The Third Voyage of Lumina

Across the border into Canada

Post 9



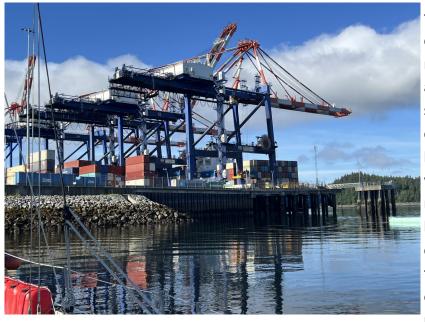
Totem at new Metaliktica—note the Holy Bible commemorating the towns founding

Most boats it seems stop at Ketchikan, that being the last big town in Alaska but having heard from locals, it sounded much like Juneau, being heavily influenced by all means available to take money from cruise ship passengers. We therefore passed it by on the other side of the channel. A little further on we had a chat with the UK skipper on a tug that was moored had noticed our ensign and called us up on the VHF. We then took a side channel down a less travelled side of an island towards a settlement called Metlakatla a difficult word to say after you start thinking of the pop group with not quite the same name. This was the other extreme as is very seldom visited with all yachts going north having to go straight to Ketchikan to check in and those going south, well just don't got there it seems. We had great difficulty contacting the harbour but eventually did so and found it a very quiet place. It was blazing hot and we had a walk round, bought a nectarine in the shop as they didn't have any ice creams and sat watching a whale just off the village. Being so hot we moved on to anchor a little further down the coast and the harbour was happy as it saved them doing paperwork for visiting vessels that they were unused to.

With one further stop in Foggy Bay, yes it was actually foggy we set off to cross into Canada. Once again we were motoring most of the time with a bit of help from the sails. As is often the case, approaching Prince Rupert there is a long way round some islands, or a shorter tortuous narrow channel. Yes, we took the

channel with many buoys, rocks and sandbanks to negotiate. There was a village part way through called Metlakatla and it seemed rather odd as the one we stopped at a couple of days ago was not that far away of the same name. Indeed a 140 years ago a lay preacher of the Church Missionary Society fell out with the church authorities and took his flock to settle across on Annette Island. They laid out the town on a grid system, built a harbour and cannery. Then in WWII the government built an airfield on the island and promised a road across to give the residents easy access to Ketchikan not far across the channel, however the road was not built until the 1970s. In all a fascinating story and unfortunately one I didnt discover until after we had left but you can read about it here.

For a good part of the day of our crossing over to Prince Rupert we had been in touch with the two marinas in town as one has to contact Canadian Border Force (CBSA) once you are docked. Once you have crossed the border you cannot stop until you have reached a port of entry. However, we were finding



Our quiet berth next to the container terminal

that there was no room at the inn so called the CBSA and we were given permission to anchor which we did, just across the channel from the Town. It was strange to be anchored in such a quiet creek looking across at the hustle and bustle of one of Canadas busiest ports with ferries, container ships, an oil terminal, grain and wood pellet docks. The latter is part of one of those wonderful conundrums of today as it is owned by the Drax Group, who are named after one of their power stations in England, which used to be coal fired and now fired by wood pellets part of which come from

here. Looking on their website you will find all their wonderful green credentials but as usual with corporate greening one wonders if it tells the whole story; is actually better to ship it literally half way round

the world to an ex coal fired power station in the UK when it could be burnt in Canada, where they are still burning coal to produce electricity. Anyway before anyone asks about our diesel powered sailing boat or the flights we have taken recently I will leave it there—its complicated!



en recently I will leave it Woodpellets being loaded from railcars to a ship destined for Drax power station in Yorkshire

After a quiet night on anchor and still no luck with the marinas I contacted the port authority and outlined our predicament. They said they had room in their Fairview South harbour a couple of miles down the coast from the town "Its just before the container terminal" they said. We went straight across to a rather run down set of pontoons inhabited mainly by fishing boats and other rather green residents who obviously haven't moved for a long while. We were greeted by a friendly fisherman who was very interested in our voyage and who had always wanted to get to northern waters but had never done so. Its lovely to get some respect from people who are professionals of the water but still are impressed by our exploits.

On calling the CBSA to report our arrival it was all a bit of a let down as everything was done on the phone, there was no visit to the boat and we could have been still at anchor as they didn't even ask where we were docked. It was, however, a much more interesting place to be with fishing boats coming and going, the tugs and Pilots doing the same as they were nearby and containers flying on and off the Cosco Auckland every 90 seconds per crane, with three working together. The ballet of the crane, together with the arrival of trailers was impressive to watch and if ever there was a delay it was the trailers not



An old station building transported by lorry and barge to become a living exhibition at Prince Rupert

the crane that was slowing it down. In all they were working for about 36hrs non stop and then with no fanfare they were off to continue south towards Vancouver or Long Beach. A lot of the containers would end up on the railway to head inland, the rail link over the Rockies from Prince Rupert apparently having the kindest gradients of the Canadian crossings.

With the town being a mile or so away the trusty folding bikes were unpacked and dusted off, they are a bit of a compromise really, not brilliant at being bikes, but they

fold down well and live in the back locker with the spare oil and gas. The route into town was pretty quiet, despite being a main road, but had several hills to test the oxygen capacity of our lungs. The museum was about to close so this was left for the following day but we found a reasonable marine store for an upgrad-

ed salmon catching spinner and had a great burger in an old café which must have been one of the oldest buildings in town. It was lovely to be away from America with their strange "tipping" system where it is expected as part of the transaction rather than being earnt.

Returning to town the following day we did the museum—very native Indian rather than colonial history, and then went down the hill to the old railway station which was much more my thing. They had a great story to tell of building the railway with many original artifacts. Then it was along to an even better marine store with the best selection we had seen since Kodiak, but still not the toilet parts I was looking for, however we did get a bit carried away on the clothing front with Carol taking a fancy to new lightweight jacket and I a shirt and a pair of socks. So the next time we are at a yacht club we will be well attired.

Returning to the boat we hear that Carol's son Sam has been notified of imminent delivery of his passport and is looking to fly out to us, therefore the decision has been taken to hang around for a few days rather than head south



And every single lure guarantees to be the best one to catch that dream fish—my lucky anchovy did exactly that!

towards more difficult places for him to get to. Retracing our steps through the Venn channel there are a few interesting historical places to check out.



In a bay called Big Bay a site of an old sawmill exists. The Georgetown Mills ran from 1875 to 1969 which to old folks like us does not seem so long ago, however much of it was destroyed by fire in 1978, so maybe not much to see? Anchoring in the bay there was nothing to see but forest

and I suppose that's not really surprising looking at the speed that trees grow here and they have had 50 years to recolonise! So off in the dinghy we went, luckily it was high tide and we could get right up the creek to the site. As we got closer you could see various pieces of ironwork and the remains of timber piles, together with a very impressive waterfall which

apparently provided the power. Alas, you could also see the damage that the fire must have done as a lot of the piles were burnt off. It is common for such places like this and canneries to be almost completely built over the water with the whole site supported on pilings. With everything constructed from wood the fire risk is always high and looking at the history of canneries you often see that hardly any of them have not burnt down at some point in their history! Back at Georgetown Mills, Carol stayed in the dinghy as having twisted her ankle the day before, clambering through the debris didn't appeal to her. In fact looking at the parts of the timberwork that remains, it was all so rotten that there would have been even less to see if everything was collapsed on top of the machinery. There were several saws and



what looked like thicknessers together with all the other paraphernalia of a pretty busy place. Along the river bank was the very rusted remains of a railway line which went a few hundred yards to where the ships would have been loaded. Unfortunately any timber was so rotten that where the docks had not been burnt the remains were so soft you could hardly walk on them. Amongst the trees were the remains of a few houses but these were completely flat and rapidly disappearing into the bush.



Returning to Lumina we had a quiet still night with the only sound being the salmon jumping all around, very annoying as we still have to get to catch one. In the morning the tide was low and as we were preparing to lift the anchor we watched a bear on the shore right front of where we had been yesterday. We haven't seen a bear in the woods yet but I expect they have seen us.....

Determined to get a salmon and with a light wind the lucky anchovy was deployed and trolled behind the boat at about 2.5kn. The lucky anchovy is the cousin of the lucky squid that caught the halibut and the anchovy didn't disappoint. After just less than an hour the reel started screaming out and we slowed down as much as we could and sure enough there was a decent sized beautiful silver salmon. By now with the wind increasing we were shortly at the first destination of the day,

Storehouse No1. I had read about this previously but helpfully it was in our new pilot book that we had managed to get in Prince Rupert. This was one of 4 buildings built by the US Army Corps of Engineers in 1896 under the direction of a Captain Gaillard. It seems that at some point he mistook the Portland Inlet for the Pearse Canal as two of the buildings were built not on Alaskan soil but in the next inlet, on Canadian territory.

No one noticed that the buildings had been built in the wrong place until 6 years later when it came to the attention of the



Canadian government who were worried that the United



Storehouse No1 with the "US" defaced

States was trying to take over part of Canada. It all seems to have been resolved amicably and Captain Gaillard went on to try and "Make America Great" by playing a major part in the building of the Panama Canal and has the Gaillard Cut named after him. With the anchorage in the tiny Manzanita Cove rather untenable for an extend-



ed stay with the wind now picking up considerably, we crossed over to the south side of the Portland Inlet to a lovely sheltered anchorage for the night.



Storehouse No2, less overgrown but impossible to see from the beach

ing to come across a slumbering bear, I had a bit of a look around but it was very difficult to see more than a few metres in the gloom beneath the trees. Eventually we went back to Lumina to do some more research.

Youtube is a wonderful place for losing yourself but this time it came up trumps with a Canadian who likes exploring remote places. Dustin Porter had difficulty finding it as well and his video, together with a report I found from the Boundaries Commission who found all four buildings

The second storehouse was going to prove a bit more difficult to find as was not mentioned in the pilot guide and a copy of the original map found on the web was very vague. Nevertheless we arrived at an inlet that looked promising by Lizard point where the location was shown on the old map. Negotiating any beach here is a bit challenging as first you have to clamber over massive tree trunks washed up and then somehow get into the bush behind as there was no building visible from the shore as had been the case with Storehouse No1. Hoping I wasn't go-



in 1978 pinpointed the location to be in the next bay along and not as on the 1906 map. With the anchor raised we motored just under a mile further north and dropped it again in a bigger bay with a more



promising sandy beach. With only two big rooted tree trunks on the beach that could be seen in the video we finally tracked down Storehouse No2 just a few feet behind the beach in the undergrowth. Of the two we found, both had lost their roofs and doors with just he masonry walls standing, each with a carved stone saying US Property do not injure to the left of the doorway, although the "US" had been chiselled out on the first one.

It was very satisfying to have found both, and pieced together a little known piece of history which emphasised how in just over a hundred years how technology has improved our ability to find our positions on the earth to the point where an everyday item like our phone can position us to a few metres. Contrast this with the another fact from this story that the four stone buildings were built from scratch with a team of engineers on one trip lasting just 24 days. I would like to see that done today!

Here is a link to the info we used and the <u>youtube</u> video (I now discover he has been to several of the other places we have explored including the sawmill!)

Anway that's all from the captains chair, we are off back to Prince Rupert tomorrow, to pick up Carol's Son who is flying in to be the cabin boy for the last few weeks down to Sidney near Vancouver where we get hauled out at the end of August.

With Best wishes to all of you still reading, Tim and Carol

Website with all the old blogs

Live Tracker link