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## **January – February 2022**

### **Tours -Gerry Buydens**

We will start up again in mid-February with in person tours which will be contingent on the status of COVID. Check our website, our Facebook page or email for 2022 tour information. Tour schedule for February to April listed below.

We would like to thank everyone for making this past year a success. In particular I would like to thank the tour organizers for their efforts in adjusting to the pandemic laden year and still deliver the weekly tours. Thank you to everyone who attended the tours.

### **Old Cemeteries Society 2022 Tour Schedule — February to the end of April**

Charge: \$5 for non-members; \$2 for members. No reservations needed.

Tours are every Sunday at 2 pm.

Tours at Ross Bay Cemetery are signified RBC and start at the cemetery entrance on Fairfield Road, opposite the south end of Stannard Street. Other tours start where noted.

**NOTE:** The tour on **Sunday, March 20, Victoria's Multicultural Firsts**, will be on **Zoom only**. The Zoom link will be sent out to members.

Feb. 20. RBC. **City of the Dead**. Find out why RBC was founded in 1872 and how it was designed based on 19th century ideals of cemetery layout that originated with Napoleon. The winding carriageways lined with trees had symbolic significance; the styles of monuments and their epitaphs evoked Victorian values; the sloping site overlooking the ocean and the division by religious denomination reflected divisions in 19th century class and society.

Feb. 27. RBC. **Black History.** Each year in February, the OCS joins with the BC Black History Awareness Society to mark Black History Month by touring some of the many graves of Victoria's Black pioneers buried at RBC. Escaping increasing discrimination in California, about 600 came here at the invitation of Gov. James Douglas. Douglas is included on the tour because of Black ancestry on his mother's side.

March 6. RBC. **Monuments and Their Makers.** Victorian cemeteries such as RBC were often intended to be outdoor sculpture gardens. Several master stone sculptors practised in Victoria and have superb works in many different styles on display at RBC. Who carved these angels, elaborate crosses, Gothic tablets and classical pillars? John Adams has chosen some fascinating examples for today's tour and will visit the graves of some of the carvers to tell their stories.

March 13. RBC. **Murder Most Foul – Part 1.** Always a popular topic in our annual tour program. Join Michael Halleran as he visits graves of the victims of murder and even a few of the convicted murderers themselves. For murder mystery aficionados who want more, the theme will continue later this year with a selection of different stories.

March 20. *Zoom only.* **Victoria's Multicultural Firsts.** May Q. Wong is the author of the recent book *City in Colour* about Victoria's multicultural past with a focus on people of colour. The author will highlight the many firsts among this diversity of people buried at RBC. Hear about Victoria's Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiian, First Nations, Metis and others of colour who were pioneers, trailblazers and community leaders.

March 27. RBC. **Emily Carr Tour – Part 1.** Emily Carr's grave is one of the most visited at RBC. Every year a team of OCS guides visits the graves of many people Emily knew. Emily herself (a.k.a. Molly Rahe Newman) will delight us with readings about these people from Emily's prolific writings. A second, different Emily Carr tour is scheduled later this year.

April 3. RBC. **Gulf Islands Connections.** Today the Gulf Islands are easily accessible by regular ferry service but even in the earliest days of settlement when travel was more difficult, there were strong connections between Victoria and the islands. Join Yvonne Van Ruskenveld to hear stories of those with connections to the many different islands that attract visitors from near and far.

April 10. **The Jewish Cemetery.** In October 1859, within a year of the first Jews arriving in the city, the Hebrew Benevolent Society purchased 1.7 acres from the Hudson Bay Company for a cemetery. Officially established in February 1860, it was the first Jewish cemetery in western Canada and is B.C.'s oldest non-indigenous cemetery still in continuous use today. Our tour will offer an overview of the influences of Jewish customs and beliefs on the creation of a cemetery landscape as well as how the site reflects the community's history, its present and its future. Meet at the main gates on Fernwood Rd. at corner of Cedar Hill Rd. Men, please wear a hat.

April 17. RBC. **Grave Messages.** While the permanent residents of Ross Bay Cemetery can no longer speak to us directly, the words and symbols on their grave markers give us glimpses of who they were and how they were loved. Join long-time OCS member Yvonne Van Ruskenveld as she explores the meaning behind a new set of some of RBC's most interesting epitaphs and symbols and the stories they can reveal. This tour will include some of the newest stones in the cemetery.

April 24. RBC. **Re-thinking Point Ellice House.** Kelly Black, historian and manager of Point Ellice House National Historic Site, examines the stories of the O'Reilly family, their neighbours, friends and business associates. Peter O'Reilly, often portrayed as a pillar of the community in Victorian society, can also be seen in a different light that will be discussed today.

### **Annual General Meeting- Gerry Buydens**

Due to the pandemic, we will not be able to have indoor gathering for the foreseeable future, so do not expect an AGM in February. We are allowed to delay the AGM by 6 months under normal conditions but due to COVID, we have a 12-month window from the end of our season.

It is my hope that things start to lighten up & we get the virus under control, so that we might be able to hold an outdoor AGM in May or early June when the weather will be favorable. The current executive will remain in place until the AGM, whenever that may be. We will continue to operate as per whatever Health regulations are in place. Keep safe.

### **Painting of Ross Bay Cemetery by the late Anne Meggitt**



-Donated by her daughters to the Old Cemetery Society



# George Russell (Russ) Stewart, 1931- 2021

Russ was born July 15, 1931, the second of thirteen children of George Watson Stewart and Mabel Stewart (nee Taylor), in Kinistino, Saskatchewan, which is just west of Melfort. He attended Norden School beginning in 1937.

Poverty, the Depression, and then wartime labour shortages taught Russ habits of long hours and hard work which he kept up throughout his life.



As a teenager he began to see a bigger world when he visited Ontario to help with a grain harvest, and then British Columbia as a member of the naval reserve. Russ earned a



Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy at the University of Saskatchewan, paying for it by working on pipeline construction, at the smelter in Trail, BC, and as an apprentice pharmacist.

In 1954, after graduating and while working at a pharmacy in Prince Albert, he met and married Lucy Row, who had graduated from Prince Albert Collegiate Institute and worked in the film room of the public library.

They were married in the chapel of St Albans Cathedral on November 7, 1954, beginning more than 67 years of married life together.



Russ soon joined the Canadian Forces as a medical officer, and in 1966-67 he earned a Master's in Health Administration degree from Baylor University. He spent his career in the health care field, serving in Ontario, Manitoba, Germany, Texas and Nova Scotia. Russ and Lucy became adventurous and well-organized travellers, taking many long trips across Canada to visit family members, wherever they were based, and occasionally to see other parts of the world. Russ was a lifelong Christian and a constant contributor to his community, wherever he lived, and above all through the United Churches where he was always active.

In the late 1970s Russ began building a cottage on a lot on Centennial Lake, between Calabogie and Griffith. The cottage became his hobby, and Russ and Lucy's second home, for the next twenty years, as their primary base moved to Nepean, Ontario and later to Victoria, BC, where they retired. Russ continued to contribute through organizations including the Salvation Army Grace General Hospital in Ottawa, Victoria's

Fairfield United Church, the Cook Street Village Activity Centre, Craigdarroch Castle and the Old Cemeteries Society for the rest of his life.

Russ passed away in Victoria on November 28, 2021. He is survived by his loving wife of 67 years, Lucy (nee Row), children Ken (Rose), John (Nadia), Tom (Christina) and Maggie (Ken Frasch), and eight grandchildren. He was predeceased by daughter Lucy (1957), son James (1971-99) and granddaughter Maeve (1993-99). Russ is remembered by his friends at Fairfield United Church, the Cook Street Village Activity Centre, and the Old Cemeteries Society, by his surviving brothers and sisters, and by friends and neighbours far and wide.

The Old Cemetery Society would like to thank Russ for all of his years of service and our thoughts are with his loved ones.

### December 5, 2021 Tour: Old Burying Ground Christmas Tour



- John Adams Tour Guide



- An engaged group listening to John Adams



The Old Cemetery Society's year runs from January 1 to December 31<sup>st</sup>. We would like to remind everyone that annual membership fees are due on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Thank you to all members who are up to date with their membership dues. For those of you who haven't submitted your dues, it is not too late. Please submit as soon as possible. Please use the membership renewal form attached. Dues will also be accepted in person at our Sunday tours.

## Membership Renewal Form:

It's time to renew your OCS membership for 2022 and for the board to thank you for your past support of our activities. Please circle type of membership: Individual \$30 Family \$45 Student \$20 Donations are greatly appreciated. \$ \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make cheques payable to The Old Cemeteries Society and mail to P.O. Box 50004, RPO Fairfield Plaza, Victoria BC, V8S 5L8  
Membership cards are issued only if requested.