

## Paddling Desolation Sound

by Dan Dunaway

If warm water, spectacular scenery and comfy cabins are on your excursion list, then Desolation Sound Resort in Okeover Inlet may just be right for you. Thirteen of us Salties took the ferry from Comox to Powell River (1.5 hours) then drove 20 min. to the resort a few kilometres from Lund—a picturesque coastal stop with a pub, store, fuel dock, moorage, restaurant and a super coffee shop/bakery. We arrived on Sept. 8th, the day after Labour Day, so the place was quiet by usual summer standards. Also, being shoulder season we got a nice discount on our cabins.



The mastermind of our trip was Greg Rooney; unfortunately he and Katie had to miss it. We carried on with a promise not to send photos telling them how much fun we were having. Each evening at 6:00 BJ and Ali hosted us in Cabin Six for Happy Hour where we also finalized the next day's paddle, guided by options outlined by Jim.. So on

Wednesday we launched our kayaks in Lund for a paddle north thru the Copeland Islands, four miles away. They were fun to noodle thru with a good number of rocky, oyster-strewn beaches and two Provincial Marine Park campsites. We stopped for lunch at the farthest one. I scooped up a dozen oysters for appies later. This initial foray was ten nautical miles, our Salties' sweet spot.

Next day had us working our way northward up Okeover Inlet against a stiff wind. Norm kept encouraging us (I may have been whining a bit) until we broke into two groups: he led one into Theodosia Arm which has a tidal entrance, while Sandy led our Cabin 5 paddlers to Grace Harbour. We rested in the pretty cove, also a Provincial campsite, while new Salties Tony and Marjorie hiked in



to a nearby lake for a swim. They claimed it was no warmer than the ocean. Since there is little tidal flow in this area, swimming is enjoyable.

Friday was my turn to lead a paddle to Savary Island, less than a mile crossing from Lund. We went around the east end where an enormous shoal extends a mile out. It's strewn with rocks everywhere but we had enough water to paddle amongst them. Making it even more exotic, loons were calling.





We retraced our route to the other side while Allison and BJ paddled on around the island back to Lund, about 13 miles. My group landed on the north shore near the water taxi dock for a stroll into the Savary Island community centre. They have about 45 permanent residents and 2,000 - 3,000 summer ones. The whole island is surrounded by beaches; it has long been a popular vacation destination. Our trip that day was only eight miles as we needed a little reserve energy for Saturday. Three killer whales made their way south along the coast as we approached Lund.

Norm had organized a sea truck to take us from Finn Cove near Lund to Feather Cove on the end of Malaspina Peninsula. From there we would paddle 13 miles east into the heart of Desolation Sound to be picked up in Laura Cove. It turned out to be another pristine sunny day and the scenery was magnificent! Jagged 6,000 ft. mountain peaks rose ahead of us across Homfray Channel on the mainland. It's a special part of the B.C. coast—anything but desolate in our eyes.

The 5.5 hours Norm had allotted to cover the distance went by all too quickly. Cheryl, Marjorie and myself had just enough time to dash in for a swim before the sea truck appeared entering Laura Cove, right on time. Our skipper Kelly and his eight year old son Forbes sped us back to their dock in Flynn Cove. It was definitely the highlight of our trip.



For the \$183 it cost each of us we figured it was a deal. Most of the group had a last dinner at the Laughing Oyster next door.. never did get the story behind that name.



So back to Vancouver Island in the morning, but not before a stop at Nancy's popular espresso bar in Lund for coffee and pastries. The place upstairs is famous for their merino wool sweaters. Evelyn Pollen has been making them for 40 years. Several of our group took one home. I took only photos to remember our excellent adventure on new cruising grounds.



A beautiful 13 mile paddle through Desolation Sound. Mt. Denman is the pointy peak in the middle.



Motoring back to Finn Cove in Kelly's sea truck. He likes kayakers!



Okeover Inlet in front of our Resort.