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The Great Paper Boat Race of the World from the new book *Wind, Whales and Whisky* by Silver Donald Cameron. Lulu's instincts were right: the easterly wind eased steadily as we ran down Lennox Passage into Inhabitants Bay. Haddock Harbour opened to port, another maze of neglected islands and sheltered inlets. One island belongs to hospitable Germans who come for a month or so in the summer: waterfrontage in Europe is so scarce and pricey that it makes sense to buy cheap Nova Scotian land and fly the family out to it. We sailed slowly past the long slender bulk of Rabbit Island, with the ragged shore of Janvrin's Island, the last fragment of the Isle Madame archipelago, to port. Close in by the shore of Rabbit Island, a lobsterman hauled traps, his outboard skiff heaving in the onshore swell, the boat was still sleeping; Lulu yawned and went below. Silver-sark and I sailed on together. Seeing this landscape for the first time, one might find it pristine and unspoiled, the very picture of coastal serenity. In fact, it is redolent of ruined dreams of wealth and industrial development. Twenty years ago, Inhabitants Bay was the outer anchorage for supertankers waiting to unload at the Strait of Canso Superport. The far shore of Inhabitants Bay • Port Malcolm, Port Richmond • is uninhabited only because its people were removed to make way for a steel mill, never built, on Bear Head, towards which we were steering. Off the port bow, on the mainland of Nova Scotia, a gigantic scar marks the site of the oil refinery John Shaheen proposed to build after his apparent success at Come-by-Chance, Newfoundland. In the fall of 1974, Shaheen brought a shipload of dignitaries here on the Queen Elizabeth II, which he had chartered for the purpose. But Shaheen went bankrupt and died, and that refinery, too, was never built. Halfway across Inhabitants Bay, the breeze died completely, leaving Silversark rolling quietly in the slick water for fifteen minutes. Lulu and Mark woke up, put on the kettle and ate some granola. The wind came in again from the northeast, gently at first, then more seriously. Silversark forged onward, aiming for the red buoy off Bear Head. Another lobsterman was hauling traps there, waving as we passed. We turned at the buoy, and Silversark heeled before what had become a fresh breeze, carving her way directly up the Strait. "Look!" cried Mark. "A dog swimming!" Sure enough, the dark head of an animal was moving steadily through the water from the industrial Launch of the Stora Viking, winner of The Great Paper Boat Race of the World. Left to right (from Stora Forest Industries): Freddy Snow, Welder; Tommy MacDonald, Millwright; George Ryan, in Stores; Ralph Keefe, President; Jimmy Joe Organ (Jim's son); Jim Organ, Pipefitter. We sailed past the lands at Bear Head towards the mainland. "That's not a dog," said Lulu, squinting through the binoculars. "It's • it's a deer!" We sailed within fifty yards of it. As we passed, the deer turned around and swam back to Bear Head. "Another Cape Bretoner who couldn't bring himself to leave," said Lulu. We found ourselves abreast of the oil dock at what was once the Gulf Oil refinery and is now just a collection of storage tanks on the hillside. For years, former Liberal cabinet minister Alastair Gillespie has been trying to put together a deal called Scotia Syncrude, which would use the defunct refinery to make



petroleum out of coal; news about the project has become a staple of the two weekly newspapers in Port Hawkesbury, pop. 3,850, the chief community of the Strait area. Port Hawkesbury is best visualized as a suburb with no urb to which it is sub. But because of this stretch of water, it is • or was • 'that rare anomaly, a Maritime boom town. The Port Hawkesbury boom took place twenty years ago, after the construction of the Canso Causeway blocked the Strait and unexpect? edly created the finest ice-free deepwater harbour on the east coast of North America. Gulf Canada built a refinery to process Middle Eastern crude from supertankers. Canadian General Electric built a heavy- water plant to supply the CANDU reactors Canada intended to export to the world. The Nova Scotia Power Corporation erected an oil-fired generating station, Georgia Pacific established a gypsum-shipping operation, and Sweden's Stora Kopparberg, through a subsidiary now named Stora Forest Industries, built a pulp and paper mill. Then, during the 1920s, the boom stalled. CGE sold its heavy-water plant to Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd., and in 1986, when Michael Wilson noticed the world's indifference to CANDU reactors, he closed it. When the Suez Canal reopened, the supertankers faded away, and the Gulf refinery closed. The generating plant was converted to run on coal, and it still operates • but Nova Scotia's new generating plants stand right atop the coal mines of Langan, a hundred miles away. The chief remaining industry is Stora, with a workforce of 1,300 • and Stora itself faces sluggish markets and stiff competition. But that magnificent harbour is still there, and Port Hawkesbury has faith. The town is on the Trans-Canada Highway and the Canadian National main line, though Michael Wilson has taken away its pas? senger trains. A new gypsum quarry is operating nearby, and several small industries have sprung up, lured by a rich stew of government development funding. Louisiana Pacific is producing a revolutionary new wall covering made of gypsum and wood fibre, and the German conglomerate Thyssen is proposing to build military vehicles • arnnoured cars and the like • at Bear Head. In the mid-1980s. Port Hawkesbury was doing tolerably well. A local shipyard called Breton Industrial and Marine, now bankrupt, was building draggers, pilot boats, small freighters. Offshore oil explora? tion brought Petro Canada supply ships to Mulgrave, across the Strait, where Mulgrave Machine Works built up an offshore-supply business that employed thirty to fifty people. At that point. Port Haw-