

Winter/Spring 2010

Marpole Museum & Historical Society (MM&HS) *Newsletter*

Our Mission

The Marpole Museum & Historical Society is a group of volunteers, who are brought together by a common interest in the heritage of their community, and a desire to foster and preserve memories and memorabilia of local interest. The Mission Statement of the Society is:

To collect, preserve and display the history of Eburne – Marpole buildings and houses; to store and display historical artifacts, and to bring people together to share stories past and present as an ongoing community asset.

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The Newsletter is published periodically, to update members on MM&HS activities.

With special thanks to **Pam Savenye** at PricewaterhouseCoopers, for her skilled assistance in typing, formatting and printing this Newsletter.

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Our Directors

Past Chairperson: Keith Frew
Chairperson: Yvonne Robinson
Directors: Bill Barclay
Marilyn Dacher
Marjorie Fisher
Donna Kean
Katharine Mirhady
Roy Pick
Bob Wilmott
Jan Wilson

Regular directors meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday of each month except for the months of July, August and December.

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To Our Readers

Do you have an article or historical anecdote which would be of interest to our membership and supporters?

Do you know of anyone with knowledge of the history of Marpole, who would be interested in a video interview with one of the directors of the Society?

If so, please call
Bill Barclay at 263-4252 (evenings).

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How to contact us

The present mailing address for the Society is:

Marpole Museum & Historical Society
8743 S.W. Marine Drive
Vancouver, B.C. V6P 6A5

Yvonne Robinson, our Chairperson, can be reached at 604-261-0131.

We are also on **the internet** at:
www.marpolehistorical.ca

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The Olympic Games – then and now!

As you read this newsletter, (and especially if you live in the Greater Vancouver area), you will be feeling the rising tide of excitement as the long awaited **2010 Olympic Winter Games** begin. We all hope that they will be accomplished with great success, and be a source of pride for our city and our Canadian athletes.

The modern Olympic Games, as many will be aware, began as an international sports event in **1896**, when **Pierre de Coubertin**, a French teacher and historian, together with the first members of the IOC, decided to revive the games that the ancient Greeks had held every 4 years on the plains of Olympia, in eastern Greece. The games had not been celebrated for nearly 2000 years. With the exception of years which coincided with the two world wars of the 20th century, the modern Olympic Games have been held regularly ever since.

It's worth noting that the Olympic Games of the V Olympiad were held in **1912**, which was also the year that **Colbourne House** was built (the Colbournes weren't the builders or the original owners of the home, but the Colbourne family lived in the home continuously from the early 1930's to the late 1980's).

The 1912 Olympiad, which was held in **Sweden**, (a summer games) was a much more modest undertaking than the international extravaganza that we have come to experience a century later.

Only **28 countries** participated in the games, and it's worth noting that **Canada** took part in the games and acquitted itself very well (coming 9th in the medal count).

The Americans won the most gold medals (25) – as they often do, but host country Sweden put on an impressive show to hold second place (23 gold). On the total medal count, Sweden actually had a slight edge over the USA. Some countries which took part in 1912, no longer exist. (The **Austro Hungarian Empire**, for example would be swept away by the Great War which was soon to engulf Europe, starting in August 1914. (Four of the Empire's constituent nations, Austria, Bohemia, Hungary and Serbia participated in the games under their own flags.)

Czarist Russia sent athletes to the games, and won 5 medals in total. (In little more than 5 years, the three hundred year old Romanov dynasty would fall to the forces of the Bolshevik Revolution in November 1917, out of which the **Soviet Union** was created; a country which has also since dissolved back into some of its original constituent nations. As a result in 2010, "Russia" – a somewhat different Russia – is again taking part in the Olympic games, under its historic name. The hammer and sickle is gone, and the old Russian national flag is back.

The only two African countries to attend the 1912 games to participate under their own flags were **Egypt** and **South Africa**. (Most of the rest of the African continent at this time was under the colonial rule of various European powers, as a result of their carving up of "the Dark Continent" during the nineteenth century. The Union

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of South Africa was barely two years old, having been formed in 1910 out of the various British controlled states and colonies north of the Cape of Good Hope in the years following the **Boer War** (the first foreign war to which Canada sent soldiers to fight for the British Empire, and the conflict in which "concentration camps" were first used). The only South American country to send athletes was **Chile**; unfortunately they were one of the nine countries which failed to win any medals in Sweden.

One of the American athletes (who took part in the first modern **pentathlon** competition) would later achieve so much fame as a soldier, that his Olympic endeavors are probably entirely unknown to those who are familiar with his military career— he was **General George S. Patton**.

Another big change from 1912 to the present day is the composition of the athletes. Of the 2,407 athletes who competed at Stockholm, **98%** (2,359) were men. And they didn't rush things in those days. The games began on May 5, 1912, and the Closing Ceremonies were held on July 22 (a total of **78 days!**). Vancouver, by contrast, is bracing itself to handle just **16** days of the games.

So, as you enjoy the 2010 Olympic experience (possibly the only Olympics Vancouver will host in our lifetimes), take a moment to contemplate how much the world has changed since 1912 – when the modern Olympic Games were still very young, and our Colbourne House was still under (its original) construction!

2009 Activities

Saturday, March 14th

We held our Spring Tea at St. Augustine's Parish Hall with guest speaker **Lisa Smedman**. She gave an interesting talk and showed photographs about early Vancouver. Following her presentation, she autographed copies of her book "Vancouver – stories of a city". A delicious tea with donated baked goodies was enjoyed by all in attendance.

Saturday, May 23rd

Our Plant and Collectible Sale was held in the back yard of Colbourne House. The weather was better than last year and we held a successful event. We had a variety of plants and some interesting collectibles. A number of local artisans attended. As usual, the hot dogs were terrific!

Saturday, July 5th

Our Strawberry Tea where **Westwynds** performed for the seventh year, was a great success. The strawberry shortcake was delicious and the attendees told us they want us to do that again! The weather was beautiful and the crowd had a great day.

Sunday, July 26th

Legendary blues musician, **Jim Byrnes**, accompanied by **Lindsay Mitchell**, guitarist and songwriter, performed an outstanding summer concert to a "packed yard". The weather was perfect and there was no shade to be had. We even ran out of liquid refreshments and had to send out for more! **Rachel Chatoor**, a local singer, performed during Jim's break and wowed the crowd. It was a terrific afternoon!

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Saturday, November 14th
Christmas Craft Fair

Our pre-Christmas craft sale was an unprecedented success this year, thanks to the many volunteers, members, community supporters, and buyers who came in off the streets to spend their Christmas money with us.

When the final tally was made, we banked **\$3,111.00** – a new record for this annual event!

We had old and new books, home baking that people bought by the bagful, and a very busy craft table. Thanks to many donations, there were gifts for old and young alike. A local photographer provided some very unique work, and sold a number of major pieces.

The centre of the room was dominated by a huge silent auction, which included toys, fashion items, jewellery, paintings, books, stuffed animals, Christmas decorations, and much more. The bidding was busy, and all but a few items sold for good prices.

Hot dogs, cake with hot sauce and whipped cream, mince tarts, tea, coffee, mulled cider and great conversation....something for everyone! It was a wonderful day.

Thanks again to all who took part. We hope you will renew your MM&HS membership, and join us again in 2010.



Memory Lane ...a la Marpole!

We asked some of our members to share some of their early memories of living in Marpole when they were young. Here's a sample...

Growing up in Marpole in the 50's and early 60's, I liked to sneak out to **Terry's Café** without telling my parents where I was going. Terry's Café was located on the southwest corner of 73rd and Hudson (across the street from where the **Scottish Cultural Centre** is now located). Terry's Café was a trendy hot spot for the teenagers who liked to be around the motorcycle boys in their black leather jackets and pants. It had a reputation as the "hang out" restaurant in Marpole, (competing for the honors with the **White Spot Drive-In** on Granville Street). Sadly, both of these favourite childhood haunts have long since gone. I wonder where today's young people hang out? – **Marilyn Dacher**

I remember walking with my Mom into Marpole to get groceries. Milk was delivered to the door, but other groceries were bought at **Safeway** which (at that time) was on the North side of Marine Drive, close to Montcalm Street. My brother would sit in the little red wagon, and Mom would pull it down the bumpy path from our house which was on Adera near 70th. She complained bitterly every time the wagon caught her heel! We walked past **the Delmar** at 70th and Granville, past the old **Esso gas station**, and a lot of bush. If the Hudson Street bridge happened to be open, to allow ships to pass up the river (the Oak Street bridge and Arthur Lang bridges didn't yet exist),

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there would be cars stopped on Granville Street as far as I could see!

The trip home was slower and harder. My brother held onto the brown paper bag full of goodies, and my Mom pulled. It seemed like such a climb up the hill. We were quite excited when Safeway eventually built their new brick store on Granville (in front of the present Safeway), which saved us a lot of walking! – **Marjorie Fisher**

As a child, I remember that every winter my father would take me to **Kerrisdale**, and we would go to the “skate exchange” on the West Boulevard (just north of 41st). There we would exchange last years skates (which were now too small) for a newer pair for this season. My father had been a hockey player in Ontario with the **Kenora Thistles**, and had played with **Babe Pratt**. As a result, I started skating at two, and took to it like a duck to water!

We would then wait for cold weather. We lived in the seven hundred block of West 69th, not too far from the Chinese gardens that were south of Marine Drive. Every year the gardens would fill up with water, and when the “cold” weather came, the water froze. That’s when many of our neighbors would walk us kids down to skate. However, it wasn’t the most ideal surface. Now and then you would hit a piece of grass or something sticking out of the ice and take a tumble. Everyone hunted for the biggest patch of ice with the least obstacles! Some of the boys would bring their hockey sticks. Often the puck would get lost in the grasses, and as the area was not lit, it required a few people to hunt for it...but nothing deterred us. As

we skated, we hoped that the cold weather would hold for more than just a couple of days....

Some years my father would flood our own back garden and make us a rink. We would have a fire going in our old incinerator drum. (It seemed like everyone had one in their back yard in those days.) My mother would bring us out hot chocolate as we stood around the fire. When we finally went in, my mother would start to dry our mittens above the old wood cook stove in our kitchen. I think most of us can remember the smell of wet wool drying!

Marpole was a much more rural area in those days, and we made our own fun. There was a real community feeling as neighbors would give us a hand in getting our back yard rink set up. Everyone was welcome! Even those that didn’t have skates came for a “slide”. These are fond memories! – **Yvonne Robinson**

[Editors note: Is **global warming** now a reality? When was the last time you could skate outdoors in Marpole???]

If you have some early Marpole memories to share, please send them in!

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Calendar of Events 2010

- February 24 **AGM**
Marpole Museum & Historical Society
At Colbourne House
6743 S.W. Marine Drive
Vancouver, 7:30pm
(Directors meet at 7pm)
All welcome!
- March 13 **Annual Spring Tea and**
fund raiser at St.
Augustine's Church Hall
8680 Hudson Street
Time: 1:30 – 3:30pm
Admission: \$5.00
All welcome!
- May 15 **Plant and collectible**
sale at Colbourne House
11am – 2pm
Lots of great stuff!
- July TBA **Special Event**
Westwynds Concert at
Colbourne House
Back by popular demand!
- August/
September
TBA **Special Event**
Jim Byrnes annual
Summer Concert at
Colbourne House
Come and enjoy a great
professional
performance!
- October 13 **House and yard clean up**
at 10am
Volunteers welcome!

- November 13 **Christmas Event**
10am – 3pm.
St. Augustine's Parish
Hall, 8680 Hudson Street
All welcome!