



Probud Club - of Central Edmonton

February 2018

Guest Editor: Ken Hoffman

Speaker: February 20, – Chris Ashdown, Edmonton Radial Railway Society

Chris Ashdown of the Edmonton Radial Railway Society spoke to us about the history of street cars in Edmonton and the Society.

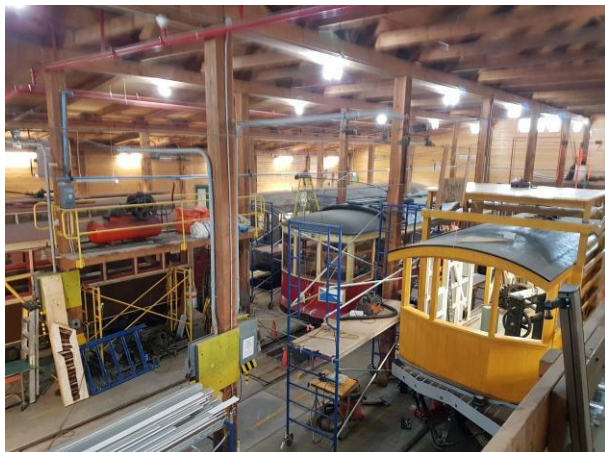
Street Cars entered the Edmonton scene in 1908 with street car No.1. Tracks and cars were added over the years until 1951 when the ceremonial last run was held. Another significant date was August 11, 1913 when the first street car crossed the High-Level Bridge. It shared the Bridge upper deck with trains. The deck was constructed with three tracks. Street cars used outside tracks and trains used the center track. In 1913 the train fare was 5 cents.

As part of Edmonton's 75th anniversary celebration, street car trips across the High-Level bridge were planned. Street car no. 1, which was held in storage, required extensive restoration. Volunteers came together to carry out the restoration and the operation of the street car. In 1980 these volunteers came together to form the Edmonton Radial Railway Society to continue to operate the street car. Since its creation, the Society acquired more street cars and expanded its service to Fort Edmonton Park. It now provides a regular service in the summers at the park. It has a large facility for storing, restoring and maintaining street cars at the Park. It also has a facility to store cars used to cross the High-Level Bridge. It has plans to expand the downtown tracks, build another facility at the Park and to continue to acquire and restore street cars. There is a dedicated crew of members who repair and operate the cars. In 2017, Society benefitted from about 15,000 volunteer hours. It also operates a museum and gift shop. The museum is located in the Strathcona Streetcar Barn on 103 Street and 84 Avenue (at the north end of the Farmer's Market building).

Tour: February 27 – Fort Edmonton Radial Railway Facility

We were met by Chris Ashdown who introduced us to Allan and Hugh who were very able guides. They handled our many questions with ease and point out the many interesting items on the building.

The following two photos are taken from the storage level looking in either directions. From these pictures one can get an understanding of the size of the building and the number of cars in it.



These are two of the cars in being stored. The one on the right is car No. 1 from the Edmonton fleet. The second is Edmonton No. 80.



Our guide is showing us the cars being restored. The one on the left is a track cleaner. Its restorations are well underway. The second, on the right, is been stripped down to its frame. It will take thousands of man hours to complete.



The following photos show the interior of a car. First one shows the passenger area and the second the cockpit



The final photos show the some of the equipment that the volunteers employ. One set is of the carpentry shop and the other is of the machine shop.

