



## **The Best of Times**

Reflecting About the Birth of West Coast Expeditions, Over 40 Years Later!

by Jerry Lang, Founding Owner

Those were the best of times. Being on the ocean in a small rubber boat heading up the West Coast of Vancouver Island dressed in a wet suit with tears streaming from your eyes because of the constant salt spray is unlike any other experience.

That was in the summer of 1970. We were heading up the coastline checking on kelp beds in an attempt to map the extent of *Macrocystis* (Giant Perennial Kelp) growth. Hotsprings Cove, Hesquiat, Esperanza and Kyuquot were names that were as exotic as Timbuktu and other faraway destinations for a city boy from Victoria.

I was taking courses for my graduate studies in Marine Biology at the Bamfield Marine Station during the summer of 1970 when my prof and another grad student decided on this trip along the West Coast to the Brooks Peninsula. Three Canovas powered by 20 hp Mercs took us from Bamfield Marine Station all the way to Kyuquot. The trip was mesmerizing and full of sights that I had only read and dreamed about.

This was the beginning of West Coast Expeditions. I knew my mission in life now and that was to make sure as many people as possible learned of the most wonderful coast in the world. The following summers, with a few exceptions, saw groups of students and teachers rubbing shoulders with seniors and visitors from afar, who had only imagined the ocean from the shores of Stanley Park. The more enthusiasm I received from visitors, the more I was determined to make this a permanent summer's vocation.

Kyuquot was the beginning of many special recipes and friendships that were forged beside a bonfire on McLean and Spring Island. Friends whom I still share happy moments with. My nephew Rupert eventually took over and took WCE to another level. Now, West Coast Expeditions shines with new vitality under the ownership of Dave Pinel with Caroline Fisher and Bev Hansen-Michel....but I can sense the spirit is still the same...the love for the sea, land and its people remain deep.