CHAPTER 3

LOG STORAGE IN GOLIATH BAY

August 2009 a little history

We spend the day looking for signs of the most recent industrial use of Goliath Bay. As mentioned in chapter 1 Goliath Bay is described in an earlier sailing instruction book as the site of an industrial complex. And so it was for years, first the logging up behind the ridge which finished by the 1940s.

By 1982 Goliath Bay was again alive with the sounds of the logging industry. Not the felling of trees this time. No long lonely train whistles. Rather the sounds of tugs, a huge crane, and crew boats in and out, generators throbbing as Crown Zellerbach orchestrated the creation of a huge marshalling pond for the sorting, scaling, bundling and shipping of logs brought here from all over the West Coast.

Logs were towed in booms by tugs from such places as Sandspit on the Queen Charlotte Island's as it was called then (now Haida Gwaii), from Eastern Vancouver Island centres such as Beaver Cove, from small logging camps up the inlets and dotted through the channels; from Fanny Bay, Loughborough Inlet, Homathko River at the head of Bute Inlet; from Salmon Inlet and Narrows Inlet, from West Sonora Island, from camps in the Broughton Archipelago.

In 2009 we were anchored in Goliath Bay on the Liza Jane when another boat anchored nearby. On it was the man who was the first employee at the new marshalling pond and the last to leave. He told us that he had read about Crown Zellerbach's plans for Goliath Bay. The article said that they were interviewing in Sechelt.

At the time he was a certified pipe fitter in his late twenties searching for what to do next. He had worked all over the province on pipe lines and pulp mills. Pipe fitting was a great job and he loved it, but it meant that he was away most of the year. A few years earlier he had put his money into buying acreage in the Pender Harbour area. Pender Harbour and the Sunshine Coast were pretty attractive. If he had a job at Goliath Bay he could commute daily by boat to Goliath Bay from Egmont, a small hamlet slightly west of the Sechelt Rapids and an easy drive from Pender Harbour. Life would settle down a bit. He could live on his land.

At the interview they asked him if he could weld. "Well," he said, "as a pipe fitter I work partners with a welder every day. I cut the pipe: the welder welds. Yes, I can weld."

Two weeks later he got a call. You're hired as a welder. You start Monday morning. He spent the weekend with a union welder friend learning everything he could, refreshing himself on as many of the finer points of welding pipe as it was possible to do in three days.

Monday morning he arrived to find that he was employee number one. The company had wasted no time. There, ready for him, was a barge-load of acetylene tanks, welders and big pipe. All ready for him to start right in. They had the plans showing what all this was supposed to look like when it was finished. The big pipe was to form the structural supports for repair shops, offices and all the buildings needed, some of which would be built out over the water.

He looked around for the supervisor or engineer in charge of seeing that the plans were followed. There being nobody of those descriptions around, he realized that not only was he the senior welder on this huge job, but also, apparently, the building supervisor. He took a good look at the plans, the materials, the equipment on the barge and started in.

To get the government to issue them a lease for the use of Goliath Bay for a marshalling ground the company, Crown Zellerbach, as it was then called (Crown Forest Products as its new owners called it) had agreed to stiff terms. These included running a clean operation above and below waterline, also, cleaning up after they left the site so that it was as it had been before their arrival.

In the marshalling ground logs were sorted, scaled, bundled and sent to the appropriate mills. All those logs created a huge amount of debris which had to be dealt with; tons of bark, broken logs and the inevitable damaged boom logs lacy with teredo worm holes.

The first plan for dealing with the refuse was to build a burner and a moving chain that would transfer the debris from the water to the burner. Once built it worked after a fashion but it wasn't good enough. The next idea, one that did work, was to build a chipper and chip the debris and sell it to pulp mills as fuel for their boilers.

The lacy boom logs were a very real concern. Boom logs are critical to any log storage system. The boom logs are joined together with cable and attached to buoys. The problem is that boom logs have to be high quality logs, therefore are expensive. They are more subject to teredo damage than other logs as they are in the water much longer, thus needing to be replaced when teredos eat into them[1]. Many ways of protecting them from teredo damage were tried.

The test that best illustrates the tenacity of the teredos is the one that had crews bundling teredo infested boom logs, weighting them with the huge weights necessary to hold them at depths of 500 plus feet under the sea. After a lengthy period underwater these bundles were hauled up again. The logs were then sent to the University of British Columbia for analysis to see what the

1 Toredo Navalis aka naval shipworm are actually bi-valves, and considered a delicacy in some cultures. They are long red, worm like creatures who have at their head two calcareous plates which they use to rasp wood found in salt water. They live completely encased in long tubes within wood that is in the sea such as ships, piers, logs.

pressures at those depths had done to the teredos. The report came back. Nothing. The teredos were unaffected by the depths.

Ultimately the teredo became a major reason why the Goliath Bay marshalling grounds were moved out of Goliath Bay into the fresh water of the Fraser River. Teredos can stand pressure at depths, but they can't stand fresh water. But that move was in the future.

One day after the crew boat dropped him at Goliath Bay our informer was shown to a 1950s crane mounted on a barge and standing about forty feet above it. Big brake pedals controlled the huge brake drums. No one knew how to operate it. So he got on board and began trying out different lifts till he got the hang of it. Out of necessity he became a crane operator. That crane was used by him and others to lift huge generators up the side of the hill to nestle in behind the offices and shops already built.

The crane lifted loaded cement trucks to various levels around the lease to put in the tons and tons of cement that were needed and of which there is virtually no remnant left. When the gas and oil storage tanks arrived those too were lifted. That big old crane plus welding was used to build the burner and later the chipper.

The crane also helped solve one immediate problem-the problem of keeping the buoys in place during winter storms. Although Goliath Bay is relatively calm during the summer, come winter high speed winds periodically rage through the Bay. These are outflow winds from the very long reaches of Jervis Inlet north of it, winds that are funnelled out of the interior colder region back of the Coastal Mountains which drive down Jervis Inlet, swooping into Goliath as they pass out to Georgia Strait.

The buoys themselves were railway tanker cars welded shut. Goliath Bay is deep. At the outskirts of the marshalling grounds where the buoys were to be anchored the water is about 150 meters (500 feet) deep. The problem is that the depth then rapidly drops off to the formidable depths of Jervis. Anything that starts rolling comes to rest at 658 metres (2,138 feet).
To anchor the buoys they needed big cement blocks. Each of these cement anchor blocks weighed 50 tons. Joining the anchor blocks to the tanker car buoys was chain, the heaviest chain available which weighed 60 to 70 pounds per link.

Some of the chain came from False Creek in Vancouver left over from the anti-submarine nets built during the Second World War to protect against submarine attack. The links of that chain had formed the frames for the mesh of the anti-submarine nets. But a lot of chain was needed to create a log pond in the great depths of Goliath Bay especially one that could withstand the fierce winter storms. Millions of dollars of log stock were stored in the Bay. No one wanted all those logs making their way out to the Strait of Georgia imperilling marine traffic and entailing millions of dollars in losses and in the cost of retrieval.

Fortunately second-hand chain was also available from the American Navy base in San Diego. Trucks were sent to San Diego to haul load after load up to Vancouver to be loaded on barges and shipped up to Goliath Bay. There the big old crane lifted chain off the barges it arrived on and looped it carefully into a pattern involving 600 feet of chain on a steel barge. Once the

pattern was in place the chain was welded to the deck of the barge to hold it in place with a weld that would break when the chain was dropped over-board with the fifty ton anchor going in first. The other end of the chain firmly attached to one of the tanker-car can buoys.

Dropping the anchor and the chain were done in one event. After the chain was loaded the great crane lifted the 50 Ton anchor carefully on to the end of the barge. The anchor had some of the great chain already attached to it. The chain attached to the anchor was then attached to the chain on the barge and another smaller trip chain was laced over the anchor. This procedure involved tremendous danger to those working on the barge and to the crane operator.

When all seemed ready, with all personnel standing clear, the trip chain was pulled tipping the anchor off the end of the barge into the Bay. As the anchor plunged the welds holding the chain to the deck of the barge snapped and 600 plus feet of chained 60-70 pound links began arcing off the barge. It was amazing to see that great chain as one loop after another peeled off the barge, arced up into the air plunged and disappeared into the water.

This procedure was used to install all the can-buoys. Linked between the tanker car can-buoys and connected by cables to the buoys were the boom logs. One of the problems was that the dropped anchors were landing in areas that had steep declines from that more moderate 150-plus meter (500 feet) depth. Sometimes the anchor began tumbling into the much greater depth pulling the tanker car with it until the tanker car broke free of its weld to the chain, soared back to the surface, shot free of the sea endangering all around before crashing back. Finally, bobbing restlessly amongst the logs.

When that happened the job of retrieving the 50 ton anchor and its 20 tons of chain had to begin. For that an unmanned submarine was sent below to locate the missing anchor and its chain, and to attach a heavy cable to the chain. Once that was done the old crane began reeling it all back in again, struggling to get it all up and reattached to a steel barge for another try at getting the anchor down and stopped at the 150 meter (500 foot) level.