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November – December 2012

OCS Fall Meeting November 14, Wednesday, 7:30 pm at James Bay New Horizons, 234 Menzies Street. After a short business meeting, our speaker, Rose Stewart, will speak on the Day of the Dead in Mexico. Rose is a member of UVic's Dept. of Hispanic and Italian Studies.

Remembrance Cross Placements in the Cowichan Valley Mike Bieling

As so often in the past, days and days of October rain broke over the last weekend of the month for the Remembrance Cross Placements. Since 1926, local volunteers have followed a Cowichan Valley tradition during November of placing small white wooden crosses, decorated with a lapel poppy and a sprig of cedar, on the graves of veterans. On Saturday, October 27, twenty-nine remembrance crosses were set up at **Shawnigan Cemetery, Shawnigan Lake**. Cross placements



continued at the former **Mill Bay United Church**, which has 10 more veteran's burials, and at **St. Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Church, Mill Bay**, where another 32 veterans' burials were marked. The day concluded at the **Dougan Family Cemetery**, where two veteran's graves received crosses. A separate event was also held by Nanaimo's 136 (Amphion) Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps at **Cedar Memorial Gardens**. On Sunday, October 28, 2012, approximately 450 crosses were placed at **Mountain View Cemetery** and at **St. Mary's Anglican Church, Somenos, Duncan**, by cadets from the 744 (Cowichan) Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron, 2924 (Khowutzun) Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps, and 100 (Admiral Mainguy) Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps.

On Thursday, November 1, 2012, 31 crosses are scheduled to be placed at **All Saint's Anglican Church Cemetery, Westholme**, by students from Nanaimo's John Barsby Community School, and the same day about 250 will be set up at **St. Peters Anglican Church, Duncan**, by parish volunteers. The final ceremony will take place on Sunday, November 4, 2012, when 85 crosses will be raised at **St. John the Baptist Anglican Church, Cobble Hill**. At most of these locations, the crosses will remain up for the month of November.

Sunday Tour Schedule

Nov. 4. **Murder Most Foul** Back by popular demand! Michael Halleran takes us to graves of murderers and their victims.

Nov. 11. **Veterans' Cemetery Remembrance Tour** John Azar conducts his annual tour to veterans' graves, from the Crimean War to the present day. Meet at the Veterans' Cemetery off Colville Road near the Base Hospital.

Nov. 18. Victoria Esquimalt Military Reenactors Assoc. Tour Members of the association will be wearing World War I period clothing and will be stationed at the graves of World War I veterans to tell their life stories.

Nov. 25. Christ Church Cathedral Tour The present stone edifice from the 1920s is the third Anglican cathedral in the city. Meet inside the main doors of the cathedral on Quadra Street at the corner of Rockland Avenue.

Dec. 2. Old Burying Ground Christmas Tour One of Victoria's oldest cemeteries. Meet at the corner of Quadra Street and Rockland Avenue.

Dec. 9. Ross Bay Christmas Tour John Adams continues the yuletide theme with more warm-hearted and humorous stories, including many about Emily Carr. A holly wreath will be placed on Emily Carr's family plot, an annual tradition of the OCS. Emily's birthday is December 13.

OCS Pot Luck

The potluck for OCS members was held on Wednesday, Sept 12. Approximately 30 people enjoyed a variety of food and a beautiful evening. Although there were numerous prizes, Norah Reksten was the winner of a beautiful basket of goodies donated by Tim Horton's.

2013 OCS Board Candidates

It's not too early to start thinking about nominations for the 2013 Board. If you are willing to serve or want to nominate someone for any of the Board positions please contact Gerry Buydens, gbuydens@shaw.ca, phone 250 383-4873, or leave a message at the OCS office.

Ghost Walk on October 28 Gerry Buydens

I would like to thank all the volunteers who participated in putting on the ghost walk tour. Without your help this event could not happen. You do not realize the number of people required, but 34 people assisted in putting on this event. Thank you all for your time and effort. A number of customers complimented the professionalism displayed by everyone in the delivery of this tour. 154 people attended. The event raised \$707 from ticket sales and \$48.56 from book sales and donations.

Thank you for a job well done



Cleaning & Restoration Report Sharon Welsh & Wilf Bruch

Work parties were held on September 8, 22, and 29 and on October 13 & 20. We started our work parties on June 2 and, for the best part, have completed cleaning and restoring (raising and straightening) Section U and Section V. Many of the cement tops and curbing in block V & W were also power washed where water was available.

As we put away the buckets, hoses and brushes for another year, we can truly stand back and say "We have made a difference"

Thank you to Rex Frost, Pat Lydon, Linda Boon, Don Grant, Barbara and Paul Dickson, Andrew Merpaw, Ron Jeffries, Sue Couch, and Jim Nyland. Each of you has contributed much to the Old Cemeteries Society and to Ross Bay Cemetery.

Row Marker Project Wilf Bruch

We have finally placed the last row marker in Ross Bay Cemetery. At about \$30 each, this has been a major undertaking for our society over the past three years. Thrifty Foods Smile Card Program has gone a long way towards covering this cost and generous support from our membership has enabled its completion.

So what is next? Do you have a suggestion? Is there something you would like to see done at Ross Bay? Please send us your comments so we can start working on them now.



Work at Ross Bay Cemetery**Wilf Bruch**

Over the past few weeks the city parks department has been busy repairing some of the worst grave sites. This entailed bringing in equipment to break up collapsed cement grave tops and remove it from the cemetery. Truck loads of gravel were then brought in to fill the cavities. Some of them will be topped up with soil and seeded and others will be cemented over. One site in particular to watch is Emily Carr's grave. The Parks Department will be pouring a cement skirt about 18 inches wide around the grave. This should happen before mid November. The area around Emily's grave has been a mess for some time and has always been hard to maintain. This improvement should make a big difference. If you see any of the caretakers in the cemetery, tell them that you notice the difference.

Anti-vandalism patrols were undertaken again this year on October 27th, 30th and 31st. About fifty volunteer hours were used this year to try and protect our vulnerable cemetery from vandals. It is not the nicest or easiest job but if we don't do it, who will? If we save one marker we can consider it time well spent and worthwhile.

So, to all you who spent a few cold hours at Ross Bay Cemetery this Halloween, thank you!

Leechtown Trip Sep 15 Pat Lydon

On Saturday, September 15, some 37 Members boarded the bus at Tillicum Mall. Elida Peers gave a presentation at the Sooke Museum about Leechtown and the history of the 1929 Cairn, and indicated that Leechtown might become part of the watershed area. We might be among the last historians to see the town in its natural state.



We drove to the Charters River Interpretive Centre where we enjoyed a packed lunch and coffee. Gerry Buydens presented Elida Peers with a box of chocolates and Pat Lydon gave her a small nugget from the Leech River as a token of our thanks and appreciation.

Some 40 minutes later we were in Leechtown. Tom Paterson gave a spirited talk about the area and commented on the myths and stories regarding stolen treasure, the "Spanish Steps", and the "sunken boot with stolen gold". We then crossed the Sooke River and the Galloping Goose Trail and saw old machinery rusting at the side of the road.

We also found the CRD sign for Leechtown. The CRD will designate a new "station" named Leechtown, one of some 9 new "stations" on the galloping Goose Trail, and this will be completed by the end of 2013! On the bus home we had a free raffle for some gold nuggets from the Leech River. Peter Rizzie, age 8, and Doug Miller were the lucky recipients!

The Eagle Has Flown**Wilf Bruch**

On Thursday, October 11, 2012 the eagle monument in the lower block F of Ross Bay Cemetery, left its home for good. This hand made sculpture of an eagle atop of a cement base with two brass plaques on its face has been a much visited and photographed landmark for some twenty-four years. The eagle was erected to commemorate the life of Barnard Erickson 1916-1988 and John Layton 1945-1985.



Kit Pearson mentions the eagle in her book "Awake and Dreaming" and we have used it as a point of interest on our tours. This unique monument will be missed by all of us who frequent Ross Bay Cemetery. The family has moved it to an undisclosed location in Vancouver.

Victoria Genealogical Society Conference**Linda Richards**

On Oct. 20th, the Old Cemeteries Society was invited to have a Resource Table at the Victoria Genealogical Society Conference! Their topic was "Updating the Basics" and as a minor researcher, I am always interested in expanding my knowledge of how to go about it!

The venue at the Vancouver Island Technology Center was incredible! Don Grant, who was in charge of the setting up, was a real help! He not only made sure that we had a table, but also that we had a power

source for the computer and anything else that we needed or wanted! And he was nice enough to help me when I messed up on the data base!

I am always happy to attend an event like this, as it gives us the chance to let people know what we are willing and certainly able to do with the research side of the Society! We have some excellent researchers that are willing to comb the Archives for Birth and Death Certificates, as well as Wills and Probates, etc. There is a small fee for us to do this, but it is less than other societies charge and if you have ever gone into the Archives and felt over whelmed, it is so worth it! Leona Taylor and her Research committee know all the ins and outs of the Archives.

There was a lot of interest in our programs and I hope that we will have a number of queries as well as new descendants to add to our files!

Thank you Don Grant and everyone involved for the invitation!

A Family Christmas, Sorrow and Joy

G. Mark Perkins

Watch for another Story in Stone in the spring about an excellent officer with the Saanich Fire Department, who tragically died at a house fire in the early hours of December 25, 1968. He is buried at Royal Oak Cemetery. Lieutenant Thomas Jennings was born February 28, 1914 and served his community with faithful dedication. He went to the fire station as usual on Christmas Eve, for his routine night shift of fourteen hours. Tom received the good news that his daughter had given birth to his Christmas granddaughter while he was on duty. He planned to see her for the first time at St. Joseph's Hospital on Humboldt Street, in Victoria, when he got off that Christmas morning. Sadly, it was to be his last tour of duty and he never returned home.

An annual national tribute is held in Ottawa each September to honour Canada's heroes and their families, who have given the ultimate sacrifice while providing selfless Fire/Rescue protection to the citizens of their own and neighbouring communities. The executive members of Saanich Fire Department's IAFF Local 967 are currently in the process of recording Lieutenant Jennings with the Canadian Fallen Firefighters Foundation registry. A local commemoration is scheduled to be unveiled near the Parliament Buildings in Victoria next spring. Plans are being made, as well, for an article in the spring edition of *Stories In Stone* and possibly a tour sponsored by the Old Cemeteries Society next year. This story of one life taken away and a new life given, needs to be told.

Christmas Greetings from the President and Executive

"It came without ribbons! It came without tags! It came without packages, boxes or bags!"...

Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before!

"Maybe Christmas," he thought, "*doesn't* come from a store. Maybe Christmas... perhaps... means a little bit more!"

~Dr. Seuss, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*

May you have the gladness of Christmas which is hope;

The spirit of Christmas which is peace;

The heart of Christmas which is love.

~Ada V. Hendricks

As another year slips away, this great collection of people from different backgrounds and with different passions that we call The Old Cemeteries Society, can truly look back on 2012 as a year of many successes.

Thanks to each of you and we wish you much happiness over the Christmas season.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

