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May – June 2015

Constitution and Bylaws

The Constitution and Bylaws of The Old Cemeteries Society of Victoria, as amended at the 2015 annual general meeting, and accepted and filed by the Registrar of Companies, is available upon request to the office.

Aboriginal Day Tour

June 21 is Aboriginal Day in Canada. Celebrate it by visiting graves of some of the many First Nations and Metis people buried at Ross Bay Cemetery. The guide will be OCS member Fern Perkins, a descendant of Isabella Ross, the Metis woman who became BC's first female property owner when she bought what is now the site of RBC. Gather at Oregano's Pizza in Ross Bay Plaza for 2:00 p.m. Cost is \$2.00 for members, \$5.00 for non-members.

Music in Early Victoria

Kate Humble's March 29 tour featuring the graves of singers, musicians and music teachers, telling their stories and singing some of the tunes that were popular in their day, was very well received in spite of the rainy weather.



Cleaning and Restoration

Sharon Welsh

It's that time again! Cleaning and Restoration work parties are starting for the season. As mentioned at the annual general meeting, we are going to try a different approach this year for the cleaning parties. We will have one cleaning party per month for 5-6 hours, starting at 9am. Come for the whole time, or drop by for an hour or a few hours – it's your choice.

The first Cleaning party will be held on Saturday, May 2nd, 9am-3pm. We will meet in Section A, across from the McKenzie Mausoleum. This section was cleaned several years ago, and needs tidying up because the moss is taking over. This section is close to some working water pipes, so we might be able to wash some of the headstones this year. Also, we will unlock some of the mausoleums for their annual cleanup. If you ever

wanted to be inside one of the mausoleums (McKenzie, Helmcken, Johnson, Houston), now is the time! We have all the equipment needed (brooms, scrapers, shovels, etc) and will supply water – just bring some sturdy and/or water repellent gloves. People wandering around the Cemetery see us working and often approach us to see if we can help them find a family plot. We have met many people and heard many stories while taking them to their plot. Come out if you would like to help people find family!

Gift of Smocks

Patrick Lydon

The Old Cemeteries Society has approved the proposal to avail of a gift of ten quality poplin smocks to protect the clothes of volunteers working in the cemetery on Saturdays. The Manager, Mr. Brock Coupar, of the Bank of Nova Scotia, Hillside Mall, has kindly offered to cover the cost of the items, and Ms. Anna-Lise at Ocean Promotions on Jutland Street arranged for the items to be given to us at a reduced price. The smocks are Lincoln green in color and are made of a durable, washable material. The words "Scotiabank" and OCS are printed on the back. My request to make them bullet-proof was denied! Watch for them on our volunteers when the summer clean-ups begin.

Buccaneer Days

OCS will have a booth at **Buccaneer Days Arts & Crafts Show & Sale on Saturday, June 13 and Sunday, June 14**, to be held at the curling rink at Archie Browning Sports Centre. Members of OCS are welcome to come & enjoy the fun filled event. The doors open at 10:00 AM on both days.

I am asking for volunteers to staff our booth. Please contact Gerry Buydens at 383-4873 or gbuydens@shaw.ca if you can help .

Volunteers are needed for the following shifts: Saturday, June 13, 10 am to 2 pm and 2 pm to 5 pm. On Sunday, June 14, shifts from 10 am to 1 pm and 1 pm to 4 pm.

You will welcome the public, hand out our Sunday tour schedule and answer questions relating mainly to Ross Bay Cemetery & OCS. If you do not have the answer, please record the question, the person's name, e-mail address or phone number and someone will contact the enquirer.

BC Historical Federation Annual Conference

This exciting three-day event will take place on May 21 to 23 in the Quesnel area. Featured are speakers, the AGM, a banquet, a field trip on Friday to Barkerville and Cottonwood House. There is a bus trip being organized provided enough people take it to travel from Vancouver to Quesnel with an evening stop over at Cache Creek.

Registration is open to anyone interested in history. For more information check the BC Historical Federation Website <http://www.bchistory.ca/>

Images from Mill Bay's St. Francis Xavier Church

Susan Henderson



You can see it from the highway as you head north from Mill Bay. Do a short detour and be rewarded by a lovely churchyard and cemetery dating to 1887. The Mill Bay Roman Catholic Church, located near the intersection of Kil Kilmalu Road and the Island Highway, stands out as an

island of white clapboard with its steeple and cemetery in an island of trees. One of Cowichan Valley's longest serving churches, it takes its name from Francis Xavier, 1506-1552, a Basque and a Jesuit granted sainthood for his missionary work in the Portugese colony of Goa. Here are some details from monuments in the cemetery:



Graveyard Detectives

Mike Bieling

Laurence Manton of the Graveyard Detectives Facebook page has posted a couple of stories about cemetery goings-on around Vancouver, BC, in recent weeks. First this one from the Vancouver Sun's religion page going back to February 16, 2013, about the four gravediggers who work at historic Mountain View Cemetery, opened in 1887 and the city's oldest cemetery: <http://blogs.vancouversun.com/2013/02/16/vancouver-gravediggers-share-stories-of-the-disturbing-and-beautiful/>

Then, on March 8, Laurence posted a current story from the same source about eight clearly-inscribed gravestones found doing service containing earth for a raised garden bed near the Vancouver waterfront, one of them a duplicate of a marker still on its grave in Mountain View, and the speculation about where these came from and why they're being used in this manner: <http://blogs.vancouversun.com/2015/03/07/tombstone-abuse-families-shocked-headstones-in-retaining-wall/>

Membership Renewal

A reminder that your Old Cemeteries Society membership fees are due. If you haven't renewed, please do so ASAP. If you have renewed, thank you.

When renewing your membership for 2015, please complete the form below and return it with your payment.

Dues are: Individual - \$30.00; Household - \$45.00 and Student - \$20.00

Check applicable category

OCS membership

Donation (any amount is appreciated; income tax receipts are given for donations of \$10 or more.)

Name(s) _____

Mailing Address _____

E-mail _____

Telephone _____ Amount enclosed _____

Make cheques payable to OCS and mail to OCS, Box 50004, RPO Fairfield Plaza, Victoria, B.C., V8S 5L8

Please note that the OCS issues membership cards only on demand. Please indicate so if you want one.

Tombstone Oddities

Russian Mafia Tombstones

Russian gangsters routinely spend lavishly on elaborate tombstones for themselves and their family members and associates. Some of these memorials cost as much as \$250,000, but that never seems to be a problem. Here are some examples:



Last Words

King Charles II 1630-1685

On his deathbed he asked his brother, who succeeded him as James II, to look after his mistresses, especially his favourite, the actress Nell Gwynne. "Don't let poor Nellie starve" were erroneously reported to be his last words. His actual final words were an apology to the courtiers gathered at his bedside: "You must pardon me, gentlemen, for being a most unconscionable time a-dying."

