



THE SIGNAL

Official Newsmagazine of the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society

2001
2021

SURREY'S
Heritage
Rail



Started in 2001 with a business plan:

Get Car ✓

Fix Car ✓

Run Car ✓



*Celebrating
20 Years*



2001

2021

SURREY'S Heritage Rail

FVHRS.org

Celebrating

Our journey through time

CITY OF SURREY

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

February 19, 2021

Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society
1045-165 Street
Surrey, BC V4A 9A2

Dear FVHRS Board and Society members,

On behalf of Surrey City Council, I am pleased to offer the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society our support and best wishes as you celebrate your 20th anniversary this year, a significant milestone.

The heritage railway journey started as a Surrey Heritage Commission special project in 1995 when then Commissioner, Jim Wallace brought forward the idea of restoring the BC Electric railway through Surrey. As Surrey Mayor at that time, it gives me great pleasure to see that the heritage railway project has steadily moved forward following its business plan.

The remaining four historic BC Electric interurbans have been acquired, repatriated and moved to Cloverdale for restoration. BCER 1225 and 1304 the Connaught have been restored and are operational between Cloverdale and Sullivan. I understand the third interurban, BCER 1231, is under restoration, leaving the last car in the fleet, BCER 1207, still to be worked on. This is the largest collection of BC Electric interurbans anywhere, and Surrey is the only place where they are operational following a complete restoration. The interurban restoration process I know is challenging and can take up to five years and 20,000 volunteer hours to bring each historic vehicle back into operation.

The development of the Cloverdale heritage railway facility with the construction of custom designed car barns and a replica Cloverdale station is a credit to your organization. The goal to complete the heritage railway project by activation of the Sullivan station and expansion to Newton has recently received unanimous support by Council.

Last July, Council approved the Newton Town Centre redevelopment plans, and included the heritage railway project as an important tourism element. The opportunity to travel between Newton and Cloverdale town centres by heritage rail will, I am sure, become a first-class tourism experience. Cloverdale has developed into a significant heritage destination that includes the Surrey Heritage Railway, the Museum of Surrey, Surrey Archives and the BC Vintage Truck Museum as established facilities well worth visiting.

I appreciate that the FVHRS has strong community support and an active volunteer base. Your volunteers are to be congratulated for making the commitment to complete the restoration of the BC Electric railway and provide many in the community an opportunity to experience a *Journey through Time*.

Sincerely,



Doug McCallum
Mayor



Mayor Doug McCallum driving ceremonial spike to launch the FVHRS in May 2001



Mayor Doug McCallum at the opening of the Sullivan Station June 2004.

Twenty Years of Success

John Sprung, Chair

Twenty years ago, at the request of City of Surrey Council, this Society was formed to implement the interurban revitalization: Heritage Tourism project from the Surrey Heritage Advisory Commission, or SHAC. The purpose of the project was to obtain, restore and operate British Columbia Electric Railway interurbans between Cloverdale and Brownsville on the original interurban line through Surrey.

FVHRS Director Terry Lyster, one of the founding directors, was able to summarize the business plan with our six-word mission statement:

Get Car Fix Car Run Car

Twenty years later, we have acquired four cars, restored and operate two of them, and will finish restoration of one this year leaving one yet to fix. The intervening years have resulted in some changes, such as our current goal to expand from Sullivan to Newton in the next six years, and we must adapt to the changes imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are many stories to be told about what has happened since 2001, some that you will find in these pages. Even more stories and adventures may be found when you arrive at Cloverdale Station and climb on board one of the original BCER interurbans for your journey though time.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, members, volunteers and supporters of the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society, I am most pleased to invite you to review our first twenty years and invite you to visit us in Cloverdale, or online at fvhrs.org, to be part of the next twenty years.



Photo: C.Y.M.Ng, Richmond Photo Club



Sullivan Site, 2008



Cloverdale Campus
2018



In this 20th Anniversary Publication:

Salute to a Friend and Founder

Terry Lyster was a professional urban planner working with the City of Surrey, later the Township of Langley and, until he retired, the District of Mission.

From 1996 to 2000 he was a Surrey Heritage Advisory Commissioner, and one of the members of the heritage railway special project group which included then-Councillor Judy Higginbotham, Allen Aubert and the late Jim Wallace.

Terry, a student of history, brought a unique and distinct clarity to describing the vision of restoring the B.C. Electric Railway. To create a reality, there needed to be a feasibility study and a business plan. Terry developed a short to do list

Get Car—Fix Car—Run Car

This became the mission statement for the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society. It took twenty years, but the three principles have been accomplished.

Of course there was a great amount of sub-text to each of those three guiding principles. He once said that the mission statement, likely the shortest ever conceived, was easy to understand.

Terry also created the FVHRS logo, with the profile of an interurban, which has stood the test of time as our Society masthead, and subsequently he designed a number of our lapel pins and an embroidered badge.

Terry was a “map man” and nothing pleased him more than creating another map, graphically showing where the interurban ran long ago, and the proposed route to be operated by us through Surrey. As Terry would say, “it’s helpful to know where you are going, and a map will confirm when you have arrived”.

Upon retirement, Terry moved to Vancouver Island to be closer to his family, but still remains involved with the FVHRS as a member and graphic design consultant, helping us build on the foundation he helped create.

By fellow ex SHAC commissioner Allen Aubert



Our Story Begins:

Get Car	5
Fix Car	9
Run Car	17
Cloverdale Campus Launch	17
Buckingham Palace Letter	19
1304 Connaught Launch	20
More than a Train Ride	24
Frank Horne Discovery Centre	26
Speeders, Velocipedes, etc	27
Motorman’s Simulator Bill’s Corner Souvenirs	29
Clayburn Signal Shack	30
Special Rail Events Hallowe’en Rail Event Christmas Electric Express	31
School Tours	32
First Responders Event	33
Paint the Train	34
Wildflower Meadow	35
Heritage Rail Players	37
Tomorrow & Beyond	40
Board of Directors	43
Postcards from the Train	44

Our Story begins: Get Car

A salute to Robert Ashton, FVHRS' first Chairman from 2001 to 2005 and Vice-Chairman 2005 to 2014, and the late Bill Watson FVHRS Vice Chairman 2002-2003.

Conceived in 1996 as a special project by the Surrey Heritage Advisory Commission, and following a four-year feasibility study, the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society was incorporated in 2001, with a business plan: to "get car, fix car, run car."

Initially Surrey Heritage Advisory Council Commissioner, Jim Wallace, pictured with Mayor Doug McCallum, committed \$25,000 of his own money to fund the feasibility study.



Operations were to take place on a Surrey section of the B.C. Electric Railway's sixty-four-mile New Westminster-to-Chilliwack interurban line built in 1910. The line remains in service to this day, operated by Southern Railway of British Columbia offering freight-only service. Only seven of the B. C. Electric's seventy-plus interurban cars remain.



Bill Watson

The late FVHRS director Bill Watson (left) visited the Orange Empire Railway Museum in Perris, California in 2002 and began negotiations to repatriate BCER 1225.

Ultimately, the OERM Museum Directors decided that, while that interurban car had significant heritage value, it was no longer central to their collection and return to the region where it had operated was appropriate.

FVHRS Chairman Robert Ashton completed the acquisition arrangements and with Jim Smatlak, the president of OERM, signed the purchase agreement in Perris in May 2004.



Robert Ashton

Robert undertook to complete the logistics for the loading and transportation of BCER 1225 on to special road transporters from PCC Transport of Langley and arranged the delivery to the Sullivan carbarn. BCER 1225 left the OERM rail yard on August 7, 2005.



1225 in Perris CA



1225 arriving at Sullivan

Our Story: Get Car

BCER 1225 Acquired

The move was not without drama. Because of road height limitations, the body of 1225 was lifted off its trucks. Windows were boarded up for the journey north to B.C. A torrential storm just outside of Perris, complete with hail and a twister that ripped the roof off a nearby building, caused some anxious moments as the move commenced. Robert was faced with helping to secure the plywood coverings over the windows of 1225 that were in danger of being ripped off along the highway. These were tense moments. At the Peace Arch border he was asked: "Anything to declare?" "Just 35 tons of Interurban!"



The BCER 1225 purchase price of \$300,000 Canadian was raised by FVHRS with very generous support from the City of Surrey and the BC Ministry of Transportation. Then Councillor Judy Higginbotham, as the Society's liaison with the City of Surrey, presented B.C. Transportation Minister Kevin Falcon with a FVHRS hat at the 1225 arrival reception ceremony. Minister Falcon joked it was the most expensive hat ever received on behalf of the citizens of British Columbia.

The most dramatic event of the whole move was when GWIL Cranes picked the chassis of 1225 off the 90-foot transport, swung it over the fence at the Sullivan car barn and set it down on its trucks. PNR Railworks had extended a length of rail out of the west bay of the barn. 1225 was then carefully jacked with a hand-operated rail mover into the barn: safe at home and repatriated after 47 years.



BCER 1304 Acquired



With the assistance of the Steveston Interurban Restoration Society, B. C. Electric interurban car 1304, on display at the Oregon Electric Railway Museum at Brooks, Oregon, was acquired. It arrived at our car barn at Sullivan on April 25, 2009. Built specifically for the Chilliwack line in 1911, BCER 1304 was the last interurban car in regularly-scheduled service on the Chilliwack line, October 1, 1950. The FVHRS now had the two BCER interurban coaches which it had targeted for acquisition from its inception.

Our Story: Get Car

BCER 1207 Acquired



With the relocation of the Society to new facilities in Cloverdale in 2012, and the construction of the replica Cloverdale station, in January 2013, cars 1225 and 1304 were moved to the new location and rolled into the new car barn, later dedicated as the Frank Horne Discovery Centre.



**Frank Horne
Discovery Centre**

Interurban Restoration Shop • BC Electric Railway History Tour
Speeder & Velocity Ride • Train Play Centre



Interurban car 1207, languished in storage for more than four years in the barn of the Downtown Historic Railway (DHR) in Vancouver, after thirteen years of service on that line. It was donated to the FVHRS by the car's owners, Byron and Diane Cole of Seattle. It arrived at our Cloverdale facility in the early morning of January 28, 2016.

Built in 1905, in the New Westminster shops, BCER 1207 was in service on the very last day of B. C. Electric's interurban operations.



Byron & Diane Cole

Our Story: Get Car

BCER 1231 Acquired

Interurban car BCER 1231, a sister of car 1225, but built in 1913, was in storage for nine years in the DHR (Downtown Heritage Railway) Vancouver car barn, after nine years of service on that line. The car was donated to our Society by BC Transit; 1231 arrived at our Cloverdale facility, also in the early morning, November 9th, 2017.



Twenty years after incorporation, the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society stands firmly as "B.C. Electric central", with their splendid roster of four interurban cars.



Car 1231 operated on B. C. Electric's last day of interurban service, as did car 1207, and was the very last interurban on B. C. Electric's tracks, on February 28, 1958.



Our Story: Fix Car

BCER 1225

Dedicated, talented, energetic volunteers who rehabilitated BCER 1225 and 1304 are working currently on car 1231, and look forward to dealing similarly with car 1207.



All four interurban cars were technically operational when they arrived at our facility; however, 1225 and 1304 needed a major overhaul. The restoration of 1225 began shortly after its arrival at the Sullivan Car Barn, including an almost total body rebuild and a new roof covering. 1225's trucks, motors, wheels, and brakes needed overhauling along with rewiring the electrical.



Our Story: Fix Car

BCER 1225

Window frames, with safety approved glass, needed to be replaced; the glow of brass and varnished woodwork needed to be rehabilitated and some brass parts had to be fabricated, as most of them were removed over the years.

Then there was the necessary refurbishment of rattan upholstery, produced in Indonesia, the (only source) of what was called Transit Weave, a special diagonal weave, so the upholstery didn't snag those expensive silk stockings of yester-year.

Total restoration of 1225 was achieved over a period of five years and 20,000 volunteer hours; a stunning achievement!

Interurban BCER 1225 was newer than new.



New roof membrane being applied by Robert Ashton



Out with the 100 plus-year-old rattan, in with the new.



No rattan needed for this smoking section.



Our Story: Fix Car

BCER 1304 The Connaught



Restoration of BCER 1304 commenced in the summer of 2013 in the new Cloverdale car barn, with initial emphasis on its interior. A new roof liner was installed, some of the interior wood was replaced, new doors and wall panels were built in our shop, and required safety glass was installed in all the windows.



The trucks and traction motors which needed a total overhaul, were sent to specialty shops to be rebuilt.

When accounting for volunteer hours and in kind donations from local companies, car 1304 cost \$1.5 million to acquire and rehabilitate.

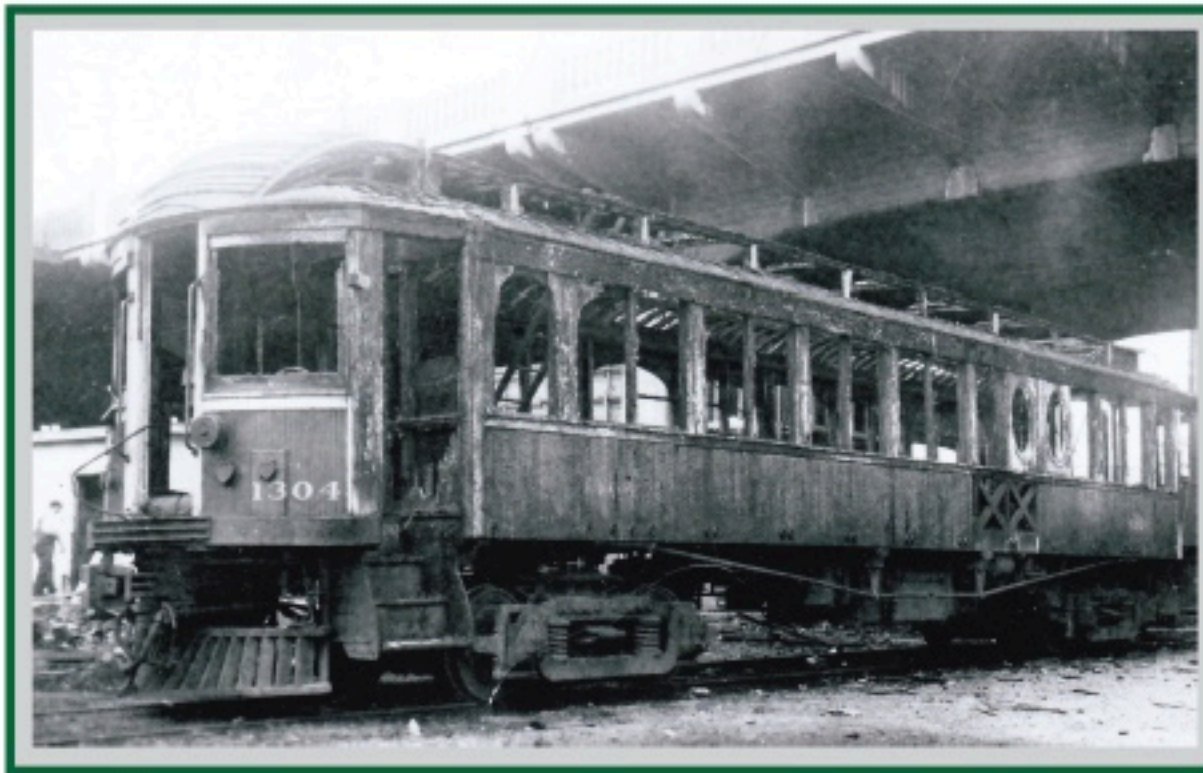
The volunteer hours over five years contribution was \$480,000 from 16,000 hours of skilled labour.



Our Story: Fix Car

BCER 1304 The Connaught

The "Connaught," although in need of a major restoration, was in much better condition than 1225, largely due to the car having burned to the floorboards in September 1945. During a deadhead run from Chilliwack, 1304 the last car on the empty three-car train, caught fire near Cloverdale:



"Only a virtually destroyed shell was left by the time the train's crew realized what was happening behind them and a brave, though futile attempt was made to extinguish the blaze. Since passenger vehicles were still in great demand, the (Kitsilano) shops busy with street car refurbishing and rebuilding, got to work constructing a beautiful new interurban car."

- Page 240, The Story of the BC Electric Railway Company, Henry Ewert



Our Story: Fix Car

BCER 1231



Rehabilitation is currently underway on 1231, our third car, including restoration of the seats and interior woodwork, the electrical system, four electric motors, wheels and bearings.

The car is elevated to allow removal of trucks and motors for reconditioning

Still, 1231 had some major restoration work done on it:

At the close of service, it was sold to the Trolleyland Electric Railway museum near Olympia, Washington. In the mid-70s, Premier Dave Barrett bought it and had it returned to B.C. where it sat in a Burnaby warehouse for ten years. It was then sent to Victoria, where it was lovingly restored by volunteers and craftspersons before being shipped to Vancouver in 1997 to return to service on the DHR, Vancouver's Downtown Historic Railway at False Creek. BCER 1231 was acquired by the FVHRS in April, 2017.

- from presentation panel 1207/1231 in Frank Horne Discovery Centre



1231 motor removal for rebuilding

1231 floor preparation



Our Story: Fix Car

BCER 1207



1207 was saved from destruction by a rail museum in Snoqualmie, Washington. The owners, Byron & Diane Cole of Seattle returned it to Vancouver in 1989, and some restoration was completed in 1992. BCER 1207 was leased to the City of Vancouver and operated by the Downtown Historic Railway until operations were suspended for the 2010 Olympics. Shortly after that the DHR was terminated by the city, and the owners gifted 1207 to the FVHRS.



BCER 1207 is unique among the seven remaining BCER interurbans as it has a raised roof, known as a clerestory, where the middle section of the roof is raised 18 inches. Along with increased headroom down the centre of the car, a row of narrow windows is set on each side, allowing both, more light into the car, and greater ventilation as they can be opened.

1207 Theatre

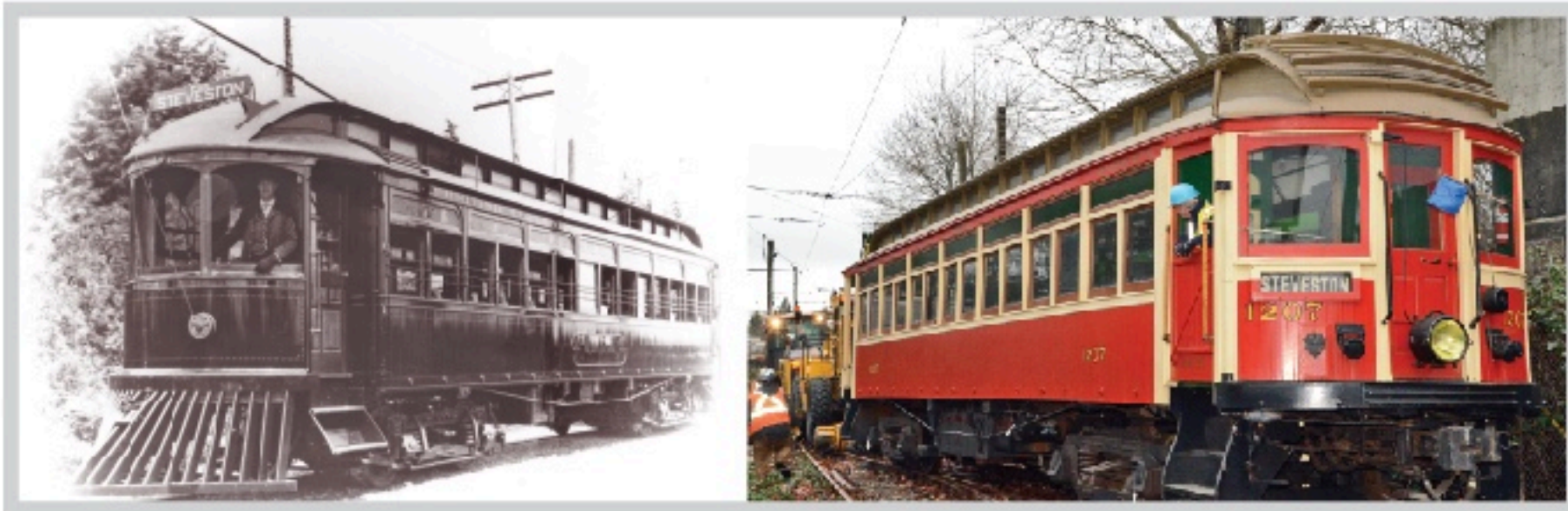


As it will be some time before restoration can begin for 1207, the car is doing duty as both an exhibit and the 1207 Theatre. It is the first stop on the Frank Horne Discovery Centre tour, where visitors climb aboard and watch a video introduction to the B.C. Electric Railway.

Restoration work clearly remains a major component in the Society's future.

Our Story: Fix Cars

BCER 1231 & 1207



BCER 1207 is the oldest car in the FVHRS fleet, built in 1905. It pre-dated numbering it was named the "Steveston" until modernization in 1912 returned it to service as 1207.



Beginning in 1949 and up to the end of passenger service in 1958, the BCER street cars and interurbans, were gathered in the Kitsilano yards under the Burrard Bridge, stripped of metal and burned. The two cars, 1231 and 1207, side by side in the picture above, were sold to different museums in the United States. It is remarkable that by 2017 they came back together all these years later.

1225 and 1304 with 1231 and 1207 are four of the seven remaining, *and only operating*, BCER Interurbans.



Our Story: Run Car

Cloverdale Launch



They were gala times! Our splendid replica Cloverdale station, built mostly by donated labour and materials, was opened on April 30, 2013 to service the passengers of our first season of operation. The volunteers were breathlessly waiting the return to service of interurban Car 1225, having passed its commissioning test run and operational certification on February 21, 2013.



Steve Higginbotham, BC Hydro; Frank Butzelaar, SRY President; Surrey Mayor Dianne Watts, and John Sprung, FVHRS Chair (left - right)

As FVHRS chair John Sprung put it:
"The 'big day' will be remembered for a long time, with [Surrey] Mayor Dianne Watts at the controls of BCER 1225, breaking the ribbons stretched across the tracks as the car approached the Cloverdale station. Waiting at the station, an excited and welcoming crowd thrilled to this replay history from another world long gone.



Our Story: Run Car

Cloverdale Launch



Ben Weavers, Amrik Virk, Cliff Annable, Anita Huberman, Tom Gill, Mary Martin, Bruce Hayne, Linda Hepner, Barbara Steele, Marvin Hunt, Stephanie Cadieux, Steve Higginbotham, Frank Butzelaar, Dianne Watts and John Sprung (left - right).



Saturday, June 22 marked the official opening of the Cloverdale station. It was also the first day of a new life for B.C. Electric Railway's Car 1225, on the very same BC Electric track, fifty-five years after the end of service.

Our partners, SRY Rail Link, BC Hydro and the City of Surrey, joined us on car 1225 to ride to the Cloverdale station, and a celebration which included local MLAs and our band, the Circle of Friends.

"It was an overwhelming event, with great media coverage and positive comments from all involved", said John Sprung.



BRITISH COLUMBIA ELECTRIC
RAILWAY COMPANY LIMITED.

Linda Annis, Councillor



the future lives here.

February 23, 2021



Dear Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society,

Re: Letter of Support: Fraser Valley Heritage Railway 20th Anniversary

As chair of the Surrey Heritage Advisory Commission, it is my honor to provide this letter of support and acknowledgement of the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway's 20th Anniversary.



Linda Annis
Councillor

Since its' inception in 2001 the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society has demonstrated long range vision of the future of the railway travel while at the same time honoring the foundation and heritage of what the railway was built on.

The commitment and dedication of the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society cannot be understated. The Society has a community membership approaching 300 with 100 members volunteering. Their accomplishments are vast - the repatriation of the historic BCER 1225 and 1304 the Royal Connaught and specialized restoration of the BCER 1225, the operation of these restored interurbans as Surrey's Heritage Rail, and construction of a large carbarn along with a replica of the Cloverdale station.

Twenty years later and 7 years of operating two restored interurbans as Surrey's Heritage Rail, the Society is celebrating its 20th anniversary. A third interurban restoration, the BCER 1231, has been undertaken in anticipation of its' operation in 2022. Plans are being developed to activate the Sullivan station for passenger use as well as to expand the service as far as Newton.

Surrey has the largest fleet of BC Electric interurbans and is the only location where they are operational, offering the community a journey through time.

I would like to express my sincere thanks for your commitment to the City of Surrey. Your contribution to the City helps to support a vibrant, welcoming and progressive community.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "L. Annis".

Councillor Linda Annis
Chair, Surrey Heritage Advisory Commission





BUCKINGHAM PALACE

12th December 2016

Dear Mr Sprung

The Queen wishes me to write and thank you for your letter, and for the photographs, booklet and magazine you thoughtfully enclosed.

Her Majesty thought it so kind of you to write to her, and The Queen was interested to learn about the restoration of the Connaught Interurban Car, which is due to be launched next year.

Her Majesty hopes this special event will be enjoyed by many, and I am to thank you once again for your thought in writing as you did.

Yours sincerely,

Annabel Whithead

Lady-in-Waiting

Mr J Sprung

Our Story: Run Car

1304 Launch ~ Canada 150 Celebration

It would be more than four years after the launch of operations from Cloverdale before car 1304 made its spectacular return to operation on B. C. Electric track. It was named "Connaught" because of its brief stint in 1912 as the private car of the Duke of Connaught, Canada's Governor-General, on his official visit to Vancouver.

The car's interior was lavishly, though only temporarily, re-worked by Woodward's Department Store for that occasion to remove seats and other transit car hardware, and replace it with plush chairs, couches, curtains, lights and carpets appropriate for its special passenger.

Canada 150



A military salute for the namesake provided by cadets of the Connaught's Own Rifles.



The exterior of the Duke's car was a deep jade green in colour, with gold piping and lettering as was the rest of the interurban fleet in 1912.

Our Story: Run Car

Canada 150



1304 Launch ~ Canada 150 Celebration



Hon. Col. Ted Hawthorne of the Connaught's Own Rifles (left). Lt. Gov. Judith Guichon instructs FVHRS Superintendent Ron Powers to call 1304 into service. Pictured to his right are MLAs Jinny Simms and Marvin Hunt, Chair, John Sprung and MC, the late, Don Evans, West Coast Railway Association President Emeritus.

September 9, 2017, the day of our special salute to Canada's 150th anniversary, was an especially rainy day for the grand entrance of 1304. It was accompanied by a wide-ranging group of dignitaries, headed by British Columbia's Lt. Gov. Judith Guichon.

Many who attended this occasion were offered the opportunity to be among the first passengers on a series of short return trips on our track powered by a diesel locomotive, which stood in for the not-yet-completed power generator. It was generously provided by the Parrish & Heimbecker Grain Company.



Parrish & Heimbecker yard diesel substituting for our generator.

Our Story: Run Car

And now we await Interurbans 1207 and 1231's readiness for service, completing an extraordinary fleet of four vintage interurban cars that were constructed between 1905 and 1913 and brought to renewed life and splendour by the dedicated volunteers of the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society.



Cloverdale Sullivan and Return ~ weekends



We do it all for you ~ Welcome Aboard!

MLA Mike Starchuk



March 3, 2021

Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society
1045-165-Street
Surrey BC V4A 9A2

I am pleased to offer the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society, Board, members and volunteers my support and best wishes as you celebrate your 20th anniversary this year.

The heritage railway restoration that your volunteers have worked so hard on is exemplary and demonstrates their commitment to preserving our heritage in a very tangible way. This is a true legacy project that will stand the test of time.

A few years ago, I had an opportunity to visit your Cloverdale heritage railway campus, and under supervision, drove BCER 1225 along your spur line. This was memorable and I managed to stay on the tracks.

While serving as a Surrey city Councillor, I became aware of the background of the FVHRS and the genesis of the heritage railway as a 'special project' of the Surrey Heritage Advisory Commission. Twenty years has seen amazing progress from your initial operations in Sullivan, the acquisition and repatriation of the four remaining BC Electric interurbans and your relocation to expanded facilities in Cloverdale.

The development of the Cloverdale heritage railway facility including construction of the custom designed car barns and a replica Cloverdale station is a credit to your organization. The goal to complete the heritage railway project by activation of the Sullivan station for passengers and expansion of the route to Newton has recently received unanimous support by Council and will complete the heritage rail vision.

Surrey Council last year approved the Newton Town Centre redevelopment plans and included the heritage railway project as an important tourism element. I am sure having a heritage rail link between the Newton and Cloverdale town centres will become a first-class tourism experience. Cloverdale has developed into a significant heritage destination recently that includes the Surrey Heritage Railway, the Museum of Surrey, Surrey Archives, and the BC Vintage Truck Museum. The connection between Cloverdale and Newton could become an event to be enjoyed by local residents and visitors to our City.

As your Cloverdale MLA, I appreciate the strong community support and the active volunteer base you have. These dedicated volunteers, like most volunteers, a large component of organization. Your volunteers are to be congratulated for undertaking the restoration of the BC Electric railway and providing many in the community an opportunity to experience a Journey through Time.

The very best to you all.
Kind regards,

Mike Starchuk, MLA Surrey-Cloverdale Mike.StarchukMLA@leg.bc.ca 778-571-5503



More Than a Train Ride

Cloverdale Station

by Ray Hudson & Allen Aubert



Today

From the start in 2001, and all through the Get Car, Fix Car and Run Car phases, the focus of the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society was on completing the rehabilitation of BCER 1225, which took ten years.

The Society could then offer rides from Cloverdale to Sullivan along part of the original B.C. Electric track.

The replica Cloverdale station was based on the original drawings and completed in time to welcome the first passengers on board 1225.

The big green Cloverdale car barn structure across from the station platform, was initially off-limits to the public, dedicated solely to the rehabilitation and maintenance of the interurbans, the other rolling stock, tools and related equipment.



Original BCER Cloverdale Station circa 1910



2013

More Than a Train Ride

Cloverdale car barn



Original car barn comprised two bays soon to be four



Applying custom wrap to 1225's external power supply (called a genset)

What became clear early on was that our visitors and waiting passengers were keenly interested in discovering what was going on inside the big green barn. This presented an opportunity to develop our unique heritage railway story and create a history-based experience that would offer sufficient variety and interest to appeal to people of all ages. It would also be a good reason for people to return frequently to discover what else was new.

Though our primary focus to offer a unique experience to ride a restored B.C. Electric interurban tram and journey back through time remains unchanged. The scope of Surrey's Heritage Railway developed into so much more.

This twentieth anniversary edition of *The Signal*, the annual magazine of the FVHRS is a retrospective that reveals just how we have grown, to become **more than just a train ride.**



More Than a Train Ride

The Car barn/Frank Horne Discovery Centre



Visitors wanted to see what we were doing in the Car barn, which was becoming decorated with interesting photos, posters and artifacts from the restoration work. That aspect became a must-see for our many visitors, so it evolved with more formal guided tour presentations of the history of the BCER and the cars we were working on. The car barn was dedicated in 2018 as the Frank Horne Discovery Centre in honour of one of our earliest society members, Frank Horne. In his younger years, Frank, as a Motorman with the BCER, drove all the cars we have now before going on to a long career as an Engineer with the Great Northern Railway.

Frank devoted many hours to the rehabilitation of 1225, and looked forward to driving it once again. Unfortunately, Frank passed only months before the tram was ready to run once again.

The History Panels & Artifacts Cupboard



The Discovery Centre walls have become the venue for the display of much of the history, both graphic and artifact, of the B.C. Electric Railway.

Mounted on the wall are panels which detail the stories of each of the four interurban cars, as well as other pieces of equipment used in operations. Another display is in a large cupboard where historic artifacts from both the railroad and the cars are also on display.



More Than a Train Ride

The Speeders



Speeder at Sullivan location



Woodings CBI Speeder at Cloverdale

Working Speeders



Fairmont M-19 Patrol speeder



Front Access FVR-6 Skytrain work speeder

One of the attractions that survived the move from Sullivan was the Speeder ride. At the Sullivan campus the visitors would be driven around the oval track a couple of times in the carriage drawn by the speeder; often their first opportunity to "ride the rails".

After the relocation to Cloverdale some of our visitors asked about continuing the Speeder rides. Now, with unrestricted access to almost a kilometre of FVHRS owned and controlled track (which connected us to the SRY mainline) we could offer a much improved experience as a separate fifteen minute rail experience in addition to the full trip on the Interurban.



Fairmont A-3 work crew speeder

More Than a Train Ride

The Velocipede & Quad Handcar

The Velocipede:

A chance donation of an unwanted garden ornament ¹ that *"looked like it had some thing to do with railroads"* turned out to be a rare debilitated velocipede which, when fully restored by FVHRS director and master woodworker, Harry Taylor, ² became one of the most popular ride attractions we have.

This odd looking machine is a three-wheeled hand powered vehicle used for track inspection at a time before there were internal combustion engines to drive a small speeder. In those early days, the distance between stations or service points was only eight miles, and easy for one person ³ to operate as well as easy to lift the velocipede off and on the track.



Quad Handcar:

To provide an additional visitor experience, our volunteers, led by Director Terry Nichols, designed and built a four-person hand-operated rail cart. Called "the quad," it is enjoyed by our visitors during the tour of the Discovery Centre. The quad is geared to ensure it is safe; no matter how vigorously the visitors operate the hand levers, the speed is controlled.



More Than a Train Ride

The Motorman's Simulator

One highly sought-after attraction, located in the Cloverdale station museum, is a mockup of the Motorman's controls of an interurban. It is comprised of the speed controller, brake handle, whistle and bell, and a large screen where a video simulates the train's movement on the track as the motorman would see it.

The simulator is light weight and easily transported, and often becomes the spotlight attraction of our booth at the various train shows we participate in through the year.

Director Terry Nichols designed and built the simulator along with Director Roger Crick, with computer simulation developed by Director Aaron Lau.

"It's very realistic," said Nichols, "and once people get on it, particularly the young boys and girls, it's hard to move them along so others can have a turn."



Bill's Corner Souvenir Shop

The late FVHRS volunteer, Bill Robinson, an ardent promoter of our Heritage Railway, for many years could be found in his favourite corner of the station, behind the counter surrounded by a collection of souvenirs. He genuinely liked visitors and engaged them with enthusiasm as he made another sale.

Over time, the variety and quantity of heritage railway souvenirs have increased. In keeping with our wildflower meadow, we also offer local honey, supplied by our partner, the Surrey Honey Bee Centre. Always cutting edge, in 2019, we added custom railway socks in a choice of two colours. You never know what comes next. Out-of-town visitors are often keen to find a memento, and grandparents love to spoil their grandchildren and many can be seen wearing a newly purchased railway engineer's hat.

Led by Stephen Plant, Director of Guest Experience, with several talented and enthusiastic station volunteers have reconfigured and expanded the retail area to incorporate a corner store named Bill's Corner.



More Than a Train Ride

Clayburn Signal Shack and Semaphores

The small Clayburn diamond crossing signal building, used for many years by the BCER where its tracks crossed the CP lines was, after decommissioning, donated to the FVHRS by Southern Railway of BC. It is one of very few complete remaining signal structures and systems. We relocated it to the rail yard of the Cloverdale Heritage Rail Centre. Over the past three years, we reinstalled the signal levers and connecting mechanisms to the two sets of semaphores (signal arms). Visitors can now discover how trains were controlled in the pre-computer days and experience the delight of actually being able to change the signals themselves. A visit to the signal structure will become part of the Discovery Centre guided tour.



Signals (semaphores)



Signal Levers

Motion Picture Location



Hallmark's movie sets: "Christmas in Evergreen"



The Cloverdale community has become a favourite venue for motion picture studios including various film shoots at our Heritage Railway campus. Both Netflix and Hallmark have filmed at the station and on the interurbans. It is anticipated that more filming will occur where the FVHRS heritage railway venue is featured.

More than a seasonal train ride

Special Rail Events



Hallowe'en Experience: When the regular season ends, many of the volunteers are ready for a break. But when the special event and holiday seasons come around, there has been a strong interest in hosting an event around Hallowe'en and Christmas that features activities at the Cloverdale station, on board the interurban and in the Discovery Centre. The "Hallowe'en event" was carefully engineered with not-so-scary creatures that kiddies of all ages, dressed in their costumes, enjoy. Live music and frightful fun were assured without a chance of becoming spooked.

The Electric Express: Christmas spirit is celebrated both historically and whimsically as our visitors enjoy a ride on the tram back in time to the sights, sounds and times of the Fraser Valley 100 years ago.

Our time travellers ride aboard the original interurban trams on our own section of track. After the trip back in time, our travellers are delivered to Saint Nicholas' secret toy wonderland in Cloverdale.

Travellers meet all the elves who work there; they are greeted by the reformed Ebenezer Scrooge and the delightful Tiny Tim. Finally there is a warm welcome by Father Christmas himself. It's one of the most enjoyed events in our calendar and visitors should book early to ensure a seat.

More Than a Train Ride

School & Pre-School Tours

The late Ray Crowther, our former Vice-Chair, developed a special relationship with the Surrey School District so that teachers could bring their classes to the Cloverdale Heritage Rail Centre on weekdays during the school year to give the young students a personal hands-on opportunity to see and experience an enormous piece of local history where they live. The experience includes a video on railway safety, and on the history of the BCER Railway in the Car 1207 Theatre, ¹ rides in the Interurban car ², the speeder, the velocipede ³ and Quad handcart ⁴, as well as hands-on fun of ringing train bells ⁵ and sounding train whistles. The program has blossomed into a frequent event throughout the school year, which staff enthusiastically support.

Local Guides, Beaver groups and Seniors groups come out in the evenings too.



2



1

3



4

5



Every class gets a group photo in front of the car

More Than a Train Ride

Annual First Responders Day



Each year we celebrate Canada Day with flags and other decorations on the closest operating day. In 2019 we took it a step further by recognizing and celebrating those who keep us safe: the Fire, Police, Ambulance and Canadian Armed Forces people, our first responders.

The first year's service award went to the crew at Fire Hall #8 in Cloverdale, one of the city's oldest halls. Adding colour and excitement to the event were the Surrey Firefighters Pipe & Drum band, the eye-popping fire truck parked out front, and on the platform, a Mountie in Red Serge, BC Ambulance members and Hon. Capt. Anita Huberman, RCN representing the armed forces.

Displays included an old fire truck, ambulance and police car as well. It was a wonderful event and it will be celebrated annually!

Cloverdale Parades

Each year we participate in Cloverdale's two parades: for the Rodeo & Exhibition, and Christmas celebrations, which maintain the high profile Surrey's Heritage Rail has in the community. includes our **Mini-Tram**

Play Centre on a trailer, pulled by our seasonally bright red Trackmobile festooned with lights. The Mini-Tram was built by the volunteers a few years ago so our young visitors could imagine they are operating a real tram. It also provides a venue for small birthday parties, something becoming popular.



More Than a Train Ride



Paint The Train competition



In 2017 the FVHRS partnered with the Arts Council of Surrey for the first of what was to become an annual event (barring any further pandemics) named Paint the Train, which invited Surrey artists of all disciplines to create artwork inspired by the trains, tracks, lives and communities connected to the people of the Fraser Valley and the B.C. Electric Railway.

Year three didn't happen in 2020 due to the pandemic; however, year three has been moved into 2021 and the scope of the competition has expanded to include participation of the Langley Arts Council and artists of that city and township.

Another change this year is broadening the subject matter from images related only to the B.C. Electric Railway to include the steam trains and operations from the wider Fraser Valley.

Results of the 2019 Competition



1st Place:
Ryan Broderick
"Fragments"



2nd Place: Sarah Power "Passengers"



3rd Place Winner: Judy Lewis
"Flowers at the Station"



People's Choice Award
Jenny Lewis, "A Beautiful Day In the Neighbourhood"



More than a seasonal train ride

Wildflower Meadow



*Honey
Bees*



Wildflower Meadow: Including bee hives and a Bee Hotel – the Buzz Inn: the large patch of ground adjacent to the Cloverdale Station platform has been turned into a meadow with a variety of colourful wildflowers, native to the locale, that bloom all summer and attract the local bees, butterflies, dragonflies and other pollinators.

Partnering with the Surrey Honeybee Centre (right), several hives were placed in the meadow and from all accounts a great amount of honey was produced. To provide an over-wintering venue for some bees and other pollinators that like a winter rest, our Harry Taylor carefully crafted a Bee Hotel (left) that offers blocks of wood with cozy little holes and tubes of various diameters for the bees to bed down.



More Than a Train Ride

HERITAGE RAIL PLAYERS

When the Surrey Heritage Rail started its initial weekend runs, a professional touring group known as the Re-enactors, sponsored by the City of Surrey, came to the Cloverdale Station once or twice during the season and put on skits recalling the era of the B.C. Electric Railway and well-known local Cloverdale characters. They were much enjoyed and we miss them since the city programme ended.

Because the concept is solid, Communications Director Michael Gibbs suggested we form our own troop, which we did under the direction of Director Stephen Plant (left on the platform).

The Heritage Rail Players perform in period costume during our events to celebrate our rich BCER heritage.

Our troupe was well received when we performed at

- "The Opening of the Cloverdale Train Station 1910;" at the Cloverdale Chamber Lunch
- "The Golden Age of the Interubans;" at the Heritage Conference,
- Our first annual First Responder Day, "Celebrating (fire) Station #8;" and twice at the Museum of Surrey for school Professional Days in October and January.



Stephen Plant: Heritage Rail Players Creator & Director



More Than a Train Ride

HERITAGE RAIL PLAYERS



The Covid-19 pandemic created a temporary pause in our special events; however, while the heritage railway is closed to the public we have created new virtual opportunities. We made three films to showcase the BCER local history and our Cloverdale heritage railway facility, through a virtual tour. The following titles are being made ready;

"The Opening of the Cloverdale Train Station 1910;" this production will be made available to the public very soon.

"The Return of the Connaught - A Documentary." This is in production, and will be available at a later time.

3. "A Virtual Tour of the FVHRS Cloverdale Campus." This production is almost complete and will be shown at the virtual B.C. Historical Federation Conference in June, and then will be available to the public.

Along with participating in several in-house special events, we plan to reach into the community through our partnership with Museum of Surrey, and be part of the weekly Cloverdale Market as well as other venues.

We are a small group within the FVHRS volunteers, and we welcome anyone who might be interested to join us. Eagerness to entertain and have fun are the only criteria needed to promote the rich heritage of the BC Electric Railway.

by Stephen Plant

MLA Stephanie Cadieux



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
of BRITISH COLUMBIA



Stephanie Cadieux MLA
Surrey South



MLA Stephanie Cadieux speaks to the Volunteer dinner in 2013.

Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society
1045-165-Street
Surrey BC V4A 9A2

February 24, 2021

I am pleased to offer the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society my best wishes and offer my congratulations as you celebrate your 20th anniversary this year.

Over the years, I have watched, participated in, and supported your progress to acquire, restore and operate your BC Electric interurbans. I have myself, enjoyed riding the restored BCER 1225 between Cloverdale and Sullivan and having a piece of my family history connected to the interurbans makes it more exciting.

Your volunteers have worked hard, for the many years necessary to totally restore the interurbans to operational condition, demonstrating their commitment to preserving our important transportation heritage and as a legacy for the community to enjoy. I appreciate the extra effort that has been taken to provide a level of accessibility to the station and the cars and hope that can even be enhanced further in future, so that all in our community can experience this history.

The development of the Cloverdale heritage railway facility, including construction of the new car barns and a replica Cloverdale station is an asset to Cloverdale and its growing heritage area. Last year, when council approved redevelopment plans for Newton, I was not surprised to see the heritage railway included in those plans. That is a testament to the organizations tremendous efforts and success.

As your South Surrey MLA, I appreciate the strong community support and the active volunteer base you have developed. The restored BC Electric railway operating currently between Cloverdale and Sullivan during the summer weekends provides a unique opportunity to experience railway travel that was so important to the developing communities in the Fraser Valley.

Most sincerely,

Stephanie Cadieux MLA
Surrey South

MLA Cadieux enjoying the ride to Sullivan on 1225 in 2015.

Ms. Cadieux addressing the crowd from 1225 following her arrival at Cloverdale Station during the official launch of the Cloverdale campus and passenger service in 2013.



Gerald Linden, SRY Rail Link



Celebrating 20 years as a heritage railway society.

As President of Southern Railway of BC Limited (SRY), it gives me great pleasure to offer the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society (FVHRS) and your dedicated team of volunteers our very best wishes as you celebrate your 20th anniversary as a heritage railway society. This is a tremendous achievement and a worthy milestone event.

Southern Railway of BC is the BC Electric Railway (BCER) successor, operating today on the original BC Electric Railway route from New Westminster to Chilliwack through the Fraser Valley. SRY provides freight service along this storied line, and we understand and appreciate the long and important history of the railway. BCER played an important part in the economic growth of the Fraser Valley, bringing electricity, passenger and freight operations to the local farm communities.

SRY is pleased to support the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society by providing an opportunity to use our tracks between Cloverdale and Sullivan on weekends during the summer months to operate a heritage railway passenger service.

You are providing the community at large, an exceptional opportunity to experience the ambiance of historic passenger rail travel as a genuine *'journey through time'*, riding on restored BC Electric interurbans on the original BCER Fraser Valley line. Between Cloverdale and Sullivan, the vista along the route has hardly changed in one hundred years where the line passes through farmland and over our new bridge across the Serpentine River.

Your dedication over the past twenty years in undertaking the restoration of several of the original BC Electric interurbans is exemplary. Your skilled volunteers and qualified operations crew are to be commended. Operating a heritage passenger railway is extremely challenging. Safety is always our primary focus, and we at SRY appreciate your commitment to providing a safe historic railway experience.

We look forward to continuing our relationship with the FVHRS as you continue your historic journey.

Warm regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Gerald L'.

Gerald Linden
President
Southern Railway of BC Limited



Saturday May 2, 2009, SRY teamed up with the West Coast Railway Heritage Park in Squamish to bring the Royal Hudson 2860, and the historic Canadian Pacific F7 on an excursion to Cloverdale with a stop at Surrey's Heritage Rail at Sullivan

Tomorrow & Beyond

Next stop along the journey ...through time

by Allen Aubert, FVHRS Secretary

So what's next....we are well into RUN CAR....the opportunity and obligation now is to complete the journey.



Cloverdale Platform Expansion



Photo: Don McKay



Photo: Harry Taylor

To accommodate the increasing number of visitors to the Cloverdale station, an expanded platform has become necessary.

The operational plans include running a two-car train to meet demand which would definitely require doubling the platform length. To meet regulatory requirements the 'platform patio' uses a concrete block foundation

and a coloured concrete walking surface, stamped to represent wood planks. Guard rails will be provided around the patio area with built-in seating, which will also offer musicians and the Heritage Rail Players a place to perform and entertain the waiting passengers.

The platform expansion should be complete by the end of June 2021.

Hydrogen H₂

On the technology side, the FVHRS is working toward realizing the goal of adopting hydrogen fuel cell technology as a zero emission power source to operate the electric interurbans.

The overhead electric wires that once provided power have long gone, so we rely on diesel power generators. In our desire to drive the past into the (clean-air) future, we are working on becoming the first heritage railway to demonstrate hydrogen fuel cell technology. The theme arising from this initiative is ***Heritage to Hydrogen***.

Tomorrow & Beyond

Next stop along the journey through time

Sullivan Station Reactivation



Sullivan Station west view Photo: Don McKay



Sullivan Station east view Photo: Don McKay

The plans going forward include the activation of the Sullivan station that will include construction of a new siding to bring the interurban up to the edge of the station platform, which will be extended to accommodate a two car consist (train) similar to that at Cloverdale, and will require installation of an electric lift to assist passengers with disabilities.

The station also requires the construction of a washroom and connection to electrical, water and sanitary system. A considerable amount of work is necessary before the first interurban welcomes passengers to board in Sullivan. The plan is to have the work complete in time to open the station during the 2024 operating season.



Concurrent with the activation of the Sullivan station is the creation of Sullivan as a heritage precinct and becoming a destination and then moving forward with plans to extend the heritage railway experience as far west as Newton.

There is considerable work necessary to complete the Newton expansion, including the upgrading of several railroad crossings and construction of a siding and a Newton station. The goal is to reach Newton by 2027.

The Founders who Made it so!

Henry Ewert, Historian-in-Residence,

Born in Vancouver in 1937, Henry earned degrees from U.B.C., Western Washington University and from the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto. He served as a secondary school teacher for 35 years including as English Department Chairman, retiring in 1994. He has conducted and accompanied choirs, and coached and refereed soccer and ice hockey. He has designed and guided numerous European tours, and was a broadcaster for the C.B.C.'s Armed Forces FM radio network in Germany.

Henry is a founder and continuing active member of the Opera Club (of Vancouver) for over forty years, and is also currently vice-president of the internationally known Vancouver Chopin Society. He has taught numerous special music courses for Simon Fraser University.

His passion for history led to the research and publishing of several definitive books on The B.C. Electric railway. His first book, *The Story of the B.C. Electric Railway Company*, was commissioned for EXPO 86 and has become a much sought-after collectors item. Three further books followed: *Victoria's Streetcar Era*, *The Perfect Little Streetcar System: North Vancouver*, and *Vancouver's Glory Years* (with co-author Heather Conn) with a two page forward by then Vancouver Mayor, Larry Campbell.

In January 2005, Henry was presented with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award by the Canadian Railroad Historical Association; In 2000 he was awarded its Norris Adams Memorial Award "for outstanding service in the preservation of railway history;" In 2009 the Vancouver Historical Society presented Henry with its annual Award for Merit "for meticulous research in the operation, route, equipment and personnel of the B.C. Electric Company.

Henry, who was one of our founding directors in 2001 was appointed as Historian-in-residence of the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society (FVHRS) in March 2016. He continues to share his deep knowledge of the B.C. Electric era through his work with the FVHRS, his books and lectures.



Judy Higginbotham, Life Member



From the start in 1996, then Surrey Councillor, Surrey Heritage Advisory Commission (SHAC) and council liaison to the FVHRS played a pivotal role in moving the heritage railway project from idea to reality in 2000, when council approved the SHAC feasibility study. This became a city of Surrey Heritage Railway project implemented by a society in partnership with the city, Southern Railway of B.C. and BC Hydro.

Judy remains a strong advocate to complete the heritage railway project vision. She was made an FVHRS lifetime member (the only one) in recognition of her unfaltering dedication to the society. For many years she was, and still is referred to as our den mother, often bringing home made cookies to a board meeting.

Allen Aubert, Secretary, Director of Fundraising

This is a 25-year milestone for Allen, as a decade long member of the Surrey Heritage Advisory Committee and chair of its Special Projects committee at SHAC when Jim Wallace strongly indicated that the largest heritage item in Surrey, the interurban system, was being overlooked. The Special Projects group, Allen, Jim Wallace, Terry Lyster and then Councillor Judy Higginbotham, undertook the four-year investigation into the viability of the project.

They travelled to heritage rail operations to find surviving BCER trams and develop a long-range plan to ensure the sustainability of the resulting operation. The investigation accurately predicted a time frame of about twenty years and being an Architect, Allen was no stranger to long term projects including London's Canary Wharf project and Architect-in-Residence for Christ Church Cathedral in Vancouver, an 18-year restoration project.

In 2000, Surrey Council approved the Interurban Revitalization Heritage Tourism project. The original group that formed the FVHRS included experienced people who were able to both oversee these areas for development and take a hands-on approach to managing it all. Thusly the City said "Go ahead."

Allen's dedication to and love for the BCER project has grown, along with an amazing ability to develop funding solutions and raise money and in-kind resources. Like a proud parent, he keeps a close eye on things and tirelessly trumpets the wonders of Surrey's Heritage Rail.

The Founders who Made it so!

Graham MacDonnell: the FVHRS first director of communications, he was a local journalist, and historian with a considerable background of the history of the BC Electric. He was editor of the first FVHRS newsletter and created several publications including a short Sullivan railway history. promoted the Vision of the heritage railway project at every opportunity.

Roy Mufford: with a background as a building contractor and with long family connections to the area was passionate about the preservation of the interurban story. He brought his skills to bear on various special heritage railway projects including the construction of the Sullivan car barn workshop and Sullivan Station construction and relocation.

Larry Fisher: President of the Lark Group, a prominent local design build construction company , this founding board member made sure that we understood the magnitude of the heritage railway project we were about to embark upon. Larry provided critical project management guidance and built both the Sullivan and Cloverdale car barns. With his guidance and support we continue confidently with the completion of our heritage railway vision.

Vic Sharman: brought his expertise from a long career in transit as a motorman and bus driver, becoming the Executive Assistant to the President of BC Transit, Stuart Hodgeson, in 1985.

Jim Gillis: during his time as Dean of continuing education at Kwantlen University College, was the individual who created the documents for, and registered the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society as a legal entity.

Information on founding directors: Terry Lyster is on page 4, Robert Ashton is on page 5.

Board of Directors 2021



John Sprung
Chairman



Roger Crick
Vice-Chair



Allen Aubert
Secretary,
Director
Fund Raising



Stephen Plant
Treasurer,
Director
Guest Experience



David King P.Eng
Operations
Manager



Elizabeth Guenzler
Communications
Station Master
Liaison



Michael Gibbs
Communications
Station Master



Harry Taylor
Restoration
Manager



Terry Nichols, Mgr
Rolling Stock
Maintenance
Chief Operator/Trainer



Sten Christiansen
Operations
Motorman



Art Crowther
Operations
Motorman



Aaron Lau
Operations
Motorman



Helen Williams
Communications



Linda Annis
Surrey Councillor
Council Liaison

Communications Team: John Sprung, Allen Aubert, Michael Gibbs, Elizabeth Guenzler, Helen Williams, Ray Hudson

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~ Post Cards From the Train ~

Cloverdale ~ Sullivan Return



1225 crossing the Serpentine River



Towering over the Bose Farm, Golden Ears peaks



1225 crossing #10 Highway near 168th Street



Mt. Baker in Washington State

Thank you to those who rode with us on this journey!

Super Save Group

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Cloverdale Station 17630 56 Ave 176A St. & Hwy 10, Surrey, BC Car barn 5554 176 St. Surrey BC
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