

Issue 98  
November  
2016



British Columbia

FOREST HISTORY  
NEWSLETTER



## AGM 2016



FHA of BC Directors and members attended the 2016 AGM held in Powell River Sep. 23-25.

See more Association news on pages 3 and 8.

### More Board Members welcome!

Four retired and only one joined. Please contact the board if interested.

[info@fhabc.org](mailto:info@fhabc.org)

### We want your email address!

Help the FHABC modernize our communications. If you are holding a paper copy of the newsletter, **please update your email address.**

With time it costs more to produce physical copies and send them out in the post. Even if you still want to receive a paper version, having your email address makes it easier to send out important announcements in between issues. So, send us an email at [info@fhabc.org](mailto:info@fhabc.org).

Also use this address to alert us to changes in your contact information.

**Thank you!**

## This Issue

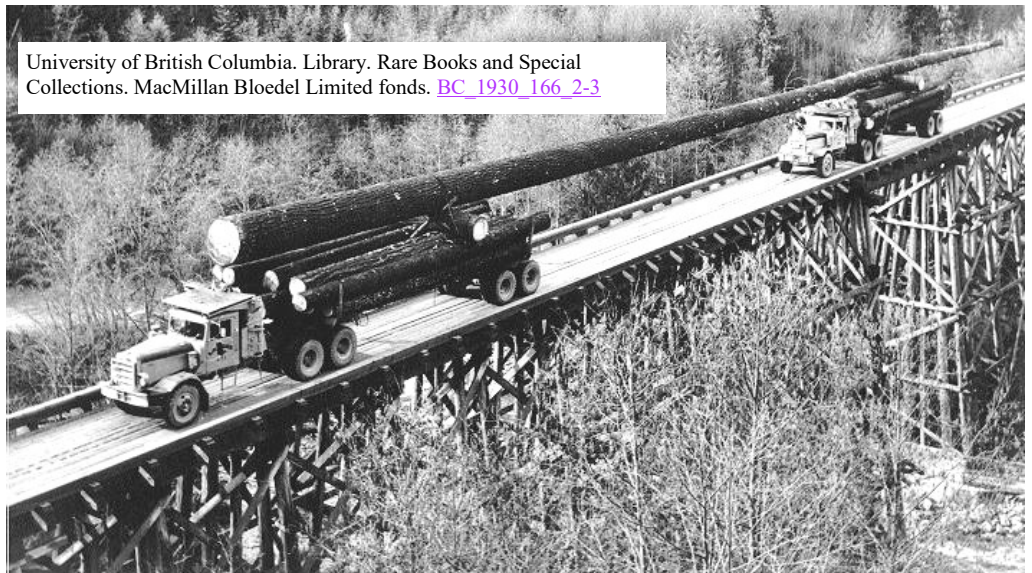
Kew Gardens Flagpoles	P.1, 6, 7	Powell River Forestry Heritage	P.4
Ex-BCFS Vessel Rendezvous	P.2	WFP Significant Donation	P.5
Mossom Boyd collection	P.3	Forest History Program Update	P.8



# The Kew Gardens Flagpoles and other Former Big Trees

by John Parminster

University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. MacMillan Bloedel Limited fonds. [BC\\_1930\\_166\\_2-3](#)



British Columbians are justifiably proud of the province's extensive forests and record-sized trees – notably Douglas-fir, Sitka spruce, western red cedar and black cottonwood. Over the course of a century and a half, four large Douglas-firs were exported to England, to be fashioned into flagpoles and put on display in the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew (16 km west of London). The first two of these large specimens were sent courtesy of Captain Edward Stamp, pioneer sawmiller at Alberni and Burrard Inlet. The third and

fourth massive Douglas-firs were gifts from the B.C. government, the fourth for both a centennial and bicentennial celebration.

In 1857 Edward Stamp wanted to cut some large spars at Pachena, south of Bamfield on Vancouver Island, but the local people lacked the necessary felling and yarding equipment. So he contracted with a mill at Port Gamble, Washington. In 1858 he sent spars, ship's timbers and lumber to two prominent firms in London and promoted the little-known

*(Continued on page 6)*



# Ex-BCFS Vessel Squadron 2016 Rendezvous by John Parminter

The annual rendezvous of the current owners of some of the former BC Forest Service coastal vessels was held at the Ladysmith Community Marina on the BC Day long weekend July 30-Aug. 1. In attendance were *Alpine Fir II*, *Arbutus II*, *Cherry II*, *Coast Ranger*, *Dean Ranger*, *Forest Ranger II*, *Maple II*, *Nesika*, *Oak II*, *Silver Fir*, *Tamarack*, *Western Yew* and *White Birch*.

The local press publicized the rendezvous, as did the marina, and many people came to have a look at these floating artefacts of BC's coastal heritage. A number of retired long-time BC Forest Service employees went aboard the boats to rekindle memories of time spent on the water and the places they visited in the course of their duties. Vessels were open for viewing on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, as is the usual custom.



Photos by  
John Parminter

The owners also held their annual general meeting and had a potluck dinner. There was ample time to relax in the sunshine, swap stories, compare notes on vessel maintenance and exchange ideas. The first rendezvous was held in 1992. The 1995 rendezvous was held at the Vancouver Maritime Museum and

coincided with a reunion of many retired BC Forest Service ranger staff. The 2012 rendezvous took place in Victoria as part of the centenary celebration of the BC Forest Service. For more information on the Ex-Forest Service Vessel Squadron see <https://westcoastwood.wordpress.com/>



**New book of note.** *If you have read it, we will be happy to publish your review!*

## **The Sustainability Dilemma: Essays on British Columbia Forest and Environmental History.** by Robert Griffin and Richard A. Rajala

Historians Griffin and Rajala delve into the management of our forest industry and its impact on our fresh-water ecosystems. Well illustrated with black-and-white and colour photographs, this book looks closely at some of the key players and issues--from E.C. Manning, C.D. Orchard, and the proposal and implementation of sustained-yield policies in the 1930s and 1940s to Ray Williston, Jim Hart and two forest-fish conflicts that captured province-wide attention in the 1960s and 1970s.

Available online via the [BC Royal Museum shop.](#)



### from Newsletter Editor Eric Andersen:

A big Thank You to our resourceful colleague David Brownstein for taking the lead in assembling issue #98! This newsletter has always been an enjoyable and profitable read for me over the years. To help a FHABC newsletter that will continue to entertain, offer resources, foster networks and stimulate research and writing in support of B.C. forest history should be very satisfying.

### Print Readers - please opt for the online version and invite us to not send you the print version.

#### Why?

- underlined text are **hot links** on the [website version of the newsletter](#)
- Emailing saves costs and helps keep the membership fee low
- Online version is in colour

### FHA of BC Newsletter team:

**Editor:** Eric Andersen, Squamish

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**Submissions?: email to [info@fhabc.org](mailto:info@fhabc.org)**

### Membership: New or lapsed member?

\$15.00 annually, or three years for \$40.00

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## Mossom Boyd collection donated to several BC Museums.

By Tim Woodland *Editor's note: Earlier this year the [Maple Ridge News](#) reported that Tim won an award for his efforts. It came from the Maple Ridge Heritage Commission "for his Significant Contribution for the Preservation of an Historical Collection."*

I was contacted by a Vancouver Island dealer, who knows me to be a BC forest historian and collector, and offered a wonderful archive from the Mossom Boyd family estate. Mossom and a half-brother had been involved in lumbering in the Bobcaygeon, Ontario area in the mid-1800s, and purchased timberlands and a sawmill in BC's Cowichan Valley in the 1890s. They also owned land and timber on BC's mid-coast, in Port Moody, and around Alouette Lake in Maple Ridge, which was subsequently logged by the Abernethy Loughheed Logging Company.

I gave a presentation on logging history to the Maple Ridge Historical Society, based partially on material from this archive, and then donated material to the Maple Ridge Museum which filled in some gaps in their Abernethy Loughheed records. Donations were also made to the Port Moody and Lake Cowichan Museums, and a significant donation

to the Cowichan Valley Museum in Duncan.

The purchase included 10 boxes of company records, business ledgers, financial records and correspondence, and legal and government documents related to the business of timber ownership, logging and sawmilling. As part of the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway Grant, the Boyd's Cowichan Valley holdings were owned outright, as opposed to being public or TFL managed. Through several economic cycles, a World War and the Great Depression, the business dealt with the sale of logs, operation of the sawmill, and offers for sale of various timberlands. Many examples of colourful letterhead correspondence common to the day were included in the archive, from both private companies transacting business and government departments managing timberland, railway and industrial operation.

As the first generation passed on and second generation sons and brothers ran the business affairs, the holdings became complicated as some family members wished to sell their shares in the estate. Some family members resided in BC and ran the business affairs, while others remained in Ontario. Much legal correspondence was included as these issues were resolved, generally dealing with an estate which had been divided into 12ths.

Interestingly, much of the family correspondence is duplicated in [this archive](#): I have not had opportunity to view these, but the finding aid listings suggest that in many cases it includes the other half of correspondence from my purchase.





# Powell River Forestry Heritage Update

By Dave Florence, *President of the Powell River FHS, who has joined the Newsletter team as the layout person*

A [December 1988 article](#) by Edo Nyland in the Forest History Association of BC's newsletter reported the grand opening of the Powell River Forestry Museum. The present article provides an update to the Forestry Heritage scene in Powell River since then.

The Forestry Museum is in the same space as in 1988, but displays have been improved over the years, including a major chainsaw display, information on fires in the local area, a forest service display, and some natural history displays. The outdoor display area, now called the Willingdon Beach Trail, has developed significantly. Signature pieces along the trail are a large Empire steam donkey #357 circa 1918, which was flown from its resting place in the forest by helicopter in 2001; a boom boat; a D6Cat; a Byers cable shovel circa 1942; and a trestle bridge built in 2003. We are proud to report that both the Willingdon Beach Trail and Forestry Museum are listed as "must-see" destinations by the local tourist industry.

In 2011 we developed a new attraction by building a miniature rideable 7.5" gauge railroad, with most rolling stock about 1/5 scale. Powell River has a rich logging railroad history, but all of the hardware was shipped off to Vancouver Island in the 1930s when railroad areas were logged out, or collected for scrap in the Second World War. Rather than celebrate the era by importing huge artefacts, we decided to go miniature. We offer rides to the public weekly from May to September with our gas locomotive, and periodically showcase live steam engines. We have plans to expand the railroad to include more rolling stock of the kind found in Powell River from 1890 to

1954, and expand the track layout to showcase logging techniques of the steam era.

A major organizational change took place in 2014. The P.R. Forestry **Museum** Society changed its name to the P.R. Forestry **Heritage** Society and transferred ownership of the Forestry Museum building and indoor assets to the Powell River Historical Museum and Archives (PRHMA) which is located across the street. We did that because we felt the PRHMA could better manage the indoor Forestry Museum in conjunction with its existing forestry collection and associated archive material. We still support the Forestry Museum both with funding and volunteer support, but are able to focus our outdoor-equipment oriented members on our PRFHS Trail and Railroad activities. The new arrangement is working very well, and we look forward to a better-than-ever Powell River Forestry Museum under its new management. A major tool celebrating the colourful forestry heritage of the Powell River area is our extensive [PRFHS website](#). Many "virtual tour" photos of the Forestry Museum, Railroad and Trail are available on the website, as well as articles about the local historical logging and railroading.

Forest history continues to be made in Powell River. The local Western Forest Products Tree Farm Licence #39 harvests over 400,000 cubic metres of wood annually with associated re-seeding. We have additional harvesting on two Community Forests, on many authorized woodlots, and on private lands using conventional and helicopter harvesting techniques. WFP hosts a Community Advisory Group that helps ensure community values such as a balance between logging and recreational use of the forest. The Sunshine Coast Natural

Resource District is headquartered locally. It's an exciting time and place to see local forest history in the making.

We hope that FHABC members will consider Powell River in their holiday travel plans. In addition to the PRFHS-managed Trail and Railroad, Powell River has an excellent Historical Museum and Archives, its Forestry Museum; a Townsite that was designated as a National Historic District of Canada in 1995; a Townsite Heritage Society with a recently restored 1910 residence; and two museums on Texada Island. We would welcome the opportunity to provide behind-the-scenes tours to interested FHABC members, or reply to queries about the website.



*Editor Eric Andersen welcomes articles describing forestry museums and other institutions of interest to the BC Forest History community for future editions of the newsletter.*

*Email submissions or enquiries to [info@fhabc.org](mailto:info@fhabc.org)*



# Significant Archival Donation from WFP

*Story and Photos by David Brownstein*  
(note: underlined text are hot links on the website version of the website)

The Canadian Forest History Preservation Project is happy to announce a significant corporate BC-based archival donation. Western Forest Products has made an important archival donation to [UBC Rare Books and Special Collections](#).



Peter Kofoed, Krisztina Laszlo and Martin Buchanan contemplating where to begin

The 2.2 metres of textual records and an enormous pile of bound, hand-drawn and coloured maps represent a mandatory passage point for any researcher seeking insight into forest management on BC's coast. A collection of air photos was transferred to the UBC Geography Department's "[Geographic Information Centre](#)."

The bulk of the collection covers the 1950 through 2001 period, though some of it does reach back into the 1930s. The records describe forest operations up and down the entire coast of British Columbia, from Haida Gwaii in the north to Powell River in the south, and Port Alberni on Vancouver Island. The collection reflects the forestry operations and projects undertaken by Western Forest Products and their predecessors. The material covers subjects on tenure, stumpage, forestry projects, silviculture and plans for cutting areas. Beyond the WFP name, the records came from a wide range of

predecessor companies, including traces of MacMillan Bloedel, Weyerhaeuser, Canadian Pacific, Canfor (Englewood Logging Division), British Columbia Forest Products Ltd, Rayonier Canada Limited, Cascadia Forest Products and Pacific Logging.

The donation is courtesy of a connection at the March 2014 Kelowna AGM of the [Association of BC Forest Professionals](#).

Lisa Perrault of WFP thought that she knew of some material in need of archival protection and time proved her right! In Campbell River, WFP executive assistant Gwen Hamling invited us to create an inventory of the collection so that the company could determine what was still needed for current operations, and what might be donated for future research.

With an inventory completed, thus began a lengthy discussion with several archives to balance collection integrity, institutional mandates and the financial pressures of transportation. Krisztina Laszlo, archivist with UBC RBSC, made two trips to Campbell River: one to evaluate the material and another to decide how much UBC could accept. She selected this smaller subset of material from a much larger accumulation held in two storage lockers. Her decisions were guided by advice from WFP retirees Peter Kofoed and Martin Buchanan, and Forest History Association of British Columbia members [Gerry Burch](#) and NiCHE flagbearer David B. Later, David joined FHABC past president Stan Chester to transport everything back to UBC.

Thank you to WFP for funding hotel accommodations and transportation costs, and also to the FHABC for covering additional travel expenses. Of course none of this would have been possible without the

collaboration of [NiCHE](#), the [Canadian Forest Service](#), the [Forest History Society](#) and the [Forest History Association of BC](#), all of which provided seed money for the Canadian Forest History Preservation Project.

From David Brownstein: "**Are you aware of any Canadian forest-related collections in need of an archival home? Please get in touch!**"



Jacky Lai, Krisztina Laszlo and Stan Chester unloading the van at UBC



Gerry Burch makes a close study of some immaculate, hand-coloured atlases.



Martin and Peter advise Krisztina on atlas selections



(Kew Garden ...Continued from page 1)

Douglas-fir by shipping a 150-foot (45.7-m) long flagpole to London. Unfortunately it broke apart while being installed at Kew Gardens. As Stamp had neither timber rights nor a sawmill in B.C., it is likely that this flagpole came from the Olympic Peninsula and was processed by the mill at Port Gamble.

In December 1858 Stamp went to England to arrange financing for a sawmill to be built in B.C. During the spring of 1860 he hired timber cruisers Jeremiah Rogers and John Walton to inspect the forests along the Alberni Canal. Stamp was impressed enough with their report to continue lobbying the colonial government for a land grant with timber, settlement and development rights. It became known as the Stamp Land Scheme and his Crown Grant was subsequently issued with a 21-year term. The sawmill was built between the summer of 1860 and May 1861 and using two gang saws could produce up to 18,000 board feet (42.5 m<sup>3</sup>) per day. The products were exported to Europe, South America, Hawaii, Australia and China plus used locally at Fort Victoria.

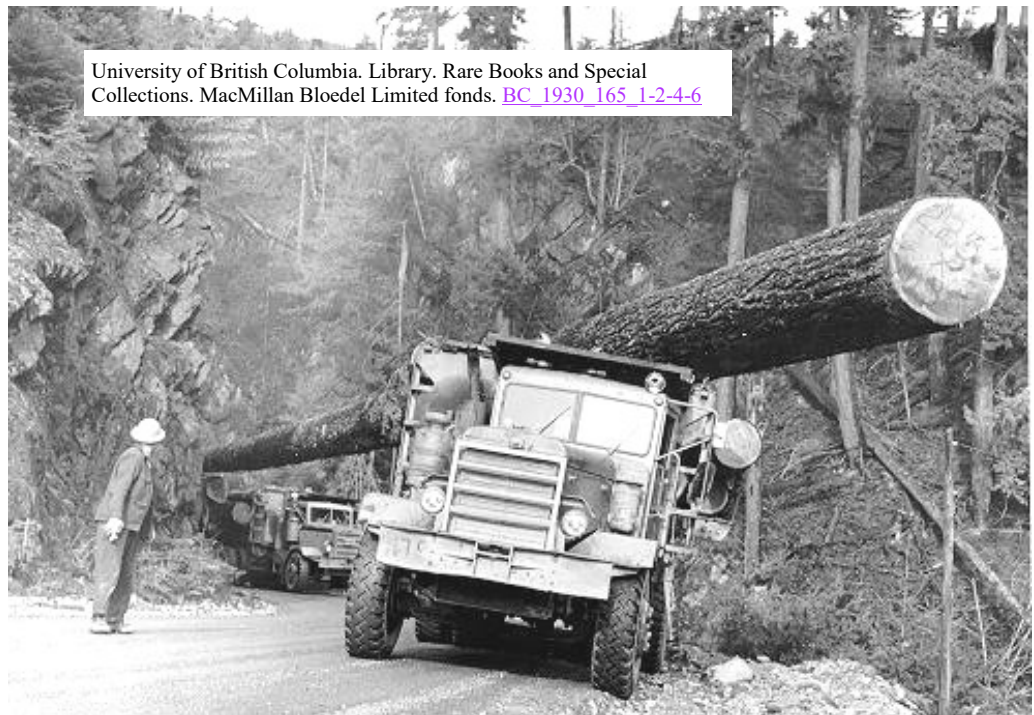
In 1861 Stamp sent a replacement Douglas-fir flagpole to England. It was 159' (48.5 m) long, weighed 4.5 tons (4.6 tonnes) and made from a tree judged to have been about 250 years old. It was installed at Kew Gardens, repaired and reinstalled in 1896 and finally dismantled in 1913 due to serious dry rot. Stamp was working his Alberni land grant in 1861 so that was probably the source of the big tree. He resigned in January 1863 and the next mill manager, Gilbert M. Sproat, closed the facility in 1864 due to the high cost of transporting logs from the forest.

In 1911, Premier Richard McBride decided in favour of presenting a replacement flagpole to Kew Gardens. Early in 1914 J.H.

Turner, the Agent

-General for British Columbia in London, wrote to McBride and also endorsed the proposal. The offer was accepted on February 25, 1914. Eleven suitable trees were located at Stillwater (by the mouth of Jervis Inlet) and felled by logging crews of Brooks, Scanlon and O'Brien. Estimates have the chosen tree measuring from 280' to 300' (85.3 to 91.4 m) to the tip of the leader. It was trimmed and the length reduced to 220' (67.0 m). It was 48" (1.2 m) at the butt and 14" (35 cm) at the top.

The tree was taken by logging



railroad and water to Vancouver for shaping. It was then square from the base to 15' (4.6 m), octagonal to 157' (47.8 m) and then round to the top (at 214' or 65.2 m). The diameter at the base was 33" (84 cm), at 115' (35.0 m) it was 22.5" (57 cm) and at the top it was 12" (30 cm). There were 360 annual rings at the base. The first 100 rings occupied 17.75" (45 cm), the next 100 rings took 7" (18 cm) and the third hundred were compressed into just 3.5" (9 cm). It weighed about 18.2 tons (18.5 tonnes), four times that of its predecessor.

The flagpole left Vancouver on November 8, 1915 aboard the

steamship *Merionethshire* and was dropped into the River Thames at the London docks on December 29, 1915. After being towed upriver to Kew "the largest individual piece of timber ever brought to Europe" was floated ashore on a high tide then placed by the flagpole mound, where it rested on supports beside its much smaller predecessor. The Canadian Forestry Corps were unable to erect the pole but supervised the installation of large concrete blocks at the base and four anchor points. Professional mast riggers raised the flagpole on October

18, 1919 using a derrick 100' (30.5 m) high. A [short video clip](#) of this operation is linked on the website version of the newsletter.

The fourth flagpole was a gift from the British Columbia Loggers' Association and the B.C. government to mark the centennial of the province (1958) and the bicentennial of Kew Gardens (1959). In announcing the gift, Premier W.A.C. Bennett thanked the forest industry for providing "the traditional export of timber products to the United Kingdom."

This large Douglas-fir came from MacMillan Bloedel's Copper Canyon operation, southwest of

(Continued on page 7)

(Kew Gardens .... Continued from page 6)  
Chemainus. The 272-foot (82.9-metre) tree was first limbed and topped, then the crew spent three days rigging and felling it. Cables and blocks had to be attached because the tree was leaning and thus required support on the way down. Crew members manning a donkey and a cat worked together to successfully lower the tree, which escaped damage during the operation.

The pole was yarded and loaded on to two large Hayes trucks. It rested on “false bunks” made of several logs on each truck, which raised the pole high enough that it could swivel. The two trucks travelled carefully, connected in

Ministry of Works hauled the pole up on the bank and placed it on supports. The bark was removed, the wood allowed to season and then it was shaped.

The 23rd Field Squadron of the Royal Engineers erected the pole on November 5, 1959 and it was entered in the Guinness Book of Records. It was then considered to be the largest flagpole in the world, as at 225' (68.6 m) high it was 11' (3.4 m) taller than its predecessor. It had a butt diameter of 54" (1.4 m) and a top diameter of 13" (33 cm) for a volume of 11,000 board feet (25.9 m<sup>3</sup>). The tree was estimated to have been 371 years old. It originally weighed 36.4 tons (36.9 tonnes), but after being

*website version of the newsletter.*

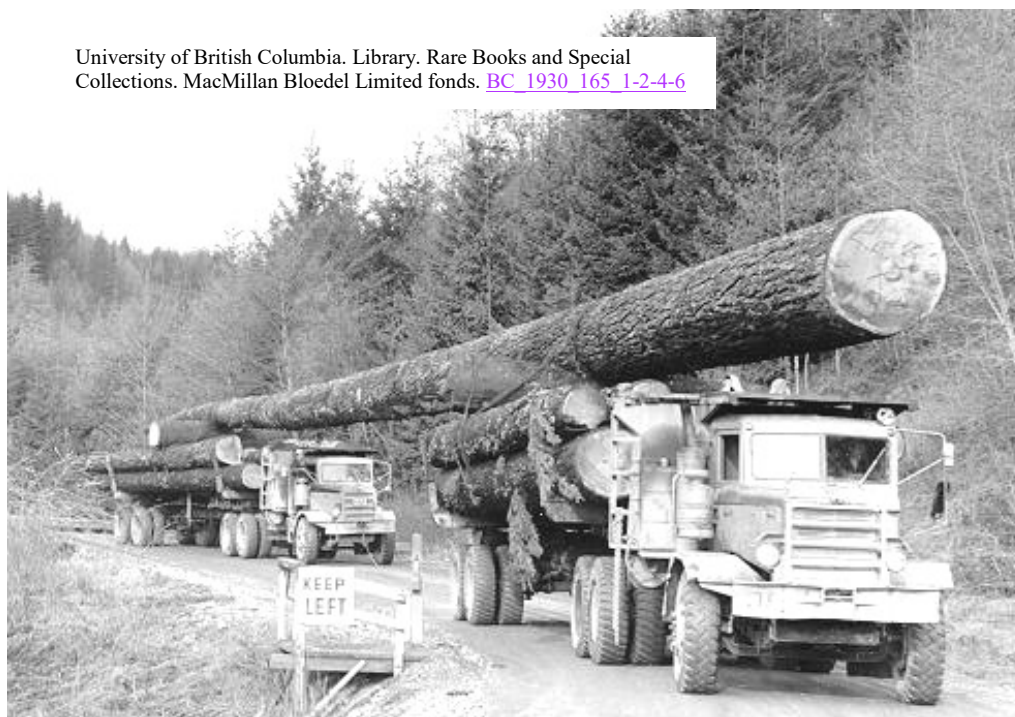
Considering that this was 149 years after Captain Edward Stamp's original gift, it speaks to the ability of such natural structures to induce awe and wonder. The three poles that were erected stood for 52, 40 and 48 years respectively. The management of Kew Gardens decided not to replace the 1959 flagpole, “especially from an old tree, as this would be unsustainable and not in keeping with Kew's conservation and preservation views.”

Other large trees from B.C. that went traveling include a Douglas-fir donated to the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto in 1929 which was 184' (56.1 m) long, 34" (86 cm) across at the base and 10" (25 cm) at the top. Several Vancouver Island locations (Nanaimo Lakes, Caycuse and Copper Canyon) were the sources of many large Douglas-firs cut in November 1968 and used to form part of British Columbia Pavilion at Expo 1970 in Osaka, Japan. [See video clip linked on the website version of the newsletter.](#)

In 1981 a large Douglas-fir on Vancouver Island was felled by B.C. Forest Products and sent to Calgary to grace the Stampede Grounds. At 203' (61.8 m), it was Canada's tallest wooden flagpole and stood for 19 years. Another victim of rot, it was taken down September 27, 2001 and replaced with a steel pole. It is claimed that it was the world's tallest wooden flagpole when it was erected in 1982 and this is possible if the fourth flagpole at Kew Gardens had been shortened to its final height of 200' (60.9 m) by that time. When the Calgary flagpole came down it was still the tallest in Canada.



University of British Columbia. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections. MacMillan Bloedel Limited fonds. [BC 1930\\_165\\_1-2-4-6](#)



tandem by the pole. They covered over 20 miles (32 km) of serpentine logging roads with just 24" (61 cm) of leeway at one spot. A photo of the trucks crossing a bridge is on the cover page.

The pole was shipped in March 1958 from MacMillan Bloedel's Chemainus Sawmill Division. It was towed to Vancouver then put aboard the 450-foot-long (137-metre) ocean freighter *Wavecrest*, bound for the Thames River. Once at Kew Gardens, the

towed up the Thames and shaped at Kew, it was down to 14.7 tons (14.9 tonnes).

However, the flagpole had to be shortened several times over the decades and when taken down was a more modest 200' (60.9 m) tall. Woodpeckers and rot were responsible for its eventual demise. A team of steeplejacks dismantled the last of the wooden Kew Gardens flagpoles on August 13, 2007 because it had been deemed unsafe for flag-flying. [Photos are linked on the](#)





## Upcoming Events

### 2017 Annual General Meeting

The fall 2017 FHABC AGM will take place in the province's interior. Watch this space for details as they are announced.

### A warm thank you to some special people

Thanks for the hard work and tireless commitment from four retiring board members. All will continue to be active as regular Association members:

**Stan Chester**, President for the past 16 years, stepped down;

**Mike Apsey**, recently active with the B.C. Forest Service Centenary Society, also ended his term as a board member;

**Edo Nyland** was a founding member of the FHABC in March 1982, and was the first secretary/treasurer. He served as Treasurer until 2006 (24 years!);

**Barbara Coupe**, a former newsletter editor from 2009 to 2014, has also vacated her board seat.

One new face has joined the board: **Eric Andersen** of the Squamish Sea to Sky Forestry Centre Society. Eric is stepping into the newsletter editor role, and we look forward to hearing much more from him in the future. Please send your article submissions to [info@fhabc.org](mailto:info@fhabc.org).

Some photos from the AGM held  
Sep 23-25 in Powell River BC



## Forest Inventory Program History Updated

by John Parminter

Last year the FHABC published an “e-book” version of Ralph Schmidt’s history of the BC Forest Service’s inventory program from 1912 to 1940 by placing

it on our website and that of the [BCFS/MFLNRO library](#). Since then we discovered that many of the early forest survey reports held in that library have been digitized and are available online.

A list was made of all the 180 reports for 1912 to 1971, organized chronologically and then by author, with the link given for each report available online. Some reports have not yet been scanned. A shorter list of those reports dated 1912 to 1940 was added to the appendix of Ralph

Schmidt's report and the online version of that report was updated. Copies are available online at [fhabc.org](http://fhabc.org) and at [nrs](http://nrs).

Work is underway editing and formatting volume two of the inventory program history, written by FHABC member Bob Breadon. It covers the period from 1940 to 1960 and will include a list of the forest survey reports available for that time period.

