

## An Excursion to Capernwray

by Dan Dunaway

It was Norm Smyth's brilliant idea to arrange a paddle from Capernwray Harbour Bible Centre on Thetis Island. He had been working on them for two years to get us Salties into their lovely establishment as a base from which to explore the area. We stayed there two nights, each in our own rooms with meals included. Sharing the Centre with us were two Christian student groups, mostly from Vancouver Island. Their boisterous energy was fun to be around; we fit in as the more sedate "Smyth Group Paddlers" at mealtimes. I often felt like a grandparent.



The main lodge at Capernwray



**Above, breakfast on the patio. Below, Capernwray's lovely gardens and interior**



So, our first leg began from the beach right in front of Capernwray in Preedy Harbour, near the ferry landing. Vic Turkington led us around the north end of the island and down the east side to Clam Bay. Perfect sunny weather with intriguing low tide seascapes. The four other paddlers were Jordan Zinovitch, Anne Duval, Allison Alther and Cheryl Brace. We arrived at the Cut a bit early to transit between Thetis and Penelakut: the canal is dry on a 4' tide at Fulford. Not to worry. A short muddy thrash and we were back in Telegraph Harbour. Since we were on minus tides, this half-mile passage needed some planning.



**Padding thru the Cut in the morning, then a minus tide upon return**

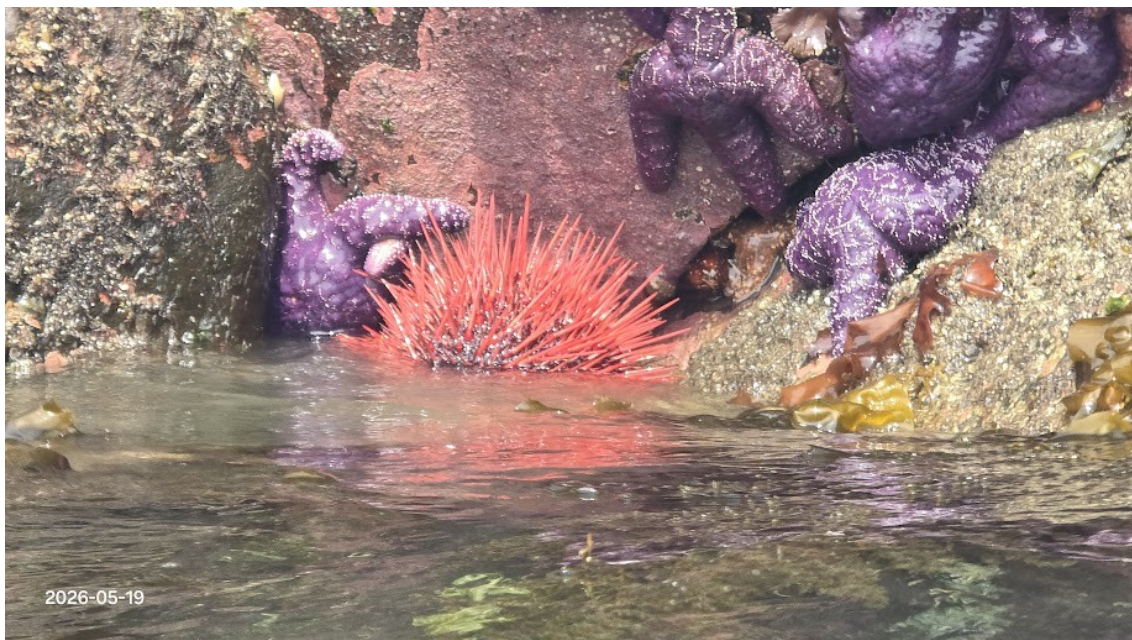
We left our kayaks at a boat launch beside the Thetis Island Marina near the Cut for next day's paddle. Cheryl planned this one: back thru the Cut then south to Norway, Jackscrew and Secretary Islands. Unfortunately, Jordan's knee had swelled up badly and he was unable to come. He and his wife Adel spent a relaxing day exploring Thetis instead.



**Totems on Jackscrew Island**



We counted 17 beautifully-carved totems as we cruised along the shores of Jackscrew Island. Apparently the owner of Jordan's Furniture in Victoria installed them on his private island. Lunch happened at Chivers Point on Wallace Island. This Provincial Marine Park is one of my favourite campsites, easy to reach from Saltspring Island. We took our time on the paddle home to enjoy exotic sandstone formations, purple seastars plus oodles of clinging/hanging marine life on every rock.



Wednesday, our last day, took us around Penelakut and Tent Island. I led a reduced group of four: Vic and Allison stayed behind to explore Thetis Island by land, as did Jordan and Adel. So back thru the Cut and around Penelakut Spit we went. The east side of this Native-owned island (formerly Kuper) is totally featureless. But we zipped right along with an ebb tide and following breeze. A pretty sand/shell spit soon appeared on Tent Island. Passing it we rounded the south tip then idled our way up the west shoreline brimming with exotic caves and sculptures. The delicate filagreed formations in these sandstone cliffs are called “tafoni.”



**Norm with sandstone tafoni**



Our up-island getaway ended back in Telegraph Harbour. This is a fun place to day trip from, though to secure a booking at Capernwray you must be patient and persistent. Thanks go to Norm for this. We enjoyed perfect weather, no long crossings nor any paddles over ten miles. People were laid-back, friendly and helpful as we invariably find them in island communities. I looked up two old friends in Clam Bay whom I hadn't seen in decades: Wayne and Maureen, still there after 40 years. I worked with him at a boatyard in Birds-Eye-Cove back in the 70's. Wayne graciously drove us back to get our cars on the second day when we couldn't wait for the tide to lift us thru the Cut. We finished up at the Telegraph Harbour Marina Pub lifting pints instead. Our Salties mini-adventure ticked all the boxes.

*Note: much useful information on accommodations for paddlers on Thetis Island and other coastal locations may be found at [www.kayakfriendly.ca](http://www.kayakfriendly.ca).*

