

Revelstoke Heritage Railway Society

2022 Annual Report to Stakeholders

2022 was a remarkable year for the Society in many respects. While there were still challenges to be faced, we continued to make good progress on several fronts.

In many ways, the year felt like a partial return to “normal”. Our 2022 museum visitation totaled nearly 27,000 people, a record in our thirty-year history and a reassuring increase over the 2020 and 2021 visitation downturns driven by the pandemic, heat waves, highway closures, floods and wild fire smoke. Likewise, at Craigellachie, we enjoyed a relatively strong year with an increase in tour bus traffic over the past two years. We want to thank our incredible team of volunteers and employees for their hard work and resilience over the course of the year.

Our financial picture is captured in the Year-End Financial Report supplied by BDO Canada. In short, we needed a strong year to recoup from our 2020 and 2021 operating losses. With the uncertainty and lessons learned from 2020 and 2021, we continued to operate prudently throughout 2022. Operating subsidies and grants and the generosity of several individuals helped us complete the year and start repaying our COVID financial debt.

This Annual Report summarizes the Society’s activities and accomplishments over the 2022 calendar year.



*The Revelstoke Railway Museum acknowledges and honours
the four nations on whose traditional territory we gather:
the Sinixt, the Ktunaxa, the Secwepemc and the Syilx.*

Exhibits

“Macredie Works of Art: Cherished Memories of a Father’s Career” Exhibit – This exhibit, borrowed from ExpoRail in St.-Constant Quebec, was held over until February 2022. The exhibit consisted of nearly 30 paintings by the late Alice Macredie of Calgary and showcased feats of railway engineering and technology depicted in watercolour art.

“Revelstoke is a Railway Town” Exhibit – A major achievement for our small museum, we opened the “Revelstoke is a Railway Town” exhibit on June 24th (with a sneak preview for members at the Annual General Meeting).



Chronicling the social history of the railway in Revelstoke and the Canadian Pacific Railway’s profound impact on nearly every aspect of life here, the exhibit is one of the largest and most comprehensive exhibits the Museum has developed in its 30-year history. The exhibit was researched and developed by Curator and Deputy Director Laura VanZant and supported by major donations from the Columbia Basin Trust, Revelstoke Credit Union, the Province of British Columbia’s Resort Municipality Initiative program, and supporter Len Thompson.

Programs

Family Day - This winter statutory holiday would normally be celebrated with a special event at the Museum but was eclipsed by COVID restrictions which were still in force. To provide a COVID-safe but family-friendly special offering, the Museum again offered a series of colouring sheets based on archival photos in the Museum’s collection and a scavenger hunt for children.

Railway Day – On September 25th, 2022, we re-launched our annual hallmark Railway Day event and hosted over 640 visitors. Admission was by donation, ensuring that everyone could afford to attend. The event opened with a welcome and land acknowledgement by Revelstoke’s Indigenous Friendship Society and a rousing performance by Revelstoke’s Pipe Band and their BC Interior piping and drumming colleagues.

Visitors enjoyed a variety of activities, including: performances by May Davis, special operations of the model railway, displays and conversations with some of Revelstoke’s community agencies and first responders, games for the kids and face painting (both hosted by the Revelstoke Grizzlies Hockey Club), special demonstrations of track laying and

the new Albert Canyon handcar and our speeder collection, a bouncy castle, behind-the-scenes visits to some of our equipment, and balloon animals. Our Master of Ceremonies Lerritt Robinson from StokeFM. We had numerous door prizes and a 50/50 raffle, with prizes donated by generous Revelstoke businesses and private donors. Our volunteers and employees worked very hard to ensure everything ran smoothly and our visitors had a great time.

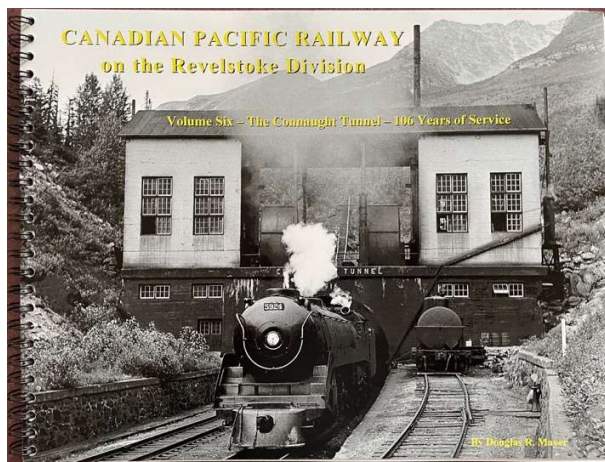
Trackside Holiday Party – On December 10th, 2022 we presented our ever-popular Trackside Holiday Party, attended by over 430 people. Visitors enjoyed operating the Polar Express train set, hot chocolate and snacks in Business Car No. 4, arts and crafts for the kids, the Thomas the Tank Engine tables, special model railway operations, and a huge raffle and door prize program supported by local Revelstoke merchants and donors. Santa’s arrival caused much excitement and he met hundreds of children.



This program would not have been possible without the hard work of our paid staff and volunteers, who did everything from supervising arts and crafts to pouring hundreds of hot chocolate and coffee drinks.

“Canadian Pacific on the Revelstoke Division Volume VI – the Connaught Tunnel” – Just in time for Christmas, we launched the sixth volume in Doug Mayer’s popular series “Canadian Pacific on the Revelstoke Division”.

The Museum’s largest book to date, this volume proved extremely popular and went into a second printing in early 2023. It chronicles the over 100-year history of the Connaught Tunnel, including its planning, construction and remarkable working life. The Tunnel was a major Canadian engineering achievement and “game changer” for the CPR’s operations in the Rogers Pass.



Doug donates his research, writing time, and expenses to the Museum. The Museum pays for printing and retains all profits from sales of these books.

Stoke FM Morning Show Episodes – The Museum was invited to make regular appearances on Stoke FM’s morning show. In 2022 our executive director Jim Cullen made several live

and pre-recorded appearances on the show on a variety of topics. Author Doug Mayer was featured in one broadcast on the Connaught Tunnel, coincident with the launch of his new book on the subject. Curator Laura VanZant also featured on a broadcast talking about “Revelstoke is a Railway Town.”

Hallowe'en Fun – For Hallowe'en, we offered free admission to anyone in costume, with a special treat for kids.

RedDress Exhibit – In June, the Museum hosted the Revelstoke School District Indigenous Education department's display of red dresses hung from tree branches in a wooded area along the pathway to Mount Revelstoke National Park. The display commemorates and raises awareness for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and was created by Ella Hardy, Mya Manson, and Suri Stewardson, students at Revelstoke Secondary, alongside local artist Rob Buchanan and Indigenous Student Advocate Jessica Stewardson.

Education Programs – In February 2022, we debuted an educational program developed by School District 19 educator Michelle Gadbois on simple machines. This is the first of what we hope will be many curriculum-based educational programs with which we can serve our local students.

Brown Bag History Guest Talk – In April 2023, Curator Laura VanZant gave a guest talk for Brown Bag history, a popular lecture series held by the Revelstoke Museum & Archives. The talk, entitled “Revelstoke Is A Railway Town,” is a companion piece to the new exhibit, and is featured on the Museum & Archives' YouTube channel. It was very well attended, and has been highly viewed online!

Collections

Restoration of Albert Canyon Handcar – In June 2022 at the Revelstoke Car Show, we unveiled the Albert Canyon Handcar. This car was donated by Executive Director Jim Cullen and painstakingly restored to operating condition by volunteer and lifetime member Ed Palasz with the assistance of his sons. All wooden components of the handcar were entirely replaced with carefully-selected wood from historically-accurate species; all metal components underwent heavy repair, corrosion removal and coating with fresh paint; and numerous metal components were fabricated and machined from scratch.

Artifact Acquisitions - The Museum received several new collections of artifacts and archival material. Included in these were several folios of original steam locomotive builder's photographs, a large volume of labour-related correspondence pertaining to the Revelstoke region, two personal photo albums showing CPR trains in the Revelstoke region from the 1900s through the 1940s, approximately thirty boxes of labour-related material, a major collection of CPR-related railway books and archival material, and several 19th Century drawings and sketches attributed to William Borbridge, a locomotive foreman at Donald, BC.

Collections Management - In 2022, the Museum moved forward with Collections and Archival Management projects that will ensure the sustainability of the Museum's collections. As in 2021, digitization and digital cataloging was a major focus for Collections in 2022 as archival material was added to our PastPerfect database. This included paper material and the photographic collection. The Collections work continues to ensure a high standard of museological practice, ensuring that artifacts entrusted into our care will continue to be available for generations. The overall health of the collection with regards to storage, organization, and preservation continues to increase rapidly. Much of this work is completed by summer students and interns, hired through the Young Canada Works granting program. In 2022, the museum hosted 2 interns and 2 summer students through this program, without whom much of this work would not have been possible. We want to express our sincere thanks to our students and interns for all of their hard work in getting over 2,000 records added to the digital database, and to Volunteer Miriam Williams for her tireless work accessioning the photographic collection.

Retail Operations

2022 was our first full year of operations with the Shopify Point-of-Sale system at the Museum and Craigellachie. We are grateful to our entire team for their hard work to implement and operate this system, a major change in our retail operations. We particularly acknowledge the support of Curator Laura VanZant, whose retail background and expertise in the Shopify system has been extremely helpful.

Marketing and Promotions



Billboard Marketing – The Museum is promoted by two billboards, located at the east and west City Limits. With the support of Kootenay Rockies Tourism, we were able to have exciting new images of a Revelstoke family enjoying the museum developed into billboards. We hope to have the billboards structurally rehabilitated and the new images installed in spring 2023.

Social Media Marketing – Curator Laura VanZant continued to spearhead the Museum's social media presence in 2022, posting a variety of interesting and topical photos and messages on Facebook and Instagram related to happenings at the Museum, anniversaries or other historical milestones, and some of the interesting things that are part of museum work. These have been very well-received, and have had the added benefit of providing extra context, identification, and other information to our photo records through crowd-sourced information.

Rack Cards – In 2022 we developed new and improved rack cards, using imagery developed for the billboard project. These are distributed by both Tourism Revelstoke and a local rack card distributor.



Fundraising and Grants

The Museum applied for several grants to fund numerous capital projects and certain operating expenses. We very grateful to our grantors for their generosity and support. Grants received in 2022 included:

- Revelstoke Credit Union – Revelstoke Credit Union provided a grant of \$5,000 towards replacement of the Museum’s 30 year-old fire alarm system.
- Revelstoke Community Foundation – The Revelstoke Community Foundation provided \$2,000 in funding for purchase of basic modern telecommunications equipment, including an LED projector and a contribution towards the costs of purchase and installation of a modern telephone system.
- Columbia Basin Trust Community Impact Program – The Museum received a grant of \$1,468.47 under this program for the purchase of archival supplies which are required for the ongoing cataloguing and storage of the Museum’s archival and photographic collections.
- Columbia Basin Trust Technology Grant – The Museum received a grant of \$10,000 for the upgrading of our 30 year-old security system.
- Government of Canada - Museum Assistance Program - The Department of Canadian Heritage provided a major grant of \$33,352 in 2022, under the Recovery Funds for Heritage Organizations Program.
- Government of Canada - Young Canada Works - Through the Government of Canada’s Young Canada Works program, the Museum received funding which enabled us to hire two full-time students and two full-time interns for work terms. These positions allowed the Museum to move forward with collections and archival management projects, and provided valuable experience to young people looking to enter the heritage field.
- British Columbia Museums Association (“BCMA”) – The Museum received a grant of \$1,000 in support of its COVID-safe Family Day activities, funded by the Province of British Columbia. The BCMA also generously granted Curator Laura VanZant with a conference travel bursary for the 2022 BCMA Conference, held in Victoria, BC.

Individual Donors - The Museum benefitted greatly from the generosity of numerous individual donors. Four donors in particular collectively donated over \$15,500 in 2022. These donations were unrestricted and allow the Museum to fund projects where the need is greatest. We are deeply honoured by the generosity of these donors.

Railway Day and Holiday Party donors – We received significant support from Revelstoke-based individuals and businesses in support for our major Railway Day and Trackside Holiday Party events. These came in the form of door prizes, silent auction merchandise and raffle prizes, food and refreshments for volunteers, fabrication and installation of a new set of stairs for locomotive No. 5500 and the Selkirk Spreader. We were also very fortunate to have the support of dozens of volunteers at both events. Supporting organizations, businesses and individuals included: A&W, Apex Janitorial, BC Gaming, Birch and Lace, Carol Mayer, CIBC, Coast Hillcrest Hotel, Community Futures, Dose Coffee, Doug Mayer, Downie Timber, Fable Book Store, Legends and Heroes, Little Spoon, MacDonald's, Matthew Timmins Photography, Mount Begbie Brewery, Operation Lifesaver, Padrino's Pizzeria, Revelstoke Animal Shelter, Revelstoke Credit Union, Revelstoke Grizzlies Hockey Club, Revelstoke Family Pharmacy, Revelstoke Model Railway Club, Revy Outdoors, Roxy Theatre, Save-on-Foods, Silverwinds, Society Snow and Skate, Southside Market, Starbucks, Stoke FM, Stoke the Fire Hot Sauce, Style Trend Clothiers, The Annex, Revelstoke The Source, Tourism Revelstoke, Universal Footwear, Warner Rentals, and Wright Machine Works.

In-Kind Donations and Support - We also received in-kind donations worth over \$5,000 from philanthropic-minded businesses in both Revelstoke and Alberta, not to mention numerous smaller donations of time and equipment from numerous Revelstoke businesses. We particularly want to thank several Revelstoke firms which support the Society with their time and talents: Apex Janitorial, BDO Canada, R. Jones Contracting, Mackenzie Peak Law Corporation, Revy Repair and Rentals, Save-On-Foods, Swiss Chalet Motel, and Warner Rentals, to name just a few.

Gaming Proceeds – In 2022 we held 50/50 draws at the Revelstoke Car Show, a Revelstoke Grizzlies Game, and at Railway Day. Volunteers drove the majority of these ticket sales and we thank them for their hard work. We appreciate the support of BC Gaming in allowing us to engage in 50/50 draws.

Facilities

In spite of challenging conditions, the Society made significant progress on several important initiatives. These include:

New Automated Phone System – With support from the Revelstoke Community Foundation, we replaced our aged and unreliable telephone system. Callers now can hear a brief summary of our location and operating hours, and reach our leadership team members and museum store at their own locals.

Electrify Canada Charging Station – In March 2022 the Electrify Canada electric vehicle charging station was commissioned. It gives motorists convenient and very rapid charging speeds and provides another source of visitation to the Museum, and a modest stream of income. The work also included re-painting our parking lot, which made our parking more orderly and user-friendly.

Accessible Restrooms and Doors – In late summer, we commissioned our rebuilt restrooms, funded by a grant from the Province of British Columbia’s CERIP program. The new restrooms are more accessible, more COVID-safe, and generally fresher and more pleasant.

Revelstoke Model Railway Club - The Revelstoke Model Railway Club made progress on its expanded depiction of the Revelstoke roundhouse and yards complex, giving our visitors further insights into the CPR’s presence in Revelstoke. A unique feature is the ability for visitors to peer into the roundhouse and see locomotives inside. Very popular with our visitors, the model railway, depicts scenes in the Revelstoke region and provides an important animating element to the Museum.

Flower Power – Revelstoke’s Rotarians once again beautified the Museum with a “Rotary at Work” project, planting a variety of new flowers and plants to give a colourful welcome to our visitors. Revelstoke Rotary’s for the Museum is a long tradition! Pictured here are: Tyler Maki, Museum Trustee Pam Doyle, Peggy Howard, Leigh Forsythe and Vivian Mitchell.



Last Spike Gift Shop – The Last Spike gift shop received a much-needed new roof and structural levelling of its foundation. This was funded by a Province of British Columbia Grant, administered by Kootenay Rockies Tourism.

Our People

Lifetime Memberships Awarded - At the Annual General Meeting on April 26th 2022, we elected seven persons to the position of Lifetime Member, the Society’s highest honour. Elected were: Ed Koski, Ed Palasz, Miriam Williams, Geri Crawford, Fern Hansen, Trustee Pauline Hunter, Trustee Doug Mayer, and Trustee and President Roger Eddy. These individuals have consistently supported the Society for many years with their exceptional volunteerism and efforts.

Our Employees – In 2022 we welcomed two key people to our leadership team. Melissa Thornton took on the role of Manager of Retail and Visitor Services. Melissa has lived in Revelstoke for several years and her strong customer service skills have ensured our visitors receive a warm welcome. She has been instrumental in our ongoing efforts to improve our Museum Store operations. Long-time Revelstokian Karen Matthews joined our team in the new role of Manager of Administration. Karen has become involved in nearly all aspects of our operations, has helped out in countless ways around the

organization, and was instrumental in planning and presentation of our Railway Day and Trackside Holiday Party events.

Our employees worked very hard in spite of often difficult circumstances. Our Curator Laura VanZant worked tirelessly on numerous initiatives to improve our exhibits and led the “Revelstoke is a Railway Town” exhibit development. Our book-keeper, Megan Lund, kept our finances in order. Our Museum Store team of Melissa Thornton, Hallie Newfeld, Tamara McPherson, Aleshia Byers, Leslie English, Kim Allin, Grant Sutherland, Leuisia Adjei, Kaye Huseyin and Lizzie McDowell-Stupnikoff made our visitors feel welcome. At the Last Spike, Judy Tomey, Jennifer Lobb, Kip Hutchison, Annette Harris and Karen Goodridge gave our visitors a warm Craigellachie welcome. Ed Koski worked hard to keep our visitors safe during the snowy seasons.

Our Young Canada Works Summer Students Bradley McLean and Deanna Feuer and Interns Leslie Hutchinson and Bailey LeBuke helped us make progress on cataloguing and describing our archival and photographic collections. Significant progress was made on scanning a substantial portion of our photographic collection for on-line accessibility.

In 2022 we also said a fond farewell to long-term employees Jessica Byman and Kate Baron from our Museum store team and thank them for their many years of service.

Our Volunteers - Our museum has always been a grass-roots effort, and we depend heavily on our volunteers in many aspects of our operations. Nearly every program, exhibit, project or activity in all of our areas involved the hard work of our volunteers; without them, the Museum would quickly cease operation. While it is impossible to identify all of the work that our volunteers did for the Museum, some of the activities are listed below and they represent thousands of volunteer hours. We look forward to seeing more of our volunteers in 2023 and re-implementing some of our volunteer-led programs as pandemic impacts and restrictions are lessened.

- Groundskeeping and Facilities – Don Hawker (Lifetime Member and former Trustee), Pam Doyle (Trustee), Rod Battersby (former Trustee), Roger Eddy (Lifetime Member and Past President), Jacob Geyer, Jo Hawker, Ed Koski, Carol Meyer, Rob Mellish, Ed Palasz, Susan Hopkins, William Pennington-Little, Bailey LeBuke, Rotary Revelstoke
 - Installing the “Revelstoke is a Railway Town” exhibit
 - Working with our contractor on the Museum’s restroom and door projects
 - Installing a new water heater in the Museum’s meeting room
 - Mowing the Museum’s extensive green spaces, renovating our flower bed and planting our planter barrels with perennials and Christmas boughs
 - Sorting recyclables left by visitors and returning them for refund
 - Maintaining and repairing our groundskeeping and snow removal equipment
 - Replacing countless light bulbs throughout the Museum
 - Cleaning of all the Museum’s windows
 - Opening, closing and winterizing the Craigellachie Last Spike Gift Shop

- Fund Development and Marketing – Kevin Dorrius (Trustee), Don Hawker (Lifetime Member and former Trustee), Wendy Harper (Trustee), Jim Cullen, Jacob Geyer, Stephen Jenkins, Dave Russel
 - Selling 50/50 raffle tickets at Revelstoke Grizzlies hockey games and the Car Show
 - Selling raffle tickets at the Railway Day and Trackside Holiday Party events

- Museum Operations, Administration and Commerce – Pauline Hunter (Trustee), Glenda Eddy
 - Administering the membership program, ensuring that renewal reminders are sent out in a timely way, the database is accurate, and new members are thanked

- Collections and Rolling Stock – Don Hawker (Lifetime Member and former Trustee), Wendy Harper (Trustee), George Hopkins (President and Lifetime Member), Miriam Williams (Lifetime Member), Doug Mayer (Trustee and Lifetime Member), Ed Koski (Lifetime Member), Rob Mellish, Ed Palasz (Lifetime Member), Josh Palasz
 - Ongoing maintenance of the Trackmobile and speeders so they are operational and reliable
 - Restoring the Albert Canyon handcar
 - Preparing the caboose for re-opening to visitors
 - Installing tarps and preparing rolling stock for winter and removing accumulated snow from the tops of our rolling stock throughout the winter
 - Describing and cataloguing archival photographs

- Exhibits and Programming – Doug Mayer (Trustee), George Hopkins (President and Lifetime Member), Kevin Dorrius (Trustee), Rowan Hargreaves (Trustee), Ed Koski (Lifetime Member), Ed Palasz (Lifetime Member), Don Hawker (Lifetime Member and former Trustee), Wendy Harper (Trustee), Pauline Hunter (Trustee), Roger Eddy (Lifetime Member and Past President), Walter Cyronek, Matt Wojak, Jimi Rienks, Braeden Cherrington, Marc Paradis, Maria-Lynn Johnson, Jacob Geyer, Jordy Hunter, Jo Hawker, Rod Battersby (former Trustee), Alexander Parsons, Josie McQuarrie, Charlie Hill, Freya Nelson, Helen Sheppard, Ann Tegart, Lerritt Robinson, Jonathan McConachie, Samantha Veninski, Zach Veninski, Foster Martens, Pat Legacy, James Gascoyne, Mandi Lunan, Chris Wattie, Shannon Owens, Dean McGregor, Richelle Diamond, Chantal Southam, Bailey LeBuke, Revelstoke Grizzlies Hockey Team members, Revelstoke Credit Union staff
 - Volunteering at Railway Day and the Trackside Holiday Party
 - Continuously improving the model railway's Revelstoke roundhouse, turntable and yards exhibits to depict Revelstoke's facilities
 - Operating the model railway and performing general maintenance to ensure its continued smooth operation to the delight of thousands of visitors
 - Installing the new railcar interpretive signage in Spring and removing it for the Winter season

- Authoring Volume VI of Doug Mayer’s series “Canadian Pacific on the Revelstoke Division”
- Leading tours and representing the Museum during group visits
- Providing security and coverage during special events and facility rentals
- Repairing and maintaining the locomotive simulator

While we have added new volunteers to our ranks, we are always in need of volunteer help. A love of trains isn’t necessary to volunteer at the Revelstoke Railway Museum, just an interest in your community.

Our Trustees

In 2022 we welcomed one new member to our Board of Trustees: Rowan Hargreaves, a senior consultant in hospitality and tourism. We thanked long-time Trustee and Lifetime Member Don Hawker for his exceptional service to the Board. Don remains very active at the Museum and we are most grateful for his incredible commitment to the Museum. We also thanked long-time volunteer Rod Battersby for his service as a Trustee during 2021. President Roger Eddy stepped down and assumed the role of Past President; Roger has been ably succeeded by George Hopkins in the role of President.

Our 2022-2023 Board of Trustees is a group of very dedicated volunteers who govern the Society and are entrusted with its long-term sustainability:



George Hopkins
President and
Lifetime Member
(All Committees)



Doug Mayer
Vice-President and
Lifetime Member
*(Revelstoke Model
Railway Club, Executive
and Collections
Committees)*



Kevin Dorrius
Treasurer
*(Executive, Finance,
Governance, Marketing
and Fundraising
Committees)*



Pauline Hunter
Secretary and
Lifetime Member
*(Exhibits and Programs
Committee,
Membership Working
Group)*



Rowan Hargreaves
*(Marketing and 30th
Anniversary Committees)*



Pam Doyle
*(Collections and
Governance Committees)*



Wendy Harper
(Marketing Committee)



Dave Love
*(Governance and 30th
Anniversary
Committees)*



Roger Eddy
Past-President and Lifetime
Member

In Closing

Opening to the public on June 16, 1993, the Revelstoke Railway Museum was a bold, visionary and ambitious project for Revelstoke. We are very proud of our accomplishments as a cultural cornerstone for Revelstoke’s communities, and a major tourist attraction which welcomes visitors to our region.

At the risk of repeating ourselves, it is hard to imagine a better place for a railway museum than Revelstoke. Revelstoke is one of Canada’s original stations on the transcontinental railway, equidistant from the iconic Rogers Pass, Craigellachie – site of the Last Spike, and Arrowhead, the northern terminus of the CPR’s steamboat and barge service. The Eastern end of the toughest railroading region in Canada, Revelstoke was made a divisional point in the 1890s. It also became the site of a major workshops complex, the CPR’s largest shops between Winnipeg and Vancouver until construction of Calgary’s Ogden Shops in 1911.

All of these things make Revelstoke a true railway town. We are excited to be part of what makes Revelstoke a great place to live and visit, and we are privileged to steward its remarkable railway heritage. We are excited about the prospects as we look forward to the

Society's next thirty years! Once again, we are grateful to our volunteers, our members, our communities, our staff, our donors and our stakeholders for their support of our work.

