



SPOT NEWS

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Western Vancouver Island Industrial Heritage Society

Issue 51



October 2012



Alberni Pacific Railway's 'Number 7', in 'log train' mode for "Far Rails Tour 2011", being watered by Engineer John Land at McLean Mill while 1947 "Hayes" truck waits.

Photo: Robert Turner

ALBERNI PACIFIC RAILWAY—

This summer, the train operated on a 4-day a week schedule, with two runs on Thursday and Saturday and one run, with extended stay at the Mill, on Friday and Sunday. This autumn, there were several charters—from cruise ships in Nanaimo, a wedding, wine trains and two 'Fall Steam Specials. Half a dozen volunteers attended the re-opening event for the Nanaimo Train Station in July to represent the A.P.R. They took the hand car and velocipede to offer rides to the public [see photo, left] and manned a table to publicize heritage attractions in Port Alberni. [See Pat Miller at the table.]



Engineer Rollie Hurst was 'hors de combat' during the summer so John Land did all of the engineering duties in the cab of "No. 7" until Rollie was OK'd for service in September. Several Conductor and Fireman Trainees have been building up their hours.

A significant amount of track work was done this summer, led by Foreman Rob Gair. A number of broken joint bars and



Photos: B. Miller



rotten ties were replaced by Rob and volunteers. In the photo to the above right, K.G. Campbell, Rob, Erich and Robert Campbell have dug out a tie under a broken joint bar behind the Barclay Hotel. Big Steve and Gord Blake are behind.



Andrew Underwood, Conductor, in fine new vest (& watch!)



(Counterclockwise, from below)
William Brown, 'trainman-trainee'

"Hawaiian Evening Special" & "Centennial Belles"
(l. to r.) Maxine & Bud Munsil, Bill Brown, Shirley Whyte, Linda Brown.

Nick Acciavati, Fireman-Trainee



PARADES, SHOWS & OTHER EVENTS



Cliff West & "Belles" at Ukee Days

Summer is the busy season for the I.H.S. and there were more events than ever this year, due to the Centennial of the City of Port Alberni. The July 1st and Fall Fair Parades had an added 'Centennial Flavour, with banners and the "Centennial Belles" adding a touch of class. (They also helped with decorating.) There was a "Homecoming Weekend" with an extra "Picnic Excursion" train to the McLean Mill the August long weekend and a Centennial Truck Show that I.H.S. members and vehicles attended.

The July 1st Parade was the first local outing for two restored vehicles—the 1928

"Chevrolet" fire truck (the City's first), and the 1944 "International" 6 x 6 log truck. Both vehicles got a lot of exposure—and compliments—this summer. For example, the "International" made its out-of-town debut at the ATHS Show in Duncan. The fire truck was the centerpiece of our participation in the "Ukee Days" parade in Ucluelet.



Tom Maher with '44 "International" at its first 'foreign' show since restoration was completed.

The I.H.S. was a main participant in the "Hayes & Friends" 90th Anniversary Truck Show in Port Alberni. Members took 11 vehicles from the collection to support this historic show. Even our own Antique Truck Show did not mark the end of our work. There was still "National Forestry Day" and the 100th Anniversary of the BC Forest Service event at the end of September.

The "Old-time Logging" crew did at least 25 shows for the public, performing every weekend. They finished the season with a "Command Performance" for the Mayor, Councillors and other public officials October 11.

The "Vintage trucks & rail equipment" display in the Station Truck Bays finished the tourist season with more than 400 visitors signed into the Guest book. Jake Heid and Jan Jansma were the main 'hosts' at that site this year.

Truck Dept. members have spent the past month putting vehicles 'to bed for the winter': moving vehicles into storage at the IHC, at the McLean Barn, in the



Fall Fair Parade - "Waiting"

B. Cherwak, L. Stewart, H. Bakken, B. East, J. Heid [Inset: B. Cherwak cleans "Anna Berry Hayes"]

truck bays at the Station.

There are lot more than we had only seven years ago.

Big and Small

Les Stewart (l.) and Alan Williamson ready for the Parade with 1918 "Maxwell" (BCFDC) and the 1967 "EXPO Hayes".



UPCOMING EVENTS



WINTER STEAM TRAINS

- Nov. 23 "Spirit of Christmas" run to Craft Fair at McLean Mill.
- Nov. 24 Winter Wine Train Special / "Spirit of Christmas" run to Craft Fair combined.
- Dec. 1 Santa Train
- Dec. 2 Santa Train

Reservations are strongly advised.
Telephone 723-1376 or check on-line
alberniheritage.com

Port Alberni Centennial 1912-2012



Exhibit is ongoing.

Alberni Valley Museum — Centennial

Check it out!

Miscellaneous Photos



(left) Schellenberg-Sadzak Wedding



Antique Truck Show



Ron Green



"J.J. Logging Crew - October

Photos: D. Hooper

"I BIN WORKING ON THE RAILROAD"

The work is endless but volunteers put in countless hours nonetheless: repairing the sinking track at Argyle St. and Athol St. crossings, brushing along the track, restoring the "No. 11" locomotive, painting the old tool car, crewing the train, building a new hand car.

Soup Campbell and Sterling Stump have been working every Wednesday at the Roundhouse, restoring the 1942 GE diesel electric. At the start, the cab was a bare metal box. It is now all re-wired and ready for road-testing.



Not quite the **Last Spike** at Argyle Street crossing
R. Gair spiking; K.G. Campbell & nephews Erich & Robert critique his style.



(Above) H.Grist & Soup manoeuvre air tank into place under the "No. 11" loci.



(left) **The new Handcar**
Matt Gregory (r.) and J. Jansma built the car this winter and put it on the rails in September.

(right) **Rewiring controls of No. 11**
Sterling Stump pores over the drawing after installing all the wiring in the panel in the cab.



The passenger coach "Grandy" was painted in June so now we have two coaches looking like new. Our only boxcar was painted in early October by Ben Schievink and David

Hooper. "Community Gaming Grant" money was used on these projects as the I.H.S. owns the cars. [See photos at bottom right.]

Jan Jansma and Matt Gregory built a new hand car (above left) over the past year. They put it on the tracks for the first time in September. Jan & John Reeves ran it. [below]

The tracks to the McLean Mill had to be brushed during the summer. The 'RS-3' was used as a 'brushing platform' to reach the higher branches.



Photos: D. Hooper



OLD-TIME LOGGING

In early June, the steam donkey logging crew were invited to "the Real Thing" - an annual steam logging weekend at "Pomeroy Heritage Farm", north of Vancouver, WA. Merv Johnson and Mike Rotschoy, with a team of volunteers from all over the Pacific Northwest, fire up a yarding and a loading donkey to operate a 'high-lead' logging operation similar to the show at McLean Mill. They were especially pleased to meet Jack James as they no longer had anyone who had actually logged with steam and wooden spars.

As well as the yarding and loading donkeys, they had other steam machines—a buzz-saw to cut wood for the donkeys



STEAM IN THE WOODS



Jack (r.) and Merv Johnson discuss the rigging with "loading pot" behind.



Jack on the levers of the yarder, brings in a 'turn'.

and a small rock-crusher. There was a drag saw, a water pump and vintage trucks, cats and shovels.

Visitors were brought on hay wagons to the site.



Mike Rotschoy and Jack James.



Jack & Tony Super. (above)
Hank Bakken on the donkey
Photos: D. Hooper



Crew piling wood for the yarding donkey.

GROWING UP IN A LOGGING CAMP - Memories from Childhood

Jack James and Don Watt grew up near the end of the era of the big steam rail logging camps on Vancouver Island: Jack in a 'Canfor' camp in the Nimpkish Valley; Don in 'Bloedel, Stewart & Welch's' Franklin River Camp "B" There were usually not a lot of children in the camps as the work force was made up mainly of single men. Bunkhouses were the typical housing. 'Married quarters' were a kind of afterthought and, in small camps, there might be none at all, unless for the boss or other 'staff'.

Jack moved to Anetz Lake Camp "A" with his Mom and 5 siblings from Saskatchewan in the early 1940's. His Dad had been there for a year and had built a house for the family but it was a new camp, just carved out of the forest. Apart from the James kids, there was only one other child in camp, Betty-Jane. Her family lived in a boxcar as there was no house for them.

The Ministry of Education would not provide a teacher if there were not a minimum of 9 children so, Jack and the other kids ran free for the next year. There were no 'playgrounds' or organized activities for them. "We had to make our own fun." said Jack. In fact, Anetz Lake was an "industrial site" with logging taking place all around the camp and trains and other heavy equipment moving around the area.

At 11 years, Jack was the oldest and the natural leader of the children. All of the children hung out together. One of the first things that he organized was a 'high-lead' logging 'show'.

He and his brothers found a "BB winch" and put it on a sled. Next, they rigged a 20-foot alder as the 'spar tree' - "with no belt or spurs," said Jack. Then, they logged all of the alders in the 'setting', with some kids as 'chokermen' and another one 'chasing'. They hand-cranked the logs in. They added a 'heel boom' for loading. The Superintendent came to check on their 'clearcut'. When a foreman complained about the 'green' chokermen that he had been given, the Super told him to "Send the 'greenhorns' to Jack; he'll train them!"

The next project was to build a tent-house for the summer, complete with a stove for cooking. They would light the fire and spend the night. But, one day, little brother Ken drank the kerosene and had to be 'medevac-ed' to the nearest hospital - Alert Bay—a trip by boat down the lake, then speeder to the dock at Englewood, then by boat to hospital. James Sr. had already lost a child back in Saskatchewan and was beside himself. Ken survived but, on his return to Anetz Lake, James Sr. burnt down the tent-house.

"So, what to do now?" Jack decided that they would play 'boom-man' on the creek between Anetz Lake and Nimpkish Lake. This meant a rowboat-ride to ferry the other kids across. Brother Bob fell off a log. A kid yelled, "Bob's drowning!" James Sr. heard this and ran, then swam across to pull his son out of the water. End of "Boom-man" project. By this time, Dad got young Jack a job as a 'flunky' in the Cookhouse, to try to keep him out of trouble, but it did not last, after Jack's encounter with a bear in the early morning. [See Issue #40]

Jack was in a quandary. "Can't do this; can't do that". A neighbour had a .22 and let the kids use it, if they bought the bullets. James Sr., a crack shot, would teach his kids to shoot on Sundays, the only day off.

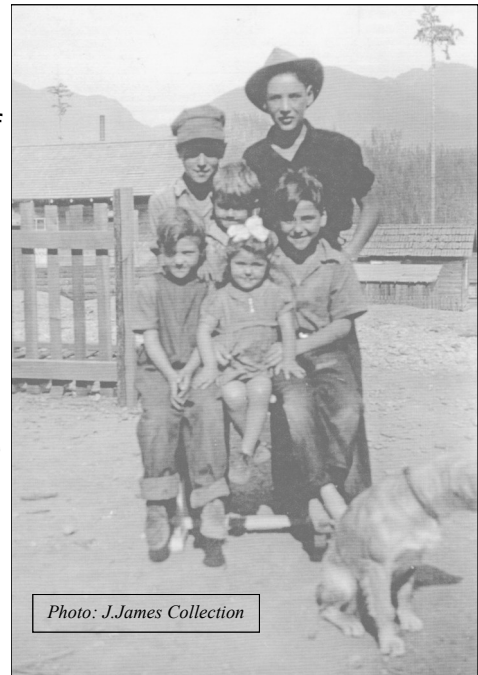


Photo: J.James Collection

The James kids at Anetz Lake Camp

Jack is the tall boy at the back with the fedora. A logger gave him the hat and Jack liked it so much that he never took it off, even at table. Counter-clockwise from Jack are: Bob, holding young Ken, Lindy, sister Pat, Bill and Mickey the dog.

All of the brothers grew up to work in the logging industry.

Jack noted that mothers always knew where the kids were by listening for the dogs.

One day, Jack borrowed the .22, but left it on the bed, loaded, and went into the next room. Young Ken, age 4, picked up the gun and emptied the whole magazine of bullets. The walls of the house were 'Donnaconna board', which the bullets went straight through. Everyone hit the floor while the bullets cracked overhead. Another "No-no" added to the list.

When another family with children moved into Camp the next year, a one-room school was opened. Jack was the oldest pupil but placed at "Grade 3". Classes were held from Monday to Friday so, the kids were only free to roam after school and on weekends. After a year of freedom, Jack found it very hard to concentrate in school.

Don Watt moved to Franklin River Camp "B" from Port Alberni in 1943, when he was 4.

That year, the Company—"Bloedel, Stewart & Welch" - built 4 new houses so Camp "B" became home to the Watt family. Before that, Mrs. Watt and Don lived in Port Alberni while Mr. Watt stayed in camp six days a week. He had been working at Franklin River since 1937.

The Franklin River operations and camps had begun in 1934 so it was not as 'young' a camp as Anetz Lake when young Don arrived. There were already 'community services' in place. When the new Camp "B" was built at Coleman Creek, a school, a "Rec Hall" and the cookhouse were among the first buildings to go up.

Schooling went from Grades One to Eight at Franklin. When he was in Grade 8, Don was the only one in that grade. There were 3 Grade Sevens and a few more in Grade Six. They formed the 'senior class' that year. To continue their education past Grade 8, children had to board out, usually with relatives or friends. Don went to high school in Courtenay, where he stayed with his aunt and uncle.

Don mentioned "Movie Night" on Thursdays at the Rec Hall. 'Westerns' and pirate movies were popular. There was also free ice cream at the Cookhouse after supper on Thursdays. All of the camp kids came running with their bowls to line up at the back door. There was badminton and floor hockey in the Rec Hall, too, but Don said that kids spent a lot of time outside. He said that everyone had a dog and the dogs moved around with the kids. He had a 'Scottie' dog and it was a camp sport to hunt rats under the houses with the dogs flushing them out.

Like Jack, he noted that the little kids followed the 'big kids' and they all did things together and did get into their share of mischief. He recounted the 'Zipline Project' across Coleman Creek. The kids found a length of old 'straw line' left by the side of a road. Every kid in camp grabbed on to help to pull it over to the Creek and into place. After anchoring the two ends, they got a tea chest from the Cookhouse to use as the carriage. Billy Marshall was to make the first ride across the zipline but the bottom fell out of the tea chest and he fell into the Creek. How much did the adults know?

He mentioned the time that they found a big case full of watermelons behind the Cookhouse. Every kid, big and small, got a huge piece. Don said that he was unable to eat watermelon for years afterwards.

Bicycles were popular. "Everyone had a bike." The mechanic in the Chainsaw Shop would usually help a kid fix a damaged bike. [To be continued...]



First Franklin River Camp "B" in 1937

Note the one-room schoolhouse above the "Pacific Coast Shay". There are 3 bunkhouses, to the left. Photo: D. Watt Collection

AT THE INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE CENTER—Members and Projects

The Industrial Heritage Center has been a hive of activity all year. Restoration of two vehicles—the City’s first fire truck (1928 “Chev”) and the 1944 “International” 6 x 6—was completed and the units got their first public exposure at shows and parades. Two other units, a 1965 “Mercury” truck— Jim Bracht’s first and the R.B. McLean “Buda” gas loci—continue to be “works in progress” and work has begun to restore the “Farquhar” steam tractor from the McLean Mill. The tractor used to serve as the auxiliary steam boiler at the Mill.

The Antique Truck Show stretched the membership...and emptied the Heritage Centre! The Fall Fair parade was also an “All Hands” exercise.



Ben Schievink & 1928 ‘Chev’ at ‘Hayes & Friends’



(left)
“Farquhar” steam traction engine at I.H.C.

(left below)
Russ McCoy and Les Stevens work on the crankshaft and piston assembly of ‘Farquhar’

(right)
Tom Maher & grand-daughter Katie on 1944 “International” 6 x 6



(l.) 1949 TD-14” crawler of the late Don Rowe. **Lorne Bratt** is to the right of this unit that he helped restore.

(below)
H. Bakken gives a last polish to the 1967 “EXPO” Hayes before the parade.

(bottom left)
B. Simpson & grand-daughters Ava & Kyla are ready for the parade.



2012 ANTIQUE TRUCK SHOW—September 1-3



A "Mack" on "Hayes Corner".

The I.H.S. again hosted the show at the McLean Mill National Historic site. We acknowledge the generous support of the Coastal Community Credit Union. They made the event possible with a "Coastal Spirit Fund" grant. Thanks.

Dozens of Society members worked hard to put on the Show. The 'old-time loggers' put on 4 shows; Hank brought his models; Gord Blake & crew made burgers; Dan took photos; members brought vehicles. It was a busier show season than ever in 2012, due to the Centennial celebrations of the City of Port Alberni.



Gordon Blake—'Burger King'



1937 "White", 1955 "Hayes" on "Model A" Row.

Photos: Danny Jones



(above) "Byers" Shovel—the first excavator of the City of Port Alberni was shown at the Show as well. (left) Cliff West and 1947 "D-8" cat.



2012 is also the 100th anniversary of the BC Forest Service. The BC Forest Discovery Center loaned us their Forest Service Model "A" pickup for the Show. Rod Clark, currently with the Forest Service, models the truck.



Ron Jeskey tries to decide what truck to drive.



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

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"SPOT NEWS"

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