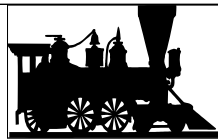


SPOT NEWS

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Western Vancouver Island Industrial Heritage Society

Issue 55



February 2014



Photos: D. Hooper

"No. 7" (1929 'Baldwin') working with BCIT student Conductors at McLean Mill Spur (*See p. 2*)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: February 12, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. Echo Centre
Guest Speaker: Doug Harrison
Topic: Alberni Pacific Logging "Camp One" Memories.

ALBERNI PACIFIC RAILWAY

Although in winter, the APR is mainly in "R&R" (rest and repair) mode, some projects get done that are difficult to do when the railroad is operating. On January 11, work began on a new spur beside the Diesel track at the Roundhouse. Ties were loaded on a small rail car by K.G. Campbell's "Pitman" crane and pushed to the worksite. Ten rails were moved there the same way. Ken Fyfe brought his excavator to put the ties and rails into place. Being a "Campbell Project", it rained. The spur will provide more storage space for equipment.

The "Santa Runs" in December carried more than 1500 happy passengers, including nearly all of the small children in town. Santa arrived at the Station by "A-6" speeder this time. The Folksong Circle provided Christmas music at the Station and many members helped out.

The APR hosted two BCIT "Conductor Practical Training" courses (4 groups) in 2013, the second one being in November. (Two are scheduled for 2014.) Both the 1954 "RS-3" and 1942 "No. 11" diesels were used for these courses. The "No. 7" steam locomotive was pressed into service for one day, when the big "RS-3" broke down with electrical failure—a rat had built a nest and chewed the wires, resulting in a short(en)ed (life of the rat)! The students were able to live a "Heritage Moment", working with steam. [See Cover photo]



SANTA TRAIN CREW (l. to r.)

R. Hurst, J. Land, G. Murton, J. Jansma, K. Hunter, N. Malbon, L. Hunter, L. Malbon, G. Creighton, Elf Emily, Santa, Elf Auburn, J. Heid. *Photos: D. Hooper*



Santa & "Soup" arrive by speeder.



(above) "We are the Navvies..." pushing ties to the new spur. (l. to r.) T. Mollet, R. Clark, H. Grist, H. Carlson, D. Newman. (B. Simpson under the cart.)



(left) **Unloading rails** at the new spur. Ken Fyfe on the excavator

(below) **New wheels** under log car

One log car had damaged wheels so, they were changed out. K.G. Campbell is seen here with H. Carlson (back to .)



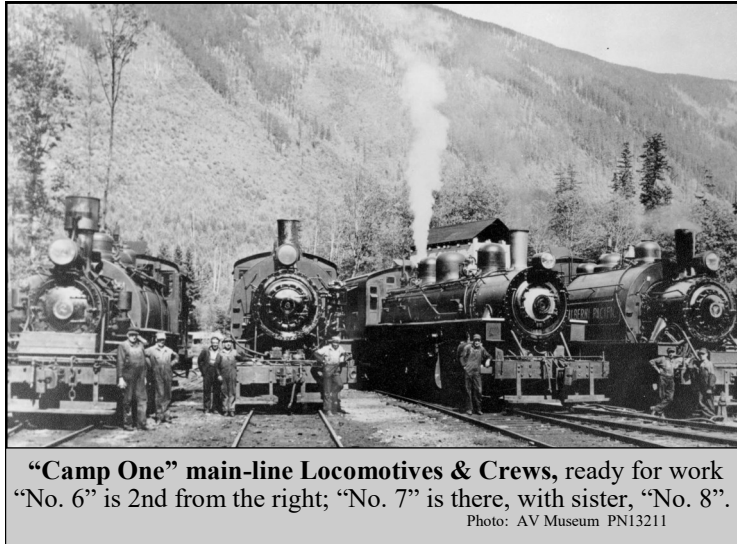
ALBERNI PACIFIC LUMBER "CAMP ONE" (cont. from Oct. 2013 "News")

APL "Camp One" was a 'rail logging show' that operated from 1937 to 1953 in the upper Alberni Valley. A 'Brief History' was put together by Timekeeper, Terry Dinham, shortly after the closure of the Camp in 1953 and Edgar West, father of I.H.S. member, Cliff West, received a copy. Edgar, a steam donkey and yarding engineer, was a long-time employee of APL. This is a continuation from that "Brief History".

* * * * *

To bring the full Camp One production of one and one-quarter billion (board) feet to tide-water required the loading of over 250,000 skeleton cars, which, if all coupled together, would reach from Vancouver to Thunder Bay. The locomotives hauling these trains travelled a distance of 275,000 miles (440,000 km.), sufficient to encircle the Earth eleven times. Engine No. 6, (now "113" at Woss) at one time the largest steam locomotive on Vancouver Island, hauled as many as 67 cars on one trip to the 'Beach' — now the site of the 'Coulson Mill', south of Port Alberni.

Employee-employer relations have been of the best, with many employees still at the camp, who were working there when operations commenced. Four long-term men still active and who have, each of them, over thirty years service, are: Don Moore—Loco Engineer; Mike Melnik—Head Trackwalker, who was in earlier years a Head Load-er; Harold Haines, who started with the Company as a Loader and is now the Dispatcher; and Len Myren—Warehouseman, who first worked in the back as 1922. Together with J. Magnone—Car Builder; Leo (King) Myren—Hook Tender; Edgar West—Engineer; Olaf Leverman; Harvey - Hap Leong Jap—Head Engineer; Black Mike Turchynevich—Cook; and Section Foreman — eleven men in all, with a combined service record of 299 years.



"Camp One" main-line Locomotives & Crews, ready for work
"No. 6" is 2nd from the right; "No. 7" is there, with sister, "No. 8".
Photo: AV Museum PN13211

Jim Magnone estimates that, in rebuilding rail cars, he has used one million feet of lumber. Leong Jap, the highly-respected Cook, has served, by conservative estimate, one and one-half million meals, enough to feed the average Canadian family for 325 years. Approximately 2.5 million logs have been loaded out from the operation: placed end-to-end, they would reach from Port Alberni to Moscow... and back!

The continuity of production from this area will be uninterrupted by the conversion from rail to trucks, with the development of truck roads now adequate to maintain an even flow of logs from the woods and the major part of the old Camp One crew now absorbed into the newly-formed Sproat Lake Division. The Timekeeper opening the Camp One office, H.S. Berryman, is now Vice-President of Production Department and Forestry Division.

It seems fitting that Leo Myren is the Hooktender who will send in the last turn of logs to go out by Railway and that Olaf Worhaug will be handling the levers when these logs are put on the last skeleton car to be loaded. These two employees, fresh from Scandanavia, arrived to work at APL together, twenty-six years ago.

This is the end of an era at Camp One; within a short time, there will be little evidence of the big Steam Yarders, the Locomotives and the Railway that played such a large part in the development of this area. Although the crews will note the passing of steam as they would the departure of an old friend, as good loggers, they'll make of Diesel Engines and Trucks what they did of steam; until science and engineering gives them something new again.

-Ed. Note: This document was very slightly edited to fit the page.

Memories of Jack Bell, legendary General Foreman at Franklin River

The name Jack Bell was synonymous with Franklin River from the 1940's to the '60's. Bell became General Foreman" of the famous logging camp and held that post until 1967, when he was transferred to Northwest Bay Logging Division of M&B.

"Bloedel Stewart & Welch" began operations in 1934 at "Camp A", at the mouth of Franklin River, six miles south of Port Alberni. The logging 'show' was to supply logs to new 'BS&W" 'Somass Sawmill" in Port Alberni. At the time of the start-up, Bell was logging for Phil Welch, on the West side of the Alberni Inlet. With the opening of the new Franklin River operations, it was a logical jump for an ambitious young logger.

Young Jack did it all: he worked in the 'rigging', setting chokers; loaded logs; worked with every kind of log-moving machine, from "Cat" to 'cold-decker' to the giant 'Lidgerwood" skidders; yarding with steam or diesel power with 200' wooden spars or steel towers. He literally climbed his way to the top in the woods, soon becoming a 'High Rigger"—the peak of the logging profession. He worked with all kinds of rail-logging equipment—"Shay" and "Baldwin" locomotives, steam cranes, skeleton cars, 'speeders' - then made the transition to truck logging and diesel power after the Second War. In summary, he learned how to move anything in the woods, no matter how heavy or awkward, in any situation.

At the same time, Jack also learned how to move men—to push them, show them, teach them, inspire them, remember them and when necessary, drive them—to do what they did not even know they could do. Franklin River was his 'school' and he ended up in charge of it.

The 'General Foreman' in those days was much more than a modern Operations Supervisor. He was in charge of not just the industrial operations; he was in charge of a rough community in the wilderness. Housing, feeding, recreation, transportation, maintenance, training, discipline, entertainment—there was no aspect of life at Franklin River where his influence did not touch.



Photo PN152235
AV Museum

Here are some memories of Jack Bell from people who worked with him or lived in Camp. Jack ate in the Cookhouse with the rest of the loggers, saying, "If it's good enough for me, it's good enough for you." When new 'unbreakable glasses were bought, he tested one, dropping it on the floor. (It broke.) Jack wanted to know if a new thing was any good, whether it was a new machine or just a glass.

Several fellows talked of being personally hired by Bell. Don Watt left school after Grade 11 and was hanging around when Bell spotted him. "Why the Hell aren't you in school?" Don's reply brought this from Bell—"Show up Monday afternoon at the Shop for afternoon shift. We'll make a Grease Monkey out of you."

Harold Brownson recounted a similar abrupt hiring. Bell made a point of being around when the crews were marshalling

Young **Jack Bell** (2nd from right) with crew on a small 'cold decker'.

(right) Bell (r.) on 'Lidgerwood' Skidder No. 3 with Engineer Hugo Lavander.

The skidder is being moved to a new setting, across Franklin River trestle.

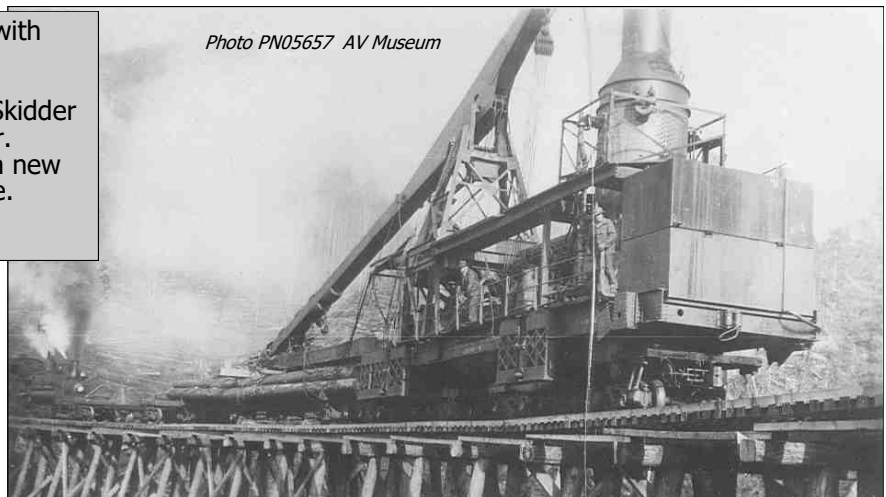


Photo PN05657 AV Museum

in the morning and when they came back at night. That morning, a crew was short the driver and Bell said to young Harold, "Get in the truck!" "I'm not a driver." said Harold. Bell's reply was, "Didn't you hear me?" And that was how Harold started work at Franklin.

Bell had a tremendous memory for people. This served him well at work. Jack James remembers a meeting for senior M&B Foremen, where each participant was supposed to tell a story about another participant. There were 24 people there and Jack Bell made a funny poem up on each person there, with a comical incident involving them.

As General Foreman, Bell took personal responsibility and directed operations when emergency situations or accidents occurred. A log car partially derailed while crossing a trestle, leaving the line blocked, while the loaded car teetered precariously in the middle. Bell arrived, took in the situation, then went out himself with another foreman, onto the trestle. They uncoupled the teetering car and logs and let them fall into the gulley. The line was open again. Bell was not going to put his crews at risk. He said that that was his job.

A heavy snowfall in the winter of 1951 left the Camp cut off from the outside world. There was only the railroad linking the Camp to Camp "A" on the Inlet and it was blocked under feet of snow—14 miles of track and 23 bridges. There were 400+ men to feed, not to mention the folk in Married Quarters. It took tree days, but Bell took a 'D-8' to clear the tracks, including 'walking' the big "Cat" over the trestles. He did not ask anyone else to do it.

Joe Stanhope remarked that Jack Bell was first and foremost a 'gentleman', even though he did have a rough side. After all, he was in charge of a rough and tough group of men who worked hard and lived hard. There was no doubt who was in charge but he was highly-respected because everyone knew that he knew what was going on. In emergency situations, his presence and 'take-charge' personality had a calming influence on everyone. He was often the first one to arrive at the site. He gave people confidence.

Jack Bell had the best house in Franklin, until M&B brought in a "General Manager", complete with a new, bigger house. Bell's house was behind the Rec Hall, in the middle of the Camp. The Water Tower was just behind it and the children, always on the lookout for adventure while making their own entertainment, would climb up this 'ultimate Jungle Gym'. Bell, always alert to what was going on, would bellow "Get the Hell off that Tower!" and the kids would scramble down and scatter. Don Watt remembers that the kids were scared



Jack Bell—"High Rigger"

Jack became "Head Rigger" at Franklin. Here, he is topping a Douglas fir for use as a spar tree. [Note the new railroad tracks at the base of the tree.] After topping the tree, he would rig the spar with guy lines and hang the blocks for yarding and loading. Bell fell out of a tree once, breaking a leg. He had one bad leg ever afterwards.

This dangerous job was phased out in the 1960's, when steel spars came into use in the woods.

Photo PN07457 AV Museum

when he roared. The School was across from Bell's house and one Halloween, some kids took his garbage can and ran it up the school flagpole. He came out next morning and was looking all over for the can, which was floating above his head! There were occasional Field Trips for the Camp Children to see their fathers logging. Jack Bell organized the excursions in a speeder, arranged lunches and personally took the children on the tour. [To be continued.....]

-Thanks to Don Watt, Joe Stanhope, Harold Brownson, Jack James, for their stories.

FRANKLIN RIVER MEMORIES

2014 marks the 80th Anniversary of the beginning of logging operations at Franklin River, which became the largest logging camp in Canada by the 1950's. Tens of thousands of workers spent time at Franklin River over those years - some 'camp inspectors', some 'lifers' and some trying to raise a 'stake'. Every one had a story. This is Pete Huysmans'.

Pete Huysmans arrived in Port Alberni in the summer of 1951, direct from Holland. By then, more than 100,000 Dutch had emigrated to Canada since the end of the Second World War and 23 year-old Pete was one of them. Fresh from military service, he could only find only seasonal employment in the bulb fields and was in the Unemployment lineups. The Dutch government offered free tickets to Canada as this was a cheaper solution than paying UI to the many unemployed.

Pete got off the ship at Quebec City and took the train to Vancouver, where he knew no one and had no prospects in hand. A Dutch pastor trying to recruit a "flock" was at the Station and invited Pete to come to the Alberni Valley.

Upon arrival, Pete was welcomed to Bill Goorts' house while he looked for accommodation, which he found at Mrs. Jacobson's Boarding House, on Beaver Creek Road. Nearly all of the other boarders were Dutchmen, too.

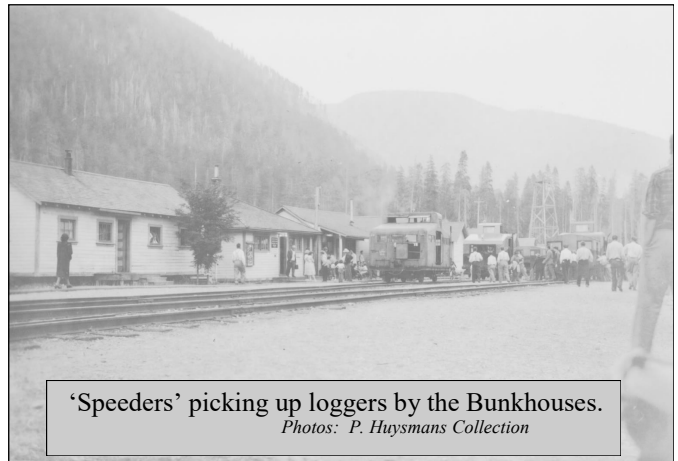
Next day, he walked to the "Bloedel, Stewart & Welch" Pulp Mill (the amalgamation with Macmillan had not yet been completed) but there were no jobs there so, he continued to the "Somass" (Sawmill), where he was told to report the following Tuesday. (That Monday was "Dominion Day".) He got a couple of weeks work before a summer shutdown.

From there, he found work at the Franklin River logging camp of "BS&W", where he worked for two years. Logging was on summer shutdown but trackwork into new cutblocks was still ongoing. (Rail logging continued at Franklin River for another six years.) The first question that he was asked on arrival was "Can you speak English?" Pete was assigned to a Track Gang. The Foreman was an Italian and the crew consisted of two Danes, a Norwegian, an Estonian and a Dutchman - Pete.

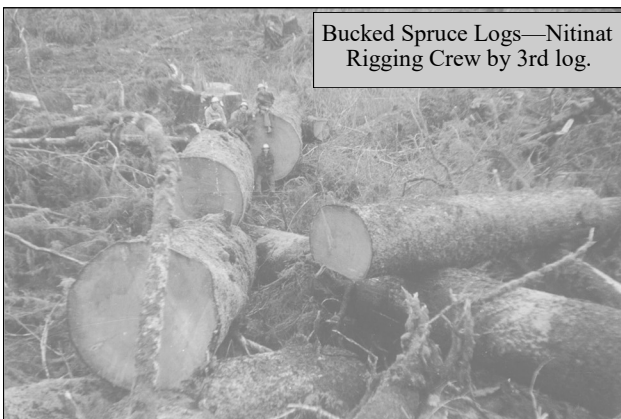
Laying track was a new experience for Pete and for most members of the crew. They were to level and tamp track with shovels and bars. The Danes took shovels and started digging with a will, but no idea. The Foreman came back and said "Too deep". Other crew members were to level the track by putting jacks under the rail, which they did and started pumping away. "Stop! Too much!" was the next command from the Foreman. Next, they were told to tamp ballast around and under the ties. This time, they asked "How do we do that?" and the Foreman showed them.

Pete worked on this crew for 3-4 weeks and there was not one Canadian on the crew. Once logging started up again, he was assigned to a diesel 'cold deck' machine as a "Chokerman". They were 'ground-lead' logging, yarding timber to within range of a big skidder, which yarded the logs to trackside. One month later, he was made into a "Rigging Slinger" - promotion came fast in those days, if you were competent and

willing to stick with a logging 'show'.



'Speeders' picking up loggers by the Bunkhouses.
Photos: P. Huysmans Collection



Bucked Spruce Logs—Nitinat
Rigging Crew by 3rd log.

There was a big turnover of men at logging camps in those post-war boom days. He was once even told to be a relief "Hook Tender" at Camp "A" but said that it was a lot of work.

Pete was moved from machine to machine, including some time as Rigging Slinger for one of the big "Lidgerwood" steam yarders, which he remembers as real 'monsters'. Legendary Woods Foreman, Jack Bell, told him to "Do the best you can" but the two-ton "carriage" on the main line flipped over the skyline on the first turn. He thought, "What now?" but he said that it was just "Dumb luck" that the carriage flipped right back into the correct position.

The "Lidgerwood", like all of the other steam equipment used in logging – donkeys, locomotives, cranes – needed to be steamed up every morning so that it was ready to work when the crews arrived from Camp. An old Swede logger lived in a shack near the unit and used to get up every morning to light the fire and raise steam. He would also brew up coffee ready for the crew. He always threw an egg – shell and all – into the pot. It apparently made better coffee. The cabin was on skids so that it could be moved to the next setting when the yarding was finished there. Pete remembers that, on New Year's Day, Jack Bell used to pay a visit and have a drink with these old loggers living way out in the woods and share a drink with them.

After living through the privations of the German Occupation and the post-war economic ruin in Holland, Pete found life good at Franklin River, especially the food at the Cookhouse, which was "a marvel". Margarine was not allowed – it had to be butter. He remembers the Sandwich Maker (lunches were prepared for the crews before they left for the woods every morning): he spread melted butter with a brush on the trays of sliced bread; you could ask for whatever you wanted. There was so

much choice – coffee, tea or juice, fruits, meat for breakfast. After knowing hunger in Holland, it used to make him angry to see people throwing fruit around like a baseball or throwing away a sandwich saying, "Aw, baloney again!".

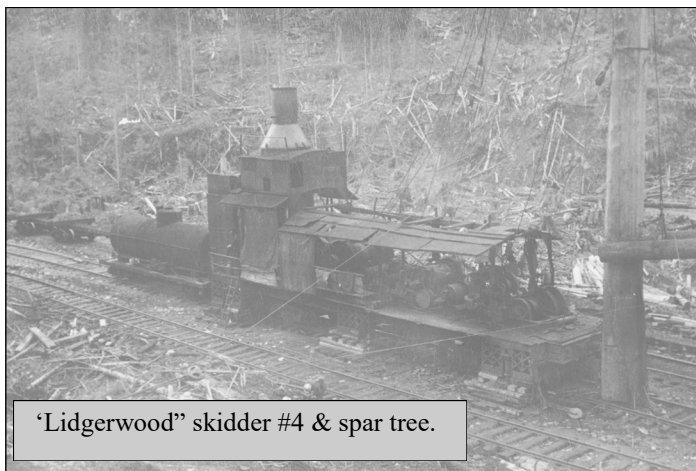
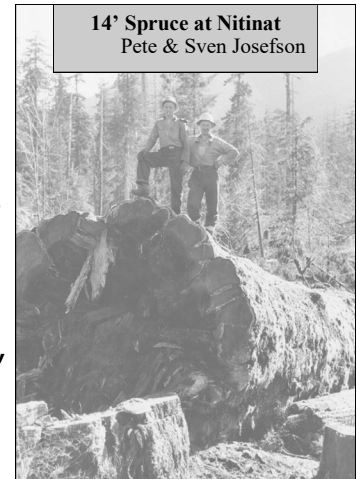
Pete got a surprise baptism in the famous Franklin River long Outhouse on his first day in camp. No one told him about the tipping barrel that periodically sluiced down the trough beneath the multi-seat toilet. He heard a 'Swoooooosh' and the next thing he felt was a slap of cold water on his buttocks, as the wave of water from the barrel raced down the channel!

Being single and with nothing else to do, Pete used to work on Saturdays when a job came up. Weekends were when certain jobs got

done, such as moving to a new logging setting, or raising and rigging a new spar tree. Otherwise, a whole crew might be held up with nothing to do if the work was done during the week. You also got paid overtime on Saturdays.

Pete remembers the "goat" (small steam donkey) and preparing the 'gin pole' butt-to-butt with the spar tree to be raised, laying out all of the guy lines, notching the anchor stumps, then, when all was ready, the Engineer would open up the steam and "Up would go the tree." - first the gin pole, then the spar tree. Then, the rigger would ask, 'How much belly in that line?' and the guy line would be tightened until he was satisfied. Then, "Spike her!" and railway spikes would be hammered home into the anchor stumps to attach the lines.

Pete left logging when his fiancée came to Canada. He worked at Somass Mill for the rest of his working career. I am sorry to report that Pete passed away on January 15. Our condolences go to his family. Ed. note



CHANGES at the OLD-TIME STEAM LOGGING SITE

The “Old-time Logging” Crew had put the show away for the winter but have since gone back to work, preparing to move the operation 200 feet (70 m.) farther into the forest, away from the Mill pond. As it has been decided to re-route Kitsuksis Creek through the spot where the spar tree was standing, the whole operation—yarding donkey, spar, loading donkey, guy lines and anchors—has to be moved. It was also decided that it is time for the boiler tubes to be replaced in the donkey. (This was last done in preparation for EXPO ‘86 in Vancouver) Les Stevens is taking the lead on this project.



On January 6, Les and Russ McCoy, with the help of others, removed the smokestack, the “house” and the water tank from the donkey, to prepare to lift the boiler off for the tubing job.

In December, the crew had skidded the donkey back 50 feet, removed the heel boom and the buckle guy lines. Aaron Thom came to do the ‘high-rigger’ work of stripping the blocks from the top of the spar.

- Page spon-

(r.) **Lowering Boom**
Jack James directs from nose of boom. Al Green in foreground.



Lifting off the smokestack
Les Stevens directs from top of boiler. H. Bakken operates the “Barko” loader.
(below) **Lifting the ‘house’ off the donkey.**
R. McCoy directs (r.); B. Simpson (r.) holds ladder.



sored by
Photos:
D. Hooper

“Rayner &

(below left) **Boiler being loaded**
Jan. 15—“Barko” loader lifts boiler on to lowbed. H. Bakken-operator; R. Catto on ground. Boiler was taken to the I.H.C. for tubing.
Photo: R. Catto

(below) **Removing the “Bull Block”**
Aaron Thom has removed the ‘safety strap’ on the block and the ‘straps’ holding the block to the top of the spar. It is about to be lowered on the “pass line”.



Old-time Steam logging site (cont.)

On January 6, the crew got the use of a "D-8H" Caterpillar from the Martin Brothers of Powell River. (Jack James used to work with their Dad.) The Cat skidded the Loading Donkey out of the way [#1] and helped to clear the area where the spar tree would come down. The "Barko" moved the logs out of the way out in the setting.



1

Next, the Cat's winch line was wrapped around the butt of the spar, then cinched tight. The cat then 'walked' the butt of the spar towards the back end. [#2] The two guy lines at the back end held the top of the spar steady as it came down.

[#3] The tree only fell the last 15-20 feet, with no damage done.



2

The tree was then slung between the two Cats and carried further towards its eventual destination. [#4]

The whole operation was possible, thanks to Jack's years of experience in the woods, rigging wooden trees.



4

Editor's Notes:

Last year was the 60th Anniversary of the closure of APL 'Camp One'

- #1 : Jack rides the Loading Donkey.
- #2: Cliff West operates the 'D-8'.
- #3: **'On the way down'**
The 'D-8' still holds the butt firmly in control
- #4: Tom Maher on the TD-14 holds one end of the tree while the D-8 has the other end.



3

- Don't miss Doug Harrison's presentation on 'Camp One' at the AGM on Feb. 12! This year is the 80th Anniversary of the beginning of logging at Franklin River. In July, there will be an Anniversary Event & Reunion at the McLean Mill. Kevin Hunter is taking the lead on this. Stay tuned for details.

Our Application for a 'Community Gaming Grant' to fund restoration work in 2013- 2014 was denied. We appealed the decision and I am happy to report that Funding has been restored.

A big "Thank You" to our sponsors. They support us; please support them.

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Tel. 724-5509 or E-mail: dshooper@telus.net

TRUCK & MILL DEPARTMENT NEWS

Cleaning up, putting away and starting on winter projects seems to be the main activities of I.H.S. members at this time of year. Don Watt and Ken McDonald have been keeping the IHC clean and organized. Don (*below left*) has been keeping the Parts Rooms organized.



I.H.S. members have spent many hours at the Mill this fall on projects. The Mill cut a large order of big dimension cedar for the Ucluelet First Nation, for a new 'multiplex' building. Cliff West and Hank Bakken spent hours moving and unloading logs for this operation while Les Stevens helped keep the Mill's steam engine running.



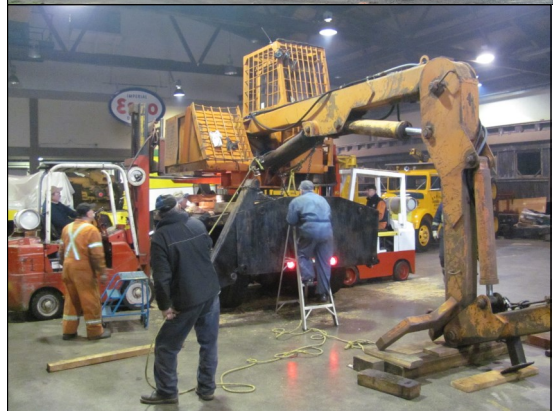
Jan Jansma, Barrie and Josh Williamson re-built the Sand Shed (*above right*) at the McLean Mill. The garage behind the McLean House was covered with a tarp to buy time for further restoration work on that building.

(The McLeans' "Cletrac" cat is presently stored in there.)

The "Barko" log loader has been a 'workhorse' at the Mill during the past season. It has done much of the log-handling as well as a lot of other heavy-lifting jobs. There was consternation when it was discovered that several bolts on the turntable were broken so, the machine was brought to the IHC for repairs. (*See right*: two forklifts are lowering the machine back onto the truck after all of the bolts were replaced.



"Barko" loading logs at Mill.



"John Deere" skidder repaired
Skidder ready to be delivered back to work out at McLean Mill.

"Reed" Oil-well pumping Engine
Stationary engine donated by Ken Fyfe; being restored by R. McCoy. *Photos: D. Hooper*

