

## WEST COAST RAILWAY ASSOCIATION CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

West Coast Railway Association celebrated 50 years since its incorporation as a society, in two events held in May. The society was officially incorporated on May 17, 1961. Originally started in 1958 as a railfan group known as the Hi Ballers, the society had twelve members at the time of its incorporation. Interestingly, the original constitution and main goal of *Preserving British Columbia's Railway Heritage* remain in effect to this day. In addition, ten of the original twelve are still with us, two are presently on our Board of Directors (**Hugh Little** and **Martin Jergens**) and six remain active members of the Association.

Saturday, May 21 was an all day celebration at the West Coast Railway Heritage Park in Squamish. Admission to the Park was free all day, and a number of special activities occurred throughout the day, including several operating trains from WCRA's restored collection, a ceremony honouring our founding members, and cake for all. Some 500 people took in some or all of the day.

The ceremony was held at 11:00AM in the CN Roundhouse and Conference Centre. **Don Evans** acted as Master of Ceremonies. The event was opened by **Dale Harry** of the Squamish Nation, who did a traditional welcome to the Squamish territory. Don then provided a brief history of the WCRA, and turned the mike over to mayor **Greg Gardner** who congratulated WCRA's founders on their vision in creating the organization that has grown to what it is today. WCRA Chair **Bob Philip** then said a few words of appreciation on behalf of the board. Don then read a note from **Hugh Little**, one of WCRA's founding members and a current director, who was out of town and unable to attend the event. The group then moved to the site of the commemorative plaque to be unveiled in the lobby of the roundhouse.



At the event were three of the original founding members of the Hi Ballers / WCRA, and they presided in the unveiling of the permanent plaque in the lobby. With us were **Keith Anderson, Doug Cummings and Glen MacGregor**. They lifted the cloth off the plaque to the applause of the crowd. (photo, page 19, Doug, Keith, Glen left to right)).

Following the ceremony, the crowd moved to enjoy some cake celebrating the occasion, and two sets

of roundhouse doors were opened to reveal the turntable and a demonstration of its operation

with RDC-3 BC 21 taking the ride—a full 360!



Train operations provided a series of demonstrations and photo opportunities throughout the day, with the operational series as follows:



- 10:30AM BCR Budd RDC-3 BC21 arrives *Mac Norris Station*
- 11:30AM BCR Budd RDC-3 BC 21 takes a spin on the turntable
- 12:00PM CPR FP7A #4069 arrives *Mac Norris Station* with passenger train
- 1:00PM PGE RSC-3 #561 arrives *Mac Norris Station* with freight train
- 1:30PM PGE RSC-3 #561 takes a spin on the turntable

Thanks to all who came out and to everyone who helped make this a very special day for the WCRA and its members.

**Sunday, May 22** saw a second event, this time at the Locomotive 374 Pavilion in Vancouver's Yaletown. This event coincided with the 124th anniversary celebration of the arrival of #374 into Vancouver with the first passenger train from the east, the date was May 23, 1887! Master of ceremonies this time was **Bill Johnston**, who hosted the program. Speaking first was WCRA President **Don Evans**, who covered the history of the WCRA and the 50th anniversary.



Roundhouse Community Centre board member **Leslie Adams** made remarks on behalf of the Roundhouse Community Centre. (photo, Russ Grycan)

Following the talking, there was live entertainment, cake for everyone, face painting and

lots of activities that lasted through the afternoon. As noted earlier, although the large doors were opened to the outdoors, the locomotive had to stay inside due the turntable construction work in progress—just as well as it was quite wet outside with Spring showers! Still, it was a fun afternoon for everyone and again, well attended as many guests and WCRA members were on hand for the afternoon. Thanks to all who helped and participated.