



Cruising the Sunshine Coast of Canada with the ICOYC

By Richard Lawson

As we all know, September each year heralds the beginning of the Sailing Season down under. However 2018 year was different for 13 Squadron Members who, together with four crew from the SASC, embarked on the International Council of Yacht Clubs (ICOYC) latest cruise offering out of Royal Vancouver Yacht Club (RVYC), British Columbia.

This event was quite an undertaking for Seattle Yacht Club (SYC) and RVYC who were the co-hosts for this latest version of the wonderful ICOYC Cruises. These cruises occur on a regular basis, at various world cruising venues and are available to all our Club Members. The RSY is an original founding member of the ICOYC, back in 2003, when Commodore Rex Harrison guided our contribution to the formation of the organisation.

This year's cruise departed on 4 September following a highly successful and noisy welcome night at RVYC's Jericho Harbour headquarters. This is a beautiful and outstanding facility which features a 300 berth marina behind a very substantial breakwater, a large hardstand area, extensive workshops with all kind of marine services and a very traditional three story clubhouse.

The planned route for the cruise was ambitious. We were to travel about 40nm north up the Georgia Straights (inside Vancouver Is), turn to NE and travel another 60+ nm through the extensive fjord system which extends into mainland British Columbia, pass through the Malibu Rapids (at slack water) and then another six nm along Princess Louisa Inlet till we could go no further, where we moored in the National Park at the Chatterbox Falls! This was quite an undertaking for eight motorboats and 17 yachts, varying from 30 to 55 feet, with nearly 100 crewmen. We were now deep in genuine wilderness country, completely shut off from our normal lives.

The weather throughout was almost perfect, with some rain which apparently is typical of the area and actually added to the overall experience of this marvellous adventure. We had little wind throughout, some foul currents to deal with over long distances, but the scenery was simply FABULOUS!

Around each bend or headland was a full WOW factor! Plus, we had to be very aware to avoid copious quantities of drifting logs on all waterways, as British Columbia is one of the world's largest timber suppliers.

Apart from the outstanding destination of Chatterbox Falls and Princess Louisa Inlet, the most impressive thing for the Aussies was the various outstations that both SYC and RVYC have spread throughout these extensive cruising grounds. Although each venue is relatively small, they are beautifully maintained, have their own small marinas, and are most inviting. In Garden Bay, Pender Harbour, each outstation had hot showers, washing machines and dryers, BBQs and a pleasant place to relax. These facilities were really appreciated by all of us and were a real eye opener for this average Club Member.



The return voyage from Princess Louisa Inlet, via the Malibu Rapids, was just as enchanting and enjoyable as the outward passage, with many new anchorages to experience. Our penultimate evening was spent in Snug Cove on Bowen Island which is only a short 10nm run from Vancouver. Here we were entertained ashore at the local pub where a salmon BBQ was served to the many hungry yachtsmen, whilst Canadian Geese were feeding off the green lawn in front of the pub as they begin their migration south for the winter.

The final evening was a very pleasant sit-down meal at the RVYC Jericho Harbour clubhouse, where we were able to present RSYC burgees to each of the hosting yacht clubs as a token of our appreciation for this very successful Cruise. As the night drew to an end, it was announced that the next ICOYC International Cruise would be hosted by Royal Southern Yacht Club, from the Hamble River, UK, at the end of the summer in 2020. This will be highly anticipated by the 13 Squadron participants.