



The Sunken Car in the Forest

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It was a long and narrow path to Hampton Park; one we would frequent everyday as kids. It never felt so long though. Crowded with trees and branches that let light guide our way, it was our shortcut, our small adventure. It felt as though we lived in the forest, our backyard being just that. It was full of lush trees and a stream flowing through it. So as any kids do, we would explore the forest, climbing trees and hills, jumping off rocks and splashing in the creek. One afternoon, while on a walk through the pathway, we noticed what seemed to be a car, hidden beneath the moss and shrubbery. Taking a closer look, we saw it was exactly that. My dad, being a car guy, told us this car was from 1932—a 32 Ford 3-window coupe, in fact! It was hard at that age to even understand how long ago 1932 was and why such a thing would be living in this forest behind our house.

This was the beginning of my interest in finding out what Coquitlam was before I had ever come along. Our dad told us that not many years ago—in fact, only three years before I was born—there was a roaring racetrack right beneath our feet. At its peak, Westwood Motorsport Park was the talk of the town, a place where people from all over the continent would come to race. Where we were standing was just below the paddock from the racetrack, what is today Paddock Drive. Being kids, we wanted to save the moment, so we took a door handle off the sunken car in the forest. That handle was a turning point in my understanding of my community, a point in time that I cherish greatly.

- *Image and story by Maria Centola*

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