second dive in Saanichton Bay in search of the tug Restless that burned and sank in 1933.

Both dives are suitable for basic open water divers.

Cost \$80 per person. Limit 8 divers.

Contact Jacques (250) 474-5797 or email: jmarc@shaw.ca

Saturday and Sunday, March 21st and 22nd

Sunshine Coast - We will visit Powell River to dive the steam tug Shamrock, schooner Malahat and USS Dakota. We will do a charter diver on Saturday and will do shore dives on Sunday. We will catch the 7:15 ferry from Comox on Friday evening and return on 5:15 ferry Sunday afternoon.

The Charter will be \$85 per person. We will also have ferry, food and accommodation costs.

For liability reasons the Charter operator will not take new or recently certified divers.

This limits this trip to experienced divers. Limit 8 divers.

Contact Jacques: (250) 474-5797 or email: jmarc@shaw.ca

Saturday, March 28th or April 11th

Nautical Archaeology Society (NAS) Introduction Course

Saturday March 28th, 2015 Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre 2275 Quadra St, Victoria BC

Lectures include: principles of underwater archaeology, site types, laws and basic survey techniques. The practical session includes hands-on surveying experience in the pool and plotting up the results. Non divers can participate and practice on land or in the shallow end of the pool.

Cost: UASBC Members \$100. Non Members \$135

To register contact Jacques Marc (250) 474-5797 or email: jmarc@shaw.ca

Sunday, April 12th

Southern Vancouver Island- We will investigate the reports of a shipwreck at Muir Creek West of Sooke. This will be a shore dive and will be suitable for all levels of divers.

To register contact Jacques Marc (250) 474-5797 or email: jmarc@shaw.ca

Thursday to Sunday, June 4th - 8th

Expedition to Winter Harbour at the entrance to Quatsino Sound on the West Coast of Vancouver Island.

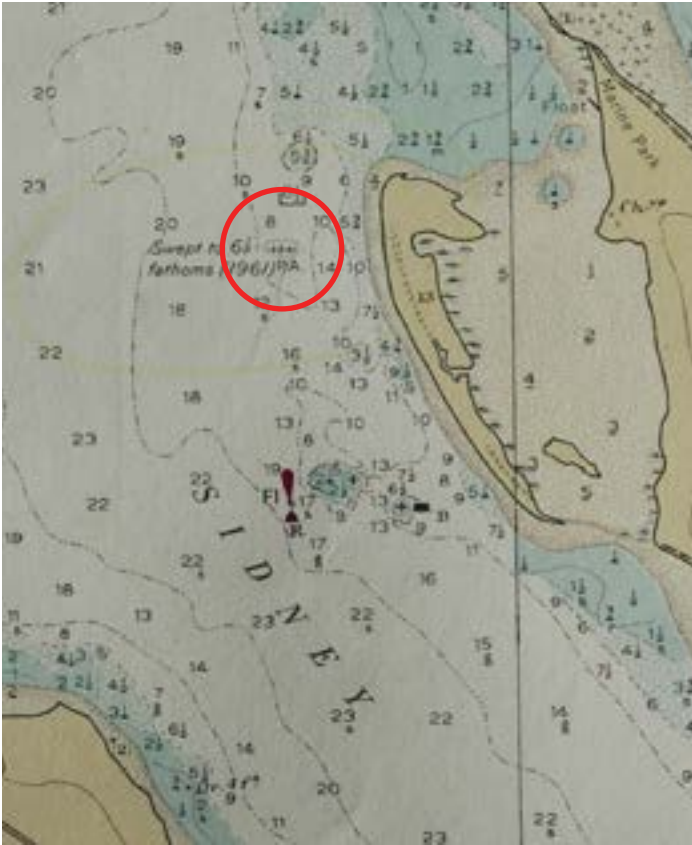
The focus of this trip will be to search for and explore three different wreck sites at the entrance to Quatsino sound. The list includes Fibreboard, Dunsyre and Eagle. Thursday and Monday will be travel days to Winter Harbour and return. We will stay in 6-person apartment/lodge at Winter Harbour and will make day trips to the various wreck sites aboard a dive charter boat. Cost \$750-800 per person. Limit six divers. You must have a NAS Introduction Certificate to participate.

Contact Jacques (250) 474-5797 or email: jmarc@shaw.ca

PLEASE REFER TO WWW.UASBC.COM FOR THE LATEST UPDATES!

Sidney Spit Rail Cars - Take 2

by: Jacques Marc



Once we had boarded the boat, it was a short 15 minute trip across Sidney Channel to Sidney spit. We had previously searched the middle portion of the spit so our goal this trip was to search an area near the north end. Our search area this time was defined by a wreck symbol on a 1932 chart.

Previous Intel told us that the rail cars were in 60 feet of water a couple hundred feet off the beach. The wreck symbol was considerably further offshore but I thought we would try two searches. On dive one we would swim off shore to a depth of 50, 55 and 60 feet and would swim parallel to the beach. Each group towed a marker buoy so the Warrior could follow. At the end of dive one each group came to the surface with essentially the same report. Sand, sand and more sand. Oh yeah, don't forget the occasional crab trap.

While it was a bit chilly, we were fortunate to have clear skies with only a light wind. We made a quick pit stop for lunch at Sidney Spit and then embarked on a second search. This time we dropped into the water on the GPS location of the wreck symbol and swam in towards shore hoping that we would come across the rail cars or other wreckage. Alas, it was not to be our

November 16th arrived as it does each year and it was time to try another search for the Sidney Spit rail cars. On December 29, 1927 the rail car barge Sidney No. 2 was being towed through Sidney Channel during a strong Southeast gale. The wind drove the barge onto Sidney Spit and a number of rail cars rolled off the end and into the water. The barge was salvaged and continued on transporting rolling stock but no effort was made to salvage the rail cars. In the 1970s a diver relocated them while trying to free a friend's crab trap. Since then they have vanished again. Our goal was to try and re-locate them.

There were six of us on this trip, Paul Spencer, Dan St. Laurent, Pete Craig, Aurora Skala, Holger Heitland and myself. We marshaled at the Tulista Park Boat launch in Sidney in preparation for boarding the Juan de Fuca Warrior. All week it had been cold, dropping down to -3 to -4 degrees at night with the daytime highs being only marginally better. Things didn't improve for our trip. It was about -1 as we suited up at the boat launch.



Juan de Fuca Warrior at Sidney Spit. Photo: J. Marc

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Sidney Spit Rail Cars - Take 2 (continued)

day. Again the report was sand, sand and more sand. There were also some fine Dungeness crab specimens. The Dungeness were plentiful and at least every third or fourth one was legal at 6 ½ inches. Good to know for another day.

Following the dive we retired to Tim Horton's for Hot Chocolate and coffee. A fine finish to a beautiful day.

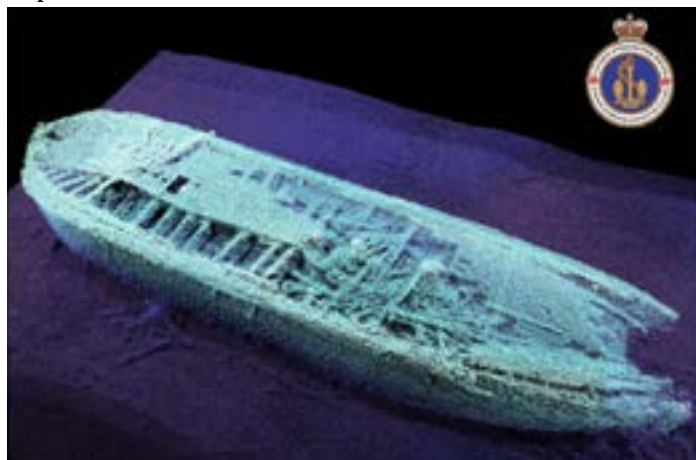
On Monday morning I sent an email note to Dave Jackson at the Hydrographic office asking if he knew what the wreck symbol was and if any multi-beam work had been done in the area. He had one of the Hydrographers Duncan pull the multi-beam data for the area. It showed: you guessed it, sand, sand and more sand. One of the reports put the barge ashore near the can buoy. When Duncan checked that area he found a potential target. We don't know if it is the rail cars, but it is definitely worth checking out.

Stay tuned, the story continues.

Shipwrecks 2015

Mark the following Event on your Calendar!

"Shipwrecks 2015" will be held at Simon Fraser University May 9th 2015. This year's theme is Arctic Exploration. Our key Note Speaker will be Marc-Andre Bernier, Chief of the Parks Canada Underwater Archaeology Service. He will talk on the discovery and exploration of Franklin's ship HMS Erebus discovered in September 2014.



NAS Summer Fieldschool at NMC

Those of you who have completed NAS 2 have an opportunity to start work on level 3 if they are willing to travel. Read on for an interesting way to hone your skills and have some fun.

Nautical Archaeology Society International Field School July 12 - 26, 2015, Traverse City, Michigan.

Join members of NAS International, divers, educators, students and fellow underwater archaeology enthusiasts for two weeks of training in beautiful Traverse City Michigan. Classes will be held at Northwestern Michigan College's waterfront Great Lakes Campus.

Come train on the Great Lakes with experts in the field of Underwater Archaeology. Each of the course instructors are qualified professionals in their field of study and will be sharing their years of experience with you. This is a great chance to do some sunny summer diving and get some fantastic training too!

Courses Offered:

- Introduction to Nautical Archaeology NAS Level 1
- NAS Level Two Field Projects
- NAS Level Three Classes:
 - Archaeological Illustration
 - Acoustics and Sonar in Archaeology
 - Documentary Research
 - Flint knapping
 - Native American Settlement in Michigan
 - Remotely Operated Vehicles
 - Ship and Boat Construction
 - Underwater Archaeological Surveying
 - Introduction to GIS



For more information please visit:

www.nasnmc.com

or call 989-307-9651



Keith Bossons & Eric Young at the UASBC booth. Photos by Bronwen Young



Every year the Vancouver Aquarium showcases a wide variety of diving, underwater activities and topics at its 'Diver's Weekend'. UASBC receives an invitation to come and most years we attend and set up a booth. This year it was held on January 17 and 18. The venue was the magnificent main foyer of the aquarium building along with the entrance area on the level below.

We were lucky to be given a spot on the spacious main level. The booth began with a long table which lent itself to a back drop of posters, photographs and printed information. We had plenty of room to set up a TV screen with a continuous slide show of recent activities from the Pacific Coast and the Kootenay-Thompson-Okanagan region. Information Pamphlets and a display of our publications filled out the rest.

The presentation was organized by Keith Bossons of the Vancouver Chapter and attended by him along and with Eric and Bronwen Young. This was a nice arrangement as we were able to spell each other off and wander around to look at everything else.

The interest in our booth was fairly 'steady' so it was definitely worth the effort. It was a great opportunity to talk to people and explain what it is we do. The NAS program interested some, the Shipwrecks conference, others. Many were quite impressed as they had no idea that UASBC existed and the extent of our work. It was also very nice to see some familiar faces who made a point of coming and saying hello.

In addition to our booth, two of our members delivered seminars of interest to the general public. Keith Bossons spoke about 'four decades of underwater archaeology in B.C.'. Tom Beasley discussed the 'ten best wrecks in B.C.' and then an overview of the 'Tonquin' wreck mystery. Dr. Robyn Woodward of SFU, spoke about her work with sternwheelers in the Yukon, 'Ghost ships of the Yukon'. (She is also a longtime member and benefactor of UASBC).

The weekend included everything from vintage hard hat diving demonstrations to examples of the latest high tech marine search equipment. There was even a 'fun booth' for kids. Something for the entire family.

As I observed the ebb and flow of the people who came down on those two rainy days, I realized how fortunate we are to have a world class facility such as the Vancouver Aquarium and also how worth while it was to be a part of the 'Diver's weekend'. If you are in the area next year, it is an event to mark on your calendar.

2015 UPDATES *(Southern Interior Chapter)*

Dates are tentative and will depend on the weather and lake conditions.

1- Museum research – December 2014

2 - Little Shuswap – sidescan – January

3 - Kamloops Lake steam engine – February 7

4 - Alvera – photos and mapping – March 7

5 - Kootenay wreck tour – March 20, 21 & 22

6 - Upper Arrow Lake - Bonnington & Arrowhead – April 3, 4 & 5 2015

7 - Upper Columbia River wreck mapping – April 25 & 26

Bill Meekel

Director

UASBC Southern Interior

Editors Message

Anji Smith and Gary Lambeth

Hi Folks!

Just a quick note from Anji and I. We're happy to be aboard and helping out with the U.A.S.B.C and look forward to many adventures with these fine people!

Anj and I took the N.A.S. Intro last year. We had a great time and learned a lot. After a few minutes in class no-one seemed to mind our dive mascot "Chewie" the Chihuahua who sat at our feet until lunch time when he not only made the rounds but made some friends! We enjoyed it so much we went back for round two with N.A.S. 1!

This one was in the ocean. Weather and tide kicked our butts a bit but great fun nevertheless. So much so we started plotting (Excuse the pun) N.A.S. 2!

Living in Powell River very near the lake we decided to plot an old sawmill and a couple of smaller wrecks almost in our own backyard. Work in progress. We'll keep you posted.



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Editing and Layout

Anji Smith

Gary Lambeth

Editorial Material

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