

Thrasher - A Success Story

By: Ewan Anderson



Sailing Ship Thrasher

The Thrasher was relatively new three-masted sailing vessel when she wrecked on Gabriola Reefs, east of Nanaimo, in 1880. Launched in Bath, Maine in 1876, she travelled the world in her short life. She stopped in San Francisco, Queenstown, Liverpool, Rangoon, New York before her final stop in Nanaimo in July 1880.

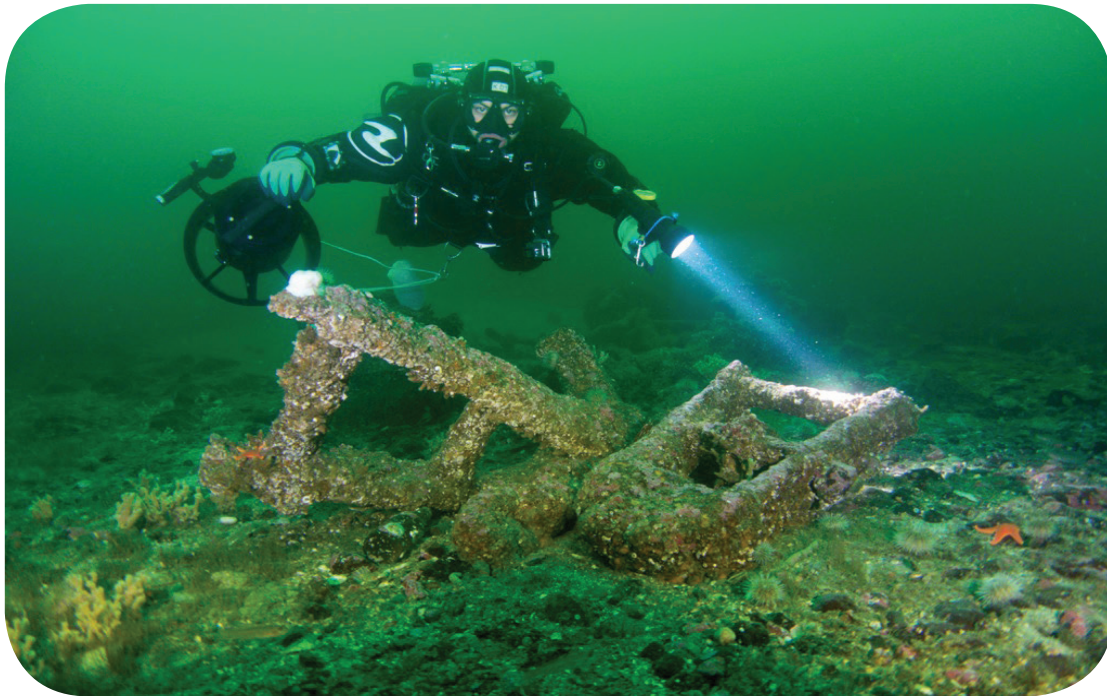
The Thrasher left Nanaimo in fine weather with a 2,466-ton load of coal, under tow from the tugs Etta White and Beaver. Late in the evening on July 14, she ran aground on Gabriola Reef and rapidly started taking on water, and was completely flooded, resting on the bottom in the early hours of July 15. A significant effort to lighten the ship followed to no avail, and the wreck was sold at auction later that month. Salvage must have concentrated on the Thrasher's cargo of coal, since by the following November, the wreck was still aground and two of her lower masts were visible.

Groups of divers visited the wreck and collected the

odd artifact in 1959 and 1963. The UASBC searched for the Thrasher in 1982 and identified parts of the wreck north and northeast of the Thrasher Rock marker. They noted scattered timbers, portions of anchor chain and an iron capstan or windlass drum northeast of the marker. Jacques Marc returned to the wreck in 1986 and recorded rows of spikes and drift pins marking buried timbers, and three bronze sternpost gudgeons. The gudgeons were collected in the late 1980s by commercial geoduck divers.

Last June, the UASBC launched attempted to relocate the wreck as part of the Southern Gulf Islands Project, but muddy Fraser River water, rough seas and strong current prevented divers from entering the water.

On September 23, the UASBC made another attempt at re-locating the remains of the Thrasher. Jacques Marc, Jiri Kotler, Paul Spencer, Ewan Anderson and Tyler Armeneau boarded the Juan de Fuca Warrior in Che-



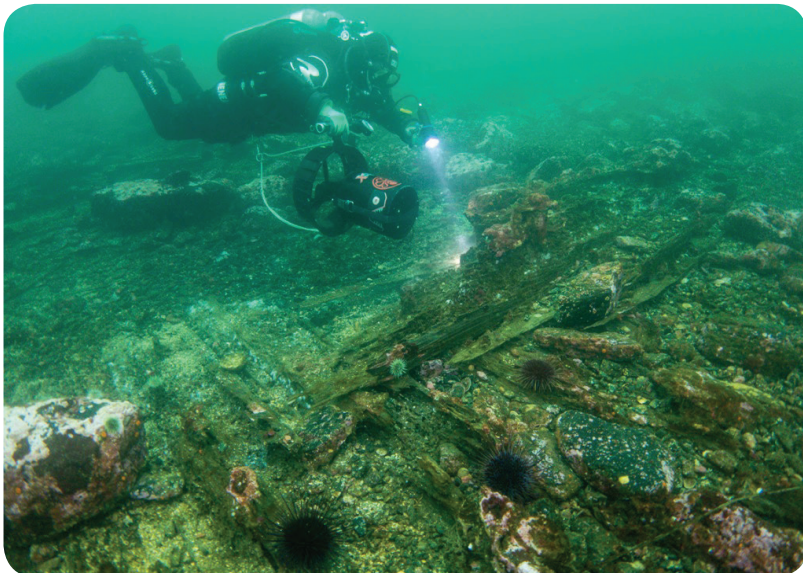
Tyler Armeneau on Thrasher Wreckage. Photo by Ewan Anderson

mainus and sped out to Thrasher rock over glass-calm water. Our timing was excellent, arriving just before slack and getting prime conditions for the search.

Ewan and Tyler dropped in first and sped off to the northeast using diver propulsion vehicles (DPVs). Their goal was to search for the main wreckage site by surveying a straight transect, no more than 250 m to the northeast (about 5 mins at cruise speed), then return

along a parallel transect. Meanwhile Jacques, Jiri and Paul surveyed north of Thrasher Rock for other remnants last seen in 1986. Both teams identified a significant amount of Thrasher wreckage. To the northeast, a 36 m long expanse of hull planking covers the ocean floor at 17 m depth. Three distinct clusters of chain plates and deadeyes are located along the northwest side of the planking, and a possible naval pipe, chain, and what appears to be winch brackets are at the northeast end of this part of the wreck. North of Thrasher Rock a large concentration of anchor chain, large pieces of coal and a lifeboat davit are located in 11 m of water.

The same teams conducted another dive on the wreck site. Jacques's team collected measurements of the main hull section, while Ewan and Tyler broadened the search area and collected 3D photogrammetry data of the southeast section of hull and the naval pipe and winch. Although the wreck is widely dispersed and lacks any "ship-like" structure, the dives were very satisfying. Successful searches are rare enough to excite UASBC veterans and novices alike!



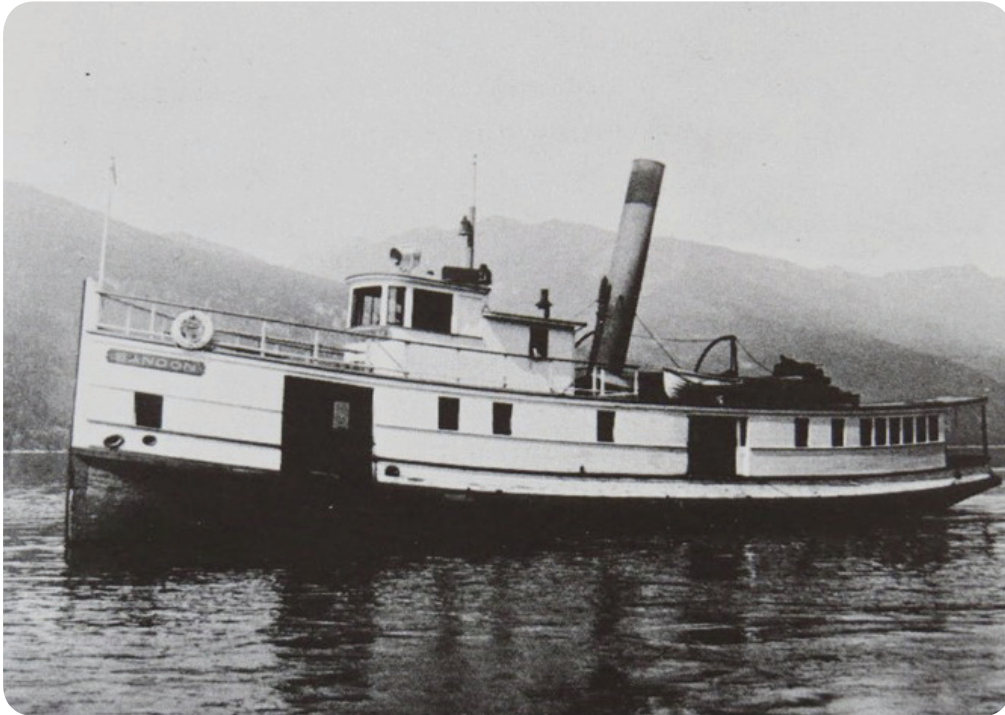
Tyler Armeneau swimming over wooden Wreckage. Photo by Ewan Anderson

FINDING THE SS SANDON

By: Bill Meekel

On October 26, 2018, the hull of the passenger tug SS Sandon was found by UASBC divers in 52 m (170 ft) of water at Rosebery on Slocan Lake. This was result of a joint project involving the UASBC and the Institute of Nautical Archaeology (INA).

The SS Sandon was built in 1898 by the CPR and was a screw driven steam powered tug. She was wood hulled and was 23 m (76 ft) long and 5.2 m wide (17 ft) with a 97.2 gross tonnage. She could carry up to 50 passengers in her aft located passenger cabin. She was built to be a multi purpose boat which could move large railway transfer barges as well as carry passengers. In this way she supported the CPR steamboat SS Slocan. Over her life she steamed over 192,000 kms!



The passenger tug SS Sandon during her operating days on Slocan Lake from 1898 to 1927. Earl Marsh collection.

The location of the SS Sandon was an outcome of a project by John Pollack, historian Henning von Krogh, and Kathleen McGuinness. The initial goal was to sidescan several areas on Slocan Lake. They used a STARFISH 452F CHIRP sidescan sonar to survey Silverton, New Denver and Rosebery and in the process located a number of promising targets.

One intriguing, ship-like target at Rosebery was very near the location Henning believed the Sandon was laid up.



Sandon on Ways

SS Sandon on the ways at Rosebery in 1927. At this point she had been retired and was being dismantled so her parts could be re-used in other vessels. Note the name SANDON of VANCOUVER on the stern and the large opening on the port side of the vessel to allow removal of the engines and boiler. G.H. von Krogh photo

Additional side scan locations were obtained, however the site was difficult due to the depth, the steep slope and the quantity of logs covering the bottom and the wreck. It was decided that divers should visit the wreck site to confirm which vessel was on the bottom. Due to the depth, this would be a technical dive requiring a decompression plan. Brian Nadwidny and Richard Jack (UASBC divers) were contacted about diving the target.

The first dive was done in April 2018. The wreck was not found due to the complexity and depth of the site. We later found the divers had missed the wreck by only 70'. John, Kathleen and Bobbie Maras later returned to the site with the sidescan to re-confirm the wreck location.

On October 26, 2018 the divers were again available to dive the site. John Pollack and Kathleen McGuinness placed four separate down lines and floats over the wreck site using a zodiac. These defined the area for the divers to search.



Richard Jack and Brian Nadwidny (foreground diver) are getting ready for their dive to look for the SS Sandon while John Pollack and Kathleen McGuinness look on from the zodiac. Bill Meekel photo.

Finding The SS Sandon *(continued)*

Richard Jack was diving with a Megalodon rebreather and Brian dove with a KISS rebreather. The plan called for the divers to scooter to the site then descend on the deepest down line. On the bottom, they would scooter over the site defined by the down lines. In this way they hopefully able to find the SS Sandon.

We knew the dive runtime would be about 90 minutes to allow for the decompression obligation both divers would have. We would have to wait to hear if the wreck had finally been found. At 1:30 pm the divers surfaced.

Yes, they had found the hull of the SS Sandon! The stern of the vessel still bears her name and registration location, Sandon of Vancouver! It had not been seen by human eyes for 91 years!



The stern of the SS Sandon in her final resting place in 52 m of water at Rosebery on Slocan Lake. Brian Nadwidny photo.



Richard Jack at the bow of the SS Sandon in 52 m (170 ft) of water in Slocan Lake. Brian Nadwidny photo.

The author would like to sincerely thank and congratulate the sponsoring organizations of UASBC and INA and all the persons involved in the finding of the SS Sandon. In particular, the historians (Henning von Krogh and John Pollack), the sidescan crew (John Pollack and Kathleen McGuinness) and in particular, the dive crew (Brian Nadwidny and Richard Jack) who made two challenging dives at the site and in the end located and videoed the SS Sandon.

Spring Exploration Schedule 2019

Sunday January 13th Cadboro Bay

Southern Vancouver Island - We will continue our search for the wreck of the elusive SS Enterprise in Cadboro Bay. The Enterprise was lost in 1885 after being in collision with the sternwheeler R.P Rithet. There is one small piece of the bay that we have not yet searched. We will do a shore dive to search for the wreck.

This dive will require a couple hundred meter swim but is suitable for all open water divers.

This is a shore dive so there is no cost to participate.

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

Sunday February 24th Robert Kerr

Gulf Islands - We have booked the Juan de Fuca Warrior to visit the wreck of the Robert Kerr.

The goal will be to try finish off the survey work started last year.

This dive is suitable for all open water divers.

We will depart from Chemainus. Charter \$90 per person. Limit 8 divers.

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

Saturday March 16th Porlier Pass

Gulf Islands - We have booked the Juan de Fuca Warrior to visit the steam tug Point Grey. The goal will be to try conduct photogrammetry on the prop and stern area of this wreck. Our second dive will occur on the east side of Reid Island where we will continue our search for evidence of the Mary Hare. The Mary Hare was a small coastal steamer that grounded and then burnt February 1896.

We may experience a bit of current on the Point Grey site, but this dive is suitable for all open water divers. We will depart from Maple Bay. Charter \$90 per person. Limit 8 divers.

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

April 1 - April 14th Minto Search

Kootenays - A magnetometer will be used to try find the elusive stern wheeler Minto.

If targets are found, divers will be used to dive located targets.

This is a joint UASBC/INA project using small boats so space is limited.

Contact Bill Meekel for details billmeekel@gmail.com

Saturday April 13th Cowper Search

Gulf Islands- The clipper ship Cowper struck a rock northwest of Tumbo Island November 21, 1869 and was lost. The UASBC will conduct a search for this wreck. Afterwards we will dive the Zephyr site off Mayne Island. We may experience a bit of current, but this dive is suitable for all open water divers.

We will depart from Sidney for this trip.

Charter \$90 per person. Limit 8 divers.

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

May 13 to 19th Okanagan Landing

The UASBC and INA will be conducting a side scan sonar survey of the Okanagan Landing area of Okanagan Lake. This project will be using small personal boats so space is limited.

Contact Bill Meekel for details billmeekel@gmail.com

“Congratulations – NAS Introduction Course 2018

Congratulations NAS Introduction Course

An Introduction to Foreshore and Underwater Archaeology course was held in Victoria at the Crystal Pool October 13th. It was organized by Jacques Marc and taught by Jacques, Ewan Anderson and Jiri Kotler. Five enthusiastic students spent the day attending general lectures about the topic and learning the basics of measuring a shipwreck. Practice was done in the pool using some creative artifacts. Back in the classroom, the results of the pool session were transcribed to paper. Achieving accurate results was quite an eye opener’ but there will be another chance to work at it in NAS 1.

Congratulations go to the following people for completing the course.

1. Lydia Sigo
2. Tyler Armeneau
3. Gabriel Hill
4. Jenna Anderson
5. Christopher Neilson



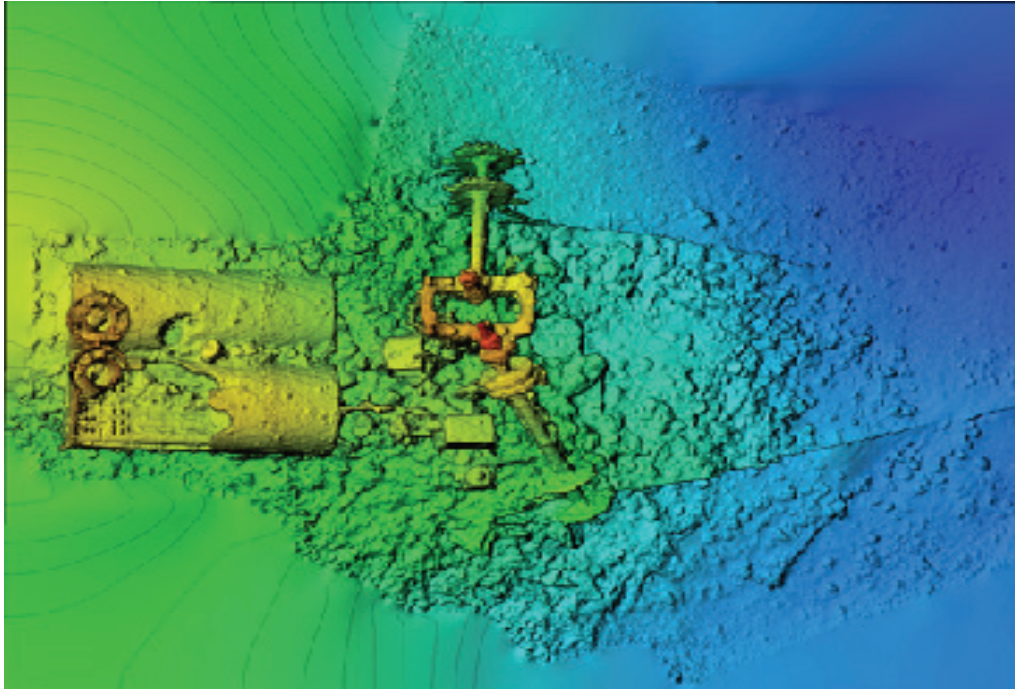
The **next NAS Intro course will be offered March 23, 2019** at the Crystal Pool in Victoria.

Course Cost is \$110.00 for UASBC Members and \$150.00 for non-members.

For more information or to **register contact: Jacques Marc at 250-474-5797**
or e-mail jmarc@shaw.ca

Del Norte- A Photogrammetric Success

By: Jacques Marc



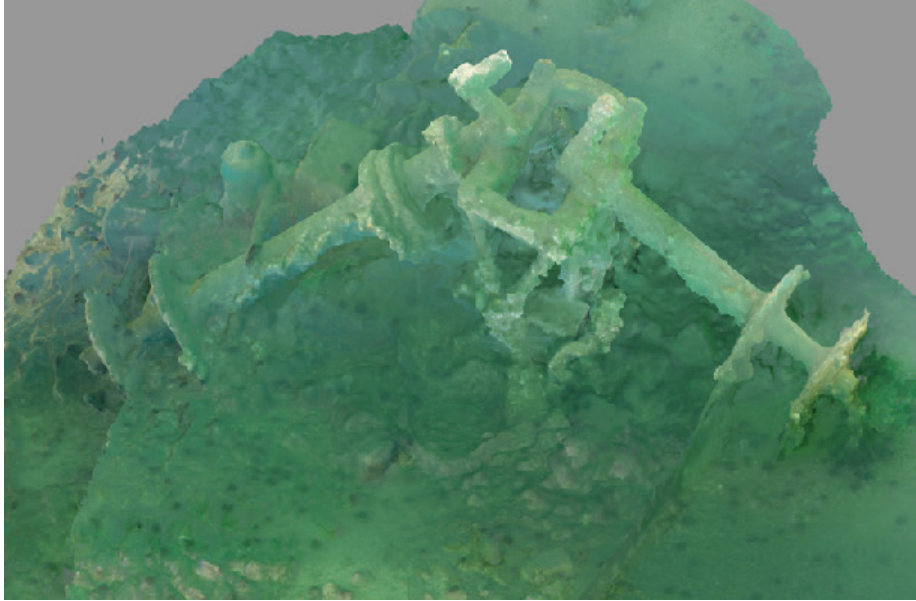
Del Norte Model by: Ewan Anderson

The Del Norte has always been one of my favourite BC wrecks. At one hundred and fifty years old she is impressive in that she is laid out on the bottom very much as she sank in 1868. Her two large fire tube boilers define the center of the wreck. Behind them are the remains of an oscillating steam engine. Reputedly only a handful of these unique engines were used in ships. Even the famous Smithsonian Institute does not have a representative sample. The UASBC has tried a number of approaches to document the site over a 20 year period. We have tried mapping it and have taken hundreds of photographs. However the results have been less than satisfactory.

When I learned that Ewan Anderson was trying his hand at photogrammetry I encouraged him to take on Del Norte. In 2017 he tackled the boilers and the model that he developed was fabulous. You could see every

blemish in the boilers and everything was to scale. The fact that you end up with a three D model means that you can look at them from all angles. As it happened I had to do a talk on Gulf Island Shipwrecks to a grade 4-5 class. I had my son take Ewan's model of the boilers and print the boilers in 3D. The children thought it pretty cool to be touching boilers from a shipwreck that had been underwater for 150 years.

Where is all this leading? I mentioned to Ewan at a meeting that we really had to capture the engines the same way as the boilers, before they collapse. He was in agreement so I set up a dive to the Del Norte for November 10th. We met in Maple Bay where Erin Bradley met us with the Juan de Fuca Warrior. He arrived a bit late with a flat tire on the trailer that was completely shredded and looked like something from a science fiction movie. However, we were still in good time and



Del Norte Engine & Paddle Spiders by: Ewan Anderson

40 minutes later we were on site at Canoe Rocks. The conditions were perfect. The current was almost slack and the sun was peeking through the clouds. The only down side, was there were about a hundred Sea lions on the rocks. The stench was awful and the noise was deafening.

Ewan and Jim wasted no time getting into the water to escape from the stench and to get a head start on the photography. Ewan had the camera and Jim Dixon carried a boom with two very powerful lights on it. Ewan had borrowed the lights from the local GUE Chapter. (Thanks guys)

As it turns out it was a good decision, as the underwater visibility was about 15 feet.

The lights were very effective at lighting up the engine works and paddle spiders.

George Silvestrini, Colby Hammerer and I followed. We were under strict instructions to stay away from the photography operations which we tried to do. Colby was new to the wreck so we spent most of the dive showing him around and taking photos. I always seem to find something new on each dive. On this trip I

found an 1868 San Francisco soda bottle poking out of the coal. After taking a photo of it, I tucked it back into a safe place.

Once everyone was back on board the Warrior, we headed back towards Maple Bay. Enroute we stopped in upper Sanson Narrows to re-acquaint ourselves with the wreck of the steam tug Chehalis. Our previous GPS coordinates were bang on. We dropped down on the rudder in 30 feet of water and spent 40 minutes poking around. Alas, despite our best efforts we were not able to locate anything new. It was a quick 10 minutes from the Chehalis back to Maple Bay. Everyone had commitments, so we said our goodbyes and everyone headed home.

Within a day Ewan had pumped out the new model. It shows the Del Norte in all her glory and does a good job at preserving the unique features of this shipwreck.

Thank you Ewan.

Enterprise - Elusive as Ever

By: Jacques Marc

On October 20th I arrived at Gyro Park on Cadboro Bay at 08:30 to set up yet another search for the elusive Enterprise. Set up meant transferring search start locations to the ground using GPS.

When I arrived it was a bit foggy but by mid morning the sun came out and the fall colours were spectacular.

Each time we do an Enterprise search the number of participants seems to dwindle as people get tired of swimming the flat featureless bottom of the bay. On the positive note the amount of area to be searched gets smaller. On this outing I was joined by Jiri Kotler, Colby Kammerer, Ewan Anderson and Dan Weinberger. Kevin Twohig of Terra Archaeology graciously came out and drove the zodiac. The zodiac is instrumental for moving divers around the bay and for ensuring yacht club sailboats don't run over the divers.

On this outing scooter divers (Ewan and Dan) were assigned a transect along the outside of the Royal Victoria Yacht Club break water. We had searched this area back in the 1990s but I wanted to confirm that there was no possibility of the Enterprise being there and that we hadn't missed anything on earlier searches.

The two swim teams were given a couple of new transects on the West side of the bay which had not been previously been covered.

Once the swim team divers were suited up Kevin transported them by zodiac to their GPS start position.

He also took periodic GPS coordinates as he followed the bubbles. The underwater vis was about 8-10 feet which was reasonable for Cadboro Bay. All three teams covered their assigned areas

Ewan and Dan reported that they were able to cover the full length of the breakwater.

During their transit they observed a few logs and a large pile of debris consisting of bottles and rusted metal at the South end of the breakwater. The debris was not the Enterprise but their observation confirmed the presence of debris at the South end of the breakwater located in the 1990's.



Google Earth image showing areas previously searched in Cadboro Bay



Line drawing show location of debris found off south end of the breakwater in 1990s.

Jacques and Colby did the green transect. The bottom was found to be covered in green and purple leaf kelp until we got out into 10 feet of water. As we got deeper the kelp gave way to a soft mucky bottom.

It is the type of bottom that you can push your hand into for 8-10 inches. Yuk!! During our search we periodically came across active and abandoned moorings and anchor chain. We also found a few long stout beer bottles. Once we reached the end of our transect we moved over 25 meters and returned to the shore. Jiri reported much the same experience. Mud mud and more mud with the occasional tire and bottle. Alas no Enterprise.

I am dumfounded as to how a 150 foot ship can elude us. There is a remote chance it is in the last unsearched area in the west side of the bay north of the yacht club.

I will plan on having a good high tide to search this area as the depth is 15 feet at best.

After our dive we retired to the Smuggler Cove pub per tradition for a hot coffee and lunch.

UASBC SHIPWRECKS Conference 2019

Mediterranean & Classical Nautical Archaeology

Shipwrecks 2019

Mediterranean and Classical Nautical Archaeology.

Mark your calendars for April 6. It will be a fabulous event.

The Conference theme is

Dr. Justin Leidwanger, a nautical and classical archaeologist at Stanford University is the Dinner Speaker with a presentation on the 1500 year old 'Marzamenti Church' wreck off Sicily.

Dr. Leidwanger's wife, Dr. Elizabeth Greene, a nautical and classical archaeologist at Brock University, will give a daytime presentation, likely on the 6th century BC Archaic shipwreck she excavated at Pabuc Burnu, Turkey.

Other daytime speakers, costs for the day time program and the evening banquet will be announced soon.

The 32nd Annual UASBC Shipwrecks 2019 will be held on April 6, 2019 in Vancouver, at the Hellenic Community Centre, 4500 Arbutus Street.

Please check with Keith Bosson keithsharon@bossons.ca or Tom Beasley tbeasley@telus.net closer to the event for details.

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

Victoria Chapter Exploration Speaker Series Spring 2019

Wednesday, January 9

TOUR - 443 MARITIME HELICOPTER SQUADRON FACILITY

Major Dale Arndt, Operations Officer with 443 Maritime Helicopter Squadron at Pat Bay will be conducting a tour for us of their new \$104 M Maritime Helicopter Base and fleet of helicopters at Pat Bay.

As this is a secure military facility all interested participants must submit their name to John at josa@telus.net by no later than midnight Dec 3 so that all can get vetted and approved for the tour. Closer to the tour date, further information on meeting time and location will be sent out.

Wednesday, February 13

SHELLFISH ARCHAEOLOGY IN BC

Meaghan Efford, MA Student in Coastal Archaeology, UVIC

Meaghan Efford is on the executive of the Archaeological Society of BC and is an MA Student in Coastal Archaeology at the University of Victoria. Her research interests focus on shellfish archaeology, coastal and historical ecology, food culture, and Indigenous governance. Currently her research is looking at shellfish taxa on the Northwest Coast. She is interested in how these shellfish are represented in archaeological samples and ethnographic reports and the role these shellfish play in the dietary profiles of Nuuchah-nulth people.

Wednesday, March 13

LIFE BELOW WATER: THE UN'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL #14

Dwight Owens, Ocean Network Canada

Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources.

Throughout history, oceans and seas have been vital conduits for trade and transportation and a source of food. Careful management of this essential global resource is a key feature of a sustainable future.

Dwight will talk about this UN goal and the challenges and solutions facing the world's oceans such as those listed below:

- The global share of marine fish stocks declined from 90 per cent in 1974 to 69 per cent in 2013.
- Studies around the world show that current levels of marine acidity have increased by about 26 per cent since the start of the Industrial Revolution.
- Global trends point to continued deterioration of coastal waters due to pollution and eutrophication.

Wednesday, April 10

UASBC EXPLORATIONS - YEAR IN REVIEW

Jacques Marc – UASBC Explorations Director

**The UASBC Victoria Chapter meets at
The offices of Terra Archaeology
45 Bastion Square in Victoria
at 07:00 PM
The 2nd Wednesday of the month**

Presidents message December 2018

by: Keith Bossons

Hi Everyone,

This will be my last message for 2018. Our Society has continued to progress our various projects over the fall.

The recent discovery of SS Sandon in Slocan Lake by a joint UASBC and INA team is great news.

Congratulations to everyone involved in this project.

Our Gulf Island Project team under the leadership of Jacques Marc has continued to make progress with a number of successful dives over the fall. The team completed additional photogrammetry work on the Del Norte in Porlier Pass which will hopefully lead to a 3D site map in the future.

Our attempts to put an ROV on a target thought to be the SS Cowichan in September had to be cancelled due to uncooperative weather. We will hopefully be able to make another attempt in the spring.

The 2019 Shipwrecks Conference will be held in Vancouver at the Hellenic Centre. The theme will be Mediterranean Shipwrecks. We are still finalizing the date but it will likely be late March or early April. We will send out an email once the details are finalized.

Jacques is working on the dive schedule for the winter and spring so keep an eye on the website for details. We are in the process of doing research and producing statements of significance for the BC Heritage Branch for a number of wreck sites. This work provides us with additional revenue which is necessary to sustain the society and fund our explorations work. If you would like to help out with this work please contact either Jacques Marc or myself.

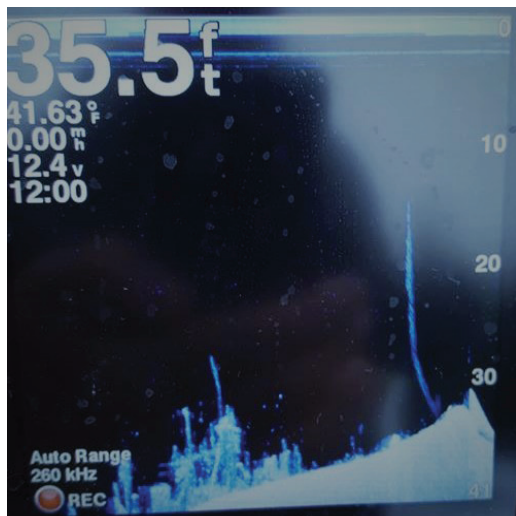
In closing, I would like to wish all our members a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Hope to see you all as at the Shipwrecks Conference next year.

All the best
Keith Bossons
UASBC President

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

Local History By: Lambeth & Smith



Depth sounder shows bow at 30ft. & bottom at 40ft.

We had heard about a vessel that had sunk (Or had BEEN sunk) some thirty years ago in Okeover Arm. A woman told us the name of the bay and pinpointed it pretty closely on the chart for that area. On November 18th, it was a cold morning of about 1 degree, when we ran out in a 21' Boston Whaler. It was a quick 10 minute ride pretty mach already had my hands frozen by the time we got there. After a couple of passes with the sounder we located what was clearly a sunken ship. This took all of two minutes. What luck! We quickly suited up and splashed in. Once we descended we pretty much landed on our target.

She was wooden and by my estimation around a hundred and ten feet or so. Maybe longer. I measured this with kick cycles so it could have been off a bit. There appeared to be twin diesels on her which made sense. I had heard she was a minesweeper which many had been constructed with wooden hulls to deal with the magnetic mines. A little bit of crow's nest or similar structure still stands vertical. She sits in thirty to forty feet of water at a medium tide. The charts actually shows an obstruction.

Dangerous bit of diving as she's covered in nets and oyster lease gear. We had to watch ourselves so as not to get caught up in the mess of a jungle lines and debris that lay everywhere. We did a couple of loops and headed back to the boat. I really hadn't expected to find it so I'll have to bring a camera next time!

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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