



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

Correspondence: P.O. Box 50004, #15 – 1594 Fairfield Road, Victoria BC V8S 1G1
Telephone: (250) 598-8870 Fax: (250) 598-8811 Web Site: <http://www.oldcem.bc.ca>

May – June 2009

Spring Meeting

When: Wednesday, May 13, 7:30 p.m.

Where: James Bay New Horizons, 234 Menzies Street

Who: Richard Linzey, Senior Heritage Planner, BC Heritage Branch

What: “On Life and Death on Cole Island, Esquimalt”.

Cole Island is a part of the Esquimalt Naval Sites National Historic Site that commemorates a continuum of defence themes. From the establishment of a British Navy presence in the Pacific northwest in the mid-1840s through to its use by the Royal Canadian Navy until the end of WW II, Cole Island served as a magazine for the storage of ammunition and powder for the supply of the Pacific naval squadron.

There will be a short business meeting, refreshment break and the speaker. The meeting is free and open to the public, so spread the word!

Open House at Ross Bay Cemetery Wilf Bruch

May 17th is our annual Open House. This is our opportunity to showcase our organization to the community. We are planning cleaning demonstrations, a recording work bee, mini tours and we will have volunteers to look up family plots and show them where they are. So, please pass it on to all your friends and let Wilf know how you can help make this event a huge success. Phone Wilf Bruch 250-383-7414 or leave a message at the office.

Cleaning

May 17th will also be the kick-off for our 2009 cleaning and restoration year. Last year was very successful due to the hard work of some ten volunteers. We hope to see many of you back this year. To make sure you are on the phone list for cleaning bees, call Wilf Bruch at 250-383-7514 or e-mail. No previous experience is necessary.

Recording

Jane Bruch is just about ready to assign rows and plots for recording. She has spent some of the winter going over the already recorded sections to make sure they are complete. Where sections are not complete, we will try to finish them this year. To be part of this volunteer activity, one must be able to draw fairly well and have a keen eye for detail. If you are interested and would like more information email Jane.

Thanks to the Parks Department

We would like to thank the City of Victoria Parks Department for all the hard work they have put into improving Ross Bay Cemetery. Your accomplishments have been noticed.

Upcoming Sunday Tours at Ross Bay Cemetery

May 3 Voices from the Sound

May 10 Fabulous Flora

May 31 Surveyors and Mapmakers

June 14 Away with Rum

May 17 Ross Bay Cemetery Open House

June 21 City Fathers

May 24 Memorial Day

June 28 Music in Early Victoria – this new tour will feature live performances.

Coordinators for 2009

Wilf Bruch – Cleaning/restoration

Sven Jensen – Ticket sales

Jane Bruch – Recording

Russ Stewart – Stone Cuttings

Leona Taylor – Research

Bill Magee – Stories in Stone

Don Reksten/Leona Taylor – Media

Leona Taylor – Office

Kathy Miller – Refreshments

Linda Richards – Events Booth

John Adams – Tours

Ross Bay Cemetery Summer Student

Thirteen applicants responded to our posting for a Summer Student on the UVic Co-op Job Postings board. Four students were short-listed and interviewed April 9th. The successful candidate was offered the position subject to funding from Canada Summer Jobs. We should know by early May if our funding application is successful.

Old Burying Ground (Pioneer Square) Project

BC150-Heritage Legacy Fund



It was with great excitement that we received word on December 31, 2008 that our grant application had been approved. The Old Cemeteries Society (OCS) had for some time hoped that one day we would be able to consolidate and share the wealth of information about the Old Burying Ground (Pioneer Square).

We immediately set to work searching our own files, the BC Archives, the City of Victoria Archives, local church records and reading known publications about this historic cemetery. It was an immense job to research and write the history, gather the photos, and build a burial database in a three month period. Somehow it all came together.

One of the biggest challenges was creating the searchable database of 1300 burial records and including obituaries and grave marker photographs. Another was the development and design of web pages to present all the information in an accessible and useful format available to the whole community. Our thanks go to web designer Clifton Dildy for incorporating all our requirements into an attractive and functional addition to the OCS website. This is an accomplishment that we are extremely proud of and very thankful for the grant which made it all possible.

The second part of our project was to create a map of the cemetery showing some of its remaining monuments and the stories connected to them. From this map we have created a self-guided walking tour brochure which has been printed and is being distributed in the Greater Victoria area. This new walking tour brochure, designed by Dale Hitchcox, can also be downloaded from the website.

We sent out two press releases which generated an interview on the CBC Radio Morning Show and an article in the Victoria News (copy attached).

The new page on our web site www.oldcem.bc.ca was completed and launched on March 30, 2009. Thanks go to the project Steering Committee members Wilf Bruch, Don Reksten, Doug Miller, and John Adams. They, Fred Hook and Leona Taylor were also major contributors of material in the web pages.

Victoria Historical Society Meeting May 28

James Bay New Horizons, 234 Menzies Street, 7:30 pm

Speaker: Dr. Bob Griffin: Bamberton, Then and Now and Beyond.

An historical overview of Bamberton, BC, once a thriving quarry and cement manufacturing plant, by Dr. Bob Griffin of the Royal BC Museum and Maureen Alexander, historic research consultant and curator of the Bamberton site as a museum.

BC Historical Federation AGM/Conference May 14-17

The BCHF annual conference is being held in picturesque Nelson this year. There are many interesting activities as you can see from the BCHF website (linked to OCS website). The Honourable Stephen L. Point will be awarding the the Lieutenant-Governor's Medal for Historical Writing at the Opening Reception on Thursday evening, May 14th.

Sooke Excursion

We will be driving by the site that was a commune at Sooke in the mid-1920s that housed the Standfast Bible Students, as they awaited the end of the world. We'll have a sandwich and dessert lunch with tea/coffee at the Sooke Museum. The bus, with Elida Peers as guide, will take us around to various Sooke area heritage sites; there are always lots of places to visit, and never enough time to see everything, but we will include a tour of the Sooke Museum lighthouse. Some time in early June, the Sooke Museum will be celebrating its one millionth visitor - you never know, this could be especially exciting!

Please contact Leona Taylor directly to book a place on this excursion which now costs \$85 for the day [early booking date was April 15].

Volunteer Dinner Apr. 19, 2009

Our annual Volunteer Dinner took place at the Fairfield Community Place, Garry Oak Room, on Sunday April 19. The dinner is put on by the OCS Board to honour members and non-members who have volunteered as tour-givers, gravesite cleaners and recorders, Halloween patrollers, newsletter editors, researchers, office workers, and other capacities as needed. Leona Taylor, Kathy Miller, and Lynn Thomson prepared a wonderful meal of baked salmon, couscous salad, bean salad, green salad and homebaked dinner rolls. Linda Richards crafted the delightful flower basket table decorations, and other Board members took care of tables, chairs, and cleanup. Display panels illustrated the many activities made possible by our volunteers. Wilf Bruch was an entertaining Master of Ceremonies and recognized the contributions of our volunteers. The dinner ended with the traditional door prize and book raffle.