

Hollyburn Heritage Society



Issue No. 7 - December 2003

Hollyburn Heritage Society (HHS), creators of the Hollyburn Ski Camp Heritage Project and the Hollyburn Cypress Heritage Project, is the official title for a group of pioneer skiers who saw fit to preserve the history, culture and heritage of this area. Come in the Hollyburn Ski Camp Lodge to have a rest, a hot chocolate, or a cool beer and see our displays of old photographs, memorabilia and ski equipment from yesteryear in the "Back Room."

2003 was the 77th anniversary for this lodge at its present site. It was reconstructed from building materials in an old cookhouse from the abandoned Naismith lumber mill at 2,500 ft. (762 m) elevation, brought to this site by stoneboat drawn by a team of horses.

HHS is a registered society and has charitable donation registration with Canada Customs & Revenue Agency. We welcome donations for which you will receive an income tax deduction receipt.

Commemorative coffee mugs and beer steins are for sale in the Hollyburn Ski Camp Lodge. HHS also has two videos "Hollyburn, A Place of Memories" and "Eilif Haxthow, A Hollyburn Mountain Pioneer." To order, please call 604-922-7358 or 604-926-3748.

Coffee mug	\$7.50	Beer stein	\$8.50
Video.....	\$15.00	(Prices includes taxes.)	

Funds from donations and sales assist in the publication of these information bulletins and support other HHS programs that advance the Society's mandate. B.C. Parks or CBRL do not receive any funds from Hollyburn Heritage Society. Membership to HHS is by way of a donation: financial - volunteer time - items (photos, articles, stories, etc.)

For more information contact:
Bob Tapp Phone/Fax: 604-926-3748
Gordon Knight Phone/Fax: 604-922-7358
E-MAIL: hollyburnheritagesociety@telus.net

Accomplishments for 2003

At the end of 2002, our photographic collection was approximately 1400. This year individuals and families have loaned HHS over 2100 photos, including 1400 from Alex Swanson, which we have scanned, added to our database, and returned.

Our collection of articles has increased by library research for early items published in local newspapers, especially the Vancouver Province. During the 1920's, Pollough Pogue wrote a series of over 200 articles and stories, most concerning his life on Hollyburn. These items, copies of which we now have in our archives, awakened interest in Hollyburn as an area for hiking and skiing. Another Vancouver Province article we have acquired describes the two enterprising ladies who owned a cabin on Hollyburn where they prepared formal afternoon teas for their visitors. A significant acquisition has been a copy of the journal of Eilif Haxthow, written in his native Norwegian, which Jorgen Dahlie volunteered to translate. It chronicles Eilif's life at the ski camp at its original location near the old Naismith Mill on Hollyburn between December 1924 and May 1926.

HHS has been active in receiving funding to carry out some projects. The commemorative picnic table dedicated to early commercial entrepreneurs on Hollyburn was funded by the North Shore Community Foundation and the Rotary Club of West Vancouver and was installed in August on the shore of First Lake near the main trail. Have your picnic there come summer!

Another project, funded by the West Vancouver Foundation, is a sign designed to be mounted on Collins Run, near the former site of "Blackie's Cabin" in the downhill ski area. It relates the story of Harry Collins, after whom the run is named. In 1932, Harry built this cabin in this area, cutting trees on Mt. Strachan and in so doing produced a ski run which was the delight of many pioneer skiers. Unfortunately, the early snow this year has prevented the sign from being erected.

Funding was also received from the Helley Hanson Adventure Fund and the Alpine Club of Canada to continue the recording of oral histories from old time skiers/hikers/cabin owners.

This fall, Don Grant has been creating a curriculum that will introduce students in West Vancouver schools to the history and heritage of Hollyburn.

The HHS executive committee has been augmented by the addition of Robert Watt. Robb is the first official Chief Herald for Canada. He was also Vancouver's first official archivist and a director of the Vancouver Centennial Museum. Robb graduated from West Vancouver Secondary School in 1962. In the late 60's and early 70's, he and his brother Duncan were cabin owners on Hollyburn.

Hiking - Trucking - Lifting - Driving. How We Got There!

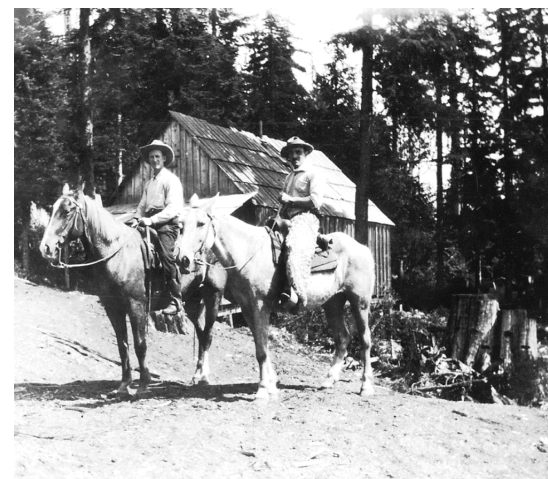
Today, would we walk from Richards and Smithe all the way, except for the North Van ferry ride, up Capilano Valley, climb the two Lions, then return? The Latta brothers did in 1903. Or, how about walking from the NV ferry up Lonsdale, hiking up Grouse Mtn., then climbing Crown Mtn. and the Camel and not going to bed from Friday night to Sunday night - Buddy Barker and her friends did in July, 1928. Feet and legs were how one got there.

The first ascent of Hollyburn Peak was in 1908 by members of Vancouver Mountaineering Club (forerunner of BCMC), following trails made by loggers. In 1910, John Davidson did a botanical survey of this area, hiking from St. Mark's Camp on Howe Sound (Lions Bay today.)

West Vancouver developed as a result of forestry - from the late 1800's, trees were cut up to as high an elevation as possible with skidroads and flumes used to transport them to sea level in the days before logging trucks. In the vicinity of McDonald Creek (near 22nd Street) and Marr Creek (near 26th Street), where logging had taken place, trails up Hollyburn Ridge were the legacy. It was up one of these trails that Rudolph Verne and a friend hiked in May 1923 when they came upon James Naismith's abandoned lumber mill buildings at an elevation of 2,500 feet (762 m). Verne, an avid skier, saw possibilities for skiing at this location. In December 1924, he told Eilif Haxthow, a recent emigrant from Norway, that he had rented an old building and had a plan to start a ski camp that winter, where hikers could rent skis, purchase coffee and sandwiches - even spend the night. Eilif accepted the offer and with Hjalmer Fahlander, another Swede, helped Rudolph put his plan in place. Everything was carried up the mountain on the backs of these Scandinavians and a few others that joined them later - food, tools, building materials, cement. They opened the ski camp on January 11, 1925. During the last weekend in January, they had close to 150 guests. Despite a low snowfall, things went fairly well that first year.



Ski Camp and Restaurant at the 'Old Mill' site, Winter, 1925
(Eilif Haxthow Collection courtesy of Peggy Massey)



Fred Scott and Captain Lindermere - the 'dude wranglers,' May, 1925
(Eilif Haxthow Collection courtesy of Peggy Massey)

In May, 1925, a couple of 'wranglers' came to the 'Old Mill' ski camp with horses. An entrepreneur named Fred Scott conceived the idea that 'dudes' from Vancouver, clothed in full cowboy regalia, might enjoy a ride up the Hollyburn trail on a horse. He persuaded Captain Lindermere, the forest ranger on the mountain, to be his first 'customer.' Since few were inclined to follow Lindermere's example, Fred's business venture faded quickly into obscurity, but in 1926 horses did participate in transport on Hollyburn - as packers and to haul building materials on a stoneboat up to the new ski camp site at First Lake. In the 1930's there was 'Baldy', Ted Russell's packhorse.

Word got around and soon hundreds of local youths hiked up the 'Hollyburn Trail' to try the new sport of skiing, extolled in a number of Pollough Pogue's Vancouver Province articles. Who could not be charmed and intrigued by the following words?

"A skier ...loves the snow and the pure sharp air, the crystal days of winter sunshine, blue shadows on the white meadows, the large free wind of the mountain top; the sculptured peaks that enclose the high plateau in a pattern of violets and silver, the nights of white moon and icy stars."

"The Craft So Long To Learn," Pollough Pogue, The Province, November 30, 1928

During the Depression years, some of the hikers that made the trek to "the Ridge" from the West Vancouver ferry wharf at the foot of 14th Street built almost 300 cabins on municipal land - from shake shanties to elaborate lodge cabins. Except for what they found left by the loggers, materials were carried up - stoves - sofas - a sewing machine - even a piano, because the four guys who carried it wanted some music! Brian Creer and Bert Baker earned 5¢ per pound to haul other folks' packs from Marine Drive up the mountain. The 'Bread Lady,' Barbara

(continued on overleaf)

(continued from overleaf)

Hughes and her son would carry 100 lb. sacks of flour to their cabin at the Forks. One day, a hiker volunteered to pack it for her, but soon tuckered out and left the sack on the trail. She never saw him again!

In the 1940's, Harry Huff who operated the service station at 25th and Marine Drive, had a wood truck that on Fridays and Saturdays, he would use to transport hikers' packs up to the Forks charging 75¢ a pack. At tree line above 26th and Ottawa, the hikers would swarm aboard for an illegal trip to the Forks.



Harry Huff's wood truck on the Forks road loaded with 'illegal' hikers, late 1940's (source unknown; HHS Archives)

By 1952, things were becoming modern! 'Hi' Colville, Bill Theodore, Dick Lawrence and others had built a single chairlift from a point near the top of Chairlift Place to Hi-View Lodge at 2,600 feet (793 m). It was called the "Chairway to the Stars," but hikers still had to hike either to Westlake Lodge or Hollyburn Ski Lodge to enjoy their favorite winter sports. Folks referred to the lift as "going from nowhere to nowhere." By this time, Grouse had a double chairlift up the south side; the clearing scar is still visible today. On Seymour, there was a road to the ski area.



Bob Tapp standing beside a chairlift tower during construction of the "Chairway to the Stars." August 20, 1950. (Bob Tapp Collection)

Before the chairlift was built, in winter, the Burfields, who now owned the Hollyburn Ski Lodge, had a Bombardier "Sno-Cat" to transport skiers from the 'Old Mill' site to the ski area at First Lake. This was great in a winter of good snow, otherwise hikers 'hoofed' it. For hauling around the ski camp, the Burfields at first used 'Red', their trusting horse. Later Red was replaced by a little John Deere tractor. Norm Deacon at Westlake also had a John Deere.



Alex Swanson on his skidoo beside Fred Burfield's John Deere tractor (centre) and the Bombardier (right), Spring 1973 (Alex Swanson Photo Collection)

In 1965, the top terminal of the lift and Hi-View Lodge burned down. Hollyburners drove their own vehicles or rode Fred Burfield's new bus up a rough road as far as they could and then transferred to the Bombardier or walked in to their cabins. Some people began to use skidoos to get around the mountain.



Fred Burfield's bus, Winter 1966 (Alex Swanson Photo Collection)

Alex Swanson's children would often ride down the mountain on dilapidated old bikes purchased at police auctions. By the time they got to the bottom, these bikes would usually be a wreck.

In 1967, the Girl Guides and Boy Scouts of Canada began work on the Baden-Powell Trail, a British Columbia Centennial project for these two groups. This 50 km trail, completed in 1971, begins near the Eagleridge exit above Horseshoe Bay, crosses over Black Mountain and the Hollyburn Plateau, descends via Hollyburn ski runs and a

forest trail to the Capilano Reservoir and then continues east crossing the lower slopes of Grouse, Fromme, and Seymour before reaching its terminus in Deep Cove. For the past 32 years, many hikers have accessed Hollyburn via the western section of the popular Baden-Powell Trail.

In the early '70s, a three lane highway was constructed to provide access to the newly created Cypress Provincial Park, which officially opened in 1975. In 1976, thousands of Vancouverites used this highway to get to the new downhill ski facilities on Black and Strachan.

In the late 70's, hang gliders flew from Highview Lookout beside the highway to landing sites in West Vancouver. After a couple of glider pilots failed to reach their intended destination, this form of transportation down the mountain was forbidden!



Hang glider near Hiview Lookout, Spring 1975 (Alex Swanson Photo Collection)

Today, cyclists and mountain bikers can frequently be seen pedaling their way up and down the mountain, most using the highway, a few using an network of forest paths to make their clandestine descents.

Parts of the old trail systems used by the loggers and ski pioneers are still in use. In 1981, as a training run, Peter Croft, a well-known rock climber, would walk to the Centennial Seawalk at Dundarave, run all the way up the original 26th Street trail to the ski camp at First Lake, and then walk down! With increased traffic on the Grouse Grind, more hikers are returning to the quieter trails of Hollyburn. Natural history enthusiasts are attracted by the mountain's flora and fauna. Others come to revisit the pathways of their youth.

Hollyburn Heritage Society Announcement for the Annual General Meeting

HHS is giving notice now that it will hold its 4th Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, May 19th, 2004 at 7:30 p.m. in the West Vancouver Seniors Centre (northwest corner of 21st Street and Marine Drive.) If you're interested, please come. You can become a member by being a donor - financial or gift in kind.

During the past year, these folks have gone for their last ski across the glacier:

Gerry Hardman at 90 gave us insights regarding the early activities on Hollyburn. In 1922, when he was 13, Gerry made his first trip to the "Old Mill" site with some West Vancouver High School friends to play in the sawdust piles. He and his buddies built their first cabin when they were sixteen. During his 77 years on Hollyburn, Gerry owned three cabins. At 88, he was still hiking around the ski camp area at First Lake.

Ralph Herzstein was a cross-country ski enthusiast familiar to many Hollyburners. He learned to ski when he was 75 after he retired! Ralph would often stop and help a student struggling with skis, give him a few tips, and then send him on his way smiling. Ralph's reward - another happy skier.

Trevor Roote first came to Hollyburn in 1942 to look after a cousin's cabin who had 'joined up.' Trev found great pleasure being in the mountains. At UBC, he joined the Varsity Outdoor Club and enjoyed it so much that skiing and hiking became a passion, interests he shared with his wife Susie. He was active in developing things - at Whistler, it was the local trail system; on Hollyburn, he was a founding director of HHS and had many ideas regarding the restoration, renovation or rebuilding of Hollyburn Ski Lodge.

Ken Sotvedt was the son of Henry Sotvedt, one of the great Norwegian ski jumpers, well-known to many BC skiing pioneers. Ken, a dedicated outdoorsman, passed away suddenly after spending a day on the Skagit River, during which he caught and released four fish.

Alfred Staley passed away in November at the age of 94. Around 1930, he built Cabin #183 and its 28 foot high outhouse, much needed during 1932's record snowfall of 23 feet. At age 91, Alfred rode skidoos on Cypress Mountain.

OUR CORPORATE and COMMUNITY GROUP SPONSORS

