

# The most unique train to cross the Kinsol

BY KEN CRINGAN, SPECIAL TO THE  
CITIZEN

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In August, 1971, a train like no other steamed across the Kinsol Trestle. On board that day was Ken Cringan of Nanaimo, who sent along this picture, and some information about the train

The train was made up of vintage cars and locomotives, pulled by a modern diesel locomotive, destined for the Victoria Pacific, a new tourist operation on CNR's trackage west of Victoria. The VPR operated for two seasons. This has to be the most unusual train to have crossed our favourite bridge.



The most unique train ever to cross the Kinsol Trestle in August 1971.

In the photo, you can see the CN locomotive pulling the train. Here are some notes about the rest of the cars

- The first steam locomotive in the train is Hillcrest Lumber Company #10, a 70-ton, three-truck "Climax" geared logger built in 1928. It did not operate on the Victoria Pacific Railway and later went to Elbe, Washington where it was extensively rebuilt and now hauls tourists during the summer

I believe it is still owned by VPR organizer Terry Ferguson of Vancouver. Hillcrest Lumber had about six miles of track from their mill at Mesachie Lake to an interchange with the CPR at Lake Cowichan station. They and the Ten ceased operations in 1968

- The Tank car was also from Hillcrest. They used it for locomotive fuel oil

- The boxcar was a former CPR. In the photo it has been painted "Victoria Pacific."

- The steam crane and its boom-car were used by Hillcrest to move lumber around their mill yard. It saw little use at Victoria and was scrapped at Ladysmith in the '80s

- The two cabooses A5(?) and A13 were ex-B.C. Electric/BC Hydro. One ended up sitting in front of Whippletree Junction south of Duncan. I'm sure both were scrapped long ago

- The second steam locomotive was former Comox Logging & Railway Co. number 16. For several years it had sat unused in Comox's yard at Ladysmith. It was then purchased by West Coast Railway Association of Vancouver who leased it to the State of Alaska for use hauling the public from Anchorage station out to the airport and back during their 1967 "Alaska Purchase Centennial" celebrations. After its return to Vancouver it was overhauled at CNR's Terminal Avenue shop (yours truly chipped scale off the inside of the boiler -- the worst job I ever had) then leased by VPR. It did all the passenger-hauling there. It now sits in storage somewhere in the Vancouver area

- The final car in the train (not visible in the photo) was ex-CPR business car "British Columbia." I believe it is long-scrapped; its all-wood frame made it unacceptable for mainline use. There is a similarly-named car at the WCRA museum in Squamish but I don't think it is the same one. It was built in 1928 and would therefore have a steel frame

Ken Cringan, Member,  
Canadian Association of Railway Modellers,  
Nanaimo, B.C

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