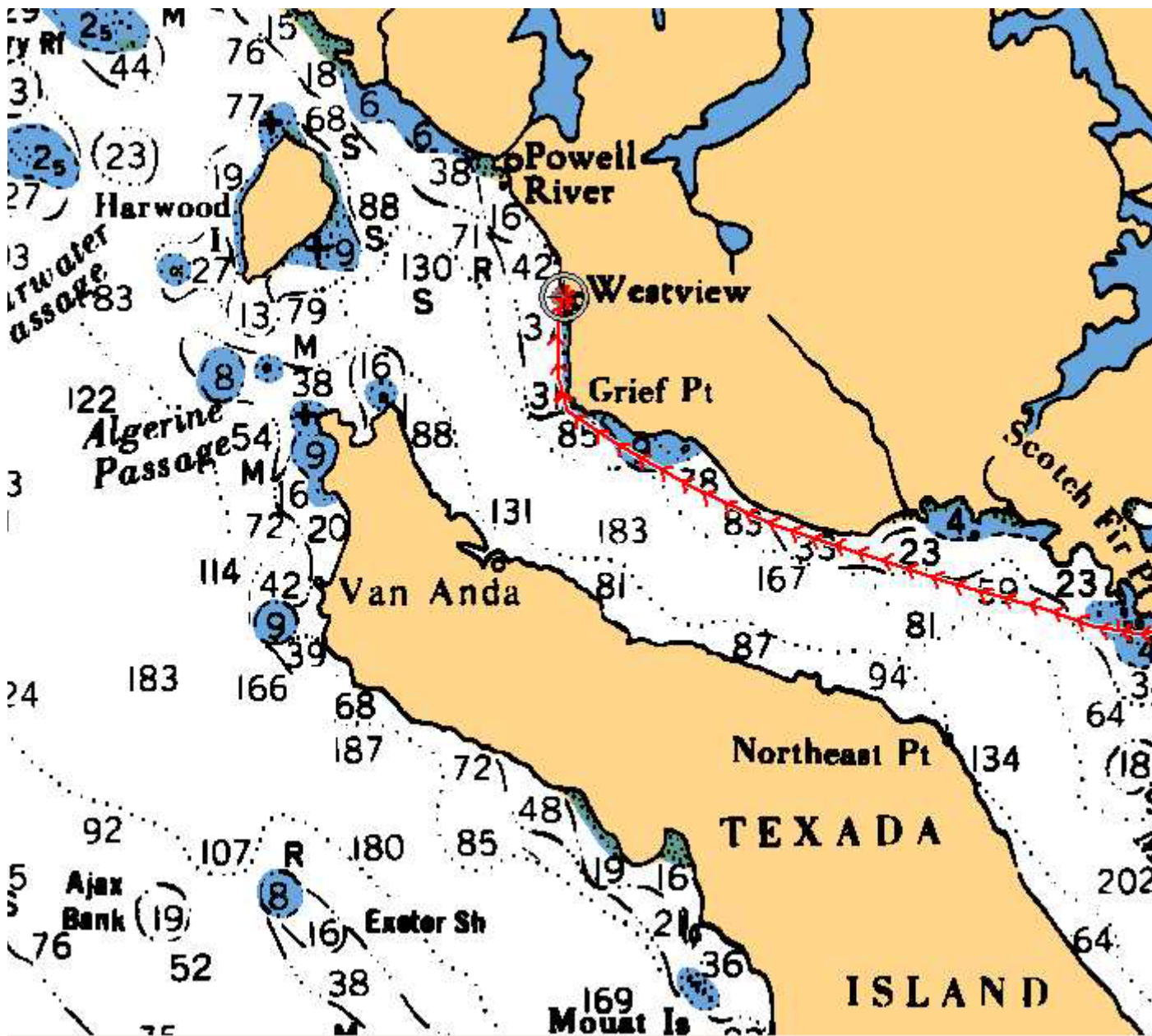


Day 11: 17.2 Nautical miles.



Woke up to the sound of the Queen Chilliwack firing up her engine right across the dock from me. Wow ... what a rattle! Apparently she's the oldest ship in the BC Ferries fleet.



Off at 8, motoring again in a dead calm, following 'Dragon Tale' all the way to Powell River, and docking at 11:30 AM. We loaded fuel and water and hiked up to the shopping plaza for provisions, mostly fresh fruit and veggies. Not much of a "happening" day, just very hot, so did a lot of relaxing on the boat.

As it was Sunday the library was closed, so I had no email access ... and Monday was a holiday ... 🙄

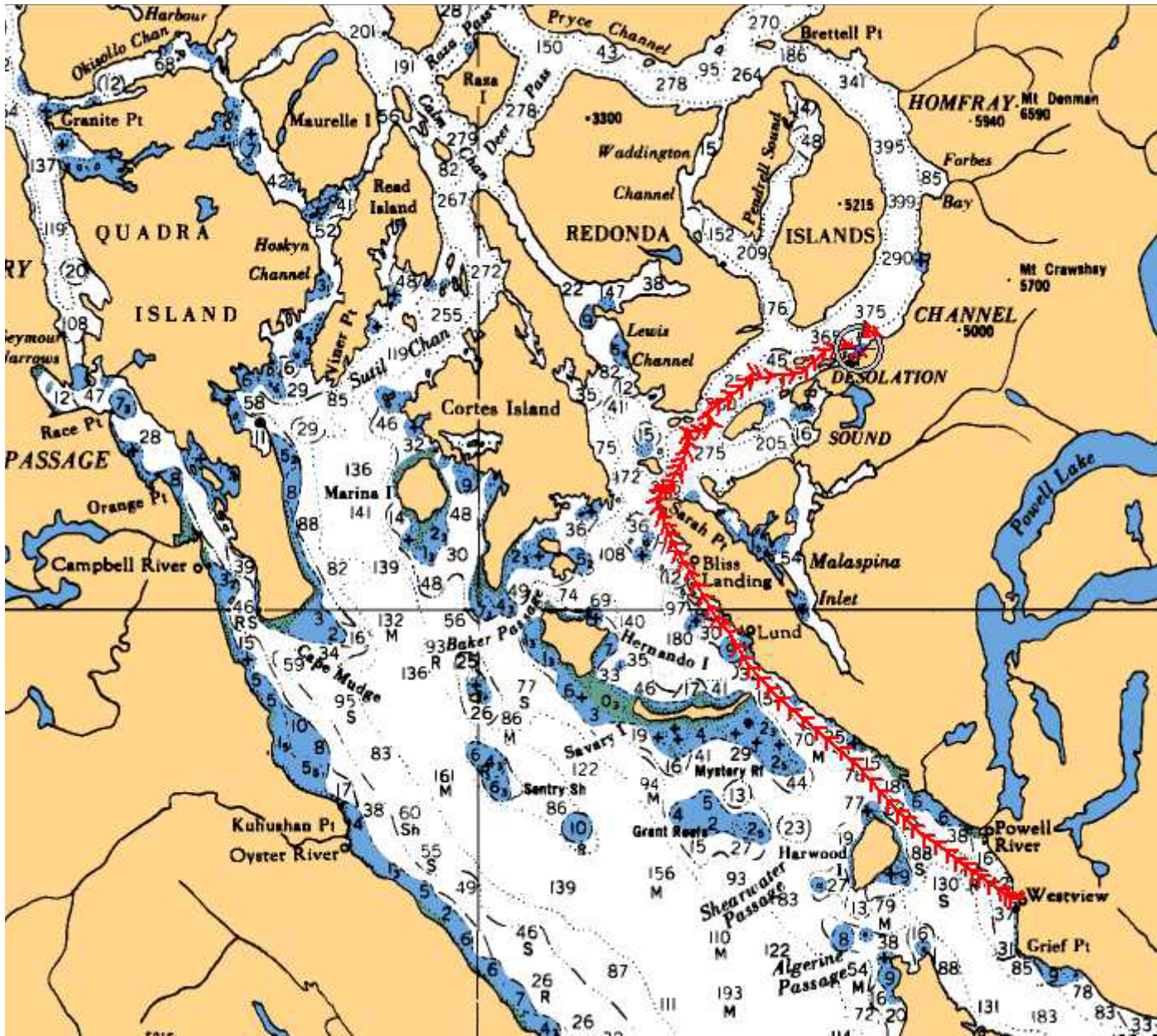
Photo: Passing Grief Point, south of Westview.



Photo: Octopus hanging from stern of fishing boat.



Day 12: 29.6 Nautical miles.



Last night Ken told me about a bakery just up the street that bakes seven days a week and opens at 7 AM. So we paid them a visit and I bought a fresh warm twelve-grain loaf .... should have bought two! On the way back to the dock I spotted an old wooden boat (a 30' Knarr, I believe) that had been cut lengthwise in half and mounted on a retaining wall as a piece of art.



She has (had) such beautiful lines, much like my favorite, the Folkboat, but with a canoe stern. It was neat to see, but in a way sad that she had met such a strange demise. At least her full lines can be appreciated by all. I wonder about her history ...





'Sin Tacha' was underway at 8 under cloudy skies and blustery tail winds. 'Dragon Tales' had left a bit earlier and remained a dot on the horizon for most of the day. I flew my new nylon drifter on one side, with the main on the other, and was up to seven knots at times, but could not catch the 'Dragon'.

It rained quite a bit so I decked out in my best yellow foul weather gear. (note to file: time for new foul weather gear!!!) Flying past Lund I spotted the Brit boat that was at Princess Louisa Inlet earlier.

As things were starting to get a little squirrely in such a narrow area, I dropped the big drifter and used the small jib to run up narrow Thulin Passage, between the mainland and the Copeland Islands. At the top end of Malaspina Peninsula I rounded Sarah Point and turned Northeast into Desolation Sound. It was a gusty and brisk beat up the Sound, with lots of rain squalls and winds from all directions. Ken had told me about a good

anchorage and I'd marked it on the chart the night before. Well, digitally marked it on a digital chart .... 🤖

The last couple of miles to the anchorage was a twisty passage through reefs and small islands, so down came all sail and the motor took over. It was a good thing too, as it got really gusty, with winds ripping down from some of the nearby tall mountains.



Into Laura Cove at last, and there was the familiar profile of 'Dragon Tales', already peacefully at anchor. The only other boat in the cove was just leaving, so I dropped the hook where they had been. Ken and I motored around the adjoining coves in his little 'deflateable', getting soaked again when caught by yet another rain shower.

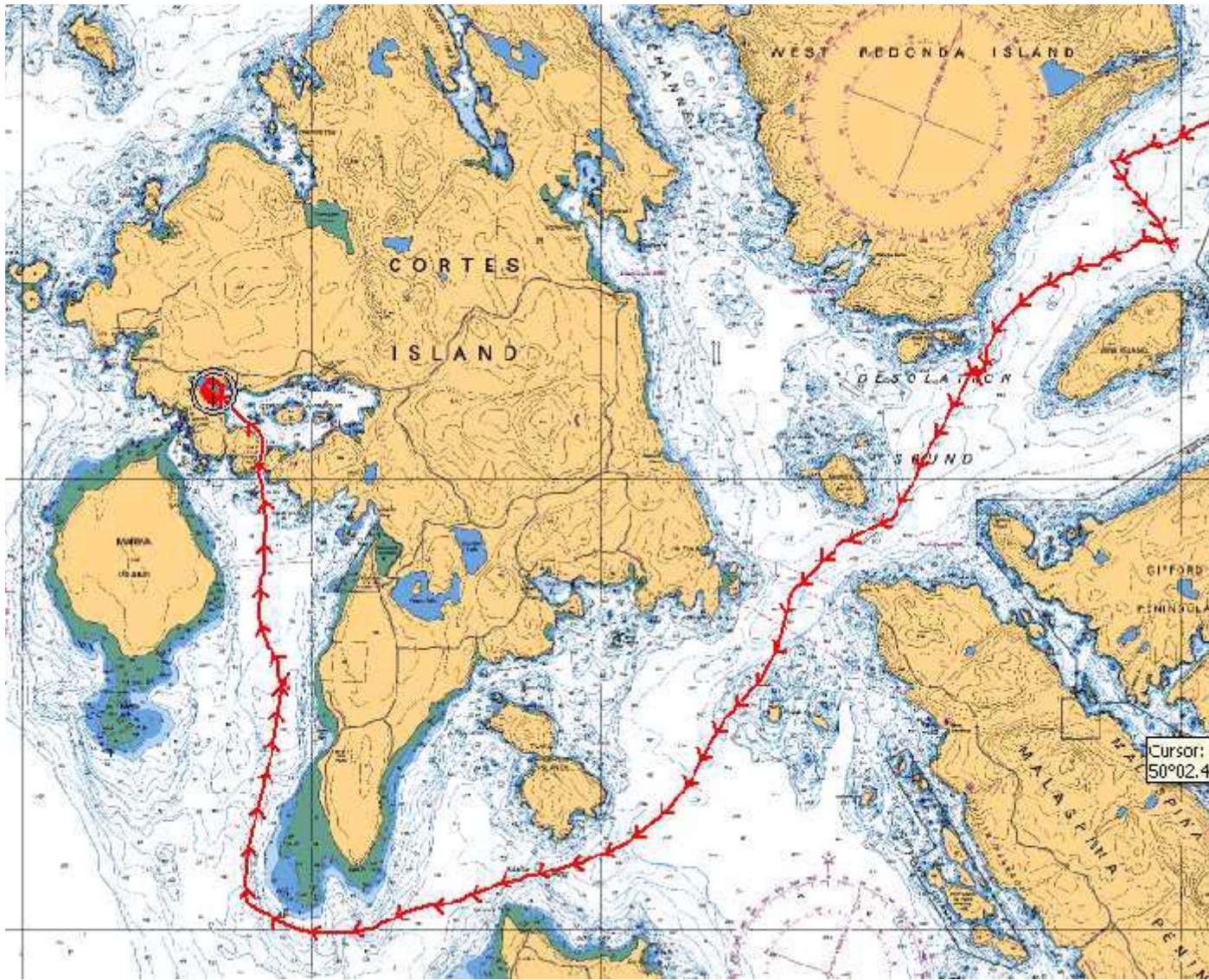
After supper a little shore exploring was in order 🤖





All in all it was a great sailing day, even with the rain. As it was quite warm, being wet was not an issue. I just hope we get some sun tomorrow to dry everything out!

Day 13: 26.3 Nautical miles.



Up this morning, with a mixed bag of weather. After perusing the charts last night I'd decided to turn south once more for the journey toward home. 'Dragon Tales' is staying one more day then heading north to the Broughton Islands (near Port McNeil), so I bid Ken and Betsy 'Goodbye', with the promise of getting together again in Victoria this fall. With characteristic generosity Ken checked to make sure I had fuel, water, and food, offering to "top-up" any areas that were lacking. Fortunately there were none, as we both had re-provisioned just two days before in Powell River.

My plan was to visit Mittlenach Island, a barren rock that has a decent anchorage and some interesting bird life. However, the wind was right on the nose and steadily strengthening to a point where it was getting downright

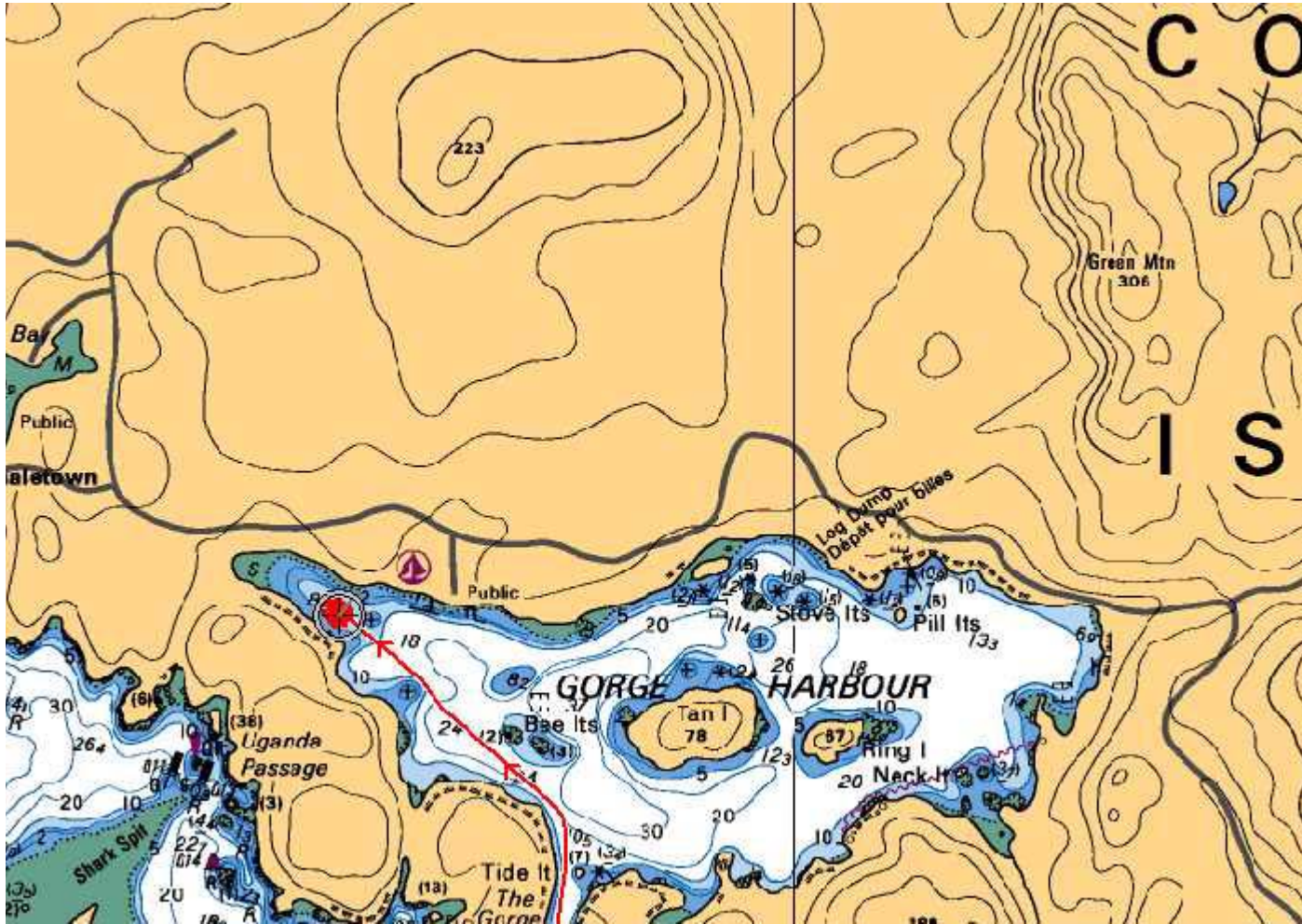
uncomfortable to go to windward, a point of sail I generally enjoy. Also, wave heights were increasing rapidly and every third or fourth one would just about bring the boat to a halt. Turning off the wind a bit and dropping the main (running under jib only) proved to be a lot more comfortable and a heck of a lot faster. The GPS showed nine knots several times as 'Sin Tacha' surfed down the sides of the waves.



The chart showed Gorge Harbour to be only a couple of hours away in the direction I was going (would you believe, north again!) so the choice was made.

Gorge Harbour is a completely land-locked inland sea, except for a narrow entrance, surrounded by hills. It lies on the west side of Cortez Island and is probably one of the best anchorage's in the area. Once I got through the entrance there wasn't enough wind to sail, even slowly, so I motored to the

west end of the harbour and dropped the hook in 30 feet of dead calm water. What a relief!

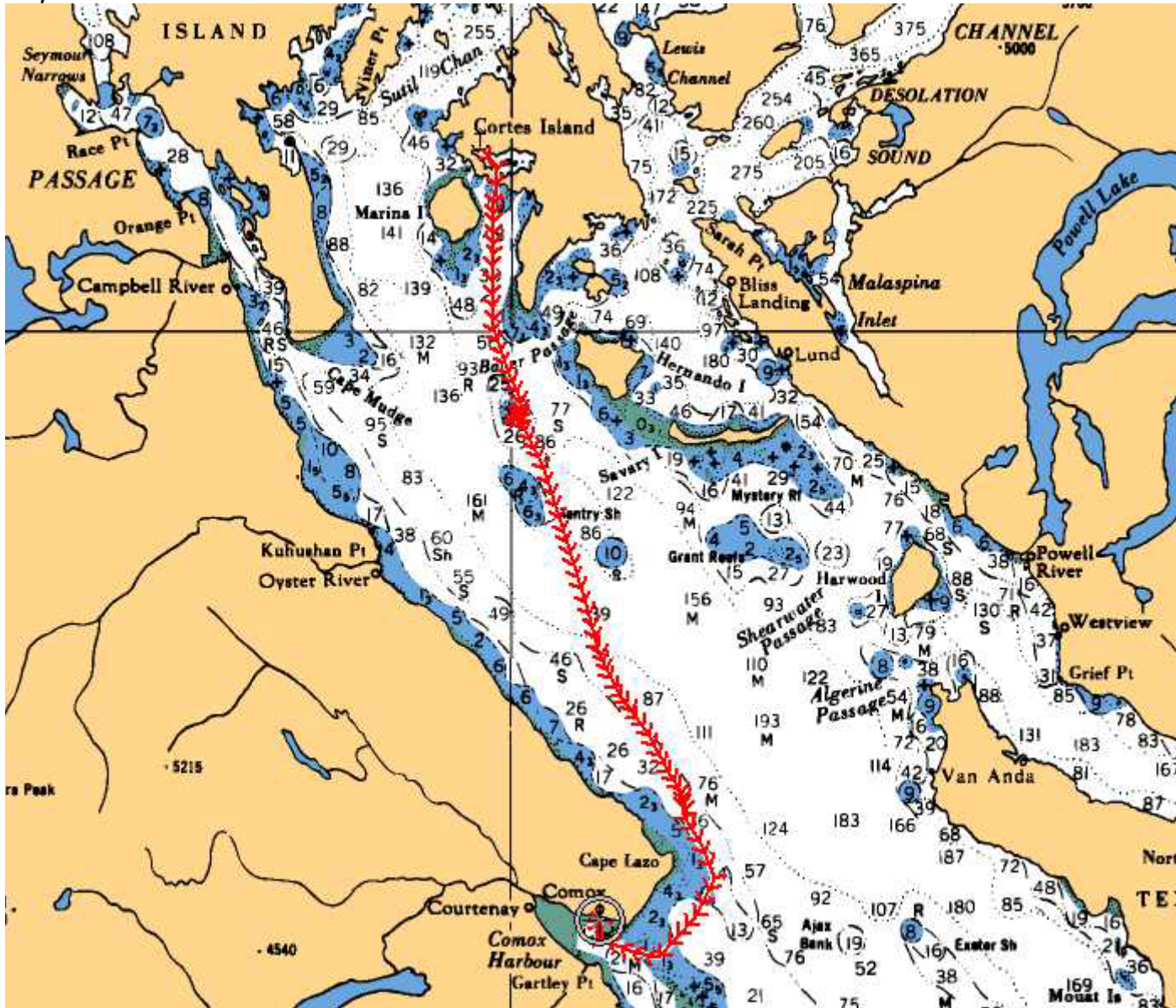


I find anchoring with my new chain rode a lot more secure affair. In 30 feet of water I'll let out about 80 feet of chain that would probably hold the boat even if there was no anchor on the end! The only catch is hauling it up again in the morning ... it's quite a grunt ... I think I see an anchor windlass on my 'wish' list 😊

There's a marina in the harbour, with a store (spelt sourdough bread!) showers, and a Laundromat. I rowed ashore and had a shower. Four minutes of nice hot water for a Looney ... such a bargain 😊

The forecast for tomorrow sounds a lot better, with wind from the north instead of the south. I'd like to make Mittlenach Island for lunch and continue south from there. We'll see what the morrow brings ... so far the forecasts have been very reliable.

Day 14: 33 Nautical miles.



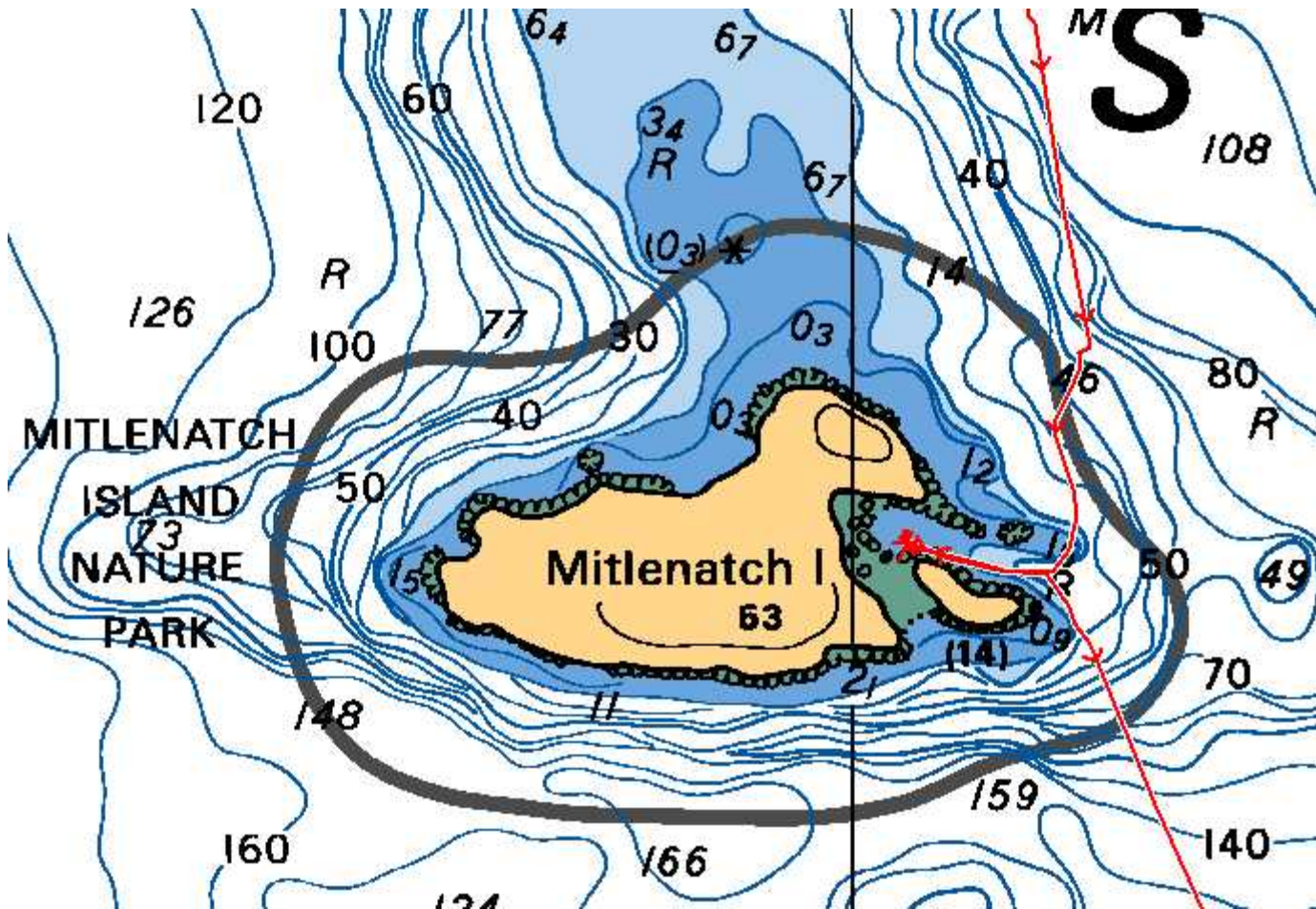
After an absolutely peaceful night, and a hot 'mush' breakfast, got underway at 9 AM and motored out of the harbour, raising both jib sails once out into the channel. There was a nice northerly wind, a complete switch from yesterday's strong southerly. What a treat to run with a sail poled out on each side, boat level, with only a gentle side-to-side rocking motion on a calm ocean.



Continued like this all the way down to Mittlenach Island, a bare slab of rock with some areas of brush, and covered with sea birds.



The guide book says it lies in the rain shadow of Vancouver Island, and as a result is quite dry, even supporting several types of cactus!



There is a beach on the north side, but it was too exposed to the north wind, so I sailed around to the tiny cove on the southeast side, dropped sails, and carefully motored in, watched by several sea lions basking on the rocks. There is a small caretaker's hut and some information boards on shore. The tide was low so the cove was very small. I dropped hook in six feet of water with only about 30 feet clearance from the surrounding shores. As the tide was still dropping and the wind would have blown Sin Tacha right out the channel if the anchor dragged, I decided to stay aboard and enjoy the wildlife, while eating an early lunch.



After eating and resting I pulled anchor and was glad I hadn't left the boat unattended, as it was completely fouled with sea grass and not holding at all. Back out on the Straight the wind had picked up a bit, so I flew both jibs again and left the main furled. The boat was really well balanced, the Auto Pilot hardly working at all ... and neither did I 😊

Passing Cape Lazo, near Comox, the wind died, so I motored the final hour into Comox Harbour, crossing the well marked but shallow river bar with caution. In the last few days I'd heard several calls on the VHF radio from mariners asking for assistance after running aground in that very area!

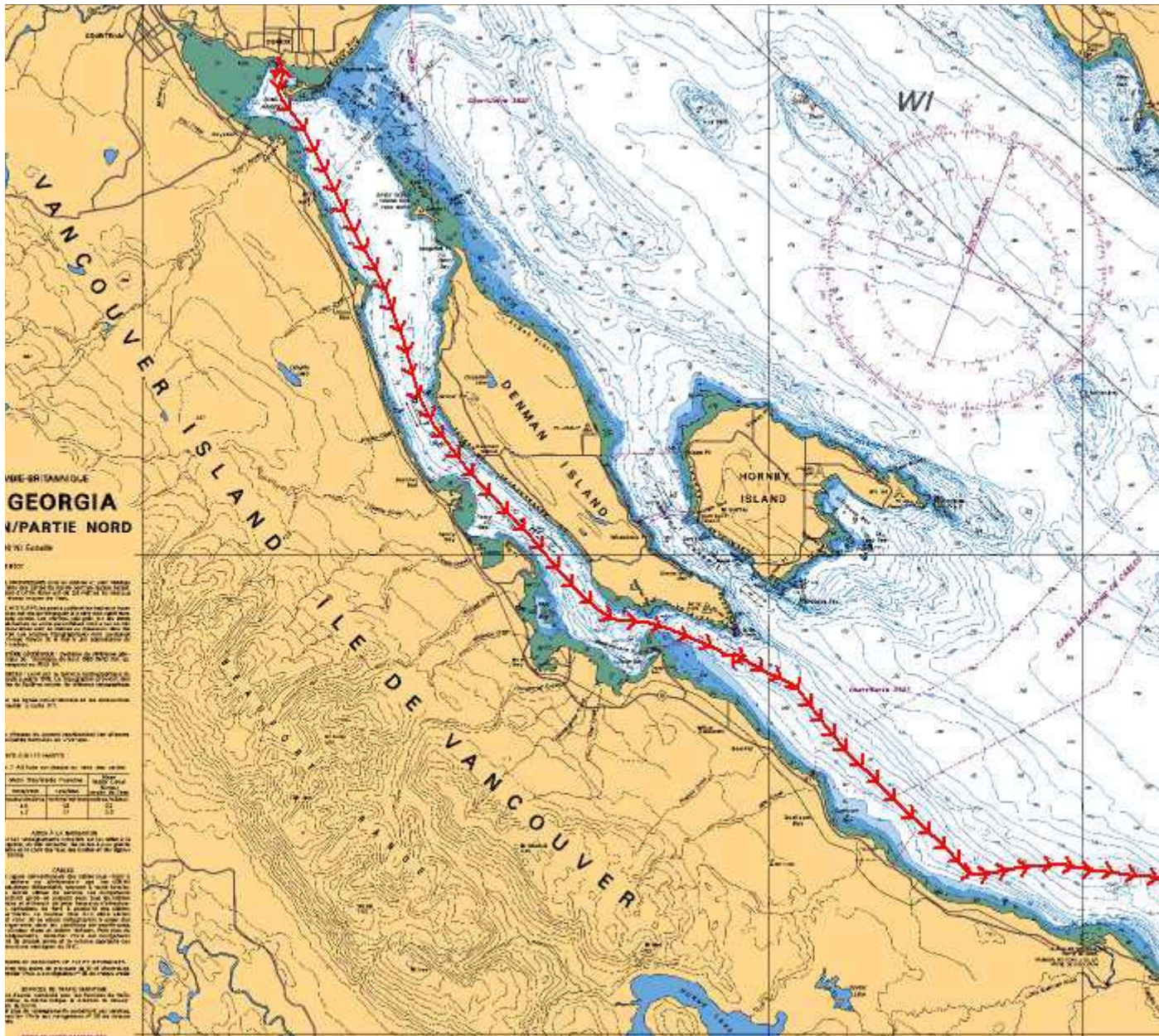


I tied up at Comox Public Dock, a very well kept marina, with great new facilities for people and boats. Earlier I had called an old friend who lives in Comox, but there had been no answer. He later returned my call and arranged to come down to the boat. A quick trip to the local shopping center and I was ready to entertain. Bill arrived and we had a good long "catch up" talk. Later his wife, Debbie, arrived with son, daughter-in-law, daughter and grand-daughter! The Vega has a large cockpit ... luckily ... we all fit, and chatted until the sun went down.

Later I explored the marina a bit. There are two tidal grids for 'beaching' ones boat to do maintenance. Bottom cleaning/painting is frowned on, but allowed if extreme care is taken to prevent contamination of the marine environment. There was a CT 41 on one of the grids, waiting for low tide and a new coat of bottom paint. A beautiful boat, as Rod well knows 😊



Day 15: 32.5 Nautical miles.



Up 'early' at 7 and tested the nice new showers at the head of the ramp. The weather forecast was a bit ominous, but at least it was supposed to be blowing in the right direction. I ended up motoring all the way south between Denman Island and Vancouver Island until I got to the south end of Denman, by the lighthouse on Chrome Island.



Along the way a fishing boat passed, with all spare hands working at the stern, cleaning the prawn catch in their rain pants, red, yellow, and green!



After that the sailing was brisk with jib and main poled out on either side, and doing about six knots all the way to French Creek, arriving at 2 PM. The waves were steep and the wind had risen more, as I did a less than perfect maneuver getting into the marina. No matter, as no paint was lost and the only injury was to my pride as I muffed the docking job twice, witnessed by an audience of Lasquiti Island ferry passengers.

A visit with friends the Holmquists, of 'Canadian Electric Vehicles' fame, consumed the rest of the day in a most pleasant fashion. Randy's facilities have grown considerably, and sales are up, partly due to fuel cost increases. One of his 'current' projects is converting a Scion to electric for a customer, using all the latest and best technology. (I have a gas Scion).





He also manufactures a small utility truck, which sells as fast as he can turn them out. This one is a catering vehicle.



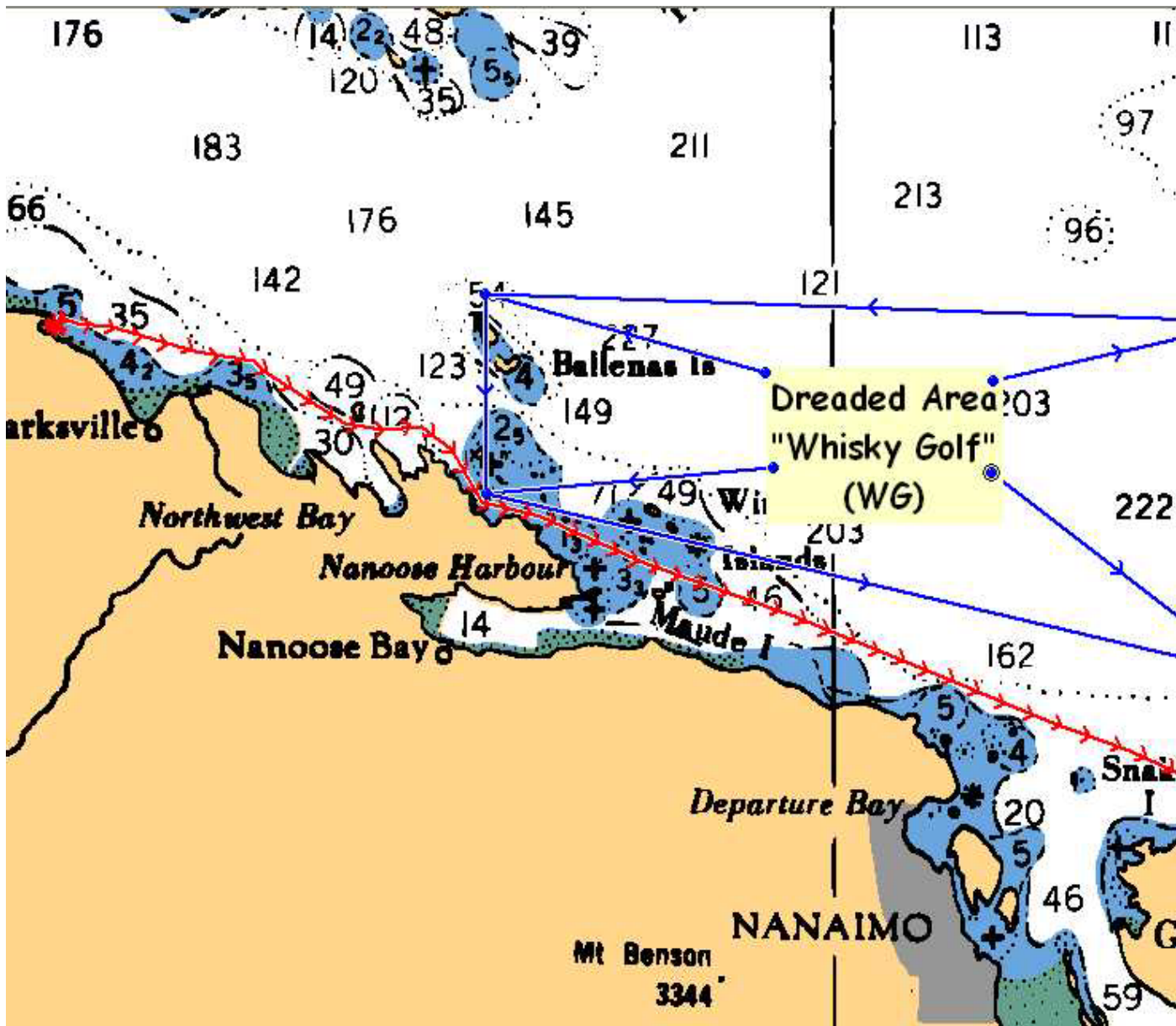


Buddy, the shop cat, is in charge of mouse control 🐱



After the shop tour I was wined and dined by my gracious hosts, then returned to the boat, arriving back at 10:30 PM, and fell into bed with the sounds of a northerly gale shaking the mast and whistling through the rigging. So nice to be tied to a dock in those conditions!

Day 16: 30 Nautical miles.



I got up late (7:30), had breakfast, and fiddled around for a while, as the weather report sounded a bit threatening. Not sure whether to stay at French Creek another day to see if it got better, at 9:30 I finally decided to get off my duff, poke my nose out, and see what was actually going on.

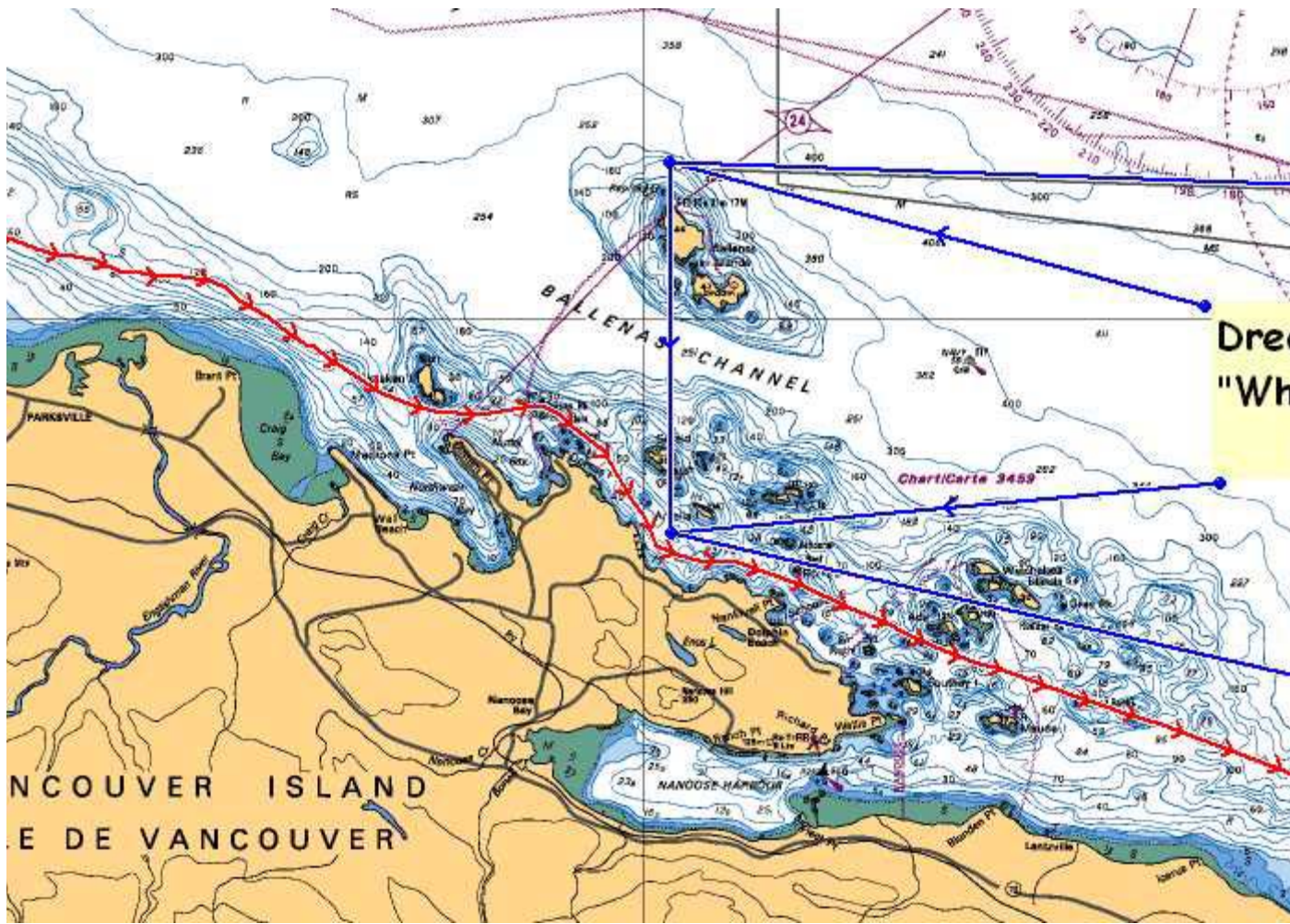
Once outside the protective breakwater the waves were marching past, about four feet high and close together, but there was hardly any wind. Motoring along, I kept running into giant patches of the same stringy seaweed that had fouled the propeller in Princess Louisa Inlet. Using a tip from Bill Rhodes (Comox), whenever I ran through some weed and the prop

started vibrating, I quickly reversed it momentarily to throw the weed off. It seemed to work .... sort of ....

A little further down the coast, around Parksville, the wind returned and I raised the small jib, leaving the main on the boom. The waves were so steep it was hard to keep on course, so hand-steering was the order for the rest of the day. These were the largest waves I've been in to date, and was glad not to have been beating into them, and the wind, like the boat in the picture below.



Ran all the way down to Nanaimo like an express train, at times hitting eight knots. Military practice area "WG" was closed, so a route close to the coast was taken to avoid getting into trouble with a Zodiac full of military personnel.

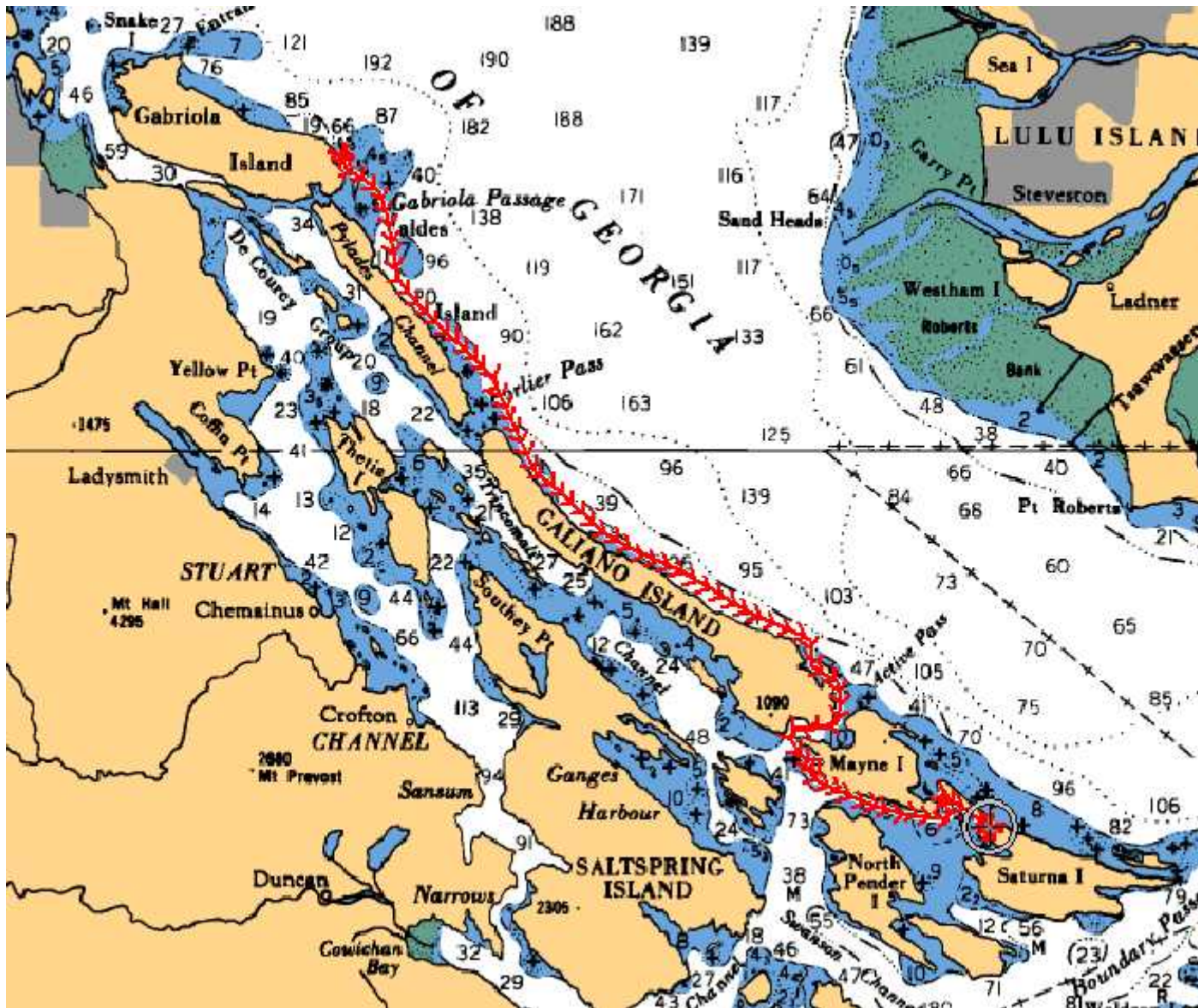


The run carried on down the outside of Gabriola Island, until the narrow channel into Silva Bay, where I anchored for the night. Going down the east side of Gabriola saved me from having wait for the tide, then transit dreaded Dodd Narrows, but it was a wild ride!



Being Friday night, Silva Bay was full of anchored boats, but there always seems to be room for one more 🤪 It remained calm through the night, and I slept like a log.

Day 17: 35.8 Nautical miles.



Leaving Silva Bay around 9 AM (after a very quiet night) I motored out into the Strait of Georgia to find the promised northerly winds had failed to appear. 'Putt-putt-putt' was the order of the day ... after yesterday's exhilarating sail, today was definitely a motor boat day.



It was an easy day of reading, fiddling, and eating while the little ship steered herself all the way down the east side of Valdez and Galiano Islands.



I took a loop behind *Gossip Island*, at *Active Pass*, and decided to transit the Pass as the tide was low and the current slack.





More motoring, with the only highlight spotting another Albin Vega moored in Village Bay on Main Island. She was called "Allie", and I have not seen her around before. I was quite surprised to have identified her as a Vega from about two miles away ... they certainly have a distinctive profile.



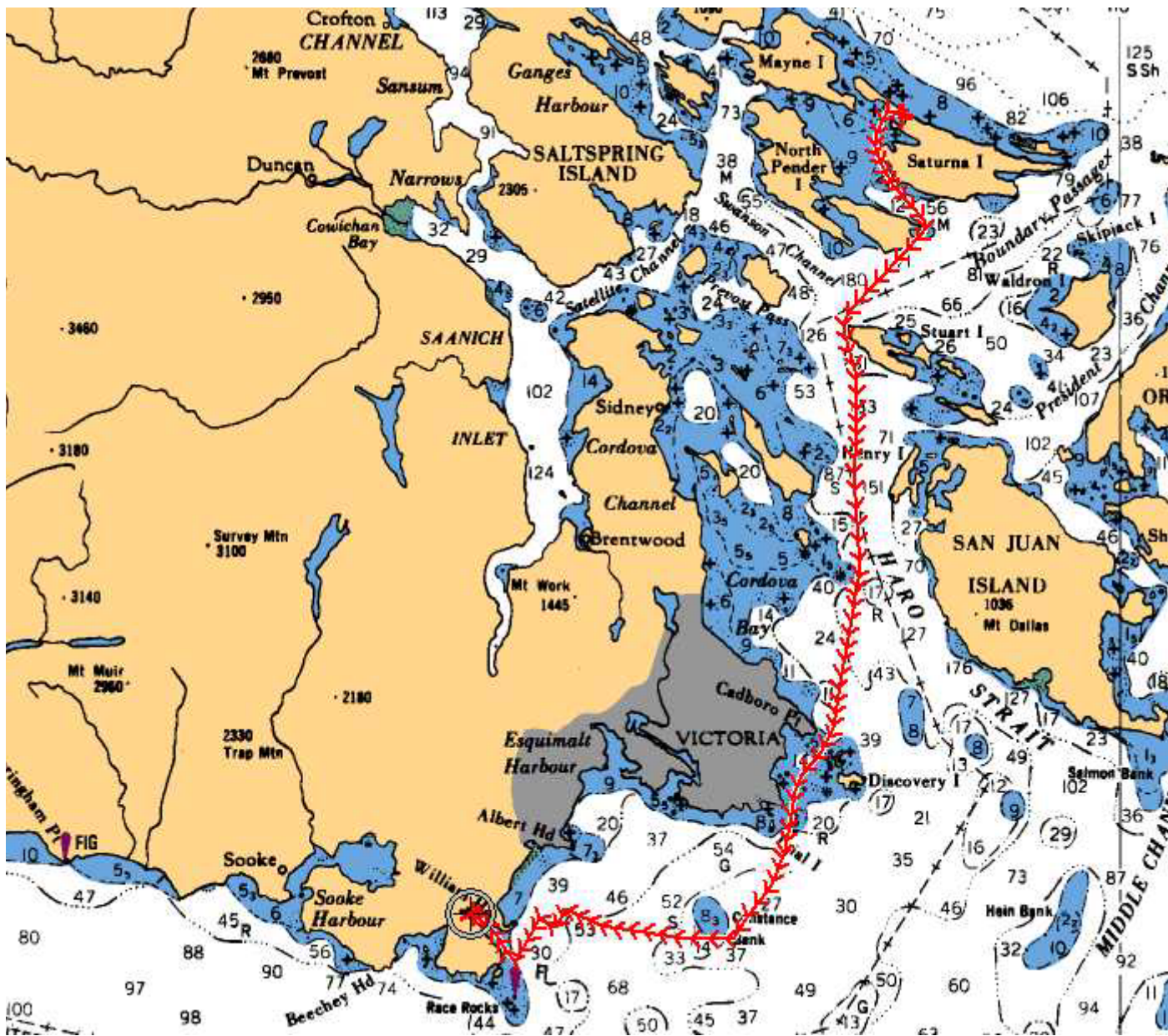
Onward down Navy Channel on the south side of Mayne Island, this time remembering to skirt Conconi Reef. On checking out Winter Cove, near the wreck of the Robertson II, I decided to overnight there. Rowing ashore and walking the Park trails, and looking at the rapids at Boat Passage took up the rest of the afternoon.



Supper in the cockpit, with a good book and a glass of wine topped off another great day on the water.



Last Day 18: 43.7 Nautical miles.



I usually try to get completely ready before getting underway, you know: wash, shave, breakfast, etc. But today it was get dressed and weigh anchor, as there was a very favorable current to catch down Haro Strait. The rest of the chores were done while underway.

As usual with early starts there was no wind, so I motored all the way to Haro Strait where there was a fair breeze and a great current pushing my speed to a high of 10 knots! Since I bumped a log yesterday the knotmeter has 'knot' been working, so who knows how fast I was actually traveling through the water. One more little job to attend to when I get home.

Passing Tern Point, on Stewart Island, I noticed the white cliffs there .... and it's not chalk 😊



Rounding Trial Island and heading out into Juan de Fuca Strait might have been a replay of last year's homeward bound voyage. The seas were short and high, with enough of a south-wester blowing to require a double reefed main. Even then, Sin Tacha managed to plow her nose right under a couple of times, revealing another little job that needs doing: install a new seal around the forward hatch. The poor old dinghy, upside down on the foredeck, managed to stay aboard for both dunkings. Again, it was quite a ride.

Closer to Pedder Bay the last of this year's Swiftsure Yacht Race participants were running toward Victoria under a colourful array of spinnakers. Pedder Bay gave her usual welcome of gusty winds from all directions. I struggled with a fouled jib sheet while the wind held us over with the lee rail under, but managed to free it before things got

serious. There was no time for picture taking, so you'll just have to take my word for it.

It's good to be home again, especially now the three loads of laundry are put away, and I've got a good home-cooked meal under my belt 😊

Summary:

Days: 18

Nautical miles travelled: 488

Hours sailing: 51

Hours motoring: 53