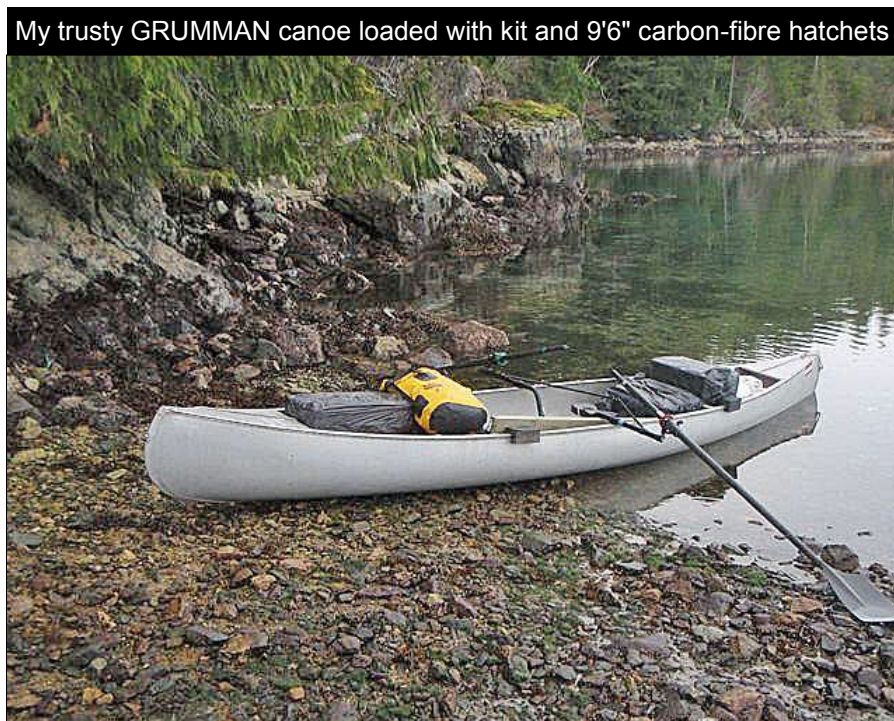


# Maurelle Camp Trip Diary

## 02~11 January, 2013

**Wednesday, 02-January,2013, +4 Celsius, dry**

Trips to the camp are always fun, but only provided that one is not put off by climatic extremes and the prospect of capsizing in 'cool' waters. This Autumn was wet and raw, but Winter, here on the Coast anyway, can often be dry and pleasant if a little cool. Daylight is brief: roughly 0745~1745 and good lighting is mandatory for reading, drawing, etc. Attempts to leave on New Year's Day 2013 were defeated by excessive hot-tubbery on New Year's Eve, and most of the 1st was therefore spent girding loins and loading the canoe onto the car whilst carefully nursing my katzenjammer and general befuddlement.



0450 on Wednesday, the 2nd found me very wide awake, speeding towards the ferry terminal by 0540 and aboard the 0630 sailing from Horseshoe Bay to Departure Bay on Vancouver Island. Esther's freshly baked barnitze in tummy...this when combined with coffee...is a marriage made in heaven, and except for a stop for gas (*0.15c/li less on the Island than here in Vancouver*), it is a clear run to Campbell River for the 1030 ferry sailing to Quadra Island.

Alas, the 1030 sailing is reserved for dangerous goods and not only is the ferry from Campbell River to Quatiaski Cove full of fuel oil and propane trucks, but I cannot get on...ah ha!...it is because the normal DG day is Tuesday, but delayed a day because of the holiday. Blast and bother!



The camp containers viewed from the sea-side looking NE



A place is found for me aboard the 1130 and after a quick stop for some fresh green vegetables in Heriot Bay, I cover the last 30 Km along the logging road that ends at Hoskyn Channel Landing. The road to the landing is always entertaining, being both steep and slippery due to the friable nature of its aggregate components, and there is always a concern that one may not get back up. Particularly when aggressive four-wheelers rip up the surface; which they have.

The camp is in the exact centre, looking SSW towards Heriot Bay





It takes forty minutes to unload and pack the canoe, and about an hour or so to row to the camp. The weather is overcast but still. The tides are similar in height at this time of year so the waters are slack - a relief from the usual rips and eddies that usually prevail, offering a trap for the unwary. The camp itself is undisturbed. The fire is roaring within twenty minutes, the kettle is on for some of Mr. Tetley's best, and my very brief period of industry while unloading, stowing and collecting firewood is soon followed by another of introspection and blueberry buns.



**Thursday, 03-January-2013, -2C at 0700**

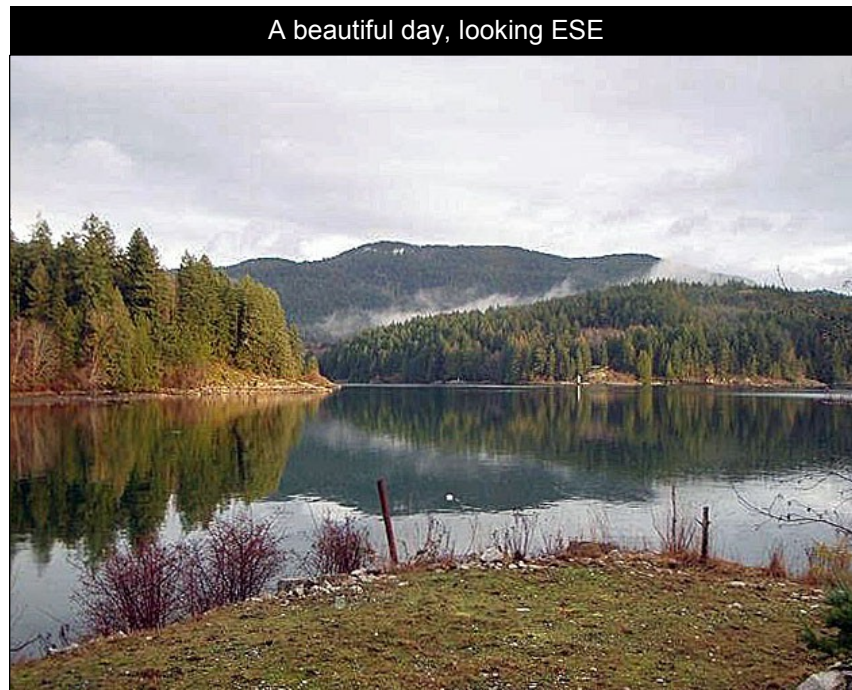
A solid day with hand tools installing the new gas hob, rerouting the propane gas line, and generally cleaning-up...an all-day job.

**Friday, 04-January-2013, +2.5C at 0700**

Clarke pops over for a visit - Surge School now hosts just two kids and although more are forecast to attend after the Spring Break it may be the death knell as the costs to keep the school open must be significant. The effects on the community will be tough if it closes, as it will discourage all but the very bravest of young parents from taking up residence – home schooling and weekly boarding on Cortes Island or Quadra being the only options in the vicinity.



As soon as Clarke leaves Roger arrives and we discuss important affairs over tea, scotch and biscuits. Nothing is resolved but we are quite pleased with ourselves and Rog leaves with an invitation for lunch on Sunday. A useful couple of hours are spent stripping out the briars around the dunny, and cutting down many alders to permit an unobstructed view of the sound whilst seated upon the throne.



**Saturday, 05-January-2013, +4C at 0700, almost tropical**

The entire day from dawn until dusk spent bucking-up the obstructions on the beach around the canoe berth. The landing, where the canoe lives, is obstructed by jetsam and flotsam and requires significant effort with the chain saw, carrying the proceeds up the embankment to the cut wood storage area, preparatory for splitting in a couple of months time.

**Sunday, 06-January-2013, +4C, light rain & scattered showers**

After a leisurely breakfast at 0930 it's off to Roger & Rachel's, a slow row through the pass into Whiterock Passage and lots of hot tea followed by welsh rarebit cooked on a wood stove! Rachel spins her wool from alpaca, merino, and others and she and Roger are renowned knitters, producing extraordinary designs of complexity, colour and texture that cannot be bought - they give the results of their efforts to relatives and friends only. Roger consults to knitters all over the world, offering opinions, solutions and ideas. After lunch I row even more slowly back to camp and debate whether to spend another couple of hours sawing logs or read a book. Sawing wins.



### **Monday, 07-January-2013, +5C Rain and showers**

Louie stops by after checking his crab trap, bearing a grateful gift of fresh prawns, and Mr. Weasel (*probably the short tailed genus, as no tail marks can be seen in the snow around his (or her) cat-like prints*) very kindly kills and donates a bufflehead duck to my larder. Both are good, the bufflehead; which can be excessively gamey and 'muddy' is not - a tribute to its diet, and is sublime when served thinly sliced, incorporated into scrambled eggs, as cold cuts, or alone. (*Cook the prawns in thin water at high heat in a shallow pan until firm. Place the plucked and gutted bufflehead in a dutch oven and place on the wood stove for 3+ hours.*)

### **Tuesday, 08-January-2013, +7C steady rain**

Roger has dropped Rachel off in Heriot Bay for a couple of days with her spinning crew, and for R&R. Rog decides that a scotch at 0900 cannot be beat. While I cannot disagree, I stick with tea. Unbelievably, the temperature drops 7C over a period of two or three hours and before long it is snowing heavily. Seems like a good day to catch-up on reading. Roger motors off into the gloom and I carefully watch him enter the pass before I turn away.



### **Wednesday, 09-January-2013, +1C**

The wolf visited, this is not unusual as for perhaps three out of the last ten years wolves have been noted on Maurelle, none last year, but now one, a lone male, is back. These are what are described as 'sea wolves' by some biologists; which are smaller than the regular variety, russet and blond in colouring as opposed to the usual grey, and partial to shell fish. His lament is disturbing and chillingly beautiful. Most of



the day is spent walking the trails and deciding what tools I shall need to bring with me tomorrow. Clarke stops by to ask if I own a blue Toyota as a tree has crashed through the roof of one parked off the logging trail... luckily for me I don't.

My size 12 boots and Mr. Wolf's size 12 paws!



**Thursday, 10-January-2013, -2C**

Clean and sharpen tools in the morning, but once I have the chainsaw in my hands it is inevitable that my attention turns to the back forty where the alders are taking over the world and limiting access to the water-fall and my desire for a decent walking path. For the next eight hours I carve a broad path with chainsaw and axe - only another couple of kilometres to go... by 1600 I am knackered and ready for dinner and a good book.

The falls run in Winter only...





Edible fungus in the flume of spray



**Friday, 11-January-2013, -7C**

It is distinctly nippy, but duty calls. By 0700 the canoe is packed and by 0745 everything is stowed, the camp is locked-up and I row back to the landing in light winds with a faint popple on the water. The blue Toyota is pinned by a log spear to the ground, this will be a hard one to explain to the insurance company.

For some reason my car won't start - here I am, 35 Km from the nearest pub and no solution, well no easy solution. And then, a serendipitous event: a young kid drives up and asks if I need a hand. We can't find any jumper cables, but I have lots of rope. He tows me 10 M across the only flat space anywhere and she starts! Yippee! I manage to make the 1500 ferry from Nanaimo to Vancouver. Esther is preparing dinner and I can start planning for the next trip.

The new two-burner hob installed

