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LOG GROUP: Western Canada

LOG TITLE: Wayfarer Wanderings – Pacific Yachting

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# Wayfarer Wanderings

*Cruising in an open boat can reveal new horizons, and put you back in touch with sea and shore.*



*by John Millen*

**"T**hat sure would be a great picnic boat," commented the skipper of a family runabout admiring one of our three Wayfarer sailing dinghies beached on the sand at Buccaneer Bay. We had struck up a conversation because we wanted a chance to try out his *Pacific Yachting* "Peeper" (Sam Devlin's complete plans appeared in the magazine in December, 1984). Six of us were spending a lazy day soaking in the hot August sun before sailing back to West Vancouver. In two weeks we had explored the Sechelt Inlets, braved the Skookumchuk Rapids and a gusty inflow wind in Jervis Inlet, paddled across Hotham Sound, and ghosted down Ma-

laspina Strait. Great cruising in 16ft open sailboats.

I was impressed with the way the "Peeper" handled under oars, but we cruise without a tender. That evening, just at sunset, we stoked our beach fire to a good blaze for Ivor, who took his turn to swim ashore after anchoring our boats out far enough to be afloat on the next morning's low tide.

We had pitched our tents just above the high-tide mark on the sand among the marram grass. Our kitchen outfits were set up on the beached logs. As the fire embers died down and the sunset glowed over the mountains to the north we savored the experiences of our two-week holiday.

Hugh Johnston and I have cruised our dinghies in company for each of the past five summers. We were joined in 1986 and 1987 by Roger and Barbara Bush in a third Wayfarer. Last summer we launched our boats from Hollyburn Sailing Club at Ambleside late in July. The first day a fresh easterly took us to Plumper Cove on Keats Island in four hours. The wind and sea built steadily from Point Atkinson along the south shore of Bowen Island. I hadn't settled into the rhythms of sailing and was too tense to enjoy the power-surfing off Cape Roger

**Our sheltered waters such as Sechelt Inlet and Smuggler Cove are ideal for Wayfarers and other small boats...**





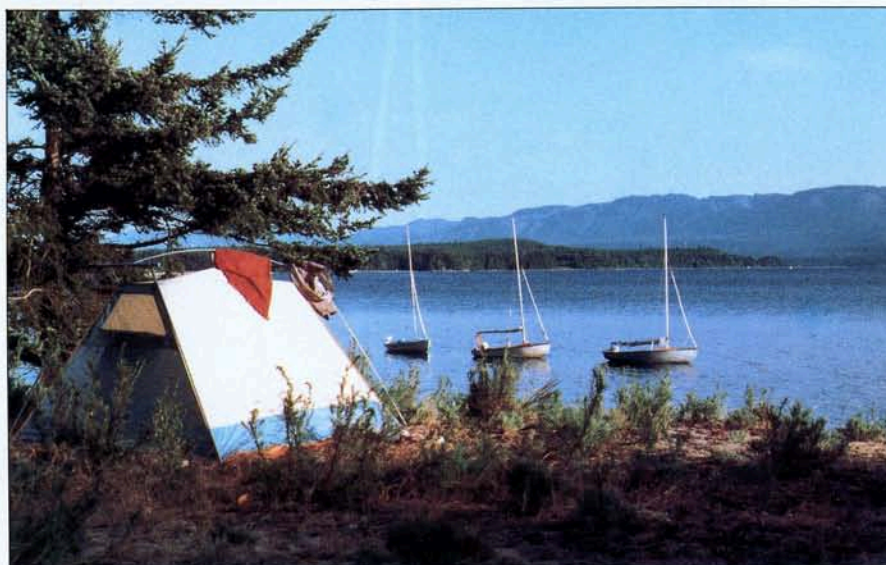


Curtis. I tacked around and reached in to get under the shelter of the Cape. Reaching was not much more comfortable because the gusts were blowing the bow wave all over Donna and me as we sat on the rail. Roger, following behind, looked as if he was planing. Next I luffed up and dropped the main, continuing under genny only. Roger caught up as we bore off through the channel between Worlecombe Island, he having also dropped his main when a raft of kelp had wrapped his rudder.

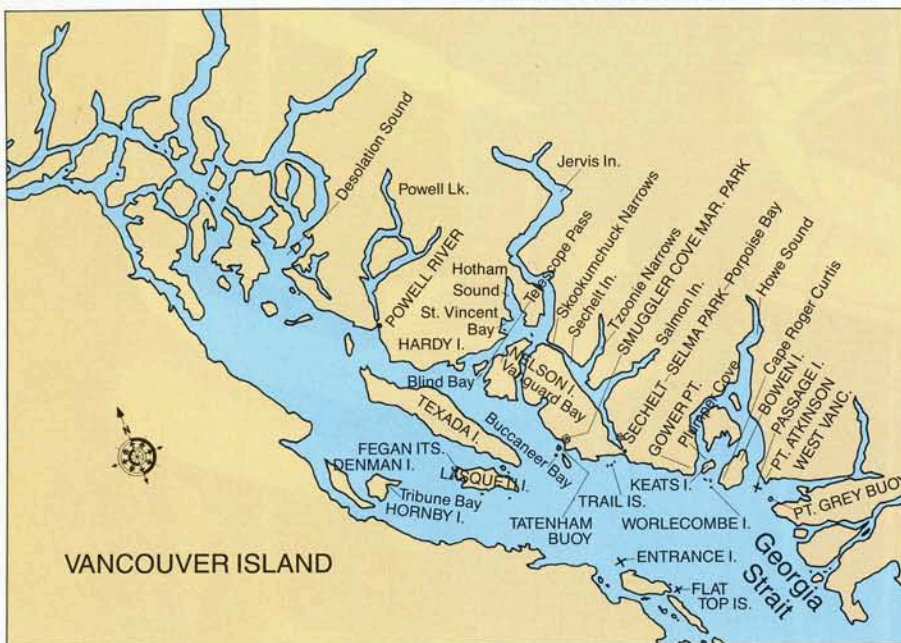
On the second day we tacked up the Sunshine Coast in a freshening northwester and reached into the shelter of the breakwater at Selma Park. There we were met by Roger's son with a boat trailer. We shuttled the three boats across the isthmus to Porpoise Bay on the inside waters of Sechart Inlet. In the flukey evening wind we tacked three miles up the Inlet and camped on the beach at Piper Point Marine Park. We had to hurry to anchor the boats off the beach before dark.

The Inlet was perfectly still overnight, but in fine weather strong winds blow up the Inlet during the day. We had a brisk run down to Kunechin Point and camped at the head of the bay on the Salmon Inlet side of the point. Space on shore for camping was limited here, but in compensation the remains of an old float enabled us to reach our anchored boats at all stages of the tide.

After spending a day exploring Salmon Inlet, encountering again the powerful up-inlet winds, we sailed to Tzoonie Narrows, around the corner in Narrows Inlet. The marine park at Tzoonie extends along the shore on



Top: Wayfarers motoring through the Skookumchuck. Above: Anchored off Sandy Island (near Comox). Facing page, top: Under sail in Malaspina Strait. Right: Wayfarers beached at Ford Cove on Hornby Island.



both sides of the narrows, with the best anchorage and camping on the south-east side. To the north the mountain face rises 5000ft, catching clouds. Once during our stay it threw a violent rain squall at us; or at least that is what it looked like as the squall marched across the bay toward us.

On shore we found evidence of the early loggers, from their steam boiler to their fruit trees. Elsewhere in the woods were other relics, such as World War II-vintage equipment, from the more recent wave of loggers, and makeshift structures typical of the hippy generation. On the northern side a carefully crafted cabin is still weather-tight, showing the pride of its builders. The appeal of the cabin is enhanced by the hexagonal main room, built of whole logs, and the lead-light windows.





Tzoonie Narrows, we judged, is the best site of all the marine parks in Sechart Inlet. It is quiet, with abundant bird life and spacious clearings on shore. We stayed several days.

Skookumchuk Rapids connects the Sechart Inlet to the waters of Georgia

Strait. Tidal rise and fall causes 14-knot currents, with violent overfalls and whirlpools in the shallow narrows. It is only safe to navigate at slack water. We planned to motor through at the slack on a day when tidal range was at a minimum, since our outboards of 2hp to 4hp

would only push us at about 4 knots.

A brisk northwest wind forced us to beat up to the Narrows. Tucked into a cove to wait for the tide, we had some lunch and I put a new roll of film in my camera. We sailed on, right up to the beginning of the Narrows, where kelp



beds line the shores. There we furled our sails. Motoring through, we encountered enough cross-currents, logging debris, and kelp to be glad we weren't trying to tack through against the light wind. At the Egmont Marina we were met by friends as we stocked up with fresh provisions and then relaxed on the floats with our ice-cream.

After encountering light winds and calms in Hotham Sound and St. Vincent Bay, we were surprised by the strength of the northwest wind blowing up Jervis Inlet as we beat our way toward Telescope Passage between Nelson and Hardy Islands. Although we reefed mainsails in Vanguard Bay, the heavy gusts bouncing off the high bluffs of Nelson Island kept us ragging our sails and trying not to ship too much of the short steep chop. My log noted, "Spray blowing right across boat". This wind was still dead on the nose through Telescope Passage so we dropped sail and motored through into Blind Bay. In a cove of Hardy Island a local resident pointed out a site on Crown land where we could camp. With the northwest wind still blowing 15 knots in Blind Bay we were glad to stop in mid-afternoon.

Our long day in brilliant sun and light airs from Blind Bay to Thormanby Island was broken by a delightful visit to the old homestead just south of Cape Cockburn. Our timing was perfect for harvesting some of the golden plums and transparent apples. I admired again the intriguing architectural details of the old house, such as the sunrise window, the built-in furniture and the fireplace decorated with inset shells and stones. As we expected, the wind faded in Malaspina Strait in the late afternoon. We motored the last few miles to Buccaneer Bay, nosing into the beach just at dusk.

Cruising in dinghies, we experience an intimacy with the sea and shoreline. We live outdoors, in the web of nature, for the weeks of our voyage. We especially delight in exploring coastal nooks and crannies not readily visited by larger boats. One favorite spot is the east bay of Smuggler Cove Marine Park. Entered off Halfmoon Bay, a rock-choked channel leads to a circular basin which dries at a few feet above tide datum. On many summer tides we can camp overnight here without our boats drying out. It is perfectly sheltered, has good tent sites and is seldom visited.

One summer we stopped for lunch in the Fegan Islets at the northern tip of Lasqueti Island. We left Ford Cove on

Hornby Island that morning in a healthy northwest wind. Gusts puffing out of Tribune Bay encouraged us to take a reef in the main before setting out across the stretch of water exposed to the whole of the northern Strait. With shortened sail we had a comfortable broad reach across to the Fegan Islets. The chart somewhat simplifies this maze of reefs, rocks and islets, but it clearly shows the main feature we were interested in: the sheltered channel between the two largest islets. As we reached the place where we had to gybe to run between the islets, the northwest swell was feeling the shoaling bottom and setting up good-size rollers. We surged in and quickly dropped the main to slow our speed in the rock strewn channel. Hugh, whose rudder pintle worked loose a mile out, had an exciting arrival steering with an oar.

We anchored knee-deep in calm, warm water and waded ashore over a bed of enormous oysters, some a foot long. The islets are extremely rugged and intricate, well worth exploring in a small boat and distinctly worth avoiding in a large keel-boat. After lunch we paddled cautiously out a passage between the reefs to rejoin the usual safe channel which hugs the northern shoreline of Lasqueti Island.

## The Boat

The Wayfarer dinghy was designed with cruising in mind. It has wide plywood floorboards which enable two people to sleep aboard in reasonable comfort on air mattresses under a boom tent. This is the usual camping arrangement in eastern Canada and England, where most shoreline is privately owned. Our preference is to camp ashore in small tents, although our friends who cruise in the southern Gulf Islands sleep aboard their Wayfarer.

We easily stow two weeks' provisions aboard, and we carry a jerry-can of water to be independent of water supplies for a few days at a time. Our cooler stows in the sealed lazarette. With a single block of ice we manage to keep fresh milk and vegetables most of the time. Duffle bags (lined with plastic garbage bags) are used to stow our bedding and clothing under the foredeck.

Each day of the cruise commences with a skippers' meeting, for a discussion of sailing plans, reviewing the weather, possible stops and rendezvous points. While our planned daily destinations are usually reached, we do adjust our plans when faced with unsuit-

able conditions or a tempting alternative. We sail in close company, which conflicts at times with the instincts of a racing skipper, but this is important for safety and contributes to the enjoyment of the whole company.

Out on the water, we try to sail within conservative limits. Taking in a reef or even running under "genny only" often turns a wild ride into an enjoyable sail. While this is a standard approach for cruisers, it is not usual among dinghy sailors.



## Specifications

LOA .....	15'10"
Beam .....	6'1"
Weight .....	365 lbs.
Sail Area .....	141 sq. ft.

The Wayfarer is a strict one-design class cruising/racing dinghy. It was designed by Ian Procter in Britain in 1957. Over 9000 boats have been registered worldwide. The Canadian Wayfarer Association based in Toronto has 270 members. There is a large, active, racing fleet in eastern Canada, where the 1986 Worlds were held at Couchiching, Ontario.

A fiberglass version is manufactured in Ontario and a wooden kit is supplied by Wayland Marine, Cobble Hill, B.C. for home builders. These kits have been sold all across the continent.

Famous voyages in Wayfarers include: across the North Sea, Scotland to Iceland, and the Labrador Coast.

## Why?

Why cruise in these open boats?

Hugh Johnston, retired department store manager and Wayfarer skipper: "We use these boats for year-round club



activities, but the highpoint of the year is when we go cruising each summer."

Donna McLintock, first mate: "Living so simply and tuned into the rhythms of nature keeps you focused on the here-and-now. Even now I feel a wonderful connection to the sea, as if I have had a love affair with the ocean; it is something lasting, that is renewed each time I look out over the Bay."

### Where To Go

In seven years of sailing to Plumper Cove on Keats Island, in my recollection we have sailed south of Bowen Island about as often as to the north. Based on this and our experience elsewhere in the Strait, I conclude that at least half the time in summer, conditions in the Strait are safe for open-boat cruising. One summer, returning from Buccaneer Bay, we rode a fine northwester from Tatenham Buoy to Gower Point in five hours. In lumpy 3ft seas off Trail Islands (we were too close in) Roger reported having a wave roll up against his quarter and splash aboard, but Hugh and I experienced nothing like that. The next day, however, 25-knot winds were reported in the Strait and we chose the inside route through Howe Sound. For much of the way there was no wind at all. Soon after passing Passage Island, we began to feel the northwest wind. The big rollers were waiting for us off Point Atkinson. Seeing waves breaking heavily to the south of us, we gybed promptly after passing the Point and followed the north shore into our home base at Ambleside.

Returning across Georgia Strait from the Flat Top Islands on another voyage, we set out in a dying northwest wind that had been reported that morning at Entrance Island at 28 knots, with 7ft seas. On this occasion we had a Crown 28 as an escort. We started under Genoa only. My log reads:

"3:25 p.m. Thrasher Rock abeam. Course 35 M. Large waves, some 6ft with breaking crests. Wind 12 to 15 knots. Trying to avoid surfing.

"5:50 p.m. Hove to: Hugh well behind. He put up reefed main and soon caught up. I then followed suit. Si (skipper of the Crown 28) opened up his Genoa—speed picked up!

"6:50 p.m. Full main, no breaking waves.

"7:02 p.m. QA abeam.

"7:29 p.m. Point Grey Bell Buoy." ❧

**John Millen** is a Vancouver sailor with a penchant for Wayfarers.