

Girl Guide Chalet Our Cabin on Hollyburn Mountain

The Girl Guide Chalet was originally built in 1934 by Gus Johnson with the assistance of Mr. Tom Gibson and was then known as the Hollyburn Pacific Ski Club. It was not built on its present location, but was originally constructed on the highest point of land halfway between Hollyburn Lodge and West Lake. In fact, the chalet was then on the edge of such a steep hill that it was used for ski jumping and was one of the larger jump hills on the mountain. The starting platform for the jump was the peak of the cabin!

Mr. Ted Russell, Hollyburn Ranger until the end of 1973, with the assistance of a beautiful horse called Baldy, pulled, or as the saying went then, "snaked out" the logs for the building. Baldy also packed in all the lumber and windows from the upper end of Eyremount Drive. Mr. Russell recalls, "It was a difficult task because the chalet was built on such a high point of land all the logs had to be hauled up hill." However, because of its central location, it was the scene of much activity and many dances with live music were held there.

In the late 1930's, upon the opening of the First Narrows Bridge and the British Properties, Brothers Creek and West Lake became initial water supply sources and Westlake Lodge had to be moved. Since our Chalet was on the very edge of the watershed, it too was moved in 1940. It was taken apart and re-erected on its present site by Otar and Emil Brandvold, with the help of others who are still on the mountain. They cut the trail and again Mr. Russell, this time with the aid of a much larger horse, moved the logs. Mr. Russell relates, "It took me nine days of steady work to move the whole building over. If I remember correctly, I was paid ninety dollars for the job."

Mr. Wood, West Vancouver Municipal Forester, remembers that interest in ski clubs lagged at this time and Hollyburn Pacific and Vancouver Ski Club amalgamated, but since neither club wanted to use the other's identity, they called themselves the Cypress Ski Club. A few years later this was changed to the Vancouver Ski Club again. This club continued to operate as a lodge and dormitory until 1963 when the Burnaby Girl Guides leased the building with the option to purchase. This they exercised early in 1965.

Many Guiders remember riding the chairlift up the mountain and then hiking from there to the Chalet. When the chairlift burned in June 1965, the use of our Chalet was restricted to those who would hike from Eyremount Drive, taking 2 1/2 hours or more depending on weather conditions. In 1975 the Cypress Bowl road was completed and now we can drive to within a 20-30 minute hike of the Chalet.

For over forty years hundreds of girls and Guiders have hiked up the mountain to enjoy a stay in an authentic log cabin on beautiful Hollyburn Mountain.