



Correspondence: P.O. Box 50004, #15 – 1594 Fairfield Road, Victoria BC V8S 1G1  
Telephone: (250) 598-8870 Fax: (250) 598-8811

E-mail [oldcem@pacificcoast.net](mailto:oldcem@pacificcoast.net)

Web Site: <http://www.oldcem.bc.ca>

January – February 2012

### **Annual General Meeting**

Date: Wednesday, February 15, 2012, at 7:30 p.m.

Location: James Bay New Horizons at 234 Menzies Street

Speaker: Maureen Duffus

### **Agenda**

**President's Report** - will summarize the written reports submitted by Board members to be included in the Minutes.

### **Election of Officers**

Elections to the Old Cemeteries Society Board for 2012 will be held. The Board consists of Past President, President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and five Members at Large. Board members are expected to attend monthly meetings (third Wednesday of the month) to guide the Society's activities and discuss issues. There are retirements from the Board this year, so please send in your nominations (yourself or someone else) for any of the positions. Contact Gerry Buydens, Nomination Committee Chair, at [gbuydens@shaw.ca](mailto:gbuydens@shaw.ca) or 250-383-4873 as soon as possible.

### **Refreshments and Membership Renewals**

### **Speaker**

We're delighted to have Maureen Duffus, local historian and author ( "Battlefront Nurses in WW I", "A Most Unusual Colony", "Old Langford" and others) present new research on "Craigflower Country", a history of View Royal. Maureen will have books available for sale.

### **2012 Tours Start in February**

February 19. RBC. **Black History**. After 1858 Victoria was a haven for blacks escaping racism in California and many are buried at RBC. A Black poet of the 1860s, a man who was a slave during the time of George Washington, a Black city councilor and many other people will be discussed. A joint tour by the OCS and the BC Black History Awareness Society for Black History Month.

February 26. RBC. **A Powerful Past**. This is Heritage Week and the theme across the province this year is "Energy in BC: a Powerful Past; a Sustainable Future." Stories of

Victoria's first gas works, coal production on Vancouver Island, early electrical generation and even nuclear energy will be included in today's tour.

March 4. RBC. **Surprise Endings.** Popular storyteller Glenn Perlstrom has dug into his macabre files for more of the most amazing stories of sudden and unexpected deaths, bizarre mishaps and deadly epidemics that sent many of our forebears to an early grave at RBC. Not for the faint hearted or squeamish!

March 11. RBC. **Ross Family Heritage.** Charles Ross built Fort Victoria in 1843 and his widow, Isabella, owned the land where RBC is now located. Descendant Fern Perkins will visit family graves and recount family stories. She will discuss the new wooden headboard to be placed on one of the Ross family plots.

### **Members Fall Social**

Our first annual Fall Social was held on November 26th. It was a great social evening with lots of interaction between members and a bit of storytelling. Jan Ross, manager of Carr House, gave us a short talk on Emily Carr and read passages from her writings relating to Ross Bay Cemetery.

Lasagna and salads were served and we finished the evening with cake, coffee and more conversation. Our president recounted our accomplishments for 2011 and outlined what we should be aiming for in 2012. It was a fun way to end the year. Here are a couple of photos:



### **President's Message**

As I turn yet another calendar page, I can't help but reflect on the past year and wonder at how fast it has fled. Our move into the Ross Bay Villa took a bit of time and lots of reorganization but thanks to Roberta, Elizabeth and a few others, we are set up to share our collection of histories and stories with all our membership. We also have a system in place to add new files and keep track of them on our database. Our goal of painting all the iron fences in the cemetery was completed in late September and a heartfelt THANKS must go out the volunteers who made it happen. The result is very noticeable and appreciated.

Our recording volunteers and summer student finished Block T and half of block B. It was a little less than we had hoped but still an excellent accomplishment. Our biggest accomplishment of 2011 was the completion of phase one of our Row Marker Project.

These markers make a huge difference in the use of the cemetery and we can be very proud of it.

Well, as they say, that was yesterday!

Here are a few goals that your executive will be working on in 2012:

Repair and re-erect 10 old tablet markers

Add monument photographs for Block U, T and A to our database

Start to add obits to the database

Continue our summer cleaning program with an emphasis on Block U

Start on phase two of the Row Marker Program

In 2012 we will be asking for your continued support of all our projects and activities and we look forward to meeting and working with all of you in our continued effort to make a difference.

### **New Project for 2012**

A project team is being established to enhance and add to the valuable information gathered over the years by OCS members into a more accessible resource. Activities may include photographing grave markers, updating the existing database to connect to invaluable paper files, preparing and adding photos to the database and locating obituaries for RBC burials.

If you have some time to commit to a large project over the next year, we need you!

E-mail Linda Boon at [lmboon2@shaw.ca](mailto:lmboon2@shaw.ca) or call 250-388-6675

A meeting will be held in January, a date to be determined, to outline our goals.

Get involved early and be part of this exciting new project that will consolidate much of our data into one friendly, usable database. Looking forward to hearing from you!

### **Row Marker Project**

It is so satisfying to see a plan come together. In mid-December, a small group of hardy souls got together to place and install the last 18 row markers at Ross Bay Cemetery. This completes the first phase of a two year project that we can be extremely proud of. Thanks to Thrifty Foods and to everyone who helped make this project a success. In the spring we will start organizing the second phase. If you have any suggestions for "path/roadway" locations for markers, please jot them down and pass them on to the executive for consideration.

### **Office Coordinator**

Office Coordinator Roberta Law has had to give notice that, due to pressures from other work, she can no longer fill the position and will be retiring in January. Roberta has been working with us since April 2010 and was a great help in getting us through the difficult transition to our new office at Ross Bay Villa in Dec. 2010. It involved a lot of physical moving of files and furniture and reorganizing all our material to fit into the new office. Roberta helped with all aspects of our activities and projects and will be missed. Thankfully she is carrying on long enough to train our new Office Coordinator Norah Reksten. Norah has extensive office experience (U Vic Law Faculty office) and is now

substitute teaching after attending U Vic and completing her teaching degree. We are delighted to welcome her to our society and wish her well in this interesting job.

### **Thrifty Foods Smile Card Program**

Please don't forget to use your Thrifty Foods Smile Card this New Year. All the funds generated by this program go to our Row Marker Project and we have already spent the money. So we need you to use them!

### **Repairs at Ross Bay Cemetery**

For the first time in more than fifty years the City of Victoria Parks Department, responsible for the maintenance of Ross Bay Cemetery, has taken the initiative to repair and restore monuments. In September a number of monuments were identified as dangerous or in need of major work; in October a contract was let and the work on twelve large monuments was completed in mid-November. These monuments were beyond the capabilities of our volunteers so we are very grateful that the City has made these repairs. Special thanks to Todd Stewardson, Dan Marzocco and David Speed.

### **Victoria Historical Society Meetings**

**January 26th, 2012:** Bob Griffin: *Feeding Victoria: 100 Years of Food and Drink in Victoria* Bob's talk will be based on the new book of this title which he has co-authored with Nancy Oke. **February 23rd, 2012:** Ken Johnson: *History of Beacon Hill Park*. Ken is the President of the Hallmark Society.

### **Langham Court Theatre Fundraiser for OCS**

We applied for Langham Court Theatre's fundraising opportunity for non-profits, and were accepted!

We are offering tickets for the **9 March 2012** 8pm performance of "**Rabbit Hole**" for the reduced ticket price of **\$15** (tickets are usually \$19/Adults - \$16/Seniors).

In addition to the play, we are also invited to join the cast and crew in a question and answer talkback following the performance. The focus for the evening is to entertain and educate the audience about the process of mounting a show and to give insight into the meaning of the play itself.

Act soon as these tickets will go quickly!

Contact Sharon at 250.995.1322 or [afterprior@shaw.ca](mailto:afterprior@shaw.ca). Sale of tickets will be on a first-come first-served basis. If you don't order before Jan. 29 please don't expect a reply to your order until Feb. 15, as Sharon will be on vacation.

Payment is by cheque or money order to the post office box (we will mail your tickets or arrange alternative delivery) or if you prefer to pay cash, we will arrange to open the OCS Office at Ross Bay Villa to accommodate you and collect payment.

### **Rabbit Hole**

*Written by David Lindsay-Abaire*

*Directed by Sylvia Rhodes*

*How can a family survive when the light of their lives has gone out? David Lindsay-Abaire's Pulitzer Prize-winning drama offers a view of personal tragedy that is at once mesmerizing and heart-wrenching, but full of compassion, humour and, finally, hope.*

### **Vic 150 Celebration**

OCS will be involved in the 2012 celebrations for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the incorporation of the City of Victoria. A symposium “Victoria, 1862” is being proposed by the Victoria Historical Society. The 2-day symposium would take a detailed look at the events leading to incorporation in August 1862 and life in the city at that time. Partners are OCS, Hallmark Society, Friends of the BC Archives and U Vic History Dept. The proposed date is September 29-30, 2012. Other details are being worked out in anticipation of applying for funding from Canadian Heritage and the Greater Victoria Spirit Committee.

Another project is being coordinated by Leona Taylor and Don Reksten to compile interesting articles from the 1862 British Colonist and add factual background information related to the story. These will be published by OCS in a booklet.

### **From our Research Files**

The Daily Colonist – September 13, 1932, page 5 Leona Taylor

IMPROVING CEMETERY – nearly 50 men employed at Ross Bay in Work of Reconditioning

Work of improving the Ross Bay Cemetery is well under way, it was announced yesterday by W H Warren, city park superintendent. Thirty-three men on relief work are now busily engaged re-grading the cemetery for the purpose of re-seeding. The work is being done in such a manner that the green swards can be mowed properly and the cemetery kept tidy in perpetuity. Hedges are being trimmed and weeds pulled out.

Mr Warren also is making a study of what is best to plant near the waterfront, where salt spray generally kills most plants. Sitka spruce has taken quite well there and it is planned to plant shrubs and flowers behind this windbreak.

Asters, Michaelmas daisies and other flowers have been found to withstand the salt spray and these will be planted in the cemetery to improve the appearance. Among the trees, native alder and willow seems to survive the salt spray and wind in that neighbourhood and some of these also will be planted.

It is expected that when the programme is completed, Ross Bay cemetery will no longer be open to criticism by those who believe that it can be maintained in proper condition with flower beds to soften the existent harshness of the landscape.

### **A Sad Story**

### **Wilf Bruch**

In 1900 the caretaker of the Goldstream Water & Power Company’s reservoir was one Robert McClure. He lived on site with his wife (Mrs McClure) and their two children. Charlie was 10 and Katie was 6.

On July 6, 1900 Charlie borrowed his father’s Winchester rifle to do some “hunting” and on his return home had left the rifle in the bedroom next to the kitchen. After supper, he realized that he had not returned the rifle to the gun rack and left the kitchen to retrieve it. Returning to the kitchen, rifle in hand, he tripped and the gun discharged. The other three members of the family were standing together near the stove and the bullet passed through Katie’s forehead, Mrs. McClure’s left arm and pierced Robert McClure’s abdomen. Katie died instantly!

At this point Charlie panicked, ran to the reservoir and jumped in. Both parents followed him and were able to talk him out of the water before he drowned himself.

Help was called for and came in the persons of Doctor Hart and Constable Hoskins of the Provincial Police who took 45 year old Robert to St Joseph’s Hospital for surgery. His intestines had been ruptured in five places and he did not survive!

We can find no trace of Mrs. McClure and Charlie. They seem to have moved on but Robert and Katie are forever in Section F, Plot 1, west of row 19 in Ross Bay Cemetery.

Jan 28, 1871 - among passengers aboard *Isabel* from Pt Townsend, WT was Capt Henry Gray, formerly of Hope, BC. In 1861 Mr Gray was pilot of SS *Cariboo* when that vessel was blown up off the mouth of this harbor. Capt Jamieson, who stood by Gray’s side at the wheel, was killed - the latter escaping with a few slight contusions. After the disaster Gray went to OR, the present being his first visit to Victoria since the melancholy occurrence.

**Membership Renewals due in January 2012**

Membership dues are now on a calendar year basis so everyone should renew in January 2012. If you joined any time in 2011, you must still renew in January. You may renew at the AGM on February 15, 2012 but after that we will remove you from our membership list. Membership forms are included in this newsletter (see below); are posted on the website [www.oldcem.bc.ca](http://www.oldcem.bc.ca); will be included in the 2012 Walking Tour schedule distributed in February, and will be available at the AGM.

**Due to the ever-increasing cost of sending newsletters and notices by Canada Post, the executive of OCS urges you to have them sent by e-mail.** If you agree with this, please provide your e-mail address on the membership renewal form. The newsletter sent via e-mail or on the website will be formatted so it can be downloaded or printed on 8½” by 11” paper.

Members can check the status of their membership by looking at the back of your membership card, or you can e-mail the office at [oldcem@pacificcoast.net](mailto:oldcem@pacificcoast.net).

When renewing your membership for 2012, please complete the form at the end of this newsletter and return it with your payment. You can also renew at the Annual General Meeting on Feb. 15, 2012.

Dues are: Individual - \$30.00; Household - \$45.00 and Student - \$20.00 Make cheques payable to OCS and mail to OCS, Box 50004, #15 – 1594 Fairfield Rd, Victoria, B.C. V8S 1G1

**Membership Form**

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 \_\_\_\_\_

