

# British Columbia



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## SHIPPING OUT WITH SURVEYS By R.K. "Dick" Vivian

We assembled at what today is the South Terminal of the Vancouver International Airport on the morning of May 1, 1948. While the others seem to have been resident in Vancouver, my journey had begun the previous evening on a CPR midnight boat out of Victoria. The night had been spent in one of the bunks tucked away below deck in the fore-castle, at an additional cost of \$0.50.

The assembled group, in part, consisted of "old hands" in as much as they had worked the previous summer on forest inventory crews. The remainder of the group was comprised of novices devoid of any experience save what they may have absorbed as first year students in the Department of Forestry at UBC. Since enrolment in the classes of BSF '50 and '51 numbered in the hundreds we had but a nodding acquaintance with each other at best.

While the commercial flight to Prince Rupert would save the several days of travel time otherwise required by coastal steamship, it too took time. Leaving Vancouver in a plane of a type and vintage that now escapes me, we made our first scheduled stop at Port Hardy. There we de-planed and stood about, chatting and becoming better acquainted with each other, in one of the two abandoned RCAF hangars.

In time the flight continued on to another World War II airstrip at Sandspit where we would be required to change planes following some more waiting. The time was spent variously inside, or on the steps of the Sandspit terminal building which, at the time, consisted of an old bunkhouse. It was evident that it had been salvaged from somewhere and subjected to a generous application of white paint. The adjacent gravelled parking pad was of sufficient size for several cars although I cannot recall if any vehicles appeared.

Finally, in the east, appeared the means by which we were to complete the journey. It assumed the form of a Canso (a.k.a. Catalina) flying boat. This versatile machine had a boat-like fuselage with wheels that could be lowered to land on the Sandspit airstrip and later retracted to set down on Prince Rupert harbour. Once on the water the wheels were again extended and, with full throttle applied to the engines, the aircraft ascended a concrete ramp to deposit us on dry land. By this time it was late in the afternoon and the first leg of the journey was completed with a taxi ride to where the MV Forest Surveyor was berthed.

Once aboard it was apparent that the vessel, which did not appear all that large, was going to have to accommodate a skipper, engineer, cook, party chief, three-man growth and yield crew, and a seven-man inventory crew. When accommodation was allocated crew members, the party chief and cruisers were assigned to single or double cabins while anyone with lesser qualifications was directed to the forecastle. Being, by and large, ex-servicemen accustomed to a social strata based on implied differences in status this arrangement was accepted philosophically but not without some perceptive comment. In retrospect one suspects the cabins must have been claustrophobic.

The next day was spent cruising through the coastal waterways until we, hours later, arrived at the native village of Kitimat. There the boat was to be moored at the wharf while we made our daily sorties into the Kitimat valley. During this period an event demonstrated to us that it was just as well we aspired to be woodsmen and not ball players. One Sunday afternoon a softball game was arranged between the young men of the village and ourselves. What was thought would be a wholesome form of entertainment proved to be a source of humiliation. We lost by something like 23 runs to 2. Fortunately, shortly afterward the village inhabitants made their annual pilgrimage to the fishing grounds and canneries, precluding a repeat performance.

In all, it was to be a memorable summer during which I never suspected that some day it would be possible to get to Kitimat in a matter of hours.

The Party Chief was George Allison; the Cruisers Bill Grainger, Albert McMinn, and Doug McLeod; the Compassmen Bill Bradshaw, Dick Vivian, Wally Rolls, and Earl Johns; and the Growth and Yield Crew Jack Kerr, Carl Highsted, and Don Allerdice.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The 1989 annual general meeting of the Forest History Association of B.C. was held on June 11, 1989 at Port Alberni. A good number of members, spouses, and friends attended and enjoyed a productive meeting along with an interesting field trip.

It was gratifying to note that the Association's membership has increased from 125 to about 400 members over the past year. Our finances are healthy, with a bank balance as of the end of May, 1989 of approximately \$3,000. This healthy bank balance is partly due to the fact that the Executive (past and present) has never charged out-of-pocket expenses to the FHABC. Special thanks are due to Roy Cullen, C.A. and Dr. R. DeBoo for acting as auditors for 1989.

The newsletter format will change to higher quality printing as time goes on. This format change, along with increased postal rates and distribution costs, will mean that the annual costs of producing the newsletter might very well exceed the annual membership dues. At the annual general meeting it was agreed that the Association would maintain the \$5.00 annual dues schedule (described by some as ridiculously low) for the following year. Should the new newsletter format prove successful, it was agreed that a modest increase in annual dues will be considered at the 1990 annual general meeting.

I believe the Association has had a good year in every respect. The next year will see new plans brought to fruition that will result in a better understanding of the province's forest heritage, traditions, and history.

W. Young,  
President

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FHABC EXECUTIVE FOR 1989 - 1990

The following slate of officers was elected at the annual general meeting in June:

For a two year term, expiring June 30, 1991:

Pit Desjardins	John Murray	Clay Perry
Doug Little	John Parminter	Jack Thirgood

For a one year term, expiring June 30, 1990:

Bill Backman	Bob DeBoo	Edo Nyland
George Brandak	Don McMullen	Bill Young
Gerry Burch		

The Executive Committee will consist of:

Bill Young, President	Edo Nyland, Treasurer
Bill Backman, Past-President	John Parminter, Editor

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## NEWS ITEMS

### Green Timbers

The recent announcement that the Government of B.C. is negotiating with the B.C. Forestry Association to "lease" the property as a forest education centre should mean that the varied forest heritage values of the area will continue to be protected. An Advisory Committee is being proposed and it is expected that the FHABC will be asked to participate.

### Green Timbers 60th Anniversary - March 15, 1990

The FHABC is a member of a small committee planning the Green Timbers 60th anniversary ceremony for March 15, 1990. This date will be sixty years to the day when a group of men and women planted the first trees at Surrey's Green Timbers - B.C.'s first reforestation project. Remarkably, this initial grove of now sixty year old trees remains. Details will follow in future newsletters.

### Award of Merit

The association is seeking candidates for its annual Award of Merit. Eligibility includes individuals, associations, clubs, companies, government agencies, and other groups who have made a significant contribution toward furthering a greater understanding of B.C.'s forest history during the year. Contact the President, Bill Young, for further information or to submit nominations.

### Forest Nursery Association of British Columbia

The President of the FHABC was one of the keynote speakers at the 1989 annual meeting of the Forest Nursery Association of British Columbia in Victoria recently. The title of his presentation was "A History of British Columbia's Forest Nursery Sector."

### McLean Sawmill Designated a National Historic Site

An announcement was made in September that the McLean sawmill just outside of Port Alberni had been granted federal recognition as a national historic site. This increases the prospect that federal and provincial monies will be available in the future to permit restoration of the mill and the adjacent townsite. Reportedly the only surviving steam mill in B.C., it was visited by attendees at the FHABC's annual general meeting in June. Members of the Alberni Valley Museum and the Western Industrial Heritage Society have been instrumental in obtaining this recognition of the mill's special value.

LETTERS

"Thank you for your recent letter and for providing me with a copy of the Association's Newsletter. Your publication looks to be an excellent one, and I especially enjoyed reading Jim Dunlop's story."

Dale Lovick, MLA

"I read your Forest History Association's Newsletter with a great deal of interest. Having been born in Vancouver and very active with my family in the forest industry, my uncle being a log broker and my father being a marine engineer on the tow boats, it brought back the many times when I had to run to Mac and Mac and purchase some equipment."

Douglas Mowat, MLA

"Thank you for your April letter and the enclosed issue of the Forest History Newsletter. Your publication is an enjoyable reminder of how rapidly the B.C. forest industry has changed since its beginnings. To continue to evolve in light of new conditions, the industry might well re-call some of the human-scale perspective featured in your Newsletter."

Mike Harcourt, MLA  
Leader of the Official Opposition

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HECTOR ALLAN RICHMOND, 1902 - 1989

Members of the FHABC will be saddened to learn of the passing of fellow member and good friend, Hec Richmond. He died on July 9, 1989 at Nanaimo General Hospital due to complications following surgery.

Active for over 65 years in his chosen profession of forest entomology, Hec Richmond was a well-known and highly respected forester, researcher, administrator, and consultant. He was a charter member of the Association of B.C. Professional Foresters and a Fellow of the Canadian Institute of Forestry.

In his book "Forever Green" (Oolichan Books, 1983), Hec gave us a peek at his exceptional career, especially as a sincere and dedicated field practitioner. In the book, we also saw some of the exceptional qualities of a warm, smiling, and interesting individual. At the time of his hospitalization in February, and before his valiant last battle, Hec was gathering materials and organizing chapters for a second book.

Hector Richmond is survived by his wife Vi and daughter Donnie, living at Cedar-by-the-Sea on Vancouver Island. Recently they entrusted the FHABC with many of Hec's files and documents, some of which relate to field projects of the 1920's and 1930's. We will ensure that all of these special papers are properly archived so that others too, in the years to come, can benefit from Hec Richmond's many contributions to British Columbia.

Robert F. DeBoo,  
FHABC Director

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THE FOREST RANGER SCHOOL  
by Geoff Bate

In early January of 1961 I left Greenwood at about 7:00 PM on a Greyhound bus and arrived at the corner of the Fraser Highway and 140th St. in Surrey around 2:00 AM the following morning. Dick Cawston caught the same bus at Oliver. My most lasting impression was the walk we made to the Ranger School dormitory. We passed along the road through part of the Green Timbers nursery, by well-groomed lawns under large deciduous trees. At night it was as it is now - silent, serene, and beautiful.

Thus began one of the most interesting phases of my life. Under the direction of Eric Robinson and Art Kirk, twenty Forest Service Assistant Rangers from all parts of the province were moulded into future Rangers. In April of 1962, after nine months of intensive training we graduated, having returned to our respective locations during the summer of 1961. There are few days that the knowledge gained at the school is not useful. More importantly, most of us made friendships that will endure indefinitely.

During World War II it was obvious to the government and the Forest Service executive of the day that as soon as the war was over, B.C. was in for an extremely rapid expansion in the forest industry. The ranger staff which existed at that time, both in numbers and knowledge, could not be expected to cope with industrial and/or public demands. While UBC made plans to sizeably increase the number of forestry graduates, including the formation of classes of war veterans, it was apparent that more well-trained technicians were also needed. Because of these issues the Forest Ranger School was constructed and set in motion.

The Annual Report of the Forest Service for 1946 reports the following:

"Fulfilling a long-felt need of the Service, a Ranger School was established in 1945 and put into operation during the past year. The necessary staff appointments were made in April, 1945, and the preliminary work of selecting a site for the school commenced shortly thereafter. Due to labour and material shortages, it was necessary to locate buildings which would accommodate the school without too much remodeling, and it was finally decided that the former Relief and Alternative Service Worker's camp at the Green Timbers Forestry Station could be adapted for temporary quarters, pending construction of suitable permanent buildings on the station. The work of remodeling the camp for school purposes and preparing and arranging various courses of study, occupied the staff of two during the remainder of 1945, but the school was ready to open by the first week of January, 1946.

On January 7th, 1946, the Green Timbers Ranger School was formally opened by the Honourable Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr. E.T. Kenney, in a short but impressive ceremony in the lecture hall. Twenty students, selected from the Ranger and Assistant Ranger staffs of all five forest districts of the province were in attendance. Included in the group were two Rangers, ten Acting Rangers and eight Assistant Rangers."

I recall, on many occasions, listening to some of the members of the first class reminiscing about that first training year. Without fail those from the interior talked about the initial difficulty in lighting the wood and coal heaters in the bunkhouses. These contraptions were designed so that the heavier fuels were placed on the bottom with kindling and paper placed on top!

The first graduating class consisted of:

J. Applewaite	H.G. Mayson
C.L. Botham	P. Neil
C.S. Framton	F.H. Nelson
C.L. French	E.L. Scott
W.D. Haggard	N.B. Scott
F.G. Hesketh	S.T. Strimbolt
R.C. Hewlett	L. Van Tine
J.H. Holmberg	J.A. Willan
W.E. Jansen	L.A. Willington
A.J. Kirk	

R.D. Greggor was the Dean and J.A. Pedley the Assistant Dean.

While I did not have the pleasure of meeting all of the men listed above, I have met most of them and had the honour of working with many of them. A lot of these students are no longer with us but I do know that Art Kirk is living near Kelowna and Floyd Nelson at Clearwater. Both are just as keen and dedicated to the Forest Service today as they ever were.

Through the years the curriculum at the school underwent many changes. The B.C. Institute of Technology and other technical schools throughout the province reduced the need for an extensive and lengthy course. In 1979, while I was a member of the School staff, the Executive determined that the necessity for maintenance of the Ranger School as we know it was long past.

In the early 1980's the school was privatized. The school still continues to function but its impact on Forest Service staff diminishes.

Most of us that have been graduates of a full-scale Ranger School class consider ourselves to be very fortunate. The learning and bonding that took place has lasted a lifetime.

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REVIEW  
by W. Young

An historical review of forest policy appeared in the Spring 1989 edition (No. 81) of B.C. Studies. Authored by Stephen Gray, a doctoral candidate in Canadian history at Simon Fraser University, the article is entitled "The Government's Timber Business: Forest Policy and Administration in British Columbia, 1919 - 1928."

Gray's thesis is almost completely concerned with the "timber business" aspects of forest policy in British Columbia during the 1912 - 1928 era. The chief subjects addressed are those policies relating to royalty and stumpage charges, forest tenures, and log exports.

In particular, Gray emphasizes the significant lobby powers of the forest industry in the province. He points out numerous examples where direct lobbying in the political arena resulted in revisions to, and changes in, forest policy during the period. In hindsight, one is left to ponder whether each of these changes were good news or bad news for British Columbians. Perhaps a little of both.

I found the article primarily addressed the "politics" of British Columbia's forest policy during the period. Gray is clearly critical of the influence of the forest industry on the direction of the province's forest policy. This position is clearly demonstrated in the concluding sentences:

"Using the administrative and quasi-governmental structures established by conservationists and progressive-minded politicians and foresters, lumbermen succeeded in over-coming most political and bureaucratic resistance to their demands by invoking the shibboleths of investment, development and prosperity for all. The people were to benefit from the forest resource, not through meddlesome restrictions, regulations and taxes, but by allowing private enterprise free rein."

Gray, Stephen. 1989. The Government's Timber Business: Forest Policy and Administration in British Columbia, 1919 - 1928. B.C. Studies. Spring issue, No. 81. pp. 24 - 49.

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This newsletter is the official organ of the Forest History Association of British Columbia and is distributed at no charge to members of the Association, libraries, and to certain institutions. Items on forest history topics, descriptions of current projects, requests for information, book reviews, letters, comments, and suggestions are welcome. Please address all correspondence including changes of address to the Editor: John Parminter, # 1 - 949 Pemberton Road, Victoria, B.C. V8S 3R5.

**Membership** in the Association is \$5.00 yearly. Should you wish to join or obtain further information please write to the Treasurer: Edo Nyland, 8793 Forest Park Drive, Sidney, B.C. V8L 4E8. The President, Bill Young, can be reached at 6401 Conconi Place, Victoria, B.C. V8Z 5Z7.