

Hollyburn Heritage Society



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Hollyburn Lodge News

2018 finishes off with the second full year of operation of the new restored lodge. Music nights, a long tradition of decades, are back again, live and strong and very popular. For more information see the Cypress Mountain website.

Hollyburn Heritage Society News

This year, the Hollyburn Heritage Society has continued to collect documents and photos related to the history of the North Shore mountains. Many of these have been uploaded to our website, posted on our Facebook page, and included in our annual newsletter. The HHS website has been expanded with a new page on Physical Geography. HHS has also been collecting information regarding the Hollyburn Rangers, as well as photos and documents related to the "Golden Age on Hollyburn" (1927 -1939). The John Deere crawler, originally owned by Fred Burfield, has been restored and has found a new home at the Atchelitz Threshermen's Association (www.atchelitz.ca) in Chilliwack, BC.

Rudolph Jules Verne

Visionary – Promoter – Successor
Article by Iola Knight & Tami Knight

An intriguing person; born Rudolph Julius Joachim Verne in Sweden 19 October 1884. Like most men born 1880's he didn't participate militarily in WWI. 1913, Verne made his way to Canada and by 1919 to Calgary Alberta, where he was employed by the Canadian Imperial Bank.



Buddy Barker (l) and Rudolph Verne(r), circa 1928

Being Scandinavian, he was likely already involved in sport of skiing, winter 1921, Verne developed ski interest among Calgary's mostly immigrant population. Verne conceived an idea to have ski jump trestle built atop flat roof of Calgary Stampede Grandstand, called "Hell Dive Ski Chute." He invited ski jumpers whom he knew were in area. Interest spread, for publicity he enlisted Calgary fire chief, "Cappy" Smart, who a few days leading up to days of event had his fire trucks drive around town, sirens blaring. It worked, as press reported on Monday, close to 10,000 attended "Rooftop Ski Jumping."

Early 1920's Banff was a summer resort filled with tourists; winter it hibernated. Winter 1922/23, Verne now posted with the bank in Banff. He sought to do something to develop winter activity. "Winter Snow Festival" would attract people to

the resort for a weekend of enjoyment - he enlisted community to sponsor "Snow Queen" – ice skating races at nearby lake and ski races on Mt. Norquay. The event was successful and continued for several years after Verne left Banff.

Spring 1923, Rudolph Verne arrived in Vancouver. May 1923, he and a friend decided to hike up the closer Grouse Mountain to ski. Arriving at North Vancouver Ferry dock, they boarded a small ship. Unknown to them, they had boarded ferry to West Vancouver. Upon arrival to West Vancouver ferry dock, looking up at the ridge they saw no snow, left their "ski" at ferry dock and hiked following loggers' trails. They reached Nasmyth's abandoned mill site, had lunch and decided to continue their hike – reached a plateau area with much snow. They continued hiking, finally reaching summit of Hollyburn. The view was spectacular. They could see all way to Seattle's Mount Rainier. This must have excited Rudolph Verne, as he vowed to return. He envisaged opening area for skiing, possibly using the mill site buildings for a restaurant. Following months he met a Norwegian immigrant, Eilif Haxthow. Verne employed Eilif to develop a restaurant at Nasmyth mill site. January 1924, they opened for business, even had some skis to rent. Verne had Pollough Pogue write an enticing and enthusiastic story in *Vancouver Province* paper on the new project on Hollyburn Mountain.

While there was some good snow, things at this operation went well. However, it appears that Eilif Haxthow and the others were not really employed by Verne, they had to work hard to make "the restaurant" successful, which was possible as long as there was snow. They were really "on their own." At this elevation, 2500 feet, subsequent winter snows for skiing were much less reliable. Despite variety of attractants – gramophone for dancing, overnight accommodation in adjacent cabins, people failed to come. Eilif decided to leave.

Early 1926, Rudolph Verne realized winter snow for skiing was more reliable at 3000'. Hence, he decided to move the operation to area adjacent to First Lake where an abandoned loggers' cabin was located. With affirmation by District West Vancouver, to accomplish this, Verne engaged compatriots, three Swedish loggers, Oscar Pearson, Ole Anderson and Andrew Irving. Again, it appears that Verne may have "hired" them, but they were actually "on their own." To complete the project – building "Hollyburn Ski Camp" they used recycled building materials by deconstructing Nasmyth mill, hauling materials to First Lake on a stoneboat by horse team. Any new materials required were purchased by builders and backpacked up the mountain. Hence, HSC is considered privately owned. However, to these owners, it was a public building. No matter who anybody was, they were welcome to come in – stay a while, warm up, dry mittens; not necessarily buy anything. Incidentally, some of those recycled materials were recycled again for use in "Hollyburn Lodge 2015 Renewal Project."

January 15th, 1927, HSC was officially opened with considerable fanfare by Verne. He founded Hollyburn Pacific Ski Club, the first ski club on Pacific Coast to have mountain headquarters. He organized first ski races for both men and women that took place April 17, 1927.

Following years, we lose contact with Rudolph Verne on the mountain. "Three Swedes" continue and successfully operate Hollyburn Ski Camp, mostly led by "Oscar" until 1946 when they sell to Burfield family. Meanwhile, Verne was busy in Vancouver. He developed Western Branch, Canadian Amateur Ski Association; became vice president CASA. He wrote articles re west coast skiing activities for CASA Journal.

Early 1930's, Verne became "Figure skating Professional" with Connaught Skating Club – in figure skating jargon referred to "the Pro." Figure

skating until mid 1930's was 'classic' – emphasized "figures" – such as "8", "3", loop, 'bracket' and classic Dance, such as Waltz, Foxtrot and Tango. Norwegian, Sonja Henie, 3X World Champion & Olympic champion aided its development to the athletic figure skating sport we know today.

In July 2015, HHS was contacted by a man in Tasmania via Email, re: "Lindsay Lance". His son was disposing his father's papers and found handwritten letter from Rudolph Verne, dated May 20, 1946. In a page from father's journal circa 1944, Lindsay wrote that he met Rudolph Verne in San Francisco, June 1944, when they became shipmates on Swedish freighter, "Kookaburra", working Pacific Ocean during WWII. Sweden was "neutral" nation, safe from war-conflicting countries. He described Verne, "Our crew mess boy was an old Swede with the name of Rudi Jules Verne (now 59 yrs.) He unobtrusively mentioned one time that he was related to The Jules Verne. We corresponded after for a number of years. I last heard of him from Canada."

Verne's letter revealed little of his early childhood except when at 16, 1900-04 he was in Swedish Navy. He says: "My wandering "wander lust" has taken me all over the world. Before I was 17, I had completed a world circling tour via windjammer. Australia was the last country of my wanderlust conquest – and by no means the least important! But, TASMANIA – that was my dreams to visit."

This letter tells about his return to Sweden where he plans to write books and articles about his life. He mentions that he "graduated as full-fledged journalist before coming of age" (21 years) and talks of his journalistic appointments "abroad" to Glasgow Scotland, Copenhagen 1906 to 1912, when he immigrated to Canada 1913. He then "followed a wild chase of diversified occupations" - Gold Rush trip to Alaska – prospector – cowboy – farm machinery "boiler man" – free-lance journalist. He also relates his exploits, from 1923

in Vancouver with regards to winter sports on Hollyburn, figure skating Vancouver and skiing in western Canada (CASA).

Verne mentions his winning "139 medals in 18 different branches of sport, and the coveted Swedish Sports Merit Badge in gold." Verne, in his letter to Lindsay Lance, relates his life's experiences but also tries to convince Lance that he isn't 'phoney.' May 1946, time of writing this letter, it appeared Verne was living Vancouver aboard a boat moored probably in Coal Harbour. He may have got a pleasure craft to utilize his seamanship to explore Vancouver's coastal area. He planned to sell it and travel to Seattle with idea to then travel to Australia most likely by shipboard work on Swedish ship, to finally return to Sweden.

Before closing his letter to Lindsay Lance, Verne replies to Lance's question concerning his name and that of "Jules Verne", 1828 - 1905 author classic science fiction books, "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea" (1870) – "Around the World in 80 days" (1879). Verne's reply, "First of all, there never was such a person as Jules Verne except me!" Genealogical information revealed this Verne was related to the author, but two hundred years apart.

Verne finishes his letter to Lindsay Lance with a feeling of happiness to be returning "to my dear native land" and signs "Most sincerely, your grizzly old pal Rudy Jules Verne"

But, did Verne really return to his "dear native land"? 'Fraid not – Rudolph Verne passed away on February 3, 1948, age 68 in Vancouver Canada.

About HHS

The Hollyburn Heritage Society (HHS) is a not-for-profit registered charitable society dedicated to preserving the mountain history of the North Shore mountains and was instrumental in fundraising to rebuild Hollyburn Lodge. To join or donate to HHS, please see the HHS website.