

November – December 2022

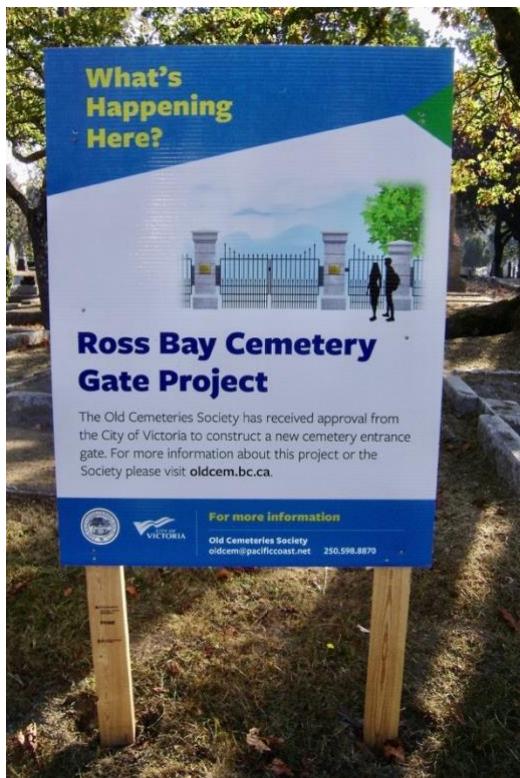
Ross Bay Cemetery Memorial Gate Project

The Old Cemeteries Society of Victoria is pleased to announce that, after four years of planning, construction has begun on a memorial gate to commemorate next year's 150th anniversary of the opening of Ross Bay Cemetery. Since 2004, Ross Bay Cemetery has been formally listed on the [Canadian Register of Historic Places](#) where it is described as “the most important heritage cemetery in British Columbia” with a “largely intact historic landscape.” Unlike most other major heritage cemeteries, however, it had no gate and no sign. At one time, Ross Bay Cemetery had a formal entrance on Fairfield Road, across the street from Ross Bay

Villa—a wooden gate that disappeared sometime in the 1920s. Since then, there has been no formal entrance or signage to welcome visitors or to inform passers-by of the identity, history, and significance of the site.

In the summer of 2018, the executive of the Old Cemeteries Society started an extended discussion about the society's investments and how they might be used to create a lasting legacy. With Ross Bay Cemetery's 150th anniversary coming up, the Board decided that a commemorative gate would be an appropriate project. The new gate and two accompanying brass plaques will be located on Fairfield Road at the Stannard Avenue entrance—familiar to OCS members as the starting point for most of the Sunday afternoon tours.

Because Ross Bay Cemetery is owned by the City of Victoria, any construction project required the City's involvement and approval. The OCS executive embarked on several years of negotiations with the planning staff of the City of Victoria Parks Department. On September 8, 2022, after winning the



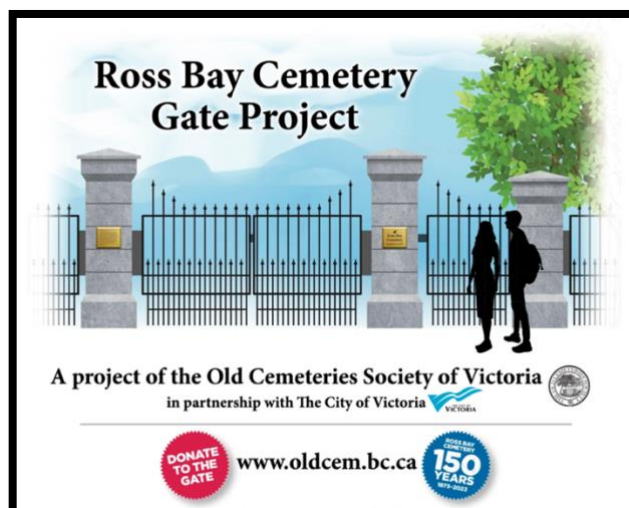
approval of City Council, the OCS received the required Parks Permit allowing construction to begin.

Construction of the Old Cemeteries Society's commemorative gate is on track to be completed well before the upcoming anniversary on March 1, 2023. In 1872, the City of Victoria purchased about five hectares of land from Robert Burnaby, for whom the municipality of Burnaby is named. On September 22 of that year, the first contract was let to drain and clear the



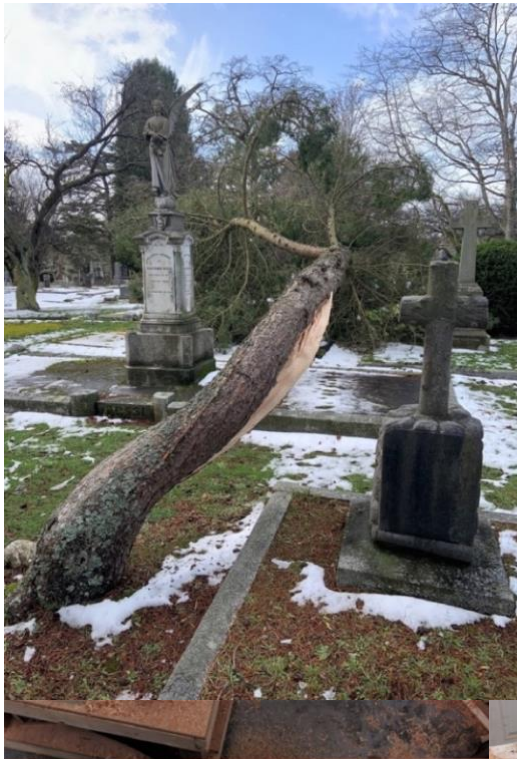
new cemetery property. Exactly 150 years later, on September 22, 2022, the Old Cemeteries Society completed the building of the three main cement pillars that will form the bases of the memorial gate (shown with OCS Project Manager Wilf Bruch in the photograph below). The cladding and actual metal gates have been ordered and are due for installation in mid-November of 2022.

It is estimated that the cost of the completed gate will be about \$100,000 and the Old Cemeteries Society is looking for public support. On September 13 and 14, the beginning of construction and the launch of the fundraising campaign benefitted from a flurry of coverage in local media. See especially an [article](#) in the *Times Colonist*, a [radio interview](#) with OCS Past Presidents Wilf Bruch and John Adams on CBC's *All Points West*, and a [TV news report](#) from CHEK News featuring Project Manager Wilf Bruch at the construction site. Regular updates with more photographs will appear on the [Memorial Gate Project 2022](#) page of the OCS website.



The Old Cemeteries Society's Memorial Gate Project needs your support and welcomes all contributions. Donations can be made by using the Ross Bay Cemetery Gate Project [GoFundMe](#) page organized by OCS Board member Paul Taylor, by means of an electronic money transfer at oldcem@pacificcoast.net, or by [mailing a cheque](#) to the OCS. The Old Cemeteries Society is a registered non-profit and donations are tax deductible. Receipts will be provided.

Ross Bay Cemetery's Bossi Angel Restored



In January of 2022, a badly deformed pine tree succumbed to a winter storm, narrowly missing Ross Bay Cemetery's iconic **Bossi Angel** (H92/93W26). A branch took off one of the angel's wings, which was broken into four pieces but, fortunately, not completely shattered. OCS Board member, **Wilf Bruch**, Past President and current Project Manager, took up the challenge of repairing and reattaching the wing. Using clamps and epoxy in his own workshop, Wilf reassembled the wing. On October 7, with the help of scaffolding, wing and angel were reunited. A job well done! Photos by Wilf Bruch.



Vandalism at Ross Bay Cemetery



On Thanksgiving weekend, six monuments were vandalized at Ross Bay Cemetery. Three were toppled and easily re-erected but three were damaged. All were promptly repaired by the Old Cemeteries Society. Photos by Wilf Bruch.

Around Town



Michael Abe leads tour of Japanese garden on August 27

Photos by Diana Pedersen

On August 27, hundreds of people attended the **Japanese Cultural Festival** to celebrate its return to an in-person event, after a three-year pandemic gap, at the [newly opened Esquimalt Gorge Park Pavilion](#). The design of the new multi-purpose facility was inspired by the Japanese tea house and gardens that were popular attractions at Gorge Park from 1907 until 1942, when they were closed and then looted at the time of the internment of Japanese Canadians on the west coast. **Michael Abe** of the Victoria Nikkei Cultural Society (VNCS) and the major research project, [Landscapes of Injustice](#), leads the annual OCS tour of the Japanese graves at Ross Bay Cemetery. He has been deeply involved in the pavilion project and narrates this hour-long 2021 Zoom presentation, [Esquimalt Gorge Park Historical Virtual Walking Tour](#), from the Heritage Committee of the VNCS.

The Queen is Dead! See the Moving Pictures!

Diana Pedersen

The last time the City of Victoria mourned the death of a reigning British queen, and Canada's head of state, was in 1901—121 years ago—on the death of Victoria, great-great-grandmother of Elizabeth II. Queen Victoria had reigned for 63 years; she assumed the throne in 1837 at the age of 18 and died aged 81, after becoming Britain's longest-serving monarch in 1896 and celebrating her Diamond Jubilee in 1897. In 1901, as in 2022, the majority of Victoria residents had known no other reigning monarch; many people experienced a sense of personal loss and recognized the end of an era. Both deaths prompted extensive reflections on the



1. *Colonist*, January 23, 1901

enormous changes in the world that had taken place during the monarch's reign. Both funerals and their accompanying pageantry in London were the subject of great interest in Victoria.

Unlike the founders of Fort Victoria—the colonial outpost named for the young Queen in 1843—the Victorians of 1901 were linked to Britain and Europe by a sophisticated network of telegraphic communications. News of the Queen's death at the royal family's seaside retreat, Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, at 6:30 PM on Tuesday, January 22, 1901, reached Victoria within hours. Queen Victoria had been failing for several weeks and her death was not unexpected—"The Queen Still Alive," proclaimed the front page of the *Victoria Times*, the evening paper, on January 21. On the following day, the *Times* published two editions with the later edition announcing "The Queen is Dead," although most of the articles were clearly written while her death was still imminent.

On January 23, the full details of the Queen's last hours surrounded by family were carried by both the *Times* and its morning rival, *The Daily Colonist*. In response to Mayor Charles Hayward's call for a show of respect, many businesses closed for the day while the majority displayed emblems of mourning, social events were cancelled, flags were flown at half-mast, and public buildings were draped in black. In Esquimalt Harbour and at the Work Point Barracks, minute guns thundered 81 times—once for each year of the Queen's life. After two days of "gloom and depression," according to the *Colonist*, business resumed, flags were raised, and ships' guns were fired 101 times in salute to the new sovereign, King Edward VII.

Over the next ten days, Victorians turned to their newspapers for long accounts of the Queen's life and reign, the grief of the royal family and displays of mourning throughout the Empire, the accession of the new King, and the preparations for the funeral procession through the streets of London. In Associated Press reports carried by the Victoria papers, journalists did their best to convey in words the colour, pageantry, spectacle, music, solemnity, grief, and pathos of the events in London.

Mayor Hayward immediately convened a planning meeting of the Patriotic Committee—appointed the previous year to coordinate the city’s contribution to the military conflict in South Africa (Second Boer War)—and most of the city’s clergy. Preparations began for the official day of mourning in Victoria, held on Saturday, February 2, coinciding with the Queen’s funeral in



2. February 2, 1901. Courtesy of City of Victoria Archives M09478.

London. On the preceding afternoon, 2,500 schoolchildren were marched to the Metropolitan Methodist Church (now the Victoria Conservatory of Music) for a memorial mass meeting—reportedly the largest assembly of children ever held west of the Rockies. On Saturday, all businesses closed. In the morning, all the major churches and the synagogue held special memorial services. These were preceded by military parades as soldiers and sailors marched through the streets of Victoria and Esquimalt to attend the church of their choice; all the city’s bells tolled before and after the services.

On Saturday afternoon, Victoria’s many fraternal orders assembled in their regalia to parade to the Parliament Buildings, following the Fifth Regiment Band past the silent black-clad throngs lining Government Street. Prominent politicians and clergy eulogized the Queen and her exemplary life from the steps of Parliament. The thousands of

assembled Victorians sang several well-known hymns and then formed a procession to City Hall for the proclamation of the accession of King Edward VII and a rousing rendition of “God Save the King,” sung for the first time in the city’s history. Naval ships fired another 81-gun salute. The event was blessed by sunshine on “a typical Victorian mid-winter day, like the May day of Eastern Canada.” Nowhere in the British Empire, the *Colonist* reported, were the memorial services for the dead Queen more universally and respectfully observed.

Editions of the *Times* that evening and the *Colonist* the next morning described Victoria’s day of mourning but the front pages were dominated by the news from London. A spectacular naval pageant had accompanied the transfer of the Queen’s remains from the Isle of Wight to Portsmouth where members of the royal family, including many Crown princes of Europe, boarded the King’s train to accompany the casket to Victoria Station. Because there was no public lying-in-state (newspaper reporters had been allowed to view the Queen’s embalmed remains at Osborne House), the two-hour three-mile procession through London streets from Victoria Station to Paddington Station was the major opportunity for ordinary people to pay their respects.

The newspapers described black-clad crowds lining the streets but the procession itself was a dazzling display of colour, glitter, ceremonial garb, and uniforms of every description, with the Queen's casket on a gun carriage drawn by her eight Hanoverian horses. Embracing her role as commander of all the armed forces, she had broken with tradition to insist on a military funeral. The casket was transferred to the Queen's train at Paddington for transport to Windsor Castle, where more throngs greeted the royal procession. The artillery horses drawing the gun carriage grew restive, and Royal Navy "bluejackets" were substituted by the King's order—a tradition that has continued to the present. The service was held in St. George's Chapel at Windsor Castle. Two days later, Queen Victoria was buried in the Royal Mausoleum at Frogmore, Windsor, beside her long-mourned husband, Prince Albert, who had died forty years earlier.

Victoria residents had to imagine the royal funeral procession in London with the help of vivid descriptions provided by the Associated Press—but they knew that moving pictures would be coming. Although the Queen's death occurred little more than five years after the first novelty moving pictures were exhibited in Victoria, this new medium had already established itself as legitimate entertainment and a window on the wider world. Most offerings were very short actuality films showing famous landscapes and buildings, scenes of daily life featuring exotic national dress, parades, sporting events, naval and military exercises, trains, firefighters, and police. (Newsreels were not invented until 1910.) During the 1890s, in Victoria as elsewhere, there were no theatres exclusively devoted to moving pictures—these were usually offered as part of a variety show by one of the travelling vaudeville companies that regularly passed through the city. Only five weeks before the Queen's death, the Searchlight Amusement Company of Seattle opened a moving picture parlour at 62 Fort Street to "exhibit Edison's latest and best moving pictures obtainable" as "a continuous entertainment for ladies, gentlemen, and children."

The much-anticipated views of Queen Victoria's funeral procession reached Victoria two months after her death and were exhibited in two very different venues. Reflecting the

VICTORIA THEATRE

SATURDAY, MARCH 23

Grand Matinee, 2.30 p. m.

DOORS OPEN AT 2 O'CLOCK.

Prof. Hunt's Dog Paradox

Including the Greatest of all Trained Monkeys.

Prof. Borland's Wonderscope

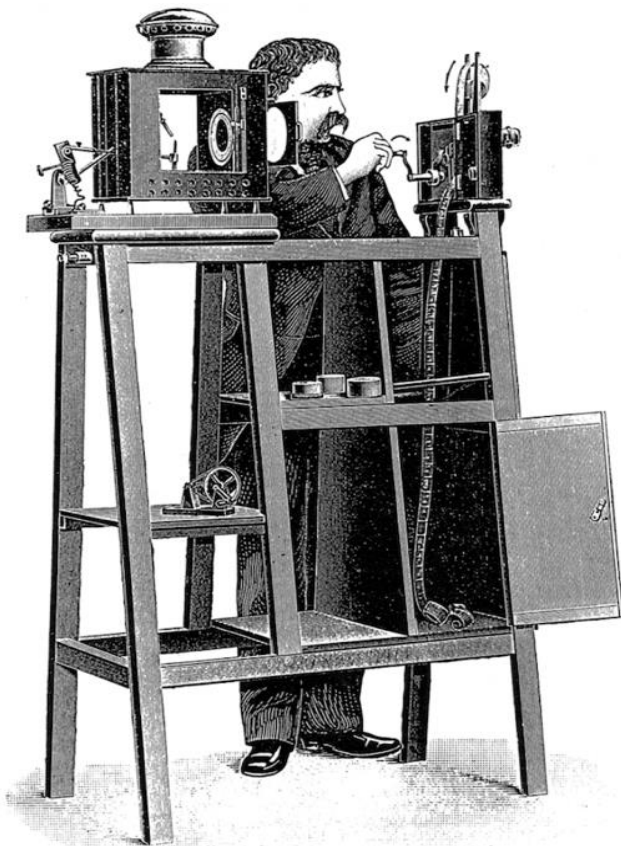
Moving Picture scenes and incidents of the late Queen Victoria's funeral; most realistic and interesting.

The following artists will also appear: Miss Lottie Hill, operatic soprano; Miss Emma Hill, vivacious comedienne; Martin and Ridgway; Miss Agnes Freed, the popular soprano; Rooney and Forrester, artistic exponents of Celtic comedy; Thatcher and Chenoweth, and Prof. Werner's Orchestra.

Admission adults, 50c.; children, 25c. Doors open at 2 o'clock; performance at 2:30. Patrons are advised to purchase tickets at the Victoria Book & Stationery Store early and thus avoid rush at door.

3. *Colonist*, March 23, 1901.

competition and lack of standardization in the industry, they also used different technologies. On Saturday, March 23, the Savoy Company passed through Victoria on its regular route up and down the west coast and offered a "grand family matinee" at the Victoria Theatre, with a vaudeville program that was typical of 1890s offerings. Over 1,000 feet of film purporting to show the entire funeral procession was presented using "Prof. Borland's Wonderscope," which promised such vivid realism that notable personages could readily be recognized. But the moving pictures of the Queen's funeral were sandwiched between the top billing—the finest dog and monkey circus in the country—and the vocal selections, dramatic scenes, and comedic sketches, with music by an eight-piece orchestra. Reportedly, the afternoon was greatly enjoyed by the large number of children in the audience. After this single "instructive and mirth-provoking entertainment," the Savoy Company left Victoria for the next stop on its tour.



Le cinématographe Lumière: projection.

4. Cinematograph projector, ca. 1897. Wikimedia Commons.

Searchlight

Special Announcement.

Moving pictures showing the complete funeral cortege of our late Queen Victoria passing through Windsor will be reproduced at the A. O. U. W. Hall by "Searchlight Co." on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, March 21, 22, 23. In order to accommodate the immense crowds that have been anxiously awaiting, The Searchlight has secured the above-mentioned hall for these three nights only. This is the only complete view of the Queen's funeral pageant taken, and is photographically perfect. An excellent view, showing the blue-jackets drawing the gun carriage and coffin, surmounted by the crown and sceptre, is obtained. The royal personages are here shown, following the coffin on foot, whilst in the rear of the procession will be noticed the Gentlemen-at-Arms and the Yeomen of the Guard in their quaint and picturesque costumes. This moving picture has just arrived from London, England, and is 1,000 feet long. In conjunction we give two hours of moving pictures. Music by Fifth Regiment band.

5. Colonist, March 23, 1901.

Seattle's Searchlight Company must have recognized an appetite in Victoria for images of the Queen's funeral procession presented in a more elevated and tasteful setting. Barely a year earlier, hundreds of city residents had packed the [Drill Hall](#) on Menzies Street to view the Biograph Company's moving pictures from the war in South Africa, accompanied by patriotic music, in several benefit presentations for the Canadian Patriotic Fund. Accordingly, the Searchlight Company booked Victoria's largest and most respectable venue for three days—Thursday, March 21 to Saturday, March 23. The AOOW Hall on Yates Street, erected by the Ancient Order of United Workmen in 1894, was the finest assembly hall in the city, complete with spectator galleries and a recessed platform for orchestra. (It became the Princess Theatre in 1911.)

Victorians were promised superior quality pictures produced with the French cinematograph, and appropriate musical accompaniment by the Fifth Regiment Artillery Band—a well-known local fixture frequently engaged for funeral processions. The cinematograph projector was hand-cranked at a rate of two turns per second and was preferred to the motorized Edison machines like the Wonderscope; a skilled cinematograph operator could adjust the speed of the film to eliminate annoying flickering and to suit the images on the screen and the musical accompaniment. The Searchlight Company advertised two presentations per day, at 2:30 and 8:30 PM—each two hours in length with twenty-five minutes devoted to the Queen's funeral procession and the rest to musical interludes and short films on other interesting and appropriate subjects. The promotion promised scenes, such as the landing of the coffin at Portsmouth and the bluejackets pulling the

gun carriage, that Victorians would have recognized from newspaper accounts of the funeral procession.

According to the *Times* and the *Colonist*, the AOUW Hall was packed to capacity for all six presentations, with hundreds of people being turned away at the door. The Searchlight Company promptly booked the hall for another three days—Monday, March 25 to Wednesday, March 27.

6. *Colonist*, March 26, 1901.

Reviewers enthused that the cinematograph was “a splendid piece of mechanical art” and that it worked “without a hitch.” The funeral cortege was “shown in such a way as to make one feel a spectator of the real procession.” The pictures were made “more solemn and impressive by the strains of the funeral march”—the presence of Bandmaster John Finn and “British Columbia’s leading band” guaranteed that the music would be “suitable” and of a high quality.

The Searchlight program was filled out with varied and attractive pictures whose character provided “evidence of the good taste of the management.” These included scenes from the Paris Exposition of 1900, with a trip up the Seine River and an elevator ride to the top of the Eiffel Tower; street views in London; a comedy about a bull dog and a tramp; “startling exhibitions” by spiritualists, mesmerists, and acrobats; scenes of devastation following the hurricane that destroyed most of Galveston the previous September; and an exciting Spanish bull fight that concluded the program and “engrossed the attention of the audience from start to finish.” The additional bookings offered different views of the funeral procession and views of New York’s reception of the victorious Admiral George Dewey in 1899, following the Spanish-American War.

When Queen Victoria died on January 22, 1901, not even the wealthiest British Columbians could have travelled to London in time to attend the funeral service and procession on February 2. The Searchlight Company’s twelve presentations at the city’s largest assembly hall offered a memorable experience that was shared by a significant percentage of the city’s population. It is difficult for us to recapture their excitement over this modern technology that seemed to bring newspaper accounts to life and allowed them to witness distant world events. Today, we can see film footage of Queen Victoria’s funeral procession, similar or identical to what Victorians viewed 121 years ago, in two compilations ([15 minutes](#) and [5 minutes](#)) from the archives of British Pathé, with written comments identifying the locations. Keep in mind that the skilled cinematograph operator would have smoothed the jerky movements and slowed the procession to match the sombre and dramatic strains of the funeral marches played by Bandmaster Finn and Victoria’s own Fifth Regiment Band.

To learn more about the City of Victoria’s response to the death of Queen Victoria, see [“The Queen is Dead!”](#)—an online microhistory project created by History students at the University of Victoria in 2002.

Tour Notes

On October 2, temperatures at Ross Bay Cemetery were in the mid-20s—the warmest October tour that anyone could remember. Forty-five people attended **Yvonne Van Ruskenveld**’s annual Women’s History Month tour. This year’s new tour, **Brideship Revisited**, commemorated the 160th anniversary of the arrival of SS *Tynemouth* in Esquimalt Harbour, carrying sixty English women sponsored by the Columbia Emigration Society and the Female Middle-class Emigration Society. The tour offered a portrait of gold-rush Victoria in the 1860s, as local authorities and the heavily male settler population eagerly anticipated the arrival of the ship. We also learned about the identities and expectations of some of the women and about how they built new lives following their arduous journey to British Columbia.



Yvonne Van Ruskenveld at the grave of Amor de Cosmos

Photo by Diana Pedersen



October 16 was another record warm day at Ross Bay Cemetery, this time with an air-quality alert covering Greater Victoria due to wildfire smoke. Fourteen people attended **John Azar**’s new tour “**Never Not Ready**”—the motto of the Fifth (BC) Field Artillery Regiment whose history in Victoria goes back 140 years. Members included veterans of the Indian Army, the Boer War, and the First World War. The Regiment was deeply involved in the life of the community through its sports teams and especially through the highly regarded Fifth Regiment Band which was a fixture at local concerts, patriotic events, and funeral processions.



John Azar introducing members of the Fifth Regiment

Photos by Diana Pedersen

Victoria researchers are particularly fortunate in having free access to online editions of their major historical newspapers. In other cities this often requires a paid individual subscription or borrowing privileges at an academic library. **The British Colonist Online Project** has been a great boon to local historians and genealogists. A joint undertaking by the *Times Colonist*, the University of Victoria Libraries, and a consortium of BC libraries, it launched in 2008 on the 150th anniversary of the first issue of the *British Colonist*. The first massive run of issues to come online included the years from 1858 to 1910. Researchers were overjoyed when the next decade, up to 1920, became available just in time to observe the centenary of the First World War and so many events that loomed large in the lives of people buried in our local cemeteries. With additional funding, subsequent decades were digitized and the project was completed in 2019 with the final run of the *Colonist* from 1971 to 1980. **Click on the banner below** to access the complete online edition of the *British Colonist*, later *The Daily Colonist*.



In 1980, *The Daily Colonist* merged with the *Victoria Times*, becoming the *Times Colonist*. As discussed in the previous instalment of “Researchers’ Corner,” free online access to the [Victoria Times \(1884-1980\)](#) and the [Times Colonist \(1980-2010\)](#) is now available to any BC resident as part of a larger project co-sponsored by academic, public, and school libraries.



Proquest Digital Times Colonist

Back issues of the Times Colonist from 2011 to three months ago

Victoria residents also have free online access to more recent issues of the *Times Colonist* (2011 to three months ago) thanks to the Greater Victoria Public Library (GVPL). Visit the [Digital Collections and e-Resources](#) page of the Library website and look for “ProQuest Digital Times Colonist,” as shown at left. (Note that this access requires a GVPL card and password. To sign up online for a temporary library card and immediate access to digital resources, click [here](#).) Local history researchers can usefully consult these recent back issues of the *Times Colonist* for obituaries, coverage of historic sites and history-related controversies, and special anniversary coverage of major events and milestones in BC and Victoria history.

Editor’s Note: If you are interested in submitting photographs, news items, or articles to future issues of *Stone Cuttings*, please contact the editor at ocsnewslettereditor@gmail.com

Tour Schedule for Nov.-Dec. 2022

*Tours are every Sunday at 2 PM. **NOTE:** Tours on **Nov. 6, Dec. 4, and Dec. 11** will be **in person**. See below for locations. The tours on **Nov. 13, Nov. 20, and Nov. 27** will be on **Zoom only**. The Zoom links will be sent out to members. Charge for in-person tours: \$5 for non-members; \$2 for members. No reservations needed.*

Nov. 6. Veterans' Cemetery. **Remembrance Day Tour.** At this annual tour at the Esquimalt Veterans' Cemetery (God's Acre), John Azar and guests will share stories of the contributions and sacrifices made by people in the service of our country. Lest we forget. Access off Colville Road near the Base Hospital.

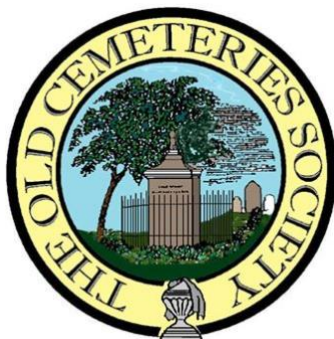
Nov. 13. Zoom only. **History of Ross Bay Cemetery.** The site for RBC was acquired by the City of Victoria 150 years ago (1872) and the first burial took place in December. The official opening was in 1873. To commemorate the anniversary, John Adams, author of *Historic Guide to Ross Bay Cemetery*, will give an illustrated presentation about the cemetery's origins and some of the fascinating stories about how it evolved into its present configuration.

Nov. 20. Zoom only. **Doctors of Early Victoria.** Pioneer doctor J.S. Helmcken is well known in BC history but many other doctors soon followed him to minister to Victoria's growing population in a slowly developing health care system. In this illustrated presentation, Yvonne Van Ruskenveld will feature some of these doctors, many of whom, like Dr. Helmcken, went on to become influential members of Victoria and BC society, helping to shape our city and province.

Nov. 27. Zoom only. **Captains of Industry.** In spite of its fame as a city of gardens, until the 1960s, Victoria was a gritty, smoky, noisy place, filled with industries. Numerous sawmills, foundries, shipyards, paint factories, brickyards and even cigar factories lined the harbour and surrounding areas. Many of the people who owned these businesses or worked in them are buried at RBC. John Adams will discuss the industries, the owners, employees and their graves in an illustrated presentation.

Dec. 4. **Old Burying Ground Christmas Tour.** John Adams will delight and amaze you with Christmas and holiday stories from Victoria of old. New Christmas tales and old favourites combine with the history of one of Victoria's oldest cemeteries, in use from 1855 to 1873. Meet at the corner of Quadra St. and Rockland Ave.

Dec. 11. RBC. **Ross Bay Christmas Tour.** John Adams continues the yuletide theme with more warm-hearted and humorous stories. Themes are different each year, but the final stop on the tour is always Emily Carr's family plot where a holly wreath will be placed, now an annual tradition of the OCS. (Emily's birthday is Dec. 13.)



The Old Cemeteries Society of Victoria

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