



Klondike Highway through the vast Yukon forest

difference, where you can enjoy 'Gaslight Follies' – a colourful turn-of-the-century-style vaudeville show. The cabin where Jack London lived is also preserved for posterity, and on 8th Avenue there is the Robert Service Cabin where the 'Bard of the Yukon' wrote such classics as *The Cremation of Sam McGee*.

Gold continues to exercise a fascination, and no visitor need go away disappointed. The Bank of Commerce Gold Room demonstrates the complete process of assaying and refining gold from nuggets and quartz to gold ingots, while along Bonanza Creek Road you can try your hand at panning for gold. Further along this road you will find the largest wooden hull dredge in North America, and at nearby Bear Creek you can see the extensive camp that supported the mammoth Klondike gold dredges for more than 50 years.

Getting round the Yukon

Travelling around the region is now child's play compared with the obstacles the pioneers had to face. A number of firms offer package tours with a variety of coach excursions, river cruises and flights, while independent travellers have an extensive road network at their disposal with well-appointed camping sites and travel lodges at regular intervals.

Of the major highways, the 450-mile Klondike Highway is reckoned to be one of the most scenic in the north. It follows the route the prospectors took, up the lush Skagway Valley, over the White Pass to Carcross where George Carmack and his two companions lie buried. It continues to Whitehorse, now the bustling capital of the territory, and then via Carmack and Stewart Crossing to Dawson City.

The Alaska Highway, constructed in 1942 as a

military route for US forces, starts at Dawson Creek in British Columbia, crosses into the Yukon near Watson Lake, and passes through Whitehorse and the Kluane National Park on its way to the Alaskan border.

For people who really want to get away from it all, there is the 460-mile Dempster Highway, named after a courageous Mountie who helped bring law and order to the area in the early years of this century. It begins just south of Dawson City and links the Yukon with Inuvik and the Mackenzie River Delta in the Northwest Territories. It is one of the few public highways in the world to cross into the Arctic circle.

The only indication of this imaginary line is a solitary marker. But coach passengers sometimes encounter another landmark at this point – a gentleman in a rocking chair dressed in a tuxedo, top hat and top coat sipping champagne. This is Harry Waldron – self styled 'Keeper of the Arctic Circle' – who regales tourists with tales of the Gold Rush and *The Shooting of Dan McGrew*.

Activities to suit all tastes

Tourism is now the Yukon's second largest industry, and the needs of the visitor are well catered for. Here are just a few of the activities you can indulge in.

Cruising: From Carcross you can take a boat cruise on the headwater lakes of the Yukon River; travel from Whitehorse to Dawson City on a 28-foot catamaran; or take a leisurely boat voyage between the two cities on the MV Anna Maria, the first on-board-accommodation vessel to sail the Yukon River since the demise of the sternwheelers in the 1950s.

Fishing: The lakes and rivers provide excellent fishing for salmon, Arctic char, trout, pickerel and pike (that can weigh up to 35lb). You can charter a jet boat or fly to the remote Aishihik or Selkuman Lakes; or, if you like home comforts, you can stay at the new fishing resort of Inconnu Lodge 185 miles east of Whitehorse, where lake, stream and river fishing are on offer.

Hiking: June to September are ideal, since the weather is warm and the trails are dry. The Kluane National Park is a favourite, with trails for novice and intermediate hikers, and more difficult trips for experienced backpackers. Alternatively, you can retrace the steps of the gold seekers along the famous Trail of '98. There are also opportunities for horse riding and climbing.

The abundant wildlife makes the Yukon a must for nature lovers and photographers. Also of interest is the Indian community of Old Crow, the Yukon's most northerly community, and the wide range of Yukon Indian Arts and crafts. There is plenty happening in the winter, too – skiing, dog sled excursions, ice hockey and curling.

But be warned. The Yukon seems to cast a spell on visitors that forever urges them to return, just as it did on Robert Service:

*The stillness, the moonlight, the mystery,
I've bade 'em goodbye – but I can't.*



Kluane National Park is a favourite with hikers.

