

Langley Heritage Society

{winter 2026}

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"Providing the window into the past to preserve Langley's heritage for today and tomorrow"

President's Message

Fred Pepin has been the heart and soul of the Langley Heritage Society almost since its inception. He has led the organization through multiple restoration projects and built bridges with individuals and organizations throughout the Langley community. I'm trying to get used to the idea that I am replacing him as chair, which isn't really possible. Fred's insights and practical know-how are without peer, and fortunately he'll remain on the board of directors and we'll continue to look to him for guidance. We're just lightening his load.

It is an exciting time for our society. We are acquiring ownership of the historic St Alban's Church and hall. The church originally stood at Milner, was consecrated in 1890 and became the first Anglican Church in the Langleys. Longtime LHS member and Milner historian Ellen Worrell says each of the church's boards were numbered when it was dismantled, moved and later reassembled in Otter District on land donated by the Poppy family. We'll now assess how best to utilize the two structures and are fortunate to have back-up for restoration work from the Langley Heritage Trust, established by a donation from the late Don Spiegel.

Helen Williams and the volunteers at the historic CNR Station are gearing up for a new season. They'll fling the doors open on Victoria Day Monday to visitors from around the world. There are exciting new elements to station interpretation, and an opportunity for members to volunteer and share the station's history.

Director Shawn Feddes is leading the charge to document and digitize the LHS archives that have been neglected in recent years. We plan to share material with the community that's been hidden in file folders and on hard drives. The work of former directors who contributed much over four decades is inspiring — Gordon Yusko, Norman Sherritt, Bays Blackhall, Bob Puls, Warren Sommer, Marion Tucker, Kay McComish (and others). The society's history of building partnerships to undertake projects has been exceptional. Some current directors are stepping away. Thank you Dave Buckley, Lotte Elias and Jim Foulkes for your dedication. We are now in a rebuilding phase, and most recently welcomed Graeme Branswell and Ivy Wang to our board. You'll meet them at the May 1st AGM at the Fort Langley Community Hall.

Finally, I welcome any comments, suggestions or questions about the work of our society. markrennieforthe@gmail.com

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Society News

"The Langley Heritage Society is located on the traditional and unceded lands of the Kwantlen, Katzie, Matsqui, and Semiahmoo peoples. We respect this land and its original occupants."

Our Next Project

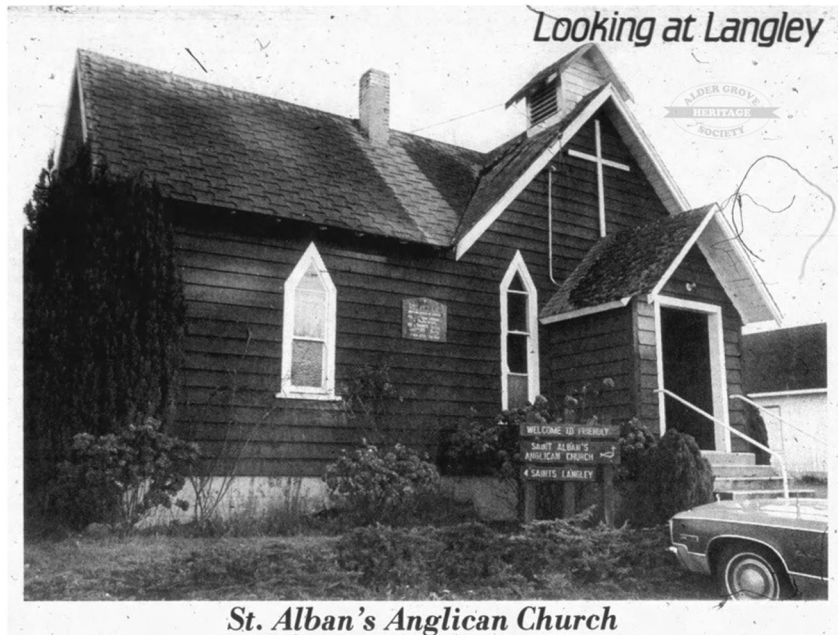
St Alban's Church and Hall are situated on a tight corner at 248th and Fraser Highway, directly beside Otter Co-Op. Our society was gifted the buildings by the now defunct Phelp Society that owned it for many years; they received a Township of Langley Recognition Award in 2018 for restoring this 1890 church for use as a community centre. Improvements included a return to the original wood siding, window and sill repairs, and fresh paint for the exterior. Langley Heritage Society will now determine what needs to be done to make the buildings functional as they have been sitting empty in recent years.



Photos Mark Forsythe

The photo above of the church and hall was taken in February 2026.

A newspaper article from the *Langley Advance* in 1983 provided some fascinating background history for a building that began its life in Milner.



St. Alban's Anglican Church

Ninety-three Christmases have come and gone since St. Alban's Anglican Church was built. But this year, as for the past 57 winters, Christmas will be celebrated seven miles from the original church site.

Now located at the corner of Fraser Hwy. and 248th St., St. Alban's was actually first constructed on Johnstone Townline (216th St.) in Milner in 1890 to serve Anglicans in Langley Prairie. Head of the diocese at that time was Bishop A.W. Sillitoe.

However, when St. Andrew's Anglican Church was built in 1922 St. Alban's was no longer needed by the Milner congregation.

St. Alban's found a new home three years later in 1925, following a series of November public meetings by Otter residents who wished to build an Anglican Church in that community. Land for the church site was donated by the Poppy family, who were prominent pioneer farmers in Otter.

D.W. Poppy served as Reeve of Langley municipality from 1908 to 1913, and son Bill was

elected to the same post more than 30 years later.

In June of 1926 the Milner church was given to the Otter group, who dismantled it board by board and hauled it by horse team and truck to be stored in one of the Poppy's barns.

The haying season called a halt to work on the church until the end of August.

Work on the church was supervised by a Mr. McRae, a professional carpenter, with much volunteer help from the community.

First service at the peripatetic church's new home was held (Continued on 5a)

(Continued from 4a)

Nov. 14th, 1926, by Rev. H. Hoodspeth, the vicar at St. Alban's.

A bell for the church was obtained for the church by Mr. and Mrs. Joe Bell. An acquaintance of the Bells — a fellow bearing the improbable moniker of Noctory Ankettell Jones of County Mayo Ireland — donated a bell to the church and shipped it by boat to New Westminster.

Carted to Otter in the back of Larry Murphy's Model T truck and placed in the bell tower. According to firsthand accounts of the day, when first rung, the bell's peal was drowned by the shriek of protesting bearings. A quick application of graphite and grease by Dave Sturmey and Bill Poppy solved the problem, and the bell has been calling the faithful to worship without protest ever

For many years St. Alban's Sunday School for children, conducted by Jack Greer, was the only one in the district. Jack's brother, Ben Greer, was organist at St. Alban's for many years, and also served as church secretary.

The Women's Auxiliary to the Anglican Church of Canada was formed in 1943, and was instrumental in having the church's vestry enlarged in 1945. Electric lights were installed in the church in 1947.

St. Alban's remained much unchanged until 1960, when a church hall was added on. The Evening Guild, a younger women's group, was a moving force behind construction of the new hall.

Funds for St. Alban's Hall, built to replace the dilapidated Otter Community Hall, came from

by selling the community hall. Once again much of the construction was done with volunteer labour. Supervising the work was contractor Jack Skea.

Today, the church and hall still serve as a focus for many of the community activities in Otter.

From Our Archives

Shawn Feddes, a director with the Langley Heritage Society, is leading a project to scan and digitize mountains of paper files, photos and maps. One of his first discoveries is the first newsletter that the society published in the spring of 1984, which is when the heritage CNR Station was moved, restored and officially opened. We thank the band of volunteers for their vision and resolve to save a vital part of Langley's heritage. Below is the newsletter's description of the big day.

FOR OPENERS...

Our CN Station Opening was a grand success! Many came to join in our 20's festivities - the music was loud and cheery, the costumes splendid, the 20's-style box lunches delicious.

Among our notable guests were:

The Honourable J.V. Cline, Past Director of Heritage Canada.

Mr Hunter Vogel, the first Mayor of Langley.

The Honourable Bob McClelland, our M.L.A.

Mr & Mrs Bill Stephenson, Director Western Region for CN Railway.

Mr Richard O'Rourke and Mr Al Maynard, Regional Executives for CN Railway.

Mrs Blair, widow of our late Mayor Bill Blair.

Mr D.W. Poppy, Chairman of the Heritage Advisory Committee, Langley.

Plus representatives of B.C. Heritage Trust, West Coast Railway Association,

Heritage Society of B.C., and the R.C.M.P., special interest groups, other heritage societies, and the local and neighbouring communities.

The spotlight, of course, was on the CN Station - resplendent in fresh paint inside and out, and decked out with gaily colored flower baskets. Without the tireless efforts of Bays Blackhall, Bernice Littleboys, David and Michael O'Brien, and other volunteer painters and plasterers, cajoled by Bays into devoting hours to these tasks, the Station would not have been ready. Many, many thanks!

Our CN Station Project, however, is far from completed. We, the Heritage Society, are now responsible for a multi-use facility; we are landlords, and have acquired a host of new concerns. Murray Lundberg, our Station Manager, is presently bending all his efforts toward providing a comfortable lodging for our tenants. "Wiring" and "Heating" are words that will trigger instantaneous reaction in Murray these days! Bays Blackhall, the good shepherdess of the project, thankfully has not abandoned us and is devising ways and means of keeping the Information Office open part-time during the winter. Then there is the Master Plan, prepared by David Byrnes, which presents recommendations concerning the use of the rooms, care of any artifacts, acquisition of period furniture, and landscaping a la Simpson. To hear more, much more, about our pet project, come to the September 25th meeting at the CN Station.

Next Steps: New Foundation

Haldi House (aka Bedford House) has been lowered onto its new foundation placing it higher on the flood plain beside the Bedford Channel, and closer to the railway tracks and Glover Road. Township of Langley undertook the \$4 million project last year and plans to turn the building into a multi-use space. Restoration will return the structure to its original appearance. Jacob and Jesse Haldi bought the land in 1901 and local builder Billy Brown constructed the house beside the Haldi's butcher shop in 1910.

Some details here: <https://www.tol.ca/en/building-development/haldi-house.aspx>



Heritage Tea

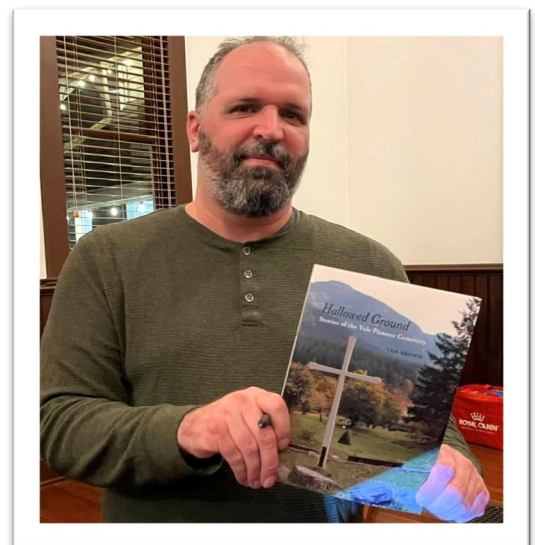
Langley Heritage Society members gathered at Milner Chapel for our **annual Heritage Week Tea** to hear about heritage partners' plans and events for the coming year. Special thank you to Pierce Smith for organizing the event and organizing a yummy lunch.

Our stellar speakers are featured on this page. (Front) Brigitte Wieronski from the Fort Langley National Historic Site, Sandy Hope with the BC Farm Museum and Evelyn Wedley of Surrey Historical Society. (Back) Fred Pepin from Langley Heritage Society, Helen Williams CNR Station Manager and Tami Quiring with the Alder Grove Heritage Society. Thanks for your presentations and here's to much success in the coming year. (Photo Glenn Disney) The heritage community can only benefit when we lift each other up!



Speaker Night Past

Thanks to Ian Brown for sharing fascinating tales from the Yale Pioneer Cemetery at our January Speaker Night. (Photo Mark Forsythe)



Alice Johnson



Published January 26, 2026

In Loving Memory ~

1933-2026

Alice was a lifelong Willoughby resident. She attended West Langley Elementary School, Willoughby Elementary School, and was a member of Langley High School's graduating Class of 1951.

She then attended Pittman Business College, during World War 2 was a member of the Tillicum Club and collected scrap for the war effort.

Alice's volunteer work included being an Explorer Leader with the Canadian Girls in Training (CGIT). She was a Sunday School teacher at Willoughby United Church, was a member of the Young People's Union and served as hostess at the Flying Angel Club (mission to seaman). She was a chair person for the restoration of the Willoughby Elementary School building, saving it from demolition (it is now a heritage building), reorganized the Fort Langley Women's Institute, which had been dormant for many years and formed the Langley-Willoughby Women's Institute. She also served as a membership secretary on the Langley Heritage Society and was an 11 year member on the Douglas Day committee with 9 years as chair.

In 2016 she was awarded the Eric Flowerdew Volunteer Award recipient and the Eric Flowerdew Volunteer of the Year Award of Merit. In 2019 Alice was awarded The Freedom of the Municipality by the Township of Langley.

Donations to the SPCA in her name and her fox terrier Sugar would be appreciated. There will be no service by request. Alice is survived by her brother Brian

We'll miss the dedication, knowledge and sweet spirit of Alice Johnson, who passed in January. She volunteered with many community organizations (including our society) and was one of the few people to be awarded the Freedom of the Municipality by the Township of Langley. Our condolences to her family and many friends. (This obituary was published in the *Langley Advance Times*.)

From Our Archives

TRAFFIC JAM



In Milner. Source: LHS Newsletter, May 1985.



Langley's Oldest Schoolhouse Rediscovered

According to Norm Sherritt, **Langley's oldest existing schoolhouse** is on the City of Langley one-way. It's location is teased in the February 1994 edition of the LHS Society newsletter and revealed in the April edition.

LHS Director Shawn Feddes consulted the 1982 survey to learn that it's the former location of Bishop's Reliable Cycle which is now, Everything But the Groom.

Comments from our Facebook followers remembering Bishop's:

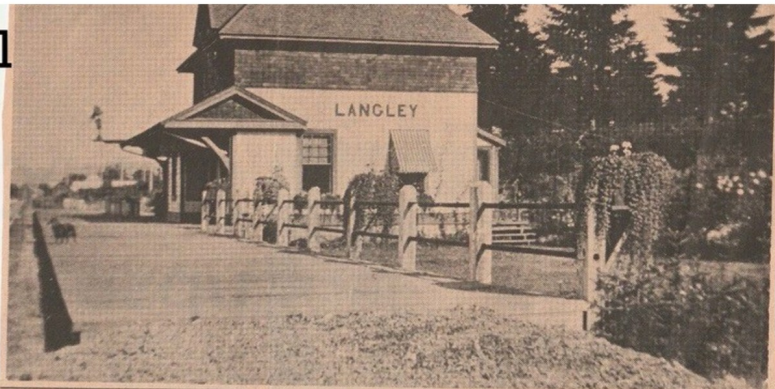
"Bishop's Sports Shope and we remember old Mrs. Bishop who ruled the roost back in the fifties and sixties. The store smelled of leather and rubber ... a pleasant smell ... It was a totally family run business and before the big box stores took over it was the main source of sports equipment in the Langley area."
- Al

"I always loved going there! I usually got to go home with a balsa wood stick airplane powered by that big rubber band." - Ron

If you're not following us on Facebook, you'll find the society page at: <https://www.facebook.com/LangleyHeritageSociety>

Down By the Langley Station

CNR Station original
location:
1918 (R) and
1968 (below)



50 YEARS has passed between the taking of these two photos of the railway station in Fort Langley. Only a very few old-timers are left who will remember how the station looked prior to 1920 when an ornamental fence and hanging pots of flowers decorated the station plat-

form and premises. Modern photo, today demonstrates that nearby houses and trees have been replaced by industrial mills. Note that the name on the station changed, too, in half a century.

CNR Station: 50 years Apart

The station was built for the Canadian Northern Railway (CNoR) in 1915 as agriculture expanded and new settlement drew people into the Fraser Valley. Absorbed by the Canadian National Railway in 1918, its life as a passenger station spanned steam through diesel eras, until 1980. The clipping above was published by the *Langley Advance* in 1968. You can just make out the new CN logo above the entrance on the track side, introduced in 1961.



FAMILY DAY 2026: Stir the Pot

We were delighted to see 300 visitors from as far away as North Vancouver visit the station this Family Day. Food was this year's theme. Children had a couple crafts to choose from, free seed packets to grow nasturtiums and sweet peas were eagerly scooped up by accompanying parents, and a recipe for a hearty treat (aptly named Railway Cake) common when travelling on Canada's first railways before any food or beverage was available.

Until the station opens on Victoria Day, May 18, 2026 we're hard at work developing new displays and site improvements.

Photos Helen Williams



R to L: Carson, Al (on ladder) and Dax from Smith Tank & Trailer Repair. A change of pace for all three as they left the shop floor to weld a train car during their workday.

We had an incredible in-kind donation of time and coordination by **Dax Poitras** of Smith Tank & Trailer Repair in February 2026. Dax asked **Faststeel** to donate the steel plate, **Fast Fab Custom Metal Fabrication** in Port Kells to fabricate the steel, **Air Liquide** for use of a mobile generator for welding, and then Al Smith (Dax's business partner and founder) welded the metal plate over one of our passenger car windows.

With the window covered, the Langley Men's Shed (a few of the fellows pictured on the right) are now able to build the structure to house a 1930s upper and lower train berth to accompany the Black sleeping car porter display.



Above photo Langley Men's Shed



Left: BEFORE
Above: AFTER

We also thank **Adam Knorr**, S&C Supervisor, in the **CN Yale Subdivision** for arranging the removal of invasive blackberries from the station fence lines bordering Mavis Avenue and CN maintenance yard. The fence, ground, pole, and tree are now visible!

Mark Your Calendar

Get Your Ticket for the AGM & Dinner

Date: Friday, May 1, 2026

Where: Fort Langley Community Hall
9167 Glover Road, Fort Langley

Time: 5:30 pm doors open

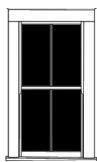
Speaker TBA

Reserve tickets by email or call

williams@telus.net | 604-866-1925

Cost: \$25 per person

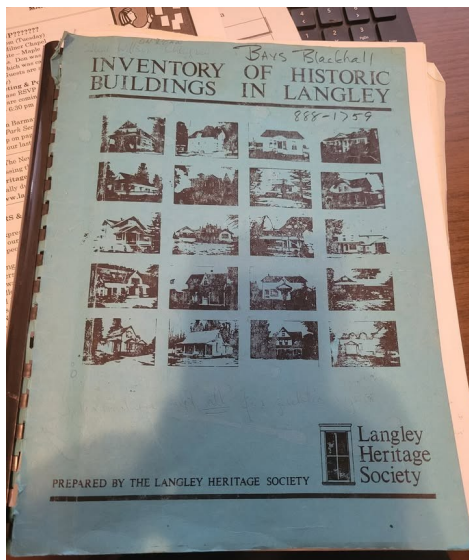
Logo History



Langley
Heritage
Society

Did you know that the Langley Heritage Society logo is **based on a window at the Annand Rowlett farmhouse** at Campbell Valley Regional Park?

It was created by Harry Berg in 1986 when he and another individual were hired to create an inventory of Langley Heritage houses. Berg chose the window as the symbol for the heritage society because it was the one commonality shared between many of the heritage houses that were built in Langley's early years.



Rosemary Genberg is a longtime LHS member and has advocated for heritage in Langley Township for decades. She is also a talented artist and shares this painting of **Cornock House at Glen Valley**. The home was built by John and Eliza Cornock in 1905 and today is **lovingly cared for by LHS member Mike Frost**.

Supporters & Suppliers

Langley Heritage Society wishes to express our gratitude to all our volunteers and supporters who contribute to our projects.

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