

# THUNDERBIRD SAILING

## *Cruising Tales 2001*

- Flying Cloud's Excellent Adventure **IN THIS VOLUME:** • Thunderstruck goes Back to Blackfish part 2

Here are two fine cruising stories, one down the East Coast of the U.S. and the other of a bold voyage up the British Columbia coast and across to the Queen Charlotte Islands.

**Ken Macleod is the second generation of the Macleod clan to own and race Thunderbird #777 FLYING GULL as members of Mass Bay Fleet #5. After taking the helm from his father several years ago, Ken has continued the Macleod tradition of winning both one-design and PHRF competitions. Additionally, Flying Gull has continued to lead the fleet in cruises to Maine and Cape Cod and the Islands each year. As an accomplished skipper and pilot (read that as free airfare anywhere around the globe!) Ken decided cruise down to Florida for the winter months as he prepares Flying Gull to compete in the 2001 Toronto Internationals. You may remember Ken as he crewed in both the Seattle (1997) and Victoria (1999) Internationals.**

The following is Ken's account of Flying Gull's Excellent Adventure part two - see part one in the December 2000 ITCA newsletter located in the "Newsletter" section of the ITCA website.

### **Third and Fourth Leg**

The third leg of this journey started before I even left the dock. I received a call from one of the guards from Navy Norfolk on Thanksgiving morning, advising me that my boat had run aground on restricted naval property and to get it off! I called Navy Seal Scott Freeman, Greg's brother and owner of Trident Seamanship and Sailing School ([www.tridentsailing.com](http://www.tridentsailing.com)), who's mooring I was using. He was already on the job. He had discovered it missing the day before and requested a fly over Willoughby Bay from the tower for an air search. He found it and was en route on his boat to save the FG! By the time I arrived the next day, Scott had already jumped into the water and pushed the Flying Gull off the beach. She was in-between two jetties with rocks on either side, three

miles from where she had been moored. Scott had towed her to a marina using the still-attached mooring line, ball and ten feet of chain (a pin had backed out). The FG had sustained damage from someone using the spinnaker cleats on the coaming instead of the stern cleats that are through-bolted; they had ripped the cleat out of the side of the coaming that then took a stern chock with it. The solar panel had been stepped on and glass was everywhere, and the tiller was very stiff to move. They also left a 13lb Danforth anchor with six feet of line attached in my cockpit. Hmmm.

Scott and I made temporary repairs before my friend from work and fellow sailor and aviator Mike Kelleher arrived that afternoon from Chicago. We provisioned the boat and departed Willoughby Bay for downtown Norfolk at 2000 arriving there two hours later for the start of this trip to Charleston, SC via the Great Dismal Swamp. We passed the fleet on the way, including six aircraft carriers, twelve or so destroyers four submarines and several patrol boats. Most of the boats on the waterfront in the marina we stayed at had Christmas lights strung up that were absolutely beautiful with the city lights of downtown as a backdrop. As I settled in for the night I heard a very unpleasant sound - the sound of my bilge pump activating automatically. Looking into the bilge, I confirmed we were taking on water, but from where?

The next day, Saturday, November 24, 2000 we left at 0730 using the engine the entire day. We had just missed the scheduled morning opening of the Swamp lock so I elected to tie up to the shore and walk to the small town. There, we had breakfast and purchased an inverter for Mike's laptop so we could navigate using the moving map display once he had tied it into the GPS.

By the time we got back to the boat, she was aground, so Mike pulled on the main halyard on the shore while I put her in full reverse, spinning the FG around so I could plow a new channel in full forward. This took some time, and we almost missed the noon opening but we made it with five minutes to spare. Mike walked over to the lock to board the FG. The sides of the lock had numerous names of boats that had made this trip with the dates of passage with several saying "second time through!" We had to maintain 5.0K to make it to the lock at the end of the Great Dismal Swamp for the last opening for the day and we did it with ten minutes to spare. After passing under three drawbridges and two locks, we laid up in Elizabeth City at 1930 hours. Around the corner from the marina was a place called Mulligan's where we had delicious lobster bisque and crab cakes (and I think a few cocktails).

In the morning I backed the Flying Gull out of her slip for the trip across Albemarle Sound and was able to raise the sail for the first time on this trip with a west wind building to 18-25K by noon. We passed the Alligator River swing bridge at 1300 under a reefed main surrounded by three other sail boats heading south looking for warmer weather. One yelled over to me as he passed and asked me my destination. When I told him it was West Palm Beach, he sized up my yacht and just shook his head (. Another boat was flying a Canadian flag with Halifax Nova Scotia on his transom. While they anchored for the night, the FG continued past the fantastic sunset, up the Alligator canal using range finders for the first time and in the dark, no less. Having Mike's laptop tied into the GPS with moving map display gave us unbelievable security and piece of mind.

For dinner, I wrapped a pork loin with onions in foil and grilled it outside while frying potatoes and heating French cut green beans down below. We took turns eating since the canal was too narrow and the center meanders too much for the autohelm. I had just taken over from Mike so he could eat when I noticed the depth decreasing from the normal 12-14 feet down to 9.0, so I turned 5 degrees right to get into the center. It is not always clear where the center is in the pitch

black of the canal so you have to use your spotlight to shine on both shores to judge the center along with the depth finder and electronic chart. Thirty seconds later the depth finder showed us in 7.5 feet so I turned 10 degrees the other way, assuming that I had turned wrong the first time. Bang! At 5.0K I hit a stump that stopped us dead in our tracks. What was left of Mike's dinner went flying, along with his drink. The engine died and would not restart, but with the wind at 12K being funneled right down the

canal on the nose, I was able to maintain steerage down the canal making 0.8K headway (in the wrong direction of course).

We decided to anchor off to the side to change the spark plugs, when Mike noticed a tugboat in the distance. As I finished replacing the plugs, Mike hailed the tug to establish communication with him and it was decided to wait the 45 minutes of so for him to pass before we continued. That turned out to be a wise decision, because the engine would only run at nearly full throttle and the tug was quite large when it passed in that narrow canal at night.

The sound of the swamp was amazing. At this time the clouds moved aside showing the Milky Way glowing clearly and with the Moon still down, the swamp was an eerie pitch-black. The temperature got down into the twenties the week before this trip so there were no bugs to boot. Once clear of the tug I had to start the engine, goose the throttle and shove it into gear before it got bogged down while Mike raised the anchor quickly! I tied up to the Marlin Robb Marina in Belhaven by 0100 and took a long very hot shower before hitting the hay. Traveling in a narrow canal at night is both nerve racking and very tiring.

In the morning it was time to make repairs and replenish supplies. My repairs, however, were not nearly as pressing as the 50 foot Egg Harbor on the travel lift missing one prop and the other with a line wrapped around it with one of its 4 blades bent. The marina offered one of their six available golf carts to get our shopping done. So, armed with a new battery charger, 50 feet of dock line, 2 sets of spark plugs, and a 30amp= locking receptacle for connecting shore power, we set out for Beaufort at Cape Lookout by 1300 in the afternoon.

It was a sunny day with a brisk wind of 18K on a close reach across Pamlico Sound. Once across, we put the engine on for entering Goose Creek at 1700 and maintained 5.3K all the way through to Adams Creek, exiting at midnight. We followed the channel around the bay on our way to Beaufort but ran aground in it anyway due to silting. It was too hard to find the other entrance at night so we went to Morehead City across the bay, fighting a 2.0K current. This made entering the marina slip interesting, since I had to keep the speed up to counteract our being pulled sideways from the rip inside the marina.

After five hours sleep I walked across the street for gas and coffee to prepare for the passage outside to Charleston, SC. The 2K current was with us making it a quick getaway from terra firma into the ocean. The forecast called for clear skies and the wind building to 20-25K by afternoon shifting from the west (a close reach) to northwest, so we set course for the light ship off of Cape Fear. I saw one of the first rights of passage on a trip of this nature that morning: the arrival of half a dozen dolphins playing with the wake and bow of the Flying Gull. What a sight to behold!

Unfortunately, the wind gods were not in our favor this day as the wind continued west for the most part and even shifted southward, in the 260-240 degree range. Even as I hardened up to a beat the GPS course line showed us drifting left of course, out to sea. With the seas building to 5-8 feet on the nose and little forward progress, we decided to pull the plug. We tacked and headed towards the shore as we were ten miles out at the time with the nighttime wind forecast to stay the same and the sun was setting. We tried the engine but since full throttle was all it could do the FG would fly off one wave, plow the next and then the engine would bog down and die.

We headed in under a reefed main only and started a discrepancy list for repairs once in port. It included front windows and chain plates leaking, a cracked tiller where it is through-bolted, and the engine needing an adjustment. I finally discovered that the rudderpost was the cause of all that water in the bilge. It took me until 2200 to make it to the beach. I watched the depth sounder until it read 25 feet and dropped the hook off Carolina Beach. My halogen deck light was invaluable for this procedure. We finally were able to cook dinner, so I heated some New England clam chowder with bread and butter.

The next morning there wasn't any wind, so after breakfast I turned to the iron sail and headed south for the Intercoastal entrance while Mike called another crew member from work that lives in Wilmington, NC to bail us out. Aren't cell phones great? He arranged for a marina that day and drove us to have the engine repaired and dropped us off at the airport the next day. Now keep in mind, we had to enter the marina at full speed, 5.8K, taking on water with a cracked tiller without knowing where our slip would be! I had Mike on the fore deck to call it as I turned the corner from the breakwater, the entrance to the marina. "QUICK! LEFT OR RIGHT MIKE!" as there was a dock with boats on it at 12 o'clock, angle on the bow 0 degrees, range 40 feet and closing rapidly! "LEFT" was his response. "There is an open one third row in, see it?" I pushed the tiller hard over and reached down to the engine to reduce power and of course it died instantly. I then turned my attention to the fast approaching slip and turned hard over again to enter it saying to Mike, "slow us down if you can, but don't kill yourself". Secretly to myself I thought, "This is really going to hurt, even the people on the dock took a step back!" I saw by their expressions that they were thinking, in the local dialect of course, "Ain't go'in stop that fool!" The FG slowed to 2.0K with 5 feet to go when the first real luck in the last four days happened: we ran aground again! We stopped within 1 foot of hitting the dock. I have to tell you, with all the racing I do, the FG runs aground or ricochets off a rock once a year on average, but this trip has set a FG record for hitting real-estate: six times in four days.

I loved all the little hamlets along the Intercoastal Waterway and think the dolphins were the highlight of this leg of the trip. Although, the lobster bisque and crab cakes, after a very intense night, was a close second, or was it the drink?

## Fourth Leg

Warm (70°) and sunny skies met me as I got off the turboprop at Wilmington Airport along with a friend of mine. He was from the area and was willing to drop me off at the Flying Gull. I picked up some groceries and clean burning lamp oil for a lantern, the new addition to the boat. This lantern with a red lens was in my cellar for forty years and was the godsend of this trip, the final leg to Florida January 19, 2001. I had wanted to leave the next morning at 0500, but I did not set an alarm and I awoke at 0900 hard aground at the marina slip. I thought I was done with running aground! I was not free to go until 1600 so I set out for Southport and arrived in the dark at 1805. As I have mentioned in the past, you have to look at the next mark on the chart to determine the side you are going to pass the present mark in the Intercoastal Waterway. Unfortunately, I had pasted the entrance to the marina on the wrong side, and I would have run aground had I not happened to see the depth finder flashing, alerting me to shallow water. A quick U-turn kept me in the channel.

Unfortunately, most of these little hamlets roll up the carpet around 8 PM so I had the choice of walking down the street to get gas or to eat. I had plenty of food on the boat for the latter, so I chose the former. I carried the two six-gallon gas cans the 1/8 of a mile for a fill up and then had spaghetti with bread and butter on my boat. The wind was forecasted to blow 25-35 that night diminishing slowly the next day to 15-25 as it shifted from the WSW to W and then N by late afternoon. I set the alarm for 0500. It was still dark when I awoke, and the wind was finally below 30. I headed for Cape Fear, running the engine for two hours before hoisting a reefed main just outside the breakwater. The wind outside was from the West so with a magnetic course of 220, it was a close reach that sent the spray of many waves over the Gull's cabin.

As the sun came up, I distinctly remembered a passage from Capt. Joshua Slocum's book; *Sailing Around The World Alone*. He tells that the two closest times he came to drowning were off Cape Fear (a rogue wave) and on his approach to NY Harbor (a tornado took out many ships inside in the summer of 1898). The one thing I can positively attest to is that the Flying Gull is not the Spray and it will not hold a course for a thousand miles or even thousand seconds with the tiller tied off. It needs positive control at all times.

By 10:00 the wind shifted NW as predicted and it made the six- to ten- foot seas confused. They were colliding; sometimes on the side of the FG and several times right underneath where I sit. They were hitting so hard that I could feel the timbers flexing. I had to actively steer through the waves, but the better angle on the wind increased the speed from 5.0-6.0K to 6.0-8.0K. By now, all of the spray was going over the foredeck and cabin top and I heard the FG make noises I had never heard her make before as she passed 10.0K one more time. I hoped that 15-year-old reef line would hold! I know one thing for certain: my knees aged ten years that day as the waves were rocking the boat 30 degrees to leeward and 10 degrees windward.

The wind and waves slowly subsided so I shook out the reef at 1800 and put an old working jib from 1969 on with the wind from the north now. I had the Autohelm keeping me on course while I prepared dinner and listened to the forecast. It was not a good one. An unforecasted low-pressure system was forming off the Florida coast so winds that night would be 5-15 then 25K by the following afternoon and 30-40K Monday night. I knew that I would need to have a second set of reef points to handle that type of wind. The temperature throughout the period would be in the 40s. Suddenly, I remembered all the good things I had heard about Charleston, SC and that it was a can't-miss destination. A quick glance at the E-Chart showed that 20 degrees right would give me an ETA in 12 hours. So, 240 degrees was the input to Autohelm as I started the engine and lowered sails in the light air.

The wind picked up around midnight so the main was hoisted again, increasing speed from 4.8K to 6.0-6.5K as I heated some hot chocolate on the stove. I anchored across from Fort Sumpter in the 3.0K current by 0500, set the GPS and Depth finder on anchor watch and crashed in my bunk after having traveled 130NM in 24 hours. The lantern was indispensable for providing heat.

I woke at 10:00 and motored against the current to City Marina for a slip and a hot shower. Charleston is everything that I had been told and then some. It is a cross between Hamilton and Nantucket and everything is within walking distance of the marina. At a local restaurant, I had a sport fish called Amberjack, grilled with rice in a red sauce and southern hushpuppies – out of this world and one of the best meals I had ever had. I spent two days there to explore everything, including the Aircraft Carrier Lexington (The second one of course), but I have to admit that I checked into the Marriott for my body to recuperate.

I returned to the FG two weeks later on medical leave from work after shaving one of my knuckles off in a table saw. (As painful as this sounds, I can guarantee it was much worse.) I re-supplied and headed out during full tidal rip, passing Fort Sumpter at better than 8K speed over the ground (SOG) and cleared the jetty to enter Open Ocean in just 70 minutes. Since I was one hand short, I hoped the horse latitudes would provide light winds as it had for so many sailors in the past. I finished the first tank of gas just before dinner and had not seen so much as a ship, boat, wave, dolphin, fish, or breath of air the entire day; it had been dead calm. Why am I the only thing out here?

The sun set as the first full moon since leaving Boston rose on the opposite horizon. The wind finally came up just before dinner, out of the East at 10K. Since I did not have enough gas for the entire trip to Jacksonville, FL, I raised the main and spinnaker, making 3K headway. All of a sudden, the sky lit up in front of me: liftoff for the space shuttle Atlantis! It was a fantastic sight; there wasn't a cloud in the sky. Then, as the solid rocket boosters separated, a cloud formed as the shuttle accelerated past Mach 10 in orbit. It appeared like an opal with shades of light blue, aqua and white. In orbit, the shuttle screamed right over the full moon from my perspective and was off the horizon. The entire event took five minutes. Then, as the sun set on this lone cloud an hour later, it appeared yellow, orange and brown. What a sight! The wind slowly built up to 15K, so I took down the spinnaker just before midnight and put the Genoa up for the night. It would not last, however: several hours later I was motor-sailing.

The next morning, I got up and set the fishing rod out first thing. It was warm, so I was in the process of taking off my offshore foul weather gear when all of a sudden; the rod went flying across the cockpit. I stumbled and grabbed it as it was on its way over the side. The strain on it was such that I thought it was going to break, so I brought the FG into the wind. Ten minutes later I had a tuna on board! Unfortunately I only had a three inch steak knife with which to make tuna stakes. They were fantastic nonetheless.

All day winds stayed a steady 10K out of the East under sunny, 70-degree skies, finally. The southern full moon that night was shimmering on the water making it almost intoxicating. It also gave me visibility at night that I had not seen as of yet. Since time was on my side (no work), I didn't start the engine until the speed reduced below 2.5K. I also changed my destination from Jacksonville to St. Augustine, FL, the next port south.

I arrived at the beginning of the inlet at 0700 in the morning with that steady, light East wind. It was fairly narrow with dredge material on both sides and no channel marks listed, just a note that position of the marks are changed with the shifting sands. I was glad the sun was up! The water depth goes from 75 feet to 14 over just 200 feet. The depth finder was flashing, alerting me to the shallowing trend. As I approached the sea swells came out of nowhere and I put my feet up on the traveler to brace in the event of hitting bottom. It showed a low of 9 feet at the trough of a swell in the shallowest area of the channel. I wondered what it would be like if it were really blowing.

Once in the lane I had a good 4K current with me in 30 feet of water. I had to have a drawbridge open for my arrival to City Marina, St. Augustine, Florida: over 1000 miles from home! What a beautiful warm sunny day to walk through the oldest continually occupied settlement in the New World (1565).

I set up the battery charger and filled my tanks as I had arrived with three gallons of fuel and 2/3 power on the second battery. I then set out exploring this quaint town, staying long enough for the tide to change.

The wind had picked up to 30K so I asked a local who had just arrived from outside and he assured me it was only 10K offshore and that the inlet was rough but passable. The tide was at full bore on my tail as I made my way out of the inlet. The waves were breaking over the dredge material on both sides of me as I actively dodged the 4-foot waves, changing heading as much as 45 degrees at a time.

I watched the depth as I approached the shallow area and then suddenly, like the arrival, enormous waves came out of nowhere, three of them. I turned hard left and aimed for the far end of the first wave that was not breaking and almost made it. The wave slammed against the FG beside the cockpit, sending spray over my head. I looked up at the next wave that was already breaking, and since I was aimed 45 degrees from it, I determined it would probably roll the boat. I swung around pushing the tiller to the combing to take the second wave on the nose. I watched as the Gull climbed the wave, almost making it to the top, before it came over the fore deck and cabin top at me. By now, my speed was down to less than 2.0K so I quickly turned around, got on the other side of the tiller and gunned the engine all ahead flank!

For a brief second I thought I might not make it as I still had at least one more wave to go and it was coming at me like a wave, straight out of "Hawaii Five-0". I then pulled the tiller full deflection, forcing me into the corner of the cockpit as I locked my feet under the traveler in the event that I was rolled. At the worst of it, all I could see was white foam on the fore deck, cabin top, and around me at shoulder level, up to the top of the combing, on both sides of me. Then I was through. There were only 3-4 foot waves on the other side. I raised a reefed main and full Genoa as the wind was on the nose blowing 18K and headed out to sea planing to tack every two hours. When I finally did tack, it was the first port tack

of the entire trip! Dave Houston, Fleet 5's 'Mr. Thunderbird', always said that these boats are indestructible. I think that maybe he was right.

Throughout the night the wind very slowly diminished I alternated between motor sailing, motoring up wind or sailing under full sail. Every few hours or so the dolphins would join the FG on her trek southbound, jumping in front of and beside her. Several times they jumped in pairs! I burned through the 12-gallon tank by the following day at dinnertime, when I was just 4 NM from the Cape Canaveral launch pad. It was within 3 degrees of a 40-year record high of 86 degrees this day and only dropped to 70 that night. What a difference in temperature between North and South Florida (south of Cape Canaveral). The winds were light enough for me to properly prepare another fresh tuna stake on the grill! I still had to dress for soaking dew outside at night, but the cabin stayed warm and dry. I passed two cruise ships waiting to enter Port Canaveral and again saw that enormous moon shimmering on the water.

I switched to the last tank of gas at 0730 in the morning and got the days forecast as I ate some boiled eggs and a power bar. After hearing the local tides announced by NOAA, I had to increase speed to full to make it to the inlet at Fort Pierce, FL before the tide would change against me. I walked up to the fore deck to call my friends in West Palm Beach (only the ones that are intelligent enough to know for whom they voted!), when a giant sea turtle surfaced a boat length in front of me!

Once in the inlet, I got a picture of the boat once again traveling through the water at 5.0K and the GPS showing a SOG of 9.0K. I arrived at Fort Pierce City Marina by 10:30, in time to take the last slip in the marina on this spectacular 90-degree day. It is hard to describe the feeling of accomplishment. I made sure to back into the slip so that everyone could see "Quincy, MA" on the transom. Just seeing the look on people's faces made the entire trip worthwhile.

The whole day I could barely finish a project without a passer by yelling, "Hey Quincy, how long have you been here?" To which I would dramatically look at my watch and reply whatever number of hours I was there; at that point a thirty- to sixty- minute conversation would ensue. We would exchange stories and such with the conversation always covering the route that I took down or to offer to crew. When I told them it was made outside with the exception of Norfolk - Cape Lookout the response was always the same: their eyebrows would raise up and they wouldn't say anything but I knew what they were thinking. "Outside in that?!" Hey, its my boat, it is paid for, my body can make the trip now and it is a one time deal.

Let's see now, Havana is how many miles from...

Epilogue Since this trip I have visited the Gull twice and have leisurely moved the boat sailing on the wide part of the Intercoastal Waterway in south Florida. Staying in Jupiter, Palm Beach Gardens, Singer Island and of course, West Palm Beach where she is now. I took a group of guys and girls out to Peanut Island for the weekly Sunday cookout/ raft party and washed the bottom of the boat under sunny 80-degree skies in 82-degree water. Then headed to The Waterway Café squeezing between two sixty-foot sport fishermen in my plywood beer can to grab the last slip for dinner. Then sailed back to the marina in the 75-degree nighttime air. Nights like these are the reason why I endured being the only one out there!

Ken MacLeod

## Thunderstruck goes Back to Blackfish 2001

Left Royal Victoria Yacht Club Friday, June 15 at 8:30 AM. Powered, with the help of our newly acquired Auto Pilot, to Sidney where we put the spinnaker up and had a great run to Ruxton Island in the hot sun. Walked up to the property to enjoy the view and collect a couple of things.

Left Ruxton early to catch the tide across Georgia Strait. Beating in 12-15 knots, very wet but another nice day. Crossed the strait with 'Psyche', Ed and Pauline Haynes of CFSA. Stopped the night at Smugglers Cove. Smugglers is a beautiful spot.

Up early again and off to Secret Cove for showers and fuel (not that we've used much). Powered for a bit until the wind filled in. Had a very enjoyable beat up to Vananda on Texada Island. Anchored the boat and went on to explore the island, found the local pub! Sunday's 3 beers for the price of two!

Well we tried to get a decent start but our anchor wouldn't come up. After several attempts Dave Investigated and saw a sunken boat that we had caught our Bruce Anchor on. Several more attempts to free the Bruce failed, and as Kathy was heading off to hire a diver, the sailing vessel 'Mentor II' came to aid us. After much effort by the crew of Mentor II we had our anchor safely back, a big thanks to the Scots men!

When Mentor II hoisted sails we did the same and for about an hour sailed until it dissipated. Motored to the end of the Copeland Islands and then had a spinnaker ride to Refuge Cove. Filled up the gas, got some munchies and ice then boogied out to the corner and threw the chute back up. Sailed past Teakearne Arm and then motored up the Yucaltas. Went through Gillard passage doing 11.9 knots getting pulled from side to side in the current. We went one hour after the shorter ebb, which maxed out at 5.5 knots in the book, but close to twelve was flowing. You have to cross to the west side well early as when you do you are moving 6 knots sideways. That went well and the Dent Rapids came quickly upon us. Stayed down the left side till Dent Island then chose the middle. On the charts a rock shows at 21 feet. We could see some upwelling and stayed clear but within 150 feet a large whirlpool about 30 feet across formed just in front of us. Kathy tried going left but it came to us and Thunderstruck plunged downward at least a foot, turned hard to port then popped out. Water shot out of the two cockpit drains which lead to a single through hull like a water cannon and then all was normal. We stopped at Shoal Bay. Unfortunately the bar had burned down last July. Chatted with the wharfinger. Hit the hay after a couple of rums.

Left Shoal Bay at 0600 to catch the ebb through Green Point Rapids and Whirlpool Rapids. Went through Green Point doing 9.5 over the bottom. A strange sensation indeed motoring at five knots yet watching everything go by so fast. The weather was sunny and hot and seas calm so we decided to carry on. The current book showed Johnstone Strait as having only .5 knot against us so we kept moving. Past Port Neville the wind filled in from the Southeast and we hoisted the spinnaker and the breeze got up to fifteen and looked really promising but died out within the hour. Motored into Port Harvey in which one area was being actively logged, decided against staying. Motored through Chatham Channel and saw two black bear foraging. Heard the next day that the post office on the channel had kitty taken by a cougar two days earlier.

Powered to Ministril Island, the marina was quiet, Kathy suggested Lagoon Cove, and so we motored through 'The Blow Hole' to Lagoon Cove. We tied up to the fuel dock and were greeted by Bill. Bill talked us into staying. I can't say enough about the owners Bill and Jean. Nine years ago they bought the dock and area and now have the marina hopping. Every slip was full, our spot being fifteen feet of the end of the crab cook hut. They were so friendly filling us in on the items available, showers, water, hiking trails, fire pit, etc. They told us happy hour was at five. With ourselves armed with appy's and some wine we headed up the ramp to a room with book exchange and burgee wall. Lots of appy's and did I forget to mention, all the prawns you can eat! The sun was beaming and it was a great way to meet your neighbours on the dock. We were encouraged to take leftovers so we did and had a prawn omelette for breakfast.

Bill encouraged us to stay because next evening instead of happy hour it was 'potluck dinner night' with all you can eat crab! We were told this alternates every second night. At \$.55 a foot for moorage we were ahead of the game. Some of the larger powerboats had been tied up there for a week. Bill said the crabbing and prawns were the best yet this year.

We were hiking the marina made and maintained trail until we heard the bawling of a bear cub. Not chancing an encounter with mama bear we turned 180 and jogged back down. Bill told us they come around and climb his plum trees at harvest. Mom sends the cubs up the trees, and once they were so full they fell asleep in the tree.

Left Lagoon cove to venture on. Decided to go and check out Potts Lagoon. Moving at about five knots and BOOM, we smoked a big rock, hard on with the current flowing over it. I had just checked the chart when the sounder went beep, 15,10,5 and that fast we hit it. Kathy was making an entry in the log and I was sitting in the cockpit. What an explosion of noise. The boat pitched forward then swung to starboard abeam on the rock with the current pinning us. I ran forward held the shrouds and hiked out while Kathy throttled the boat in full reverse. The motor jumped out, Kathy throttled down, I jumped back and while leaning on the motor gave full reverse. Seeing the drop off and current flow I steered up current and when the keel cleared the rock turned down current. Free! Kathy quickly pulled up the floorboards with so much adrenaline broke the quarter by ten-inch board. All was dry. Knowing the boat and the construction of a Booth Boat I have no concern, some cosmetic repairs on the keel. Many expensive boats that I know of would be in big trouble with that degree of grounding. What spooks me about the incident is having no visual warning. Almost all rocks or shallows on the South Coast have kelp showing. This rock was granite or quartz and kelp and weed don't grow on the surface.

No sooner did we enter Potts Lagoon and at dead slow, when the island we thought showed 2.5 metres at mean low was shallowing up to seven feet and at plus six feet in the tide book. Put the boat hard into reverse and backed out. Upon reevaluating the entrance we thought was Potts Lagoon with the same islands as showing on the chart was actually the channel on the right. Confusing? No kidding! What we then saw were two powerboats up the left arm of Potts Lagoon anchored in what we thought was drying water at low tide. Not until this did we realize exactly where we were. Holy Cow!! Back to back mistakes after twenty years of cruising! Gun shy as we were, we agreed where we were and proceeded into the right side cove. Anchored in twenty-five feet of water and called for a lay day to ease some sore muscles and get settled down.

The lay day at Potts Lagoon was fabulous. We rowed the dinghy up to the lagoon edge but low tide wouldn't let us through. No sooner did we stop rowing to look at the entrance when a black bear nosed out around the corner and then dove in at the edge and swam across the entrance. We explored the area and walked one of the islands. I tried fishing outside the lagoon but to no avail. We rowed back to the lagoon at the start of ebb after high slack and carefully would row the dinghy up behind the boulders in the channel to use the back eddy. A lot of fun not moving while the water on both sides of you flies by.

That evening as we were half way through dinner when a fellow in a dinghy rowed up. He was from one of two float houses and it turned out he's 'Hermit Bob' who was profiled in Pacific Yachting June 2001. Kathy had read the article just two days before and "Hey you're Hermit Bob". We poured him a rum and we sat and told stories for several hours. Bob gave us some pointers on a few unique things to explore during our cruise. A good day it was.

The following morning we left at low slack. Tides are really peaking at sixteen feet on the high and

zero on the low. We motored down Baronet passage to the end of West Cracroft Island. Stopped long enough to catch a yellow rock cod for the crab trap later. Motored across a glassy smooth Johnstone Strait and into Telegraph Cove. Paid for moorage. The new marina is a clear-cut development with lots of concrete. This we remedied by tying up with our stern facing across the bay to the old boardwalk and houses, with a past history as a the fish salting business and the old mill site. We had showers, did some laundry then went up to the restaurant. The food was absolutely perfect, steak and oysters for me, steak and prawns for Kathy. We shared the seafood, the flavours were WOW!

After dinner we walked out to the end of the dock, which runs alongside the narrow harbour entrance. Just then a humpback whale sounded raising that huge tail high and straight then slipping straight down. About five minutes later and about a quarter mile farther up the channel we got one more look. Checked the crab pot and had five keepers, 3 Dungeness and 2 rock. One of the high liners cleaning halibut gave us a skeleton for the trap and it's producing!

Headed out of Telegraph Cove heading for the Pearce Islands. Dropped the hook and cooked and shelled crab for about an hour and a half. Waited until slack tide and went between the islands, beautiful, lots of bald eagles. Carried on then to the Plumber Islands where we went through a narrow gap in them, carrying on to Goat Island via the gap between Crease and Maude Islands. Dropped the hook and the crab trap. Rowed around the little islands, spotted a pair of deer on Goat Island, not goats, deer! Also found one of the islands covered in chocolate Easter lilies. Back to check the crab pot, 9 dungeons, and 4 keepers. Good day, nice weather and the anchorage to ourselves.

More puttering around. Left Goat Island and checked out New Vancouver and the bay where Hermit Bob buried his dog, decided not to anchor as there was a lot of deadheads around. Carried on to Dead Point and then sailed to Scrub Islets and down Eliot passage past Mamalilacula (we'll stop on the way back), put up the spinnaker and had a great sail to Port Elizabeth, beating into the anchorage. Three other boats here. Still good weather.

Powered out of port Elizabeth with the tide, once out we raised the sails and beat up with the tide, very light wind but strong current made for a fast trip. I cooked an omelette while Kathy sailed. Powered through Povedence passage and then tried fishing for a bit in the rain shower. Sun came back and we powered through to Sunday Harbour. Put down the anchor and enjoyed the sunny afternoon, a little cool breeze. Put the sailing dinghy into action, good fun, took her over to the beach out of the wind to enjoy the warmth of the sun. Saw a mother loon with six chicks. Rowed out after dinner for sunset, beautiful evening, best yet. No other boats here.

Left Sunday Harbour, very shallow at the east end but no problem. Powered to Arrow Pass and then had another lovely sail in sunshine to Echo Bay. Shorts time! Showers, laundry and fuel and then off to Shoal Harbour for the night. Only boat for a bit and then one other powerboat. Nice here, a hummingbird came by to check out our Canadian flag. The weather is changing. Came out of Shoal Harbour and hoisted main and jib. With good ebb sailed down past Health Bay Indian Reserve till the wind backed off. Took sails down and fished for halibut in the pouring rain for about two hours, had a couple of good nibbles but couldn't set a hook. Rain and wind got stronger so reeled in and powered for about forty-five minutes into Waddington Bay. Heavy gusts and heavy rain. Anchoring in with three other trawler type cruisers. Relaxed and warm. Will spend the night. Keep calling Bob and Ang on Interim but with the hills reception doesn't seem to go too far.

Rowed around Waddington Bay. Found a great midden of clam shells and walked around in the forest at the site. High canopy gave us easy walking on the sponge like forest floor. Thousands of salmon fry swimming in the shallows. Poked around on a couple of the islands by the bay entrance. Left Waddington Bay and sailed around Bonwick Island out into Queen Charlotte Strait then through

the numerous outlying islets in Monday Anchorage. Anchored at the very head of the bay. A narrow passage through the end of the bay not navigable at low water in the bird made for fun exploring in the dinghy. Excellent view at sunset out the few miles of islands off our bow and anchor. Quiet night with a great half moon and lots of stars.

Next morning Kathy pulled the crab pot and found two dungeness crabs about eight inches across the shell. Cooked up three we have been keeping alive in our crab bucket, a snap on lid with two inch holes taken out on the sides and bottom, and shelled crab for a hour. Eleven crabs so far! Motored out of Monday Anchorage exploring up by Insect Island which completed the circumnavigation of Mars Island. Slowly went up the narrow channel between Baker and Insect the between Baker and Davies Island into Fife Sound. Salmon fished across Fife Sound around Pierce Peninsula and up to Laura Bay. Five boats stern tied so we ventured further to Sir Edmund Bay. Both spots on the chart that look OK weren't as pleasing with one corner booms and the other very rocky and narrow.

Pulled up the sails and sailed across to Shawl Bay on the Wishart Peninsula at the entrance to Kingcome Inlet. The people who own and run the marina, Lorne, Shawn and Rob their son have worked hard to make a go of this place. Lorne was in Port McNeil. Shawn and Rob were super. First timers get the tour of the book exchange, laundry, gift shop, ice, etc. Everything is on the honour system. The store is unmanned and open 24 hours a day. A chit box is there for you to record your purchases and price and you square up before you leave. Your moorage of fifty-five cents a foot includes a pancake breakfast and coffee served under a large awning with one large picnic table. All of the power boats there, five in all knew our boat was a T-Bird, and Double Dutch a trawler from West Vancouver used to own one in the 1960's, hull number 76. The couple told us of bringing up their children cruising on a T-Bird, and bribed us with a bag of prawns for a good look at the interior of our boat. They were impressed with the layout.

After pancakes, showers, water and groceries we sailed from Shawl Bay docks (Shawn said she'd never seen it done), all the way to Sullivan Bay. A ten to fifteen knot westerly and good current. Super sail and only saw three or four boats in transit. At Sullivan Bay we added more essential provisions, took some pictures of all the painted propane tanks at each float home then shoved off. NOTE! CASH ONLY FOR LIQUOR!

Sailed across Sutej Channel, up Duncony Passage, across Grappler Sound and into Claydon Bay. Only boat in the quiet bay. Twenty-five feet of depth through the whole area. Cooked up the forty prawns we were given at Shawl Bay. A tempura batter and lots of veggies. Trying for more crab. Sat and watched three osprey soaring just overhead and later an osprey dive-bombing a young eagle. Nice sunset. July 1 Happy Canada Day!!!

Awoke to a beautiful morning. Pulled up the anchor and no go. In twenty-five feet of water but still had about sixty feet of line out, the rode is tight, and the line is vertical and taught. Tried to use the trip line but it was obvious we were hooked on a log. Let out a bit of line and ran full throttle in forward. Were moving but still hooked which means the log can't be too large just large enough that we can't wind it up. Even with crossing onto the second winch it wouldn't budge, so payed out a hundred and twenty-five feet, tied it off on the stern cleat and full throttle in the opposite direction on the first attempt. Voila! Free. The rode had charcoal marks staggered down the line so we feel a dead burnt tree exposed on one end did the barber pole twist as we spun at night in wind and a tide change.

After checking the anchor gear we putted out of Claydon down past Overflow Basin passing the dilapidated structures that were once -a mine then through Kenneth Passage carefully negotiating through the islands off of Jessie Point. As we powered close to the steep vertical cliffs we spotted the Indian Pictographs of an apparent cross and one of a face of sorts. Once around the curve to McKenzie Sound we could see all the way to the east end of the sound with Ninmo Bay on the port side with binoculars. I spotted what looked like several grizzly bears in the marsh. Only when we got fairly close did we realize

that we had been fooled by large sandy coloured rocks.

With the current and tide having finished the flood we motored out. We decided to stay at Turnbull Cove, which had been highly recommended. When we had woven through the small group of islands off of Jessie Point, the distant sounds of Roaring Hole Rapids caught our attention. What looked flat and calm earlier was now a steep rapid hundreds of feet long with standing waves shrouded in a vale of mist. We powered up to the edge of the entrance and marvelled how with the snowy peaks in the background the scene looked right out of a Rocky Mountains postcard. One would not want to time your exit from Nepah Lagoon wrong. Turnbull Cove is a good holding anchorage with a great view out the entrance. Next morning as we powered out through Kenneth Passage near the end of the ebb Overflow Basin was earning its name. A six foot waterfall displayed its intensity. The plan for today was to explore Drury Inlet and perhaps spend the night.

The flood had turned and we motored through Stuart Narrows timing it to attain maximum fuel consumption. Just past Helen Bay the trickiest part was staying close to the island on our port side as the current boiled over the rock reefs to the starboard side. Quite exhilarating the sheer volume of water which enters and leaves the inlets at this time of year. We went through Jennis Bay to observe the active logging camp, then slowly explored the group of islands just before Sutherland Bay. Even at a slow crawl spots on the chart can jump out at you. Exploring when a low slack is starting to a flood is always the best way to solve unexpected touching, that or stay home. We weren't overly impressed by the terrain of logged off brush so decided to motor back out of Drury Inlet on the ebb and headed to Tracey harbour.

Entering Wells Passage, a nice westerly was blowing, so Kathy and I hoisted sails and had a quick beat with good ebb down Wells Passage and into Tracey Harbour. A large log sort area greeted us so we cautiously watched the sounder for uglies on the bottom. Soon after we set anchor, again the only boat in the bay. That night was still but extremely bright, just two nights before full moon and not a cloud. In the morning three more large Dungeness male crabs to be cooked. With the crab cooked and the choice of about three anchorages, the radio crackled with Angela on their boat Interim. Yes! Good to hear from them after wondering for days if we would touch base. We hailed back and both conversations were weak. We heard "Headed for Alert Bay", we responded "Go to Alert Bay".

Our pace quickened and we had soon motored the distance to the mouth of Wells passage and with a building North-westerly sailed on the building edge on a beam reach with the spinnaker down the east side of Malcolm Island to the south end and then across to Cormorant Island and Alert Bay. The wind now up to twenty knots made the entrance to the government docks tricky. The wind is behind you and pushing as you approach the almost full and crowded docks and a tight spot behind a large seiner was the only spot visible. At about five knots speed I spun the boat just clearing pulpit to pulpit a thirty-five footer and the mast six feet behind the jutting stern of the seiner as we stopped. Without speed the boat would not have made the turn. That made us thirsty! Bob and Ang were on the next finger. Let the rumpus begin.

Next day, after supplies, fuel and a gale force northwesterly forecast, we sailed from Alert Bay across the Queen Charlotte Strait to Booker Lagoon. The wind got up to 23 knots and made for a wet beam reach of two and a half hours. It was so neat to sail in behind the islets at the entrance of the lagoon into flat calm in the lee and laze about after taking down sails. Meanwhile your friends are still reaching in spray at seven and a half knots. Huge floating knots of bull kelp and logs all the way across Queen Charlotte Strait made helming a workout.

Heavy ebb was flowing out of Booker Lagoon and the passage narrow. Motoring up the middle of the passage left, maybe, just enough room to turn and bail out if need be. An almost stopped Thunderstruck inched forward and at halfway point won the contest with the current. Bob made it too but commented how his rudder would stall in the turbulence. Slack tide on the way out was a unanimous decision. The west side of the lagoon has a couple of small islands and reefs with a protected anchorage. Once set

up with both boats using a bow anchor with stern lines, dinner was made and a fun evening followed with a long row for dessert.

Lay day saw timed dinghy races around the two islands. Bob won overall; he had the right conditions, I'm still whining as I write this. Bob and Ang are excellent sailors and great to crew for when racing.

Booker Lagoon is a very large lagoon and in several hours of rowing we only explored a fourth of it. Next day out, at slack tide of course, into overcast conditions and light winds. We sailed to Joe's Cove, which provided great dinghy exploring. A lagoon on the east corner, which is tidal, saw hundreds of salmon fry and perch packed into the entrance of the lagoon. A racoon dug madly into the mud for butter clams trying to get dinner before the rising tide buried his chances. A red mink scurried over the rocks toward us seeking to fill his stomach, and as he was climbing along beside our dinghy two otters swam by on the other side of us. Very wet day, caught lots of water in the bins.

Leaving Joes Cove next day brought sunshine and the northwest wind. Motoring through Misty Passage, both boats hoisted mains and spinnakers and sailed side by side a short distance apart down Indian Passage doing simultaneous jibes, as the channel was very narrow. We sailed down to Echo Bay to restock. A short time later the spinnakers were back up with a great run up Tribune Channel to Quatsi Bay.

Quatsi Bay is listed as temporary anchorage because of the steep sloping bottom. Anchoring in ninety feet and backing into the steep shore had the stern sitting in fifteen feet of water and the bows in fifty. Quatsi Bay has many fabulous waterfalls rivalling those of Princess Louisa Inlet. Across from our anchorage was the site of an ancient Indian village where we rowed to and hiked to the base of a thousand foot waterfall. The temperature was in the nineties and to cool off a day sail on the Ross 930 to Wahkana Bay was what we needed. Beam reaching with blue skies at eight knots and not a boat in sight. Wahkana Bay was a good secluded anchorage but didn't hold the same beauty as Quatsi Bay.

Very little is written on Quatsi Bay but we highly recommend it for the numerous waterfalls and steep rocky mountains towering all around. There is also a small family run marina tucked in the corner. Next day saw overcast skies from the fog, which had rolled in that evening and a brisk northerly for so early in the day. Spinnakers were hoisted yet again and we went barrelling down Tribune Channel for a three-hour spinnaker run involving several jibes in gusty conditions.

Passing Kumlah Island had us changing to headsails and beating our way to Sargeant Passage. Winds were calm there and the passage very narrow. Motoring through the channel we watched the active logging up the steep banks. Out of Sargeant Passage and into Knight Inlet took us back into the strong north-westerly of twenty to twenty-five knots. Traveller down and sheet on hard and Thunderstruck was in her element. Steering the waves to keep as dry as possible and move with ebb on our tail made the last five miles to Minstrel Island a quick trip to weather. The last mile was a broad reach at warp speed. A last night dinner at the Minstral Island Restaurant with Bob and Ang was a great way to end our time together.

Next morning at 5 AM had us up to catch the current at Chatham Channel, and then through Havannah Channel to the entrance of Johnstone Strait. A high-pressure system was quickly establishing a freshening northerly and blue skies again. Spinnaker up in ten knots of wind and a beautiful view of the Vancouver Island mountains from Telegraph Cove to Kelsey Bay. The wind gradually built in velocity and soon it was two hands on the tiller and surfs up. The Strait turned white as we raced our way to Forward Harbour. When conditions passed beyond carrying the spinnaker the takedown went bad as the topping lift got twisted in the spinnaker and then the spinnaker wrapped itself around the forestay tighter then one would twist a towel to wring out the water. With Kathy on the bow the boat surged down the waves burying the bow. Many attempts wouldn't remedy the problem. We both tried but decided to leave the spinnaker as it was for the next ten miles, S.N.A.F.U.! Around the point of land

across from Forward Harbour was a small bay out of the wind. After ten minutes Kathy unravelled the mess without injuring the spinnaker.

As the day was still young we decided to carry on. We motored through the Whirlpool Rapids in good ebb with strong back eddies along both shores. The breeze was still strong and with main only, we sailed down Chancellor Channel at eight knots through Green Point Rapids to Blind Channel Marina. A long day, but none better. A hearty meal on the boat and some good conversation had us hitting the sack early as tomorrow meant getting through the Dent and Yuculta Rapids.

The next morning we woke up half an hour late so in quick order we got out of the marina and on our way. The Dent Rapids were slack but the current was against us at the Yucultas. As we hugged the shoreline of the south island of Gillard passage a large seiner cut the corner but seeing us quickly altered course and gave us a friendly wave. We raced up the back eddy and punched into the current. We were forty minutes late for slack and the current was already four knots against us. The next hour was slow going but no other traffic to be concerned with. At about the entrance to Hole In the Wall the breeze began filling in and again the spinnaker assumed it's favourite shape carrying us through Lewis Channel and into Desolation Sound.

The time was now seven in the evening, no boats moving about and here we were alone again, spinnaker up and Jimmy Buffet singing Cheese Burger in Paradise. So anchoring in Cripplestone Bay the BBQ went on and we cooked cheeseburgers. Spent the next two days lazing about the anchorage, sailing the dinghy and exploring by oar. We have a few choice spots to get oysters although they are plentiful almost everywhere in Desolation Sound. We usually pick them on the outer islands by Prideau Haven where the water is a bit cooler and the current moves quicker than the more protected anchorages.

We left Desolation and motored all the way to Ballet Bay by Hardy Islands. Fabulous oyster beds built up like coral heads in crystal clear water made for great dinghy fun. Next move, again a day of motoring, into Smugglers Cove where the next two days were spent sun tanning, reading and hiking the paths of the marine park. Smugglers Cove is such a unique anchorage with pockets of anchorage joining each other and dotted with small islands throughout. Leaving Smugglers Cove in a large ebb tide had us into a moderate easterly wind putting us on a port tack reach to Newcastle Island at Nanaimo. We got a nice inside dock at Nanaimo Yacht Club where much needed laundry and provisioning was taken care of.

We happened to arrive in Nanaimo on Wednesday, Dinghy Dock Racing, YEAH! Kathy hopped on Doug Compton's T-Bird "Time Out" and I went out with Tormay on his bird "Tormentor". After you finish the race all racers tie their boats up to the floating Dinghy Dock Pub and the party begins with the pub owner giving out beer and food awards. Great fun.

A little fuzzy and up early to catch the flush through Dodds Narrows, we anchored at Ruxton Island where we own property. Spent the afternoon relaxing on our lot and then had another nice evening on the hook.

A fun sail through the Gulf Islands got us all the way to Ganges on Salt Spring Island. We met up with our good friend Susannah and had dinner at the Vesuvias Pub followed by some island exploring by car. The next two days were spent at the disk golf course where we played 144 holes. This took us into our final weekend, sigh.

We sailed up to Portland Island Marine Park and rafted with our friends who were playing park hosts that weekend. A three hour hike around the island before happy our aboard "Mystic". Portland Island is another jewel in the crown known as the Gulf Islands.

All great adventures must come to an end. With a few hours in large ebb from Portland Island to Cadboro Bay we were home.

Five weeks went by with weather that may not repeat itself for many years to come. The treasured Broughton Archipelago is an area that if you can get some time to get there, GO!

I hope you can get some information from this that will benefit Thunderstruck goes Back to Blackfish 2001