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March – April 2011

Our new office at Ross Bay Villa, 1490 Fairfield Road, will be open Mondays from 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM beginning March 21, 2011. We hope to expand these hours over the few months. Come by for a visit and check out the library and extensive reference material. Please use the rear entrance. Our new office has come together nicely. We would like to have a regular presence in the Ross Bay Villa office and at Ross Bay cemetery. If you think this is the volunteer opportunity for you, please contact Roberta at 250-598-8870 or email oldcem@pacificcoast.net for details.

Report on the Annual General Meeting Gerry Buydens

The Annual General Meeting of the Old Cemeteries Society of Victoria was held on Wednesday, February 16. There were 38 people in attendance. The meeting was chaired by Gerry Buydens, Past Chair of OCS. Jac Slik presented the treasurers report. Gerry Buydens read the presidents report prepared by President Wilf Bruch. Gerry Buydens summarized the other Committee Reports.

John Halliwell gave a report on the Thrifty's Smile Cards and their importance as a fund raiser for OCS. Smile Cards may be obtained from the OCS office. We have raised over \$600 from the Smile Cards in the past 6 months. A request for a volunteer to be the Stories in Stone Editor was raised. It was mentioned that Roberta Law would be keeping a register of volunteers and people were asked to register and indicate their area of preference for volunteering.

The Executive for 2011 will be Wilf Bruch - President; Don Reksten - Vice President; Gerry Buydens - Past President; Jac Slik - Treasurer; Michael Halleran - Secretary; and Members at large are: John Halliwell, Bill Magee, Linda Richards, Stewart Dashwood, and Sharon Welsh.

The business portion of the meeting ended at 8:00 PM. After a refreshment break hosted by Janice Wesolowski, the group was treated to a talk by Jacque Marc on the Underwater Archaeology Society of BC. A copy of the Treasurer's Report and other Committee Reports are available upon request from the office.

Alexander Monument Unveiled Gerry Buydens

On Saturday, February 26, Mavis DeGiralamo, President of the local BC Black History Awareness Society of Victoria, welcomed a group of family and friends to the unveiling ceremony. This unveiling was a joint effort by BC Black History Awareness Society, Old Cemeteries Society of Victoria and the City of Victoria to honour these two members of the Alexander family.

She also introduced special guest, Ferguson Jenkins, the only Canadian inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. The Canadian Government has honoured his accomplishments by

issuing a postage stamp with his photo on it. Valin Marshall spoke about the black people who emigrated from the USA to Vancouver Island and some of the hardships they encountered. He spoke about some of the families and their achievements.

Valin introduced Gerry Buydens who represented OCS and spoke about the history and design of Ross Bay Cemetery. He also mentioned the names of prominent black people buried at Ross Bay Cemetery, namely Sir James Douglas, Rebecca Gibbs, Nancy Leister and Charlie Kincaid. He mentioned that while some cemeteries segregated blacks into a section set aside for blacks that in Ross Bay Cemetery, they are buried throughout Ross Bay Cemetery according to their religious affiliation and are buried along side their white neighbours.

He mentioned that the Sunday tour on February 27 would visit the grave of a number of other black people buried at Ross Bay Cemetery.

Valin asked members of the Alexander family to step forward and to pull back the covering and expose the new grave marker of Corinthia and Eva, mother and daughter, buried here. Mavis thanked everyone for coming.

Many thanks to the city staff who cleared the site of snow and plowed the paths so people could park near the plot.

Although Mayor Dean Fortin was unable to attend, David Speed, Assistant Director of Parks and Patrick Meechan, new cemetery foreman, attended.

Iron Grave Fences at Ross Bay Cemetery Wilf Bruch

One of the priorities of the OCS cleaning and restoration committee for 2011 is to repaint as many iron fences as possible. Many of the old fences are starting to show rust and we will lose them to nature if they are not looked after very soon. Bayne Dean has been working on an inventory list and hopes to complete it in the next month or so. Once the list is complete we will prioritise it and get started. That is as soon as the weather cooperates! If you think this is something you would be interested in, let the office know by phone or email or call Wilf Bruch at 250 383 7514. All paint and material will be supplied.



It's not too early to think about your volunteering commitments for this summer! Jane Bruch will be looking for volunteers to do recording as soon as the weather improves. She will be working to complete section B and T.

Are you or your ancestors from Saskatchewan?? You can now see what that small, old rural town looks like today at "Small Town Saskatchewan". The web site is www.stsk.ca Enjoy.

Row Marker Project Update Wilf Bruch

What a difference a marker makes! I just don't know how we found individual grave sites before the installation of our row markers. As of December we have been able to place 60 markers in belt # 1 & 2. Instructions for their use and how to locate them are posted in our shadow box on the caretakers shed and on our website. To complete this project we will need to purchase and place another 140. Each of you can help by using a Thrifty Smile Card when buying groceries. All funds received from Thrifty's go directly to purchasing markers. If you don't have your OCS Smile Card yet, call Roberta at the office or send her an email and she will make sure you get one pronto!

Condolences **Don Reksten**

Our sympathies to one of our very active members, Dr. Patrick Lydon, whose wife died on Feb. 27, 2011 in Victoria after a courageous battle with cancer. She was buried at Ross Bay Cemetery on March 5.

Summer Student Application **Don Reksten**

We have applied to the Canada Summer Jobs Program for funding for a summer student to work on our gravesite recording project at Ross Bay Cemetery. If you know of any student who is in a post-secondary program related to History, or History in Art, and is skilled at sketching please have them leave a message for Don at 250-598-8870.

Surplus Office Equipment **Don Reksten**

As a result of the move of our office to Ross Bay Villa, we have some surplus office equipment such as filing cabinets, table, bookcase, steel shelving units and other pieces. OCS members may have these items for a reasonable donation to the Society. If you are interested and would like to have a look, please phone Bill or Peggy at 250 595-6029 and arrange a time.

Historic Victoria Walking Tours **Don Reksten**

John Adams has a new schedule of very interesting walking tours for February to April. These 90-minute tours present the history, architecture, ethnology, and natural history of Victoria neighbourhoods and are HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. Details are at www.discoverthepast.com.

OCS Walking Tours **Don Reksten**

A new season of walking tours has begun and the 2011 Schedule is available. The printed version is available through the OCS office and is distributed to a number of locations in greater Victoria; the electronic version is at the OCS website. Weekly reminders are being sent to members on email. There are many new tours this year so be sure to attend as many tours as you can. Tours start at 2:00 pm. Meet at 1:45 pm in front of Starbucks Coffee, Fairfield Plaza, 1544 Fairfield Rd. Others start where noted. Charge: \$5 for non-members; \$2 for members. No reservations needed. Tours are held regardless of weather. Contact www.oldcem.bc.ca or 250.598.8870.

OCS Speaker Meeting May 18 **Don Reksten**

You will be reminded closer to the date, but plan now on attending a very interesting talk by well-known author and historian Tom Paterson on Cowichan Valley Cemeteries.

Victoria Historical Society Meetings **Don Reksten**

7:30PM, at the James Bay New Horizons Centre, 234 Menzies St., Victoria.
Meetings consist of a short business agenda followed by a guest speaker. Visitors are always welcome...your first visit is free!

March 24th, 2011: *Some Portraits from the Anglican Diocese Of British Columbia, the Early Years.* Rev. Sel Caradus has done research on this history, and will focus his talk on three people: Maria Hills (wife of Bishop George Hills), James Raynard, and Alexander Garrett. Rev. Caradus has written a biography of Bishop Hills.

April 28th, 2011: *Keepers of the Record* . Archivist and author Deidre Simmons will speak about the history of the Hudson Bay Company, focusing on the colonies of Vancouver Island and B.C. reflected in these records. Illustrated talk.

Our Spring Tour Schedule

All tours begin at 2:00 p.m. and cost \$5.00. Unless otherwise noted, meet at Starbuck's in Fairfield Plaza at 1:45.

Mar. 13. *Irish Columbia.* It's almost St. Patrick's Day, so Michael Halleran will use the theme to present the fascinating stories of many Irish seafarers, farmers, saloon keepers, judges, rogues and others buried at Ross Bay Cemetery.

Mar. 20. *Ale and Hearty.* Victoria is the oldest commercial brewing centre west of the Great Lakes. Join Greg Evans, Esquimalt Archivist, to learn about our colourful pioneer brewers, their products and the award winning industry they created.

Mar. 27. *Chinese at Ross Bay.* Chinese were buried at Ross Bay Cemetery before the Chinese Cemetery. Many were exhumed and sent back to China, others were washed out to sea. Historian John Adams will talk about this amazing part of the cemetery's history.

Apr. 3. *Chinese Cemetery.* In honour of Ching Ming (grave sweeping day), Victoria City Councillor Charlayne Thornton-Joe leads a tour of this National Historic Site, including her grandfather's grave. Meet at the cemetery, foot of Crescent Road, off King George Terrace.

Apr. 10. *Away From Home.* Archivist and author Kathryn Bridge has been researching letters sent home from Victoria children attending boarding schools in Britain, Canada and elsewhere and has selected some of the most interesting to be read on the family graves at Ross Bay Cemetery.

Apr. 17. *Oak Bay History.* Oak Bay Councillor Nils Jensen is back for his second tour about interesting people from his municipality and others in Greater Victoria who repose for eternity in Ross Bay Cemetery.

Apr 24. *Chocolate Bunnies.* Since it is Easter Sunday we have decided to focus on Victoria's chocolate heritage, including visits to the grave of the founders of Rogers Chocolates. Sherri Robinson leads this first-time tour.

May 1. *"Awake and Dreaming"* is the name of Kit Pearson's award-winning juvenile fiction novel that features a ghost at Ross Bay Cemetery.

May 8. *For Mother.* Esquimalt Mayor Barb Desjardins has found some fascinating stories to illustrate the varied trials, tribulations and testimonials of mothers who lie at Ross Bay Cemetery.

Obituaries of the '58ers

The population of Victoria in the 1860s was certainly comprised of some interesting characters, many of whom had arrived with the population influx in 1858. **Leona Taylor** has compiled many of their obituaries from the pages of the Victoria Daily Colonist. Many were disreputable and the journalists of the day didn't pull any punches! Here is a representative sample:

Jan 19, 1869, 3 - John Livermore, old, odd habitue of police court, and almost the last of the old 1858 gang, was arrested for about 200th time, on charge of selling whiskey to natives... sent to the chain gang for 3 months... justice is satisfied and so is John, for he has comfortable quarters secured him for remainder of winter. Jan 29 - John Livermore, known for many years here as 'Whiskey John' died Jan 28 at hospital of a dropsical complaint. Livermore was native of US, aged about 50. He came to colony in 1858 from California, having been a hotelkeeper at Placerville, where he is said to have had respectable connections. During the 10 years that he figured in this locality he must have served out 50 short terms of imprisonment for selling whiskey to Indians. Contemporaneous with John Butts and 'Liverpool Jack', Whiskey John excelled both as a salesman among Indians, and has probably poisoned more natives than any other man, living or dead, on this northern coast. As an instance of retributive justice, we may state that Livermore has fallen a victim to the very vice he encouraged in his fellow men - drunkenness. Death found him in a state of wretchedness. His end was miserable, and his departure here is not regretted.