



THE WHISTLE

The official publication of:
THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SOCIETY OF MODEL ENGINEERS (BCSME)
Operators of BURNABY CENTRAL RAILWAY Vol 56; Issue 1 – January/February 2026



Brendan is Machining Parts for the East Junction Track

BCSME Member Meetings

**General Meeting on January 7th & February 4th
In-person and on Zoom 7pm**

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Editor of The Whistle

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Submissions & Deadline

The editor's role is to assemble and publish the newsletter, but it truly serves as a platform for members to share their BCSME stories with one another. Your contributions make The Whistle vibrant and meaningful.

If a BCSME member has any articles or photos that they'd like to submit for publication, please send them to the editor as an attachment in an e-mail.

Please add the words "The Whistle" in the e-mail's subject line. The more submissions made by members of the Society the better this newsletter will be.

The deadline for any submissions is one week prior to an issue being published. New issues are published every second month, starting at the beginning of January.

Means of Publication

I use Apache's OpenOffice suite on a PC to create this newsletter. OpenOffice can open almost any Microsoft document file.

Photos are handled using GIMP. Any digital pictures being submitted for publication should be in as high a resolution .jpeg format as possible. 200 DPI is a good value.

The BCSME Directors

PresidentKen Lear
Vice-president.....More McCormack
Secretary.....Tom Carr
Treasurer.....Brian Carlson
Business Director.....Gord Tilley
Site Manager.....Peter Berry
Operations Director.....Bruce Wilson
Shop Director.....Chuck Laws
Communications DirectorMarie Rogers

Officers

Financial Review.....Bill McKenzie
Privacy.....Bill McKenzie
Security Access.....More McCormack and Dennis Bosa
Garden Railway Project Manager.....Dennis Bosa
Boiler Inspector.....Steve Harvey
Archivist.....**Vacant Position**
Librarian.....**Vacant Position**
The Whistle Editor.....Brian Ruebottom
Comm. Chair, Garden Railway.....Brian Ruebottom
Comm. Chair, Raised Track.....Doug Bach
Trainers/Examiners.....Doug Bach and Bruce Wilson
Steam Instructor.....John Ostler
Shop Frm.....Bruce Johnston (M) and Phil MacGregor (C)
Social Media Manager.....John Roberts
New Steam Loc. Project Mgr.....Chuck Laws
Comm. Chair, 100th Ann...Tom Carr and Kent Cavaghan

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Also check: www.bcsme.org

BCSME AGM
Saturday, March 7

Easter Weekend
Good Friday, April 3, and
Easter Monday, April 6

Contact for BCSME Concession and Bookings

Gord Tilley: concession@bcsme.org / **Bruce Wilson:** bookings@bcsme.org

President's Message

I hope everyone was able to spend time with friends and family over the holidays. This past year brought its share of changes and challenges for the Society, but overall it was a very good year.

The Society will continue to operate with the input and involvement of its members. All of the Directors have done a tremendous amount of work throughout the year to ensure their areas of responsibility have functioned smoothly.

As a replacement for the cancelled Frost Bite meet, look for a Spring event where members can get their trains out for a stretch. I wish everyone the very best in the New Year, and I look forward to seeing all of you soon.

Happy Steaming, *Ken Lear*, **President, BCSME**

Editor's Message

I hope everyone had a good Christmas and a happy new year, as another year has come to an end, and the season opening for 2026 will soon be upon us. It has been interesting following along with the Track Gang's effort to remove and replace the East Junction. The effort from both the BCSME volunteers and the contractor has been incredible. The story is on pages 6 & 7 of this issue. The pictures in the story capture a moment in time, which is great. What the pictures do not do is show the incredible amount of effort that was put into this project by everyone who came out to volunteer their time.

Forgotten Railway Vocabulary: Footplate - the platform at the rear of a steam locomotive where the driver and fireman stood. The modern equivalent is cab, the enclosed space for crew.

Brian Ruebottom
Editor, The Whistle
Committee Chair, Garden Railway

JOB JAR

Item 1: Bruce has many small jobs in Operations. Please contact him at bookings@bcsme.org

Item 2: Peter has on-going jobs around the Site. Please contact him at pjberry@shaw.ca

ITEM 3: The Track Gang - if you can help, please contact More McCormack at vicepresident@bcsme.org

ITEM 4: The Garden Team will reconvene in February. Catherine needs new volunteers to help on Saturdays (before opening day) and Tuesdays during operating season.

Christmas Celebration and Awards

Author: Ken Lear

At the Christmas social, it was my pleasure to present the following awards.

Our Junior Volunteer of the Year is Brendon Scarrott. Brendon has been a very active member for several years, and this past year he contributed to track work, operated the G-scale trains, and ran the 7.5-inch equipment. He was always willing to step in wherever help was needed. This year, he spent many hours operating the 7.5-inch engines as he works toward becoming a qualified electric engineer.

Our Volunteer of the Year is Brian Ruebottom. Brian has done an outstanding job as *The Whistle* editor, ensuring the publication remains engaging and informative for our members. He was also the driving force behind keeping the G-scale layout operational for the majority of our running days. On several occasions, Brian single-handedly brought out the trains and ran them for the day. Throughout the year, he could often be found on site during the week, working on the G-scale layout and repairing rolling stock to ensure everything was ready to run.



Photographs courtesy of Marie Rogers

Track Work: 2025-26 Winter Projects

Right, a new block wall has been added as you arrive at the station via the East bound track. Vanscape Landscaping and Contracting Ltd. did the work.



The Hargrove Bridge has been sent to Dennick Engineering in Maple Ridge for welding point checks, sandblasting and powder coating. We should see it back sometime late January.



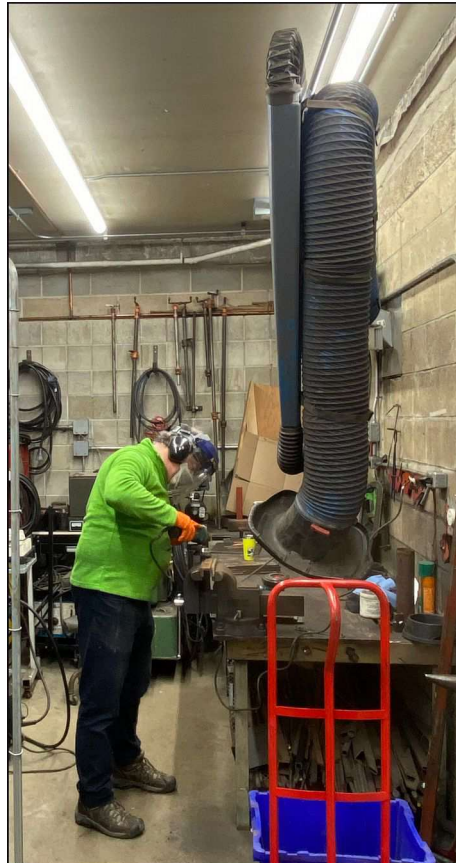
Work on the the East Junction track section has started. More McCormack and his crew started in early November by removing the section of track leading into, and including, the East Junction from the north and south directions. With the old track removed, Richard Ninaus and his company came in with heavy equipment to excavate and rebuild the roadbed. See pictures below.



Pictures courtesy of Brian Ruebottom

Winter Projects: Continued

Our volunteers were busy cutting steel straps for the rail alignments, drilling for rail attachments to the new ties, cutting of the plastic lumber for new ties and the assembly of the track panels.



Picture below is the finished roadbed, ready and waiting for the new track to be laid down and ballasted.



Photographs courtesy of Brian Ruebottom

Our Student Volunteers

By Doug Bach, Student Volunteer Coordinator

You may have noticed that during the running season we had some young faces helping out with boarding and other things. Many of these are our student volunteers. Some (but not all) of these student volunteers are doing this towards their community service requirement hours in high school. For the 2025 running season, a little more than 20 of them stuck it out and completed their required hours, and quite a number of them kept on coming and volunteered solely out of enjoying the time! If we have more than three trains running, the efficiency of boarding is actually the limit on how many passengers we can carry in an hour. (i.e. how long the queue of passengers is.)

Ten student volunteers noticed that we could use more conductors, were interested, and volunteered to start conductor training. A few even continued on and started engineer training! Since we are frequently short of staff to run trains, this has been a huge help. One day we only had four members able to drive trains or conduct. Crowds were high that day. However, we had three student volunteers who had their conductor's ticket. So, we were able to run three 5-car trains, plus a 3-car train, and that saved the day!

The students can't just come in and start helping with boarding. Each has to attend a training session, learn the different things about boarding, get started on the paperwork, and so forth. Only one school supplied all the paperwork, so we had to create things like timesheets. Once they've gone through the startup stuff, then comes the on-the-job training (you can't pick up everything in one go!). Some students can start at Easter, some hear about the program and come later, and some have to wait until they have mostly finished their classes, so we ended up with several training sessions a month through May, June, July, and August. We will see how next year goes.

Thank you to all our student volunteers!

Maricopa Live Steamers

The picture below was sent in by Bill Mellors. Here is his email that came with the picture...

Hi Brian, I have attached a photo of a steam loco pulling/pushing a heavy load! This is at the Maricopa Live Steamers track where I volunteer during the winter. I first heard this engine, then saw it in the yard struggling to get going. I thought the engineer had allowed his steam pressure to get too low. At that point, I could not see what he was trying to shunt around the yard. When he appeared with the added load of hopper gondolas, I took notice. The gondolas are filled with gravel for ballast to be used for the day's track work and they are heavy (just try re-railing one of them). Fortunately, the Maricopa track is near level with very slight grades. However, when I spoke to the loco engineer, he said he has surprised himself and others by pulling some big loads at other tracks with grades as much as 1 1/2 %. This is "THE LITTLE ENGINE THAT COULD!" Bill Mellors



CONCESSION WORKER

Dear Team,

We are reaching out to inquire if any of our members know someone who might be interested in applying for a position or opportunity within our organization. If you have a contact or a referral, please feel free to share their details with us or encourage them to apply.

Your recommendations are highly valued, and we appreciate your support in helping us find suitable candidates. If you have someone in mind, kindly respond to this message or contact us directly.

Thank you for your continued engagement and assistance.

Best regards,

BCSME - P/T WEEKEND WORK - SEASONAL

The Burnaby Central Railway is looking to fill the position of Concession Worker at a busy public park located at 120 N Willingdon Avenue, Burnaby BC (Confederation Park)

As a Concession Worker, you will be responsible for providing excellent customer service and ensuring the smooth operation of our concession stand.

Responsibilities:

- Greet customers and take their orders in a friendly and efficient manner
- Prepare and serve a variety of food and beverage items, such as popcorn, hot dogs, ice cream, and soft drinks
- Handle cash transactions and operate a point-of-sale (POS) system
- Balance cash and record sales reports
- Maintain cleanliness and sanitation standards in the concession area
- Stock inventory and replenish supplies as needed
- Assist with food preparation and cooking as required
- Follow all food safety guidelines and regulations
- Provide exceptional customer service to enhance the overall guest experience

Experience:

- Previous experience in a similar role is preferred but not required
- Basic math skills for handling cash transactions accurately
- Ability to work in a fast-paced environment while maintaining attention to detail
- Knowledge of food handling and safety procedures
- Food Safe Level 1 is required

Workdays will rotate between Saturday, Sunday and Statutory holidays. Shifts will range from 4 to 8 hours starting from 9:00am to 11:00 am. Shifts will range from 6-8 shifts per month.

The season runs from Saturday March 28th 2026 until Saturday October 17th 2026

If you are enthusiastic, reliable, and enjoy working in a team-oriented environment, we would love to hear from you. Apply today to join our dynamic team of Concession Workers!

Send Resume to concession@BCSME.org



Donation for the BCSME

The BCSME received a small traction engine (see picture to the left) and a 5in locomotive donation for the raised track. The traction engine is pretty much completed. It needs a cart behind to pull and we have the wheels for this. A propane burner needs to be fabricated, the grates have never been used, and the boiler tubes are shiny. It has passed a rudimentary pressure test by Joe Appleton. However, we need Steve Harvey to do a complete boiler test for its certification.

Photograph courtesy of Chuck Laws

Model Engineer: the Human Component

By Brian Ruebottom

This is my story; however, any one of the 50+ male members of the British Columbia Society of Model Engineers (BCSME) could insert their name into this story. I know that there are other BCSME members who actively share in this story. Last January, 2025, I had a PSA test (Prostate-Specific Antigen) and it was above a normal healthy limit. In Canada, these tests may be requested from a family doctor every two to four years depending on a 50+ male's health risk. More frequent testing may be done if the health risk is high. The doctors are following guidelines in asking for these tests to be done. There is no national policy requiring this test be done, and as a result some men may not be monitoring their PSA level. These tests are not covered by the provincial health system, and the individual has to pay for regular testing. If a doctor repeats a request for a PSA test, then the provincial health system pays for additional tests due to medical needs.

My results on that initial test was over 20 ng/mL. This means that I had over 20 nanograms per millilitre of PSA in each millilitre of my blood. This is way above a healthy range. My family doctor ordered a repeat of the test and she included my urologist in that request. He was already treating me for bladder stones. The second test was also over 20 ng/mL, and the urologist ordered a third test that had similar result as the first two. The stone in my bladder was large, I needed it to be removed, and it was removed in spring of 2025. On the day of that surgery I went home to recover. Hospital stay was not required. While recovering from surgery, I wrote a poem that captured my thoughts in the moment:

With the surgeon's hands inside my flesh, my body whispered '*let it end*', but death stood
silent, watching still, no beckon, no descent.

A stone like ruin drained me dry, its weight a thief, a thief of life. Yet hands that carved the
line of fate chased away my coming strife.

I rose not by the will of stars, not by the mercy of the wind, but by the force of knowing
hands, defying what the body willed.

This poem touches on the knowledge that scientists have collected over the last century on human biology, and I will need to rely on that collection of knowledge again to survive the coming battle.

The concern for my health now shifted to the PSA results. There are a number of reasons why a PSA test might be above normal, and my urologist was worried that my high PSA count was the result of cancer. I will not go into the other reasons for a high PSA score as my story is about prostate cancer. An Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scan for prostate cancer diagnosis is preferred by doctors; however, there is currently a long wait list for both MRI and computed tomography (CT) scans in the Fraser Health area. Currently, it's not unrealistic to wait a year for either of these scans. Due to the delay in MRI scans my urologist ordered a biopsy be taken of my prostate. The biopsy results came back as cancerous and it was assigned a high Gleason score.

The Gleason score (6–10) is used to grade the aggressiveness of prostate cancer. A score of 6 indicates low-risk cancer, 7 represents moderate risk, and scores of 8 to 10 reflect high-risk, aggressive cancer. Originally, the Gleason scale ranged from 2 to 10, but scores from 2 to 5 are no longer used because they do not represent clinically significant cancer. As our understanding of prostate cancer has evolved, these lower scores are now considered non-cancerous. It's important for your doctor to know your Gleason score, as it plays a key role in determining the most appropriate treatment plan.

One in eight men are diagnosed yearly with prostate cancer in Canada, most cases are diagnosed in men over 50 years of age, and one in thirty will die from the cancer.¹ If diagnosed early and treated, then the survival rate approaches 100%. About 5,000 Canadian men died in 2024 due to prostate cancer. It's the most diagnosed cancer for men and it's the third leading cause of cancer deaths in men. On average, 76 men are diagnosed every day and 14 die due to the cancer. Those who lose the battle to prostate cancer lose it because it was either detected late, it was aggressive, it metastasized (meaning it spread to other areas of the body), treatment was limited, or the age of the individual was such that other conditions complicated treatment. Without a national policy, awareness and understanding of this type of cancer is a man's best defence. I had no symptoms, I did not know there was even a problem, but my prostate did. Prostate cancer was not on the radar for me, but due to a chronic illness I see my family doctor yearly, and

¹ [Prostate cancer statistics | Canadian Cancer Society](#)

she has regularly requested that I get a PSA test. All I knew of the prostate was that it sits below the bladder and it is a male-only organ. The prostate plays a vital role in reproductive health. Understanding the prostate's role, common prostate illnesses, and treatments for prostate cancer is important.

When I was given my biopsy results, the urologist told me that I would need a bone and CT scan. His last words from that conversation were 'get ready for the coming battle'. The bone scan followed a week after that conversation and the CT scan followed a month after that. I ended up going private with the CT scan because the doctor's office had not yet heard back from the hospital as to when they could have me in for the scan. MRI and CT scans are being prioritized by medical urgency, essentially this is triage for hospitals. They are making the best use of their resources given the demand being placed upon them. I can remember being in the office with my urologist and he was disappointed with the delay of my CT scan. That was when a decision was made about going private. The results of both the bone and CT scan showed that there was no evidence of metastasis, and we would now focus on having my prostate removed surgically. I asked about the timing of the surgery and the urologist said it would be dependent on his schedule. He finished the conversation with: 'see you in three or four weeks'.

I began preparing myself for the coming surgery, both mentally and physically. About a week after that last discussion I was told the date of surgery, November 4th, 2025, and that was the day that I would say goodbye to the cancer. Unfortunately there was a complication during the surgery and my urologist was unable to remove my prostate. Later that day, my urologist gave me the bad news and told me that I would now need to be treated with radiation therapy. In the moment I was lost, what did radiation therapy mean, and I now had to re-align my thought process for a new path forward.

The path forward is hormone and radiation therapy. Hormone therapy works by blocking or reducing testosterone. The cancer cells depend on testosterone to grow. This weakens the tumour and often causes it to shrink. Once the cancer is less active, radiation therapy is used to target the tumour directly with high-energy beams, aiming to destroy the remaining cancer cells in the prostate. Hormone therapy and radiation therapy for prostate cancer can cause side effects that affect both physical and emotional well-being, though many are manageable and vary from person to person. I would list what those effects are, but it's depressing to read the list. I will wait until I get there and see what those effects are for me.

While researching and writing this story I am recovering from my November 4th surgery. I have started the hormone therapy, I have not noticed any side effects, but it is still early in the treatment. BC Cancer has reached out to me and I have begun the initial steps towards radiation therapy with them. The coming months may be difficult. However, I have read that some men go through this process with manageable side effects and continue daily activities.

On Dec 12, 2025, the BBC covered King Charles' televised speech for the *Stand Up To Cancer* campaign.¹ He discussed his current experience with cancer treatment and thanked the people who are helping him beat cancer. His cancer was diagnosed early and he is responding well to treatment. As Charles points out, approximately nine million people in the UK are not keeping up with cancer screening. In Canada, it is estimated that there are millions of Canadians who are not up to date with their cancer screenings. Participation levels in screening dropped during Covid-19 and the rate of participation has not returned to pre-Covid levels. This includes breast, cervical, colorectal, and other cancer screenings. As for PSA testing, men only get tested if their physician orders it and often after shared decision-making.

Writing this story for inclusion into *The Whistle* was suggested to me, and I thought it was a great idea. Considering the average age of the BCSME members, and that the most important component of model engineering is the human component, then it's fitting to tell my story about prostate cancer in a newsletter for a 'train-themed' model engineering society. The survival rate for prostate cancer, if it is detected early and treated, approaches 100%. However, there are medical reasons why a male might lose his life to prostate cancer. Lack of awareness should not be a reason. Unfortunately, stories are being told of men losing their life to prostate cancer. Hopefully this article has raised the level of awareness and prevented an unnecessary death.

¹ [BBC: King Charles - TV message on cancer recovery in full](#)