Living in Paradise

Seeing and hearing about all the bad weather that the rest of Canada is experiencing, it’s hard not to gloat, just a little bit, about living in such a beautiful part of this country.

Victoria has been blessed with a wonderfully mild winter and now we are in the midst of blooming trees and bushes, a full six weeks ahead of schedule. To top off the glory of living on the West Coast, Mother Nature has been gracing us with some spectacular sunrises and sunsets. Yes, it is definitely hard not to gloat.

As if in celebration of the mild weather, the Gardens at Government House are also breaking out in celebration and many a dedicated gardener has been spotted working away in their patch weeks before the official Tools Up on March 25th.

I chanced to chat with one of these gardeners who confessed, “How can you stay inside on such a day as this? All this sunshine just begs to get your hands into the earth and breathe the fresh air.”

Speaking of the House and Gardens, this year the House will be celebrating the 150th anniversary of Government House. Watch for upcoming plans for celebrating this great milestone.

In keeping with the history of the estate, it seems a great time to introduce a program of Cary Mews docents, volunteers who will be sharing the history of the Mews, the House and the Gardens with our many visitors during the summer season.

The Friends would like to take this opportunity to extend our hearty congratulations to former Chatelaine Gwendolyn Point on her recent installation as Chancellor of Fraser Valley University.
**Director of Gardening Activities:** Brian Rogers

**Garden Supervisors**

- **Cottage Garden:** Phyllis Muir 2nd: Pat Mayhill
- **Country Garden:** Ruth Minshall (Tuesdays) Maxine Brook (Thursdays)
- **Cut Flower Garden:** Jan Drent 2nd: Bonnie Myers
- **Floral Designers’ Garden:** Audrey Smith
- **Herb Garden:** Marion Elliott
- **Iris Garden:** Val Smith
- **Lavender Border Mob:** Carol Dancer
- **Nursery:** Bryan Taylor
- **Pearkes’ Peak:** Sharon Vermaning
- **Peter’s Rock:** Yvonne Jordan
- **Pool Garden:** Jessica Sluymer
- **Rock and Alpine Garden:** Eileen Evans & Michael Langhammer
- **Rockland 1:** Diane Symes 2nd: Sandra Fleischman
- **Rockland 2:** Phyllis Muir 2nd: Diane Adams
- **Rotary Garden:** Michael Russell & Siewkeen Quah
- **Sunken Rose Garden:** Nairn Hollott
- **Terraces:** Alison Leamy
- **Vegetable Garden:** Mary Cake 2nd: Sue Harra, Brian Dallamore
- **Victorian Rose Garden:** Vaughn Edwards
- **Woodlands:** Kathleen Martin (Tuesdays)
- **Winter Garden:** Carol Dancer
- **Tool Shed Manager:** David Langley

**Director of Non-Gardens Support: Angela Newton**

**Archives Groups - FoGHGS:** Sue Baptie

- **Bulletin Mailing Group:** Mary Anne Skill
- **Coffee/Tea Mornings:** Liz Wallis
- **Cottage Upkeep:** Sharon Vermaning
- **Volunteer Coordinator:** Nairn Hollott
- **Garden Tours:** Arthur Timms
- **Greeting Cards:** Connie Reze
- **Library:** George Metcalfe
- **E-mail Communications:** Catherine Spencer
- **Photography Group:** Kate Cino
- **Plant Registry:** Crenagh Elliott
- **Telephone triage:** Catherine Spencer
- **Telephone Committee:** Eileen Edgar 2nd: Frances Bardon

**Director of Operations:** Jerymy Brownridge

**Costume Museum:** Susan Erling-Tyrell

- **Docents:**
  - Gov’t House Archives: Caroline Duncan
  - FoGH Singers (Choir): Pat Mayhew, Mary Anne Skill
- **Gift Shop:** Jerymy Brownridge
- **Tea Room:** Jerymy Brownridge

**Bulletin Editorial Team**

Editor: Mary Anne Skill, Technical Support: Peter Freedman, Graphic Design: Mary Anne Skill, Proofreading: Carmel Linka, Jim Ferguson, Leah Freedman, Peter Freedman & Denise Stocco. Contributors to this Issue: David Young, Mary Cake, Carol Dancer, Valerie Murray, David Friend, Kate Cino.

All photos unless noted are courtesy of The Photography Group

Contributions, comments, photos welcomed and may be left in the ‘Publications Folder’ on the hall desk in the Cottage, or emailed to: CaryBulletin@yahoo.ca

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**From the Library Shelf**

By George Metcalfe

Gardeners are like artists, but with a fresh canvas available only once a year. Colour in the garden is a year round activity for Victoria gardeners. Thanks to an anonymous donor the Library has two books written by David Squire on how to mix and match flowers, shrubs and trees to create a garden of beauty.

One book is entitled **Golds and Yellows** and the other **Reds and Pinks**. Each book (96 pages) discusses in an easy to understand manner the science of colour evaluation, using colour in the garden and the harmonies and contrasts in the respective colours.

The chapters are beautifully colour illustrated and provide examples of plants for flower borders, rock and naturalized gardens, container gardening and walls and trellis.

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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2014/15**

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To contact any member of the Board of Directors, please email board@fghgs.ca
Dear Friends,

It is only February, but spring has already sprung! I do not recall ever having seen rhododendrons budding, and even blooming this early. We hope you enjoyed the incredibly charitable winter, and are getting ready for what looks to be an equally fabulous spring.

Heidi and her team have recently put the statistics together for 2014, a year that saw over 24,000 patrons visit Government House for various events. Of course this does not include the thousands of others who visited the grounds when official events were not being held. Is that not incredible? This is the result of a tremendous cooperation between the Office and you, the volunteers.

I know all would agree that Her Honour is so open and engaging, that many patrons have felt more welcome at Government House than ever before. And with the gardens as beautiful as ever, and all of the other activities that include the museum, tea room and tours, I suspect 2015 will be a record year for visitors.

Of interest, Her Honour recently officiated at the installation of former Chatelaine, Gwen Point, as she was installed as the new Chancellor of the University College of the Fraser Valley. What an honour and tribute to the work Gwen Point has done, both academically, and for the greater community.

We had a very successful public event in the recent celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Canadian Flag. It was nice to see some of the Friends in attendance. Another dates to watch for includes the “Tools Up” and service pin presentation on 25 March. Plans are currently underway to celebrate Earth Day on 22 April, perhaps not as a public event, but as an event held with some local schools and the Friends. Details to follow. Next is the season opening of the Mews somewhere around mid-May. We have every intention of continuing with the concert on the lawn series this July. This is always fun and well-received.

Again, thanks to everyone, all Friends and friends who continue to lend their dedicated support to the House. I very much look forward to seeing you all around the grounds, and around the House.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Director of Operations
A Message from your President

Well it won't stop raining in Nueva Vallarta so thought I would send a few lines.

I thought I would write a few words about the Portuguese invasion. No, not the weak sister of the European Union (P.I.G.S.) but the invasive shrub introduced by some daft landscape architect.

They were originally planted to mask the side of buildings that housed such activities as funeral homes and dentists, the purpose being to prevent the prying eye of the public from witnessing the activities going on inside.

Alas, some found a home in the gardens at Government House were they have grown to such a size they could soon impact the sight line of a small drone and alter the flight path of Harbour Air to Vancouver.

With this in mind, the cost of reshaping or removal was considered. To reshape would be four hundred dollars a year while removal would cost eight hundred. My six month old granddaughter did the math and the decision was made to first remove the one in the Rotary Garden followed by the one to the west of the Band Shell where the Peace Garden will be located once the final plans are drawn up.

This will not give the appearance of a Meares Island clear-cut as under Valerie’s watchful eye the area will be replanted with a selection of conifers.

On a personal note, when we moved into our present home, there were six large laurels at the end of the property. I removed them all, replanted and next month our garden will be featured in the Canadian Gardening Magazine.

The Portuguese and the English Laurels have to be kept under control at all times or they will soon take over an entire garden.

Regards

Brian Rogers

And the 2014 Awards go to....

The Silver Trowel (Individual Garden Volunteer Award), and the Silver Spade (Group Garden Volunteer Award) are given in recognition of the back-breaking work and long hours that so many selflessly contribute each year to the cultivation and maintenance of the Government House Gardens.

JC (Jean-Claude) JACQUES received the Silver Trowel for Individual Gardener Volunteer Award.

Jan DRENT, interim supervisor of the Cut Flower Garden, accepted the Silver Spade on behalf of the Cut Flower Garden the Group Volunteer Award.
A Harbinger of Spring  by Val Murray

There is a lovely little plant that's making its appearance in our gardens this month that I am always delighted to be reminded of and to enjoy its ephemeral beauty.

Winter aconite, eranthis hyemalis, wakes up early. The word hyemalis means winter flowering and the common name aconite is used because the foliage does resemble the perennial late bloomer, aconitum, but there the visual similarity ends.

Eranthis is a sturdy member of the buttercup family and a native of woodlands in Europe especially the Balkans, Italy and southern France. Its a tuberous rooted perennial that grows to 4” with electric yellow cup shaped flowers held on single stems above a ruffled collar of leaf like bracts.

Winter aconite is easy to grow and adds a carpet of bright colour at a time of year when we value sunshine most. In deciduous forests it flowers when the maximum amount of sunlight reaches the forest floor before the tree canopy fills in. When its flowering is finished at the end of March it’s active growth is complete and it dies back to an underground tuber and is dormant for the rest of the year just as the canopy starts to cast shade.

This is a great plant for naturalizing and can be grown in places where little else will thrive. It is best left in a spot that won’t be disturbed by busy gardeners. It wants good drainage and moisture during the growing season. The eranthis leaves must be left to die back which some gardeners find slightly messy but a spot at the back of the border suits them well. They are great companions for snowdrops that also don’t like to dry out in their growing season. Another similarity to snowdrops is that eranthis prefer to be moved ‘in the green’, that is when they are just finished flowering but still have green foliage.

Winter aconite is poisonous which the deer seem to understand so it is resistant to their voracious appetites. It is also fragrant and attractive to bees and hummingbirds. Eranthis hyemalis has much to recommend it and should find a corner in more gardens.

Hidden Beauty in the Garden

Clockwise: Red thorns of rosa pteracantha; Fungus on a Garry oak branch; The last rose hips of the season; A perfect camellia.

For more images of the hidden beauty as well as the obvious beauty of our gardens, check out the Friends website at

http://fghgs.ca/
Volunteer Spotlight

There are so many wonderful people who volunteer to work in and around the gardens of Government House. This spotlight introduces one of our special volunteers.

Introducing Mary Cake

Mary grew up on a farm in the San Joaquin Valley, about 100 miles due east of San Francisco. Some of her earliest memories are of sitting on the ground in her father’s large vegetable garden, helping herself to the warm, ripe tomatoes. As an adult living in the desert (Scottsdale, Arizona) for almost 20 years, she yearned for the delicious tomatoes of her childhood.

By 1989, Mary and husband, Terry felt the need to be surrounded with green growing things. Coupled with her desire to again “eat from my father’s garden”, they moved back to Mary’s home ranch in central California. Terry was 50 and Mary was 46, and armed with no farming experience, they immediately began an organic vegetable growing business.

Back in 1989, two food movements were getting underway. The first was the demand for organic produce and buying directly from small scale farms. Plus the Slow Food movement was defining a new way to view our food. The second was the introduction of heirloom varieties of every type of fruit and vegetable (as well as livestock). All of these influences dovetailed perfectly with the Cakes’ beliefs and philosophies of food growing and eating, and how they wanted to conduct the business.

Beginning with 1/8 of an acre they grew salad greens and herbs that they sold locally. Over the next 17 years, they evolved and expanded the organic farm to 20 acres and five greenhouses, selling to the San Francisco Bay Area. They specialized in growing heirlooms and specialty varieties of tomatoes - 20,000 plants of 85 varieties on 5 acres during the summer. For winter, they grew tomatoes in soil in 5 heated greenhouses.

Their first customers were restaurant chefs, who were delighted to have better tasting produce and unusual varieties, and through farmers’ markets they reached the individual consumer. Later grocery stores became their largest clients.

They were one of the first farms to introduce heirloom tomatoes to the S.F. Bay area. Heirloom tomatoes were a hard sell as everyone was used to a perfect, uniform red tomato. They increased the demand for these delicious oddities one customer at a time through taste testing and telling the history of each variety. Soon enough demand out distanced their supply.

At Saturday morning farmers market in the East (S.F.) Bay, they regularly sold 1,000 pounds of tomatoes in four hours.

Because the Cakes were in the forefront of the organic movement and of the promotion of heirloom varieties, Mary spent part of her time giving interviews to newspapers and magazines. Mary participated in PBS fund raising events, plus interviews on radio talk shows and television. She taught organic growing through the adult education department of the local junior college as well as hosting a 5th grade class that came to the farm every week throughout the school year. They provided each student with their own plot of ground, seeds and transplants, and taught them how to grow their own vegetables.

The Cakes participated with and hosted on their farm the University of California, Davis, in their research into organic methods of growing produce. This involved experimenting with weed and insect controls and in the trialing of crops.

When the Cakes finally retired from farming and sold the farm, they moved to BC because Terry is Canadian and he always wanted to return home to Canada. They choose Victoria because of the weather, and because Mary’s father was Canadian and while growing up she visited family in Victoria, and had always felt at home here. Mary became a Canadian citizen in 2010.

Mary joined the Friends in 2007. She started out working in the Cut Flower Garden, then moved to the Nursery Garden where she loved potting up plants in preparation for the annual plant sale. When that disbanded, she spent 2009-2010 working on the volunteer recruiting video for the Friends. The vegetable garden was already a couple of years old when Mary joined it in 2011.

Mary plans to continue to maximize vegetable production by extending the growing season and growing the best suited varieties for our climate and conditions. Her wish is for every vegetable garden volunteer to enjoy the experience of growing healthy and tasty food, and for every GH volunteer to enjoy the delicious and freshest-possible produce for an under-market price.

Also, with the sale of the produce, Mary expects to return a fair amount of money to the Friends of GH Society coffers.

Mary is still focused on teaching anyone who wants to learn how to grow their own vegetables, and invites all Friends to pop by the Veggie Garden and see what’s growing.
The Winter Garden  

The Winter Garden is located at the Tradesmen’s Entrance to the gardens. It was started in 1992 by Tony Walmer, a local nurseryman. Tony was a superb plantsman and knew how to pick his plants. The result of Tony’s knowledge was a collection of plants many of which are seldom seen in local gardens. The garden was neglected for many years until a group of us took it on about six years ago. Some of the original plants had to be removed due to age and neglect but many of Tony’s plants remain.

I always think the Winter Garden begins its period of interest when the berries of Callicarpa bodinieri turn a brilliant violet colour, usually about mid-October. The unusual colour is a real show-stopper. By the end of October or early November Camellia sasanqua starts to flower. The lovely soft pink flowers will continue until we have a hard frost. This year, because of our mild winter, it flowered into late January. Just now, mid-February, two Corylopsis: pauciflora and spicata are coming into flower. Pauciflora, commonly known as the Buttercup Hazel, is one of my favorite plants.

It has soft yellow flowers, nice foliage that colours both in the spring and again in the autumn.

Other unusual plants include Drimys winteri and Azaramicrophylla and serata. Both come from the southern hemisphere whereas most of our winter flowering plants come from Asia. I could go on listing our plants but come and see for yourself.

Most winter flowers are modest in size and colour compared to summer flowers. They have evolved to be small with their head tipped down to protect the pollen and stamens from winter rain and frost. They also usually flower over a long period of time so if we have a killing frost there is a chance of pollination.

One final thought. Because of our mild winters insects are active through the winter months. Winter flowers provide food for some of our most important insects. I am sure that you have all seen bees and wasps foraging any time we have a warm sunny day.

Seedy Saturday

The Friends had a table at Seedy Saturday, held in the Conference Centre on February 21st. The display was organized by Val Murray and Angela Newton, with meet-and-greeters Sharon Vermaning and Mary Anne Skill and AV specialist Peter Freedman.

A huge hit at our table was the stunning display of helibores, artistically compiled by Val. These beautiful flowers drew many comments and compliments. During the day, the ladies handed out brochure cards with a tea bag attached, with the invitation to “Have a cup of tea on us”, and promotion of the tea room.

A lovely selection of cards from our Photography Group allowed us to showcase the gardens in all their glory and invite people to come and visit.
“Educate children, and they may forget. Encourage children and they may remember. Empower children and they will remember.”

This is the motto of Dave Friend aka Mr. Organic. Dave is the Founder of the Growing Young Farmers Society, which he founded in 2011 after learning that Vancouver Island has only 72 hours worth of food supply in the event of a disaster. He realized that by learning how to grow food, students can play an active role in increasing our island’s sustainability and decreasing our dependence on imported food sources.

The GYF school program is geared for learners of all ages and abilities, from preschoolers to university students. By combining theoretical teaching in the classroom, with hands on practical learning in gardens located on school grounds or nearby, the program emphasizes the importance of local, organic, sustainable food sources and teaches children and youth how to grow healthy produce and share their knowledge with their families and community.

On November 9th, the GYF group organized about 30 people of all ages to take part in a Permaculture Blitz in the Vegetable Garden at Government House. The Blitz saw the creation of a food-growing area from scratch, including a number of different types of beds for children to grow food in, including a large “Hugelkultur”.

Hugelkultur, which replicates the natural process of decomposition, is German for mound or hill culture. Hügelkultur is a composting process employing raised planting beds constructed on top of decaying wood debris and other compostable biomass plant materials. The process helps to improve soil fertility, water retention, and soil warming, thus benefiting plants grown on or near such mounds.

Following the day of the Blitz, and over a period of ten days, seven classes (155 students) from Sir James Douglas Elementary School visited the garden. During their visit the students had an introduction to and a brief lesson about “Hugel”. They also planted 155 cloves (seeds) of garlic in the Hugel and in other beds. As of February 16th, the vast majority of the those garlic cloves are now garlic plants.

While participating in the Growing Young Farmers School Program, the 155 students will be visiting the garden on a frequent and regular basis. During the visits, the students will be...Educated, Encouraged and Empowered to Grow Health-Friendly Organic Food!

You can read more about the work of the Growing Young Farmers group, and follow the progress of our own children’s garden at www.growingyoungfarmers.ca/blog/

Stewards of the Future

The Children’s garden project is in keeping with the Lieutenant Governor’s mandate to educate and involve children in caring for our earth.

Her Honour’s program, Stewards of the Future, promotes the concept of a holistic approach to our endeavours based on respect for the land, positive relationships among its people, and the responsibility we share for the success of future generations.

Each citizen is a steward of the future and through healthy land, healthy people and healthy communities, we can ensure the best quality of life for future generations in British Columbia.

You can find out more about this and other priority initiatives of Her Honour by checking the official website at: www.ltgov.bc.ca/lg/priority-programs/default.html
Well-Deserved Honours

At the 2014 Friends Christmas luncheon, former Friends President Catherine Spencer and Museum Curator and House Docent Susan Erling-Tyrell received the Vice-Regal Commendation from Her Honour, Lieutenant Governor Judith Guichon.

Both ladies were specially selected for the honour by the Lieutenant Governor herself for their service to Government House.

Catherine was awarded the honour for her many years as a volunteer with the Friends, as well as her outstanding and long-time service on the Board of Directors for the Friends.

Susan was awarded the honour for her initiative and hard work in starting up and running the Costume Museum in the Cary Mews. The Museum has helped to place Government House on the map as a top tourist destination in Victoria. Susan was also recognized for her many years of service as a docent in the House.

Both ladies were suitably amazed and grateful to be acknowledged in such a notable way. Well-deserved, ladies!

The Vice-Regal and Commissioners’ Commendation

Created in 1999, the Vice-Regal Commendation and Commissioners’ Commendation is presented by the Governor General, the Lieutenant-Governors of the Provinces and the Commissioners of the Territories respectively for long-term or outstanding service to the Office of the Queen’s representative or Territorial Commissioner.

The recipients have either served on staff, paid or volunteer, during an incumbent’s mandate in a commendable fashion; or the recipient has performed one or more outstanding acts as a member of the incumbent’s staff (paid or volunteer) that has benefited the Office of the Queen’s representative or Territorial Commissioner.

The Commendation consists of a certificate along with a gold bar enamelled in blue with a circle containing three red maple leaves (as drawn from the Arms of Canada) surmounted by a Royal Crown. The lapel pin is a circular badge depicting three red maple leaves in the centre surmounted by the Royal Crown, and awarded in recognition of those who serve the Crown in Canada.

My, What Big Teeth You Have!

With a rumble and a roar, this huge machine was hired again this year by Government House to grind the compost pile beside the Woodlands. The machine is capable of grinding up brush and yard waste up to 150 tons per hour, or 160 cubic yards; also stumps and logs up to 100 tons per hour, or 60 cubic yards.

In addition to these ‘light’ yard duties, this enormous grinder chews up the remains of demolished houses in its spare time. It can digest construction waste up to 100 tons per hour, or 60 cubic yards.

Special thanks to Robin Black who has volunteered to be ‘Keeper of the Compost’. Robin will be monitoring and tending the compost to provide the best mulch for the gardens.
The Photography Group Pick their Favourite Shots

by Kate Cino, Coordinator

New members are always welcome. If you are interested in joining the Photography Group, contact Kate Cino at board@fghgs.ca

Charlene Simon has been taking photos since receiving her first Brownie camera at age eight. She learned about the Friends Photo Group through a neighbour, Kate Cino, who coordinates the group.

“I really appreciate the members’ enthusiasm, quality of photos and joie-de-vivre,” Charlene says. At any time of year there is always something to photograph in the gardens, but Charlene especially savours springtime blossoms and green shoots. “The incredible variety of plants and trees offer endless inspiration,” she says.

Combined in this photo of two of her favourite things: irises and springtime.

Nikon Coolpix P90, 1/231 sec, f.4.5, ISO 64, May, 2014.

Susan Henderson’s interest in photography was rekindled after her move to Victoria in 2001. On her way to work, Susan walked through Government House grounds, and became enamoured with the gardens.

After becoming a Friend to lend support, she heard about the Photography Group and joined.

“I feel extremely privileged to wander in the beautiful gardens taking photos,” she says. “It’s then my thoughts quiet and I am truly in the moment.”

Can you imagine Irises as big as trees? Susan challenges our perceptions with her unique viewpoint.

Canon PowerShot G12, 1/640 sec, f.4.5, ISO 80, June 2014

Notes from the Friends Board

A picnic table is to be placed in the Woodlands as a memorial to Melford Rose. The funds were donated by Melford’s partner David Nicholds. The table will be concrete and wheelchair accessible. It will be placed nearby the burial place of Wallace the dog.

A huge thank you to Sandra Gibb for all her hard work in cleaning up the Potting shed. Now that all the work has been done, please DO NOT leave your old plastic pots or trays in the potting shed. It cost the Friends over $400 to clean up the pot shed.

Brian took two truck loads of old pots to the Ellis yards. Used pots can go into a blue box for recycling.

If anyone receives a request to be a Friends guest speaker at another organization, please let the Board know. We are trying to keep track of all our outreach opportunities as we spread the word about the Friends of Government House.

This summer will see the much needed arrival of hot water in the on-ground restrooms.

Soil and gravel will be stored by the old rootceller behind the Mews for the use of the gardens.

A doggy bag station has been set up at the exit gate to the grounds. Please encourage dog owners who visit the grounds to make use of the bags. Also please encourage dog owners to keep their dogs on a leash when on the grounds.

Irrigation will be put in this spring to provide water to the lower parking lot gardens and potted plants.
Tea Room

The Cary Mews is already busy preparing for the upcoming visitor season.

Thanks to a generous donation of $50,000 from Rudi Hoenson, the tea room is undergoing a major expansion. As you can see from the picture, the former deck is being enclosed to create a sunroom and a new deck is being added. This will significantly increase the space for diners, especially during inclement weather.

Rudi has also donated funds for a commercial grade dishwasher for the kitchen and larger hot water tanks. These two improvements will help to streamline service as dirty dishes will no longer have to be transported up to the house.

The search is currently on for a new tea room manager. A volunteer coordinator is also needed to help schedule the many workers needed to keep the tea room running smoothly.

With the expanded space, the House will be accepting bookings for private functions in the tea room. These private functions must use the House catering (which is no hardship, if you have ever tasted the delicious food served at the House).

Costume Museum

The Museum, and the Mews, will be opening in mid-May, but as curator Susan Erling-Tyrell loves to say, “The Museum never Sleeps!”.

During the winter break, more historical outfits were donated to the museum, allowing for new displays featuring different time periods.

The museum volunteers had an opportunity to visit behind-the-scenes at the Royal B.C. Museum and Craigdarroch Castle.

Starting at the end of March, volunteers will be out in full force at the museum, unwrapping the displays and setting up for the new season. They will also be getting ready for the expansion into the Stables.

The Stables

The Stables will be taking on a new role this year with new displays on show. The Costume museum will be enhancing the existing exhibit about Honours and Awards, with a display of military uniforms.

Within the stables proper, there will be two new tableaux: a 1930’s dining room and a 1930’s sitting room, complete with heritage furniture from the House storage and gowns from the Costume Museum.

There will be a new display going into the small connecting room between the Stables and the Heraldry Exhibit. It will honour Veterans from all conflicts in which Canada has participated.

Chickens

The chicken coop will be getting some new residents - 12 new heritage chickens will be arriving, six at the beginning of the season and six later on in the season so the kiddies can enjoy the different stages of development. There is no truth to the rumour that the chickens will be either roasters or fryers.

Docents

Following up on a need that was seen last year, there are plans to start a Cary Mews docents program. Volunteers with a good knowledge of the history of the House and the Mews will be on hand at the Mews during the season to assist visitors and showcase the history and heritage of the Mews.

Any volunteers who would like to be part of this program are asked to contact Geoffrey Thornburn at board@fghgs.ca

Upgraded Look for Mews

The Mews will be more welcoming this year with the addition of new planters and topiaries.

The installation of benches will provide some outdoor seating for weary visitors or to just enjoy the sun. A bike rack has been installed near the tea room.

With the success of our veggie sales last year, we are hoping to expand to an occasional Farmer’s Market stall which will include the sale of not only veggies and flowers from the gardens, but House produced honey and preserves from the House chef.
The Maple Leaf Forever - 50th Anniversary

February 15, was national Flag Day, and marked the 50th Anniversary of today's Canadian flag.

The search for a new Canadian flag started in 1925 with a meeting of the Privy Council to set up a committee. However, the work of the committee was never completed.

In 1946, a select parliamentary committee was appointed. They called for submissions and received more than 2,600 designs. Still, the Parliament of Canada was never called upon to formally vote on a design.

In 1964, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson informed the House of Commons that the government wished to adopt a distinctive national flag as the 1967 centennial celebration of Confederation was approaching. A Senate and House of Commons Committee was formed and submissions were called for once again.

In October 1964, after eliminating various proposals, the committee was left with three possible designs—a Red Ensign with the fleur-de-lis and the Union Jack, a design incorporating three red maple leaves, and a red flag with a single, stylized red maple leaf on a white square. (Pearson himself preferred a design with three red maple leaves between two blue borders.)

Mr. John Matheson and Dr. George Stanley are well known in the story of the evolution of a new Canadian flag. Mr. Matheson, a Member of Parliament from Ontario, was perhaps one of the strongest supporters of a new flag and played a key advisory role. Dr. Stanley was Dean of Arts at the Royal Military College in Kingston, and brought to the attention of the committee the fact that the Commandant's flag at the College—an emblem, i.e. a mailed fist, on a red and white ground—was impressive.

Dr. Stanley's design is based on a strong sense of Canadian history. The combination of red, white and red first appeared in the General Service Medal issued by Queen Victoria. Red and white were subsequently proclaimed Canada's national colours by King George V in 1921. Three years earlier, Major General (later the Honourable) Sir Eugene Fiset had recommended that Canada's emblem be the single red maple leaf on a white field - the device worn by all Canadian Olympic athletes since 1904.

The committee eventually decided to recommend the single-leaf design, which was approved by resolution of the House of Commons on December 15, 1964, followed by the Senate on December 17, 1964, and proclaimed by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, to take effect on February 15, 1965.

The official ceremony inaugurating the new Canadian flag was held on Parliament Hill in Ottawa in 1965, with Governor General Georges Vanier, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, the members of the Cabinet and thousands of Canadians in attendance.

The Canadian Red Ensign, bearing the Union Jack and the shield of the royal arms of Canada, was lowered and then, on the stroke of noon, our new maple leaf flag was raised. The crowd sang the national anthem O Canada followed by the royal anthem God Save the Queen.

The following words, by the Honourable Maurice Bourget, Speaker of the Senate, added further symbolic meaning to our flag:

"The flag is the symbol of the nation's unity, for it, beyond any doubt, represents all the citizens of Canada without distinction of race, language, belief or opinion."

Garden Volunteer Orientation

The orientation session for new garden volunteers will be held in the MacClure Room on Thursday March 19 at 10am. If you know of anyone who is interested in joining us to work in the gardens would you please give them this information.

Notices

If they would like more information Nairn can be reached at 250-744-4019 or nairnhollot@shaw.ca.

TOOLS UP
March 25th

Long Term Service Pins

March 25th - Long Term Pins will be given out at the Tools-Up reception at the House. If you have not already been contacted, and think you qualify for a 10, 15 or 20 year pin, please contact the Board at membership@fghgs.ca or call Peter Freedman at 778-679-4083.