Metcalfe Bay — The Home of Ten Foot Charlie by Graham Brazier

Denman Island's Museum and Archives is a treasure trove of historical information that helps to answer many questions about the past of this place while invariably raising more questions. 'Clipping' files, which are collections of clippings from newspapers on a particular subject, often made by unidentified individuals are notorious for doing both. Such was the case with a rather puzzling photograph of "TEN-FOOT CHARLIE" I encountered on a recent visit.

The text accompanying the fuzzy photograph is from a small clipping from an unknown and undated newspaper which includes a handwritten date of 'Aug. 1971' at the top right-hand corner. It revealed that "C. B, (Charlie) Hadley along his wife, Elsie", owned and operated "a distinctive resort" at Metcalfe Bay, and had done so for 25 years — or since 1946. The fuzzy photograph is of a statue carved from driftwood by some of the resort's regular patrons to honour both Hadleys who had recently been awarded "official Centennial pioneer medals". The unsigned text goes on to declare that "all campers felt a salute was in order while Hadley was alive to appreciate it".

While informative, the clipping is also provocative. It appears that a distinctive resort on Denman Island was in the hands of a man close to the end of his life and calls out for further investigation. Fortunately, other handwritten files in the Denman archives reveal that the distinctive resort was made up of six cabins constructed and rented out by the Hadleys in the summer.

Furthermore, the Hadley's carried on until 1985 when they sold the property to a group of summer visitors before moving to Cumberland where Charlie died in 1987 and Elsie a year later.