

August 31, 2023 **The Delta Optimist A5**



SARAH STANTON PHOTO

A cause has not been determined yet and Delta Firefighters continue to investigate a house boat fire along River Road on Aug. 24.

## Houseboat destroyed in overnight blaze along Fraser River

**PHIL MELNYCHUK**  
PMelnychuk@delta-optimist.com

Delta firefighters doused an early-morning fire in a houseboat along River Road, Aug. 25.

According to Deputy Fire Chief Tim Ipsen, the fire broke out between 2:30 and 3 a.m., in the 4000-block of River Road. The cause of the fire hasn't yet been determined, but there were no injuries reported.

Ipsen said the fire started in a smaller boat then spread to the houseboat, which was destroyed by the blaze.

"The occupant was down the road, so nobody

was there," he said.

Firefighters were able to access the fire via the dock.

However, Mike Owen, who lives along the river, says there's a need for a shallow-draft fire boat along the Fraser River in Ladner.

He also suggests the fire department create a list of boat owners that could help out during an emergency.

He added that a burning boat that's adrift in the river could start a fire on Westham Island or in Ladner.

But Ipsen said Delta Fire and Emergency Services have no plans

for a water-borne fire-fighting vessel, although it is looking at sourcing a rescue boat.

"It's definitely not on our radar right now. More so, we're looking at more of a rescue-type boat but not a firefighting boat," he said.

He said the department keeps a contact list of agencies that could help with access to the water.

"We were lucky last night — almost no wind, calm waters and not really large, multi-storey structures. Ladner's waterfront is far too valuable to be left unthought of," said Owen.

## Fraser fishery patrol by David Acton

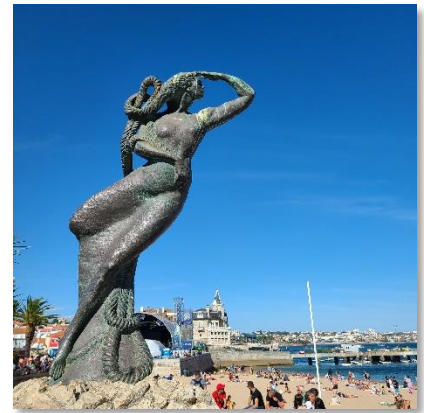
On August 26 the Fraser Lifeboat engaged in a fishery patrol for the native fishery taking place. We provided the number of vessels engaged in fishing and then traffic asked us to escort a deep-sea container ship from Steveston to Alex Fraser Bridge. Several vessels had to be asked to move as they were on the ranges.



## CLI Halcyon report by Ken Robertson

Ahoy CLI shipmates.

Greetings from Cascais, Portugal. We are at anchor in the harbour, awaiting a break in the strong winds that are sweeping south along the Portuguese coast. We are wanting to go north, against the prevailing weather, so we have to be patient. The Azores high pressure



zone is making its presence felt. Last night we had gusts to 36kn, and that was being in the lee of the shore. Gusts to 40kn are expected tonight. It will be "interesting" to see if they arrive.

Cascais is a beach resort, part of greater Lisbon. The royal family had a summer home here 150 years ago. Today it is very popular, with tourists from all over Europe, as well as from Vancouver, and other places.



Wendy and I met our friends Karl and Darya in Gibraltar, to assist them bringing their boat north along the west coast of Europe to the UK. Karl was very active in the yacht racing scene in Vancouver, and was part of Canada's entry into the America's Cup yacht race many years ago. Seven years ago, he asked me to help him sail across the Atlantic, which I did, starting in the Caribbean, and going via Bermuda, the Azores, Portugal and Spain, finally leaving him in Gibraltar. So, it was quite fitting that we rejoin him in Gibraltar.

After refueling we anchored in Spanish waters, just 500 meters north of Gibraltar, preparing for an early departure in the morning. We got under way at 6am, 2 hours after high water, which enabled us to ride the west going tide through the straits. Normally the current is east bound, to compensate for the high amount of evaporation in the Mediterranean. We rounded Tarifa, the southern point of Europe, then headed north, trying to stay within the 20-depth contour.

The local pod of orca whales has taken a liking to sailboat rudders, often chewing on them and breaking them off, which has caused three boats to sink. Although there are many theories, no





one knows why they have this desire to break rudders. Fortunately, there has not been any loss of life. The boat next to us in the marina had both her rudders destroyed. There are reports every week of yachts being disabled and having to be towed in to port. We hoped to avoid this. The only recommendation to avoid the orca is to stay within the 20m depth contour. Unfortunately, this added extra distance to the trip, but it was better than having to ask for a tow back to harbour. The 20m contour took us very close to the coast on several occasions, especially when rounding headlands like Cape Trafalgar, where we were within 30m of the beach, able to exchange waves with some people ashore. Cape Trafalgar was where a very important naval battle was fought nearly 220 years ago, which is still being celebrated today.



Our first stop was Cadiz, an ancient and important port, rich with history. We anchored at the head of the bay, right next to where a music festival was being held. The music and light show continued late into the night for the both nights we were there. However, it did not disturb us too much, as after walking the streets of Cadiz all day we all exhausted. One of the highlights was visiting the tavern where matadors would retire for a drink after a busy day in the arena. Karl and I had spent an intriguing evening there seven years before, trying to chat with them.

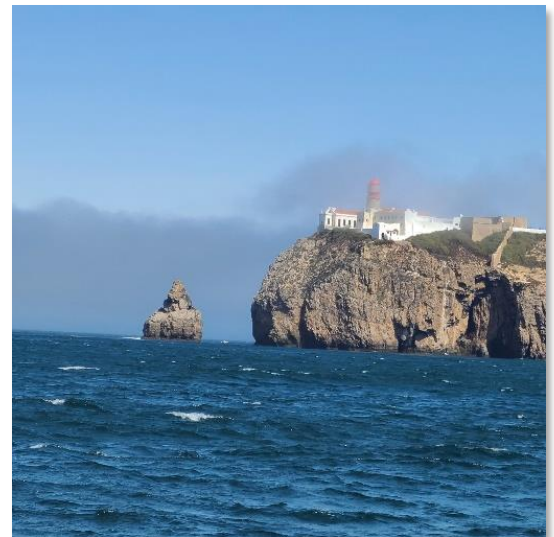
Our next stop was Mazagón, at the mouth of a river. This is where one of the ferry terminals for the crossing to the Canary Islands is located. For the one night we were there, many ferries came and went. The land is low lying here, providing a break from the seas, but not the wind, which would have blown right over the land, had there been any wind. Our whole trip so far had been motoring, as there was little or no wind the whole way. Now we have more than we need, and from the wrong direction.



The straight line from Mazagón to Faro is 50 miles. But that is across a wide bay, with deep water (approx. 90m), way too deep for our liking with the orca still lurking in the area. They normally follow the summer northerly tuna migration, but for reasons unknown they have remained in this area. We followed the 20m contour, which added extra but safe mileage to our trip. We didn't actually get to Faro, which is up a river. Instead we anchored inside the river mouth, getting sucked in on the 5kn flood tide. The range marks were appreciated getting through the narrow channel, which also had a bend halfway through. The interior of the harbour is a large tidal lagoon, with lots of shallow spots, but with good anchoring. We dropped our anchor off the town of Ilha do Farol, which is situated on a low sandy bank, with no roads. The only connection to the mainland is via ferry, of which there were many, of various sizes. There was also lots of small boats whizzing around the calm waters.

On arrival in Portimão, we anchored just inside the breakwater, with a lot of other transient yachts. The town is on the west side of the harbour, but we preferred the east side, the town of Ferragudo. This is a small village, with not much tourist activity. Getting out of the dingy at low tide was a challenge, as the sea wall is steep with a vertical ladder set into an indentation in the wall. However, the restaurant was excellent, with a rooftop dining area, which we enjoyed. We also enjoyed the excellent chandlery in the large shipyard. There were many boats of various sizes and uses hauled out here. Some looked as though they had been abandoned.

The temperatures we had enjoyed since leaving Gibraltar were in the low to middle 30's. That changed drastically when we rounded Cape Vincent, the western most point of Europe. We were immediately plunged into dense fog, with temperatures in the mid-teens. Visibility was down to 3m at times. Fortunately, there was little wind, so the swell, although coming at us from dead ahead, was low. With the aid of AIS, radar and a chart-plotter, we were able to navigate safely for the rest of the day and through the night. Keeping track of over 200 AIS targets was a challenge, although they were mostly further off shore. The ones of concern were smaller fish boats, and a few without AIS, but which showed up on radar. We tried to stay within the 20m contour, but occasionally drifted out of it. At daybreak we were off the mouth of the Lisbon harbour entrance, in clear air. We anchored close the beach off Cascais, where we have been for more than a week, and expect to stay for another 6 days. A weather change is anticipated then. There is a tall ships gathering in Lisbon this weekend (the last weekend of August). Three of them are anchored nearby; a three masted square rigger, a three masted Marconi rig, and a two masted square rig. It's nice to see the ships still being in service.





## Victoria Classic Boat Festival by John Horton

The ‘Delta Lifeboat’ departed her birth in Ladner at 1200 on Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023. With a crew of five her mission was once again to act as the medical guardship for the Victoria classic boat festival. Owing to a very low tide ‘Delta’ was forced to anchor of Harbour Park and wait 2 1/2 hours for sufficient water to proceed out of harbour. This delayed the ETA in Victoria by 2 1/2 hours.

With a crew of five in watch rotation, good training was conducted en route. Special emphasis was placed on developing a good “bridge team”, this is where close, clear communications are established between the plot, radar, lookouts, helmsman and officer of the watch. This really came together well and a great improvement was noted. A 2 1/2 foot northwest sea off Sand Heads kept the ship lively until able to turn south for Active Pass. Being away from familiar ground was more challenging for navigators, but all did well. As ‘Delta’ passed through Active Pass the wind dropped two flat calm and a beautiful sunset around supper time was a joy to witness. With darkness falling much earlier the final leg gave navigators the challenge of identifying lights and the use of all systems. Sailing into Victoria at 2100 gave a new problem with city lights obscure navigation marks and lights, however, on arrival in the inner harbour ‘Delta’ was assisted to her berth by longtime friend and wharfinger for the festival, Nick Banks. It’s always a joy to be greeted by his great big smiling face. ‘Delta’ was secured by 2130.



The festival officially opened to the public at 1200 on 1<sup>st</sup> September. In the forenoon ‘Delta’s’ crew cleaned ship and prepared for public boarding which continued through Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Donations, the sale of Christmas cards and other expressions of interest were gladly received. Visitors came from many parts of the world. The normal CLI reception on Saturday was cancelled with regret. With John and Maria Horton away in the U.R. invitations were not able to be sent out in time. Instead to CLI crew enjoyed a roast dinner and great companionship aboard. We refer to this as “necessary bonding”.

On Sunday morning ‘Delta’ participated in the festival Sail Past viewed by thousands. Throughout the festival ‘Delta’ acted as “medical guard ship” in case of any dockside accidents. Working in connection with St. John ambulance volunteers and partners. Only one accident was recorded when a gentleman fell into the

harbour. Badly skinning himself. St. John and CLI member Ron Van der Zwan attended giving required first aid.

The transit back to Delta was conducted on Monday with five crew aboard. Once again serious training was conducted en route. Close to Steveston a Mayday call was received of a vessel broken





down at Sand Heads. The Coast Guard was advised that the ‘Delta’ turned around to assist. En route to Sand Heads the Delta was advised that the vessel was not a Sand Heads but close to Gary Point. Once again ‘Delta’ turned around but a few minutes later ‘Delta’ was stood down because another vessel assisted the vessel into Steveston harbour. The ‘Delta’ continued its transit back to Ladner harbour where it secured at 1700. A wonderful crew who worked together so well - BZ.

## Labour Day safety patrol

by David Acton



The Fraser Lifeboat conducted a Labour Day safety patrol. A large sport fishery was happening off Sand Heads with more than 100 small craft definitely catching fish. We heard a couple of Maydays but none in our area.

## John and Mary’s trip to the United Kingdom by John Horton

John and Mary Horton travelled to the UK in July - part business, part family, part CLI. With time spent in London, Kings Lynn, Whitby, York, Seahouses, Lindesfarne, Eyemouth, North Berwick, Dunbar, Edinburgh, Portsmouth, Gosport and Poole.



Several of these locations had lifeboat stations and it was, as always, a pleasure to exchange stories and ideas. Whitby Lifeboat Day coincided with their time in Whitby and much time was spent with the Cox’n and crew. The Cox’n had crewed on the ‘White Rose of Yorkshire’ later purchased into CLI service.

John was able to photograph various demonstrations conducted with the new Shannon class lifeboat and the ‘D’ class RHIB (these will be shared during a later training session). John was given a tour through the new lifeboat, which had only recently arrived on station. It is always a joy to see just how dedicated all the crews, shore side volunteers and



supporters are in the UK, who are so generous in their welcome and advice given so freely.

While aboard the Shannon, John took detailed photographs of the davit and recovery procedures to rescue a M.O.B. This may help design a similar system for the ‘Fraser Lifeboat’.

The Whitby lifeboat museum houses the old pulling (rowing) lifeboat (still in pristine condition) on its heavy horse drawn carriage that conducted the dramatic rescue in



January 1881 for the brig ‘Visitor’. Owing to extreme weather the lifeboat could not exit Whitby harbour and so the lifeboat was pulled by horses and citizens 5 miles over the hill to Robin Hood Bay where it could be launched. To achieve this, 200 men dug a path through snowdrifts in biting cold. It’s a story of sheer heroism, not just by the lifeboat crew but the whole town. Robin Hood Bay still mounts the oldest RNLI money box which is made of cast iron and has been collecting money for the RNLI since 1886!

Other stations that we visited were Seahouses, Lindesfarne, Eyemouth, Dunbar and North Berwick. They are wonderful people and all very proud of all who serve in the world-wide SAR family.



## TOOB benefit cruise by John Horton

On Sunday 10th October the CLI welcomed 11 members of the Tsawwassen Order of Old Bastards group (“TOOB” who raise money for charity), on board the ‘Delta Lifeboat’. TOOB had given a generous donation in the past and are discussing further support. The possibility of a band concert, dinner and auction next year was discussed to raise more funds.

CLI had to make special arrangements for moorage that day as the low tide would make it impossible to leave the Ladner station. A big thank you goes to Randy Reifel who the night before allowed CLI to secure alongside one of his seine boats further downstream and where guests could board on the day of the cruise. Once aboard and following a safety briefing and chat about CLI, ‘Delta’ slipped sailing to Steveston where the ‘Fraser’ was shown. A transit was then made upriver as far as the Alex Fraser Bridge before returning to Ladner. A four-hour cruise gave TOOB a good idea of what CLI has to offer. The crew even conducted a recovery of ‘Oscar’ using the RHIB to the delight of our guests. CLI was pleased to have such a wonderful group of supporters aboard further strengthening our ties.



### Isabella Sobral

I grew up in Itaipu, a sunny, ocean-side neighbourhood in Niteroi, Rio de Janeiro - Brazil. As the daughter of a fisherman, I have been around boats and at sea since a very early age. Even summer camps were provided by lifeguards and firefighters. I spent countless hours by the water, always immersed in the coastal lifestyle. I moved from my hometown city to Vancouver about one year and seven months ago.

When I moved here, I faced the challenges of adapting to a new environment and overcoming the language barrier. During this transition, I wasn't surprised at how much I missed being on the water, at the beach or in my family's boat, as it had always been a vital part of my life. That's why I happily accepted my friend's invitation to meet and later join CLI. Joining CLI will not only allow me to indulge in my love for boats and the sea but also provide an opportunity to learn about river operations and SAR in Canada. I look forward to embarking on this journey with the welcoming crew at the Fraser River.

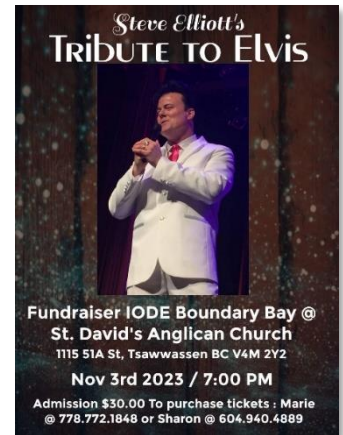


## A “Thank you” visit by John Horton

On Wednesday the 20<sup>th</sup> September John and Mary Horton welcomed 5 members of the “Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire” (IODE) for a visit to the Delta station. The members had generously donated two sets of binoculars for use on the “Delta Lifeboat”.

The ladies enjoyed a complete tour of the lifeboat and were given details of the CLI’s mission and how we operate while enjoying afternoon tea. The IODE is a group of dedicated ladies who raise funds for local community groups. Our CLI being one of them!

On November 3, 2023 they are holding a “Tribute to Elvis” fundraiser at St. David’s Church in Tsawwassen. Let’s get a group together to enjoy the event and support these enthusiastic ladies. Mary and John will be organizing a group to attend - please join them! – give them a call at 604 943-4399 or contact them at [maryhorton@telus.net](mailto:maryhorton@telus.net).



### Lucille Johnstone Work Boat Parade by Keith Murray

On Saturday, September 23rd, both the Fraser and Delta lifeboats took part in the Lucille Johnstone Workboat Parade in New Westminster, part of the annual RiverFest event put on by the Fraser River Discovery Centre with a variety of sponsoring organizations. RiverFest takes place in September each year and features a number of different activities along the riverfront in New Westminster and some of the surrounding area.

Both lifeboats headed up river from their respective stations conducting training and a safety patrol along the way. They met at the Surrey Fraser docks where Fraser moored alongside Delta at anchor near the cargo terminal. This provided a chance for both crews to connect and share a pot luck lunch before moving into place at the parade staging ground.





Just before 14:00 the lifeboats, along with tugs from Ledcor and other local towing companies, the smaller harbour tugboats, RCM-SAR 7, the Port Authority and others all made way for the water front from the staging area off Annacis Island.



There was a good size crowd on the boardwalk at the New Westminster Quay who braved the drizzle to see the workboats of the Fraser River. The tugboats, along with the Fraser Lifeboat showed off their agility turning in circles as they moved along the water. The larger tugs pushed each other about like a couple of maritime sumo wrestlers. The Delta Lifeboat sprayed large arcs of water with the fire pump, and set off the small canon as it concluded the procession.

Crews used the transit back to base to continue navigation and ship handling training along the river.



by John Horton

Once again CLI was invited to participate in the annual parade off new Westminster quay. ‘Delta and Fraser’ lifeboats departed their stations at 0930 on Saturday 23 September. ‘Delta’ went to anchor off Fraser Surrey docks and ‘Fraser’ secured alongside. This is always one of those days where crews can enjoy each other’s company, and to that end a potluck lunch was enjoyed by both crews aboard ‘Delta’.

At 1315 both lifeboats departed Fraser Surrey and proceeded to a position just below the Queensborough bridge to form up with participating vessels. At 1415 the parade proceeded in line ahead to the quay where a large crowd had gathered to watch the vessels, many of which showed off their maneuvering skills. ‘Delta’ fired up two fire hoses for its first pass and then woke everybody up by firing its saluting cannon! After the parade both lifeboats sailed together in “formation one” back to their stations. En route both up and down river helm and navigation training was given for the benefit of those who needed it. Another good PR day on the water.

## 2023 Christmas Card by John Horton

John Horton did it again. A beautiful Christmas Card with the Fraser and Delta lifeboats at the Richmond Maritime Festival. This year you can buy 5 cards for only \$20.00 and the proceeds will go to the CLI.

**“Thank God for the Lifeboats”**

Winston Churchill

While the Richmond Maritime Festival welcomes visitors to view a fleet of historic vessels including the “Delta Lifeboat”, the CLI’s “Fraser Lifeboat” passes with a disabled fishing vessel in tow alongside.

*Supporting commercial and aboriginal fisheries is an important part of the CLI’s mandate continuing the tradition of assisting mariners in distress.*





Photos by Ben Whiting

