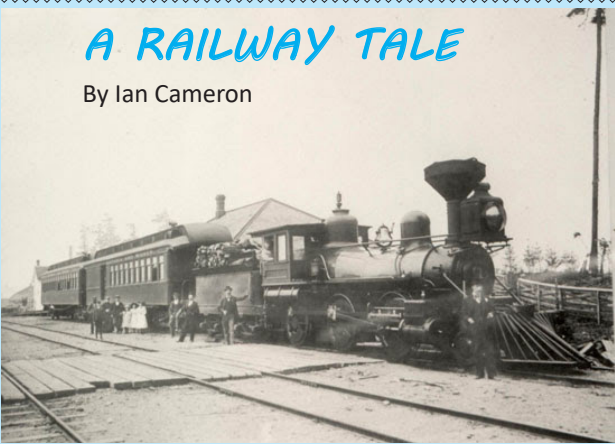


A RAILWAY TALE

By Ian Cameron



Once upon a time, many (many) years ago, I had a model railroad layout, (Lionel O27, if you care) and I remember it fondly. At the same time, I became interested in steam cars. Both those interests were submerged by others, until, 60 years later, I found myself retired, with some time on my hands, which resulted in the purchase of a Stanley steam automobile (commonly known as a Stanley Steamer) and an urge to build a model railroad. As I live in Brentwood Bay, I thought that a model of the Saanich peninsula, circa 1917, would be interesting, as at that time there were three rail lines running from Victoria to the end of the peninsula, and one of them ran on steam. So I did some research, and, as a quondam academic, I'd like to share what I learned.

"What's that got to do with Dominion Brook Park?" I hear you cry. (At least some of you. Others will know.) Well, one of those lines ran through what is now the Centre for Plant Health, of which Dominion Brook Park is a part of, and the picnic shelter in the park was a station on that line. I talk about all this on the tours I conduct, and I thought that some of you might be interested. Hence this series of articles, recounting the story of the peninsula rail lines.

The Victoria and Sidney Railway

In the late 19th century, Victoria was booming. It was the largest city in British Columbia, the first Canadian city with electrical service, the first city in western Canada with streetcars and telephones, and on and on. The one thing it didn't have was what really defined progress – a railroad. But it did have an excuse to build one: the town of Sidney was much closer to the Canadian mainland than was Victoria, and a railroad/steamship combination would provide faster and cheaper connection between Victoria, the capital, and Vancouver, the new terminus of the CPR.

So in 1892 a company was formed, government approval and grants were obtained, and by 1884 a rail line ran from what is now Fisgard Street, more-or-less along Blanshard, the Pat Bay Highway, through Royal Oak, around Beaver and Elk lakes (the current trail is the old railbed), around Bear Hill, along Veyaness Road (Veyaness = V&S), past the Prairie Inn, to Bazan Bay, and then to Sidney.

It was never a success: the grades were steep, the roadbed bad, the right-of-way narrow, the equipment old and worn, financing tight. It was called variously 'The Cordwood Limited', as it ran on wood and that was major cargo, for heating homes in Victoria; and

FRIENDS OF DOMINION BROOK PARK BOARD

At the Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Dominion Brook Park Society, held in April 2019, members who were present accepted the proposed Board for the coming year.

- President: Ian Cameron
- Past President: Jody Aylard
- Treasurer: David Lye
- Secretary: Nancy Johnson
- Member at large: Dawn Gould
- Member at large: Karen Mervyn

Our constitution allows for nine Board members so we have three vacancies that can be filled at any time during the year. If you are interested please send an email to contactus@dominionbrookpark.ca.

FLAVOUR TRAILS



This popular annual summer event will take place on August 16, 17 and 18. Again this year, the Centre for Plant Health and Dominion Brook Park will be offering tours on Sunday, August 18. Tour times are coordinated to allow visitors to visit both venues with one stop.

Tours of the Centre will start at 9:00, 10:00 and 11:00 and

Park tours will start at 10:15, 11:15 and 12:15.

Refreshments will be offered by the Friends of Dominion Brook Park at the picnic tables in the Park. Visit flavourtrails.com for more information.

COME LEARN TO BUILD A ROCK WALL

The Friends of Dominion Brook Park are holding a Dry Stone Wall building workshop. The two day workshop will be run Saturday and Sunday in late September or October. We will construct a dry stone wall flanking the stone bridge that was completed last summer. The workshop is for 10 participants and we still have space for 4 or 5. We are asking participants for a donation to the Friends of Dominion Brook Park (suggested donation of a minimum of \$100). If you are interested in participating please send us an email to contactus@dominionbrookpark.ca Come learn a new skill and help create a lasting legacy in Dominion Brook Park. Space is limited.



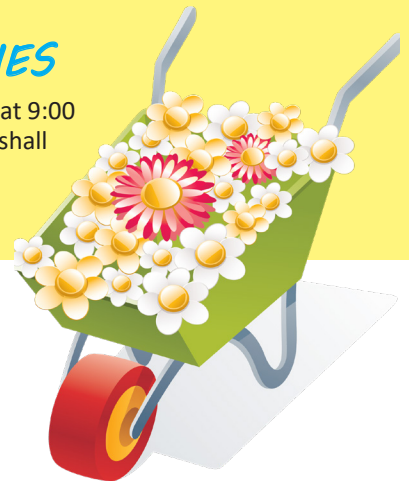
'The Tri-Weekly', because although it ran every day (most days) it tried weakly.

It was bought by the Great Northern Railway Company, which had hopes of rivaling the CPR, in 1902, but things got worse and worse, and it ceased operations in 1919. A large part of the problem was the new B.C. Electric Interurban Line, and that's the next part of the story.



WEDNESDAY WORK PARTIES

Weather permitting, volunteers meet each Wednesday at 9:00 a.m. Bring a friend and muster at the Park gate by Marshall Road. Volunteers work in the Park every Wednesday morning through to October.



SOOKE TO SIDNEY ROCK HUNT

Have you noticed any painted rocks at Dominion Brook Park? We have, and recently we discovered why they were there.



Three years ago, Kristi Nelson founded a group called "Sooke to Sidney Rock Hunt", which now has almost 7000 members. Members paint rocks and hide them in parks, beaches or other public places, then post a photo of the rock and where to find it on the group's Facebook

page. Other members will try to find the rocks and will also post photos of any rocks they find. The painted rocks might be kept or left where they are once they are found, but members endeavor to paint and hide more rocks than they keep.

Any painted rock that is part of the Sooke to Sidney Rock Hunt will be labeled on the back "SS Rock Hunt". If you find one of these rocks, please leave them or post a photo of your find on their page and paint a rock of your own to replace it. If you do, we hope you hide some rocks at Dominion Brook Park! (Special thanks to Susannah Tawse for this photo of her rocks.)

FEATURED PLANT - ROSE

Tucked in an untended corner of the Park, near the upper reservoir, a few roses bloom. Their origins are unclear but roses have been on the property for over a century. In the archives we have receipts for 108 rose plants from Dingee and Conard, in West Grove, Pennsylvania, dated March 4, 1914; an order placed by William Macoun, the Dominion Horticulturist.

Research on roses was carried out by the Government of Canada at many of its experimental farms to test how different varieties performed in different regions of the country. In 1900, William Saunders, Director of the Central Experimental Farm, started a government-funded rose breeding program in Ottawa, producing 'Agnes', which was introduced in 1922. Some of the results of this research was published in 1923 in a bulletin entitled, Hardy Roses and Their Culture in Canada, written by Macoun and Isabella Preston, a specialist in ornamental horticulture based in Ottawa. They note that:

A rose garden is one of the most delightful spots that can be found. Unfortunately rose gardens are relatively rare in Canada, although most persons who love flowers desire to grow roses. Unfortunately, too, many who have planted a few bushes have been unsuccessful and have become disheartened, but the writers of this bulletin hope that, by following the advice herein given, failures will not be so frequent.



various research programs on roses carried out by the Government of Canada.

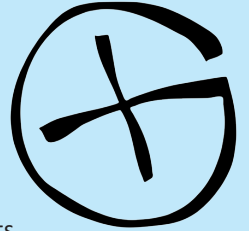
Agriculture Canada continued rose breeding and research over the decades, eventually focusing its efforts at Morden Research Station in Manitoba and Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu Research Station in Quebec in the 1960s. This led to many new varieties, including the internationally-recognized Explorer roses and the Parkland series of prairie-hardy roses.

When the Department of Agriculture stopped its ornamental breeding programs, the government saved much of the breeding stock. Eventually through Canadian Nursery and Landscape Association (CNLA), the rose genetics were transferred to Vineland Research and Innovation Centre in Ontario where research and development of rose varieties continues. The Canadian Shield™ rose is the first of Vineland's 49th Parallel Collection which was released in 2017, in time for Canada's 150th birthday celebrations.

While we don't know what type of roses have managed to survive at the edge of Dominion Brook Park, they are likely survivors of one of the

72 VISITS!!

Friends of Dominion Brook Park have set up two Geocaches in the Park this spring. The first cache is named "Rest for Gardening Volunteers" and intends to draw attention to the volunteer efforts that the park relies on. The second cache is named "Dominion Government Experimental Train Station" and intends to educate about the train station history of the park. It is a two stage cache, where a clue to where the cache is located must be found first, and then the cache must be found.



Since these caches were placed and published the park has had 72 visits with some some Geocachers have rated us as their favourite! Have you checked out the Geocache at the Park?

See geocaching.com for more information about this fun and interesting sport.



Staff this issue: Jody Aylard, Karen Mervyn, Ian Cameron, David Lye, Dawn Gould

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