



# Victoria Historical Society Publication

WINTER 2007/08

## SPEAKERS FOR THE 2007 ~ 2008 SEASON

*PLEASE NOTE CHANGES MARKED THUS \**

All meetings, except December, will be at the James Bay New Horizons Centre 234 Menzies Street at 7:30.

November 22. "Emily Carr in her Own Words" Anne-Lee Switzer has compiled Emily Carr's unpublished life stories in a new book, *This and That*. She will introduce and read from the collection that show another side of Emily.

December 6th - Christmas Dinner and Seasonal Celebration. Gorge Vale Golf Clubhouse 6 pm. Dinner and talk by Arla Taylor of the Cridge Centre for the Family on the "Life and Times of Rev. Edward and Mary Cridge". (See below for dinner reservation which will be \$26).

2008

\* January 24 "Charles Bayley — Hudson's Bay Company Employee and Vancouver Island Pioneer". Ms. Terri Hunter will give an illustrated talk on this important pioneer of the Colony of Vancouver Island.

February 28 "Fortune's a River: the Collision of Empires in the Pacific Northwest" Dr. Barry Gough, historian and author, will give an interpretation of the clash of European empire ambitions off the Northwest Coast of North America in C 18-19.

\* March 27 "Ripple Rock: Its Discovery and Demise" Michael Layland, historical geographer, has done research on this BC coastal navigational

hazard blown from the waters of Seymour Narrows in 1958.

April 24 "A Most Unusual Colony, Vancouver Island 1849 -1860", Maureen Duffus, author, will speak based on her research. Mary Yates' fictional letters give an authentic picture of Fort Victoria seen through female eyes. Illustrated

May 22 "Steam in the Mountains: A people's viewpoint of the logging history of Vancouver Island." Dr. Richard Mackie, UVic historian, has researched and written on this subject giving the point of view of the loggers who worked in the woods. An illustrated lecture. (The Society's AGM will precede this talk which will begin at 8:30.)

## ~ CHRISTMAS DINNER MEETING ~

The deadline for reservations and payment for this meeting is 30 November, 2007. Please contact Eric Domke who will also be co-ordinating car pooling. Anyone needing a ride to the Gorge Vale Golf Club should contact Eric (389 1418) beforehand and he will try to arrange rides for those needing them.

If you are planning to attend in costume and are unfamiliar with a needle and thread, costumes may be rented from 'Disguise the Limit', 3328 Metchosin Road, across from the firehall; 'Victoria Operatic Society' on Fairview Road, and 'Langham Court Theatre' — where else but Langham Court.

## ~ CARE AND CONCERN ~

If you know of any of our members or their families who you feel would appreciate some support in time of crisis, please contact Ruth Ralston (385 4113) who is the Society's 'den mother'. She will forward our messages to those affected.

## ~ ASSISTANCE REQUIRED ~

I am creating a course on social movements for the Department of History at UVic; the course is taking place between January-April 2008. The major assignment for the course requires each student to interview someone who was involved in a social movement in the 1960s/1970s (or earlier) currently living in Victoria. Any movement applies. I am attempting to track down people who could be interviewed by undergraduate students in this course. Ultimately my goal is to use this as the beginning of an oral history archive for British Columbia on social movements. I would be grateful for any suggestions you may have of people who fit this profile. Or, perhaps you could forward my request to some of the Society's members who may be able to help me touch base with others?

Thank you,

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## ~ FIELD TRIP ~

A score of Victoria Historical Society members, augmented by imports from the Old Cemeteries Society and the Victoria Genealogical Society, recently got a personalized tour of two of Victoria's military museums.

The timing was fitting — just days before both the 5th Artillery and the Canadian Scottish were to open their doors on Remembrance Day with a very special ceremony at the Vimy Cross, an old wooden cross that was originally erected on Vimy Ridge in memory of the battalion members who died in that historic struggle. Both museums are tucked away in rooms on the second floor of the Bay St. Armouries — but can be reached by elevator for those with mobility problems.

Our members and guests were warmly received by regimental members, boasting smart crested blazers and regimental ties. We split into two groups as Dale Murray led the 5th tour, John Wigmore hosted the Scottish visitors. After about 45 minutes in each museum we traded places and then got together at the end to present each museum with our thanks and about \$50, made up from our donations.

The two museums have a friendly rivalry, the Canadian Scottish Regiment has the more historic artifacts but the 5th Artillery has brighter quarters in what was once the sergeant's mess.

The 5th Artillery boasts an early computer, which was used to aim its guns. We also learned that artillery regiments don't have company colours: the gun is the rallying point.

The 5th recently lost a member in Afghanistan, the Scottish boasts four VC winners.

Many of our members may know the Scottish Regiment by its four-legged mascot, Wallace, a St. Bernard who marches proudly on ceremonial occasions. Wallace, like his army friends, epitomizes the Regiment's Gaelic motto: Deas Gu Cath (Ready for the fray).

Both museums welcome visitors and details of opening hours can be found by calling:

(250) 363-8753

or by E-mail to [csmuse@islandnet.com](mailto:csmuse@islandnet.com), and not forgetting the New Year's Day Levee

*Ann Moon*

## ~ MARITIME MUSEUM ~

The special exhibition, POSH, at the Maritime Museum, which was temporarily closed because of urgent construction work needed to prevent the east side of the museum becoming part of Langley street, has now re-opened. The exhibit documents the 'golden days' of ferry travel around the coast of Vancouver Island and to the mainland. The artifacts are drawn from the resources of the Maritime museum and from the personal collection of Jacques Marc of the Underwater Archaeology Society of BC. The centrepiece is a complete table setting of crockery and silverware typical of the 1920s. The Exhibit runs until 20 January, 2008.

## ~ IMPORTANT BOOK LAUNCH ~

Barry Gough's new book *Fortune's a River: The Collision of Empires in Northwest America* is scheduled to be launched at the Maritime Museum of British Columbia, 5 December 2007 at 7:30 pm.

This book is a tour of the horizon of the imperial struggle for the control of Northwest America. It covers the late eighteenth century through to the mid nineteenth, and has as its focus the Columbia River, the famed and elusive "River of the West."

It is a study in personalities and commerce – and how these drive state actions – and woven in with the main story is the search for the elusive, seductive Northwest Passage. The key actor in this immense drama is John Ledyard, who sailed with Cook on the third, final voyage, and was at Nootka in 1778. Inspired by the sea otter trade and the prospects of commerce, Ledyard and his story encapsulate the early zeal of men of commerce to get into the trade and develop global commerce. For a time Nootka Sound was a global gateway, but its role was supplanted by that of the mouth and estuary of the Columbia River.

Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the subject of Gough's award winning *First Across the Continent* (1997), is central to the story of the continental fur trade and the imperial politics and commercial policy of the North West Company. It was Mackenzie who convinced Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe of Upper Canada of the importance of transcontinental discoveries and empire; and, truth to tell, Mackenzie fitted in with Simcoe's designs. From Simcoe, Mackenzie advanced his designs with Lord Dorchester, the governor of Quebec, and via Dorchester the British Colonial Office and Board of Trade began to hear of this famed trader who had travelled to the Arctic Ocean and then gone west to Pacific tidewater. Mackenzie encapsulates the North West Company's western expansion, but what made it a reality was the work of Simon Fraser in the central cordillera west of Hudson's Hope. David Thompson, wildly different in character to Mackenzie or Fraser, becomes the real centerpiece of the book, and in three and a half long chapters Gough tells Thompson's story, not as biography but as explorer and traveller. That he got to the mouth of the Columbia River all too late was not his fault, details of which are given.

Rivals to British and Canadian pre-eminence on North America provide the larger backdrop of the story. The Russians, coming out of the fog and mists of Kamchatka and Alaska, the Spanish, from San Blas and Monterey, the French under Laperouse seeking a Northwest Passage and to claim empire in Alaska only to allow their claim to die because of neglect. It is to the American challenge that the British and Canadians are obliged to make the greatest concentrated effort. First the Boston fur traders, who make deals for title and trade with the Nuuchahmuls, and then the New York business tycoon John Jacob Astor plants a base of empire at Astoria are presented. The Nor'westers' reply to Astor was to buy out the exposed, beleaguered Americans. The War of 1812 upsets all plans, and in the diplomatic aftermath Astoria is returned to the Americans in terms of their claims to

sovereignty. The hitherto unknown diplomacy by sloops of war, British and American, are recounted. The story of Anglo-American rivalry thus concludes appropriately on the eve of the Oregon crisis.

By keeping all these rivals at bay – Russian, French, Spanish and American – Britain maintained a sovereign beachhead, and the implications for this in the founding of the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia are clear. This was the formative period of our modern history. Gough makes clear, too, that the Lewis and Clark expedition, as important as it was, was part of a larger story of empire and exploration. He refuses to put Mackenzie in second place to the Corps of Discovery. In the end, the Columbia enterprise was achieved. The overland quest for trade was paralleled by the maritime enterprise of British traders on the Northwest Coast. The legacies are apparent in our history and traditions.

*Fortune's a River* is published by Harbour Publishing at \$36.95

### ~ **BAMFIELD LIFEBOAT CENTENARY** ~ **13, 14, 15 JUNE, 2008**

The community of Bamfield and the crew of the Canadian Coast Guard's Bamfield Lifeboat Station invite you to celebrate a century of saving those in peril on the sea.

#### Itinerary

13 June, 2008

18:00 Registration & Tickets at Rix Centre  
19:00 Centennial Reception at Rix Centre for Ocean Discoveries, Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre.

14 June, 2008

09:00 Historical Symposium — Lifeboats and Lifesaving  
12:00 Lunch  
13:00 Tours — Bamfield Lifeboat Station, Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre, Pachena Bay and West Coast Lifesaving Trail head.  
18:00 Lifeboat Centenary Dinner

15 June, 2008

09:00 Historical Symposium continued  
12:00 Community Lunch at Bamfield Lifeboat Station  
13:00 Open Afternoon

Accommodation is limited in Bamfield, please book early. For private accommodation check [www.bamfieldchamber.com](http://www.bamfieldchamber.com)

Dormitory style housing is available for the centenary at Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre, please contact [spakula@bms.bc.ca](mailto:spakula@bms.bc.ca)

#### Advance Registration

All prices are per person in Canadian funds (US currency accepted). Tickets will also be available at the door for both meals and events. Please note breakfasts are not included.

\$75.00 Registration Fee includes centennial reception, historical symposium and lunch on 14 June, 2008

\$25.00 Lifeboat Centenary Dinner

\$100.00 All Inclusive, includes registration fee and lifeboat centenary dinner.

Proceeds will be donated to maritime heritage projects in BC

For more info contact  
[registrar@bamfieldlifeboat100.ca](mailto:registrar@bamfieldlifeboat100.ca)

## JOSEPH BADENOCH CLEARIHUE

1887 - 1976

Joseph Badenoch Clearihue was born in Victoria, his father having come here in 1859. He attended Victoria Boys School, Victoria College, McGill University and Oxford.

He was a member of the 5th Canadian Field Artillery in WWI. He later served as a B.C. judge and was the first chancellor of the University of Victoria. Reading from a book of brief essays honoring Judge Clearihue, I found out many interesting insights about the man, he was definitely one of the praised. He assisted in the birth of UVic in 1903 and saw it grow until in 1963 it became the new university. When looking back on his life he must have found it rich and satisfying.

As a student he earned the most coveted of academic prizes including a Rhodes Scholarship which gave him the opportunity to attend Oxford; as a soldier he won the military cross; and in civilian life he became a judge, an alderman, and an MLA. He also married a doctor and raised a daughter who, in turn, became a well known doctor in Victoria. Dr Clearihue was one of 7 students in the first class of Victoria College in 1903 and 60 years later he would be its first chancellor.

Lectures were given around a large table and the only sport available was grass hockey.

It was their freshman year at McGill University of B.C. situated in Victoria. McGill was the stepping stone for Oxford and in 1911 he was selected as a Rhodes scholar. Joseph's three years at Oxford were an important social, imperialistic experience, and his subsequent career justified the foresight and repaid the generosity of Cecil Rhodes.

At the outbreak of the WWI, Dr Clearihue received a commission in the 5th Regiment, Canadian Coast Artillery of Victoria in Esquimalt. It then became the training centre for artillerymen and Lieutenant Clearihue was one of the key training officers. On May 18th Lieutenant Clearihue and his men marched through Victoria and embarked for training in Ontario. From there they proceeded to London and France spending 16 months there. He participated in many battles including the cracking of the Hindenburg Line and the capture of Bourlon Wood. It was for his bravery at the capture of Valenciennes that he received the military cross. He returned to Victoria in 1919 and was promoted to major.

In 1920 he was elected on the Liberal ticket to a four year term in the BC legislature and was a city alderman for 4 years

He had been called to the bar in 1916 and practiced his profession in the city with great success. He was appointed King's Counsel in 1936. For some years before law was taught at the university Dr Clearihue gave lectures to students-at-law and articling clerks who otherwise had to do all their own study and research without direction. In 1952 he was appointed a judge, an office he held until his retirement at age 75.

When it came to higher education Dr Clearihue felt that Victoria College should be given independent status as a university and happily he lived to see his ambition realized and his dreams came true. For 18 years he devoted hours of time and thought and boundless energy to the dream and task of developing a campus in Victoria. In 1957 when he failed to persuade the Hudson's Bay Company to sell some property for \$1.00, 38 acres were purchased at a price of \$250,000 as an extension of the Lansdowne Campus. In 1962 Judge Clearihue turned the first sod for the construction of the campus. The first building was dedicated to the Friends of Victoria College and of course still stands as the Clearihue Building. In all his affairs Judge Clearihue displayed a quiet dignity which was never challenged. His dignity was founded on a true

respect for the rights of others and an expectation that his own kind of dignity be a reciprocal part of every association.

*Joyce Mackie*

## **ROBERT PATERSON RITHET (1844 - 1919)**

**R**obert Paterson Rithet was born the fourth son of a farmer in Applegarth near Lockerbie, Scotland in 1844. He was educated at Annan Academy and got his early business training in a merchant's office in Liverpool, England.

Rithet moved to Victoria in 1862 via San Francisco, and went on to become one of Victoria's foremost citizens and prominent businessmen. Some of his early jobs included being a stevedore, and working as an accountant and local manager for Sproat & Company, a wholesale provision firm. [See BC Archives photo g-1067 (Robert Rithet)]

In 1870, Rithet joined the office of J. Robertson Stewart, in the building that later was to become R.P. Rithet & Company, Wholesale Merchants, Shipping and Insurance Agents. The Rithet Building still stands at 1117 Wharf Street. Like many businesses of the time, Stewart's firm was a branch of a company that worked out of San Francisco. Stewart eventually sold his interests to Welch, Rithet & Company and the company prospered. The partners were agents for the Moodyville Sawmill on Burrard Inlet, and imported groceries and liquor to the Province. When Andrew Welch died, Rithet became head of the firm that made him a household name in Victoria. [See BC Archives photos f-9923 and h-4040 (R.P. Rithet & Company)]

Rithet was appointed Justice of the Peace by Lieutenant-Governor Joseph William Trutch in 1873.

Rithet married Elizabeth Munro in 1875. Elizabeth was the daughter of Alexander Munro, who had been an accountant and employee of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, and later a manager of the parent Hudson's Bay Company.

Rithet became active in Victoria's early Chamber of Commerce. When the Chamber was reorganized as the British Columbia Board of Trade in 1878, he became its first president, a position that he held until 1885.

Rithet was elected Mayor of Victoria, defeating James Fell and serving one term. He campaigned

on the issue of drainage, saying that the city "must be drained of its filth or it will be drained of its wealth and populace". Fell succeeded Rithet as mayor in 1885.

Rithet also became the Provincial Legislature's Member for Victoria in 1894, a position he held for one term until 1898. The major political issue for Rithet was his promotion of the British Pacific Railway, which would have secured the long awaited rail connection of Vancouver Island to the mainland, which had been promised to B.C. under the terms of Confederation. Opposition from mainland members eventually killed this idea. Rithet also took an active interest in financial relations between the Federal and Provincial Governments while in office, becoming one of the first in B.C. to draw attention to these matters.

One of Rithet's greatest accomplishments was his formation of the Victoria Wharf and Warehouse Company and its building of the Outer Wharves near the western end of Dallas Road, north of Ogden Point where the Coastguard Base now stands. Built in the 1890s, these were the city's deep-sea wharves, which enabled Victoria to become the port of first and last call for trans-Pacific steamers, which boosted the city's industrial and tourist trades in early decades. The Canadian Pacific Empress liners used the Outer Wharves, as the water was too shallow for them at the CPR's Inner Harbour wharves used by the company's Princess ships. The Hotel Dallas stood opposite the Outer Wharves near the southeast corner of Dallas Road and Simcoe Street. [See BC Archives photos h-2500, b-2694, b-2699, b-5951 and d-1659 (Outer Wharves); and a-2710 and e-1893 (Hotel Dallas)]

Rithet also held large interests in the Canadian Pacific Navigation Company, which was formed in 1883, and was promoted and managed by his brother-in-law, Captain John Irving. Shareholders included Rithet, Irving, Peter McQuade, Montague Tyrwhitt-Drake and Alexander Munro. Robert Dunsmuir was a director. The company, which was a consolidation of the Irving and Hudson's Bay Company lines, owned the steamers R.P. Rithet, Princess Louise, William Irving (named after John Irving's father), Western Slope, Enterprise, Reliance, Otter, Maude, Gertrude and the old Yosemite. The CPN later was sold to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company which formed the B.C. Coastal Service that was managed by Captain James Troup.

Robert and Elizabeth Rithet had three children — John Alexander, Gertrude Alice and Edward Paterson. They built their imposing family home

“Hollybank” at what later became 952 Humboldt Street, between Quadra and Vancouver Streets. The property included tennis courts, formal gardens and stables. Their daughter Gertrude later married Lawrence Genge, who became Vice-President of R.P. Rithet & Company. The Genges lived down the block from the Rithets on the northwest corner of Humboldt and Vancouver Streets in the home that is now The Beaconsfield bed and breakfast. [See BC Archives photos f-6587, a-1735, b-2445 through b-2450, and b-4115 (Hollybank)]

Rithet also was a leading promoter of the building of the old Victoria Theatre in 1885. He was interested in mining, and he was a director of one of the city’s leading industrial firms, the Albion Iron Works. He also was a principal owner of the Enderby Milling Company in the B.C. interior, and the Capilano Waterworks.

Rithet built a model farm near Royal Oak, where he bred champion horses and which became one of his great delights. He also owned the Wellington Farm in Delta, which was a major agricultural producer. [See BC Archives photos c-3753 and f-5386 (Rithet farm at Royal Oak)]

After Andrew Welch died, Rithet spent much of his time in San Francisco, where he was President of the California and Hawaiian Sugar Refinery Company as well as Welch & Company. The Victoria business was reorganized and many of the company’s old and trusted employees became shareholders and

directors. A Mr. Seabrook became general manager, and then he was succeeded by J. H. Lawson.

Robert P. Rithet died in 1919 at the age of 75. His wife, Elizabeth died in 1952, outliving all of her children. Hollybank was demolished a year later. A portion of its iron fence is on the grounds of the Royal BC Museum. The Outer Wharves were converted in the 1940s to a second shipyard for Victoria Machinery Depot, where some of the early BC Ferries were built; then later the VMD yard was replaced by the current Coastguard Base. While these two places are gone, there are many reminders of Robert Paterson Rithet in Greater Victoria. The Rithet Building still stands on Wharf Street. It’s one of the oldest remaining commercial buildings in town. If you go into the lobby on a working day, you’ll find the original well from Fort Victoria, which was uncovered during building renovations a number of years back. There are some great early-day photos on the lobby wall. Rithet Street remains in the James Bay neighbourhood, and there is a Rithetwood Drive in Broadmead. Finally, a new condominium complex, Rithet’s Bog, has been built in the vicinity of the old Rithet farm near Royal Oak. This is fitting, given all that Rithet did to put Victoria on the map and keep it there.

*Russ Fuller*

#### COUNCIL OFFICERS

Russ Fuller	President
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Ruth Ralston	Care & Concern

#### THE VICTORIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Victoria Historical Society holds its meetings on the fourth Thursday of each month from September to May, at the James Bay New Horizons Centre, 234 Menzies Street, Victoria.

Meetings begin at 7:30 and comprise a short business meeting and a refreshment break followed by a talk or presentation by a guest speaker.

Visitors are always welcome and encouraged to become members of our Society.

This newsletter is published four times a year and distributed to members electronically or by mail. It is also available on our web site and at our regular meetings at the door.

Visit our website at:

[www.victoriahistoricalsociety.bc.ca](http://www.victoriahistoricalsociety.bc.ca)