



## Features

### 12 REMEMBERING RODERICK HAIG-BROWN

Commemorating the renowned Roderick Haig-Brown  
By Art Lingren

### 16 THE UNDERWATER WORLD OF FRESHWATER SHRIMP

How to use shrimp imitations for great results  
By Tom Johannesen

### 22 BELLA COOLA IN THE SPRING

Fish one of BC's most historic rivers. By Art Lingren

### 29 FISHING THE SKEENA LAKES

Don't miss out on these great, scenic fishing destinations.  
By Andrew Williams

### 37 FISHING KYUQUOT SOUND

Kyuquot's awesome fishing potential is worth the trek  
By David Y. Wei and Suzanne L. Clouthier

### 41 FISHING THE COLD FRONT

When and how to successfully fish cold fronts  
By Bill Luscombe

ART LINGREN: ANDREW WILLIAMS, DAVID Y. WEI

## Departments

- 4 Casting Off
- 6 Weighing In
- 14 Fly Tying  
by Philip Rowley
- 27 Cooking in the Rough  
by Linda Gabris
- 28 Tips and Tech  
by Scott Baker-McGarva
- 34 Industry News  
by Brian Chan
- 45 Backroads  
by Murphy Shewchuk
- 54 Back Cast  
by Dave Steele



# REMEMBERING RODERICK HAIG-BROWN

## A CONSERVATION PIONEER

February 21, 2008, marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Roderick Haig-Brown's birth. The English-born Haig-Brown came to North America when he was 18 to work in a logging camp in Mount Vernon, Washington. When his USA work permit expired, he moved to Vancouver Island's Nimpkish Valley to work in a logging camp on Woss Lake. After a short return to England in 1929, where he began his writing career, Haig-Brown returned to Vancouver Island in late 1931. In 1934 he married Ann Elmore and settled in Campbell River, where they raised their family and remained until Rod died, on October 13, 1976. The Haig-Brown home and property was designated a heritage property after his death, with Mrs. Haig-Brown living there until she died, in 1990.

Haig-Brown wrote many books on fly-fishing as well as others on life in British Columbia, the native people and early explorers. Long before conservation became fashionable in the '80s and '90s, Haig-Brown counselled wise use of our land, water and fisheries resources. It is fair to say that in the past 100 years in North America, no writer touched the lives of more fly-fishers and is more revered in that community than Rod Haig-Brown.

When the Campbell River system was being developed for power in the late 1940s, the practice of the day for water impoundments was to construct the dam and flood the valley, drowning the forest. Haig-Brown believed that was a bad policy and, in a two-page letter to Lee Straight, the Vancouver Sun's outdoor columnist, he detailed 12 points against those practices and discussed the B.C. Power Commission's disregard for basic conservation concepts.

This was one of the first of conservation battles between industrialists, aided and abetted by government, in which single-mindedness of purpose was paramount and all others be damned. It took

some time, but it became policy to remove trees from water impoundments before they were flooded.

The same single-minded powers that be in government had planned to approve the building of a 750-foot-tall dam on the Fraser River a few miles above Lytton at Moran Canyon. Haig-Brown feared for the Fraser's salmon runs as well as its ecosystem, and put his case forward to the province in a 1972 paper called

The Fraser Watershed and the Moran Proposal. His words are what finally laid the ill-conceived plans for the Moran Dam to rest.


Haig-Brown inspired many young fishermen to fly-fish. He believed that in sport, method was everything, and the more challenging the fishing method, the more enjoyment one would receive from the activity. Haig-Brown's mention of fishing barbless in a 1950s letter was one of the first in B.C. It was later adopted in the regulations for all gear types.

In the early 1970s a new steelhead conservation organization — the Steelhead Society of British Columbia — was formed. For years it was the premier advocate for steelhead in the province. In the early days of its existence, Jim Culp, one of the society's founding members and an early president, recalls inviting Haig-Brown to address the society's annual meeting: "To all of us he was our hero, no doubt about it. We were honoured and in awe at his presence at our meeting."

Haig-Brown reviewed the society's artificial propagation policy. After it was revised to include comments and suggestions from Haig-Brown, the Steelhead Society adopted its policy on artificial propagation, and the SSBC became the leading advocate for wild steelhead in B.C. When Haig-Brown passed away, the society lost one of its best advisers.

Organizations such as the Federation of Fly Fishers (FFF), Trout Unlimited, Oregon Trout, Washington Trout, North West Steelheaders, and Caltrout valued Haig-Brown's input on fish and conservation issues, however, he was closest to the Totem Fly Fishers of





Vancouver. In 1967, when a small group of ardent fly-fishers was organizing the club, it sought Haig-Brown's advice. He made two recommendations: that the club be a social club foremost and that it concern itself not on tackle issues but on being an advocate for quality fishing and fish conservation. He became the club's first honorary member and donated personal fishing items that the club made into trophies. Although it remained a social club, some of its members became leaders in fisheries conservation in B.C.

Another group that Haig-Brown influenced was the University of British Columbia's Harry Hawthorn Foundation. In 1953, a group of UBC professors, its president and Haig-Brown were on a fishing trip when one of the group unknowingly kept one fish more than his limit. The group held court, with Haig-Brown acting as the first chief justice, and fined the offender. As well, the group's wagers on first, largest and most fish were confiscated. The fines and wagers totalled a meager \$13, which the group gave to the UBC Library to start a fly-fishing book collection. The group was named the Harry Hawthorn Foundation because it was Harry who had accidentally exceeded his limit. The Harry Hawthorn Foundation yearly outing continues to this day. The proceeds from over more than half a century of the courts and fines for misdeeds have bought over 2,000 angling titles for the UBC Library.

That Haig-Brown was revered by many is an undisputed fact. As a writer he had admirers in the B.C. literature community, which named one of their yearly awards The Roderick Haig-Brown Regional Prize, given to recognize an outstanding work by British Columbian author. The Totem Fly Fishers named their conservation award after him. The Federation of Fly Fishers has their Roderick Haig-Brown Award, which is presented to a fly-fishing author of a book, books or a combination of articles and books that embody the philosophy and spirit of Roderick Haig-Brown.

In early 1970, Haig-Brown had such a well-respected name in fisheries conservation on the Pacific coast that Jack Davis, minister of fisheries, appointed Haig-Brown to the International Pacific

Salmon Commission. It was around the time of this appointment that Haig-Brown was elected chancellor of the University of Victoria. As well, the government of B.C. named Haig-Brown Mountain in Strathcona Park after Ann and Rod, and for his work and dedication to fisheries conservation, the government named the park along the Adams River the Roderick Haig-Brown Park.

Robert Bruce Cave, an avid Haig-Brown enthusiast, did all Haig-Brown book collectors a great favour when he published his Roderick Haig-Brown: A Descriptive Bibliography. In Cave's bibliography he lists 21 books about or with chapters or sections on Haig-Brown, and 40 articles in periodicals about Haig-Brown.

Haig-Brown was a leader in fisheries conservation and his influence is evident in the actions of others who have a passion for fly-fishing and fish. He was a good friend of the Washington Fly Fishing Club and the Fly Fishers Club of Oregon. He had many admirers south of the border; fly-fishers and conservationists such as Steve Raymond, Les Johnson, Bob Wethern, Frank Amato, Bill Bakke and Bill McMillan, to name a few, had high regard for him.

Although I didn't know Haig-Brown personally, I got to know him well from his books and through my friendship with Rod's best friend, Van Egan. Van and I have fished and corresponded regularly for over 25 years. During those years he has taken me to many of the places that Rod fished and shared his memories of Haig-Brown with me.

Over the past couple of years Van was working on a book about Rod Haig-Brown. After reading Haig-Brown's *The Western Angler*, Van was drawn to Vancouver Island in the early 1950s and when he was fishing the Campbell he met Haig-Brown. They ended up becoming best friends. Now, through Van's book, *Shadows of the Western Angler*, Haig-Brown enthusiasts will get to know him a little better.

Haig-Brown influenced many like-minded fly-fishers over the decades; for some that influence has been profound. On February 21, 2008, many fly-fishers tipped a glass in a salute to Roderick Haig-Brown, the finest of Western anglers. ■