



The Cary Bulletin

THE FRIENDS OF GOVERNMENT HOUSE GARDENS SOCIETY

<http://fghgs.ca>

Since 1993
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February 2017



Anniversaries and Celebrations

Government House 150 Plans



Government House kicked off the 150th anniversary of Canada's Confederation at the annual New Year's Day Levee. Throughout 2017, Her Honour will host and participate in a number

of events that celebrate 'Canada 150'; Many of these which will focus on diversity, reconciliation, youth and the environment.

Her Honour will engage in conversation with youth by visiting 150 schools in British Columbia, to speak with students about Canada's constitutional monarchy, to encourage their participation in our democracy and to share ideas about a healthy and sustainable future for all.

Canada 150 celebrations will be woven into a number of the public events at Government House, including the summer concerts and the annual garden party.



Queen's Sapphire Jubilee

On February 6, 2017, Queen Elizabeth II became the first British monarch to reach a Sapphire Jubilee, 65 years after she ascended the throne. It's an incredible milestone.

The Royal Mint will honour the Queen's Sapphire Jubilee with a collection of specially designed commemorative coins. As a reminder of the monarch's dedication to her public duties, the £5 coins have been engraved with an excerpt from a famous speech she gave as a Princess on her 21st birthday in 1947. It reads:

"My whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service".

For more on the Queen, turn to page 6.

The Royal Mail has issued a Sapphire Blue £5 stamp. The Queen ascended to the throne Feb. 6, 1952, upon the death of her father, King George VI. She is the only British monarch to celebrate a sapphire (65th) jubilee, because she surpassed Queen Victoria as Great Britain's longest-reigning monarch on September 9, 2015.



The new stamp is a sapphire blue £5 definitive (regular-issue) showing the bas-relief portrait of the queen. The stamp includes an iridescent overprint reading, "65th Anniversary of Accession."

In This Issue

1. Anniversaries and Celebrations
2. From the Library Shelf
3. Message From Government House
4. Message From Your President
5. Congratulations to Spade & Spoon Winners
6. The Queen by the Numbers
7. Woodlands Trail Magic
8. Feature Plant - Hellebores
9. Woodland's Bioblitz, 10-10-10 Update
10. The Making of a Festive Christmas Gathering
11. A Unique Thank You. 150 Dresses
12. Mark Your Calendar

Friends Website: www.fghgs.ca

The Friends - a group of over 400 dedicated volunteers, approximately half of whom spend many hours working in the gardens. Non-gardening members work in archives, library, photography, publications, greeting cards, administration, tour guides, education, special events, the Costume Museum and the Tea Room

Gardening Volunteer Coordinator: Nairn Hollott

To join the Friends of Government House Garden Society, please contact Nairn Hollott at 250-744-4019.

Director of Gardening Activities: Cathie Lylock

Garden Coordinators

Azalea Walk	Carol Dancer
Cottage Garden:	Phyllis Muir 2nd: Pat Mayhill
Cut Flower Garden:	Jan Drent
English Country Garden:	
Floral Designers' Garden:	Liz Thompson
Herb Garden:	Nancy Murray
Nursery:	Heather Marsman
Pearkes' Peak:	Sharon Vermaning
Peter's Rock:	Yvonne Jordan
Pool Garden:	
Rock and Alpine Garden:	
Rockland 1:	Kate Cino
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: Brian Dallamore
Victorian Rose Garden:	Vaughn Edwards 2nd: Maurice Vanden-Bulck
Woodlands:	Kathleen Martin (Tuesdays) Rosemary Balfour (Thursdays)
Winter Garden:	Carol Dancer
Tool Shed Manager:	Brian Rogers, Keith Lylock

Director of Non-Gardens Support: Angela Newton

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Contributions, comments, photos are 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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To contact any member of the Board of Directors, please email board@fghgs.ca

From the Library Shelf

by George Metcalfe

Perennial Garden by Patrick Lima

The author offers a key to a well-designed perennial flower garden that will bloom continually from Spring through Fall, offering a gradual changing colour throughout the growing season.

He takes the reader through the important steps of planning the garden, preparing the soil and choosing from hundred of common and unusual plant, including scores of different daffodils, primroses, day lilies and true lilies.

There are plans for that will help gardeners deal with the challenges presented by shade and dry garden locations.

Highly readable and beautifully illustrated.



Message from Government House

Dearest Friends,

The sesquicentennial is upon us and promises to be action packed.

Her Honour has committed to visiting 150 schools this year and our Programmes team has carefully crafted a plan to ensure this goal is met. So far, Her Honour has been delighted to discover that the young British Columbians she has met so far, are curious, engaged and do their homework. This is evidenced in part by their ability to sing “God Save the Queen” from memory!

On Flag Day, Her Honour will host a number of schools at the House. The students will have the chance to learn more about the Lieutenant Governor, the Queen’s provincial representative and gain an appreciation for their significant past, present and future contributions to our province.

You are welcome to follow Her Honour from school to school and share in Her experiences by visiting <https://m.facebook.com/LGJudithGuichon/>

It is hard to believe that within a few short weeks the grounds will thaw and you, our Friends will be making what can easily be described as magic in the gardens. We eagerly await the return to more seasonal temperatures, increased activity and most of all the opportunity to reconnect with you.

As always we appreciate all that you do to make Government House the picturesque, West Coast wonderland that has come to mean so much to our visitors. Thank you.

Thandi Williams
Director of Operations
Government House

Vice-Regal Award Winner

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. 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.



Peggy Dallamore with Her Honour Judith Guichon after being presented with the Vice-Regal Commendation for services to the offices of the Queen’s Representative

Congratulations to Peggy Dallamore who received the Vice-Regal Award at the Christmas luncheon. Peggy’s citation read as follows:

‘For the past nine years, Peggy has volunteered at Government House in a number of capacities. She has been a flower designer, cared for the plants inside Government House and been a tour docent both in the House and in the Costume Museum.

Peggy started as a flower designer, providing arrangements for the many events that occur at Government House. Approximately eight years ago, Peggy took on stewardship of the Conservatory where many lunches and meetings take place—including the recent official audience between the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and the Prime Minister of Canada.

As a tour docent, Peggy greets visitors to the House and the Costume Museum with friendliness and enthusiasm. Her kind demeanour and concern for others has made her a welcome part of the volunteer team.’

Congratulations Peggy, on an honour well deserved!



A Message from your President

Happy New Year!

Thank you to all who contributed to the beautification of the House over the Christmas season. The PEC (Public Events Committee) team did a great job attending to all the details of assisting with the House decorations and seasonal events.

The Friends Christmas Luncheon was a great success. We had a record number of ticket sales, with 211 attendees in total. Participants raved about the food, the music, the figgy pudding presentation and the wonderfully positive energy of the Friends on the whole.



Congratulations to the following recognition recipients:

1. Peggy Dallamore who was presented with the Vice Regal Award,
2. Rockland I and the Dogwood Azalea Walk garden teams who were presented with Silver Spades, and
3. Donalda Rossman, and Lynne Thompson who were honoured with the first Silver Spoons.

Thandi Williams turned over a cheque for \$3,000.00 from the House to the Friends with respect to the proceeds from the Tea Room in 2016.

The Government House New Year's Levee was especially festive this year with the ringing in of 2017 and the Sesquicentennial.

The 10-10-10 Project spearheaded by our Past President, Brian Rogers, is now in its third and final year. The Gardens and Grounds are looking world-class! The Woodlands winter problem of soggy, slippery paths has been remedied with wood chips and a very natural looking water diversion system. Irrigation projects are continuing to improve the water pressure to the Gardens located on the West side of the Grounds.

February started off with a bang, or a timber, as it were – with a large fir tree on Pearkes Peak falling down on the pathway closest to The House, leading from the Bruce Pavilion to the Duck Pond, as a result of the wind storms. Thanks to Brian Rogers for reporting the occurrence, and clean up efforts coordinated by Bryce Fleck, on January 12th.

Friends groups are busy making plans for the coming season and have been brainstorming, holding organizational meetings and social get-togethers to keep the energy flow going. Some stalwart souls have continued gardening over the winter months weather permitting.

Board members are working on updating the outdated documentation of the administrative structure of the Society and making the necessary amendments with respect to the new BC Societies Act.

Due to the rapidly expanding Friends membership, now with over 475 members, we have experienced many challenges over the past year. With this in mind, the newly formed Board is working hard to develop ways to mitigate as many of these issues as possible through Team Building and Succession Planning.

Together we can accomplish so much more!

Cathie Lylock

Congratulations to All the Spade and Spoon Recipients



Bernie Shaw, Doreen Tester, Sandra Fleischman, Cathy Lylock - President, Her Honour, Taffy Carsley, Judy Gorby, Diane Symes. Absent: Kate Cino, Carol Clark

Joint Winners of the 2017 Silver Spade Award - The Rockland 1 Gardeners

Work on this garden started in 1992 and five of the present group have been working in this colourful border ever since those early days of double-digging.

Designed to be a summer border, the garden has gone through several phases and challenges but due to the talented work of this group and its several coordinators continues to be a spectacular display that delights visitors.

Thank you to a dedicated, hard working group 10.



L to R: Diane Felker, Nicky Tutt, Wendy Fathers, Jo Ferguson, Sharon Minus, Diana Kaufman, Mary Lawrence. Missing are Sandy Gibb, Ruth Hardy, Barbara Longe, and Yvonne Dawe.

Joint Winners of the 2017 Silver Spade Award - The Dogwood Azalea Gardeners

The Azalea Dogwood Walk is the last of the flower gardens to be developed starting in 2010. Designed to camouflage the chain link fence surrounding the nursery and vegetable area, the garden has evolved from the Lavender Border into the Azalea Dogwood Walk. The work of this group has brought beauty to the last undeveloped area of the gardens.

The gardeners who tend this garden also take care of the Winter Garden and have recently taken on maintenance of the Iris garden. They also willingly talk to visitors who ask them questions about the gardens. Thank you to another hard working passionate group.

Silver Spoons Awards for Non-Gardening Volunteers.

This year we presented the first Silver Spoon Awards for Non-Gardening Volunteers. The recipients are Donalda Rossman and Lynne Thompson.

Unfortunately neither recipient was able to attend the Christmas luncheon, so the plan is to present the Spoons to them at the first coffee morning next year.

Donalda Rossman has worked in the Rock and Alpine garden, organizes our coffee mornings and is being recognized for her work with the Costume Museum. She is always the first to volunteer for vacant shifts or for whatever needs doing - sometimes working all day.

She also cleans the museum, organizes the storage and is a valued museum docent. Thank you, Donalda.

Lynne Thompson has worked with the Flower Designers in the House for 17 years as well as being one of the people who started the Flower Designers Garden.

Recently she took on the task of coordinating the Designers work - a demanding position. She is known to her fellow designers as Queen of Horizontals - a design category - and has an interest in land art, contributing to BC Blooms displays in the gardens and to the children's play area for the recent Royal visit. Thank you, Lynne.

The Queen by the Numbers



A portrait by David Bailey, taken in 2014 and showing the Queen wearing a suite of sapphire jewellery given to her by King George VI as a wedding gift.

With this issue we celebrate an historic achievement. Her Majesty, the Queen of Canada has reached her 65th anniversary serving as our monarch.

Elizabeth became Queen at age 25, on Feb. 6, 1952, following the death of her father, George VI, the 40th monarch in a royal line that traces its origin back to Norman King William the Conqueror, who claimed the throne in 1066.

The king died in his sleep while Princess Elizabeth was in Kenya. He was the first

British monarch to pass away without anyone knowing what time he died.

When she overtook her great-great-grandmother Queen Victoria's record 63 years on the throne, she remarked it was not something to which she had ever aspired, and Buckingham Palace said she would spend the day at her residence in Sandringham, in eastern England, as was usual. To commemorate the occasion, the Queen's office released a 2014 portrait showing her wearing a suite of sapphire jewelry she received from her father as a wedding gift in 1947.

Queen Elizabeth has cut back on international tours, but still regularly performs official duties around Britain and remains hugely popular with Britons, with an approval rating of about 80 per cent.

Here are some other significant numbers about her record-breaking life and reign:

- She turned 90 on April 21, 2016, and is the world's oldest monarch since the death of Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah in 2015.

- 13: The number of British prime ministers who served during her reign, from Winston Churchill to Theresa May.

- 12: The number of U.S. presidents she has met, from Herbert Hoover (after he had left office) to Barack Obama — more than a quarter of all the U.S. presidents since American Independence. The only president during her reign that she did not meet was Lyndon B. Johnson.

- 1.6 million: The number of kilometres she has travelled more than this on official trips, visiting 106 of the 193 current official members of the United Nations. She has visited Canada 22 times — the largest number of trips to any nation.

- She has four children, eight grandchildren and five great-grandchildren and 30 godchildren.

- 2.2 billion: The number of people who live in a Commonwealth country (a group of 52 nations, of which 16 have the Queen as Head of State), across all six continents.

- 2.75 million: The number of followers that the Royal Family's official Twitter account has.

- 14: The age the Queen was when she made her first radio broadcast.

- 16: The age of the Queen when she registered with the Labour Exchange, a British employment agency, as Princess Elizabeth.

- 21: The age that the Queen was when she married Prince Philip on Nov. 20, 1947.

- 25: The age the Queen was when she acceded to the throne in 1952.

- 27 million: Roughly the number of people who watched the Queen's coronation on TV in 1953.

- 39 million: The estimated value, in dollars, of the Queen's personal jewellery.

- 40: The Queen is the 40th monarch since William the Conqueror obtained the crown of England.

- 63: The number of official speeches the Queen has delivered at the opening of the U.K. Parliament.

- 70: The number of years that Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip have been married.

- 85: The number of years ago that the first Royal Christmas address was made. The 1932 speech was written by Rudyard Kipling and delivered by the Queen's grandfather, King George V.

- 117: The number of countries the Queen has visited on official royal tours - despite not owning a passport.

- 237: The number of roads in the U.K. named after the Queen.

- 302: The Queen's ranking in the list of richest people in the U.K. by the Sunday Times newspaper.

- 775: The number of rooms in Buckingham Palace.

- 2,868: The number of diamonds in the Imperial state crown.

- 5,000: The number of breeding pairs of mute swans in Britain which are officially owned by the Queen.

- 7,000: The estimated number of telephone calls that Buckingham Palace receives per week.

- 17,420: The number of pieces of mail the Queen received during the week of her 90th birthday.

- 130 million: The reported cost, in dollars, of Netflix's series *The Crown*, which tells the Queen's story beginning with her marriage.

- **23,742: The number of days that the Queen has spent on the throne, as of Feb. 6, 2017.**

Woodlands Trail Magic by Valerie Murrey



The Woodland trails are a favourite for visitors -- dog walkers and joggers alike – but when the winter rains arrive every November many sections of those trails become waterlogged and unusable to the point that people are turned back or make their own ad hoc trails into drier but more sensitive areas that the Woodlanders are trying to protect.

This Fall, a fairly simple solution to the problem was proposed by Colin McCrea who assigned his team, Jason Choquette and Patrick Trottier to create a water diversion to bypass the worst of the ‘swamp’ on the most westerly point of the trail where every winter the water runs freely over the rocks.

Colin’s team had been working on a project at Craigdarroch Castle this fall that resulted in an excess of rocks that needed a home. Some went to the Terraces and the remainder was used for the stream diversion. Jay is a bit of a stone ‘whisperer’ and with Patrick’s help placed the stones in a very natural way that not only diverted the running water but fit into the landscape.

A new permanent pathway was created ten feet east of this diversion on slightly higher ground and cedar chips were brought in to build up the path. The cedar chips will not decompose at the same rate as the wood chips that we had used in the past that were usually sourced from our own oak and fir on the property.

Now we can all enjoy a dry walk in the Woodlands all year round and special plants that grew along the paths are no longer at risk.

Board:

Necessary revisions are being made to the Friends of Government House Gardens Society documents with respect to the new BC Societies Act.

Research is continuing on the issue of Copyright with respect to submissions to the Friends of Government House Gardens Society.

To ensure the Friends Cottage is available for use by your group and Security will provide a key, please contact Patty Grant, at pattygrant@gmail.com or (250) 385-0900.

Gardens:

A large fir tree fell on the pathway, closest to The House leading from the Bruce Pavilion to the Duck Pond during the windstorms in early January.

Friends Facts – February 2017

Bioblitz (one day scientists’ research extravaganza) is scheduled for April 10th in the Woodlands.

Earth Day Event on April 22nd is being organized by the Growing Young Farmers.

Irrigation upgrades have been completed along the west side of the lower parking lot. Progress is continuing along the west side of the gardens and driveway.

Nursery and Veggie Gardens are busy with plans for their start-ups in their greenhouses.

Pathways in the Woodlands have been improved by diverting water and covering the still slippery areas with a thick layer of woodchips.

The Vegetable Garden meeting is in the Friends Cottage on March 10th at 10:30 a.m.

Lectures and Presentations:

The Restoration of Ross Bay Villa and Gardens will be presented by Nick Russell in the Maclure Room on February 28th at 2:00 p.m.

Non-Gardening Support:

Floral Designers are liaising with The House in order to find a solution for the Coordinator position vacancy.

Non-Gardening Coordinators Meeting will be held February 28th at 12:00 noon in the Friends Cottage.

Contributions to this monthly fact sheet may be sent to Angela Newton newton_foster@shaw.ca (underscore between newton and foster).

Hellebores



Commonly known as hellebores the Eurasian genus *Helleborus* consists of approximately 20 species of herbaceous or evergreen perennial flowering plants in the family *Ranunculaceae*, within which it gave its name to the tribe of *Helleboreae*. Despite names such as 'winter rose', 'Christmas rose' and 'Lenten rose', hellebores are not closely related to the rose family.

Various species of this genus originated in Europe and Asia. The greatest concentration of species occurs in the Balkans. One atypical species *H. thibetanus* comes from western China; another atypical species *H. vesicarius* lives in a small area on the border between Turkey and Syria.

Hellebores are widely grown in Zone 5a to 8b gardens for decorative purposes. They are particularly valued for their winter and early spring flowering period.

The most popular hellebores for garden use are *H. orientalis* and its colourful hybrids (*H. × hybridus*). In the northern hemisphere, they flower in early spring, around the period of Lent, and are often known as Lenten hellebores, oriental hellebores, or Lenten roses. They are excellent for bringing early colour to shady herbaceous borders and areas between deciduous shrubs and under trees.

Flowers of hellebores are a welcome sight when they bloom in late winter to early spring, sometimes while the ground is still covered with snow. Different varieties of the hellebore plant offer a range of flower colours, from white to black. One of the earliest blooms spotted in many areas, nodding hellebore flowers are often fragrant and long-lasting.

The flowers have five petal-like sepals surrounding a ring of small, cuplike nectaries which are actually "petals" modified to hold nectar. The sepals do not fall as petals would, but remain on the plant, sometimes for many months.

Once established, hellebore care is minimal. This herbaceous or evergreen perennial is disliked by deer and other animal pests prone to munching on plants.

All parts of the hellebore plant are poisonous, so take care to keep children and pets away.

In the early days of medicine, two kinds of hellebore were recognized: black hellebore, which included various species of *Helleborus*, and white hellebore, now known as *Veratrum album*, which belongs to a different plant family, the *Melanthiaceae*. Although the latter plant is highly toxic, containing veratrine and the teratogencycloamine and jervine, it is believed to be the "hellebore" used by Hippocrates as a purgative.

'Black hellebore', *Helleborus niger*, was used by the ancients in paralysis, gout and other diseases, more particularly in insanity. 'Black hellebore' is also toxic, causing tinnitus, vertigo, stupor, thirst, a feeling of suffocation, swelling of the tongue and throat, vomiting, catharsis, bradycardia (slowing of the heart rate), and finally, collapse and death from cardiac arrest.

Several legends surround the hellebore; in witchcraft it is believed to have ties to summoning demons. *Helleborus niger* is commonly called the Christmas rose, due to an old legend that it sprouted in the snow from the tears of a young girl who had no gift to give the Christ child in Bethlehem.

In Greek mythology, Melampus of Pylos used hellebore to save the daughters of the king of Argos from a madness, induced by Dionysus, that caused them to run naked through the city, crying, weeping, and screaming.

During the Siege of Kirrha in 585 BC, hellebore was reportedly used by the Greek besiegers to poison the city's water supply. The defenders were subsequently so weakened by diarrhea that they were unable to defend the city from assault.



Gardening Updates

Woodlands Bioblitz 2017 by Susan Myerscough

The Government House Woodlanders are marking 25+ years of invasive species removal and restoration efforts with a Bioblitz, an intensive scientific survey to record species in the 8.9 hectare Garry Oak ecosystem, south of Government House.

The event is taking place on Monday April 10, 2017 from 9 a.m. to 5.30 pm.

The primary goals are:

1. To verify and update the Government House Woodlands' existing lists of species of plants and trees by inviting leading scientists to spend about eight hours searching and recording.

Two such lists already exist, one compiled by John Arnold beginning in 1998 and updated by him until 2014, also an Excel spreadsheet compiled by Crenagh Elliott in the early 2000s and partially updated in 2014.

2. To add GPS locations to these lists.

3. To supplement the lists with appropriate photographs.

The secondary goals are:

1. To record birds, reptiles and insects found or observed.

2. To raise awareness of the complexity of our Garry Oak ecosystem and its beneficial impact on us all, which is one objective of the Woodlands 5 year Management Plan.

Background:

On May 7, 1991 Dr. Richard Hebda (Curator of Botany and Earth History, Royal BC Museum) led the first broom pull, with the encouragement and support of the Lieutenant Governor, Dr. Lam and his wife.

In 2014 Dr. Hebda suggested a Bioblitz would be an appropriate and timely way to mark the quarter century

milestone. The Woodlands' Management Team (Kathleen Martin, Rosemary Balfour, Rosemary O'Connell, and Susan Myerscough, led by Janet Renouf) submitted a Bioblitz proposal which was approved by the Friends' Board and the GMB in October, 2016.

We expect 20 – 25 experts to participate, including Dr. Andy MacKinnon and Dr. Kem Luther who are two of the Metchosin Bioblitz organizers, and a team from the Royal BC Museum led by Dr. Hebda.



Dr. Richard Hebda

10-10-10 Projects and Updates by Brian Rogers

We are now entering the third and final year of an agreement with the House commonly known as the 10,10,10. It is an agreement whereby the Friends committed to spend ten thousand dollars a year for three years if the dollars were matched by the House and Foundation.

This agreement has enabled us to undertake projects that neither the House or the Friends had the resources to undertake. It has been an overwhelming success.

The first year saw the start of the pathway renovation and new margins installed. The irrigation was upgraded in many areas most notably the fire road, alpine beds and the look out area.

Year two saw the completion of the pathway project. The commissioning

of the stone monument between the Victorian Rose garden and Rockland two. Further irrigation upgrades were made. Ample quantities of meet meal were purchased, and the removal of invasive, dead and dying plants was undertaken on the East lawn. New plants were purchased. Finally, a major upgrade was made to the Woodland path to control the flooding.

This coming year will see a significant irrigation upgrade bringing in a new water line to the west side of the garden and the terraces. This line will replace a damaged system that was never properly repaired. Further work will also be done to remove invasive plants and new plantings made.

Hopefully we can continue the 10.10,10 into the future as it has made a considerable difference to the entire garden.



The Making of A Festive Christmas Gathering

by Sheila Connelly and Marilynne Convey



Let there be Light! Chef Alex sets the plum pudding alight in age-old tradition.

The Friends enjoyed a delicious Christmas buffet prior to digging into the sumptuous plum pudding with custard sauce. A feast fit to put delight into the heart of every Tiny Tim and Scrooge.



The 2016 Christmas party was a wonderfully festive event. More volunteers attended than ever before, and Chef's scrumptious menu, served buffet style, provided a veritable feast of delicious choices for all. A witty flaming figgy pudding story made us laugh, and ignited our appetites for the decadent desserts that followed.

As with everything the FGHS does, planning is key. And because the party takes place at Government House, and is attended by the Lieutenant Governor, it is necessarily organized with almost military precision. There is an "Order of Events", which accounts for every minute from the moment the first volunteers enter through the front doors of the House until Their Honours leave the ballroom at the close of the meal – nothing is left to chance.

"Chef Alex and Thandi crept into Jermy's office to find the brandy to set alight the pudding - you know - the brandy that Jermy keeps for 'medicinal purposes' only and to revive us old and ancient volunteers in case we are caught slacking. And if the brandy doesn't work, well there is always a bottle of botanical gin to do the trick!"

Alex placed sprigs of holly on the flaming pudding and proudly bore this culinary masterpiece into the dining room. And with this truly festive dessert at hand, we would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and an equally bright and healthy New Year"

Christmas address by Susan Erling-Tyrell

When we were approached to organize this year's party, we had no idea what was involved. Fortunately, detailed notes and last year's planners helped us navigate our way through the lengthy process.

It began in August and included getting the tickets printed, sending out announcements, selling the tickets, inviting the special guests, and liaising with various members of the House to discuss pertinent details, such as the seating arrangements, table decorations, arranging for a gift basket from the House, and most importantly the menu and meal service. We were also responsible for finding an emcee, going over the programme with him, purchasing the gift basket donated by the Friends Board, and organizing the musical entertainment.

While we both found the process enlightening and enjoyable, we couldn't have completed our many tasks without the help of a number of volunteers whom we'd especially like to thank: Cathie Lylock and Carmel Linka for those detailed notes and much support along the way, Angela Newton and the Phone Tree for making sure everyone got the notices, Cyndy Bray for keeping track of the money and ticket sales, Donald Rossman and Nelles Shackleton for helping out with ticket sales, Leah and Peter Freedman for providing the membership list and sending out all our announcements, Keith Lylock for hosting, once again, with grace and professionalism; Nairn Hollott for giving the perfect blessing, Silvia Jarvis, George & Jo –Ann Zador, Mary Anne Skill and Marilyn Reynolds for selling many raffle tickets and greeting all the volunteers on the day, and to Susan Erling-Tyrell for entertaining us with her festive story.

We'd also like to thank the Government House staff for their professional attitude and keen desire as they supported us in our endeavor to create another merry celebration for all the Friends to enjoy!

A Unique Thank You to a Remarkable Man

The Cary Castle Mews Tea House volunteers, with the presence of Lt. Governor Judith Guichon, ended the year on a high note on December 2nd by honouring tea house patron Rudi Hoenson.

Mr. Hoenson, a Victoria philanthropist and decorated Second World War veteran, was feted with gifts and song by the volunteers, whose dedication this year helped to make the tea house a "must-go-to" destination for locals and tourists alike.

Hoenson's generosity and his spirit was the impetus that

launched the tea house in 2012 and enable it to expand its deck in 2014.

The celebration was also the inaugural debut of the Cary Castle Mews Tea Bags, a group of volunteers whose efforts in the tea house were only surpassed by their singing.

The highlight of the tea was a guest appearance by 'Her Majesty', a.k.a. Eveline Pirie, who bestowed the OBE (Our Benefactor Extraordinaire) award on the honoured guest.



'HM' Eveline Pirie presented Rudi with the most distinguished Order of Benefactor Extraordinaire.

The Tea Room choral group 'The Tea Bags' sang an original composition to honour OBE Rudi.



150 Dresses - Fashioning a Reign



Donna Otto, Costume Museum volunteers presents a show about the Queen's dresses, on display during 2016

Despite being held on the day Victoria was snowed under, about 25 hardy souls braved the blowing snow and treacherous roads to come and see the first of the lecture series: 150 Dresses - Fashioning a Reign.

Sponsored by the Costume Museum, the show was presented by Museum volunteer Donna Otto. Donna travelled to London specifically to see the display of 150 of Her Majesty's dresses, presented at Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle and Hollyrood House. Donna attended the first two locations.

About 25 brave souls made their way through the snow to join Her Honour in enjoy a fascinating presentation

The exhibit featured everything from the Queen's christening robe to her coronation gown, from her WWII army uniform to her spectacular ballgowns.

Donna took meticulous notes and was able to bring the display to the audience. As well as descriptions of the gowns, she had plenty of anecdotes and tales of Her Majesty's travels around the world. It was a great presentation attended by Her Honour. Following Donna's presentation, the audience was invited to a showing of two episodes of The Crown.



Mark Your Calendar

February 28 - Lecture Series: Nick Russell will give a presentation on the restoration of Ross Bay Villa and the importance of volunteer involvement.

March 2 - Official first day of gardening. Thanks to all those hardy souls who kept up the work through the off-season.

March 4 - Government House Open House: Tours are at 9:30am and 11am and last for one hour.

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March 21 - Volunteer Orientation for new volunteers. Existing volunteers are also welcome to join in.

April 1 - Government House Open House: Tours are at 9:30am and 11am and last for one hour.

April 10 - Woodlands Bioblitz. Scientists and experts will be blitzing the Woodlands in a research extravaganza to find out what's there.

April 12 - Friends Spring Reception. 2 - 4pm in the Ballroom. Invitations will be sent out.

April 22 - Earth Day Event. Organized by the Growing Young Farmers. Details to come.

May 6 - Government House Open House: Tours are at 9:30am and 11am and last for one hour.

May 23 - The Cary Castle Mews will open be open for the 2017 season. This includes the Tea Room and Costume Museum

Hours of operation will be Tuesdays to Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society

Coming March 17 and 18! The spectacular Annual Spring Show of the Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society.

As well as rock and alpine plants, classes include succulent, woodland and wetland plants. In addition to exhibits there are commercial and member plant and seed sales, displays, door prizes, silent auction and raffle, and tea. This year will showcase a "Sempervivum Extravaganza".

The show runs from **1 pm to 8 pm on Friday, March 17 and 9 am to 3 pm on Saturday, March 18** at Cadboro Bay United Church, 2625 Arbutus Road, Victoria. Admission is by donation. The club members' plant sale opens at 11 am on Saturday.

For more details, go to www.virags.ca or visit the Vancouver Island Rock and Alpine Garden Society Facebook page.

Vancouver Island Horticultural Judges Group

UPCOMING COURSE

We are planning a Judge's Certification Course for 2017. Learn to become a general horticultural judge over one year.

The course consists of eight classes taught by experts in the relevant subjects. They will be held on Sundays from 10:00am to 2:00pm. This timing allows for travel from up-island and the Gulf Islands.

Student judges are required to exhibit, clerk and student judge at horticulture shows and club parlour shows.

Text book is the BC Council of Garden Clubs judging book and will be supplemented by handouts.

Cost: \$15.00 per session plus \$25.00 for text.

Certified judges may take individual courses for \$5.00.

The first session is on Sunday, February 19, 2017.

If you are interested:

Jacqueline Bradbury

250-389-1379 or jacqbradbury@shaw.ca.

Help Wanted

The floral designers group is looking for anyone who would be interested in helping with the flower arranging for upcoming house events.

Designers should have floral arranging skills however the group is also looking for apprentices who would like to learn and be involved from the ground up.

Any one interested, please contact Liz Thompson at liz.thompson67@hotmail.ca

