



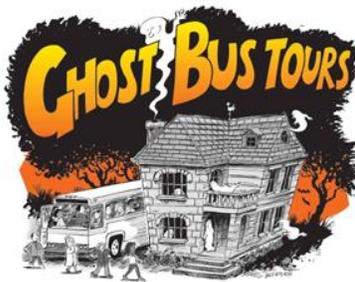
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE OLD CEMETERIES SOCIETY  
OF VICTORIA, PUBLISHED SIX TIMES PER YEAR

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### **September – October 2014**



#### **Ghost Bus Tours**

John Adams

Support the OCS's biggest annual fundraiser. Buy tickets for yourself or a friend.

Don't miss the 21st year of Ghost Bus-tours, the OCS's biggest fundraiser event each year. The two-hour excursion through Victoria's haunted neighbourhoods is led by John Adams in the comfort of a charter coach.

Routes are different each year. This year the route will feature Oak Bay, Fernwood, Fairfield, James Bay and Victoria West. Two brief stops for on-the-spot ghost

hunting will be included. Tickets are \$35 each (including taxes) and are available now exclusively through Ticket Rocket. Order online with a credit card any time at [www.ticketrocket.org](http://www.ticketrocket.org) or by phone at 250.590.6291. For over the counter sales visit the Ticket Rocket office (at Intrepid Theatre) at #2-1609 Blanshard St. at the corner of Fisgard. Call first to verify their hours.

**This year Ghost Bus-Tours will start at 7:30 pm on October 18, 24, 25, 29 and 30.**

The starting location is provided once you have purchased your tickets.

#### **Halloween Patrols at Ross Bay Cemetery**

The Halloween patrols are a unique opportunity to experience Ross Bay Cemetery at night and at the same time they help to deter vandalism. The patrol dates have not been finalized but an e-mail will be sent out to all members and volunteers as soon they are confirmed by the City Parks Department. We do our patrols in two shifts: 8pm to 10pm and 10pm to 12 midnight.

If you wish to volunteer, please email Sharon Walsh at [afterprior@telus.net](mailto:afterprior@telus.net) or leave a message at 250.995.1322

#### **Introducing Our Summer Student**

Angela Dyck, a fourth year anthropology student, is spending the summer inputting photos of monuments from Ross Bay Cemetery into the office database and linking associated deceased individuals to those photos. She's entered and linked over 6000 pictures. She has created a detailed instruction sheet with screenshots explaining how to enter and link photos into the database for those interested in helping with this task.

### **Memorial Park Guns**

The Township of Esquimalt will officially unveil its refurbished First World War trophy guns at a commemorative event on **Thursday, September 4**, from 11 am to 1 pm. These guns were captured from the Germans during two different battles in WWI and brought back to Canada. They have been refurbished after spending nearly 100 years, mostly in Memorial Park, and will be painted with their original colors. They were not melted down in WWII due to the need for metals as they were dedicated as part of the war memorial in Memorial Park in Esquimalt. Everyone is welcome. Wear your medals!

### **St. Luke's Church Fun Day & Historic Cemetery Tour** Pam Gaudio

St. Luke's Church at Cedar Hill Road and Cedar Hill Crossroad is holding a Community Fun Day on September 13th. During this free event a churchyard tour will be hosted by Pam Gaudio and descendents and friends of people buried in the historic churchyard. Everyone is welcome to attend the tour which starts at 11 a.m.

### **Heritage BC's 2014 Conference**

When: Friday, September 26 and Saturday, September 27.

Where: Cloverdale, the historic heart of Surrey.

Interactive Workshops \* Museum and Walking Tours \* Awards Gala

Heritage Marketplace \* Heritage Conservation \* Cultural Tourism

Sustainability \* Community Engagement \* Education and Training

Get all the details and register online today! [www.heritagebc.ca](http://www.heritagebc.ca)

### **Remembering Judy Wasylenko**

The Old Cemeteries Society has lost another good friend. Judy Wasylenko passed away on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June at age 66. Judy was a very private person and many of you may not have known her, but most of you will have benefited from her life's work and passion. Judy leaves an extraordinary legacy in genealogy work, including family research, providing database information for genealogy web sites, and 35 years of volunteer research to record cemetery information in Alberta and BC. Judy was a supporter of our society and its projects to the very end. We will miss her...rest in peace, Judy.

### **Cleaning & Restoration** Sharon Walsh

We have made excellent progress since May 2014 and have completed Section U & V. We are now working up the pathway between B & T and S (near the Commonwealth War Graves), removing moss, edging around the monuments and lots of sweeping. We have had up to seven volunteers each week and are happy to advise that new volunteers have been coming out to help. We will continue working along the pathway and hope the fine weather will hold until October.

A huge thank you is owed to The City of Victoria and their workers for the wonderful job they are doing at Ross Bay Cemetery this year. We have had numerous members of the public stop by to thank us for keeping the cemetery in such good order this year. We, of course, give the City credit and explain they are responsible for the grass and the large jobs – while we are cleaning, restoring and power-washing the monuments. After this is explained, they still say that the volunteers from The Old Cemeteries Society are truly

making a difference and we want to make sure that you are all aware of this, because, as a member, you are!!

Sometimes while cleaning we spend more time talking to people than cleaning. A few weeks ago, out of the 2 hours we actually spent only about ½ hour working and the rest of the time talking to people who were wandering around the cemetery. We have had the pleasure of having several descendants stop to ask for help in finding their family plots. Two of these were for very prominent people - Captain Edward Gillam and William and Peter Fernie. The family members have been asked to send any information they have for our descendants file – we sure hope they do!

While cleaning, we take the time to read the inscriptions on the headstones. Doing this can lead to mysteries ...

In Section U (U 33 W 48) we noticed a headstone that says, simply: And Agnes Dec 5th 1986. This headstone is below one stating: Margaret Irene Grant, August 27, 1981. So, who is Agnes? And why would only her first name and death date be shown? Thanks to Linda Richards for finding that Agnes is the sister of Margaret. Margaret Irene Grant and Agnes Jean Grant had 4 siblings. John Aloysious, Michael Patrick, James Francis, and Mary Conception. Also there was a baby sibling, Martin Dennis, who died at the age of 2 months who is in U 42/43 E 47 with his parents, Alexander and Mary Nyland Grant who are U 43 E 47. Margaret Grant was an R.N. and Agnes was a purchasing Agent for The General Warehouse at Spencer's Store. Now we know who 'and Agnes' was.



### Mystery Partly Solved!

One of our restoration projects for 2014 was to repair, clean and re-erect a broken Chinese marker in block N. A search of our database by plot number showed at first that no Chinese had been recorded as buried in the plot marked by the broken headstone. We found records of five burials at N43WE (another story) but all the names appeared European. Thanks to the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, we now know that the marker is to commemorate Fen Y Shen of Poyang village, Jiang xi Province, China, who passed away in January 1932.



Further examination of the record books at the cemetery show a Doris Shumm buried "at the city's expense" on March 4, 1932 in block N43WE. She is listed in the books as dying on February 31, 1932. Of course, we all know there are only 28 days in February.

The minister in attendance at the burial was a Rev Leung.

This goes to prove that the records don't always give you the whole truth. We can only assume at this point that Doris was her "English" name. For all you researchers out there, we're sure there is more to this story!

### Getting Higher at Ross Bay Cemetery      Wilf Bruch

No matter the size, cleaning a grave marker is always hard work, but a 30 foot monument is a special case. Never let it be said that the volunteers on your cleaning committee shrink from a challenge! In July we brought in scaffolding and tackled the tallest monument in Ross Bay Cemetery. The Spencer monument (Q59/60WX) is located near Memorial Crescent at Bushby Street and is the final resting place of 8 members of the Spencer family. Doesn't it look like new?

#### The Spencer Monument



Before....



....during....



....and after....

### Leechtown 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration Tour

Photo by Diana Pedersen

A very special Tour was organized at Ross Bay Cemetery 150 years to the very day that the Vancouver Island Exploring Expedition (VIEE) headed up the Sooke River.

It was July 13<sup>th</sup> 1864 when Peter Leech led his small group up the unexplored river system from the west coast. To celebrate this historic event, the Lt. Governor of British Columbia, the Hon. Judith Guichon, attended as our special guest. We also had two soldiers from the 39<sup>th</sup> Combat Engineers Regiment from Vancouver pay tribute to Peter Leech, who had been a member of the Royal Engineers, prior to his expedition on the Sooke River. Geoff Felker, his wife Charmaine, and their young son Gage, direct descendants of Lt. Peter Leech, were also guests at our presentation.

Prior to the ceremony and tour president Gerry Buydens greeted the Lt. Governor on her arrival at Ross Bay Villa. The interior of the Villa was resplendent and a fine finger lunch and coffee was provided. The Lt. Governor was introduced to our guests and had a chance to talk to the two servicemen, Cpl. Steve Raymond and Cpl. Mathew Currey from the 39<sup>th</sup> Combat Engineers.

At 2.00 PM precisely the sound of the bagpipes were heard, indicating that the public gallery had reached the Peter Leech gravesite. With the aid of a Victoria Police

### Patrick Lydon



Constable, the Lt. Governor and guests were escorted across the Fairfield Road to Ross Bay Cemetery. The Tour involved a presentation by Patrick Lydon that focused on Peter Leech, Mary MacDonald his wife, and the actual VIEE itself. The Lt. Governor then addressed the public and talked of the importance of historical phenomena and the need to recognize the figures from the past. The Lt. Governor talked about her own family's quest for gold before becoming ranchers. She quoted from Robert Service, "The Spell of the Yukon" and her speech was very well received by the spectators. The Lt. Governor, aided by her aide-de-camp, Lt. Commander Simon Brown, and by President Gerry Buydens, laid a beautiful wreath of flowers on the grave of Lt. Peter Leech. Pipe Major Steve Kelly then played the old Welsh lament "The Minstrel Boy".

The Gallery then moved to the grave of Emily Carr where two letters to Fanny Leech, the daughter of Peter Leech, were read. Finally we moved to the grave of Billy Barker, where Yvonne Van Ruskenveld gave a very spirited account of the greatest gold miner of them all. The Lt. Governor graciously remained for photos with many of our guests before being escorted back to her limousine by Gerry Buydens. It was a beautiful day and the Lt. Governor appeared to enjoy the occasion. We hope that in 50 years time, on the 200th anniversary of the finding of Gold on the Sooke and Leech Rivers, the presence and the remarks of the Lt. Governor will be remembered at Ross Bay Cemetery.

"He lies before the twin yew trees,  
A simple stone for bended knees,  
This Ross Bay Grave, will ever hold,  
the man who found the Leechtown Gold".

### **Tombstone Oddities**

#### **Free**



Matthew Sanford Robison was born severely handicapped due to lack of oxygen at birth. He was blind, mostly paralyzed, and spoke only a few words, but he was still able to touch many lives during his eleven year life. His monument in the Salt Lake City Cemetery symbolizes death freeing him from earthly burdens. It speaks volumes about how in this life we may have to suffer through hardships and trials, but when we pass to the other side, our spirits are free from these earthly disabilities.

### **Last Words**

#### **Lawrence Beeter**

“Maybe they only had one rocket.”

WWII British soldier who was taking cover in a bunker after it was hit by a rocket. A second volley destroyed the bunker and Beeter was killed.