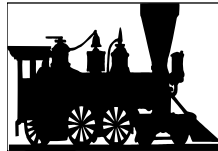


# SPOT NEWS

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## Western Vancouver Island Industrial Heritage Society

Issue 42  
November 2009



**ARRIVAL OF THE "BIRTHDAY TRAIN",** August 28, 2009  
Linda Hunter holds the banner. (G. Williamson, Enr.)  
[Inset: "Yeller" 1947 'Hayes' carries Olympic Torchbearer, Isaiah Taylor, down Stamp Avenue.]

### “I BIN WORKIN’ ON THE RAILROAD...”



**The Big Rock**  
Steve drills hole before splitting the rock. Soup Campbell in foreground.

“The Alberni Sub is again open.” So said ‘Soup’ Campbell at the I.H.S. November Board Meeting. This may have been a bit premature and unofficial, but it did express the sense of accomplishment felt by the many I.H.S. volunteers who had made a concerted effort in October to re-open the track between Parksville and Port Alberni.

In May-June, Kevin Hunter led the brushing attack on eight years growth of broom and alders between the McLean Mill spur and the big trestle on Cameron Lake. This opened the way for the cavalcade of speeders to do their tour in July. Most of the volunteers were from the East Coast of the Island and Victoria. The same group completed the job in October. The ‘Sing-Sing Gang’ (rock-breakers) put in more than 500 hours in October to clear rock falls and slides above the Cam-

eron Valley, finishing the job on Hallowe’en. The biggest rocks had to be broken up before they could be moved. Ken Fyffe’s excavator, working from a steel rail car, hauled by the ‘Hi-Railer’, did such a great job that Ken was named, “The Landscaper”. Then, damaged track had to be replaced and new rails laid, spiked and tamped. And, of course, the gauge had to be checked.



(above) **Breaking up the Big Rock**  
Steve Middelkoop operates the hydraulic rock splitter.  
(below) The ‘Landscaper’ prepares to park for the night.  
Other photos: D. Hooper

(below) **Brushing Complete!**  
Kevin Hunter (l.) and James Woodyatt shake hands to celebrate the completion of the clearing of the Parksville to Port Alberni line.  
Photo: Sterling Stump



(above) **Ken Fyfe knocks down broom** with his flail mower, much to the joy of the rest of the crew.  
Photo: Sterling Stump  
(below) **Crew levers rail into place** at rockfall site. Rob Gair (l.) checks track gauge while crew (l. to r.) N. Malbon, P. Geddes, L. Evans & R. Clark lever the rail.



Ken Fyfe loaded his machine on and off the railcar, using a big timber baulk as a ‘step’, while stabilizing the machine with the bucket. The machine was chained onto the railcar until it was time to park.



**MEMBERS at WORK—Industrial Heritage Centre**



B.C. Hydro crews connect new line to the I.H.C.

(below) G. Blake (flag) before the parade with -Leader of the Opposition Carol James & MLA Scott Fraser. J. Heid (l) and J. Jansma at ends.



The main happening at the I.H.C. (Old Arena) is the new electrical service. There IS more light in the building. The final cost, to be divided between the three user groups—Curling Club, Sunshine Wood-working Club and the I.H.S. -is still being calculated at press time.

During the season, I.H.S. members took part in the two local parades, the Parksville parade and showed off vehicles and vintage equipment at several local events, such as National Forestry Day. Due to budget restraints, we did not go out of town except to Parksville. A highlight for publicity was for 'Yeller' - the 1947 McLean Lumber "Hayes" logging truck—to carry the Olympic flame on one leg of

the Torch Run through Port Alberni on November 1st. (see Cover). The national media was there in force and driver, Hank Bakken, was in the spotlight, along with the truck.

Fred Myers of Campbell River donated two frames, some new solid rubber tires and one motor of ~1920-vintage "White" trucks, to the I.H.S. Les Stevens and George Rogers are already working on engine and frame while John Reeves is building the driver's seat. The engine has already been fired up!

Lorne Bratt, with the patience of Job, if not the vocabulary, continues to wrestle with the Rowe 'TD-14' while Bob Dingsdale works on the 1955 'Mack'. He made enough progress to feel like showing the truck at the Truck Show in September. Vic Laughlin is now working on the engine for the 1965 "Mercury" truck. [photo to right]

The 1958 "Sproat Lake Hayes" (H-34) now has its water tank mounted and painted and temporary bunks for moving logs at the Mill, where it spent the summer at the landing by the spar tree and doing the occasional demonstration log dumps.



**P.A.'s best at the Parksville Parade**  
(l. to r.) J. Reeves, J. Heid, F. Bradley, G. Blake, Tony Super.

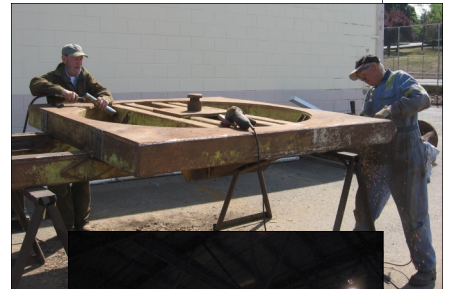


(Clockwise from left)  
**Rod Clark** with stationary engines at Forestry Day.

**Al Green and Bob East** clean up truck turntable.

**Bob Dingsdale** on newly-restored fender of the 1955 'Mack'.

**1948 'Lorain'** crane builds a load on 1958 'Hayes' for' log dump demo at Truck show. R. Catto on ground; H. Bakken on crane; J. Heid in truck.



Lorne & in-law work on TD-14



# STEAM DONKEY PROJECT

Although the Official Opening was celebrated in August, June 26, 2009 marked the first time in almost 40 years that steam logging was done in the Alberni Valley. The McLean Steam Donkey Restoration became the 'High-lead Steam logging demonstration project'. The spar tree was rigged, blocks were hung, line spooled onto the drums, and the rigging prepared.

Then, on June 26, engineer Keith Young raised steam and the crew, under the watchful eye...and booming voice... of the 'push', Jack James, brought in the first turn of logs.

It was a big day, especially for those who had never seen 'steam in the woods'. The 80-year old machine, effortlessly and, almost noiselessly, yarded in two logs. Jack James was back where he had started in the woods, 65 years ago.



Gordon Erickson makes an eye splice.



(above right) Aaron Toms fastens a guy line to the spar.  
(below) An anchor stump  
P. Geddes, J. James, G. Erickson



(l.) Jack James signals for tension on the guy line.

(r.) High rigger, Aaron Toms hangs a block on the spar.



(left) **STEAM DONKEY FIRED UP** for first time since EXPO '86. The donkey was last restored for the "Steam Expo" week at EXPO 86 in Vancouver. (Main photo) Steam logging demonstration.



(l.) Engineer Keith Young fires the donkey.

(r. Inset) Hank Bakken (l.) & Gordon Erickson wait for steam to be raised.



**Tree Rigging Crew**  
(l. to r.) Randy Catto, Tony Super, Aaron Toms, Jack James, Gordon Erickson. Photos: D. Hooper

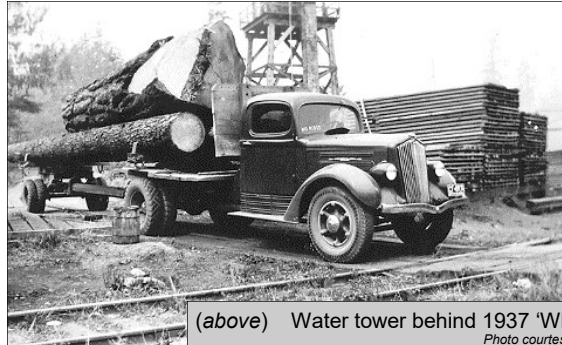


**June 26 Crew**  
(l. to r.) Keith Young (Enr.), Hank Bakken, Jack James, Pete Geddes, Les Stevens (& Ben). (Seated behind) Randy Catto, David Hooper, Tony Super. Photo: N. Malbon

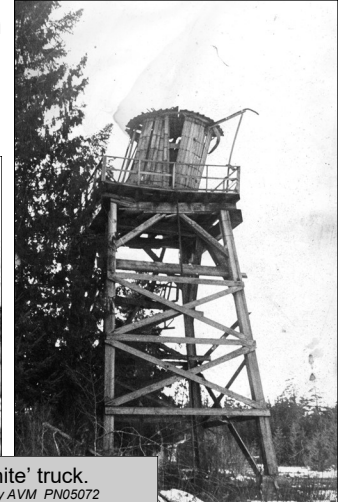
## WATER TOWER AT McLEAN MILL

The concrete footings had been hidden for years in the undergrowth behind the Ice-house ('root cellar') across from the Cookhouse at McLean Mill and last year, "Soup" Campbell took on the project of erecting a water tower on the very spot that the original had stood for years.

The water tower was built a couple of years after the construction of the Mill in 1925, to provide a regular water supply to the boiler, as well as to the houses on the mill site. Before that, residents had to carry water in buckets from Kitsuksis Creek for domestic use.



(above) Water tower behind 1937 'White' truck.  
 Photo courtesy AVM PN05072  
 (right) Derelict water tower 1960s. Photo courtesy AVM Collection



The Tower construction was a great project as it demonstrates the use of the big timbers that the Mill used to produce, as well as adding to the "visitor experience". Tourists have something more to see and it is a structure that was a vital component to the operation of the original Mill. Heavy timber construction is not common these days so visitors also got the opportunity to see 'heritage building methods' in action!

The timbers were cut in 2008 and 'Soup' and other volunteers began assembling the 'legs' of the tower on the ground in the spring of 2009. The crane lifted the 'legs' in June and the job continued during the summer, with the top deck being laid in late September, including the safety railings. Now, all that remains is to in-

stall the tank.

**RAISING THE TOWER**  
 (Clockwise, from the left)

1. Lifting the first section
2. Both sections standing.
3. 1st day Crew: Kate Campbell, Soup, H. Bakken, T. Super. Temporary bracing holds the two sections.
4. Cross-bracing is now in place; scaffolding in place to work on the top deck of the tower.
5. Detail of the timber bracing at the top.
6. Starting to lay the deck beams.  
 Soup (left) and Bert Simpson on the scaffolding
7. Deck beams all in place.
8. **Deck is complete!** (l. to r.) Bob East, Soup, Bert Simpson.
9. New View of the McLean Mill, including the Water Tower.

## “LOGGING WITH JACK”

Some photos and memories of Jack James, West Coast logger extraordinaire

Yarding the logs to a central collecting point, once they have been cut down, has always been one of the basic functions of logging. Oxen and horses provided the first motive power, pulling the logs along ‘skid roads’. Nowadays, heavy-lift helicopter are often used.

It was the steam engine, at the end of the 1800’s, that provided the big breakthrough that led to industrial logging. The steam donkey made it possible to provide the steady supply of logs required by industrial sawmills.

The first steam donkeys did ‘ground-lead’ yarding. That is, they dragged the logs, one at a time, through the stumps, rocks and slash. It was very inefficient but, it was faster than animal power... and the ‘donkey’ did not need to be fed when it was not working!

In the early 1900’s, ‘high-lead’ yarding was developed and this revolutionized logging even more. Using a ‘spar tree’ allowed loggers to log bigger settings, as a 140-foot spar allowed them to reach much farther (sometimes more than 1000 feet), to move the logs, with less friction (the logs were no longer dragged through the setting but rather with one end off the ground) and more logs could be moved at a time, held by three or four ‘chokers’ attached to the main line.

The ultimate form of this kind of logging was when several spar trees were used over a large cut block. There would be the ‘home tree’ with a big steam skidder and other shorter spars with ‘cold deck’ machines that yarded the logs around them into a big pile at the base of the tree. Jack noted that this created a kind of ‘inventory’.



(above) **HOW MANY SPAR TREES** can you see?  
Note the ‘home tree’ with a skidder in the foreground. Piles of logs may be seen at the foot of ‘cold deck’ trees. Eg. Top left corner. This is near Holberg.

(r.) SWINGING IN A ‘TURN’ from cold deck, using North Bend system.

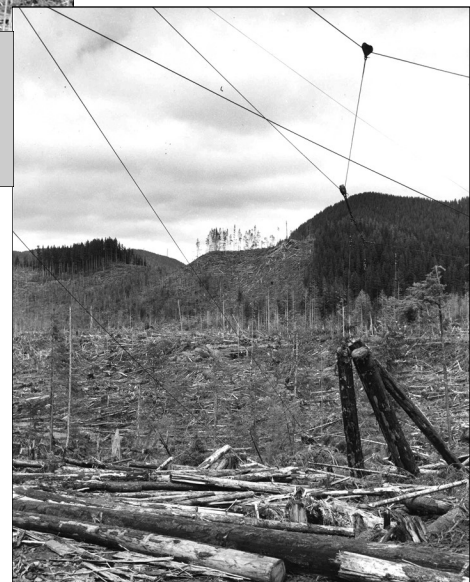
Then, the skidder at the ‘home tree’ would ‘swing’ the logs in from the cold deck piles, using the ‘North Bend’ skyline system. This delivered logs in industrial quantities.

This made rail logging feasible. A locomotive like the ‘Number 7’ could pull 40 log cars at a time from the Ash River down to the log dump on the Alberni Inlet. It took a lot of logging to provide a trainload of logs!

The key person in high-lead logging was the ‘high

rigger’, the man responsible for preparing and rigging the spar trees. Production was dependant on always having the next spar tree ready to go when a setting was complete so, he was the highest paid worker in the industry.

Jack was hired by Macmillan-Blodel as the rigger for the Stillwater Division (Powell River) in 1959 and his pay was \$26/day. The previous rigger, Stan Botswell, had fallen 60 feet out of a tree when his rope broke. (to be continued)



# MEMBERS AT WORK?

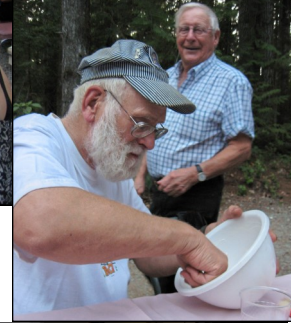
The I.H.S., Alberni Pacific Railway and McLean Mill Appreciation Supper' took place at McLean Mill on August 31, with more than 120 in attendance.



'SOUPER SUPPER'  
(below)  
K.G. (Soup) Campbell  
enjoying dessert under  
the eye of John Reeves.



CHANGING A TIRE—I.H.S. STYLE  
Bob Dingsdale gets the necessary supervision.



APPRENTICE WELDERS  
Ben Koning (l) & Kris Mann on break.



(above) Will McGraw & Kaitlyn Matthews  
went to Grad in the 1913 'McLaughlin'.  
Photo: R. McGraw



(l.) Pete Geddes, Fireman.  
  
(below) Chris Hall ready to bark the  
logs for the sled under the dump  
machine by the Machine Shop.

(r.) Jack James & John Reeves with  
the new springboard. Photos: D. Hooper



1916 (?) "White" Truck  
George Rogers preps the  
frame for painting.



# ALBERNI PACIFIC RAILROAD

The 2009 season will draw to a close with the annual 'Santa Runs' on December 5. Once again, the "Number Seven" proved very reliable, only missing one run out of more than 130 scheduled and that was due to fuel shortage, not mechanical problems. Between "Doctor Dan" (mechanic Dan Gledhill) and Rollie Hurst, the locomotive has been maintained in good operating condition. August 28 was a special day as this was the date chosen to celebrate the 80th birthday of the "Number 7", built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works in Philadelphia, PA. Several hundred well-wishers were waiting at Port Alberni Station when the venerable locomotive drove through the Birthday banner. We were grateful that several locals added to the period ambience by parking their vintage vehicles at the Station for the occasion.



(above & centre) Before the Ceremony Public waiting on the platform; vintage vehicles in the parking lot.

(right) **The Birthday Cake**  
Quality Foods donated two cakes. Bonnie MacIntyre starts to serve the cake after Mayor MacRae did the ceremonial first cut.



(l.) **CONDUCTOR TRAINEE HOLM**  
Frank Holm throws switch under the eye of Rick Lord. With a schedule of more than 130 runs a year, the Alberni Pacific Railroad needs some new conductors. Frank Holm and David Hooper are currently under training.

(below) **SPEEDER TOUR**  
I.H.S. member Don Wigen took part in the Tour over the Hump to the big trestle on Cameron Lake. Below, you see the 31 speeders before they set out from the railyard on July 5.

(r.) **STATION AGENTS**  
The "Hunter Girls" looked after the Station in August. (Amber, Kaitlyn, Linda & Mimi)

(below) **FUELING 'NUMBER 7'**  
With its small fuel tank, the locie must be fuelled regularly during the Mill layover. R. Hurst is at the pump while V. Merryfield has the nozzle in the cab.





# ANTIQUUE TRUCK SHOW at McLean Mill

The I.H.S. sponsored the third Antique Truck Show at the McLean Mill September 19-20. More than 600 visitors came to check out the 51 vehicles on display. There was plenty of activity on site: steam logging and sawmilling demos, blacksmithing, a 'Hall-Scott' motor was fired up on occasion, truck parades. Participants got to 'talk trucks' at the Truckers' Chili Supper, prepared by Cook Liz. "Mayor's Choice" - R. Stevens 1954 'Mack'.



**SCENES FROM THE TRUCK SHOW**

*Photos: Rod Clark & D. Hooper*



"Peoples' Choice" - 1919 'Olds'



"Macks" from Washington State

**Alberni Pacific Railway and McLean Steam Sawmill**

**November**

- 27-29 Fr-Su Christmas Village/ Festival of Christmas Lights at the Mill.
- 28 Sa. Winter Wine Train to Chase & Warren Winery  
Departure: 1 p.m. Tel. 724-4909 for reservation to Winery  
Tel. 723-1376 for reservation to the Mill.
- 29 Su. Train Rides **FROM** McLean Mill to the Winery. .  
Departures: Noon & 2 p.m. (\$5)

**December**

- 4-6 Fr-Su Festival of Lights at the Mill.
- 5 Sat. 'Santa Train' (\$5)

**Reservations recommended for special events, especially for the 'Santa Train'!**

**Contact:** www.alberniheritage.com  
Tel. (250) 723-1376

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**ALBERNI  
PACIFIC  
RAILWAY**  
ESTABLISHED 1984



**MCLEAN  
MILL**  
NATIONAL  
HISTORIC SITE

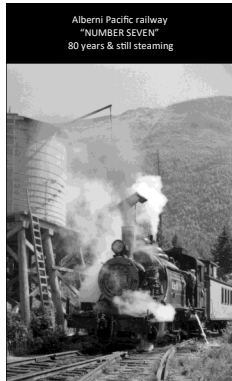
**CHRISTMAS GIFT SUGGESTIONS**

**"Number Seven" 80 years & still steaming**

80th Birthday Souvenir Booklet

16 pages with many historic photos.

\$5



**"Hayes" Truck T-shirts \$20**  
-1947 McLean Lumber Co. "Hayes"  
- "Evolution of the 'Hayes' Trucks"  
featuring 3 "Hayes" trucks restored by the  
Industrial Heritage Society—1932, '47, '58

**I.H.S. 2010 Calendars—\$16**  
featuring members at work.

AVAILABLE AT THE AV MUSEUM or CONTACT THE EDITOR. (Below)

**Editor's Notes:**

In recent years, the Gaming Commission ('Bingo') has been the main source of operating funds for the Industrial Heritage Society, along with many other community organizations. This has been used for the annual maintenance of the 'Number 7' and for the restoration of heritage trucks and equipment. We have been informed that the I.H.S. will be cut off, as of March, 2010. Thus, the Board of the I.H.S. is having to give serious consideration as to how we will proceed into the future: continue to operate but at a much reduced level?; make annual application for 'Direct Access Grants' for specific projects—but only to work on non-City owned equipment?; locate other sources of funding? The '2-Spot Fund' was liquidated to pay for the Electrical Upgrade at the Old Arena. The Gaming Commission had insisted on its liquidation anyways, BEFORE announcing that we would be cut off. I.H.S. members are asked to stay tuned and supportive during this difficult period.

**MEMBERSHIP in the WVIHS**  
\$15 / year. Cash or cheque to:  
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Nanaimo, B.C. V9V 9B4  
Tel. 390-7508

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