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FHABC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Location: Mission Tree Farm, Mission, BC

Date: Saturday, October 2, 2010

Program:

11:00 AM Business Meeting

12:00 PM Lunch: approximately \$10.00

12:30 PM Kim Allan, Director of Forest Management: History and Highlights
Following lunch, Kim Allen will give a presentation on the history of the Tree Farm, the challenges it has faced over the years, and how he sees its future development and growth. With the number of community forests now being granted or proposed, Kim's comments and thoughts should be very pertinent in understanding what is happening "in the woods" today.

1:00-4:00 PM Tour of Tree Farm

Business meeting: Mission Leisure Centre
7650 Grand Street
Mission, BC

Car-pooling will be arranged for those travelling to Tsawwassen from southern Vancouver Island. Similar arrangements can be made for those who wish to travel to Horseshoe Bay. The planned program will allow those travelling back to the Island to catch one of the early evening ferries.

Please advise Stan Chester at (604) 921-9880 or stanchester@shaw.ca of your plans to attend by Wednesday, September 29, 2010 so that we can finalize travel and lunch arrangements.



EDITOR'S COMMENTS

In order to inform the members of the AGM, this newsletter comes hard on the heels of Issue 88. Plus, with Issue 89, newsletter production will be back on track for the year. The next newsletter (#90) will be after the AGM—probably in December or January.

Another plea for stories. WE NEED YOUR INPUT. These tales do not have to be from the “deep” past or from typical forestry sources. We are anxious for a range of stories celebrating forestry, from First Nations land relationships to stories of forestry communities and tales of forest ecology. Forestry is broader than old machinery and embodies a rich treasure trove of experiences across the landscape. The newly formed Forest History Society of Ontario (<http://www.ontarioforesthistorystory.ca/>) summarizes the spectrum of topics well:

- ecology
- industry
- recreation
- conservation
- protection
- political
- social
- cultural
- people

So, please consider sending us an anecdote or two—contact Barb at bjcoupe@telus.net. Thank you. (For more info on the Forest History Society of Ontario, see below).

This issue starts with notice of our AGM, followed by a delightful reminiscence from Hubert Bunce—a “footnote” to Dr. Jack Ker’s “Nimpkish Wind” printed in Issue 88. Thank you, Hubert! Then, courtesy of the John Parminter archives and Tony Robinson, comes a small vignette of the work ethic and personalities of Forest Service employees circa 1955.



ANOTHER NIMPKISH WIND STORY

(Fire, Wind, and Water or rather Wind, Water, and Fire)
by Hubert Bunce

Jack Ker's experience of the Nimpkish Wind recounted in the last newsletter reminded me of an experience with that same wind in 1959. At first, I thought I should call this tale “Fire, Wind, and Water,” although “Wind, Water, and Fire” may be a better title, as you will see.

There used to be a very fine group of forest rangers who went under the acronym FIDS, the Forest Insect and Disease Survey, a component of the Canadian Forest Service, (CFS) based in Victoria at Burnside Road. I believe a remnant may still exist at that location—hope so! One of their rangers was Stan Allen, a brother of George Allen, the then Dean of Forestry at UBC,

when Jack himself was there teaching mensuration. Stan used to come to the Englewood Division of Canadian Forest Products (CFP) annually to check on whatever insects or disease that he (or the company's forestry department) could find. At that time, there were few roads. Transport was mainly the speeder on the logging railway line from Beaver Cove. Stan would travel to Beaver Cove in his boat, leave it in safekeeping and ride the speeder to Nimpkish Camp. His boat was an 18-foot fibreglass "Davidson" with an outboard motor for power. This boat had impressed me because Stan could live on it while sailing around Cape Scott at the north end of Vancouver Island, past the Brooke Peninsula, and out in the open Pacific Ocean! I thought he was very brave and had a fantastic job.

I was keen, therefore, to assist him in his surveys. The technique he used involved a large cotton sheet and a pole. The sheet was laid out beneath the second growth trees to be sampled, and the pole was used to beat the branches. The debris that ended on the sheet always included caterpillars and other insects which Stan identified, collected, and recorded.

Now, I had a fiancée Jill, a nurse working at the hospital in Alert Bay. For obvious reasons, we also needed a boat. Appreciating Stan's vessel, we had purchased the 15-foot version of his "Davidson" in March of that year which we named "Pelican." So, I had the bright idea that Jill could bring another nurse, Ursula, by "Pelican" on a Friday evening to Schalling's old homestead at the mouth of the Nimpkish River. There they could set up camp in the grassy clearing. Stan and I would use the company's "Sangster Craft"—a flat-bottomed, plywood boat—to get to the north end of the Nimpkish Lake, leave the boat at the now deserted Camp L, and hike down the railway right of way to the Telegraph Trail which lead to Schallings' homestead and to the nurse's camp on the river bank.

The plan worked fine. Stan covered all the areas he wanted around the various logging camps in the valley; so on Friday evening after supper in the cookhouse, we were free to be on our way north to the other end of Nimpkish Lake. It must have been about 10:30 PM by the time we had tied the "Sangster Craft" to the old camp dock and hiked along the railway to the telegraph trail. Fortunately, due to the midsummer season, we still had enough light to find our way to our rendezvous. Now, my family in England had a rallying call which we used to locate one another. We would put a finger in our mouths and produce a "wallah, wallah" sound. As Stan and I neared the campsite, I didn't want to scare Jill and Ursula with the arrival of unidentified strangers out of the forest, so, I used the familiar, to Jill, family call, which she heard and immediately returned in like manner. Stan was somewhat surprised at this quick response. Did he doubt that my arrangement with the two nurses was going to work or was it the nature of the communication between two strange English immigrants in the Canadian bush? I do not know.

The expedition was a success, and subsequently Jill took Stan round to Beaver Cove to his own boat. Meanwhile, I needed to get back to Nimpkish Camp in the "Sangster Craft." I hiked up the trail to Camp L and then travelled south by boat. This is where the "Nimpkish Wind" comes into the story. The lake is maybe 14 miles long and parallel sided, so that a strong wind on a sunny summer afternoon over such length of water—a long "reach" as it is called—can develop large, steep waves. The outboard had not been behaving, but all had gone well until I was within sight of the Nimpkish logging camp—the motor finally died. I decided the problem was dirt in the gas line and so attempted to clean the line out.

Unfortunately, the boat's flat bottomed plywood hull rolled abominably in the heavy swell that had by now developed thanks to the "Nimpkish Wind." The net effect of the smell of gasoline and the motion of the boat was most unpleasant. I was now thoroughly seasick, or technically "lakesick", hanging over the side of the boat, quite unable to solve the motor's problem. My

feeble attempts at waving Stan's insect-beating sheet to attract the attention of people picnicking or fishing on the beach in front of the camp were to no avail. I soon realized that the boat would end up blown by the wind to the south end of the lake against the log booms rather than on the shore. It did just that, and the rolling motion stopped—a great relief. When I had recovered enough, I was able to walk on the logs, across the booms, to the shore. I decided to light a fire—the flames would attract the attention of anyone in the camp or elsewhere and hopefully bring me rescuers. On a hot dry beach in the middle of fire season starting a fire was no problem. There wasn't even a need to put green vegetation on top to make a smoke signal. The fire's bright light was enough to bring instant response. I could see the brave firefighters, (my rescuers), speeding across the water to douse the fire, and incidentally tow the boat back to Nimpkish camp.

I have, ever since, felt foolish to have been seasick on a lake, but that's what happened because of the "Nimpkish Wind." Perhaps "Fire, Wind and Water" sounds more dramatic, but it was actually the wind, the lake, and then the fire that brought my saviours in such short order.



JAN SELSING AND THE MORICE BLOCK CRUISE OF 1955

As remembered by Tony Robinson, February 2008

After three years of trying, I determined that I would never become an industrial forester, so I signed on with the Surveys and Inventory Division of the Forest Service in 1955, hoping to find my niche there.

The powers that be assigned me to the Morice Block Cruise. With supervisor Al Horth and party chief Jan Selsing in the lead, we set off for Smithers early in May. We made Cache Creek the first night, Prince George the second, and we limped into Smithers late on the third.

Spring was late that year, so we did our training around Smithers. It was then that we discovered what a taskmaster Jan was, besides being an unforgettable character. He was not tall but stocky—even burly, you might say—with a big head surmounted by horn-rimmed glasses and a luxuriant crop of curly hair. Occasionally, he would speak darkly about “killing Germans” while in the Danish resistance movement during the war. With his lilting accent, he would address us individually as “my friend”, and then proceed to upbraid us for our shortcomings, telling us to “work like beaten shit” to complete our tasks. Another of his favourite expressions was, “I don't understand it.” Why, he wanted to know, didn't we finish what we were supposed to? Finally, he was vastly amused by the slang term for table tennis, and at intervals, he would say “ping-pong” with a chuckle.

Near the end of May, we were able to fly into McBride Lake, where we established our base camp at the tip of a peninsula that soon became known as “Pogue's Point”. From there, we began to run our strips off into the distance, and whatever the rest of the crew remember, I never worked harder in my life. Jan expected us to accomplish a formidable amount each day, and if we didn't, we heard about it in a hurry.

As work progressed away from McBride Lake, there were fly camps and air drops, but there were always steaks the first night out of base camp, and it was always possible to obtain a bit of grog by ordering a bottle of “Anthony’s medicine” from Smithers over the primitive radio network.

As the summer wore on into fall, some of us gave up packing canned milk along for our coffee, even if the dried variety was a poor substitute. And we sometimes had to find our way back to our miserable canvas shelters in the middle of nowhere by blazes on trees and the light of a flashlight, after working like “beaten shit” all day to finish our strips. Then there was the fateful day when we ran out of tobacco, when all aircraft were diverted to a search and rescue mission on the coast.

Jan, meanwhile, grew a magnificent beard, one so long and thick that he would often lose his pencil in it. Also, he seemed to become more eccentric with each passing day. He moved base camp to Lamprey Creek, a spot much less accessible to the crews because he was mad at most of us for failing to meet his schedule. Eventually, he and the cook, the only other human around, stopped talking to each other. Yet, whenever any of us showed up at the new camp, he would start talking as soon as he saw us. Winter came early that year, with snow falling in September, and starting to pile up in October. Still, the work wasn’t finished, and there were fewer bodies to do it after the summer help went back to school. Pat Lake (now deceased, for those who remember him) and his compassman ended up on the wrong side of the Morice River after a boating accident, in which they nearly drowned and lost all their gear. Had it not been for the strong arm of Bud Reynolds, who managed to throw a jar full of matches across the river to them, they would have frozen to death.

The end of October was looming, and still the job wasn’t done. Each of the crews left was assigned a portion of the work, and we waded through the falling snow like prisoners condemned to hard labour the rest of our lives. But all but one crew eventually finished up, and were allowed to return to headquarters in Smithers. The last crew had one strip to finish when they radioed to Jan, “There is over a foot of snow on the ground, it’s snowing; it’s well below freezing; and it will take at least another week to finish. How on that?”

The answer came back, loud and clear, “My friends, even if you are up to your assholes in snow, get out there and finish that strip.”



EX-FOREST SERVICE VESSEL SQUADRON: RENDEZVOUS 2010

Here are some excerpts from the Squadron’s summary of their 2010 Rendezvous held at the Vancouver Maritime Museum from July 31 to August 2:

Rendezvous 2010 was our fourth gathering held at the Vancouver Maritime Museum, maintaining our five-year cycle of returning to the museum...

The four ‘blimps’ Cherry II, Oak II, Sitka Spruce II, and White Birch moored close together with Tamarack astern and Maple II across the dock. It was great to welcome White Birch back into the fold...

The weather eventually cleared, and we had the privilege of a ringside seat for the final night of Vancouver's 'Symphony of Fire'. The fireworks were put on by China, and launched from a couple of barges moored in English Bay. It was an impressive display, but accolades for the best of the three competitive displays went to Spain whose fireworks were seen the previous week...

Rendezvous 2011. Terry advised members that current thinking is to hold Rendezvous 2011 at the Britannia Heritage Shipyard on the banks of the Fraser River in Steveston. The shipyard is a short distance upstream from the Steveston waterfront, on the same channel inside Steveston Island. Initial discussions have been held with the Museum, and they are very keen to have us go there with our heritage vessels. The shipyard is about a 15-20 minute walk from Steveston....

Rendezvous 2012. The year 2010 marks the Centenary of the BC Forest Service, and a Centenary Committee has been formed. Terry and Carroll Neill and Doug Mitchell met with the committee executive in Victoria last fall, and suggested that their centennial celebrations should include participation of the Ex-Forest Service Vessel Squadron. Possibilities discussed included individual or group vessel attendance at different centennial events around the south coast, and a combined annual Squadron Rendezvous and Centennial Event such as that held at the Vancouver Maritime Museum in 1995. Initial discussions with the Vancouver Maritime Museum have indicated the museum's interest in being the venue for another such event. The BC Forest Service Centenary Society (which Terry and Doug have joined as members) is developing a website which may be found at: www.bcfs100.ca. A digitized version of our 1995 rendezvous video '**Against the Tide**' has been given to the Centenary Society. It and other historical videos will be made available online through their Centenary website...

Squadron Archives/Webpage. Peter McGuire intends on doing research in the provincial archives this winter. He kindly volunteered to be squadron archivist, to create a squadron webpage with a blog, and include photos and info on each of our vessels. Members are encouraged to create narratives of their respective vessels including when and where they were bought, what we have done to them, and what we know about their history.

Editor's Note: Thanks to John Parminter for passing on the Squadron's newsletter. I was entranced by the names of the boats belonging to members of the Squadron. Here is the list (John states the MV Syrene is also about to join the Squadron):

- Alpine Fir II
- Cherry II
- Forest Ranger II
- Maple II
- Sitka Spruce II
- Tamarack
- White Birch
- Western Yew
- Dean Ranger
- Nesika
- Oak

Doug Mitchell is the contact person: dsmitchell@shaw.ca. If you want to share stories of Forest Service Boats, please contact the Squadron (through Doug). No doubt they would love to hear from you (and please don't forget to send us a copy as well).



BOOKS, LINKS, and SUCH

1. The NiCHE site (<http://www.niche-canada.org/foresthstory>) has added (*thanks to David Brownstein*) a few more interesting articles since the FHABC Issue 88 came out, including:

“An Interview with Ken Armson, Forest History Society of Ontario.”

The newsletter of their newly formed Society can be downloaded from <http://www.niche-canada.org/files/pdf/fhso-01.pdf>. If any of our members have information/stories that relate to Ontario Forest History, please contact the Society at info@ontarioforesthstory.ca.

“Historical arguments figure prominently in update on recent B.C. biofuels forestry controversies.”

You can read the article at the Focus Online website—<http://focusonline.ca/?q=node/71>— and download the entire magazine at http://focusonline.ca/sites/default/files/Focus_2010-08_August.pdf.

“Ken Halberg self-publishes autobiography describing his life in British Columbia.”

According to David, Gerry Burch sent him this info on a new autobiography that “gives readers a peak back into the past describing everything from the frontier days of gold rushes, Great Depression hardships to the dangerous early logging industry days.” For more info, consult the article from the Nanaimo News Bulletin at: http://www.bclocalnews.com/vancouver_island_central/nanaimonewsbulletin/lifestyles/98124149.html?mobile=true. The book is \$24 plus postage, and to acquire your own copy you can write to Ken at kenhallberg@shaw.ca.

2. *The Land of Maquinna: Canada's Pacific Coast* by Ian S. Mahood; self-published 1971
In this book, Mahood writes two stories: “A historical novel about the life and times of Maquinna, chief of the Nootkas, and a camera study of the modern environment for living and our stewardship of it. It is an attempt to give the visitor a perspective of what the coast was like and what it is now like, and what it should forever be—a forest environment” (description from AntiQBook website: <http://antiqbook.com/boox/litera/002717.shtml>).

Editor's Note: when I read the description of Mahood's book on the website, I promptly ordered the volume. Here is an introspective comment on stewardship from the book's Foreword:

I am a forester first, and a logger second. My friends wonder why I prepared this book. It is because my company, Millstream Timber Ltd., harvests the trees in the "Maquinna" Tree Farm Licence and thereby participates in farming the forest. While we are cutting down the trees that were growing when Maquinna was a boy, they are being replaced and thereby the land is kept productive. I was curious about the kind of life the Nootkas developed in their use of the resources of the sea and the land. There is a natural inclination to wonder if our stewardship of that resource is all it should be... We use the resources of the total environment, and we have a

responsibility to maintain it to the full. This means, above all else, we must maintain the environment of the forest. (2)



NEWSLETTER DELIVERY BY EMAIL

Just a reminder: we are requesting that members have their newsletters delivered by email in order to save postage costs. That being said, we recognize that some members may not be connected to the internet. Rest assured that we will continue to offer a hardcopy of the newsletter, but please consider receiving your copy in via email if possible. Thanks so much.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED / NEWSLETTER SUGGESTIONS

The FHABC is always looking for volunteers and new executive members. So if you are interested in participating in promoting and celebrating BC's forest history, please give us a shout. We would love to hear from you. And don't forget to check out the BC Forest Service Centenary website: www.bcfs100.ca.

Editor's Note: I am also keen to have any and all suggestions regarding the format of the newsletter. The Forest History Society of Ontario's newsletter showcases several interesting possibilities. So please send me your ideas.



This newsletter is the official publication of the Forest History Association of British Columbia. Please submit newsletter material and send changes of address to the Editor: Barbara Coupé, 1067 Heritage Crescent, Prince George B.C. V2M 6X2; Phone: (250) 562-1051; E-mail: bjcoupe@telus.net.

Membership is \$15 yearly or \$40 for three years. Please send dues to the Treasurer: Art Walker, 564 Oliver Street, Victoria B.C. V8S 4W3; Phone: (250) 598-4455; E-mail: aws564@telus.net

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Website: <http://fhabc.org/>

Back issues (courtesy of the MoFR library):

http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfd/Library/lib_Forest_History_Newsletter.htm

(Note: Only Issues 40-84 are available at the MOFR Library website. David Brownstein is currently working to get all the issues available on our FHABC website. Thanks David.)