

# SPOT NEWS

Western Vancouver Island Industrial Heritage Society

Issue 61



February 2016

"WINTER SWITCHING"  
Conductor Hugh Grist at work



**NOTICE: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE W.V.I.I.H.S.**  
February 17, 2015 (Wednesday) 7 p.m.  
ECHO CENTRE, PORT ALBERNI



## ALBERNI PACIFIC RAILWAY

Things are quiet now on the A.P.R. as the 'No. 7' undergoes winter maintenance. The saddle tank was removed for patching and the annual Boiler inspection is pending. The ALCO "RS-3" diesel locomotive is scheduled for major radiator work. Pete Geddes has overseen the repair of the transmission of the 'A-6' speeder and the replacement of the main hydraulic pump on the 'Lobster' brushing machine. This should make maintenance of the right-of-way much easier this season.

A.P.R. personnel hosted another BCIT practicum in November—the third in 2015. This meant twelve days of operation for the 'RS-3' and eight days for the "MBL 11" (small yard diesel). The "No. 7" worked one day—switching - when the "RS-3" was out of service.

The "No. 7" did a 'Hallowe'en Run' Oct. 31 and made four runs to the Christmas Craft Fair at the Mill at the end of November as well as pulling the 'Santa Trains' for more than 1400 passengers Dec. 5 and 6, in some of the worst weather possible.



**SANTA TRAIN CREW**

"Two-spot" and "No. 7" at the Train Station Dec. 6.

*Photos: D Hooper*



The 1912 "Shay" "Two Spot" was placed on public display at the Station Spur for the Christmas Train runs and many locals had happy reminiscences of clambering on the old locomotive when they were children.

### Work on "CANFOR 112"

Sandy Macham, K.G. Campbell, Michael Stewart and other volunteers continue work on the 1923 "Baldwin" 2-6-2 from Beaver Cove. The fuel tank and bottom half of the cab have been removed, as well as the superheater

tubes and other stray pipes. On November 7, a "Walco Industries" crew with a 1500-lb. pressure washer made the locomotive cleaner than it had ever been since arrival in the Nimpkish Valley in the 1940s. The "Walco" crew donated half of their time. "Thank you"!



(l.) Pete Geddes with the "A-6".

(r.) New Seats for the train coaches. Scott McCormick (r.) & Alan Migneault (l.) delivered bus seats to replace ones damaged in Jan. 15 vandalism.





## SCENES FROM THE RAILROAD

**\*LATE NEWS\*** There was serious vandalism to the APR passenger coaches on January 15—three broken windows, seats damaged by burning fuses, fire extinguishers emptied inside. Scott McCormick has already stepped up by finding and delivering replacement BC Transit seats. "Thank you, Scott!" The perpetrators were put to work cleaning up the mess on January 23.



BCIT TRAINEES and APR crew.



Waiting for 'Santa Train'  
Families check out '2-Spot'

(below left) **Amber and Linda Hunter** kept "Santa Train" passengers supplied with cookies and hot chocolate. (right) Linda salutes **Gordon Blake** on his last day of 'Conducting' on the APR. Gordon is "handing in the ticket punch" after 30 years of volunteering on the APR trains.



(right & left below) **POWER-WASHING THE '112'**



**SATURDAY AT THE ROUND-HOUSE**  
Mike Stewart & K.G. Campbell continue work on the "112".  
*Photos: D. Hooper*

## HIGH-LEAD LOGGING IN SCOTLAND?? Logging with the 'Canadian Forestry Corps' in World War Two

Although Port Alberni was far from the fighting during the War, it still had a profound impact on the City, the economy and the citizens. There was an Army Camp of more than 2000 soldiers in the 'Glenwood' district; several hundred local men were in the 'Pacific Coast Rangers' militia unit; the forest industry boomed—H.R. Macmillan built the Plywood mill for war construction demand; the Japanese-Canadians were interned. A visit to the local Greenwood Cemetery 'Field of Honour' shows just how many local people joined the Armed Services.

A little-known part of the war was the important role played by local forestry workers who joined the "Canadian Forestry Corps". Bert Simpson's uncle, George Woodward, was one of these young men. Bert has kindly loaned these family photos for this article.

\* \* \* \* \*



**"Ford" logging truck**  
with a load for the sawmill

In 1939, 96% of the timber consumed in the United Kingdom was imported—mainly from the Baltic countries and Russia. This supply was threatened when war was declared and dried up completely with the Nazi "blitzkrieg" in 1940, when access to the Baltic was denied. The German "U-boat" campaign in 1941 was so successful that much of the lumber sent from Canada never reached port in England.



**A 'company' Sawmill.** Note the open construction—similar to McLean Mill.

As in the First War, a "Canadian Forestry Corps" (C.F.C.) was created to cut and mill the forests in the UK and on the Continent, thus avoiding the "U-boat" blockade. England had been mainly deforested for centuries; the only evergreen forests existent in the UK were in Scotland—plantations belonging to aristocratic families and other wealthy land-owners in the Highlands. The CFC units were organized into self-contained 'companies' of 200 men. One section did the logging; the other section operated a portable sawmill to cut the lumber. The sawmills were powered by 100 HP Diesel engines.



**Putting in the Undercut**  
Note how low it is to the ground. Note also the crosscut saw laying in front. There were some Douglas fir plantations but pine, spruce and larch were the main species logged.



They had a 16-foot carriage and rotary headsaw, with edger, trim saw and re-saw. Capacity was from 24- to 30,000 fbm. per day. The mills would have been quite similar in size to the R.B. McLean Mill—but more modern!

For the logging, crews worked in teams of three—two hand fallers (with crosscut saw and axes) and a buckler. The logs were bucked short—only 10 to 12-foot lengths! West Coast loggers, used to leaving high stumps, found it onerous to have to conform to the Scottish landlords' rules of leaving a low stump. They hated the changeable Highland winter weather of snow one week; rain the next.

For 'yarding', there were "International" "TD-9" crawlers and rubber-tired 'arches'. There was also 'high-lead' logging with spar



Raising a Spar Tree



Photos:  
Bert Simpson Collection

(1.) **Unloading logs** into Log pond  
Logs were 'parbuckled' off the trucks at the Log dump. Note the cat and arch yarding another 'turn' of logs behind the truck.

trees—West Coast-style. They were powered by 'Lawrence' double-drum winches.

Each company had their own mechanics, millwrights, blacksmith, cooks and other support staff—a fully-staffed logging/mill camp.

By 1941, there were twenty CFC 'companies' operating in Scotland; by 1942 - thirty. By late 1943, the "U-boat" menace had been reduced so, ten CFC companies were sent

back to Canada, where an acute shortage of skilled wood-workers had developed. George Woodward was in this group. He ended up working as a 'log scaler' for 'Alice Lake Logging Company' in Port Hardy, where he stayed for the rest of his life, eventually becoming the local Magistrate.

After "D-Day", ten of the 'companies' were sent to France to cut and mill timber closer to the battle lines. (Part of the post-'D-Day' planning included towing 131 rafts of logs over to France to have an immediate log supply for the CFC sawmills near the Normandy coast.)

The CFC companies underwent the same basic training as regular infantry, even though their work was generally away from the front. They had to do military training on weekends at their camps to keep up-to-date. In December, 1944, some units were sent into the 'Battle of the Bulge', when the German Army made their last attempt to stop the Allied advance in the Ardennes region.

The CFC was disbanded in September, 1945.

[Acknowledgement to 1943 Report on CFC by C.P. Stacey to Defence Dept.]

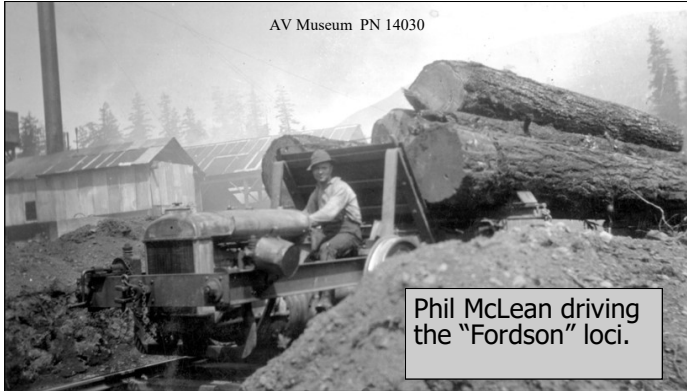


A new CFC 'company' arrives in camp, - duffel bags & 'tin hats' on their backs.

## LOGGING WITH THE 'R.B. McLEAN LUMBER COMPANY' - 1920s-1940s

R.B. McLean moved his lumber operation from Chilliwack to the Alberni Valley in 1925-26 after purchasing timberlands in the Cherry Creek district. He arrived with his three adult sons—Arnold, who soon took over management of the sawmill; Walter, who looked after logging operations to supply the Mill; and Phil, who was the blacksmith/mechanic who kept the machinery operating.

In the beginning, logging took place on the relatively level terrain in Cherry Creek and along the base of Beaufort Mountains. They logged on their own property, as well as in the timber on neighbouring farms. Logs were moved by rail to the Mill pond. McLeans owned a 'Fordson' tractor [below] with rail wheels to start with but, after the first year, they were making enquiries to "Westminster Iron Works" about a gas locomotive. They needed something with more power but "McLean's" was too small of an operation to afford a steam locomotive.



AV Museum PN 14030

Phil McLean driving the "Fordson" loci.

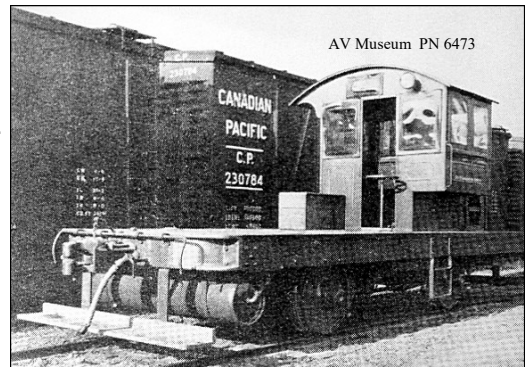
They ordered a 'Buda' gas locomotive in 1928 for \$9250. Shortly after, they bought a flat car with bunks for moving logs. The "Buda" could handle a loaded log car or move one or two box cars down to the E&N main line.

By the 1930s, available timber on the Valley bottom was becoming scarce so, logging began on the slopes of the Beaufort Mountains, above the Mill. It was in the Thirties that the

McLeans began 'truck logging', mainly because rail logging on steep slopes is technically difficult, expensive and simply dangerous. Fortunately for the McLeans, heavy truck technology was evolving and improving rapidly by that time, with more powerful engines, pneumatic tires, better transmissions and brakes. Trucks could handle log-hauling duties off the mountain.

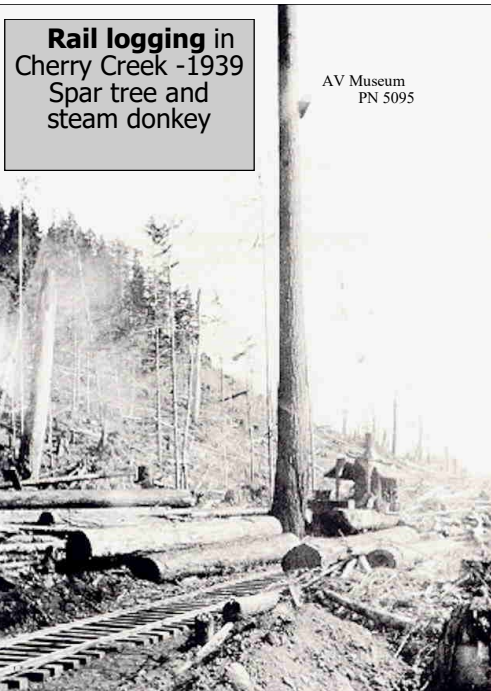
Their first truck was a "Ford", bought in 1934 for \$1224. They got a trailer from "Hayes-Anderson" of Vancouver. The 'Ford', however, had mechanical brakes, which 'faded'

after prolonged application on heavy grades. (Henry Ford refused to use hydraulic systems until 1939.)



AV Museum PN 6473

New "Buda" gas loci arrives from the Mainland in 1928, via the CPR. [below] "Buda" with a log car. (1930s)



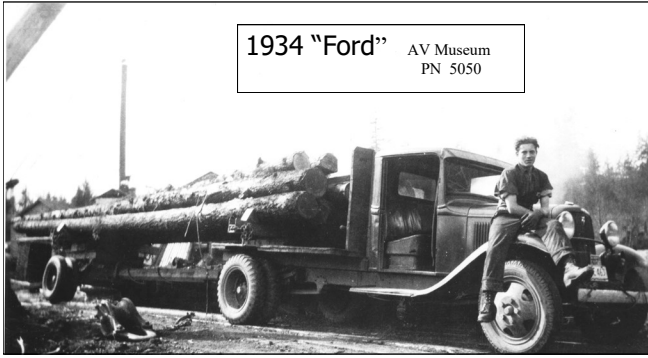
AV Museum PN 5095

**Rail logging** in Cherry Creek -1939 Spar tree and steam donkey



AV Museum PN 12931

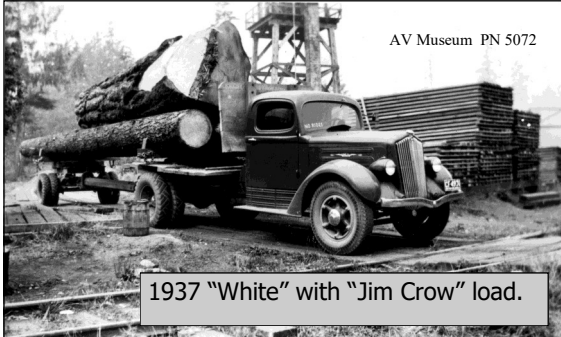




1934 "Ford" AV Museum  
PN 5050

By 1937, the forest industry was booming and McLeans bought a second log truck—a brand-new "White" - for \$2800. It was converted to a lumber truck before long and McLeans bought a heavier 1939 "White" for log-hauling. Big "Red", a 1945 "Hayes", was custom-built to work the steep Beaufort slopes, with extra-large brake drums and 10' bunks. It cost \$10,944.

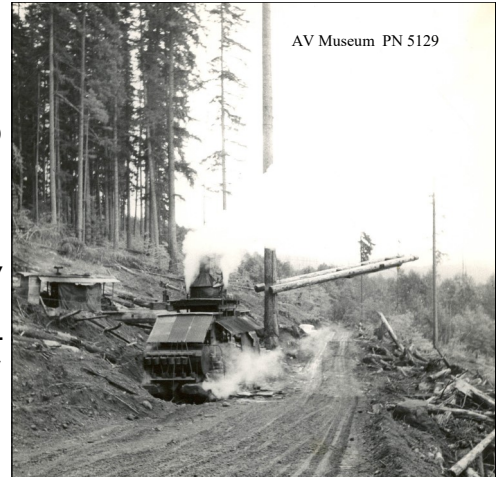
Walter McLean did 'high-lead' logging, using wooden spar trees. He was also the "high rigger" for the operation. Logs were yarded in to the landing with a 9" x 10-1/4" "Washington Iron Works" steam donkey. A gas donkey was used early on to power the load-



AV Museum PN 5072

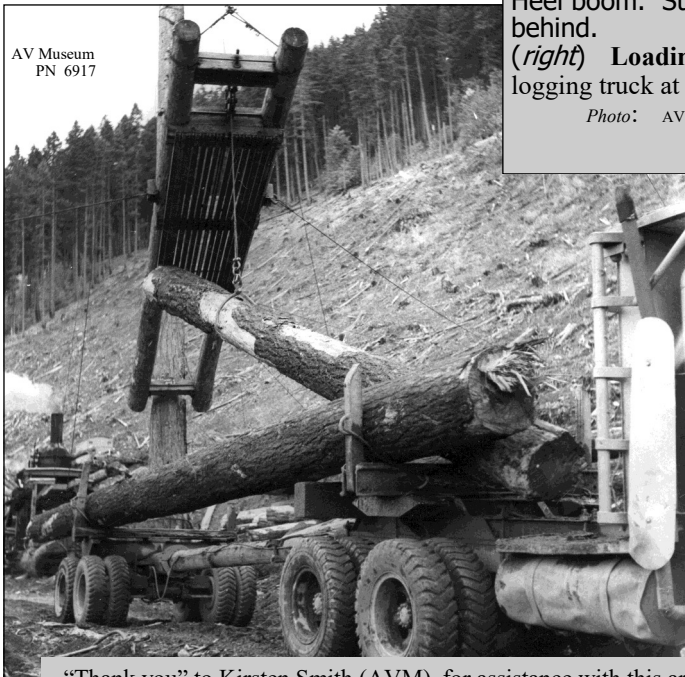
1937 "White" with "Jim Crow" load.

ing operation, using a 'heel boom'. They bought a new 'Fordson' gas donkey for \$1000 in 1929. This was replaced by a "Lawrence", with a "V-8" gas engine in 1937 for \$2200. They used the "Fordson" as a 'trade-in' and got \$1200 taken off the selling price of the 'Lawrence'. They added 'Skagit' gas donkeys in the 1940s and bought the current 'Washington Iron Works' steam yarder second-hand in 1944.



AV Museum PN 5129

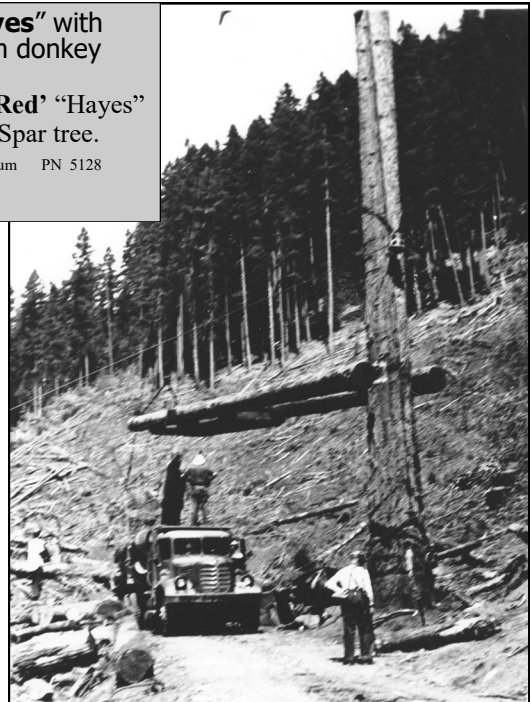
Steam Yarder and gas-powered Loading Donkey (left) working with a wooden spar tree and heel boom. (1948)



AV Museum  
PN 6917

(l.) Loading "Hayes" with Heel boom. Steam donkey behind.  
(right) Loading 'Red' "Hayes" logging truck at the Spar tree.

Photo: AV Museum PN 5128



"Thank you" to Kirsten Smith (AVM) for assistance with this article and to Ed Spencer for information re. 'Ford' brakes.

-This page is sponsored by Don Hudson.



## AT THE INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE CENTRE

### 'STRATHCONA' RESTORATION CONTINUES

Tom Maher, Fred Raven, Jan Jansma and Barry Williamson continue work on the 1882 'parlour car' once operated on the E&N Railway. Much of the exterior has been scraped, as well as much of the interior's wooden panelling. The fancy woodwork, such as carved flowers, presents more of a challenge. [Photo, lower left] -panel is scraped; fancy work remains with layers of crusted varnish.

The plan is to restore a section of the coach, so that visitors can see the 'Before' and 'After'. One can see that in the photo of the exterior of the car, at the upper left.

Tom Maher [centre photo]



demonstrates a possible display of two of the plush easy chairs at one of the folding tables under a coach window. Jan Jansma is seen above working on one of the window frames. Fred is invisible inside the coach.



As found Photo: Fyfe

A crew, led by Les Stevens, is restoring a steam-powered, self-propelled drill rig, salvaged from northern BC by Ken Fyfe. It had been abandoned and much of the wood frame had rotted away. The boiler (r.) must be checked by the Inspector.

### 1923 "KEYSTONE" STEAM DRILLER

small



Drill rig, with derrick folded down for travelling to the next job.

While Les is on leave, Mike Hobson continues to work. Front (steering) axle is installed; rear wheels next. (lower right photo).



(l.) Mike H. and Les

New beams to support the boiler, engine and drill rig are put into place.





## AT THE INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE CENTRE

On October 27, 2015, there was an event at the IHC to celebrate the successful restoration of the steam engine that once powered the head-rig at the "Pacific Pine" sawmill ("A" Mill) on the Fraser River below New Westminster. All of the persons who had helped—with parts, with advice, with specialized skills, with support—were invited to enjoy the sight of the engine 'chuffing' away for the first time in almost sixty years.

The project originated when Les Stevens went to see Ron Smith in Ladner, to check into a possible replacement fly-wheel for the 'Wheland' steam engine that powers the McLean Sawmill. Ron offered him a whole engine—one of the five that used to power "Pacific Pine" "A-Mill" on the Fraser River. It had been in pieces since its salvage from the closure of the old mill.

When Les got the pieces home, he laid them out in their proper positions, finding that everything was there, except for the top part of the Governor..... so, he decided to re-assemble it.

The October 27 'Steam-Up' was in celebration of the successful completion of the project.

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### REPAIRS and MAINTENANCE

As well as restoring and maintaining "artifacts" in the 'Industrial Collection of the AV Museum, the



Photos:  
D. Hooper

**"STEAM-UP"** October 27, 2015  
1917 "Farquhar" provided the steam to run the engine.  
About 100 people were in attendance at the IHC.

Ron Smith came with his grandson ,  
bringing a photo of "Pacific Pine" mill.

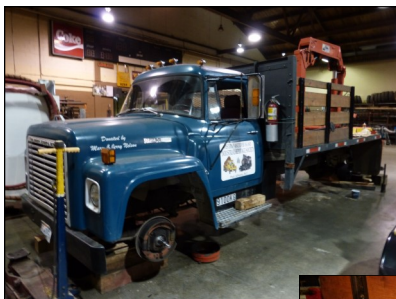


Mike Hobson & Keith Young

(r.) Les monkey-wrenching  
before opening up the steam.



I.H.S. owns vehicles and equipment that enable it to do its work—forklifts and cranes for lifting engines and heavy parts; trucks for transporting artifacts to Shows, parades and events and to and from the McLean Mill. The 1974 "International" needed serious brake work, which is almost complete as this issue goes to the printer.



(above)  
1974 "International"  
Donated by the Gerry Nelson family to  
the I.H.S.



(l.) Bob East (l.) &  
Mike Hobson check  
rear brake.

(r.) Randy Catto and  
Andrew Weaver  
replace booster.



## MEMBER NEWS



APR locomotive Engineer and Fireman ROD GLEDHILL received a Heritage Award from Mayor Ruttan for the restoration work on the 1912 "Shay" "Two-Spot" locomotive in 2015.

Our condolences to the family on the passing of ALAN GREENE, the 'donkey puncher' and all-round logger/member of the "J.J. Logging" crew at the McLean Mill.  
He will be missed.

It is a year since the passing of KAREN HOLM (below). Karen volunteered a lot at the McLean Mill and, even during her illness, continued to bring snacks to I.H.S. volunteers, to greet and wave to the passengers on the steam train.  
She is missed.



### —EDITOR'S NOTES—

We wish to acknowledge that the Industrial Heritage Society receives a lot of support from many quarters in Port Alberni and beyond. First, acknowledgements to the City and the AV Museum; also to the Government of BC for the "Community Gaming Grant" that permitted the restoration of the 1926 'Federal' truck, repairs and insurance for our work vehicles, a new paint job on a passenger coach, a new hydraulic pump for the 'Lobster' (brushing the railroad), and other projects.

A big "Thanks" to Ron Smith of Ladner for the donation of the steam engine, as a possible spare for the McLean Mill engine. "Thanks", too, go to Scott McCormick for locating seats to replace those vandalized on January 15—a nice antidote to a depressing event.

Lastly, a speedy recovery to Les Stevens.... but not too speedy!

#### MEMBERSHIP IN THE W.V.I.I.H.S.

\$15 / year Cash or cheque to:  
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#### "SPOT NEWS"

"SPOT NEWS" is published thrice yearly and is a benefit of membership in the I.H.S.... and you are supporting the preservation of Industrial heritage on Vancouver Island. Send queries or material for articles to D. Hooper  
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