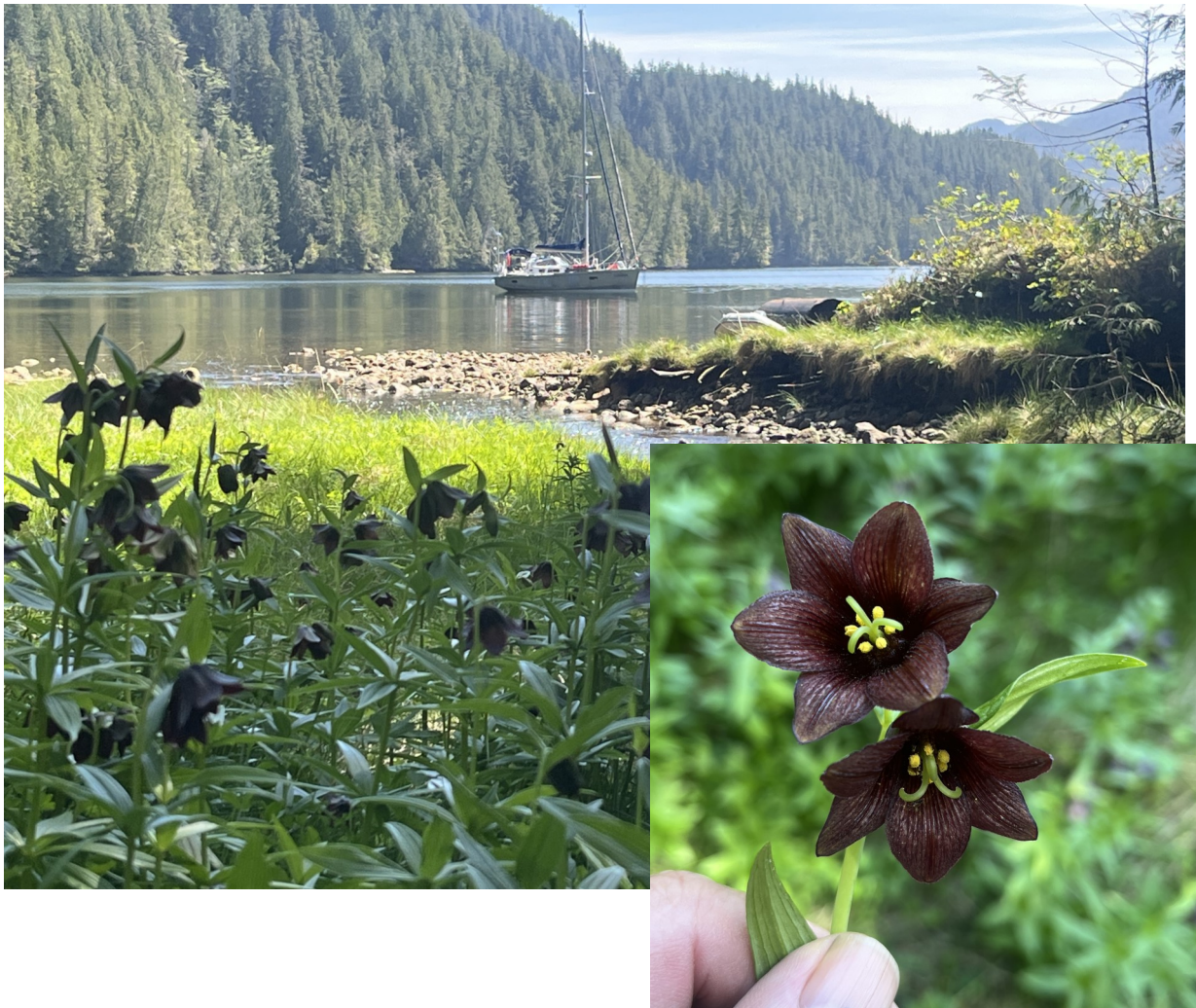


The Fourth Voyage of Lumina - June 2026

Dereliction and new life in the fjords

Post 4

With a windy night safely at anchor in a sheltered cove I looked out and saw a bear on the rocky coast quite near to us, it kept looking at the water as if it was about to pull a fish out, however eventually it slipped in and swam across to the other side of the cove, several hundred metres. We have seen several unexpected animals swimming across in front of us as we motored this year including a deer and a mink. It makes dodging the logs a bit more interesting when, like the block of ice that kept moving in the NWP, they can all swim quite effectively, a lot better than we can anyway.



I thought I had found an interesting new plant that could make my fortune back home but apparently the Black Lily is native to these parts!

We had returned to the mainland side from Vancouver Island where we had dropped the crew, here there are a maze of islands and channels to explore. The tide rushes in and out through the narrows making correct tidal calculations a must as generally there are many warnings to boaters in the pilot guide.

With fast flowing currents, the slack water period is generally very short although we have found that the timings are not necessarily very accurate on the charts, either that or the Navionics program that we use is not adjusted for Daylight Saving Time as it is in the UK and Europe. Whichever way it is, we generally seem to be coming through these tight spots around an hour early and consequently have seen some pretty impressive speeds.

The Nakwaktu rapids are the gateway to around a hundred miles of fjords and channels and we never saw another boat for our time within. In the middle of the rapids is an aptly named Turret Rock which has a challenge



to paint your boat name on a piece of wood and nail it to a tree on the island. The adding of Lumina to the collection was vetoed and we sped through at around 12 knots. Choosing the shortest of three fjords, we dawdled our way to the head and anchored in a very tight little bay that had a further channel leading to another short fjord. After anchoring we headed through in the dinghy. Despite the chart making it look almost inviting it was certainly not a channel to take the yacht through with large boulders and a constant current to catch you out. Here we were probably miles from the nearest human as it looks like few boaters come through the rapids to the paradise beyond. The silence was complete but above the contrails of jets flying over to Japan are there to remind you we are in a modern world.

On our return to the rapids I had expected to have to anchor and wait for the tide to turn but in fact it was already running out so we joined the roller coaster and anchored on the seaward side, ready to catch the ebb in the morning. We were still about 5 miles inland and our route out would take us down the main channel which appears to have most of the flow. The pilot recommends that you keep well offshore when passing the entrance when the flow is ebbing due the turbulence up to a couple of miles offshore. It certainly didn't disappoint and the passage down the aptly named Slingsby Channel was impressive as we gradually sped up the closer to the sea we got. The entrance is almost as narrow as the rapids further in and as we approached one can see why it has a reputation as the outflowing water met the incoming swell we came through the largest waves we had seen since the North Atlantic a couple of years ago!

Turning west we headed along the coast now pretty much in line with the top of Vancouver Island to round Cape Caution. This has a reputation and the clue is probably in the name and like Stadt headland in Norway it is the only place where boaters have to venture out into the ocean without any protection. Like Stadt, the guides are filled with warnings about massive swells and boat eating waves but in either case we have not found them particularly daunting. It's a bit like tides and currents, people warn me and I say, "well, we come from the Bristol Channel where at Avonmouth they can have 15m tides and you certainly don't bother to try and sail against it!"

In the Pacific North West there are many fishing lodges and we come past some pretty fancy ones so to the untrained eye it all looks fairly prosperous, however it seems that all is not necessarily as well as it looks on the surface. We called in at a place called Dawsons Landing, firstly because they sold fuel there

and I hoped to get a new oil filter and secondly because I have a bit of Dawson in me and wanted a hat. Well that was a good enough reason for a slight detour into Rivers Inlet, one of the premier sport fishing areas in BC. It was a bit depressing, the only shop for maybe 50 miles run by an old couple who I am sure if it was viable would have passed it on to the next generation by now. On the wall in the shop is the stuffed



The rather depressed settlement of Dawsons Landing

remains of one the largest salmon ever caught at over 100lbs. It is an interesting settlement built entirely on log rafts made from enormous trees. I am not sure how old they would be but the size of the logs is certainly much larger than anything being cut today. It was however a rather sad site, we were the only customers, there didn't appear to be anyone staying in the cabins and no visiting boats tied up either. I had not realised that all was not so well with the sport fishing industry, there used to be many fishing lodges in Rivers Inlet but today there are just a handful and they would probably all be for sale if you came along with a cheque book. Young people apparently don't go fishing like they used to and places like this are always at a disadvantage to those closer to civilisation where logistics make it easier and cheaper to get the guests and supplies in and out. They might have the best fishing but if it costs you twice as much for your holiday then they lose out here.



The trusty Volvo Penta with know doubt plenty of gremlins slumbering inside

Its much the same story as with the canneries and fish processing factories, declining fish stocks and economies of scale both of fishing boats and canneries mean that there are literally hundreds of abandoned cannery sites on the west coast, some have completely disappeared but others remain almost in tact. Last

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year we called in at Namu, probably the best preserved and most extensive site. This only closed as a cannery in the 1980s but had a store and café running well into the 1990s. Like many it had suffered a major fire in 1962 so a lot of the buildings are relatively new (well younger than me—just). All the can-



Esso once had a fuel dock at Namu, today the tanks rust in the forest that has grown up around them

nery machinery has been removed leaving large hangar like buildings completely clear. Other relics are there in abundance, like the store which I remembered had piles of oil filters. Having failed to get what I needed at Dawson's Landing it seemed like a good reason to return. Of course, as I really expected, anything useful has been long since removed and all that are left are many obscure sizes.

The reason I am looking for an oil filter is that when I changed the oil recently I found that the filter I had bought last year as a spare is in fact a fuel filter. I had bought a couple the last time we changed the oil and this

was the second one. I had therefore been running on the wrong filter for several hundred hours completely oblivious to the fact that the engine might be running at a lower oil pressure than it desires



The scale of the Namu complex is really something but sounds like complicated ownership and the "pc" demands of the government environmentalists escalating the cost actually are preventing any clear up

due to the flow characteristics of fuel/oil filters. Whilst the engine appear to be pretty happy and the oil pressure is obviously not low enough for the low pressure switch to operate it's the sort of thing that can bug you in the middle of the night, so as soon as I can, it will be changed. In the mean time its still probably about 150 miles to Prince Rupert and the wind is rarely helpful.

Its not all doom and gloom on the business front up here, we pulled into a great sheltered anchorage at the Hakai Beach Institute, a science based place with trails across the island to the wild west coast with sandy beaches. Their website proudly talks about their commercial greenhouse producing veg for the kitchen. I had emailed them earlier saying what my interest was and we were warmly welcomed. Unfortunately their greenhouse, that had been built at the cost of an arm and leg and a bit more, was not in use due to it being too hot inside. The ventilation is totally inadequate so I promised to put my consultant hat on and do a little report on my thoughts which may be of use to them when trying to get it sorted out. Apart from the greenhouse that it appears had lost something when being specified, the

rest of the place was fantastic. There was a great floating dock and some well looked after grounds with buildings that had obviously had a bit of design put into them. The history of the place is also rather interesting and explains the rather nice buildings etc. It was a high end fishing lodge



*Once a grower,
Always a
grower*



The Hakai Institute, with the local plants being favoured over the manicured lawns the fishing lodge once had

aging company for \$300 million, set up the Tula foundation devoting the rest of their lives to the common good.

A couple of days later saw us at the twin settlements of Bella Bella and Shearwater. The former has a good supermarket and is a stop for the ferry, but no visitors pontoon so we moored the boat and took the dinghy ashore for supplies.

once but times changed and I guess that part of the market proved difficult to service. We met one of the founders of the institute and she explained that when they were looking for somewhere as a base it was a perfect solution. They had further improved it with a new dock, water system, large solar and battery installation etc etc. With experience of dealing with universities and research establishments they always seem to have funding problems and I asked her how they got on in that respect, Oh, we are self funded, I was told and that was that. Back at Lumina I got on to Google and found that the two founders sold their medical im-



The wild west coast is just a short walk across the island



You may think you are alone on the beach, but you are probably being watched...

Then we motored a couple of miles across the bay to Shearwater, where we stayed last year and they have a marine shop. Alas, no compatible oil filter although there might have been one but their internet was a bit flaky so cross referencing was difficult and all the part numbers I had didn't match any of the manufacturers they stocked. The harbourmaster was lamenting the lack of American boats making their way north, although still early in the season there is no doubt that fuel prices and politics are taking their toll on the boating tourists. We did however have a jolly evening in the bar with a fellow sailor we had met previously a week or so ago in an anchorage. Ironically he had been to see the Colvic yacht Tuelu when it was for sale last summer that ended up in the boatyard next to us. He was leaving his boat there for a few days to do a trip home to Seattle and gave us a couple of rounds of Brie and an avocado as he didn't think the inside of his fridge would be very pleasant if he left it in there whilst he was away!

We have now come away from the usual route and have seen two boats in the last 3 days. Its great to find these completely sheltered anchorages with no one for miles around. Unfortunately we are not waking up to a crab pot full of crabs or bears dancing on the shore but there are plenty of otters and seals to entertain. The weather has become amazingly changeable, from still and 30C to windy where one minute you might have 25kn in a fjord and an hour later it completely still. Then rain like one has rarely seen, last night there was about 4ins in a bucket outside. We have come through more narrow



passages with strong flows and today did have the centre-board grumbling as we came through the narrowest of entrances into the tranquil cove where we are spending the night.

Best Wishes from the good ship Lumina

[Website with all the old blogs](#)

No, we only took the dinghy through that one!