

#7 1929 Baldwin Steam Train – History

The locomotive, was built in August 1929 by the Baldwin Locomotive Works in Philadelphia, USA, as per an order from the Campbell River Timber Company. The engine weighs 90 tons and has a wheel arrangement of 2-8-2. (a 2-wheel lead truck, 8 drivers and a 2-wheel trailing truck) and is different than other steam locomotives as it doesn't carry a tender behind. Instead, the fuel tank is attached to the back of the cab and the water is carried in the saddle tank above the boiler. The purpose of this was to give the driving wheels more weight and traction as the locomotive's main purpose was for pulling logging trains on steep grades. The engine has a tractive force of 29,100 lbs., burns oil and can carry up to 1800 gallons of water.



The locomotive was shipped in 1929 to Campbell River B.C. where it worked for the Campbell River Timber Company. It continued to work for them identifying as #2 along side its sister locomotive #3. Until 1938, when the company went bankrupt due to a forest fire in the area. They were forced to then sell the assets they owned. H R McMillan bought the locomotives and assets and sent both the locomotives to work for the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company (A.P.L.) in Port Alberni, B.C. which H R McMillan had bought in 1936. There, the #2 became the #7 and its sister switched numbers from #3 to #8. In 1953 the H.R. MacMillan Export Co. (the parent company of the Alberni Pacific Lumber Co.), joined Bloedel Stewart & Welch to become Canada's largest forest company, MacMillan Bloedel Ltd.. The #7 was transferred to MacMillan Bloedel's Franklin River logging division, as the A.P.L. rail logging operation was shut down. The #7 was renumbered to #1007. In 1954, a bridge over the Franklin River collapsed, in heavy rains, under the #7 making the locomotive plunge into the Franklin River resulting in the death of the engine crew. It wasn't badly damaged so it was repaired and returned to operation.

In 1958, the #1007 was leased to Comox Logging & Railway Co.'s in Ladysmith and worked their Nanaimo Lakes operations as #18 until 1962. The locomotive was returned to MacMillan Bloedel where it went to work in their Nanaimo Lakes operations as number 1055 until 1969 when the logging rail operations shut down. The engine was sent to work in the company's Chemainus sawmill as a switching unit. It worked in Chemainus for two years until 1971 when it retired from service and placed in storage. Sometime after retirement, the Provincial Government purchased the locomotive because of its historic significant, the "last operating steam locomotive in regular service in North America." In 1994, the Government donated it to the City of Port Alberni due to our need for a steam



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locomotive to preplace the retired “2 Spot” shay locomotive. The locomotive was restored by the Western Vancouver Island Industrial Heritage Society and renumbered back to #7 and lettered for the Alberni Pacific. The engine is part of the city’s Alberni Valley Museum’s industrial collection and is operated by the Society as part of the Alberni Pacific Railway tourist steam train operation. The restoration was completed for the start of the tourist operation in 1997. The #7 operated mostly during the summer running to McLean Mill National Historic Site, until 2017 when there was a concern that the trestles on the Alberni Pacific Railway were in too poor of a condition to run on with the 90-ton steamer. This was later resolved. Operations were restarted in 2018 after some maintenance until three boiler tubes ruptured putting #7 out of service for the rest of the summer.

As of August 2020, the #7 has received a full boiler retube and is being prepared to be put back together by our volunteer boilermakers and other volunteers from the Alberni Pacific Railway. For more information about the Alberni Pacific Railway check out our website ihsportalberni.ca.