

# British Columbia



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## AN INTRODUCTION TO CRUISING - 1948 by Dick Vivian

Upon our arrival at the entrance of the Kitimat Valley, we required a short course in inventory cruising. The procedure was one that had developed when cruising was deemed an art; and had yet to evolve into a statistical exercise. It became apparent that a lot of walking would be involved when it was established that 200 chains of cruise strip a day was not considered an unreasonable objective.

Soon each compassman developed a proficiency, if not an enthusiasm, for heading off in the desired direction, clutching an axe and hand compass, while dragging a 2 1/2 chain-long steel tape behind him. When he had advanced the full length of the tape, he was rewarded with a semi-hysterical cry of: "poop," from the cruiser. The compassman would then attack the nearest tree with his axe, to create a blaze. As soon as the cruiser was close enough to see the fresh blaze, it was time to push on.

This process was repeated without respite, except for a lunch break, throughout the day. A good interpersonal relationship depended on the compassman proceeding at a pace compatible with that of the cruiser. It was further impressed on each compassman that in the event of falling or stumbling, it was to be in the direction of travel.



Recycled Paper

For their part, the cruisers had to develop the ability to estimate rather precisely, whether or not a tree was within 33 feet of either side of the steel tape. If it was, it had to be recorded as to species and diameter class on a tally sheet. More commonly, the diameter was established by an ocular estimate, although on occasion a Biltmore stick - or diameter tape - was useful.

It was not uncommon to tally continuously for 20 chains, the longest sample permitted; then a new tally sheet was started. The resulting 2 acre sample plot incorporated the law of compensating error, since the technique was not all that precise and the sampling intensity was only 1 to 1 1/2%.

The objectives of a good compassman, who was frequently bored, cold and harassed by insects, was to keep the cruiser moving at a steady pace: one that wasn't too slow or too fast but just right. Since cruisers were diligent and obsessed with their tasks, they were often oblivious to the aforementioned discomforts. As a consequence, they had to be frequently reminded of more mundane matters, such as smoke breaks, lunch breaks and measuring tree heights.

Soon the party chief decided the time had arrived to acquaint his crew with "fly-camping," an activity he was prone to prescribe frequently during the summer. However, the introduction to this practise was to last only a few days. Each individual was provided with a Trapper Nelson packboard and a 4' x 6' canvas groundsheet, in which they wrapped their share of equipment, supplies and any personal gear they considered essential. The resulting ungainly bundle was then lashed to the packboard.

Such was our introduction to war surplus sleeping bags, reflector tents, bough beds and campfire cooking. The more memorable foodstuffs included Army surplus dehydrated potatoes, Bulman dehydrated vegetables, cans of Unger's meatballs, Puritan sausage, Burn's stew, oatmeal, rice, Ryecrisp and Pilot bread. The luxury items included tinned butter, Dot semi-sweet chocolate, dried fruit, tea, coffee and Klim milk powder.

Fortunately, shipboard fare was much more palatable: throughout the summer to follow it was the thought of hot meals, made from fresh ingredients by the cook in his galley, that provided the motivation to bring each fly-camping foray to an expeditious conclusion. Despite the drawbacks and discomforts of cruising in 1948, there were enjoyable compensations at the end of the line; the cooking on the boat was one of them.

1991 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND PROGRAM

Date: June 15, 1991 (Saturday)

Place: Cowichan Lake Research Station  
(drive past Lake Cowichan to Mesachie Lake village and turn right at the sign. Continue to the research station grounds at the end of the road.)

Times: The program will begin at 12:00 noon in order to allow mainlanders to travel over on the 9:00 AM ferry.

**Agenda**

11:00 AM	Executive meeting
12:00 Noon	Business meeting, open to members
12:45 to 1:30 PM	Lunch in heritage cookhouse
1:30 to 2:30 PM	Illustrated presentation on the early history of the Cowichan Lake Research Station and surrounding area, by Ralph Schmidt.
2:30 to 4:30 PM	Tour of the station

This should be a great day so plan to attend. Lunch will be served in the heritage cookhouse and will cost \$5.00 for adults and \$2.50 for children under 12 years (free if under 6 years). Guests are welcome.

Since we must confirm our numbers in advance, please contact the following by June 12th if you will be attending:

Bill Young, Victoria	652-3002
Bill Backman, Vancouver	732-3075

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TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

The following was written by Mr. E.J. Palmer, Resident Manager of the Victoria Lumber & Manufacturing Co. at Chemainus, to Mr. J.E. Glover, one of the company's owners. It was dated January 3, 1902.

Provided by FHABC member Monty Mosher.

"Logging: I regret to say that we have made no material reduction in the cost of putting in logs. It is simply Hades to try to do anything with men in this country. Yesterday we had but 26 men to work, and only two engineers - running the other donkeys with boys, or any one we could pick up - the bookkeeper running one of them. They will simply get up and go, giving you no notice or warning. To make matters worse, the Government have recently passed a law, compelling us to employ licensed engineers. When this is put in force, it looks as though we might as well stop trying to do business, for knowing that they had us in the hole, they would certainly take advantage of it.

Hastings have just adopted a new system, on the same lines as some of the larger operators on the Sound. That is, they have established a Saloon and boarding house, and allowed prostitutes to come in, at their salt-water landing, which is six miles from their camp. They allow no whiskey to go to camp, but they sell the men all they want, at the landing. They will give them whiskey and board as long as the proceeds of their time cheques last, but absolutely refuse to give them a single meal, after they have spent all that they had. They say, the results are, that by keeping between three and four hundred men around, they are enable to have 150 men to work all the time. They say that the men will come down to the landing, and instead of getting to Vancouver and leaving them with a large plant (4 locomotives, 10 miles of railroad etc.) idle, as they did formerly, that by the time the steamer comes in, they have no money to pay their fare to Vancouver, and will go back to work. They say they employ every man that applies for work. That this is what men seem to want / that they have tried faithfully for 25 years to deal honorably with them, but that they cannot do it. Mr. Alexander remarked the other day that a \$2,000 whiskey bill would pay a \$20,000 pay roll. It seems very hard lines when a business firm has to resort to this. The Simpson Logging Co. have bought up all the shore rights for six miles, at the big operation of Hood's Canal, and will allow no other steamer to land at their dock, except their own. They allow no whiskey in Camp, which is ten miles from the landing, but run a Saloon at the landing. Mr. Anderson told me, that he paid off, on the morning of the 24th, with about \$6,000, and the steamer left there on the afternoon of the 25th for Seattle, and in that time, he had taken in over the bar \$2,700, with a profit of about \$2,300. They also lease land to a house of prostitution.

The Lord knows what the results are going to be, if this state of affairs continues, as the men will go there and work, when they will not come here, where they get their cash at the end of every thirty days, and are treated as men.

With kindest regards to your family, and wishing you a prosperous New Year, I am,

Yours truly

E.J. Palmer"

## POWELL RIVER FORESTRY MUSEUM UPDATE

The Powell River Forestry Museum has received some grant money to assist with upgrading of the Willingdon Beach Trail to accommodate wheelchair access. This popular walking trail was originally the Michigan Landing Railway grade, one of the first logging railways in the Powell River area.

The Museum has a lease on the right-of-way from MacMillan-Bloedel and is responsible for the trail maintenance and safety. With the trail improvements, there is a program of installing old logging artifacts along the way. Several old machines are already in place, one being a set of pole road wheels, that were used in this area around 1900. This four-wheel wagon ran on a track made of poles and was pulled up the grade by a steam donkey, loaded, and then let down by gravity to the tidewater.

The Museum had supervised work parties from the Cadet Corps, who are using this project to build credits for the Duke of Edmonton Awards. They are helping with the piling and burning of debris in the forest along the trail.

Many B.C. towns have a lost gold mine; well here in Powell River we have a lost loogie: a Shay that was left in a rock cut during the 'Big Fire' of early 1920. There is much speculation about installing it along the Willingdon Beach Trail someday, if we ever find it.

Other pieces of old iron include a 1950 Osgood Log Loader: a monster on tracks, with a heel boom over 20 feet high at the gantry. This machine is awaiting transport to the site from a yard in Stillwater.

There is a really good municipal campsite on the beach at the start of the trail. Stop in sometime and take a walk along a little bit of our history. Some of the activities and pictures of this area are recorded in the new book just out by Bill Thompson, called: "Boats, Bucksaws and Blisters."\*

The Powell River Forestry Museum has a growing display of artifacts, old engines and photos, in what was known as the Willingdon Beach Bath House. It is open, on request and on special occasions, like July 1st and our annual Sea Fair in July, (this year July 19 - 21).

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\*Thompson, G.W. 1990. Boats, bucksaws and blisters - pioneer tales of the Powell River area. Powell River Heritage Research Association, 7155 Hazelton Street, Powell River, B.C. V8A 1P9 (485-2222)

Cost: \$32.05 + \$2.25 postage and handling

LOGGERS AND LUMBERMEN: PIONEER SETTLERS OF VANCOUVER  
by W. Young

When the first European settlers arrived in what is now the Lower Mainland, Vancouver didn't exist, even as a dream. Fort Langley, established in 1827, was the first settlement; the Gold Rush fever of the latter 1850's saw New Westminster named as the capital of the Colony of British Columbia, in 1859. Even Port Moody's star shone before that of Vancouver, when the British Navy, fearing the ice conditions of New Westminster, chose the site as its main saltwater anchorage on the Lower Mainland.

This decision resulted in the building of the "North Road," in 1859, to connect New Westminster and Port Moody. This was the first of several roads constructed to provide access to Burrard Inlet and present-day Vancouver. In the midst of all this activity, however, Vancouver remained undisturbed: little had changed since it was first visited by Captain Vancouver in 1792.

It was the logging industry that first brought settlers to the area: English Bay and Burrard Inlet boasted high quality forests of virgin timber. In 1863, Pioneer Mills began producing lumber from its sawmill on the North Shore of Burrard Inlet. The mill was located approximately one-half mile east of Lonsdale Avenue. New Westminster, Nanaimo and Victoria were the earliest markets for lumber; the first shipment was sent to New Westminster on August 12, 1863, aboard the wood burning, sternwheel steamboat "Flying Dutchman." In the following year, the first export shipment of lumber from Burrard Inlet was aboard the sailing ship "Ellen Lewis," destined for Australia.

In 1865, Captain Edward Stamp built a sawmill on the South Shore of Burrard Inlet, near the foot of Dunlevy Avenue. By 1867, hundreds of loggers and sawmill workers were actively employed in Burrard Inlet. Lumber was being loaded on sailing ships for Australia, San Francisco and South America as fast as it could be produced. A thriving lumber export business had been created.

Families came to join the working men, which resulted in small settlements being developed around the two sawmills on the shores of Burrard Inlet. Although the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway assured the growth of Vancouver into the metropolis it is today, it was the loggers and sawmill workers of the 1860's that were the first pioneers of the city.

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PORT MCNEILL FOREST DISTRICT REUNION

The Port McNeill Forest District will be holding a reunion this fall for anyone who worked there, or at the Ranger Station at Port Hardy.

Scheduled for the Thanksgiving long weekend are the following events:

Saturday, October 12th

Open house at the Port McNeill District Office.  
Dinner and dance.

Sunday, October 13th and Monday, October 14th

Pancake breakfast.

Possible events include a golf tournament, slow pitch softball, curling, fishing, and more.

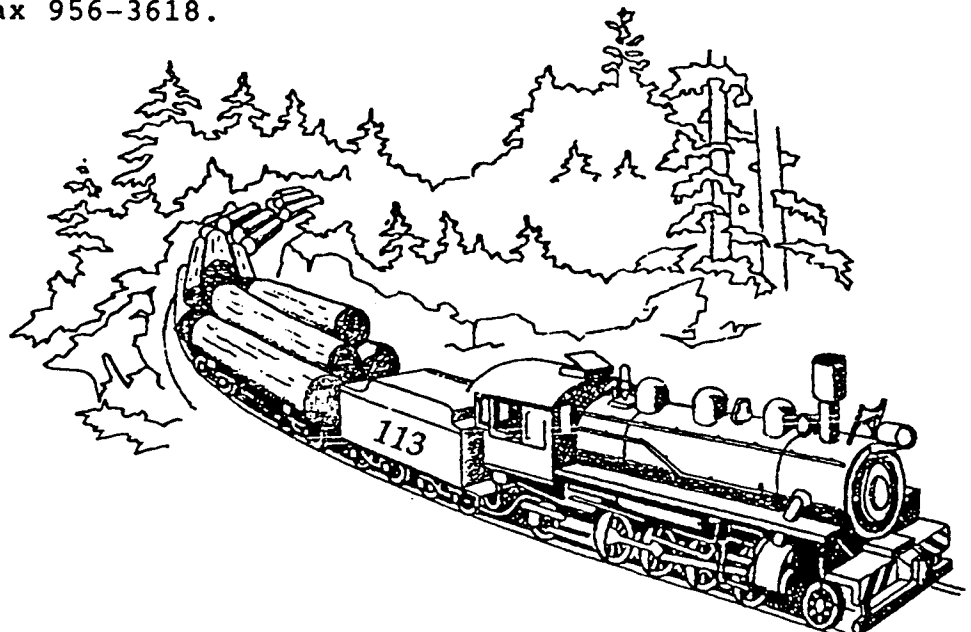
Children's programs will also be included.

It is expected that attendees will stay in local hotels, with friends, or camp.

Please contact Janice Carter at the Port McNeill Forest District office for more information:

Port McNeill Forest District  
Ministry of Forests  
P.O. Box 7000  
Port McNeill, B.C.  
V0N 2R0

Phone 956-4416 or fax 956-3618.



REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

An history of forest fire detection and control in British Columbia is being researched for publication. One aspect of the work will address fire lookouts.

If anyone has any information and/or anecdotes on B.C.'s fire lookouts, or lookoutmen please write to:

Mr. Ferdi Wenger  
General Delivery  
Heffley Creek, B.C.  
V0E 1Z0

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The logging history of the Western Communities (on the outskirts of Victoria) is being researched by the Goldstream Regional Museum, housed in the former Ranger Station building in Langford.

If anyone has any local knowledge, or information to share, please contact:

Ms. Cynthia Sinclair  
Goldstream Regional Museum  
1172 Goldstream Avenue  
Victoria, B.C.  
V9B 2Y9

Phone: 474-2830

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

Membership in the Association is \$7.00 yearly. Should you wish to join or obtain further information please write to the Treasurer: Mr. Edo Nyland, 8793 Forest Park Drive, Sidney, B.C. V8L 4E8. The President, Mr. Bill Young, can be reached at 6401 Conconi Place, Victoria, B.C. V8Z 5Z7