

SPOT NEWS

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Western Vancouver Island Industrial Heritage Society

Issue 54



October 2013



EARLY MORNING STEAM at McLean Mill National Historic Site July 21, 2013
Engineers raising steam at the 'Steam-up', Antique Machinery and Tractor Show.
Note smoke from the Steam Donkey in the distance. [See P. 10] *Photo: D. Hooper*

ALBERNI PACIFIC RAILWAY

After delays in obtaining boiler certification in May, the "Number 7" ran reliably all summer, with more than 70 runs 'up the hill' to the McLean Mill. The only 'contre-temps' was a fire along the tracks in August. The "Seven" brought the APR water car to the scene, where it was used to help fight the fire. (The train returned to town on schedule.)

The water car, which had been in serious need of attention, was painted and a new 'cradle' fabricated this summer. Thanks to the Government of BC, via a 'Community Gaming Grant', for facilitating the project.

The "Buda" gas locomotive, built for the R.B. McLean Lumber Co. in 1928, was restored last year at the Industrial Heritage Centre. In July, it was transported down to the Station, where it spent two months on display on the Station Spur, along with a 1930-era wooden rail "Crummy". It is now in storage back at the Roundhouse.



"Back on Track"

R. Catto (crane truck) lowers the nose of the "Buda" onto the rails while V. Laughlin snubs it with the 1947 "Hayes". L Stevens & R. McCoy watch in the middle.



"Easy does it."

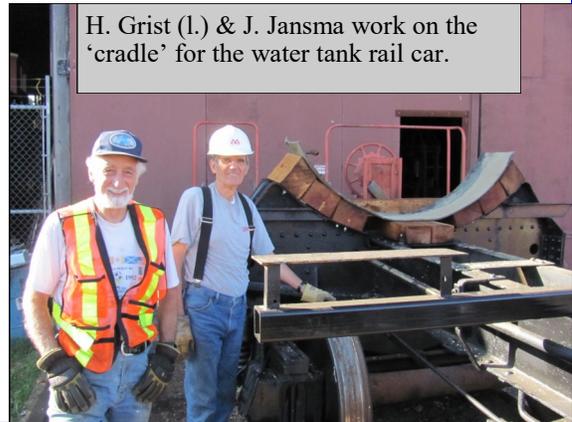
WATER CAR PROJECT

H. Grist (r.) stick-handled the job. The tank was lifted off for painting and to allow work on the rail car. KG Campbell did the lifts.

BEFORE



H. Grist (l.) & J. Jansma work on the 'cradle' for the water tank rail car.



AFTER
"No. 7" & water car.

A.P.R. FALL & WINTER SCHEDULE

October 26	Halloween Train (2 runs)
November 31	Santa Train (several runs)
December 1st	Santa Train (" ")

Reservations recommended:

Tel. 250-723-1376

Or more information at: alberniheritage.com

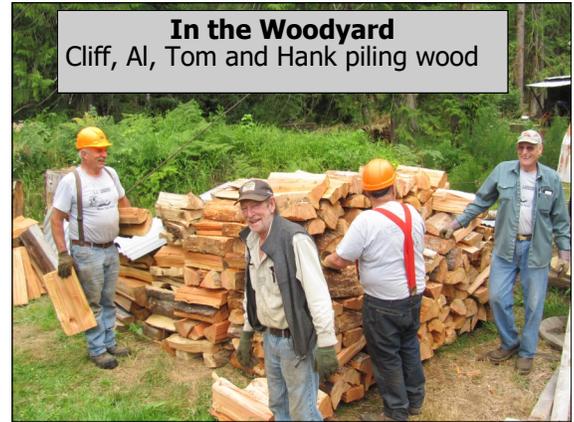
OLD-TIME LOGGING CREW

Using the newly-raised spar tree, the Steam Donkey Loggers did 32 demonstrations for visitors to the McLean Mill this season, including shows for 150 students from Alberni District Secondary School. (This was the first time to do demos for students.) Fridays and Sundays were 'Donkey Days' at the Mill this summer.

At the beginning of the season, we hosted two American steam donkey loggers, Merv Johnson and Adam Weidenbach. Merv is an editor of "Timber Times", a magazine dedicated to remembering the forest industry heritage of the Pacific Northwest. They organize an annual 'old-time logging weekend' at Pomeroy Farm, near Vancouver, WA. and our crew visited them last June. They took part in the first two shows of the season and 80-year old Merv insisted on setting chokers!

The crew did other work, too. The donkey consumes cords of firewood so, there was a big firewood bee, courtesy of Les Stevens and his splitting machine.

The new "A-frame" (*above*) was raised at the Log Dump. The "Boss" - Jack James—was invited to Ladysmith to give advice on their Donkey Sled project and



In the Woodyard
Cliff, Al, Tom and Hank piling wood



RAISING THE 'A-FRAME'
Crew: (l. to r.)
D. Hooper, T. Super, Al Green,
J. James, Ted Maurice,
Hank Bakken. (Missing:
P. Geddes) *Photo: P. Geddes*

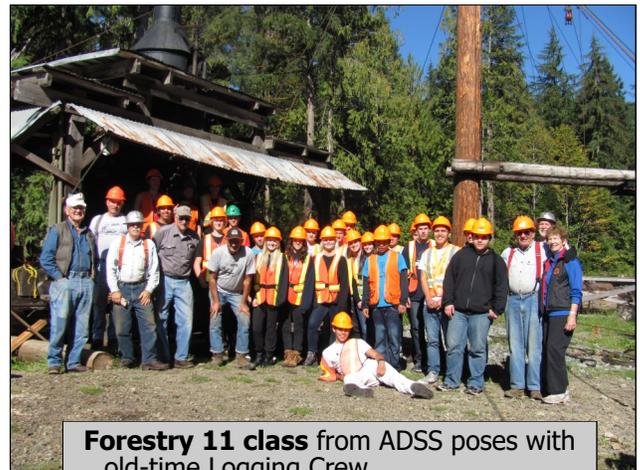


Ladysmith Steam Donkey Sled
Jack James (*2nd from right*) and Tony Super
(*l.*) pose with Ladysmith Crew.

he made 3 visits there. Besides Jack's expertise, other Alberni participation with that project was 'Probyn Log' (Larry Spencer) who provided the sled logs and the McLean Mill, which cut the large timber cross-pieces.



An addition to the show was the occasional brew of 'donkey coffee' by Engineer Ken Fyfe, (*left*) who also rigged up a steam cauldron to cook hot dogs for the students.



Forestry 11 class from ADSS poses with old-time Logging Crew.

ALBERNI PACIFIC LUMBER "CAMP ONE" (Beaver Creek, Alberni Valley)

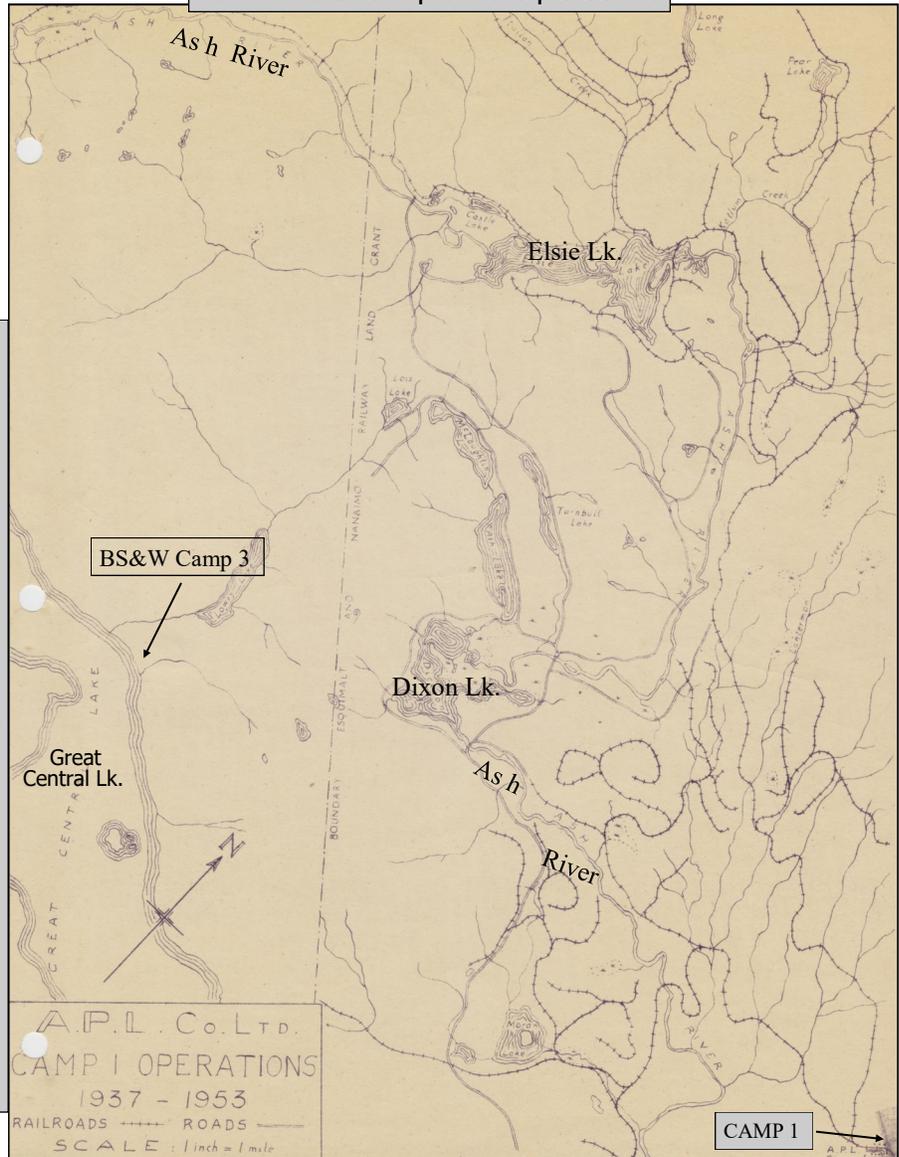
A short document –map, poems, history, lists—was put together by Timekeeper, Terry Dinham, shortly after the closure of APL Camp One in 1953 and Edgar West, father of I.H.S. member, Cliff West, received a copy. Edgar, a steam donkey and yarding engineer, was a long-time employee of APL. With the end of the Steam Era and the amalgamation of H.R. Macmillan's operations (including "Camp One") with those of "Bloedel, Stewart & Welch", he transferred to 'Camp 8' at Great Central Lake, where he ran a Diesel Yarder. "Camp 8" became part of Macmillan-Bloedel's "Sproat Lake Logging Division. Here is an extract from the document, "A Brief History"

Seventeen years ago on October 13, 1937, the first train load of logs produced at Camp One, APL, was hauled to the beach by Locomotive #4, the "Shay" now known as #1031. Ed Johnson piloted the engine, with Ray Tyler as his Head Brakeman, on the trip which was the first of more than 7150 such trains before this railroad operation gave way to modern methods of truck logging.

The purchase of such large blocks of timber and the building of a 19-mile main line costing one half a million dollars before any production could be realized, required considerable planning, foresight and financing in those days when the industry was struggling to re-establish itself after the troublous period of the early Thirties.

A tribute to the men responsible for that undertaking has been the major contribution of the operation to the growth, development and stability of the Albernis. From the first day of production in 1937, the Camp has operated without closure, except for weather conditions... The payroll has at times reached \$800,000 annually, with a crew of well over 350 men employed at some periods.

MAP of APL 'Camp One' Operations



H.R. MacMillan & the Purchase of the Ash River Timberlands
 "Bloedel, Stewart & Welch" already had two sawmills and logging operations in the Alberni Valley when MacMillan was considering buying the "Alberni Pacific Lumber Co." mill and its remaining timber. For the project to be viable, more timber was necessary. The Rockefellers of New York owned 18,000 acres of prime forestlands in the Ash River watershed. In 1936, "H.R." bought it, just beating out the "BS&W" negotiators, ensuring a 20-year supply of timber to his new 'Alberni Pacific' sawmill.
 The story is that "H.R." heard that Sid Smith of "BS&W" was heading to New York to meet with the Rockefellers but that he ("HR") got there first. He had just completed the deal when a "Mr. Smith" was announced. "HR" did not want to

MEMORIES OF "NUMBER SEVEN" AT A.P.L. 'CAMP ONE' - BEAVER CREEK

Alan Boyko is a member of one of the old Alberni Valley logging families and is well-known as an organizer and MC of Logger Sports across the Pacific Northwest. He organized an event this July at the McLean Mill National Historic Site. Alan was born here in 1935 and spent his life in logging. Here are some of his reminiscences of the "No. 7", which was still operating when he started work in the woods.

* * * * *

The "Camp One" Mainline ran from the Beaver Creek area to Polly's Point log dump, just South of Port Alberni. The tracks paralleled 10th Avenue from China Creek Road to Bruce St. The "Number 7", a 1929 "Baldwin" 2-8-2 locomotive, was used for main line duties in the 1940's, before APL (Alberni Pacific Logging of H.R. Macmillan) bought the heavier "No. 6" "Alco-Brooks" locomotive and it took over the run. [*This is the "113" at Woss.*] The "7" would leave the 'Camp One' yard, at the end of Beaver Creek Rd., with up to 80 cars of logs, dropping off 40 cars at the Roger Creek siding. Twenty of those cars were next left at the siding on Tenth Avenue while the other 20 were taken down the steeper grade to the Log dump. Quite often, the loci would stop at Bruce St. to take on water from a fire hydrant there.

My father knew most of the train crews from previous rail logging operations in the Valley. He would take me and my brothers to the engine and chat with the crew. Quite often, they would find a spare cookie, which we enjoyed.

My next experience with "Number 7" was when I was working as a "Chokerman" at APL Camp One operations in 1952, shortly before the end of rail logging at Camp One. Our steam unit [*large yarding and loading machine*] was located near the mainline, which extended from Beaver Creek to Deep Lake through the 'Ash River block' purchased by HR Macmillan in the 1930's. [*See article P. 4*] The 'Seven' was then being used to move empty cars to the 'loading works' at Deep Lake and the loaded cars back down to the yard at 'Camp One.'

"Number 7" falls in to Franklin River

[*After the closure of "Camp One", the "No. 7" was moved to Macmillan-Blodell's rail operation at Franklin River Camp, which continued until 1957. Ed.*]

In November, 1954, there was an early snowfall and heavy rains. The creeks and rivers ran full. The Mainline bridge to 'Camp A' on the Franklin River had a center bent unit design and a large wad of debris lodged against the center bent and it failed. The problem was not detected by the track inspector and this contributed to the fatal accident.

The "Baldwin" was bringing down its train in the dim visibility and fell into the river, killing two of the crew. The fireman, Stan Malachowski, was found half a mile down the river, alive.

At this time, I was employed as a 'Second Loader' at Franklin River, working out of "Camp B". After the accident, I was transferred to the steam crane, known as the "Cherry picker", as second loader and brakeman. The cherry picker's normal job was to pick up logs beside the right-of-way. These were logs on a newly-opened spur into a new setting or logs that had fallen off the cars. This time, our job was to clean up the mess left by the accident—picking up the spilled logs and overturned rail cars.

"Cherry Picker" steam crane at Franklin River is seen here picking up logs alongside the track and loading them on to a skeleton car, coupled in front.



The first task was to get steam up and couple on to the morning train to the 'Beach Camp' and accident scene. A new span had already been put in. At the bridge, we were uncoupled and sent across, ahead of the locomotive. The Crane operator, Ed Osterberg, put the 120-ton crane into 'Idle' and walked behind it, testing the new span. Ed told us that this was the standard procedure.

The ill-fated "No. 7" was still laying in the river, on the upstream side. It was an eerie sight. After our clean-up was done, we coupled on to a train of empty cars and resumed our normal duties. The following week, the 'Rig-up Crew', under the direction of Head Rigger Bill Promarokov, raised a short spar tree and a 'south-bend' skyline was set up to pull the locomotive out of the river—a very tricky operation.

A short spur line was laid to the river's edge. Divers were employed to put cable slings around the engine. The loci was righted, then dragged to the river



"Number 7" laying on its side in Franklin River. The engine is ready to be lifted upright. Note the two blocks & lines already rigged to the loci.
Photo: AV Museum PN 05603



Train wreck site, seen from the distance. Note the speeder on this side of the river and two men on the tracks. Also, the log cars still on the track, on the far side of the river.
Photo: AV Museum PN 07798

bank. "Rerailers" were put in place to lift the wheels on to the temporary track. Another locomotive pushed several empty railcars down the temporary track and coupled onto the waiting 'Seven'. Then, it was slowly pulled back up on to the main track, then hauled back to the Shops at "Camp A" for repair.

As the boiler was hot when the loci fell into the cold river, a thorough inspection was needed to check for damage. The boiler had to be lifted off the loci frame, then cut in half by a pressure welder from Vancouver, for inspection by the Provincial Inspector of Railways, Robert Swanson. After he gave the "OK", the boiler was welded back together. Our crane was called to the Shops to do the lifts as the Shop did not have a heavy enough crane.

After this, the "Seven" was used on the South Main Line from the 'Nitinaht Reload' to the Yard at "Camp B". I was Substitute Brakeman on the loci on many occasions on this run. It was a demanding job, with lots of running back and forth along the train.

The job of moving the loaded log trains from "Camp B" down to the dump at 'Camp A' was taken over by the big Baldwin "Mallet" locomotive that was brought down from Menzies Bay. With the closing of rail logging at Franklin River, the "Number 7" was sent to MB's Nanaimo River rail operations as "1055".

ALBERNI PACIFIC LUMBER "CAMP ONE" (continued from p. 4)

In direct charge of administration during the initial operations were: Manager, Mr. Ross Pendleton; Superintendent, Mr Don McColl; Woods Foreman, Foss Mosher; Engineer, W.S.B. (Bill) Latta; Head Time-keeper, H.S. Berryman; Cruiser, Tom Scott; Head Boomman, Alf Lockner.

The full extent of the operation, eventually encompassing an area of 75,000 acres and stretching over 25 miles North and West from Camp One, was developed during the next 10 or 12 years, until, at the

peak of production, there was as much as 105 miles of usable steel laid at one time and the total railway grade constructed was approximately 200 miles.

Some of the highlights of production reach impressive figures. The greatest number of loads in any one 8-hour day for one Steam Unit being 72; and for the whole operation, 137



"Steam Up" at "Camp One" Locomotive Shed
135-ton "Alco" "No. 6" with two "Baldwin" saddle tank locis - "Nos. 7 and 8" - and the "No. 2" at the right.

meet his competitor and was hidden in a closet while he heard Smith's offer being turned down.

MacMillan paid \$2.6 million for the timber and \$1.7 million for the APL mill and its remaining timber. Now, he had to build a new railway to access the Ash River timber.

"Camp 1" was set up at Somers Road, at the end of Beaver Creek. Rail had to be laid; bunkhouses, a cook-house and a big locomotive shed and auxiliary buildings were constructed. (There were up to eight locomotives, including several "Shays" and "Baldwins".) Two oil-burning, saddle-tank 1929 "Baldwin" 2-8-2 locomotives were bought from "Campbell River Timber Co." for main-line service on the new railroad. They were numbered "7" and "8". The "No. 7" still operates with the same number, carrying tourists to the McLean Mill on the "Alberni Pacific Railroad".

There was also the heaviest logging locomotive to be used on Vancouver Island—a 1920 'Brooks-Alco' 2-8-2 which was designated the "Number 6". (This locomotive was subsequently sold to 'Canfor' in the Nimpkish Valley, where it operated as the "113". It now sits at Woss Camp.)

There was a whole fleet of 'speeders' ("crummies" to move fallers and loggers from Camp out to their job sites every day, not to mention transport for the crews that laid track into new settings, then 'lifted' the rails, or otherwise served the rail operations.

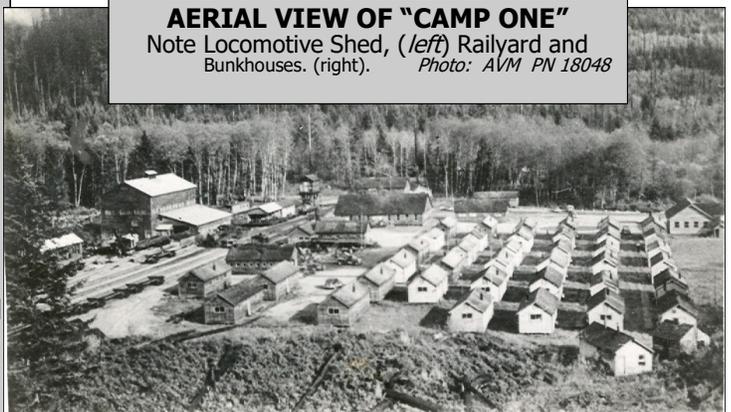
For the actual logging, the new logging company had three steam yarders and nine 'cold-deck' machines.

Some information was taken from Empire of Wood: The MacMillan Bloedel Story, by Donald McKay, 1982.

loads for the day. During the period 1939-40, 120 million f.b.m. (*board feet*) per year was produced. One Steam Unit alone yarded approximately 375 million feet, enough lumber to build 75,000 homes. Edgar West, the Yarding engineer on this side, continually throughout the years, having, during his years at this and other APL operations, high-leaded more than half a billion feet to the trackside.

AERIAL VIEW OF "CAMP ONE"

Note Locomotive Shed, (*left*) Railyard and Bunkhouses. (*right*). *Photo: AVM PN 18048*



Editor's Notes:

A big "Thanks" to the sponsors who have helped to improve the look of the Newsletter (more colour pages) with their donations. Please support them, too!

"Thanks" to AV Museum (Kirsten) for photos.

"SPOT NEWS" is published thrice yearly and is a benefit of membership in the I.H.S. David Hooper, Editor

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Breaking Financial News

The I.H.S. Application for a "Community Gaming Grant" for 2013-14 was denied so, our work will be heavily impacted. We are appealing this decision.

INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MEMBERS at WORK

The summer was once again a very busy time. Members crewed the "Alberni Pacific" runs to the McLean Mill, four days a week. There were people working at the Industrial Heritage Centre most days of the week. The I.H.C., which had started to look rather dowdy, was cleaned and painted, thanks to a "New Horizons for Seniors" grant from the Federal Government. "Thanks, Hugh" for accessing the funding for this.

Volunteers worked to keep the rail right-of-way clean; the "Flag Lady" welcomed the train passengers; others worked on looking after the Mill site. The Logging Crew did their show twice a week, as did Jake and Jan, who opened the "Antique Truck & Rail Display" at the Station twice a week. (More than 1100 visitors passed through the display.) Parades, Truck shows and a 'Steam-up' were organized and attended.



J. Heid opens the "Antique Truck & Rail Display at the Station. (above). **Truck Donation to AV Museum**
Omer Pelletier, seen here with original owner J. Brock's daughters, Michelle & Tammy. Omer restored the

(Clockwise, from the top)
Fall Fair Parade—1918 "Maxwell" leads 1967 "Expo Hayes".
1963 "Mercury" - Jamie Bracht beside his Dad's first new truck, restored by Vic Laughlin.
"Tree down" - Rollie Hurst and Andrew Underwood at work.
"Waiting" - Jake Heid & Leanne St. Thomas. (former Ticket Agent) (Leanne gave birth to a boy shortly after. Congratulations!
Photos: D. Hooper



Photo: AV Museum



"MAYOR'S CHOICE" at the Antique Truck Show Tom Maher accepts award on behalf of owner, "Soup" Campbell, from Mayor John Douglas.

"TONY'S SASH & DOOR" (r.)
Tony Super (l.) & B. Simpson, H. Bakken & Al Green repaired door and frame of the Shop at the McLean Mill.



ANTIQUe TRUCK SHOW



For the seventh year, the I.H.S. hosted an Antique Truck Show, with the financial support of our main sponsor— Coastal Community Credit Union. During the two-day event, more than 550 truck fans visited the Show, which had 50+ vehicles on display. Ron Jeskey, of Crofton, was in attendance again, with his 1919 “Oldsmobile” flatdeck... and his always-popular mini “Model T” (l.), giving rides to kids. Gordie Isaacson’s “Kenworth” is in the background.

Don Watt brought his numerous photo albums, which sparked many stories and reminiscences. Artist Dan Gray attended and left with a striking picture of the 1937 red “White” [below left].

Two interesting old trucks were sent up from the Duncan Forest Museum—the little hard-rubber-tired 1917 “Maxwell” log truck and a recently-

restored 1926 “Fisher” flatdeck [below].

The 1944 “International” 6x6—the “poster truck” of the 2013 Show—is seen beside the ‘Fisher’ Jim Falconer, Ron Roth and Steve Drybrough brought three BCFP “Hayes” - a reminder of that once-great Vancouver Island forest products company. [below left: Jim with his “Hayes”].



Thirty-five years of “Hayes” trucks
(l. to r.) 1947 “McLean” Hayes; 1967 ‘Expo” HDX; 1932 “Hayes-Anderson”



Photos: D. Hooper



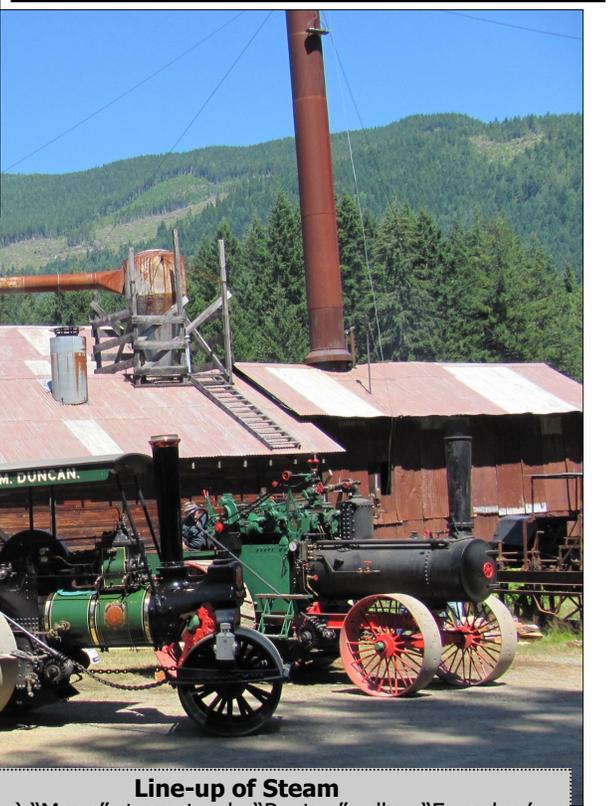
"STEAM-UP", TRACTOR & ANTIQUE MACHINERY SHOW 2013

On July 20-21, the I.H.S. hosted a "Steam Up" at the McLean Mill National Historic Site. The event was the 'coming out' party for the recently-restored 1917 "Farquhar" steam traction engine. (*below*) and visitors were treated to eleven operating steam machines on site.

The star of the Show was the 1898 "Watrous" steam pumper engine, brought to Port Alberni by members of the Victoria Retired Firefighters' Association. [See photo at right] [bottom] The BC Forest Discovery Centre sent their 1912 "Mann" steam truck, as well as their "Ruston" steam roller. Ken Fyfe (*r.*) with "Sawyer-Harris" tractor.

Photos: D. Hooper

Photo: R. Catto



Line-up of Steam
(l. to r.) "Mann" steam truck, "Ruston" roller, "Farquhar"