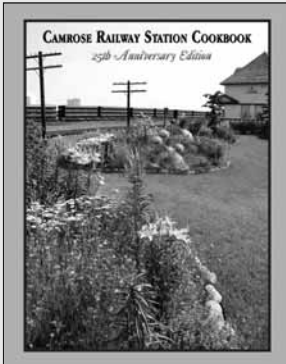




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In Memoriam



Walter Kittler, Stettler, AB, September 2009. ©S.I. Smith Photo

By now, most of our Canadian Northern Society membership will have learned of Walter Kittler's sudden passing in late May, at his home in Mirror. Walter was a wonderful supporter of our Canadian Northern Society and its activities for well over 20 years. He was a fixture around the Big Valley station as a result of what he will always be remembered for—"Senior" Conductor at Alberta Prairie Railway. He could also be found at many special events sponsored by the society—telling tales and entertaining. His passion for railroading and its history on the human side was remarkable.

His memoirs *Miles Made* is a great historical record of prairie railroading that is a fascinating read—and the Canadian Northern Society is honoured to have sponsored this work—which we all know Walter was so proud of.

A memorial service was held for Walter on Friday, June 1, a fitting tribute to such a great gentleman, friend, and railroader. He will be greatly missed by his wife Alice, his family, and many, many friends.

A life well lived indeed. Rest in Peace Walter—we will all miss you dearly.

BIG VALLEY STATION NEWS

The Canadian Northern Society and the greater community of Big Valley would again like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Kathy Evans over the last few years as she, along with a core group of volunteers, kept the station grounds and building so wonderfully presentable and maintained. Kathy's dedication has made a significant contribution to the preservation of this heritage site. Thanks also to Wayne Garrison for the spring clean-up of leaves and grass around the station and to Phyllis Garrison for trimming the hedge. Thank you to Kathy and Russ Evans for the work in restoration of one of the platform waiting benches. The Big Valley beautification group are now in the process of renewing the rock garden.

With the Alberta Prairie Railway Excursions regular scheduled season now upon us, we are also now very grateful for the partnership we have with Alberta Prairie. Staff from Alberta Prairie will give Kathy and group a break this summer as they have agreed to take on all the general maintenance duties for the garden area surrounding the depot, and provide staff to keep the station and its display area open to the visitors during train arrivals. We would like to welcome Marilyn and Lyle Sargeant to the community and thank them for assisting Alberta Prairie with maintenance.

Mr. Bob Willis at Alberta Prairie has also kindly volunteered to keep the booking record for our Big Valley Community Room in the depot. If you wish to book the room—suggested donation per group is only \$25.00 per meeting—please book through Bob at 403 742 2811, or info@absteamtrain.com.

Thank you Kathy for your continuing support as well—Kathy can be contacted for local events, school tours, or admissions by appointment at the station.

Thank you to the Big Valley Senior

Citizens Drop-in Centre for the generous donation to the Big Valley Station.

Sincere thanks to Society Managing Director Janine Carroll for her dedication in securing additional funding to help with expenses incurred in 2011 with the significant work that went into painting and repairs of the Big Valley station. Janine was successful in receiving an \$8,150 grant from the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation for some of the emergent work, and given it was a challenge to access these funds, her work is greatly appreciated. The Canadian Northern Society would like to thank the Province of Alberta and the Minister of Culture, the Honourable Heather Klimchuk, for the Alberta Historical Resource Conservation grant. The Big Valley Station celebrates a centennial birthday in 2012, celebrations taking place on Saturday, September 29, 2012.

The Canadian Heartland Training Railway has indicated that there will be at least two special railway training seminars at the station in July of 2012, and likely more in the fall. The support of Canadian Heartland and Alberta Prairie makes the Big Valley depot truly an active “Heritage Railway station”—not just a museum or heritage site—something now unique in western Canada!

We have also placed a few new colour photographs from long-time member Clayton Jones in the station display area—thank you Clayton for the photograph of Big Valley station in 1969, and the other scenes along the Stettler Subdivision from the old Drumheller railiner.

Like all Canadian Northern Society activities, volunteers are always welcomed at the Big Valley site. There is a GREAT NEED for volunteers to ‘take on’ the leadership to help improve over time the roundhouse site, help with building maintenance, and simply take an interest in the station. Any interest or help is always appreciated.

2012/2013 BOARD MEMBERS

From the desk of the Treasurer, thank you to every single one of you who have been instrumental in preserving such an interesting and important part of not only the heritage of the communities of Camrose, Meeting Creek, and Big Valley for the past twenty-five years—but the heritage of our country.

Lorrie Tiegs, B.A.
President
Edmonton, Alberta
lorrie@whaletailgraphics.ca

Leslie S. Kozma, C.E.T.
Vice President
Edmonton, Alberta
lkozma@telusplanet.net

Dean A. Tiegs, B.Sc.
Secretary
Edmonton, Alberta
dtiegs@telus.net

Mr. Shawn I. Smith
Treasurer
Camrose, Alberta
sismith@cable-lynx.net

Janine Carroll
Managing Director
Camrose, Alberta
canadiannorthern@telus.net

Glenys Smith, R.N.
Director and Chairperson
Camrose, Alberta
glenys@cable-lynx.net

Robbie O’Riordan
Director
Camrose, Alberta
(780) 608-8744

K. Brent Cheek
Director
Sherwood Park, Alberta
brent.cheek@railamerica.com

“ONCE UPON A PRAIRIE TOWN”



24" x 36", Acrylic on Canvas, 2012
Private Collection

David A. Oram | www.davidaoram.com

The sun is shining on the small town of Big Valley, Alberta but the darkening clouds and the rain seen on the distant horizon indicate that soon the weather will be changing. It's 1942 and Canadian National Railway 4-6-2 "Pacific" #5617 eases train No. 26 for a scheduled 25-minute stop at Big Valley. Operating three days a week (Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday) No. 26 leaves Edmonton at 8:30 in the morning and arrives in Calgary at 7:30 in the evening. Since there was no food service provided onboard the train, passengers could leave the train and get some lunch at the station.

Built in 1912 by CNR predecessor Canadian Northern, the station looks like new dressed in recently applied stucco siding. WW II is causing many shortages. The owners of the Chevrolets and the Oldsmobile parked at the station will not be able to buy a new car until the war has ended. Some lucky person will be getting that new tire on the baggage cart at a time when there is a great shortage of rubber. Railroad stations were the

centre of commerce, connecting cities and towns to the outside world at a time when road standards were not conducive to long-distance travel and the airline industry was in its infancy. The train station was also a place where people would gather just to talk and to see who or what arrived or left town on the train.

Like many youngsters the boy on the Schwinn bicycle has come to watch the trains coming and going and perhaps dream about becoming an engineer who runs one of the smoking, chuffing, hissing giants. It is an era long gone, the likes of which we will not see again.

- David A. Oram

RESTORATION COMPLETE OF CANADIAN NORTHERN'S PACIFIC COAST TERMINUS

The completion of a \$6.9 million project to restore VIA Rail Canada's heritage train station in Vancouver, B.C., was celebrated on April 13.

VIA Rail has completed major renovations to the station, paying strict attention to preserving the heritage features of the building, which was completed in 1919. First, the platform canopies and lighting were improved alongside the tracks where the trains arrive and depart and station columns were repaired. This work was finished in 2010. Then, a full restoration of the Vancouver Station building was undertaken. From top to bottom, the exterior masonry of the building was repointed and cleaned, the roof rebuilt, the exterior windows and doors restored or replaced and the iconic "Pacific Central" sign on the roof stabilized, as well as security improvements made. This second phase was recently completed.



Vancouver Canadian Northern station in 2009. Photo©S.I. Smith

"We continue to transform passenger rail in Canada with new stations, tracks, trains and technology," said David Hoff of VIA Rail. "We remain focused on what counts: responding to markets and the needs of our customers in the most efficient way possible."

Funding for the upgrades to Pacific Central Station included \$2.3 million from the stimulus phase of the Economic Action Plan as part of a total investment of \$923 million by the Government of Canada to VIA Rail to improve passenger rail services.

CAMROSE NEWS

We had the most successful children's programs this year thanks to the wonderful volunteers and Eleanor's organization. Thanks to Elizabeth and Kurt Bagdan, Carol Rawson, Carol Roy, Gladys Douglas, Lesley Stoddart, Lindsay Aiken, Ann Reiten, Barb McDonald, Pat Edger-ton, Peggy Shuman, Dorothy Lysons, Bruce Smith and Sandra McLay for volunteering their time. Thank you to Eleanor for teaching the Green School program and the marketing to the schools as well as organizing all the bookings. We programmed 569 wonderful children. A special thanks to Gladys Douglas who made the enormous amount of gingerbread cookie dough for the kindergarten and preschool programs and our students Laurie and Kalista.

A special thank you to Barb Shepherd and Gladys Taranger for organizing the Royal display.

We have had many visitors to see the gardens and they are beautiful right now. Many are coming from Calgary, Edmonton and area as a result of the article in *Gardens West*. We also have had an increase in visitation during the week I believe due to the cooperation of Tourism Camrose. They have been very supportive financially with advertising and paying for Janine and my fee to attend a day at the Rural Alberta Conference here in Camrose.

The plant sale was a great success and we sold over \$400 worth of plants. Twenty people attended the free lecture and tour on "The Right Plant for the Right Place." Thank you to all who donated white elephant items and plants.

The Camrose Station is once again very fortunate to have the opportunity to employ two energetic and enthusiastic students for the summer. Kalista Sherbaniuk is entering her 2nd year at the University of Calgary with intentions to become an archaeologist. Laura Falk also

goes to school in Calgary at the Alberta College of Art and Design. She is in her 2nd year of a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree program.

The Organic Master Gardener program will be offered at the Camrose Railway Station Museum and Park this coming January. The Station has partnered with Gaia College of Victoria, B.C. to offer the unique curriculum for the program.

The station will offer the Organic Master Gardener program students a perfect opportunity to experience and experiment with organic growing methods. Through education and volunteer hours the participants will acquire an Organic Master Gardener certificate and will benefit from the sense of accomplishment in learning about organic horticulture and giving back to their community.

If you wish to learn more about this exciting learning opportunity or to register for the course, please contact Eleanor White at white.eleanore@gmail.com.

- *Glenys Smith*

Upcoming Events at the Camrose Railway Station

Saturday, July 14

Annual Garden Tour & High Tea

Enjoy 4 community gardens and a Victorian High Tea in the historical Railway Station.

The day starts at 10:00 am, meeting at the Railway Station, with an organized driving tour of several private gardens in Camrose. Preregistration is required, cost is \$20.00 per person (includes High Tea).

Saturday, August 4

Tribute to Prairie Women of the Camrose District

At 2:00 pm we will celebrate the contribution and women's role in our area settlement featuring four presenters. Join into the theme; wear a hat or clothing from a past era. Homemade desserts will be featured with a berry theme.

Saturday, August 11

Founder's Days

Exciting Founder's Days Festival events are hosted across the City of Camrose, including the Camrose Station, celebrating the Founders and history of our community. Visit www.camrosefoundersdays.com for the full schedule.

Firebox Family Festival at the Station

- Children's Festival
- Challenge yourself (and others) to some old-fashioned games
- Craft table
- Face painting for the young ones
- Mirror Lake Express train rides
- Tap out a message on the telegraph machine
- Children's entertainer
- Self-guided tours of the gardens
- Watch the G-scale train in the Garden Railway. Let your children see Percy and Thomas as they run around the track as well as other trains of the early era
- Enjoy lunch at our Station Tea Room served by volunteers

Saturday, August 11, 7:00 pm

Hello Dollies Dessert Theatre at the Bailey Theatre

Featuring: Glenys Smith in the character of Myrtle Zimmerman. The story of Myrtle Zimmerman, longtime Kelsey, Alberta resident will be told by looking back on the pages of time. This excellent theatre production is brought together by the Boomtown Trail, Camrose Railway Station and the Camrose Founders Days Committee. Tickets are \$20 each, available at the Railway Station, Chamber of Commerce Visitors Centre, Bailey Theatre and Kela Graphics.

Other Performing characters:

- Miss Alice Rogers played by Nora Smith, from Delburne.
- Lily Pitthouse played by Mary Ann Lippiatt, from New Sarepta.

For more information on the above events - www.canadiannorthern.ca.

DONALDA CELEBRATES 100

The Village of Donalda celebrated its centennial on the Dominion Day weekend, 2012. Another Canadian Northern Railway—created town is now 100 years old.

Remnants of the old Canadian Northern exist in the abandoned Battle River Subdivision right of way, north of the 1909 station (Vandura station) where a leisurely walk can be taken to view the beautiful Meeting Creek Valley.



Donalda elevators and station view south, December 1980. Photo©C.W. Bohi.

CANADIAN NORTHERN SOCIETY DONATIONS

Thank you for donations:

- Sincere thanks to Gwyn Morgan and Pat Trottier Foundation, James Lani-gan of Calgary, Stan Eichhorn of Stettler, Lori Pratt of Onoway, AB, and the Loyal Order of the Moose, Camrose Branch for generous cash donations.
- The Rose City Square Dancers for donating a stage for Meeting Creek.
- Sunny Boy Cereal Mills for cereal to make our Sunny Boy Bread.
- Dean and Lorrie Tiegs for a framed picture of McAllister Motors by Neil Tulley to be used at the Centennial, a trainman suit, plus other items for the gift shop.
- Marlene Tiegs for a quilted table top runner and placemats to be used for the silent auction during our Garden Tour Day and Victorian Tea on July 14.
- Thrift Shop for a three-tiered tea plate.
- Eleanor White for 10 totes to hold supplies for the Green School program.
- Murray Roy for building a small table to hold the picture frame and CD player in the Speeder Shed.
- Rotary for donating \$1000 toward the Victory Garden.
- Dave and Gail Stolley of Camrose for a \$300 donation for the Victory Garden.
- Tofield Museum for an updated history book of Tofield.
- All who continue to donate the White Elephant Gift Shop.
- Robbie O’Riordan for items for the Silent Auction.
- Peter Didrichsen for the generous donation of Canadian Tire money coupons that will be very helpful with maintenance this year.
- Karen Smith for keeping the Canadian Northern Facebook Page updated and current and for databasing throughout the winter.
- Evelyn Hrudko for a picture donated on behalf of Natalee Chapman, who is now deceased. The picture belonged to Natalee’s father, Wilfred Hrudko. He worked for CN and CPR maintenance of way during his life and part of that time through Camrose. The painting was in memory of Wilfred and Katherine Hrudko. (Our apologies if this was not stated correctly in the last *Chronicle*.)

BIG VALLEY CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS

Big Valley, Alberta is the place to be on Saturday, September 29, with a day of family fun awaiting you. Fun starts at 2 pm till dusk.

- Free train rides. No-cost return train rides from Big Valley to Caprona, compliments of Alberta Prairie Railway Excursions. (Donation to the Canadian Northern Society / Big Valley re-roofing fund recommended and appreciated.)
- Nonstop entertainment—on stage, under the big top. Enjoy the variety of sounds from *Sentimental Journey Old Time Country Band*, *Rosco*, *Jazz Guys Band*, *Bob Shortt* and *Cornerstone Barbershop Quartet*.
- On-site concession
- Guns of the Golden West, demonstrations and gunfight
- Children’s games, crafts, stories and entertainers
- Unique balloons for the children
- Wagon rides, enjoy a tour of the village
- Caricature artist
- Rope skipping demonstrations
- Guided tours of railway station and roundhouse
- Visit St. Edmund’s Church, McAlister’s Garage Museum and the Big Valley Elevator—with site interpreters
- Unique orienteering tour of the village—grab a partner or your family and test your mapping knowledge!
- Steak barbeque dinner with all the trimmings \$20/adult; all funds raised will support the Canadian Northern Society/Big Valley re-roofing fund.
- Contest—get your team together and start training to win money for the charity of your choice and bragging rights! The challenge—pull Steam Engine 41.
- Fireworks
- Be part of the fun and celebrate 100 years of the Village of Big Valley.

Background Photo: An October 1980 view of the Big Valley station, view south. Photo©C.W. Bohi



Hats off to Bill and Gladys Douglas. From yard work to washing dishes the Douglasses have done it all while volunteering at the Camrose Railway Station over the past 13 years.

Their earliest efforts included assisting with the school program, the initial development of the flower gardens and mowing grass. Bill has pounded many nails while helping with building projects such as the new platform and kitchen.

Gladys's claim to fame is her baking and cooking talents. She tells us how much she has enjoyed the socializing and of new cooking skills that she has developed during the many baking bees at the station. Gladys prepares all of the cookie dough for the annual ECS programs. This includes mixing 12 double batches of gingerbread then cutting and wrapping in cellophane to make over 400 individual squares of dough!

The Douglasses have always been willing to lend a hand with food preparation, serving and cleaning. The success of many events at the Railway Station is due in large part to their hard work and efforts. *On behalf of the Canadian Northern Society, THANK YOU, Gladys and Bill, for sharing your energy, talents and time.*

Bill and Gladys Douglas, absolutely amazing volunteers at the Camrose Railway Station, are thankful to be blessed with good health. Bill is 82 years young and Gladys will be celebrating her 85th birthday next month (August). Their kind and gentle nature and dedication to community living truly make them an inspiration to all.

A warm welcome aboard to new volunteers Peggy Funk, Shirley Peters, Caitlyn Ellis and the Camrose Association for Community Living.

Quote by Dave Gynn: Don't ever question the value of volunteers. Noah's Ark was built by volunteers; the Titanic was built by professionals!

MEETING CREEK HAPPENINGS

Thanks to the Alberta Prairie—East Central Alberta Heritage Society crew, we have a new all-season outdoor privy at Meeting Creek station. This design is being used along the linear park system being developed on the old Canadian Northern Battle River Sub by the ECAHSc. The installation was professionally done, and appreciated.

Using our casino funds, we bought and installed a new high-efficiency furnace for Meeting Creek station. The old furnace had been originally installed when we first preserved the depot over 25 years ago, and our gas fitter in Camrose, Randy Cross, provided an excellent discount.

Summer is upon us—HELP IS ALWAYS WANTED—cutting grass and keeping the grounds presentable at Meeting Creek. In addition, we are going to begin to raise funds for a new lawn mower.

Thank you to all of those who participated in the Meeting Creek spring clean-up work on April 28—Lorene Bergstrom, Shawn, Karen, Liam, and Adam Smith, Bruce and Glenys Smith, Peter Didrichsen and Paul Penner.

If you can volunteer, please call Karen at 780 672 5782. Thank you to our regular volunteers: Shawn, Liam, and Adam Smith, and to Lorene Bergstrom for her continued watch over the property.

Upcoming Events:

Saturday, August 25, 2012: Prairie Fun Day Celebrating History In the Camrose County at the Meeting Station and Elevator. Hosts for the day, Norm and Cheryl Prestage, will tour you through the two historical buildings. To access the flyer go to www.county.camrose.ab.ca and follow the 50th Anniversary Celebration link to Prairie Fun Days.

October 6, 2012: Meeting Creek Harvest Festival

Celebrate the gathering of the harvest at the Meeting Creek Railway Station and Elevator. Children's activities include pumpkin carving and scarecrow stuffing. Diamond Jubilee theme related games and crafts. On-site concession will feature traditional high tea.

Visit www.canadiannorthern.ca for further details!

The *Canora Chronicle* is the quarterly newsletter of the Canadian Northern Society—a registered charity dedicated to providing community service through heritage tourism initiatives.

Canadian Northern Society, P.O. Box 1174, Camrose, AB T4V 1X2 / Ph: (780) 672-3099 / Email: canadiannorthern@telus.net

Editors: Dean and Lorrie Tiegs / Ph: 780 484 4038 / Email: secretary@canadiannorthern.ca; Contributor: Shawn Smith

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