



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

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## **September – October 2011**

### **Fall Events**

#### **September-October Tours**

All walking tours meet in front of Starbucks Coffee, Fairfield Plaza. Arrive at 1:45 pm for start at 2:00 pm. Admission is \$5, no reservations needed.

**September 4 Picnic Day at Ross Bay Cemetery.** The Old Cemeteries Society is reviving the Victorian tradition of taking a picnic to the cemetery while visiting family graves. Whether or not you know anyone buried there, come on your own or with a group to take part in this first annual event. Picnics, grave cleaning and recording will be ongoing from 12:00 noon to 3:00 pm. Start your visit at Ross Bay Villa, 1490 Fairfield Rd.

**September 11 Orcadian Connections** – Sylvia Van Kirk

**September 18 Is Anyone Here Named Smith?** – Joyce Mackie

**September 25 Keeping in Touch the Old Fashioned Way** – Bill Magee

**October 2 Emily Carr Tour** - team

**October 9 Two Unsolved Murders** – Linda Eversole

**October 16 Women's History** – Yvonne Van Ruskenveld

**October 23 I Live in the House Of....** – Hallmark Society

**October 30 Annual Ghost Tour** at Ross Bay Cemetery. Tours depart in front of Starbucks Coffee, Fairfield Plaza, every 15 min. from 1 to 3 pm to accommodate large numbers. This is always the OCS's most popular tour of the year. No reservations required.

### **Thanks to Yvonne and Glenn**

Yvonne and Glenn have got us through another summer of entertaining and colourful Sunday afternoon tours at Ross Bay Cemetery. Glenn gives the lively “Gossip in the Graveyard” tour alternating with Yvonne’s captivating “Gold Rush!” tour.

### **Lantern Tour**

Gerry Buydens

A small group has requested a Lantern Tour for Friday, September 2 at 7 pm. Tour starts at the site of old Cherry Bank Hotel. OCS members are welcome to join the lantern tour. Cost \$5 for non members & \$2 for members. Just meet at the site of the old Cherry Bank

Hotel. For information regarding this tour contact Gerry Buydens at 383-4873 or [gbuydens@pacificcoast.net](mailto:gbuydens@pacificcoast.net)

### **Ghost Bus-tours©**

John Adams has prepared the stories and will conduct each tour this year. Volunteers are required to sell books and to help passengers on and off the buses. Call the OCS office, 250-598-8870 or Wilf at 250-383-7514. Tour tickets are \$31 plus HST, and will be available exclusively through Tourism Victoria starting September 13. You may order your tickets from Tourism Victoria at the counter at the Visitor Information Centre, by telephone by calling 250.953.2033 or on the web at [www.tourismvictoria.com/ghosts](http://www.tourismvictoria.com/ghosts)

#### **Tours are scheduled at the following dates and times:**

Friday Oct. 21 at 6:30 pm Saturday Oct. 22 at 6:30 and 9:00 pm

Friday October 28 at 6:30 and 9:00 pm Saturday October 29 at 6:30 and 9:00 pm

Sunday October 30 at 6:30 pm

**Friday October 28 and Saturday October 29** are the “at risk” Halloween days this year and we will be patrolling the cemetery in an effort to prevent vandalism. There are two shifts to choose from, 8 pm to 10 pm and 10 pm to midnight. Call Wilf at 250 383 7514, or [wbruch@shaw.ca](mailto:wbruch@shaw.ca).

### **Time to start thinking about the Sunday, October 30th Ghost Tour in Ross Bay**

**Cemetery** We need volunteers to act as story tellers, pilots to direct patrons on the tour, and to help with refreshments and the sales table. Please contact [gbuydens@pacificcoast.net](mailto:gbuydens@pacificcoast.net) or 383-4873.

Fall Speakers Evening

**November 9 (Wednesday) 7:30 pm at James Bay New Horizons, 234 Menzies Street. Speaker to be announced.**

Field trip

We are thinking of doing a field trip for members to Leechtown in late September or early October. However we need to know how many members would be interested. If you are interested and available, please email the office [oldcem@pacificcoast.net](mailto:oldcem@pacificcoast.net) of your interest and preferred Saturday. If we get a positive response, we will proceed to organize it and notify everyone interested.

### **Happenings this summer**

#### **Pioneer Square (Old Burying Ground) Planning Project**

A very successful, well-attended Open House was held at Christ Church Cathedral on June 21. A number of display panels explained the history of Pioneer Square and the issues needing attention and improvement. Through this open house; public consultation sessions in the square on June 23 and 29; and an online version, about 300 respondents completed a questionnaire. The Advisory Group is studying the results of the survey. The next step is to draft a management plan reflective of the Advisory Group conversations and the open house results. It is hoped to meet again in early October to discuss the first draft. A second open house is planned for later. Two reports have been completed: a

"Stone Conservation Report" by Ken Johnson, and a "Tree Resource" report by Talbot Mackenzie and Associates describing trees in the square. The City of Victoria website has a page for the Pioneer Square planning project:

[http://www.victoria.ca/cityhall/compar\\_prkimp-consult-pioneer-square.shtml#](http://www.victoria.ca/cityhall/compar_prkimp-consult-pioneer-square.shtml#)

The OCS website has a Pioneer Square (Old Burying Ground) section at [http://www.oldcem.bc.ca/cem\\_pn.htm](http://www.oldcem.bc.ca/cem_pn.htm)

### **Summer Lawn Party**    Don Reksten

Our July "Pot Luck Lawn Party" was well attended and gave our members an opportunity to socialize and get to know each other. Thank you Roberta for organizing it and thanks to everyone who attended. The weather was not the greatest but the rain held off long enough to allow us to finish eating and complete a reverse draw for door prizes. When should we have the next one?? Here are a couple of photos:



### **Obon Ceremony and Festival**

On Sunday 31 July the annual **Obon Ceremony** (traditional Japanese Buddhist ceremony for the dead) was conducted at the Kakehashi monument in the southwest corner of the cemetery. A large group of volunteers from OCS and the Victoria Nikkei Cultural Society (VCNS) gathered at noon and washed many markers, and placed bouquets of flowers prior to the ceremony at 2:00 lead by Rev. Grant Ikuta. He paid special attention to the children attending and explained the importance of honouring the dead in a very entertaining way.

The ceremony was followed by a tour of some of the 150 Japanese gravesites by John Adams who in engaging fashion told the stories of those interred.

After the tour we were treated to displays of traditional *taiko* drumming, dancers in costume, watermelon smashing (only for the children unfortunately) and tables laden with tasty and exotic Japanese food. It was a wonderful event. Thanks to TLC, OCS members, tourgiver John Adams, and VCNS members Cristina, Debbie and Mike.



### **Recording and Summer Student**

Our Summer Student Program for 2011 has come to an end. This year our goal was to complete the recording of section T. Jane Bruch and Don Reksten started off in May by hiring **Cailin Bain-Glenn** to work as chief recorder. The process is rather straight forward but requires a lot of time and diligence. Jane first checked our office records to see if any of the monuments in the section have been done. Then each row is walked and listed to outline where there are markers and where there are no markers. Photos are then taken of each marker, placed on a CD and given to the recorder. This process allows much of the drawing to be done in the office or at home rather than in the cemetery where the weather can be a factor. Once a recording sheet for each marker is finished, measurements are taken and a check of all wording on the monument is done in the cemetery. We are pleased to have succeeded in completing section T as planned and want to thank Cailin for his hard work and dedication to the project. **Well done Cailin!**

### **Row Marker Project**

Last month we were able to place 20 more row markers. These new markers are in the third and final belt. We started at Memorial Crescent in Section Q, plot # 57 and section K plot # 1 and worked our way east. We need 18 more markers to complete this first phase of our project.

Don't forget that every dollar you spend at Thrifty Foods (with our dedicated smile cards) helps raise money that goes directly towards this project.

### **Painting project**     Wilf Bruch

It is truly amazing how a few hours and a bit of hard work can transform something! Once the layer of leaves and dirt were swept away, the floor washed and the gate painted we find a mausoleum that is just beautiful. I have peered into the Helmcken mausoleum many times (as I am sure most of you have) and never realized how beautiful the tile work was. This restoration work was done by OCS volunteers as part of this summer's painting project. So next time you stroll by, stop and have a look at a piece of history renewed.



### **An Interesting Find**     Wilf Bruch

While doing some cleaning of monuments in the lower part of section F at Ross Bay Cemetery we came across a curbing sunk in the ground with only a small portion visible. It just looked different so we struck it with a shovel and found to our amazement that it was actually cast iron and not concrete as originally thought. Being of a curious nature we soon had it dug

up and removed from the cemetery for cleaning. After a lot of grinding and brushing it was given a few coats of paint and returned to the cemetery. It now sits proudly as it should, ten inches above the ground. It is the only example of a single cast iron curbing at Ross Bay Cemetery and we are truly proud of our new find. It makes you wonder what else is just under the grass waiting to be found.



### **New Stories in Stone Editor**

We are on our way! We anticipate a fall publication of the Old Cemeteries journal publication *Stories in Stone*. Our new editor, S. Fern Perkins, has assumed the leadership of the task at hand. You will remember her as “Isabella Ross” at many of our Ross Bay tours and other events where period costumes are *de rigueur*. She is a teacher and university instructor. She is the great- great-great-granddaughter of Charles and Isabella Ross, first Métis family of Fort Victoria in 1843. Charles was the HBC Chief Trader who supervised the building of Fort Victoria from 1843-44 until his death. Ross Bay is named after Isabella, the first registered woman landowner in British Columbia.

Please contact her at [fern.perkins@shaw.ca](mailto:fern.perkins@shaw.ca) if you want to contribute anything by September 15 or be involved with the production of the journal. We are always looking for histories of people buried in our many BC cemeteries. The year 2012 is the celebration of 150 years since Victoria was incorporated as a city in 1862. Do you have any stories about the people who lived in Victoria in 1862 that have been buried in an old cemetery?

### **Maintenance of Heritage Roses**

One of our frequent visitors to Ross Bay Cemetery tells us she has regularly watered the heritage roses for years but is no longer able to continue. She asks if visitors could bring an ice cream bucket of water to pour on the roses’ roots to sustain them. They are not able to thrive on the minimal water they receive from a sprinkler.

### **English Heritage Conservation Bulletin**

The summer issue of the Conservation Bulletin from the UK is titled “The Heritage of Death” and focuses on cemetery conservation. It is online at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/content/publications/docs/cb-66.pdf> and features articles of great interest to any “cemetarian”.

**Searching for Emily in Ross Bay Cemetery**      Diana Pedersen

In *Searching for Emily*, an entertaining new 94-minute documentary feature film directed by Kristina Campbell, portrait artist Manon Elder, in collaboration with Royal BC Museum Curator Kathryn Bridge, sets out to redefine the image of Emily Carr by exploring her life and work as a young artist. In the film, Elder visits the BC Archives, the Royal BC Museum, the James Bay Inn (where Carr died), Gwai Haanas, and—in a two-minute segment—the Ross Bay Cemetery. After briefly getting lost in the cemetery, Elder visits Carr's grave to pay homage on Carr's birthday, December 13<sup>th</sup>. The DVD of this film can be borrowed from the Greater Victoria Public Library.