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September – October 2013

Tour Schedule

All tours are at Ross Bay Cemetery at 2 P.M. on Sunday unless otherwise notified.

Sept. 1. Favourite Stories from the Old Cemeteries Files. OCS members will present some of their favourite stories collected over the past 25 years. Since the tours began in 1987 thousands of stories have been researched and told. Today's tour features the highlights.

Sept. 8. Firefighters. Retired Victoria fireman, Mark Perkins, has a wealth of information about the city's firefighting history. He will visit the graves of many firemen who are buried at Ross Bay Cemetery and tell fascinating stories about their lives and work.

Sept. 15. Poetry Connections. Professor Emeritus of English, Bill Magee, has put together a delightful tour based on poems, including Ode on a Grecian Urn, The Ballad of Sir Patrick Spens and Bishop Orders His Tomb at St. Praxed's Church.

Sept. 22. Jewish Cemetery Tour. This year marks the 150th anniversary of Synagogue Emanu-El, so OCS has prepared a tour of the Jewish Cemetery (which is even older) to visit the graves of members of the congregation and tell their stories.

Meet outside the cemetery gates, Fernwood Road at Cedar Hill Road. Men please wear a hat.

Sept. 29. Mysterious Mary Ann. Historian and archivist Sherri Robinson will lead this first-time tour based on her research about nurseries and greenhouses, especially the Fairview Nursery where Esquimalt Plaza is today. Mary Ann, the owner for many years, had an amazing life.

Oct. 6. Women's History at RBC. One of the highlights of Women's History Month is Yvonne Van Ruskenveld's annual tour with new stories about famous, daring, heroic, forgotten and sometimes unusual women buried at RBC.

Oct. 13. Provisioners. Sylvia Van Kirk will visit the graves of grocers, butchers, bakers and other provisioners who provided 19th century Victorians with their food and drink.

Oct. 20. Psychic Tour. Clairvoyant medium Dawn Kirkham and members of her paranormal investigating team *Beyond Belief Paranormal Events* will lead a walk through the cemetery and share information they receive from the location or the spirits they encounter. They will also explain what clairvoyance is and demonstrate some basic techniques they use.

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 Rattebury's Yukon Venture*.

Field Trip to the Cowichan Valley- Sep. 14 (Saturday) A day-long coach excursion conducted by Tom Paterson to cemeteries and historic sites. Open to OCS members only; to register non-members must join OCS. Cost is \$60.00 and lunch is included. Contact the office to register.

Ghost Bus Tours- Oct. 18 –30 Our 20th annual bus excursion past some of Victoria's most haunted sites. New route and many new stories. Reserve your seat early. Check the web site www.discoverthepast.com

Hallowe'en Patrols & Sunday October 27 Ghost Walk Tours at Ross Bay Cemetery

The 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 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. Our annual Ghost Walk Sunday Tour on October 27 is always in need of volunteers. We need ticket sellers, story tellers, refreshment volunteers and pilots.

If you are able to help out with either of these events please leave your name by e-mail oldcem@pacificcoast.net or phone 250-598-8870 or Gerry Buydens at gbuydens@shaw.ca

150th Anniversary of Fort Victoria Tour



Pam Gaudio, a relative of the Finlaysons, spoke at the family monument.

Photos by Diana Pedersen



Fern Perkins, a great-great-granddaughter of Charles and Isabella Ross, unveiled the new marker.

Cleaning & Restoration

Sharon Welsh

A small but diligent bunch have been working since June 1st. We have completed the small portion of Section Q along Memorial Drive between the two paths, where we scraped moss and removed dirt and overgrowth. Although there is no water in Section Q, one Saturday we were able to string together five hoses to bring water down from

Section P and wash the Wilson stone. We have now moved across the path to Section O. The Frizzell grave is an example of our work. We removed about two inches of moss and underneath we found beautiful tiles.



Wilson before...



Wilson after...



Frizzell before... Frizzell after...

Huston Grave Site Restoration Wilf Bruch

Three years ago the Huston grave site (C33/34E25) looked like a big overgrown bush. A volunteer laurel bush had been allowed to grow within the perimeters of the grave and totally covered the site. When the City of Victoria Parks staff removed the bush we found marble and slate tiles encompassed by a large garnet curbing. On top of the tiles were two marble markers which had not seen the light of day for many decades. The curbing was sunken and had been pushed apart by the laurel bush, the tiles were black from years of exposure to rotting leaves and had separated from the concrete top, but fortunately the tiles were all there. We removed the tiles and over the next year cleaned, sanded and polished them. The curbing was taken apart and reset. Last fall the City Parks Dept put a new concrete cover on the site. This summer the tiles were reinstalled and should be good for another 100 years. A conservative estimate of volunteer hours spent on this restoration project is 50 hours. Here are some photos:



Ross/Grimm Restoration

In September we will be starting second phase of our 2013 Ross/ Grimm restoration project. Removal of the Grimm fence will be necessary to have it sandblasted and refinished. A new gate has to be fabricated and about 40 new pieces have to be made and installed on the refinished fence. Please remember that Thrifty Foods is a partner in this project through their Smile Card Fundraiser Program. Every dollar you spend with your Smile Card helps fund this special restoration.



Grand Opening of Ross Bay VillaWilf Bruch

Photo by Gordon Switzer

On August 4 The Ross Bay Villa Society and the Land Conservancy opened the doors of Ross Bay Villa to the community for a lawn party, house tours and to celebrate thirteen years of restoration. The exterior of the house boasts many of the original architectural details characteristic of the 1860s Gothic Revival style, and its interior exhibits rooms have been completely restored with period wallpapers, furnishing, floor coverings and artifacts. In addition to Ross Bay Villa's function as a

historic house museum, it is also the home for the offices of the Hallmark Heritage Society and the Old Cemeteries Society, and serves as a hub for heritage activity in the community.

Congratulations to The Ross Bay Villa Society and their many volunteers on a job well done. Your dedication and hard work is truly visible and we are proud to call the Villa our home.

Tribute to Sheila DalyBill Magee and Gerry Buydens

At the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner on June 9th a tribute was made to Sheila Daly for her years of giving & volunteering for the Old Cemeteries Society. Sheila was one of the founding members of Old Cemeteries Society. She was the group's secretary for many years. John Adams spoke of Sheila's contributions in the early days. Bill Magee talked about the various activities Sheila took on over the years. Peggy Magee presented Sheila with a lovely bouquet of flowers.

For over twenty years at the annual Christmas tour at Ross Bay Cemetery a wreath has been laid on the Carr family plot, continuing a tradition that Emily started. Thanks to Sheila these beautiful wreaths have provided a splendid memorial to the artist and her family. They are one of Sheila's many contributions to the Old Cemeteries Society in its formative years. She enhanced the research program with both tours in the cemetery and articles in the journal and leaves us with happy memories to cherish.

Sheila thanked the group for all the kind words and reminisced about how things were in the formative years. She mentioned that meetings in the good old days were held up stairs in Carr House.

We wish Sheila well as she retires to Calgary to be near family.

Pioneer Square Restoration ProjectFrom the Victoria Times-Colonist

Ravenstone Inc. has been awarded a \$160,000 contract to repair the bases of 32 tombstones in Pioneer Square as the first phase of a \$700,000 redevelopment of the historic park. Wilf Bruch is the OCS representative on the city's design committee.

The Blue Angel Restored

We are pleased to report that the descendents of Charles Edward Pooley have had the damaged wing of the Blue Angel repaired.



BC Heritage Fair

On July 6, 2013, The Old Cemeteries Society hosted a workshop for about 80 students attending this years BC Heritage Fair. The students were given a chance to learn first hand how our society works to preserve our historic cemeteries. We set up three stations; Cleaning, Recording and Story Telling. Each student spent a half hour at each station actually drawing listening to stories or cleaning. We hope they went away with a better understanding of cemeteries. Thanks to Gerry, Sharon, Michael, Wilf and Jane for putting this workshop together.



Tom Paterson Answers A Tombstone Challenge

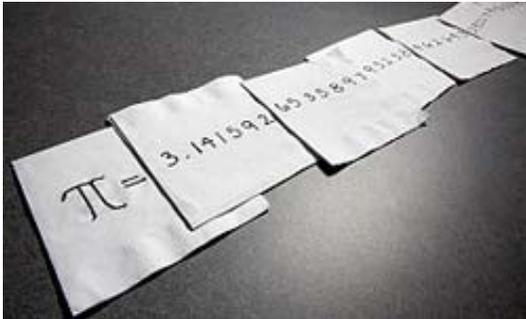


Further to the question posed in the Jul-Aug issue of *Stone Cuttings* of the hands clenching a staff in St. Andrew's churchyard, Cowichan Station, Tom points out that OCS members who have read his book, *Tales the Tombstones Tell: A Walking Guide to Cemeteries in the Cowichan Valley*, will know that Nigel Kingscote, a lifelong farmer at Cowichan Bay, is resting on his shovel after a lifetime of work. He and his wife, Dorothy, operated a commercial piggery. Nigel was still working at age 82 in 1986, the year he died. Dorothy died in 2004.

Charlene Rees Obituary

We are very sad to learn that founding member Charlene Rees died at Royal Jubilee Emergency on Friday, August 23, 2013. Her health problems had been becoming more complicated in the last few months and her death was due to a number of issues. She served the Old Cemeteries Society in many ways since 1991 when she was vice-chair with John Adams as chair. Between then and 1997 she volunteered at the Halloween patrols at Ross Bay Cemetery; served on the research committee and membership committee; and managed the office when it was located in a basement room on Stannard Street. She and her husband Bill often volunteered at the Halloween Ghost Walks at the information table. She will be remembered as a dedicated member and promoter of the aims of OCS. Our deepest sympathies go out to her husband Bill, sister Darlene and Inez Martin, her aunt and past OCS Board member.

Tombstone Oddities: "3.14159265358979323846264338327950".



Math students will recognize the number on Dutch mathematician **Ludolph van Ceulen's** grave as pi -- the mathematical constant used to calculate the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter. Van Ceulen, who died from unknown causes in 1610 at age 70, was the first to calculate the value of pi to 35 digits. He was so proud of this achievement that he asked that the number be engraved on his tombstone.

Tombstone Details by Susan Henderson



Last Words

Union General John Sedgwick

1813-1864

Encouraging his men to ignore Confederate sharpshooters at the Battle of Spotsylvania:
 "They couldn't hit an elephant at this distance."