

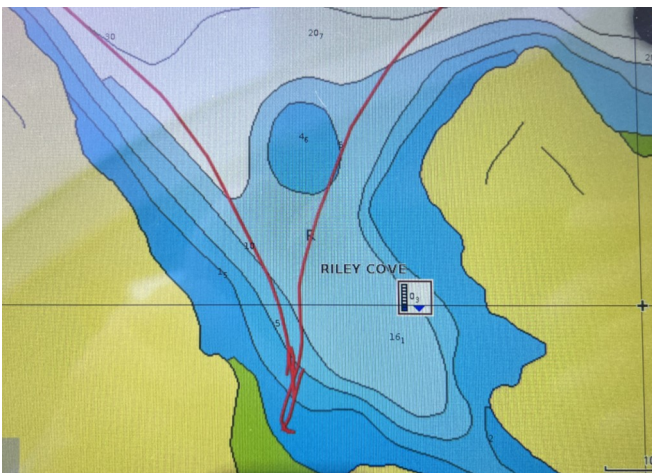
# The Fourth Voyage of Lumina - July 26

## South from Prince Rupert and administration woes

### Post 8

Prior to our road-trip to the interior we had arrived in Prince Rupert expecting to be heading further north. However two different problems arose whilst we were blissfully enjoying the sights of the Prairies and Rockies. The first spanner in the works was an email from the US embassy in Dublin saying we had overstayed our visas. First thought was “how can that be” we are not even in the country? On further investigation it appeared that as far as they were concerned we were still in the country even though we had left almost a year previously. However, telling them that we had checked out using the telephone reporting line as you have to do if on a yacht, and even giving the time and date of the call together with flights out of Canada was not good enough. Proof of entry into the UK would be satisfactory so we applied to the Home Office to get the records only to be informed it may take up to 30 days to be processed.

The next tack was to try and get something from the Canadians to prove that we had checked into the country the day after leaving Alaska. They operate a similar telephone reporting service to the US with no



We got stumped at Riley Cove

stamps in your passport, paperwork of any sort or even a confirmation email. All you get is a number and the hope that they have correctly recorded everything. So the second spanner then materialised. It appeared that when we had entered Canada we should have done a temporary import for the boat as it would be in Canada for a year, even though we would not. Once again we had a record of the call but not a recording, big mistake as it seems it all came down to being asked “when are you leaving Canada?” which we replied when we were flying out about a month later. There was no mention of the boat or any further questions. Now, hindsight is a wonderful thing they say and I probably should have asked further but as it seemed a similar to the previous year in Alaska so didn’t think any further.

So now we are still driving around the Rockies but have an appointment with the officer in Prince Rupert the Monday we return. We obviously cannot go further North and return to Alaska before the US Visas are sorted out and we were still waiting for the info to come back from Britain showing our movements there. With a fresh ream of paper bought we connected up the printer and printed out boatyard invoices to prove we had work done whilst in Canada as that seems important for the temporary import and reported to the office at the appointed time. Once there we got the classic "Good cop / Bad cop" routine with the guy I had been in contact with essentially trying to make out that we were intending to leave the boat in Canada indefinitely and get around paying import duty for it. I don't think it was helped by the fact that we had initially contacted them to try and resolve the US visa problem and he knew that we

couldn't simply leave there and cross into Alaska. However, after I said that in the worst case we could simply sail away straight down to Mexico instead, as there was no way we would be paying the import duty of 10% + of the value of the boat, he lost interest and left us with the good cop. After checking the invoices and me explaining the probable cause being a misunderstanding of whether "you" meant you or you and your vessel we got away with a great compromise that no further action would be required provided that we checked out of Canada before the 12 months of initial entry. This would give us about 10 days to get down to Victoria where we could cross southward into Washington State and would also give us 10 days to resolve the Visa issue. The kind lady also gave us written proof of our entry into Canada last July which we expected should be good enough for US immigration.

We then did a big food shop at the supermarket using the car before we took that back and had a farewell pint in Prince Rupert in preparation for doing some miles South. With the likelihood that we might be motoring hard to complete the journey in time it seemed a good idea to fill up with diesel. The last time we had done it we had to

wait for a couple of naval boats and this time it was the Coastguard filling up their Cutter. We drifted around for a good half hour waiting and eventually made it onto the fuel dock after they had taken something like 30,000 litres making our 300 look a little paltry but that would be plenty to get us south even if we had to motor all the way into strong headwinds.

Whilst it was a pity we could not get back to Alaska we at least had a destination and a need to get moving giving a similar feeling as we had in the North West Passage, the only difference being that instead of losing your boat to the ice, we were now in danger of losing one's shirt to the Canadian tax system! At least the Canadian archipelago offers many routes and options so there are very few parts of the whole



***Orcas chasing something very close to the rocks right under the overhanging trees– We think it must have got away as they suddenly left***

voyage that would cover ground already travelled. The only problem now was that whilst heading North we had been plagued with Northerly winds, now heading in the other direction it was either completely calm or Southerly.

We had two objectives, the first was to re-visit the greenhouse at the Hakai Institute on Calvert Island and the second was to traverse the outside of Vancouver Island. So, having taken a mixture of outside and in-side passages we arrived at Calvert Island where the other cofounder was due to be in residence and knew more of the greenhouse and its workings. We had a great little visit, discussed the workings of a glasshouse and explained why we were there a little earlier than originally planned. It seems that we are



*Doing our bit for path maintenance by transporting a plank, and the skeleton of a humpback whale at the Hakai Institute*

not the only ones falling foul of temporary import regulations as they had had Mark Zuckerberg there the previous week and he had unexpectedly had to go straight from there to Alaska to escape the tax, and 10% of 300 million dollars is a pretty good incentive to move on even for him!

After checking my conductivity meter against some calibration solution in the lab (we have a discrepancy between the hand held meter and the internal one in the water maker) we took a walk back to the beach on the west side we had been to before and then walked over to the North beach which was new to us. To get to the North beach, one walked along the west beach and then on a short trail through the forest. They were trying to upgrade the boardwalk on part of the trail and at the start there was a pile of 8x2" timbers with a notice requesting that you take one as far as you can. This we did and left it at another pile about half way through. It was a proper example of "every little helps" as would allow the trail builders to get on with building the boardwalk rather than carrying in timber.

Leaving Calvert Island we headed out to the west of Vancouver Island with about a week to traverse it. From a distance the chart looks like it will be a fairly inhospitable wild west coast but in reality there are many inlets offering shelter with only a couple of headlands to pass, although it was important to get the tide right as it appeared to run fairly strongly around these headlands and when motoring 1kn against you makes quite a difference when you might only be making say 4kn against the wind anyway.

We could easily have spent a month exploring all the inlets but with time pressing we made it down to

Tofino, about half way in three days. Having to catch the tide for each leg meant some very early starts at daybreak. This meant that we were at Tofino early but with the only two guest berths taken at the harbour we had to anchor to go ashore. Tofino is a bit like Banff by the sea. Being the end of the road it is a bit of a destination for the road trippers and the town is full of the usual water based offerings of whale watching safaris, kayaking, fishing and hot springs adventures etc in abundance. We had a late lunch and retired to the boat, moving it up the inlet a few miles to be away from the metropolis and speeding boats going in all directions around the anchorage. Away from the town we found a new issue—crab pots. I could count 180 from where we eventually anchored meaning our early start in the dark would need to be a careful one.



*Early morning light on the west coast*

At around 4am with the early light of dawn just showing over the mountains inland the anchor with its usual accompanying crab pot was lifted and we were not disappointed with 5 crabs. Two were big enough to be keepers and even though we had anchored where there were not any pot buoys one did wonder how many times a crab would be caught before finally it was big enough to get caught the final time and therefore how much of the crabs nutrition was actually coming from crab pot bait....

Not having any more time to muse on the nutrition of crabs I turned off the deck light and with Carol on

the bow with the searchlight scanning for pot buoys we made it out to the entrance by Tofino with only a couple of near misses. As we passed the town lit up like Christmas and headed through the entrance channel dawn was breaking and the first optimistic salmon fishing charter boat passed us. For once the gods were with us as early on in the day we were motoring with tide assistance and later on with the wind actually in our favour we made it to the inlet or Port Renfrew. This is where the West Coast Trail starts from and heads up the coast for 50 miles to Bamfield. We had anchored off a beach which was probably the first overnight stop for the backpackers. It was crammed with about 20 tents and lots of people and know doubt the more experienced travellers telling tall stories of bear encounters to the newbies. I relayed our view to fellow blog reader Ben who had walked it in the early '90s. He said they arrived cold tired and wet in Bamfield at the northern end having hardly seen anyone. As with everything else it looks like it had got a lot more busy over the intervening years so maybe I will stick with sailing to give me access to truly quiet places after all.

Another early start hoping that we did not wake too many campers at dawn with the clanking of the anchor chain being raised, we continued south with another relatively short leg to Sooke, on the outskirts of Victoria. With the tide quite strong the Straits of Juan de Fuca we made it to the entrance before the tide turned, although much of the passage had been done in thick fog with the radar doing overtime. A good lookout was still needed as with just around 100m of visibility we found that some of the smaller recreational fishing boats, probably those of the fibreglass speedboat variety were not showing up on the radar until we were nearly on top of them necessitating in a couple of enforced rapid changes of course. The entrance to Sooke is also rather challenging with a strong tide, and many twists and turns through the sandbanks, then about a quarter of a mile before the dock we suddenly



*Two views of the entry to Sooke, 24hrs apart on arrival and leaving the next day*

emerged from the fog into bright sunshine.

Tying up to the municipal dock at lunchtime we sent a message to Harry, who we had previously met at the gold mine, as he had kindly taken delivery of a pilot book for us covering the southern part of our forthcoming journey. He informed us that together with some of his geologist friends from the mine



they were at the pub watching the World Cup final and would we like picking up. This was duly done and it was nice to be watching with a neutral view (although being biased towards Spain of course) rather than hoping against hope that England would not be taking penalties! With the cup presented and after being treated to trip to a local beauty spot we were delivered back to the dock where we were able to reciprocate with a few gin and tonics with smoked salmon canapés to round off the afternoon.

Having made good time down the coast we

*There was plenty of room in the marina right in-centre of Victoria outside the Empress Hotel where we had their famous afternoon tea*

had a couple of days in hand for one last bucket list tick in Canada. With a booking made at the Causeway Marina right in the centre of Victoria, I rounded off our Canadian experience with the famous High Tea at the Empress Hotel. This overlooks the water and many people had said it was a must do, so we did. Its one of those things that you



don't have to worry about the mark up on the slices of bread or what do they do with all the crusts but just sit back and enjoy the spread piled on the cake stand. Of course such events are not complete without being able to look out and see your own boat moored just a few feet away and we were not disappointed with our window seat.

Leaving Victoria the next morning we caught the tide across the border to the San Juan Islands and Friday Harbour where we could check into America. On the way I called the Canadian border to note our departure only to be told that there was no checkout procedure and we did not need to do anything. I was a bit surprised but I should not have been with our recent experiences. However we were able to get an email reply from Prince Rupert to note our departure. So with one part of the equation sorted we moved on to the next. The US has an app which we used previously and we tried that, however due to the need to check visas we were denied entry using that and were requested to proceed to the customs dock at Friday Harbour. Despite being breezy out at sea Friday Harbour was sheltered and sweltering in the heat, something we are not used to. We reported to the office in town and after a while



we were checked in by one of the friendliest officers we have come across. On hearing or woes of overstaying visas when we were no longer even in the country it appears that it is a very usual problem and according to him, just a photo of yourself back at home should be good enough to comply, although that was not the impression that we had got from the embassy in Dublin.

***Dodging ferries and float planes in the San Juan Islands—makes a change from logs!***

So now officially in the USA we celebrated a little in a local bar overlooking the harbour and tried to get used to the heat although by morning it had returned to a more overcast warm type of

weather we are more used to. From here we will now continue south to finish in San Francisco where Lumina will spend the winter and it will be an easier jumping off point for the Pacific early next year as well.

Sorry more of an administrative rant this time but unfortunately whilst sailing is usually a pretty laid back affair sometimes it is not the idyllic lifestyle that maybe apparent and it's a pretty frustrating affair trying to navigate through different countries systems which at the end of the day are all trying to achieve the same thing—that essentially you do not come to live there. It's a shame that there is not



some universal visa that people like us who have no intention of moving to any country, are capable of sustaining themselves so wont be a burden on any of their services can use to prove their good intentions, instead everywhere tries to create their own system that does not really work for the leisure sailor.



*And finally, one for the horticulturalists—an orca floral display in Victoria*

So its best wishes from Lumina with Tim and Carol safely in the USA and not wearing orange jumpsuits!

All the previous blogs and website [here](#)