

**Western Vancouver Island Industrial Heritage Society  
Chronological History of Events**

- 1980** \* Six local model railroaders, upset with the condition and placement of the Shay locomotive "Two-Spot", requested permission from the City to cosmetically restore her. During this cleaning process, sonic thickness readings were taken on the boiler shell, revealing very little wear. Robert E. Swanson, British Columbia's first locomotive inspector and driving force behind the Royal Hudson restoration, was invited over to inspect "Two-Spot". He concurred with local opinion that the renovation could and should now be to operational status. Restoration commenced in a leased metal building with no heat and a dirt floor, located within the City Works Yard.
- 1981** \* A Washington Iron Works steam donkey, ex. McLean's Mill, was received and restoration to operational status began concurrently with "Two-Spot".
- 1983** \* The Western Vancouver Island Industrial Heritage Society was formed in September with incorporation and the first meeting held the following month.  
\* The steam donkey restoration was completed and operated at an open house in November.
- 1984** \* **"Two-Spot's" inaugural run**, on 11th. August, was an emotional event and not without some minor setbacks. She finally steamed away from the Roger Street crossing to be met at the Port Alberni Station by a large and patient throng. She was approximately an hour late, however the crowd were very understanding, not having heard her steam whistle for over a quarter of a century.  
\* The McLean Mill trucks and the Westminster Iron Works "Buda" locomotive were received along with the Allis Chalmers grader and the Ross lumber carrier. The truck division, located at the old City Bus Barn on 10th. Avenue, began restoring these artifacts.
- 1985** \* Restoration work was completed on the passenger coach in time for the summer weekend rides with nearly 5500 people carried in that first season.  
\* Restoration continued on the Westminster Iron Works "Buda" locomotive.  
\* The Sproat Lake firetruck was donated and work continued on the 1948 Hayes logging truck.
- 1986** \* **"Steamexpo"**, the two week steam exposition in May, at the beginning of Expo '86 in Vancouver, was a milestone in the Society's brief existence, giving their steam and truck restoration international exposure. In addition to "Two-Spot", the people of the Alberni Valley raised sufficient funds to send the steam donkey and the 1947 Hayes logging truck to Expo, where the donkey was rigged to an "A" frame to create an operating display.

- 1986** Three large cedar logs were delivered to the site by the Hayes truck and (cont) were lifted on and off by the steam donkey during the two weeks. This was the largest display at the Steamexpo grounds, where in excess of a quarter of a million people came to see the twenty plus operating steam locomotives. "Two-Spot" also participated in the Parade of Steam through downtown Vancouver where a further two hundred thousand people were present.
- \* The truck division also took the restored Hayes trucks to the Seattle Truck Convention, a first for the group.
  - \* It was also the first year the group operated the Santa run, a full day of free train rides, warm drinks, Christmas carols and of course Santa Claus. This was the Society's way of thanking the Community for its support.
  - \* The early 1900's crew car was also donated this year.
- 1987** \*
- \* "Two-Spot" ran train rides within the Mill at Alberni Pulp & Paper's 40th. Anniversary celebration's in September.
  - \* The trucks were displayed and the group participated in the 50th. Anniversary of Franklin River Division.
- 1988** \*
- \* G.E. diesel electric locomotive #11 donated from Alberni Pulp & Paper.
  - \* B.C. Electric speeder received.
  - \* 1959 Kenworth truck received.
- 1989** \*
- \* **The McLean Mill**, the eventual northern terminus of the tourist railroad, was designated a National Historic Site by the Canadian National Sites and Monuments Board.
  - \* The 1900's crew car restoration was completed.
- 1990** \*
- \* Another milestone year in the Society's development occurred when the City purchased **the Port Alberni Station** and MacMillan Bloedel the trackage south of Stamp Avenue from CP Rail. The second floor "station raising" and exterior renovation were completed in one long weekend, with tremendous community involvement and close to a hundred volunteers on each of the three days. The station is now the headquarters of the Society, the southern terminus of the tourist railroad and the first building designated a Historic Site by the City of Port Alberni.
  - \* Restoration of the 1945 Hayes truck and the Allis Chalmers grader were completed and displayed in the Fall Fair.
  - \* The truck and small motors groups were active in displaying their restored artifacts at various Fairs and Exhibitions throughout Vancouver Island.

- 1991** \*
- \* The Buda locomotive restoration was completed.
  - \* The 1947 Fairmont speeder was restored and operated at the Santa run.
  - \* 1929 Baldwin 2-8-2 saddle tank locomotive #7 (ex 1055) and an early Vancouver Island cabooses were received.
  - \* Awards of Merit were received from the City of Port Alberni and the B.C. Museum's Association for the Societies efforts to preserve and restore the industrial heritage of the Community and Region respectively.
- 1992** \*
- \* The truck group took a contingent of Hayes trucks to the American Historical Truck Association Convention in Portland, Oregon.
  - \* The train transported 1750 athletes, tourists and dignitaries free of charge for the duration of the B.C. Summer Games as the Societies contribution to this momentous event.
  - \* The 1882 parlour car "Strathcona" was received and stored inside awaiting restoration.
  - \* Two wood stave water tanks were disassembled from Copper Canyon and brought to Alberni to re-assemble as one water tower at the Station.
- 1993** \*
- \* The City purchased three CN transfer cabooses (two were delivered this year) that the Society will remodel to passenger coaches.
  - \* Alberni Pacific Railway, the operating division of the Society, received charter as a Provincial railway in April.
- 1994** \*
- \* 1954 Alco/MLW RS-3 diesel locomotive #8427 was received from Ladysmith.
  - \* "Two-Spot" had her firebox condemned by the Provincial Engineering & Inspection Branch and an abbreviated summer schedule was run using GE locie #11.
  - \* Santa run operated with newly acquired Alco RS-3 #8427 and two of the converted cabooses.
- 1995** \*
- \* Diesel operation with #8427 this summer combined with the Golden Oldies vintage car "Show & Shine" in July and the "Chevy's by the Sea" tour in August.
- 1996** \*
- \* Another milestone year with **the inaugural operation of the restored 1929 Baldwin 2-8-2 saddle tank steam locomotive #7** celebrated at a Grand Opening, including a Parade of Locomotives, over the 1st. July holiday weekend. A record year for revenue generated with close to 4700 passengers carried and the first wedding aboard the train with the reception in the Station.

- 1997** \*
- \* The water tower was completed and operational for the summer season.
  - \* The Grand Opening and Parade of Locomotives was successfully duplicated on the 1st. July holiday weekend preceded by a Parade of Trucks.
  - \* A farm tractor display was held later in July.
  - \* The immensely successful "Hayes Daze" was held in August which brought together thirty-three Hayes vehicles from all over British Columbia to be operated and displayed at the Station along with the regular rail operation.
  - \* Rail service was provided into the Mill for Alberni Specialties 50th. Anniversary celebrations in October.
- 1998** \*
- \* A number of special events including the Heritage in Motion weekend that coincided with the first annual Go-Kart Grand Prix, the Truck Extravaganza in conjunction with the American Truck Historical Ass'n., The Farm Tractors display and Santa Claus Runs.
- 1999** \*
- \* A replication of a the events of 1998 with the added success of the trial runs to McLean Mill in August.
- 2000** \*
- \* The McLean Mill National Historic Site opened to the public, unfortunately without the rail operation between the Station and the Mill. The Society ran a final year of volunteer operation along the waterfront.
- 2001** \*
- \* A momentous year for the operation as the professional crews commenced **five day a week service to the McLean Mill National Historic Site**. This eleven mile round trip is the fruition of a dream of many Society members since the acquisition of the McLean Mill Site and artifacts. The official inaugural run was made on June 16<sup>th</sup> with a ceremonial last spike being driven at McLean Mill. Many dignitaries were present and some members of the Society reenacted the scene at Craigellachie when Canadian Pacific completed the trans continental railway in 1885.
  - \* In addition to the preceding, the Society's members operate and display the trucks, small motors and artifacts annually at the Fall Fair and the Salmon Festival as well as traveling to Fairs in Campbell River, Comox, Coombs, Parksville, Nanaimo, Duncan and Victoria.
  - \* Between 1985 and 2000 the tourist railroad has operated continuously on summer weekends, the annual Santa run and various special events, carrying well over 82,000 people and logging over 9000 miles. In 2001 the railway carried 17,000 passengers and logged in excess of 2300 miles.
  - \* Since 1980 volunteers have worked in excess of 200,000 man-hours restoring, maintaining and operating items within the Industrial Collection