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March – April 2012

OCS 2012 Walking Tours

A new season of walking tours has begun and the 2012 schedule is available. The printed version is available through the OCS office and is distributed to a number of locations in Greater Victoria; the electronic version is at the OCS website. Weekly reminders are being sent to members on email. There are many new tours this year, including some to celebrate “Victoria 150”, so be sure to attend as many tours as you can.

Tours start at 2:00 pm. Meet at 1:45 pm in front of Oregano’s, Fairfield Plaza, 1544 Fairfield Rd. Others start where noted.

Charge: \$5 for non-members; \$2 for members. No reservations needed. Tours are held regardless of weather. Contact oldcem@pacificcoast.net or 250.598.8870.

Some NEW tours in March-April include:

March 25. *An Angler’s Paradise.* From the 1880s to 1914 Vancouver Island was known throughout the British Empire as an “angler’s paradise,” its famous trout and salmon rivers attracting both settlers and wealthy tourists. Dr. Diana Pedersen will share her research on the social history of sport fishing and sporting tourism.

April 8. RBC. *Vimy Ridge 95th Anniversary.* World War I historian Yvonne Van Ruskenveld will commemorate one of the war’s most famous battles in which Canadian forces played a major role by visiting the graves of veterans and families linked to those who were there.

April 22. *Built by Parfitt Brothers.* Parfitt Bros. were one of Victoria’s foremost contractors in the 1900s, building George Jay School, Pemberton Memorial Chapel and the James Bay Inn. Three family members will relate family stories and discuss their significant building projects.

April 29. *Canadian Scottish Regiment (Princess Mary’s).* Military historian John Azar has prepared a new tour about people connected to this regiment which is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2012. The Regiment has a long history in Victoria. It has won many battle honours in World War I and World War II and has more recently served with distinction in numerous places overseas.

Report on the Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held on Wednesday, February 15 at James Bay New Horizons. The meeting was chaired by Don Reksten, Vice-President. Jac Slik presented the treasurer’s report. Don read the president’s report prepared by Wilf Bruch, and summarized the committee and coordinator reports.

Fern Perkins reported on “Stories in Stone”; Linda Boon gave an update on the RBC Database Project; and John Halliwell gave a report on the Thrifty’s Smile Card fundraising program.

The Executive for 2012 is Wilf Bruch - President; Gerry Buydens - Vice President and Past President; Jac Slik - Treasurer; Michael Halleran – Secretary. Members-at-large are: Drew Waveryn, Fern Perkins, Linda Richards, Stewart Dashwood, and Sharon Welsh. John Adams thanked retiring Board members Don Reksten, Bill Magee and John Halliwell for serving long and diligently over the years.

Copies of the Treasurer's Report and Committee Reports are available upon request from the office.

The business portion of the meeting ended at 8:10 PM.

After a refreshment break, the group was treated to a talk by Maureen Duffus about new stories and information in the updated version of "Craigflower Country".

Welcome to Board members

It has been a while since we had new faces on the Board. We extend a big welcome to Fern Perkins (our new "Stories in Stone" editor), who is now a Board member, and to Drew Waveryn who is a founding member of OCS and fortunately for us has decided to get involved again.

OCS Office

Our office at Ross Bay Villa, 1490 Fairfield Road, is open on Sundays 12:00 – 3:00 pm. The entrance is at the back on the lefthand (west) side. Office Coordinator Norah will be happy to assist with enquiries. The portable microphones are available there for tourgivers, and tickets are there for cashiers. If you want to use the office to do some research it would be helpful to book ahead as the space is quite limited. Phone 250.598.8870 or email oldcem@pacificcoast.net.

RBC Database Project

This important project is off the ground after some intensive planning and meetings organized by Linda Boon to put together a team of volunteers. The purpose of the project is to add relevant information in the OCS files and other sources to the RBC burial database. Volunteers have been recruited and are being trained to photograph grave markers; prepare and add them to the database; updating the database to connect to the Family History paper files; and adding the existing obituary card files. The information collected over many years in the recording project will eventually be scanned and included in the database.

Thrifty Foods Smile Card Program

Please don't forget to use your Thrifty Foods Smile Card to help raise funds for our Row Marker Project. These cards are available at the OCS office. They have helped to raise over \$2000 so far.

Volunteers

We need a volunteer to take care of serving tea, coffee and cookies at the May and September Speaker Meetings, and the February AGM at James Bay New Horizons. Not a huge job, but something less for the Executive to worry about.

Langham Court Theatre Fundraiser for OCS

Langham Court Theatre has provided us with a wonderful opportunity to raise funds and be entertained. We are offering tickets for the Friday, **9 March 2012** 8pm performance of "**Rabbit Hole**" for the REDUCED TICKET PRICE of \$15 (tickets are usually \$19/Adults - \$16/Seniors). In addition to the play, we are also invited to join the cast and crew in a question and answer talkback following the performance. The focus for the evening is to entertain and educate the audience about the process of mounting a show and to give insight into the meaning of the play itself.

You may buy as many REDUCED PRICE tickets as you wish - bring your friends and family!

Contact Sharon at 250.995.1322 or afterprior@shaw.ca. Sale of tickets will be on a first-come first-served basis.

Payment is by cheque or money order to the OCS post office box (we will mail your tickets or arrange alternative delivery) or if you prefer to pay cash, we will arrange to open the OCS Office at Ross Bay Villa to accommodate you and collect payment.

Rabbit Hole

Written by David Lindsay-Abaire Directed by Sylvia Rhodes

How can a family survive when the light of their lives has gone out? David Lindsay-Abaire's Pulitzer Prize-winning drama offers a view of personal tragedy that is at once mesmerizing and heart-wrenching, but full of compassion, humour and, finally, hope.

For more information about the play and theatre:

<http://www.langhamtheatre.ca/boxoffice/plays/rabbit-hole/>

Membership Renewals due in January 2012

We hate to lose members, but if you have not renewed your membership by March 15 this will be your last newsletter and your membership will be terminated. Sorry to sound so blunt, but, in order to keep our office open, keep programs going, send out newsletters and publish the May and June "Stories in Stone" we must have your support. Please don't put us through the painful task of removing you from our membership list!

Discover the Past Tours

John Adams has a new Spring schedule of very interesting neighbourhood walking tours. These 90-minute tours present the history, architecture, ethnology, and natural history of Victoria neighbourhoods and are highly recommended. Details are at www.discoverthepast.com. The Ghostly Walks and Chinatown Walks which are available all year.

50+ Active Living Celebration on March 6

OCS will have a booth at the Senior Expo Fair on Tuesday, March 6. The fair is held at Pearkes Arena and members of OCS are welcome to come and enjoy the fun-filled event. The doors open at 7:30 AM for exhibitors and for a pancake breakfast; the public is welcome from 9am-4pm. Gerry Buydens has a number of volunteers who will operate the OCS booth. Please drop by and say hello.

For more information on the expo you can check out the Senior Living magazine website:

<http://www.seniorlivingmag.com/festival>

Victoria 150 Celebration

OCS will be involved in the 2012 celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the incorporation of the City of Victoria. A symposium "Victoria, 1862" (jointly organized by OCS, Victoria Historical Society and Hallmark Heritage Society) will be held on September 29-30 with a very interesting program of speakers, tours and social events. The symposium will take a detailed look at the events leading to incorporation in August 1862 and life in the city at that time. Another project is being coordinated by Leona Taylor and Don Reksten to compile interesting articles from the 1862 British Colonist and add factual background information related to the stories. These will be published by OCS in a special edition of Stories in Stone "1862 and Beyond". Applications for grants to support these projects have been submitted.

BC Historical Federation AGM/Conference

"A Blast from the Past" is the theme for the BCHF conference at Campbell River from May 3 – 6, 2012. All OCS members are members of the BCHF so are entitled to member rates. Early bird registration ends on Mar. 15, so register now. There are workshops and an exciting programme of

tours, informative lectures by well-known local historians and a banquet dinner and awards ceremony. Information is at <http://www.bchistory.ca/>.

Victoria Historical Society Meetings

7:30PM, at the James Bay New Horizons Centre, 234 Menzies St., Victoria.

Meetings consist of a short business agenda followed by a guest speaker. Visitors are always welcome...your first visit is free!

March 22nd, 2012: Professor Barry Gough : *Juan de Fuca's Strait* Based on his forthcoming book on the history of the strait.

April 26th, 2012: Joan Giles: *Forty Years in Forty Movements: A History of the Victoria Conservatory of Music*.

The Association for Gravestone Studies

The Annual Journal "Markers XXVII (2010)" is available at the office and as usual contains some interesting articles including one on gravestone carvers and one on wooden artifacts in cemeteries. You are welcome to borrow this journal through the Office Coordinator.

Summer Student Application

We have applied to the Canada Summer Jobs Program for funding for a summer student to work on our gravesite recording project at Ross Bay Cemetery. If you know of any student who is in a post-secondary program related to History, or History in Art, and is skilled at sketching and database entry please have them leave a message for Don Reksten at 250-598-8870 or oldcem@pacificcoast.net.

Pioneer Square Management Plan

The first draft of the management plan was reviewed and discussed at a meeting of the Pioneer Square Advisory Group on February 15 (OCS represented by Don Reksten). There is general agreement on the proposed vision for the Square which is, in part, "to preserve and enhance the rich historical value of the cemetery while maintaining a park space that suits the needs of the surrounding community". Once a final report is agreed this will be shared at an Open House planned for the end of March. More information is available at:

<http://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/departments/parks-rec-culture/parks/improvements/pioneer-square.html>



Pioneer Square today

Victoria's First CemeteryLeona Taylor

The following is an article from The Daily Colonist, September 11, 1932 by R. T. Williams.

Any mental picture of Victoria cannot be complete without referring to the first cemetery here. If you were standing on Douglas Street with your back to the present Odd Fellows' Hall and looked west, you would have observed across the street a space fenced in, of about 120x120 feet, taking in the spot where the Beehive store was located and extending to Johnson Street.

The fence around the enclosure was made of rough split pickets, sharpened by the use of a hatchet. In the enclosed lots are three or four mounds and two leaning boards, marking the last resting place of the earliest of our pioneers.

The spot was overgrown with wild rose bushes and a row of berries which lent to the scene the lovely natural beauty that only nature can so lavishly provide. The entrance was situated in the centre of the lot where there was a wide gate, sufficiently large to admit a horse-drawn vehicle. Some of the bodies were removed from Douglas Street, after December 7, 1859, and placed in the Quadra Street Cemetery, that dear old hallowed spot which was dealt with so ruthlessly some years ago.

Tombstone TouristFern Perkins

A new regular feature of *Stories in Stone* is "Tombstone Tourist". It requires the participation of readers to contribute stories about gravesites they have visited. A series of questions, suggested by Diana Pedersen, to help focus the writer of a "Tombstone Tourist" article include:

What made you plan a trip to this cemetery? Have you been planning it for a long time? Whose grave were you looking for? Why? Do you have a connection with that person? How did you travel? How long did it take? Did you combine it with a vacation? Where was the cemetery located in relation to the nearest town or city? Was it hard to find? What was the setting? (rural? urban? on a hillside? beside a lake?) What was the condition of the cemetery? (abandoned? well-kept?) Was it a designated heritage cemetery? Who looks after it? How did you find the grave you were looking for? Was it difficult? Did someone help you? What was your impression of the grave marker? What did you think of the inscription? What was your reaction when you found the gravesite? What did you do at the gravesite? (reflect? take pictures? say a prayer? leave flowers?) Overall, do you think the trip was worth it? What did the experience mean to you?

The regular deadlines for *Stories in Stone* contributions are set at September 1 and February 1.

Extensions may be granted in consultation with the editor.

S. Fern Perkins, Editor, *Stories in Stone* fern.perkins@shaw.ca

Condolences**Gerry Elliot 1926-2012**

We are saddened by the news of Gerry Elliot's death on Feb. 21, 2012. Gerry was an early member and faithful supporter of OCS along with surviving wife Gerri. Gerry was a 4th generation Victorian. He went to sea early in his life and worked on tugs, CPR boats and in the Merchant Navy. He was well known for his Heritage Tours business which included a vintage Daimler limousine. The funeral was held on Feb. 27 at Christ Church Cathedral.

Joan (McIlmoyl) Cleghorn 1945-2011

We learned that Joan died suddenly on November 6, 2011. Joan was known to many of us as an expert on United Empire Loyalists and an active member of the Victoria Genealogy Society. She was involved in a number of Ross Bay Cemetery tours for OCS on the UEL and "Norman Morison" themes.

Desert CemeteriesWilf Bruch

Desert cemeteries are much different from the ones we know but nature is just as cruel. This monument is from 1908 at Liberty Cemetery outside Buckeye. As you can see, it has suffered the same fate as many in Ross Bay Cemetery. I have had a chance to visit some of the older closed cemeteries around Phoenix and hope to give a presentation on my return.

Rose #1Carole Todd

The following information is taken from the book *For Love of a Rose* by Antonia Ridge: Walk along the Thrifty Road into Ross Bay Cemetery as far as the mausoleum of Johnson. Turn around, you are looking at Thomas and Annie Hodges' grave. (Section U east of road 46 plot 33). The Rose here is 3-35-40.

This variety was developed in France by developer Meilland in 1935. The development continued to the beginning of WWII.

Three growers were sent budded root stock, Germany, Italy, and the U.S.A.

The French originator called his Madame A. Meilland. The German client called it Gloria Dei (Glory be to God). The Italian client called it Gioial Joy.

The American name was given on April 29, 1945 the end of the Second World War. "Peace" The Meilland growers received the prestigious "All American Award" to the new "Peace Rose", on the day the war with Japan ended.

Another peace rose is located in section W of the Ross Bay Cemetery, also section F.