



THE CROW'S NEST

LADYSMITH YACHT CLUB
EDITION: 2025-04 (August)



Welcome!

This has been a busy summer, so I haven't been able to publish a *Crowsnest* edition since May. I hope you will have some time in these "dog days" of summer, to relax and read this edition, featuring:

- Special Feature - Dall's Porpoise
- Recipe - Mango Rum Punch
- Departure checklist
- 2025 Club Calendar
- LYC Member's Forum
- Cruising the Broughton Archipelago - part 1

At the end of May, Laurie and I left for the Broughton Archipelago, in the experienced company of fellow LYC members Tom and Jean. We decided to cruise early in the season to avoid busy marinas and anchorages on our way north. Unfortunately, the northwest winds were strong, so we had to wait a few days here and there for favourable conditions. I plan to give you a day-by-day commentary on our trip, which spanned seven weeks altogether and almost 640nm. No cruise is without adventure, and I promise to give you the straight goods on all our screwups. I'll also let you know how the stand-up paddleboard worked out (hint: swimmingly). If you haven't already done so, check out the new Member's Forum on the LYC website. Paul has written an excellent blog on his summer cruise.

This edition also features the second of three special articles about marine mammals by LYC member Owen Thistle. In this edition of the *Crowsnest* we learn about the Dall's porpoise.

You might know Owen as the editor of the LYC Handbook, a truly thankless job of enormous proportion, for which we are all grateful. Anyway, I was sitting aboard Northern Comfort at Echo Bay and I heard someone on the dock mentioning to another boater that he was from Ladysmith and an LYC member. I poked my head out and introduced myself as "Gord, the guy who writes the *Crowsnest*". Owen looked back and said "I'm Owen, the guy who writes the Handbook". Anyhow, we both had a laugh, since we had communicated often through electronic means, but had never met each other in person! Note: Owen also administers the Member's Forum, along with his partner Fiona.



Photo: Northern Comfort and Kerkyra at Echo Bay

Regarding the Garmin 86i Satellite GPS/Communicator I mentioned in the last *Crowsnest*: I found the device very useful for corresponding with short messages when out of cellular range. The weather forecasts were also useful, but not as detailed as an app like Windy or OceanConnect. The Garmin was 100% reliable and easy to use, although it needed recharging more often than I expected, about once a day. Overall, good value for travel to remote places. Happy cruising! Gord Coulman, Editor.

Special Feature

The World According to Sea Mammals, by Owen Thistle

Part 2: The Dall's Porpoise

This is the second *Crowsnest* essay about the Umwelt of local sea mammals – how they experience their ocean world through their highly specialized and remarkable senses.

As you wend your way through the Broughton Archipelago there's a sudden splash and a Dall's Porpoise rockets around the boat. Travelling at up to 30 knots, this largest species of porpoise can match the speed of a Bigg's Killer Whale and always seems ready to prove it. He seems to be playing, almost taunting, but his speed and agility help him to catch prey and avoid becoming one. His eyesight is good but not good enough to spot herring, squid or crustaceans through the seawater.

His superpower is echolocation, an ultrasound technology similar to our fishfinders but with the processing power of an animal brain. He emits pulses of 137kHz compression waves focused through a lens in his head to create a narrow "illuminating beam" of ultrasound¹. What he "sees" is a "colourful" map of his surroundings – here's something rough, there's something smooth, something dense, something slowly approaching, something quickly receding, and there's something that "looks" just like an injured herring².

Most of what we know about cetacean echolocation is based on studies of bottlenosed dolphins. They are capable of detecting an object the size of a ping-pong ball from a distance of 100 meters, and can discriminate thickness to a 1mm resolution. And when it comes to detecting living creatures echolocation gives a sort of "x-ray vision" as the ultrasound waves pass through soft tissue and reflect off denser bones and cartilage. You don't need to worry about a porpoise biting your fishing lure because in their Umwelt it "looks" nothing like food.

Notes:

1. The 137kHz frequency is high enough that the ultrasound clicks generate virtually no energy below 100kHz, which is the upper hearing limit of Killer Whales. On the other hand, porpoises can hear the calls and clicks of the mammal-eating Bigg's Killer Whales, forcing this predator to hunt in "stealth mode". Note that most echosounder transducers operate at either 50kHz or 200kHz – the higher frequency is probably the less offensive one to these animals.

2. Some blind humans use echolocation. Daniel Kish has been completely blind since the age of 13 months and uses vocal clicks to echolocate. He describes the experience as "flashes" of 3D fuzzy geometry with a sense of density and texture, something like colour.

Stay tuned for the next *Crowsnest* issue when we'll visit with a Harbour Seal.



A Dall's Porpoise Cruises the Pacific Ocean (Photo Owen Thistle)

Recipe

“Rum away with me” Rum Punch

This recipe was submitted by our very own Commodore Paul, and it certainly sounds like one to try out at the next happy hour.



This cocktail is built to be sipped slowly as the sun goes down, or mixed by the pitcher when your dock neighbors swing by. The flavors are tropical but balanced, with tart lime and pineapple offset by mango liqueur and a splash of dark rum. A drizzle of grenadine gives it that classic “sunset” look, and just the right amount of extra sweetness.

Rum Punch Ingredients (Serves 1):

1 oz mango liqueur (homemade or store-bought, see below)

¾ oz fresh lime juice

¾ oz pineapple juice

½ oz orange juice

½ oz light rum

½ oz dark rum

1 bar spoon grenadine (drizzle at the end)

Garnish: skewer with a cube of fresh mango, a wedge of pineapple, and a wheel of orange

Rum Punch Instructions:

Shake all ingredients except grenadine with ice.

Strain into a rocks or tiki glass over fresh ice.

Slowly pour the grenadine down the inside of the glass for a layered effect.

Garnish and serve.

Homemade mango liqueur:

1 part mango, diced evenly

1 part clear liquor (we used white rum)

½ part orgeat (almond syrup, you can substitute almond liqueur)

Mix it all together and let it sit in the fridge for a few days to let the flavors get cozy with one another.

Note: this recipe was originally published on a website called *The Galley Club*.

Departure Checklist

In the LYC, I can think of several retired pilots and others from the aviation industry or military. I don't know if the proportion is larger than the general public or not. Does boating attract a certain personality type? I'm sure this would make a great topic for a psychology doctoral thesis. My point here is that like aviators, boaters can benefit from this practice. Checklists help us to ensure that important stuff has been inspected and that the boat is in the right configuration to depart. Fortunately, boats are generally more forgiving than aircraft, for example: not selecting the correct fuel tank before takeoff.

Here is my departure checklist, which lives in Google Keep on my phone. I scan this list every time we head out. Some of these items are specific to my boat, but you are welcome to adapt and make it your own.

Preparation

- Check shroud tension
- Check Cortex and Navionics for updates, especially on first trip of season
- Trip planning plus alternate, marina bookings
- Preliminary weather and wind forecast
- Ensure spare belts, fuel filters, impeller, alternator, oil and filters
- Fill water tank, reset use counter
- Check bilge, pump operation
- Check propane level
- Tie floating line to life ring
- Check flares (expires 4 years after mfg date)
- Charge small VHF and nav tablet, backup charger
- Check fuel state, plus backup jerry can, plus dinghy fuel
- Check engine oil, belts, raw water strainer
- Check electrical, top up start battery electrolyte
- Dinghy inflation, hang from davits, oars, bailer, test motor, engine key, shut fuel valve and tank breather
- Check rigging, test steering, ground tackle, test windlass
- Ensure cockpit drain thru hull open, put plug in head sink
- Check head liquid tank, garbage ashore, ensure lots of bags and compost media
- Check sails and sheets free running
- Remove isinglass covers from cockpit

Departure

- Plug in and start Navionics tablet, input course
- Turn on Garmin tracking
- Disconnect shore power
- Engine battery switch to ON
- Open raw water through hull
- Orion charger circuit breaker to ON
- Plotter breaker to ON, start plotter
- Helm USB breaker to ON
- Cortex radio breaker to ON
- Plug in Cortex handset, secure with elastic
- Advise marina if longer trip
- Check emergency equipment, harnesses handy
- Sail plan with responsible person
- Secure all loose items
- Final check weather and wind forecasts
- Current?
- Sun screen or don weather gear, lifejackets
- Engine start, check cooling water flow
- Clear anchor alarm if set.
- Turn on the windlass, wash-down circuit breaker to ON, and open the wash-down thru hull.
- Cortex AIS collision warnings set to "harbour", VHF set to 16 or 66A if in harbour
- Visitor safety briefing
- Start trip on Navionics
- Brief crew on departure plan, ready lines, boat hooks
- Verify cat location. Close companionway door or put cat on harness
- Off we go!

LYC 2025 Events

Event	Dates	Location
Potlucks/BYOB Evenings	Robbie Burns – Jan 24 Feb 7, March 7, June 6, July 4, Aug 1, Sept 5 Oktoberfest – Oct 24 Christmas Social – Dec 6	Diamond Hall
Steak & Prawn & 40th Anniversary Celebration, Sailpast, Commodore's Gala	April 12, May 10, November 15	TBD
Rendezvous	April 25-27 May 16-19 June 20-23 Aug 25-28 Sept 15-18	Thetis Montague Harbour Port Browning Telegraph Harbour Newcastle Marina
Executive/Committee Lead Meetings	Jan 21, Feb 18, Mar 18, Apr 15, May 20, June 17 Sept 9, Oct 14, Nov 28, Dec 16	Via ZOOM*
AGM/SGM	AGM – TBD (March) SGM – Nov 25	Via ZOOM
Education Nights	Jan 14, Feb 11, Mar 11, Apr 8, June 10, Sept 23, Oct 7, Nov 4	Diamond Hall

LYC Member's Forum

If you have not already done so, please register to use the new Member's Forum. Instructions are below.

Note: It might take a day or two, as Owen and Fiona are on their boat and they might not see your request right away. If you have any issues registering, please reach out and we are happy to help. Feel free to post anything related to boating or the club.

To register:

1. Visit www.ladysmithyc.bc.ca and click on *Members Registration*
2. Enter this one-time passcode to request an account: *myLYC*.
3. Enter your information on the account request form and click *Register*. We'll confirm your membership by email and activate your account. This may take a couple of days.

Once registered, you will have full access to our exclusive members-only space (log in with your personal password and check the "keep me signed in" box for instant access going forward).

If you have any difficulty, just email forum@ladysmithyc.bc.ca for assistance. We hope to see you soon in the virtual club-house!

Cruising the Broughton Archipelago

Part 1 - Ladysmith to Forward Harbour

Part 1 took us from our home marina to Forward Harbour, the jumping-off point for Johnstone Strait. We had budgeted about a week to get to the start of the Broughton Archipelago, but as you will see, it took a bit longer...

May 30. Ladysmith to Smugglers Cove 42.0 nm. Rover and Northern Comfort had a nice crossing of the Strait of Georgia to arrive at Smugglers Cove, a very small but well-protected anchorage. We were considering a stop at Thormanby Island, but found the anchorage too open to the weather. We saw orcas, humpbacks, and porpoises along the way. Depending upon the weather (strong northwesterly winds), we could be here a couple of nights.



Photo: Rover and Northern Comfort at Smugglers Cove

May 31. A quiet day at Smugglers Cove, with a walk ashore. It is a bit difficult to get ashore, as the rocks are steep and covered with oysters and barnacles. There were lots of people enjoying the park trails. Squatchy really enjoyed the walk, but was ready to go back to his boat for some food and a nap.

June 1. Smugglers Cove to Maude Cove 20.0 nm. We arrived at Maude Cove, just west of Saltery Bay, where the Sunshine Coast ferry lands. This is a quiet and well-sheltered place with a nice view up Jervis Inlet to the mountains. It was slow getting here against wind, waves, and tide. Hopefully the northwest wind will drop soon, as it is against our direction of travel. If the wind cooperates, we could reach the Discovery Islands in a couple more travel days.



Photo: the view east from Maude Cove

June 2. We ventured out of Maude Cove this morning into an angry Malespina Strait and returned directly to the quiet and sheltered Cove. We weren't in a hurry, so there was no point in subjecting ourselves to bad weather. We hoped the weather pattern would change soon and we could be on our way. In the meantime, we read books, did stretches, and kept Squatchy fed and entertained. Our friends have Digby the dog, so they had to dinghy ashore at regular intervals - yesterday becoming quite stuck in the mud.

June 3. Maude Cove to Westview 16.0 nm. A nice trip today to Westview, which is near Powell River. The wind finally eased and it looks good for tomorrow as well. We enjoyed the marina showers and laundry and planned to have dinner at a nearby Thai restaurant. Digby and Squatchy enjoyed some walks on shore, where there were many roses blooming.

The food at the Thai restaurant was excellent, but lurking in the soup were a couple of super spicy "chili surprises". Tom got the first one and exclaimed his surprise while reaching for the water (it doesn't help apparently). Then I got one and started hiccuping, nose running, gasping, sweating, the whole deal. Finally, I got some plain rice and water down and things began to return to normal. Wow. The rest of the meal was tasty but less eventful.

June 4. Westview to Squirrel Cove 26.8 nm. Before leaving Westview, we walked up to a coffee shop and had a nice breakfast, then to a butchers to buy a couple of pieces of fish, then to buy a couple of rather expensive blocks of ice at the marine chandler. Meanwhile, the laundry was drying at the marina. Eventually, all the preparations were done and we set sail by 11:00 for Squirrel Cove, a well-protected basin off Desolation Sound. Squirrel Cove was quiet, with only about eight boats anchored in the beautiful green water.

For the next day, we needed to transit a series of three rapids, which must be carefully timed using the tide tables. We planned to arrive at Yaculta early, Gillard right on time, and Dent a little late (but it will push us clear). We've done this before, but we still planned very carefully. Delightful Shoal Bay would be our reward.

June 5. This morning as we were heading out, Rover had a breakdown and we both dropped anchor, still in Squirrel Cove. After some head scratching we removed Rover's exhaust mixing valve, which came away in two pieces instead of one. The break was causing exhaust and hot seawater to leak into the engine room instead of out the stern gland. A new part was ordered and the very helpful owner of the Squirrel Cove Trading Post offered to pick it up in Campbell River on his usual run, if the part arrived in time. If not, he planned another trip on Monday. Squirrel is an attractive and very well sheltered place. There are some hiking trails, which we may check out later.

June 6. We went for a nice hike today through the forest to Von Donop Inlet, perhaps 1.5km each way. The weather was warm, so it was nice to hike mainly in the shade. While we hiked, the tide rose steadily, so the rock I had tied the dinghy to was slightly underwater. Squatchy enjoyed the hike and walked about a third of the way, so he was tired now, as we all were. No sign of Rover's part yet, so we may be here a couple more days. I may need to run the engine tomorrow to charge our batteries. Fortunately, we have lots of supplies and won't run out of anything important.



Photo: a tired pussycat

June 7. Today, I made my "accidental" apple fritter/pancake dish for breakfast with our friends, and then we strategised about the next few days. The boat part was predicted to turn up Tuesday, so we elected to go together to Campbell River in Northern Comfort on Monday. We will spend two nights at a marina and then return to fix Rover. Campbell River is a great spot for a bit of provisioning, hopefully a shower, and maybe a pub dinner. We have to leave quite early in the morning to arrive at Cape Mudge for slack current, but it becomes light at 5 AM these days, so no problem. In the afternoon we inflated the stand up paddleboard (SUP) which was fun and a sure way to go swimming, involuntarily in my case! The water was warmer than expected and quite refreshing. I like the SUP, but I think we may get a kayak instead. One thing I learned is that the SUP must not only be inflated, but needs to be somewhat pressurized. An electric inflator would be ideal, otherwise it requires a lot of pumping.



Photo: Gord trying out the stand-up paddleboard

June 8. A very warm day, mainly spent trying to stay cool, reading books, and playing cards. We had a very nice dinner aboard Rover and we all enjoyed the outing, including the shady dinghy ride close along the pretty shoreline. Squatchy and Digby lay beside each other on the cabin sole, cooled by the ocean against the hull. Squatchy continued to amaze as he consented to get in and out of the dinghy enroute to unknown destinations.



Photo: Squatchy finds the most interest places to sit

June 9. Squirrel Cove to Campbell River 26.5 nm. A bit of a marathon day after getting up at five and raising the anchor by five thirty. A quick stop to pick up Rover's crew and we were off. We had some excellent views of the mountains near Desolation Sound and we sailed along under just the headsail at six to seven knots. Our calm was shattered hitting the Strait of Georgia, where we had strong winds and waves most of the way to Cape Mudge. Poor Squatchy was seasick and not very happy. It was windy getting into the marina, but some kind people caught our lines and helped us get safely moored. In the afternoon we had showers and laundry, and tonight we will have a pub dinner. Fingers crossed that the part arrives tomorrow, but we booked in here for two nights anyway.

June 10. Great news: the engine part arrived and we planned to set off tomorrow for Squirrel Cove. If all went well, we would be able to resume our trip, although we now had a full moon and corresponding spring tides. Northern Comfort was reprovisioned and we even did some maintenance, re-bedding a stanchion that may be the cause of a rainwater leak (per the definition of cruising: boat maintenance in exotic ports). Although the forecast was good, we were a little nervous about the possibility of strong winds and tide tomorrow, but also eager to return to Rover.



Photo: Tom with the new mixing valve

June 11. Campbell River to Squirrel Cove 25.0 nm. We had a nice trip from Campbell River back to Squirrel Cove. Rover was back in operation, yay! Tomorrow morning we planned to traverse only one rapid and stop at the Big Bay community dock, although if there was no room we would continue onward.

June 12. Squirrel Cove to Big Bay 23.4 nm. We docked at Big Bay, at the Stuart Island Community Dock and store. We were right across from Gillard Rapids. For some reason, there are some very fancy resorts nearby, and I was watching the helicopters taxi guests into the big resort opposite. The community store has a nice grassy area and Squatchy wanted to spend all his time there. I can't blame him, since he didn't get many walks at Campbell River. On the way into Big Bay, the Yaculta rapids were running against us and were steadily increasing in force. Northern Comfort was down to 2 knots and Rover even less, due to her blocked air filter as we found out later. Fortunately, we were able to turn the corner into Big Bay and the current released its iron grip. Later, I dove into the (very cold) water to see if Rover's propeller was fouled, but it turned out to be a clogged air filter, caused by soot from the leaking mixing valve. Hopefully our last gremlin. The water was very clear and the marine life was abundant and easy to see.

June 13. Big Bay to Shoal Bay 10.8 nm. We docked at Shoal Bay for the night after smoothly traversing Gillard and Dent Rapids. We were the only boats at Shoal Bay, which was very unusual. The views were spectacular, looking up at Philip Arm. We may relax for a day, as the forecast for Sunday and Monday looks ideal for travel further west. Squatchy has been tracking little racer snakes and fortunately hasn't harmed any, despite several pounces.



Photo: View from the deck at Shoal Bay

June 14. We had a relaxing day at Shoal Bay. Tomorrow we were heading to Forward Harbour, a bit further west. Squatchy had fun chasing snakes and leaping through the grass.

Some of you might be interested in the technical details of Rover's engine issue. The small diesels used in sailboats are cooled by seawater. After the water comes out of the heat exchanger, it is mixed with the exhaust gasses to go overboard, thereby keeping the exhaust system cool and damping the engine noise. Where the water enters the exhaust system, there is a metal mixing valve, sometimes called an exhaust riser. These valves are subjected to hot seawater, exhaust smoke, and vibration, so they need replacement at regular intervals. Some are made of cast iron and some are stainless steel, which lasts longer. When Rover's valve failed, it filled the engine room with diesel smoke and soot, which was then sucked into the engine air intake, which clogged the filter. This same valve failed on Northern Comfort a couple of years ago, but I was fortunate to notice a little rusty spot and was able to replace it before it completely failed. Rover's valve was wrapped in heat tape, so it was not possible to see the failure point. Tom said in retrospect that there were some other subtle signs, such as rust appearing on other parts that weren't normally rusty, probably from hot salt water leaking.



Photo: Shoal Bay

June 15. Shoal Bay to Forward Harbour 20.3 nm. A smooth trip, despite transiting two sets of rapids - Green Point and Whirlpool. Because of the distance between them, we had to transit Green Point an hour early and Whirlpool an hour late, but apart from a few “swirlies” neither one was difficult. Forward Harbour was quiet, with only a couple of boats other than ours. A YouTube sailing couple “Allison and James” pulled in a bit later.



Photo: Forward Harbour

Tune into the next *Crowsnest* for part 2: Forward Harbour to Sullivan Bay