

As Billy nears the end of his 10,000 mile journey he heads even further south towards Vancouver Island through the isolated White Pass Mountains which are below freezing for most of the year.

He learns how literally to stake a claim on a piece of the Yukon, goes hunting for a moose, sees a bear in the wild, takes part in a Native American sweat lodge ceremony, hangs out with some real cowboys and fulfils an ambition to fall a tree.

Billy starts the final leg of his journey meeting mineral prospector, Shawn Ryder, who studies geological data to predict where lucrative mineral deposits might be. He then stakes a claim on these pieces of land for mining.

Shawn shows Billy how to do this by making a post from a tree before signing and dating it and putting it in the ground. This can be sold to the highest bidder if minerals are subsequently found.

Billy then flies south to Ice Lakes where he meets two friends who spend their annual holidays moose hunting. Romeo and Carolee show Billy how they use a decoy, which they spray with scent, and a horn to try to lure a moose out. Romeo calls the moose while Carolee hides in a camouflage tent with a bow and arrow to shoot their target. The pair tell Billy they will wait as long as it takes to catch one to take home for the winter, and it could take two months.

Next Billy flies into British Columbia to Telegraph Creek, the scene of a 19th Century gold rush. Billy explains that the creek was once like something from a wild west movie – but is now deserted: “A ghost town with no ghosts,” says Billy.

To the south of Telegraph Creek, Billy then meets Nancy Ball, a 75-year-old woman running her remote 480 acre remote guest ranch all by herself. Armed with a shotgun in case they run into any bears, Nancy gives Billy a tour of her land before taking him home for moose stew.

After meeting her Billy tells the programme: “That was brilliant, that’s one of the nicest days I’ve spent in many, many years, with a delightful person. Other people’s enthusiasm is like a magnet, you can feel theirs and it does you good.

“And I really hope that this is seen by people of 75, to see her chopping wood and her attitude to life, and having the gun on her shoulder ready to defend herself. What a wonderful person. That was a life changing experience. I don’t know quite how it’s going to change my life, but I know it has.”

Billy then moves on to a First Nations or “Indian” settlement called New Aiyansh, home to the Nisga’a tribe who invite him to take part in one of their traditional, spiritual rituals - a sweat lodge. The lodges are incredibly hot tents which push people to the edge of endurance as they pray, chant and discuss emotionally and physically hurtful experiences.

Billy joins the tribe members in their pitch black tent-like lodge where the only light is from the glow of the rocks. As they pour the water on him, Billy says he feels like he has been 'struck by lightning' and doubts whether his body can take the heat.

Emerging from the lodge, Billy says: "That was one of the most moving things I ever did in my life. It's very difficult to talk. That was lovely, suddenly I feel so much at home, it's difficult to explain."

Reflecting later on the intensity of his experience, he adds: "I am closed off to anything remotely supernatural, or anything that mediums do, or ghost hunters and all that. I think it's all cobblers. But this was an outpouring of honesty and the strength of it, there's a beauty in it that has come to live with me and I hope it sticks around because I rather like it."

Billy travels 800 miles south to the Mitchell River where he faces his fears and goes looking for a bear. The river is full of migrating salmon and bear-spotter Gary Zorn takes Billy in a boat on the trail of the creature he jokingly calls his 'nemesis'.

Before he finishes his journey, Billy gets kitted up and heads into the forest with a group of loggers who show him how to chop down a tree – before letting him loose with a chainsaw himself. Self-confessed 'nice, tree-hugging hippy' Billy's guilt at such a destructive act is assuaged by the fact that the trees are being felled to prevent the spread of the pine beetles they are infested with. Conscience clear, his thrill at fulfilling a lifetime ambition to fell a tree is matched only by his disappointment that none of the loggers shout 'timber' as the trunks crash to the forest floor. And that none of them are wearing lumberjack shirts.

Then it's more boyhood fantasy as he goes riding with cowboys as they go lassoing and rounding up cattle.

Finally Billy concludes his journey on Vancouver Island at Friendly Cove – a place discovered by Captain Cook when he was looking for the Northwest Passage.

Billy says: "What an epic journey. There's a size to everything in Canada that just takes your breath away. It's big and beautiful. Mile after mile after mile of it... The ice in the legendary North West Passage melted, allowing me to take a route from ocean to ocean that many explorers before me had failed to find. It was a chance for me to see some extraordinary places in the Arctic summer. "Scenery's one thing, but it's the people I've met that will stay with me forever. I've met impressively optimistic characters who are shaped by the unforgiving landscape and climate. People who know who and what they are, and wouldn't live anywhere else. I've been touched by how contented they are with their lives at the edge of the world. They aren't chasing short-lived pleasures of material things, they've found a longer-lasting contentment."