

Garage preserves motoring past



Opening: Museum curator Deb Chapman, Bryan Kassa, Barry Swenson, Doug Adams, Allan Wilson and Richard Maki cut the ribbon during a ceremony held Sunday, Aug. 12 to officially open the Lester and Thomson Garage located at the R. J. Haney Heritage Village.

James Murray/Observer

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The curator at R.J. Haney Heritage Village did something a little out of character on Sunday. Deborah Chapman put on a pair of coveralls and rolled up her sleeves.

It was hot and muggy. There was grease under her nails and she was grinning.

Chapman, the Museum's Board of Directors, and members of the Shuswap Chapter of the Vintage Car Club of Canada were celebrating the opening of the Lester and Thomson Garage Exhibit during the Classic and Antique Car Show.

The new display is housed in a building constructed by members of the Car Club. It is a scale replica of the historic garage that sat on the corner of Alexander Avenue and Front Street (Lakeshore).

Originally built in 1918, A.W. Lester and Cyril Thomson's garage began life as a Chevrolet dealership, selling and servicing sedans and trucks, but soon expanded to carry Overland and McLaughlin vehicles.

The garage was a Salmon Arm fixture for two decades and the business survived the Great Depression. The secret was diversification. The partners had a taxi and cartage service and also sold radios.

“Thanks to the Vancouver, Hamber, and Shuswap Community Foundations and the Salmon Arm Museum’s endowment fund, the village is now home to another professionally designed exhibit,” said Chapman. “Our streetscape is really developing!”

Find out more by visiting the exhibit at R.J. Haney Heritage Village. It is open seven days a week during August.