

# Langley Heritage Society

{March 2016}

Langley Heritage Society  
P.O. Box 982  
Fort Langley, B.C.  
V1M 2S3

*"Providing the window into the past to preserve Langley's heritage for today and tomorrow"*

## President's Message, By Fred Pepin

Who does the community turn to when our heritage buildings are threatened? We know that it is the Langley Heritage Society. For 35 years, the society has met the challenge of restoring 19 sites and assisting other groups and private citizens with countless other restoration projects.

In response to many inquiries, your Board of Directors has been pursuing the possibilities and options for revitalizing the Bedford House restaurant site in Fort Langley. We recognize the site as the Haldi House. The Haldi family built the house, owned the butcher shop, and constructed the first bridge over the Bedford Channel.

Over the past year, we have surveyed the building and worked with community groups and local businesses to develop a partnership that will be viable and contribute to the needs of the community and the heritage preservation of Fort Langley. We hope to soon begin negotiations with the Township for a long term lease of the site.



*Jacob Haldi House. Photograph courtesy Mark Forsythe.*

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## Want to Know More?

Langley Heritage Society  
is now online!

Go to [www.langleyheritage.ca](http://www.langleyheritage.ca)  
for society news, membership  
information, photographs, project  
updates, and more.

To contact the LHS, please email us  
at: [info@langleyheritage.ca](mailto:info@langleyheritage.ca)

## Down By The Station, By Bays Blackhall

No matter what the weather brings there is always 'business as usual' at our LHS CN station, even though we are closed. People stroll along the platform enjoying memories evoked by the old Station, and walk or sit in Mrs. Simpson's garden. When the crossing alarm goes there is the excitement and sounds of the coming trains. The mammoth engines come charging along, dragging the many cars; some of which are decorated with fascinating graphite. You can wave at the driver who, if you are lucky, will put his arm out the window and wave back! Kids love it!

This spring the LHS Railroaders are planning a real clean and tune up. Ted Lightfoot has rebuilt the deteriorated window box which will soon be painted and the metal arbour is a work in progress. Our caretaker/tenant Greg will be tidying the garden with advice from gardener Barbara Bryson, who will advise about the spring plantings.

What fun it will be if we can find some costumed interpreters on the site playing the part of Mr. and Mrs. Simpson as Mark Forsythe has suggested. Any volunteers?

## UBC Botanical Gardens & Langley's Heritage Gardens

By Ted Lightfoot

You may have read in the Vancouver Sun a couple of months ago that the UBC Botanical Garden is the oldest garden in Canada and celebrates it's 100th birthday in 2016. The UBC Botanical Garden was started by a Scotsman named John Davidson (Botany John), who was appointed as B.C.'s first official botanist in 1911. The present garden at UBC covers 110 acres and consists of 35,500 plants. Through numerous donations the garden will double in size and will be enlarged for 30 more years of new creations. So how does this all tie in with Fort Langley? Our pioneers Dr. Marr and Charles Hope must have known "Botany John" and joined him on an order of plants being shipped over from England. The UBC Botanical Gardens and River View Hospital Gardens were being planned around this time period. The plants would have been shipped by boat to the east coast and then come across Canada by rail to finally end up in British Columbia. Some would have been procured by Dr. Marr and Charles Hope for planting in Fort Langley. Recently, several of these very old trees were lost to development in the historic Marr House garden. However, some of these significant trees can still be found in the remains of the Charlie Hope garden behind the firehall on 96th avenue. One of these, a lovely contorted Camperdownii Elm is still there. Check it out!

The River View Hospital Grounds in New Westminister have an arboretum of 100 year plus trees and you may drive to the site and walk around the collection. Patrick Lewis, now the Head of the UBC Botanical Garden, recently wrote: "I would like to think people go away from here not only, with plant knowledge, but also, with a deeper concern for the world and an eagerness to make

things better for everyone". Local resident and former UBC Botanical employee, Barbara Bryson, who we are lucky enough to have living in Fort Langley, would likely concur with the above statement.

Now Arbor Day is coming up on the last weekend in April and the CN Station committee would like to plan a ceremony to finish off the metal arbor over the steps into Mrs. Simpson's garden. Stay tuned and we will give you a time and date for the planting ceremony.

## Looking at Langley's History, With Maureen Pepin

William McRae, Sr., was born in Banff, Scotland, in 1884, and married Margaret Finlayson of Nairn, Scotland, in 1907. Son George was born in Nairn in 1908. The family emigrated to Canada in 1912, and while they lived in Vancouver, their daughter Jean and their son William were born. William Sr. formed a partnership with a livery company on Powell Street near the BC Sugar Refinery. They owned 8 teams of horses, which they used for contract work in deliveries and construction projects. Sacks of coal were delivered to all the city schools that used coal burning furnaces for heating. Foundations and basements were dug out using a large metal scoop pulled by a team of horses. One such project was the Hudson Bay Company in Vancouver.

In 1915, William and his two brothers enlisted in the 47th battalion in New Westminster. Margaret was a foreman in the Gore Avenue Fish cannery until William returned from the war. In 1919, they moved to the County Line area, where William did logging and custom work for farmers. In 1920, he worked for the BC Electric Railway, patrolling and repairing tracks from Milner to Matsqui.

When they were cleaning up an old log building, they found a still and realized that the former owner had been in the bootlegging business. Apparently, there was quite a bit of bootlegging in the area, especially in Glen Valley. Their son George recalls that when the BC Electric train dropped sacks of grain for their cattle at the milk stand, they had to pick it up right away or it would be stolen.

The McRaes had 30 head of dairy cattle plus horses, but because of the water shortage, they had to drive their cattle up the road to a water spring. Eventually, they hired a "water witcher" who found them water on a hill above their farm. They used a gravity system to bring the water down the hill to the house and barns.

In 1928, the family installed their own power line poles and thus were the first family to have electricity at County Line. In 1930, they had the first electric radio and range. Later, the BC Electric paid for the electricity because of the severe ice and snow storms. It was not uncommon to have seven or eight feet of snow and the only mode of travel was a horse and cutter.

George, the eldest McRae son, started school in grade three at County Line where one of his teachers was Miss Bilton from England. George became the local welterweight boxer. George worked as a logger (rigger) and later at McMillan Bloedel Pulp and Paper Company in Port Alberni. He was also an alderman in Alberni for a number of years. (Source: "The Place Between" Volume 1).

# The Murrayville Tour With Guide Fred Pepin

## By Ellen Edwards

So fortunate we were to have a fine weather day! We started our tour at **Centennial Museum** with Jasmine Moore showing us the latest exhibition of printmaking techniques. We filled our white bus and drove up Glover Road, through Langley Village and up Old Yale Road to **Murrayville Garage**, now a Montessori School. The head teacher showed us around, and the smiling children carried on with their special art projects. **Hagerty House** c1910 was next, now a busy office, with historical photos on its walls. Now to **the 5 Corners**, the heart of Murrayville, to have a peek inside **TracyCakes**, a fine place for tea! Specializing in very sweet desserts, of course! We admired both old and new church buildings at **The United Churches of Langley**, with the restoration manager giving us details on the modern windows and trusses and sanctuary.



Fred showed us the new foundations for the **Water Pump shed**, and pointed up to the Canadian Flag which his father painted and put around Langley's public places. Then Fred gave us all a cup of the freshest water ever, from the ancient artesian stream. And we happily walked over to **Porter's Store**, now a Café, for our lunchtime! What a tasty choice of sandwiches, soups and sweets. We must return and bring a friend!



At the top of the page you see Fred standing by **Murrayville Hall**, telling us about the beautifully restored **McCrimmon House 1889**, now a Naturopathic Clinic. Fred found his keys and let us in the Hall!

Interesting that the nearby **Orthodox Church** was once Presbyterian, that separated from the local United Church. The bright Byzantine paintings inside were absolute perfection. Why no pews? The congregation stood for the whole service! Then we were welcomed inside the **Traveler's Inn** (now *The Princess & the Pea B&B*). The oak furnishings were impressive. We drove up Yale Road Hill to see **Two Restored Cottages**, then marveled at the blue skies going back. Thanks, Fred!



# LHS School Sponsorship Update, By Sharon Johnson

There has been an increase compared to the past few years, in the number of students the Langley Heritage Society sponsored to attend programs at the Langley Centennial Museum. In November, the board decided to add one more school to those we sponsor. It was a hard decision which school to add, as many more would love to be part of the program. Willoughby Elementary was invited to join this program and gladly came on board. In fact, they quickly sent 6 classes to the museum during December and the New Year.

The sponsored schools are: Betty Gilbert Middle, Douglas Park Community, HD Stafford Middle, Langley Meadows Elementary, Nicomekl Elementary, Parkside Elementary, Shortreed Community, and Willoughby Elementary. From March 2015 to February 2016 (our fiscal year), the LHS paid the cost of the bus and the museum program so 56 classes, representing 1,680 students, could participate in the museum's hand-on school programs.

Schools are very appreciative! Thank you emails and cards are common, below are just a sample:

- "Thank you again for supporting our school. This was a great field trip for our students and it is very much appreciated."
- "The Heritage Society's support to our school is very much appreciated."
- From a teacher: "...We had a terrific experience and hope the program will continue."
- Also from a teacher: "...Thank you so much for giving us this opportunity and sponsoring the program and transportation for us. It is unlikely we would have been able to experience this without your support! Thank you!"
- From a grade 2 student: "Thank you for the mony (sic) for our field trip. It was fun! I liked the chores. My favourite chore was getting the eggs from the barn. The museum was fun! I learned a lot!"
- Another grade 2 student, "Thank you for paying for the bus. I learned lots of new things at the Langley Centennial Museum! I didn't now (sic) that they had to make there (sic) own butter and food..."
- From a parent via our website "My son Mitchell and I were able to go to the Langley museum with his kindergarten class and enjoy a pioneer Christmas on Tuesday thanks to the generosity of the Langley Heritage Society. We just wanted to thank you for donation that made the trip possible. We had an absolutely wonderful time and learned a lot about how Christmas was celebrated in the early days! Thank-you."

## Tell Us What YOU Think!

The Fort Langley Community Association is conducting a survey to identify matters of importance for Fort Langley, such as "what is your vision". If you are interested in the survey, you can complete it online at: [www.fortlangleycommunity.com](http://www.fortlangleycommunity.com).

# Notice of Langley Heritage Society AGM

Date: Friday, April 29, 2015 at the Fort Langley Community Hall, Fort Langley

Time: Meet and greet at 5:30 pm, dinner at 6:00 pm, book raffle and AGM at 7:00 pm

Entertainment: Mark Forsythe and the Brookwood Video Project for Website

We have hired Coast & Country Caterers from Cloverdale to cater the dinner. Tickets will be sold for dinner for \$15.00 per person (balance is subsidised by LHS). Dinner will include Baron of Beef and Chicken (boneless), three salads, vegetables, condiments and desserts. Tickets are available from Kay McComish (604-888-0448) or any Director. Tickets are not required for the Annual General Meeting, but are required for the dinner and to be eligible for the annual book draw.

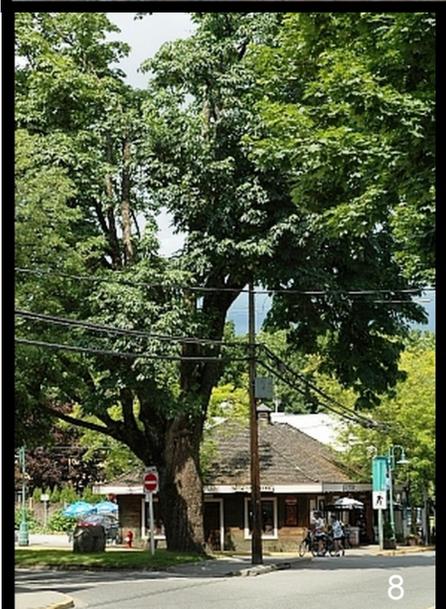
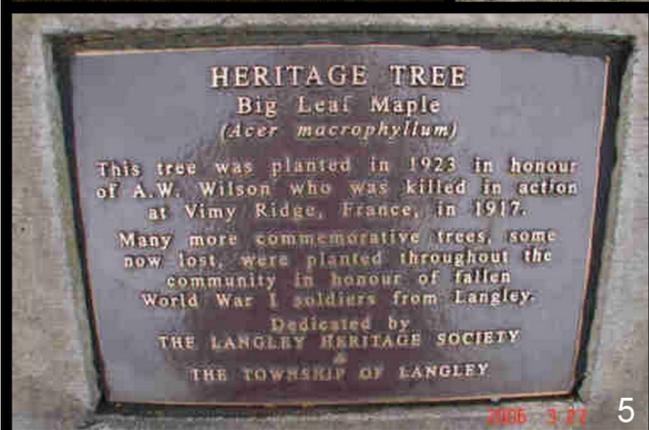
TICKETS WILL NOT BE FOR SALE AT THE DOOR. TICKET DEADLINE: TUESDAY, APRIL 19TH.

For more information, send us an email to [info@langleyheritage.ca](mailto:info@langleyheritage.ca).

## War Memorials and Monument, By Mark Forsythe

Lest we forget. Heritage BC is seeking contributions from around the province for an interactive map of war monuments and memorials. The Township of Langley **Heritage Advisory Committee** has compiled an impressive list that includes Langley's memorial trees, plaques, cenotaphs, road and place names that commemorate soldiers killed while serving for Canada. The Township's list does not claim to be comprehensive, but is a good start to gathering information and photographs. Over the years Langley Heritage Society and the Township have placed bronze plaques on small cement houses to mark commemorative trees. The photos to the right illustrate some of the ways that we remember. To contribute to the Heritage BC War Monuments and Memorials Interactive Map visit: <http://www.heritagebc.ca/war-memorials-in-bc> The online map will be launched in April 2016.

Photographs on the opposite page: 1. Heritage Tree Big Leaf Maple planted in honour of Jesse Wright, killed at Vimy Ridge in 1917. Wright Street and 96th, Fort Langley (Photo: LHS). 2. Odd Fellow's (now Murrayville) Cemetery Cenotaph (Photo: TOL). 3. Wix Road sign. Named in honour of C.V. Montaure Wix, killed in action during WW I. 24th Avenue between 200 and 216 Streets. (Photo: TOL). 4. A Walk to Remember. Afghanistan War Memorial. Derek Doubleday Arboretum, 21200 Block of Fraser Highway (Photo: TOL). 5. A.W. Wilson Commemorative Maple Tree plaque. Killed in action at Vimy Ridge. 96th and Glover, Fort Langley (Photo: TOL). 6. In Flanders Fields Memorial Window, St. George's Church, Fort Langley. Designed by Charles E. Hope (Photo: LHS). 7. Remembrance Day at Fort Langley Cemetery Cenotaph. Dedicated in 1921. (Photo: LHS). 8. Wilson Commemorative Maple Tree (Photo: TOL). 9. Captain Hector Jackson Commemorative Maple. South side of 24th Avenue across from 25965 24th Avenue (Photo: TOL). 10. Fort Langley Cemetery Cenotaph, 1950. (Archival photo: Langley Advance). 11. Commemorative Maple Tree plaque in honour of Senior Major Arthur Thomas Johnston, killed at Ypres, Belgium. 6821 216th Street, Milner (Photo: TOL). 12. Horse Chestnut Trees planted by Dr Benjamin Marr in memory of soldiers lost in WW I. Glover Road, Fort Langley. (Photo: LHS).



## Langley Heritage Society 2015-2016 Speaker Schedule

Members' meetings occur on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30pm at historic Milner Chapel, located at 6716 - 216th Street.

Stay for social time, coffee & refreshments after.

September 22, 2015  
VPB Commissioner,  
John Coupar  
Bloedel Conservatory

October 27, 2015  
Jasmine Moore  
Society for the Museum of  
Original Costume

Wednesday, November 18  
Douglas Day Potluck  
Venue: Fort Langley  
Community Hall

January 26, 2016  
Susan Safyan  
All Roads Lead to Wells

February 23, 2016  
Jay Sherwood  
Surveying Southern BC

March 22, 2016  
Val Patenaude  
Maple Ridge History

Friday, April 29, 2016  
Annual General Meeting at the  
Fort Langley Community Hall  
Presentation by Mark Forsythe on  
the Brookwood Video Project

## Upcoming Programs

{March 22, 2016}

### Val Patenaude and Maple Ridge Centres

"Didn't this used to be Haney?" Val Patenaude, director of the Maple Ridge Museum, will answer this question and many more during her presentation on the history of Maple Ridge, which only makes sense if you take the postal route. Patenaude, who started in archaeology and took over as director of the museum in 1993, will start the presentation in 1874, with the beginning of this interesting municipality. Going post office by post office, she will identify the unique characteristics of each neighborhood.

## Supporters & Suppliers

LHS wishes to express our gratitude to supporters who contribute to our projects.  
We endorse their business.

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