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November – December 2013



Fall colours by Susan Henderson

Lest We Forget

On Sunday November 10, John Azar conducts his annual tour at the Veterans Cemetery off Colville Road in Esquimalt.

An OCS team is working on a display to be mounted in the Royal BC Museum on November 10 & 11. One or more of the team will make a presentation on this display at the members' pot luck dinner on Friday October 25. Also, please contact Sharon Welsh afterprior@telus.net if you can help at the display on November 10th and 11th.

OCS Fall Meeting

When: Wednesday November 13 at 7:30 p.m.

Where: James Bay New Horizons, 234 Menzies Street.

Who: John Motherwell, P. Eng., will present an illustrated talk on his book *Gold Rush Steamboats: Francis Rattenbury's Yukon Venture*.

Ghost Bus-tours®

Dates and times:

Saturday Oct. 19 at 6:30 p.m.

Saturday Oct. 26 at 6:30 and 9:00 p.m.

Friday Oct. 25 at 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday Oct. 30 at 6:30 p.m.

Tours will start in the parking lot of the Oak Bay Marina and follow a route through Oak Bay, the Uplands, Gordon Head, then down to the Gorge. Tickets are \$34.00 each and must be reserved in advance. Book online at www.ticketrocket.org or call Ticket Rocket, 250-590-6291.

Annual Ghost Walk Tour

Sunday October 27 at Ross Bay Cemetery. Tours depart in front of Oregon's in Fairfield Plaza every 15 minutes from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Approximately 45 volunteers are required. Would you be willing to be a story teller this year? We will supply the story. Please respond to Gerry Buydens ASAP, 250-383-4873 or gbuydens@shaw.ca



Halloween Patrols



We will be patrolling Ross Bay Cemetery on October 31 and November 01. Shift times are 8 to 10 p.m. and 10 to 12 p.m. Please advise Sharon Welsh of your availability at 250-995-1322 or afterprior@telus.net

Jac Slik Obituary

Our valued treasurer, Jacques (Jac) Slik, died on August 27, 2013, at age 63. Jacques was an educator who taught in Bella Coola, Saskatoon, Castlegar, Chilliwack, Spence Bay and Squamish. We extend condolences to his family.

Pot Luck Dinner

Friday October 25 at 4:45 p.m. at the Garry Oak Room, Fairfield Community Centre. Please bring a dish to share with other members. We will provide cake & ice cream, plates, cups, glasses & cutlery.

Urgent, Treasurer Needed

Gerry Buydens

Our treasurer, Jac Slik, passed away in late August and we are desperately looking for a replacement. We use Quicken, 2003 version. The program and data is set up on one of our laptop computers that is kept by the treasurer. We do have some expertise in operating this system. If you are able to assist it will be truly appreciated. Contact Gerry Buydens at 383-4873 or gbuydens@shaw.ca

Cleaning and Restoration

Sharon Welsh

Summer of 2013 saw a moderate amount of restoration at Ross Bay Cemetery. We were able to repair and raise ten broken monuments, restore the tile work on the Huston monument and do a bit more preservation work on the Houston Mausoleum.



Wilson mausoleum before cleaning



Wilson mausoleum after cleaning

Our first 2013 work party in Ross Bay Cemetery met on 01 Jun and the last one on 05 Oct, with up to six volunteers each time. The only rainy day was on 28 Sep. This year we concentrated on Section O and part of section Q.

People visiting the cemetery and strolling through it stopped to talk. We welcomed visitors from England, Ireland, Wales, Maine, California, Washington, northern BC, several of the gulf islands, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario, and many from Victoria. Many made comments on the beauty and size of the cemetery and commented favourably on our work.

Volunteers included Rex Frost, Sue Couch, Pat Lydon, Linda Boon, Yo Knapp, Yvonne Pratt, Lynn Thompson, Kathryn Bergstrom, Drew Wavelyn, Mark Perkins, Angela Dyck, Walter, Wilf Bruch, and Gerry Buydens. You have made a difference!

Cowichan Tour

Peggy Magee

If you like scary stories, forget ghosts and goblins; explore Tom Paterson's true-life and true-death stories of the Cowichan Valley. To add to the spooky factor we had fog most of the day of our tour, September 14. Because the Valley is broad with a web of roads to small villages and many churches there is always more to learn.

At the time that Victoria was dealing with government and gold rush issues and Nanaimo was deep into coal mining, Cowichan was drawing retired British army officers and immigrants from Europe who were attracted to the farming possibilities. For this trip, a full-size bus picked us up at 9:00 a.m. and took us on the route Tom had chosen to most of the 13 historical cemeteries in the Valley.

Some of the earliest churches were built by sawmill workers, some were not consecrated and did not have ministers for many years, and some congregations outgrew their church and moved the building but left the adjacent cemetery.

Graves of babies always remind us of the advances in medicine, but nothing can prepare us for the accidents, such as befell Francis Garnett who was crushed between two "man-sized" logs, but lived long enough to give orders for his helpers to have the ox team pull the logs apart. Francis and his wife, Lizzie, are buried beside the Mill Bay United/Methodist church. Worrying about graves in Ross Bay Cemetery being washed away, the Deloume family from France moved their matriarch from RBC to St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church of Mill Bay.

At the cemetery of St. John the Baptist in Cobble Hill, we found a memorial stone to the three Hook sons, victims of war. Nearby are buried the Oldhams, parents of Dr. Frances Kelsey, former director of the US Food and Drug Administration, who refused to approve the use of thalidomide, thus saving the country from that calamity.

Knitters will be interested to know that Jedediah Muzzy is buried at Mountain View Cemetery. An immigrant from the Orkneys, Jedediah taught the local First Nations people to knit and that was the beginning of the Cowichan sweater craft.

St. Peter's Quamichan, with its numerous military officers and spring flowers, is the most famous cemetery in the area.

Lunch, picnic style, on Cowichan Bay, and a few more visits to cemeteries rounded out another pleasant OCS tour.

To find out more, pick up a copy of T.W. Paterson's "Tales the Tombstones Tell", his most recent book.

Report on Symposium 2013 Fern Perkins

The Fort Victoria Heritage Symposium was celebrated September 29th at the Newcombe Conference Hall in the Royal BC Museum with all 120 seats filled. Several people were turned away because no more available seating was available. The symposium was co-hosted by seven societies: Friends of the BC Archives, Old Cemeteries Society, Hallmark Heritage Society, L' Association historique francophone de Victoria, Victoria Heritage Foundation, Victoria Historical Society, and the Royal BC Museum.

Nine presenters were skillfully kept on time and focus by Sylvia Van Kirk, who acted as chair for the symposium. Presentations began with Fort Victoria in the Aboriginal World by John Lutz and the 1842 Lewes Map by Michael Layland. After a break, Building the Fort by Jamie Morton and Operating the Fort by Graham Brazier completed the morning offerings.

After lunch, The Francophones were remembered by Gisele Samson, the Kanakas by Jean Barman, and then the Families of Fort Victoria. The Ross Family story was told by Fern Perkins, followed by the Finlayson story told by Pam Gaudio. Bill Irvine told the Irvine family story to complete the afternoon presentations.

The final event was a walk around the bricks that outline the footprint of Fort Victoria. It happened during the only clear break in the day. The following note was typical of the feedback to the committee chair, Ron Greene:

“Congratulations to you and all the organizers for the event on Sunday. I cannot remember attending ANY event, ever, that was such a joy. Everything moved along quickly as it should – the speakers all left us wishing for more. The subject matter was all encompassing and interesting ... the presenters all knowledgeable and engaging. I cannot think of anything to say as ‘if only next time you would change...’ [I would have to say it was disappointing that none of the First Nations folks attended, but I suspect that was not in your control.] That the rain even stopped for our walk around the footprint of the fort was remarkable.

You know, Fort Victoria isn't even a major interest in my research, (Fort Langley is my focus), yet I loved the day. Seeing so many other research friends was an added bonus.”

We look forward to next year!

Pioneer Square update



Wilf Bruch

Work continues on the restoration project at Victoria's second cemetery. New pathways are being built and lighting installed in an effort to make the old cemetery more inviting and park like. Some of the old grave markers are also being cleaned and restored. Of note are the Carter Monument and Wallace obelisk

which have been taken apart, cleaned and reassembled on a new concrete bases. We look forward to the project's completion in mid November.

November and December Tours

Nov. 3. Murder Most Foul. Back again by popular demand, Michael Halleran takes us to graves of murderers and their victims and tells the grisly tales he has found in coroners' files and old newspapers.

Nov. 10. Veterans' Cemetery Remembrance Tour. John Azar conducts his annual tour to veterans' graves. **Meet at the Veterans' Cemetery, one of Victoria's most picturesque. access off Colville Rd. near the Base Hospital.**

Nov. 17. Masjid Al-Iman: A Visit to Victoria's New Mosque. Opened in November 2012, Masjid Al-Iman was built by the Victoria Branch of the BC Muslim Association, which adheres to the Quran and Sunnah. **Meet at the mosque, 2218 Quadra St.**

Nov. 24. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. Tour the church (built in 1890) with its curved balcony, view the magnificent stained glass windows such as the tribute to Robert Dunsmuir, and learn about the church's archives and burial records that date from 1868. **Meet at the front doors, Douglas St. corner of Broughton.**

Dec. 1. Old Burying Ground Christmas Tour. New Christmas tales and old favourites, combined with history of one of Victoria's oldest cemeteries. **Meet at the corner of Quadra Street and Rockland Avenue.**

Dec. 8. 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.

The tour schedule will resume on Sunday, February 16, 2014, at Ross Bay Cemetery. OCS members will be able to pick up a 2014 schedule at the annual general meeting.

Last Words

Lady Nancy Astor 1879-1965

In her final illness, she awoke to see her family at her bedside.

“Am I dying or is it my birthday?”