THE WHISTLE

The official publication of:
THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SOCIETY OF MODEL ENGINEERS (BCSME)
Operators of BURNABY CENTRAL RAILWAY Vol 56; Issue 6 – November/December 2026

Thanksgiving Weekend



Photograph courtesy of Ring Zheng

BCSME Member Meetings

Join Us for Our Monthly Board Meetings!
The Board of Directors meets on the last Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM. Members are invited to attend, listen in, and stay informed on upcoming society plans.

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The Whistle is the official newsletter published by, and for, the members of The British Columbia Society of Model Engineers (BCSME). Any opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the policies of The BCSME. All content is the copyright property of The BCSME, and the individual contributors.

BCSME Address & Track Site

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Editor of The Whistle

Brian Ruebottom
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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

President .....Peter Berry
Vice-president.....More McCormack
Secretary.....Tom Carr
Treasurer.....Brian Carlson
Business Director.....Gord Tilley
Site Manager.....Matthew Berry
Operations Director.....Bruce Wilson
Shop Director.....Chuck Laws
Communications Director .....Marie 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

Christmas Party:
Saturday, 5th December, 12-2pm

Frost Bite Run has not yet been discussed due to the track renovation work in front of the station.

Season Opening for 2027:
Good Friday, 26th March.

Contact for BCSME Concession and Bookings

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

President's Message

The 2026 BCSME operating season has now come to a close after a record year in ridership. As I noted in last month's report, a huge thank you goes out to all the volunteers who have made this season a success!

We are now entering the season of maintenance, repair, and reconstruction. All of the rolling stock and locomotive power need to be reviewed, serviced, and repaired as necessary. Repairs and corrections will also be required for our buildings and facilities. The major project for this closed season will be the replacement of the trackage on the north side of the station, which will extend to the completion of last year's East Junction work and past the Garden Railway to the west. This project begins on Sunday, November 1st, with the removal of the existing track.

The plan and scheduling for all building projects will be presented in January 2027.

Happy Steaming, Peter Berry, President, BCSME

Editor's Message

Chuck Laws sent in this YouTube link of the opening of BCR: Confederation Park, circa 1992-1993. Burnaby Mayor William J. (Bill) Copeland was on hand to officially open the park (15:56). The Society's 1/2 steam tractor can be seen running around the park with Ken Love driving it (8:59). The video is 53 minutes long.
Burnaby Central Railway, Confederation Park, July 1, 1993

About 10 years ago Shane Marshell of New Zealand purchased Tom Miller's 1:6 in scale Big Boy locomotive. Shane had to travel to Tom's railway estate near Portland, Oregon, to take ownership of the locomotive. This video was posted to Youtube about a month ago from the 2025 Season opening for Tauranga Model Marine and Engineering Club.
Turntable Hill Railway 2025 opening | Union Pacific Big Boy 4005 in New Zealand #locomotive #steam

Christmas Party Saturday Dec 5, 12-2pm at the station. Please join us in the station for lunch and Christmas cheer. Chilli and salad will be provided. If you would like to bring appetizers or dessert to share, please let Marie know: communications@bcsme.org

The BCSME is placing one of its locomotives up for sale. The 3 1/2inch 4-6-4 coal fired Hudson was built by John Wood in 1935. It will be sold by bidding, with preference to members, for local pickup, with a minimum bid starting at $1000. To make inquiries please contact Brian: treasurer@bcsme.org.

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**. More needs help with replacing the track section that extends from the East Junction into and past the station until alongside of the Garden Railway. This will require an enormous effort to have completed for next year's operations. If you are available, please come out to help!

ITEM 4: The Garden Team needs help to keep up the grounds in the off season. Hours are usually Tuesday from 11am-3pm, weather permitting. Please check with Catherine McDonnell (604-420-1778) or Tom Pruden (604-473-4660). Help is needed with cutting back overgrown bushes in the winter and mowing in the spring.

Thanksgiving Weekend

By Brian Ruebottom



Another year of providing mini-train rides for the public has come to an end for the 2026 season. This leaves us at the start of another ambitious track renovation project for the winter months, spanning the area alongside Rainbow Creek Station and the maze. Looking back at this past season, it has been a very busy one for the volunteers of the Burnaby Central Railway.

During the last two months of operations, the train crews witnessed long lines of young families waiting for their mini-train rides. Often, the line stretched from the entrance of the maze, up the hill towards the birthday party area, and then back down the hill to the concession stand where the tickets for train rides are sold. The warm weather that we had through September and October helped with getting families out for their rides. These very busy days came after the FIFA World Cup matches. It was almost night and day between these two stretches of hosting the public. If I recall correctly, an average day during FIFA was a few hundred less rides, but in comparison to the last two months, we made up for the difference and then some. These last few weeks were consistently busy with our busiest day ever.



I want to thank Ring Zheng, the BCIT student who helped with the Society's "Join Us" campaign, for providing the photographs for this story.

Operations Report for 2026

This year was an extremely busy year for us! By the end of April, we had given approximately 20% more rides than in April 2025. This was maintained during May, but fell off in June and July (World Cup?), until we were below 2025 ridership by the BC Day weekend. Ridership in August was at the 2025 level, but surged ahead in September, with approximately double the number of rides compared with previous years.

We passed the previous record for busiest day on Sunday 20th September, then again on Sunday 4 October, and finally on Monday 12 October. Of course, the number of rides is strongly influenced by the weather, but we still provided between 260 and 900 rides on the five days with noticeable rain.

I want to give a huge thanks to the 78 people whose names are recorded in the 7.5" Gauge Operations Logbook for making this possible, as well as the guys in the shop who kept everything rolling!

On a more somber note, this year has shown that the railway has reached capacity :
- on Sunday 11 September, we had to park a train at lunchtime even though the maze was full
- on Monday 12 September, there was more than an hour wait for a train ride

It's worth remembering that our City of Burnaby licence requires us to "operate sufficient trains to ensure no undue delay" (paragraph 9.2).

The 2027 season starts on Good Friday 26th March 2027. This makes 2027 a long season with 29 weekends and eight Statutory Holidays.

See you in 2027!

Bruce Wilson
Operations Director

Announcement: BCR/BCSME New Logo

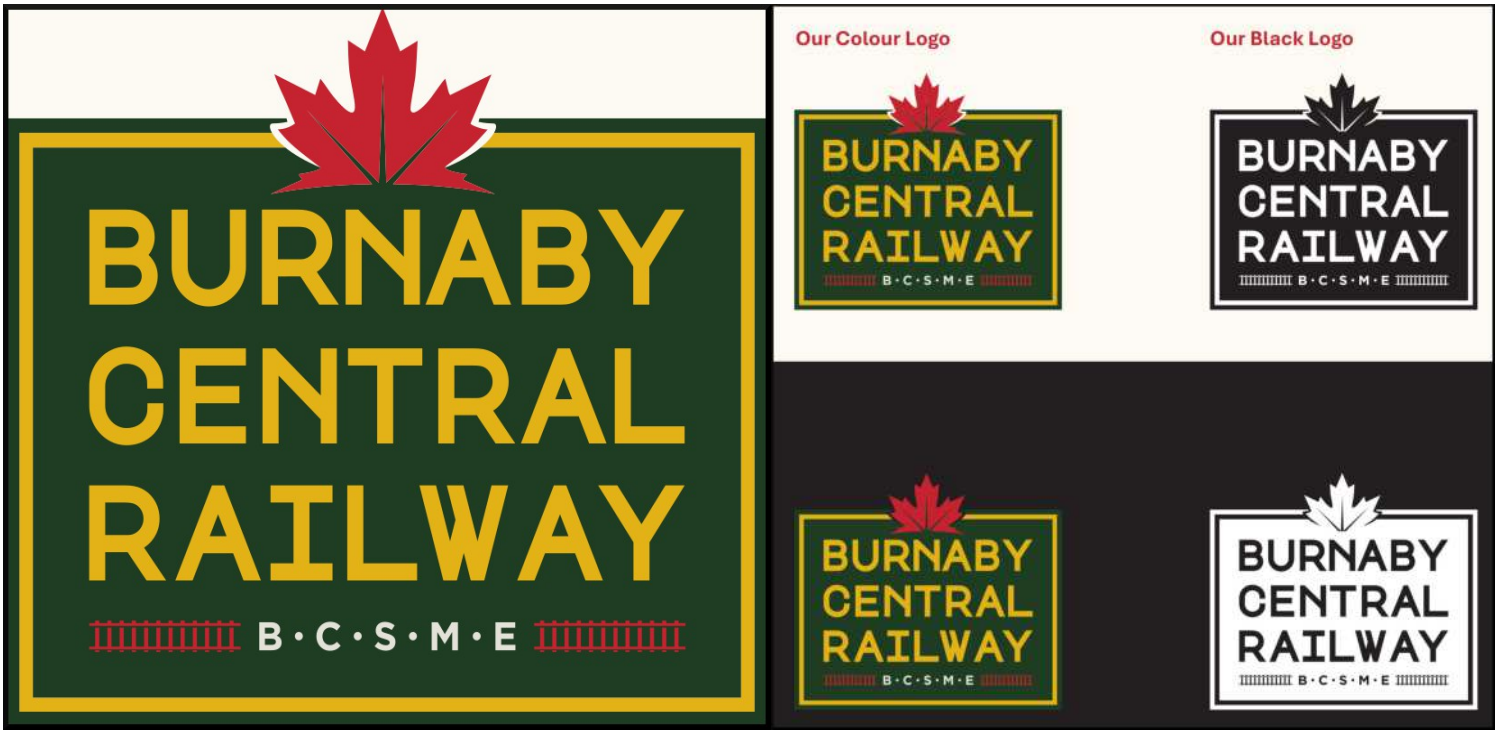
At the Thanksgiving dinner our new BCR/BCSME logo was unveiled. A new high resolution digital file was needed for the (soon to be launched) new website, prompting us to consider updating the logo we have had for 40 years. The Board of Directors considered staying with the original design, or doing minor tweaks, but there were flaws that couldn't be overlooked.

A logo must be easy to recognize at a glance, from up close or from a distance, and convey the nature of the organization. The original logo was too cluttered. Logos need to work across a multitude of digital platforms, devices, in print and on exterior signage. Legibility, contrast and scalability across all these contexts were taken into consideration when making the final choice.

The original, traditional CN colours were maintained, with a maple leaf and rail detail. The full colour logo will be used whenever possible. The black and white versions will be used when needed on white and black backgrounds. To maintain our brand identity, there are guidelines for usage. Please do not replicate the BCSME logo for personal use.

The new logo conveys our brand, Burnaby Central Railway. Many iterations and ideas were explored, but ultimately, we are pleased to land with this new logo and hope you do too!





GVGRC Play Days

By Brian Ruebottom

Jason Scarrotts, as President of the Greater Vancouver Garden Railway Club, organized a club play day at the BCSME Garden Railway on the second weekend of every month this year. The September play day was well attended. The number of GVGRC members that came out for September was in the twenties, maybe more, and of those members who came out nine of them ran trains on the G-scale tracks. It was a very busy day for the Garden Railway. Having a large number of the GVGRC members come to run trains makes it very interesting due to the variation in rolling stock.







Photographs courtesy of Brian Ruebottom

Burnaby Central Railway: Heritage Village

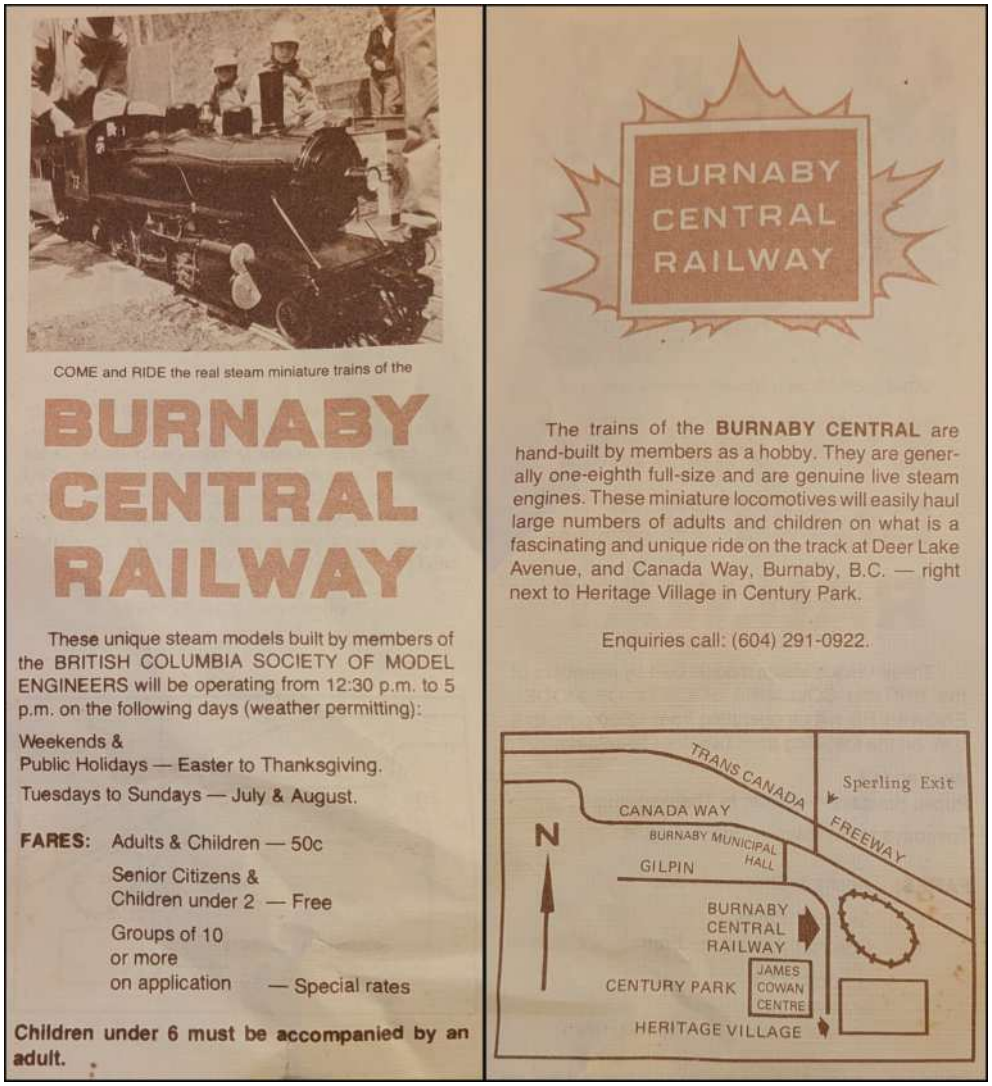
by Brian Ruebottom

Gordon Hall handed me this Burnaby Central Railway (BCR) pamphlet that he recently found in a box. There is no date of when it was printed, but there is reference to Heritage Village on the back page.

The Society ran trains from Tuesday to Sunday during July and August, 12:30pm to 5:00pm, and the usual weekends and public holidays from Eastern to Thanks giving.

The locomotive in the pictured on the front of the pamphlet is #73.

If any BCSME members have or find historical documents of the BCSME or BCR, then please share them with me for posting in The Whistle. I am always exited when I learn something about the history of the Society, and by including historical facts in The Whistle we preserve some of the past.



COME and RIDE the real steam miniature trains of the

BURNABY CENTRAL RAILWAY

These unique steam models built by members of the BRITISH COLUMBIA SOCIETY OF MODEL ENGINEERS will be operating from 12:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. on the following days (weather permitting):

Weekends & Public Holidays — Easter to Thanksgiving.

Tuesdays to Sundays — July & August.

FARES: Adults & Children — 50c

Senior Citizens & Children under 2 — Free

Groups of 10 or more on application — Special rates

Children under 6 must be accompanied by an adult.

BURNABY CENTRAL RAILWAY

The trains of the **BURNABY CENTRAL** are hand-built by members as a hobby. They are generally one-eighth full-size and are genuine live steam engines. These miniature locomotives will easily haul large numbers of adults and children on what is a fascinating and unique ride on the track at Deer Lake Avenue, and Canada Way, Burnaby, B.C. — right next to Heritage Village in Century Park.

Enquiries call: (604) 291-0922.

I (Brian Ruebottom) took this photograph recently of Steve Harvey on his steam locomotive while the park was open for the public. Steve recently purchased it from the builder: Paul Ohannesian. Seeing one of our members with their locomotive out on the tracks always catches my attention, and this one was no different. Steve has been diligently fixing boiler issues with this locomotive. On this day he had the locomotive steamed up and was testing it by running it back and forth behind the Car Barn.



Railway Graffiti: Rolling Canvas

Author: Brian Ruebottom

Graffiti is never too far away when viewing a passing train. It has roots in the late 1800s as a form of expression called a moniker. Monikers are still used today for tagging a train or location[1], but today's railway graffiti is more of a moving canvas for the graffiti artist. There are regional patterns and artistic styles that identify where the graffiti originated. There is, however, a core conflict for graffiti on rolling stock of underground subculture expression versus operational safety and logistics. Spray painting rolling stock began in New York City in the 1970s, and expressing oneself on a freight train for others to see can have a serious negative outcome. Two teens died while practicing their trade inside a railway tunnel on November 29, 1989[2].



Just as regional dialects develop across a country, freight graffiti has evolved distinct geographic signatures and aesthetic traditions[3]. North American regional variations include the East Coast, known for fast-paced, dense typography, classic Wildstyle, and Philly tall tags. The West Coast, characterized by Cholo handstyle influences, elaborate character illustrations, and custom colour gradients. The Midwest and rural corridors serves as a stronghold of oil-bar monikers, streak pens, and minimalist line art on grain hoppers. In a global context, North American freight graffiti emphasizes endurance and cross-country mileage, whereas European graffiti culture traditionally revolves around fast-impact passenger train panel bombing. Furthermore, an artist's technique is dictated entirely by the canvas, where surface textures ranging from corrugated hoppers to smooth boxcars, along with weather and rust conditions, dictate painting techniques and paint choices.

The subculture of freight graffiti exists in direct tension with railroad operations, as artists view rail cars as public canvases and railway companies view them as functional, heavy-duty industrial equipment governed by strict regulations. Essential identification data, such as reporting marks, car numbers, and load weight specs, must remain visible for logistics and yard sorting. Grade-crossing hazards arise when over painting covers required retro reflective safety tape, creating a severe safety hazard at night crossings. Additionally, mechanical integrity can be compromised when paint obscures structural cracks, wheel bearings, and inspection hatches, potentially hiding developing mechanical failures.



1 Moniker (graffiti) - Wikipedia
2 slickrip.jpg (624×812)
3 Freight Train Graffiti: Art in Motion Across the Tracks - Shannon Steven

The cat-and-mouse game between graffiti artist and railway security has entered a modern, technological age characterized by railroad security advances like AI camera detection, thermal sensors, and chemical anti-graffiti coatings. Alongside this, the "benching" community tracks cars across continents using digital databases and social media, while institutional acknowledgment grows through gallery retrospectives and the salvage of scrap-yard train panels as fine art. Ultimately, the unwritten codes that keep the subculture alive require writers to respect the functional boundaries of the rail car by leaving reporting marks and safety tape clear, ensuring that despite inherent risks and operational conflicts, rail cars maintain an enduring legacy as a dynamic, continent-spanning mobile gallery.



Notice the graffiti in the picture below on the left disregards markings for this car; however, on the picture below on the right the car's marking are visible.



Photographs courtesy of Brian Ruebottom