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Ferry Schedule

VANCOUVER - SUNSHINE COAST • 40 min. ride
 SCHEDULE IN EFFECT SEPT 2, 2008 TO JUNE 29, 2009

| Leave Horseshoe Bay | Leave Langdale |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 7:20 am | 6:20 am |
| 9:20 am | 8:20 am |
| 10:00 am Apr 10 & May 18 Only | 10:20 am |
| 11:20 am | 11:00 am Apr 10 & May 18 Only |
| 1:20 pm | 12:20 am |
| 2:00 pm May 14 & 15 Only | 2:30 pm |
| 3:30 pm | 3:00 pm May 14 & 15 Only |
| 4:00 pm Apr 9 Only | 4:30 pm |
| 5:30 pm | 5:00 pm Apr 9 Only |
| 7:25 pm | 6:30 pm |
| 9:15 pm | 8:20 pm |
| 11:00 pm May 18 Only | 10:10 pm May 18 Only |

Source: BC Ferries website. Subject to change without notice

Travel



The Spirit Dancer canoe is welcomed on the shores near Torcross, Devon in the United Kingdom.

✈ SPIRIT DANCER

The British Isles by canoe

CHRIS COOPER
 CONTRIBUTING WRITER

It was May 1, 2008 when a dream became a reality as our hand-carved paddles entered the waters of the River Thames in London. We were a team of 14 Canadians in a great canoe called the Montreal canoe. Concerns for safety were constant throughout for all our crew members into the unknown waters of the North Sea, the Strait of Dover, then into the English Channel and out into the Atlantic. This is a multi-year event — the making of a historic canoe event for B.C. and Canada and a great challenge that is about to unfold.

The Canadian High Commission, Royal Navy, Royal Marines and many hundreds who were eager to be part of this celebration gave us a spectacular and wonderful send-off at St. Katharine docks, downstream of the famous Tower Bridge.

I originally grew up in Yorkshire, England, very close to the sea where my family had their holidays in Sandsend, near Whitby on the east coast of England. I did not know at the time that I would follow in the footsteps of the great early explorers, in particular explorer and cartographer Captain James Cook, who set off from Whitby on his first voyage in 1766.

I believe the fascination I had as a young boy for the sea led me to create the most complicated, logistically challenging journey I have ever taken on. Here in Canada, I have been a professional guide for 35 years, organizing expeditions to many isolated areas in Canada's high arctic and the most beautiful surroundings of the B.C. coast. This expedition would be a challenge like no other canoe journey ever.

In 1997, I was on a great canoe journey together with a dear friend of mine from Gibsons, Ed Hill. Vision Quest was a healing journey involving the RCMP and First Nations people. These types of

canoe journeys were the building blocks and the start of a fascinating project that will benefit so many. This will most likely continue for years to come around the most unforgiving and challenging coastline of the British Isles.

The focus of this journey is about Canadian and British youth, young adults and adults learning about the history, culture and environment and meeting the people of the coastline of the U.K. We found the hospitality of the British remarkable. We were unable to give exact dates or times of our arrivals based on the weather conditions. Sea state conditions were always above a force three and many times beyond a five, so we were constantly in touch with the Maritime Coastguard Agency for frequent updates on weather forecasts.

The foundation of preparing for such an undertaking is the adventurous spirit and the years of experience handling all types of paddling craft, including the historic Canadian Montreal canoes, which

were custom built for us by Western Canoeing in Abbotsford. The custom spray deck was built by the British Columbia Institute of Technology to ensure our safety and to keep us dry from the large breaking seas off the coast of Cornwall. Our University of British Columbia team was really challenged in late June when large seas would break over the front of our canoe near the village of Polperro.

The canoe journey for 2008 ended in late July, three months after we departed from London, in the Isles of Scilly, a group of small islands off the southwest coast of Landsend.

As I am writing this for *Coast Reporter*, we are weeks away from starting another great adventure along the Scottish coast, slated to depart from Glasgow, May 6, 2009. This year's journey will finish in Orkney off the north coast of Scotland.

Editor's note: Cooper will recount more of his epic journey through a multi-media presentation as a fundraising event on Friday, March 6, at 7 p.m. at the Gibsons and Area Community Centre. Proceeds from the event will go towards the cost of chartering a decommissioned lifeboat for safety and filming alongside the Spirit Dancer canoe. Tickets are \$10 for adults or \$25 for a family of four, available at the door. For more information, check out www.spiritdancer canoejourneys.ca.



Do you have a great travel story?

For information on how to submit, contact Ian Jacques: editor@coastreporter.net



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