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May – June 2021

Status of OCS Tours & Affairs

Gerry Buydens

We would like to thank all the folks who have taken the time to watch our tours on ZOOM. Average attendance is about 35 people. I do not know if this includes those on iPad or smart phones as they might not show up on our numbers count. This has been a different year but it appears as if there may be light at the end of the tunnel. We have been doing ZOOM tours since the start up in February and will continue at least until [May 25](#). It is hopeful that the Health Regulations will allow us to start having safe in person tour at the end of May or early June. You will be advised when it changes to in person tours.

It has been an interesting and learning experience for those members who have braved the weather & fought with it in order to conduct our Zoom tours. I would like to thank Liz, Paul, Steve, Chris & Chris's children for managing the ZOOM equipment and also a thank you for the tour guides for braving the elements to entertain us. Thank you, John Adams, Yvonne, Molly, Michael, John Azar, Julie & Valin. A job well done.

We have tentatively decided to try & hold our AGM in mid-June. It will be an outdoor event as indoor crowds will not likely be allowed.

OCS Youtube Channel

Paul Taylor

The Old Cemeteries Society has set up a Youtube Channel where we have uploaded some of our Sunday Tours, in case you have missed the live Zoom showing, or would like to view them a second time.

To watch these videos, go to the Youtube website www.youtube.com and enter Old Cemeteries Society in the search box. Our Sunday Tours should come up in those search results. There will be other cemetery tours from other sources that will also appear. Our shows will have our logo next to them.

Virtual Cemetery Tours

Paul Taylor

The Old Cemeteries Society has gone high-tech with the production of weekly cemetery tours using Zoom. John Adams and his son Chris produced the first several tours, starting last December and then again in February and early March. It was time for OCS to take on the responsibility for these tours.

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To facilitate the production of live cemetery tours, we bought a wireless microphone system. We also needed a cell phone with a data connection to broadcast from the cemetery. The wireless microphone attaches to the lapel of the presenter, which sends the audio to the cell phone camera that is used for the tour.

In addition to the presenters, three volunteers are needed for the production. The host of the Zoom “meeting” sits at home and runs the show, admitting people into the meeting, making sure everyone is muted so that stray sounds do not interfere with the presentation, and helps troubleshooting any issues that arise. Another volunteer operates the cell phone camera in the cemetery so that you can see and hear the show, and the third volunteer at the cemetery monitors the program on an iPad and lets the cameraman know what is or is not happening on the screen, and communicates with the host to correct any issues.

This has not been without problems. We have discovered that wind is a problem for the microphones, and that cell service in parts of Ross Bay Cemetery is very poor. This has resulted, at times, in poor audio quality and sometimes a complete loss of the feed from the cemetery. I think that you could say that these tours have improved with experience over time. Two of our presentations have been run by the presenter without going to the cemetery, using pictures and documents in a Powerpoint presentation in lieu of a live feed from the cemetery. These have worked out very well.

Looking to the future, we have secured the loan of a digital video camera, and we are experimenting with pre-recording the presentation in the cemetery for broadcasting at the regular time on the Sunday. This has had an impact on our annual budget as we have spent about \$600 on this project, and we are not collecting revenue from the tours.

Hopefully, we will soon be able to gather outside in the cemetery in large enough numbers to once again run live tours. We’re getting our vaccinations by the end of the month, and we are hopeful as more people do that, we’ll be able to run live tours again soon.

Thanks go to volunteers, Host – Liz Taylor; Cemetery Monitor – Steve Thomson; and Cameraman – Paul Taylor. Presenters to date have included Yvonne Van Ruskenveld, John Adams, Michael Halleran and John Azar. Check out the list of tours on our website

<https://oldcem.bc.ca/tour/> for details of future weekly tours. It would be beneficial to have backup replacements for our volunteers, so you are interested in helping out, please let us know.

Royal Interments

Russ Stewart

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Prince Philip's death and interment at Windsor has underlined the fact that royalty, like ourselves, are mortal. Philip was interred in the King George VI Memorial Chapel. When Queen Elizabeth II dies, she will also be interred there.

Over the centuries, most English monarchs have been entombed in state in England, but not a few have been buried where they died. Richard III, the "ultimate evil uncle," was killed in 1485 at the Battle of Bosworth Field and buried where he fell. His remains were only rediscovered in 2012 and ultimately reburied at Liecester Cathedral. George , Elector of Hanover, became King George I of England in 1701 when Queen Anne died. He never accepted his role as king of England, never learned to speak English well, spent most of his time in Germany, and died on his way there in 1727. He is buried in his beloved Hanover.

Westminster Abbey's most famous tomb is that of Edward the Confessor. The original church, known as the "west minster" to distinguish it from St. Paul's Cathedral, the "east minster," was consecrated on 28 December 1065. The king was too ill to attend. He died a few days later and his remains were entombed in front of the high altar.

King Henry III determined to rebuild the church in the new Gothic style and provide a tomb fit for a saint, which the Confessor had now become. The church was consecrated in 1269 and the Confessor magnificently entombed.



The shrine was to become a popular place of pilgrimage throughout the middle ages. Many of the sick came to pray at the shrine for a cure and the steps in the recesses of the shrine base are worn away by the knees of pilgrims. A cult of St. Edward grew up. However, after the death of Henry III the cult underwent a slow decline and St. George eventually became recognised as the patron saint of England.

The shrine is regarded as the centre of the abbey and five kings and four queens lie buried in the chapel, including Henry III, Edward I and his Queen Eleanor of Castile, Edward III, his consort Philippa of Hainault, their grandson Richard II with his queen Anne of Bohemia and King Henry V. Edward's Queen Edith of Wessex who died in 1075 is buried near her husband's shrine.

The shrine of St. Edward was desecrated at the dissolution of the monasteries during the reign of King Henry VIII. The shrine was melted down and the jewel-encrusted offerings presented to the king. St. Edward's body was buried in an obscure spot in the Abbey. It was restored in the reign of Henry's devoutly Catholic daughter, Mary I. The base of the shrine was re-assembled, the queen donated jewels to replace those which had been removed, and the saint's remains were returned to it. The last disturbance of the King's rest occurred in 1685, where workmen were engaged in the removal of scaffolding used in the coronation of James II. A rafter fell, crashing into Edward's coffin. A crucifix and chain were discovered under his shoulder bones and were given to James II. During James' hasty flight from England in 1688 they were stolen by fishermen.

The site of the saint's original grave has remained a mystery since his body was moved twice before being laid to rest at the shrine. The original tomb, located during a recent archaeological study at the Abbey using the latest ground-penetrating radar, was located ten feet behind the modern-day altar, directly under the area of the shrine.

Do you have a story to tell?

The demise of the OCS journal *Stories in Stone* left us with no place to publish longer articles that our members might want to share. In an effort to partly fill the gap, Stone Cuttings has been publishing longer items submitted by our members. While there is no strict limit on length, articles should be reasonably brief and of general interest to our members. Book reviews and photos relevant to your article are welcome. Submit articles to rste00@shaw.ca The editor reserves the right to edit or reject any item.

Tombstone Oddities

Thanks to Doug Porteous

Arizona? No, the headstone commemorating the poet Larkin in the cemetery at Cottingham, East Yorkshire. I first saw this tombstone on a post-conference trip in July 2002. I was astonished when someone suggested that the simple statements:

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Philip Larkin
1922-1985
Writer

should each have been followed by a full stop. Larkin, of course, had indeed come to a bodily stop, but judging by his poetry's continued following, not a full one quite yet.

Mulling over this thought, I considered the nature of such a stone, upright, uptight, but really a steep verticality plunging south, downward, like current humankind, to entropy in the rich mould of earth.

I felt that the absence of any punctuation was correct, and considered how to express this feeling trilingually in verse using the strong geology of stone and the more fleshy terminology of evolutionary biology, while pointing out the view that Larkin himself might have taken. Here's the result:

Periodically, I scan for the full stop
That pointlessly would keep my name alive
Another breath, before those dreadful dates,
And the etched tombstone's earthward-plunging dive.

Omitted dottiness, I could exclaim,
Gives perfect flow to life-in-art from name;
Yet more: I'd rather see just one more bum
Than punctuated equilibrium.

Last Words

Confederate General Benjamin Helm 1831-1863



"Victory, victory, victory!"

Brother-in-law of Abraham Lincoln killed at the Battle of Chickamauga. After his death his wife, Emilie Todd Helm, crossed Confederate and Union lines, took an oath of allegiance to the union, and lived in the White House for the duration of the war.