



Finlayson Point First Nation Pillar Stone

By Jacques Marc

As summers go, this past one has been quite different. Because of Covid-19 there have been no mass gatherings. The UASBC had to shut down operations and there were no flea markets or antique shows for me to scrounge at. However, in the middle of July, I got a call from Tom Bown, a Royal BC Museum research associate. He had just helped Grant Keddie, Curator of Archaeology at the Royal BC Museum recover a potentially significant First Nation artefact from the beach near Finlayson Point. He inquired if the UASBC might be able to do a dive at the site to explore if there were more artefacts in the vicinity. I said sure; but wanted to look at the site first. Tom and I went down to the beach on July 19th during a .3 meter (1 foot) tide. He showed me where the artefact had been found and described the efforts to recover it. The area was just to the west of the concrete stairwell accessing the beach at the end of Cook Street.

The Discovery.

On July 12th Bernhard Spalteholz was walking along the beach at a zero tide between Finlayson and Clover Points below Beacon Hill Park. An unidentified man had told him about a stone with carving on the beach. Bernhard discovered it for himself and took a photograph. He then reported the find to the Royal B.C. Museum.



Figure 1 Photo of Pillar Stone on Beach.

Photo Bernhard Spalteholz

Grant Keddie and Tom Bown visited the site on July 16th to relocate and view the stone. With the help of Grants wife Freya they found it and immediately recognized it as something significant. A decision was made to recover it and resources were mobilized. The stone estimated to be 250 pounds was much heavier than anticipated. However, it was ultimately wrestled onto a dolly and trucked up the walk way to Cook Street. From here it was taken to the RBCM where it was put in fresh water to de-salt and have the seaweed removed.



Figure 2 The stone figure safely in its vat at RBCM.

Photo by Grant Keddie

What is it?

Grant Keddie is convinced that he knows what it is. He says that he had earlier written two publications in which he talked about similar artefacts. One was a similar large stone from Pilot Bay on Gabriola Island. It was 80cm high and weighed about the same as this one. On its top it had an incised face with upraised hands below it.

In the second article, (see link below) he mentions local special rocks that were used by the Lekwungen people (Esquimalt/Songhees First Nations) to change the weather and ensure safety in venturing out in pursuit of food or to create unsafe conditions for one's enemy. One of these was last used in Cadboro Bay as late as 1878, and one was "not far" from Finlayson Point. This newly discovered artifact could be the very one mentioned by Lekwungen elders to anthropologist Franz Boas in the late 1880s. Grant says that at the very least this was a very special ritual pillar stone. <http://staff.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/2013/08/29/changing-the-weather-in-songhees-tradition/>

A similar stone called the Txwelastse stone was recently repatriated at a ceremony in Chilliwack. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSw6gWJyLW4>

Upon, reading Grants articles and having watched part of the Txwelastse video I was pumped to go for a dive. Paul Spencer and I did a follow up snorkel/dive at the site July 26th. We focussed our search between the two rocky reefs located to either side of the original artefact discovery location. To conduct our search we zig zagged several times across area between the two reefs. The tide height at the time of our dive was 5.2 feet. I.e. about 4 feet of water covered the location where the stone had been found. Paul snorkelled the shallows and found the area below the stone

location was sand and gravel with very few if any larger sized rocks. I covered off the deeper water with scuba gear. The gravel bottom extended out into 8-10 feet of water and I only found an occasional rock here and there. All were consistent with the local area, not elongated or sandstone. As I got out into 10-15 feet of water the bottom became overgrown in Laminaria broad leaf kelp. It was at least two feet deep and covered the bottom obscuring everything. If there is was anything on the bottom we would not have been able to see it. Another search may be warranted next spring after the winter storms rip the kelp from the bottom.



Figure 3 Photo of inflatable anchored over site.

Photo by Paul Spencer

While we didn't find any more transformation stones during our exploration, we did find an unexpected artificial reef. Seventy meters to the east of the Cook Street beach access is a 60 meter by 10 meter concentration of large rip rap sized blast rock. It looks like maybe a barge grounded at this location at some point and the rock cargo was dumped during salvage. An alternate theory is that it was deposited on purpose to help stop the waves from eroding the bluffs. The only hole in the latter theory is that there is just the one isolated rock pile.



Photo 4 View of artificial reef from Cook Street Beach Access.

Photo by Jacques Marc

In any case the pillar stone story and discovery of a new artificial reef took the boring out of the Covid-19 summer.

Tech Divers Tackle the Lord Jim

By: Ewan Anderson

It is putting it mildly to say that the corona virus has put a wrench in spring and summer diving plans this year. This is especially true for a large number of us on Southern Vancouver Island who dive several times a week and fill a dive boat at least once a month in the summer. By mid-March, the pandemic restrictions and a realization that our social and physical connections go far beyond our immediate friends and family caused a rethink of how we were going to dive over the next several months. An online discussion and several low-key weeknight dives later, we had a new routine, new protocols and several new socially distanced handshake techniques (does any remember when we used shake hands – with strangers?).

One of the consequences of diving within the new limits is the need for creativity in finding places to dive. Some might say we've lowered the bar on where we're willing to go, but there have been as many adventures and misadventures. On a typical weeknight in July I was answering the inevitable question, "where are we diving this weekend?" I suggested that we check out the wreck of the Lord Jim – a 19 m (62 foot) fishpacker/tug which sank at its mooring in Mill Bay in the 1990s. It's a popular local dive site according to Jacques Marc, who has dived it more than once. In normal times, asking a team of divers whose normal diving involves trimix, DPVs and a couple of rebreathers to do a swim to a tiny wreck in 10 m of water (at high tide) could be potentially embarrassing. But with rousing responses like "It might be interesting..." and "I'm into doing something!" I knew I'd picked a winner. I upped the ante by telling everyone we could do some photogrammetry too. Well, that sealed the deal – this group of divers loves a mission.

We also love a leisurely start, so four of us – Jason Cook, Jim Dixon, Lee Critchley and I – trickled-in to the parking lot at the end of Shorewood Drive in Mill Bay between about 1:30 and 2:00 pm on Saturday, July 4. After the typically thorough Global Underwater Explorers pre-dive briefing and box-checking, we hit the water and began our swim. I had calculated that it would be 20 mins to swim to the wreck from the entry point, which was good because I'm pretty sure even the most stubborn of elite technical divers would have called it quits after 21 mins of frog-kicking through snotty green water over grey, featureless sand. Luckily, I had overestimated our travel time and a mere 19 minutes later we ran right into what's left of the Lord Jim.

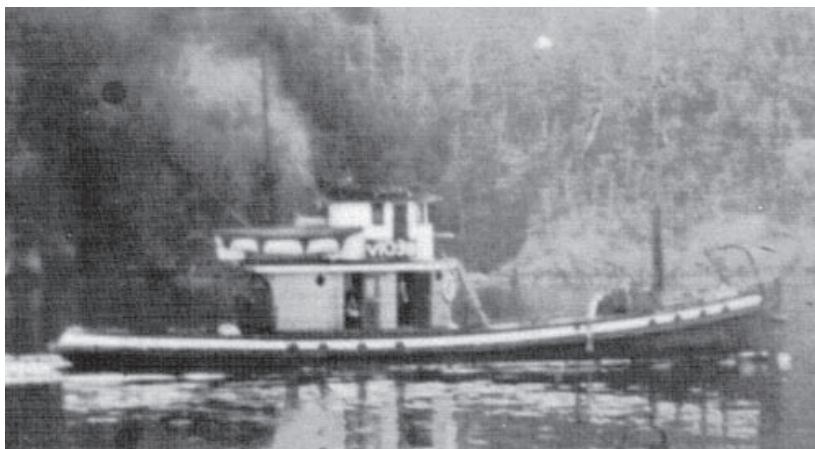


Our well-choreographed team swimming through clouds of algae

Photo by Lee Critchley

Tech Divers Tackle the Lord Jim *(continued)*

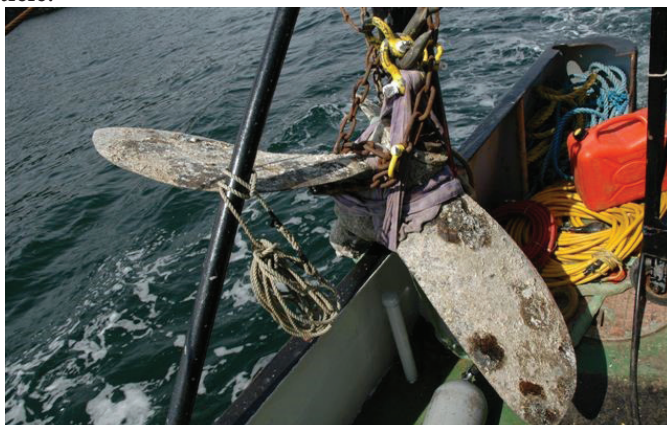
To be honest, I wasn't sure what the Lord Jim had been as a vessel. I had only come across it as a dive site when looking at Mark Heibert's website (<http://victoriabcediving.com>), which is the most detailed (and hilarious) guide to Southern Vancouver Island dive sites that exists on the internet. An inkling about some past UASBC drama or the Joseph Conrad reference may have been the inspiration, but nevertheless, her history is interesting. Originally the Bonila, she was built in 1917 with a 5 nominal horsepower (nhp) engine by the Western Boat Building Co. out of Tacoma, Washington. She served the Lummi Bay Packing Co. and then Nitinat Packers until 1927, and continued under private owners who upgraded her engine and employed the Bonila on the west coast of Vancouver Island and the Strait of Georgia. She was owned by the Vancouver Tug company from the 1940s through the late 1960s as La Bonne, being rebuilt in the mid-1950s, and then briefly renamed VT No. 501. Her last owner, Jim Drummond, kept her as a liveaboard on southeast Vancouver Island. She sank at her mooring just south of the marina in Mill Bay in the mid-1990s.



La Bonne, 1942

Photo by Nauticapedia

The wreck of the Lord Jim received a bit of attention in 2008 when a production company out of San Francisco proposed to film salvaging the propeller. A discussion about whether the wreck site was automatically protected under the Heritage Conservation Act ensued, involving the Archaeology Branch, the wreck's owner and the UASBC. Jacques wrote all about the drama in a 2008 Foghorn article.



Propeller salvaged from the Lord Jim in 2008

Photo by Neil McDaniel

Tech Divers Tackle the Lord Jim *(continued)*

We found the wreck to be a bit of a crumpled mess, but still clearly a shipwreck. The structure has mostly collapsed; the port side is still upright, and the stern section maintains her original shape. Machinery, and her mast lie towards her starboard side on the sea floor. Despite her poor condition as a vessel, individual parts are easily recognisable and make for an interesting dive. Engine, winches, galley parts, fuel tanks, mast and even seat cushions were all laid out before us. Her portside hull planking is still intact, but will probably collapse under the weight of the remaining drive and fuel system parts. A gaping hole in her stern is all that remains of the propellor attachment – Lee and I used it as a swim through.

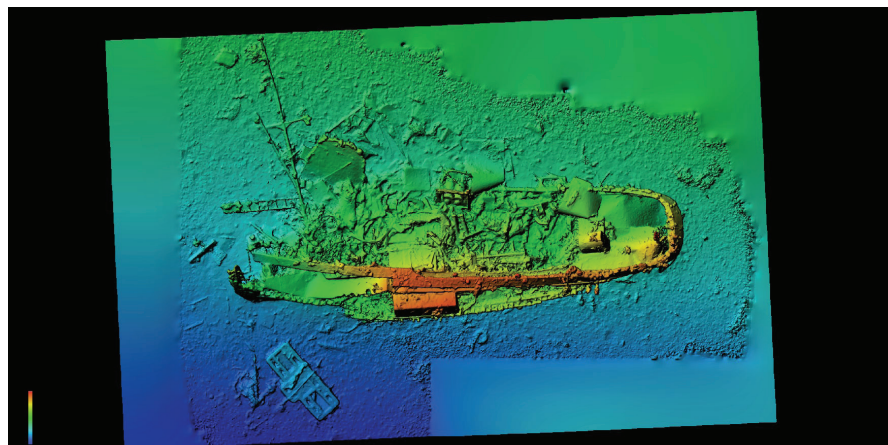
After a swim around the entire site, we got to work with data collection for the photogrammetry. Jim and Jason swam on either side of me with a pair of 10,000-30,000 lumen video lights each, which they used to wash the wreck in light – and stun any curious fish. I held my camera in its housing with no lights, flicking the shutter and my fins every second. We followed a relatively systematic 3-person path back-and-forth athwart the wreck, plus a circuit around the wreck to capture parts under every overhang, and single traverse bow-to-stern before my camera's memory card was full. Lee followed us with a video camera. Overall, it took 40 minutes to cover the whole wreck site this way, and we shot 1,155 photos.



Our photo survey of the entire wreck site - now that is a lot of photos!

Photo by Ewan Anderson

I was relatively confident about the results, but one never knows how everything will work out until the computer has a go. I processed the images on my laptop that night and the preliminary results were good – a big relief, after swimming all that gear around under water for over 100 minutes! A week later, and I was able to produce a digital map using the big computer at Terra Archaeology. You can view the 3D model in your web browser here: <https://skfb.ly/6TRBV>



A digital elevation model (DEM) of the Lord Jim wreck site

Photo by Ewan Anderson

UASBC Diver Explorations

Fall Diver Schedule 2020

Covid-19 Precautions

As it will not be possible to achieve a 2-meter distance between divers on board the charter boats, all divers will be required to wear a face mask while onboard the boat, when not diving. Also, we have had to reduce the number of divers that can participate on each trip.

Sunday September 20th Alpha Dive

We will dive the wreck of the Alpha a 220-foot iron steamer that wrecked on Chrome Island December 15, 1900. Our second dive may be on the tug Anna Foss which sank in Deep Bay in 2016.

This dive is suitable for all open water divers. We will depart from Deep Bay near Bowser.

Charter \$100 per person. Limit 6 divers.

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

October 3 & 4 Central Interior

The Central Interior chapter plans on doing some side scan work around Okanagan Landing near Vernon. This will start on October 3rd and will run for one to two days. There will be diving on significant targets that may be found. There may also be an opportunity to dive on some of the known nearby wrecks.

Contact Bill Meekel at billmeekel@gmail.com for more information or to join the group.

Saturday October 17th Rosalia Search

Southern Vancouver Island – Trip to search for the wreck of the sailing barque Rosalia, lost off the southern tip of Discovery Island March 1868. Our second dive will be to inspect the wreck of the Storm King lost off Trial Island 17 December 1941. There may be some current during the second dive but we will be using a live boat for pickup.

Cost \$85 per person. Limit 6 divers.

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

Victoria Exploration Speaker Series Fall 2020

Covid-19 Precautions.

We ask that you bring a mask to wear in the meeting as it may not be possible to keep everyone 2 meters apart.



September 9

DIVING MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Andrew Britton – Dive Master and BCEHS Unit Chief

Andrew has been training divers for many years and is also a Unit Chief with the BC Emergency Health Services. He will talk to us about the types of diving related medical emergencies which divers can find themselves involved in and he will also relate some of his own personal experiences from his work.

The UASBC Victoria Chapter meets at
**The offices of Terra Archaeology in the boardroom
Suite 303 - 45 Bastion Square in Victoria
at 07:00 PM**
The 2nd Wednesday of the month (except July & August)

This venue has a secure entrance, please be at the door between 6:45 and 7:00 PM or the entrance may be locked.

UASBC Presidents' message

by: Keith Bossons

Hi Everyone,

It is a bit of an understatement to say we are living in challenging times. The past few months have been a difficult time for all nations in the world and it seems we are not anywhere close to returning to business as usual. Like all organizations, the Covid-19 Pandemic has had a significant impact on the UASBC over the past six months with virtually all of our planned winter and spring activities cancelled. With the improvements in the situation over the past couple of months we are taking small steps to resume activities. We will continue to monitor the situation and adjust our plans accordingly over the next few months.

In the mean time we are planning to resume our exploration activities starting latter this month with a search for the clipper ship Cowper on August 30. There are also exploration trips planned for September 20 and October 17. You can find the details on our website under "Exploration". We need divers to make these trips productive so I encourage everyone to consider participating in one or more of these trips.

Our most recent publication "Historic Shipwrecks of the Southern Gulf Islands" was released earlier in the summer. This is the culmination of over three years of work including on-site surveys, archival research and writing and producing the publication. The report authors, Jacques Marc and Warren Bush, did an outstanding job putting this together. I would also like to express my appreciation to the UASBC members who participated in the diving and survey work. The report is can be ordered on the UASBC website. It is a great read and I encourage you to order a copy.

We are also planning some expanded exploration activities in the interior over the next couple of years with the potential for producing another Shipwrecks report for the interior.

I hope everyone is staying healthy and safe and has had an opportunity to enjoy some of the excellent summer weather we have had lately.

*All the best & Stay Safe
Keith Bossons
UASBC President*

**Please refer to
WWW.UASBC.COM for latest Updates!**

Foghorn (ISSN 1198–7081) is published quarterly 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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