

# Vancouver Historical Society

## NEWSLETTER

ISSN 0042 - 2487

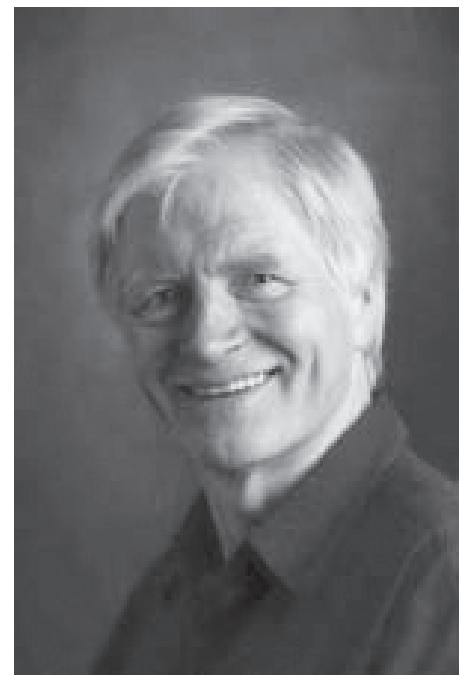
Vol. 46 No. 2

October 2006

### Radical Campus: Making Simon Fraser University *November 2nd Speaker: Hugh Johnston*

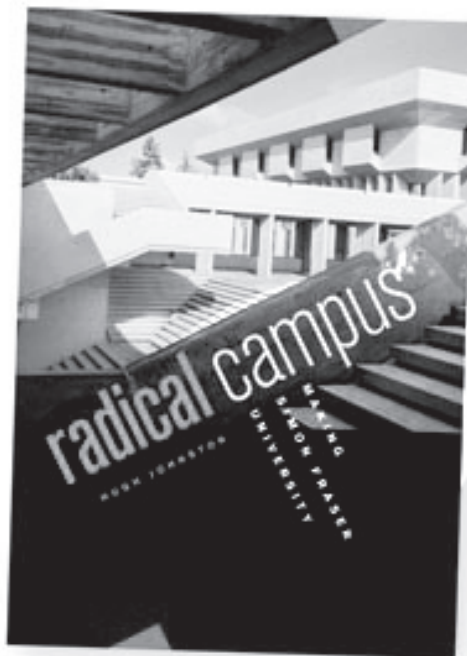
Remember the noisy '60s and Simon Fraser University? Those were tumultuous times for the new institution. Launched by W. A. C. (Wacky) Bennett in 1963 and built in a hurry, the Erickson Massey designed SFU sprang onto the world stage in 1965. This coincided with the biggest building boom in the history of universities and the awakening of the counterculture from the rigor mortis of the comfortable 1950s. By 1968, acutely aware of the Paris riots of that year and the growing counterculture

movement, SFU students protested with huge demonstrations in an attempt to create a university led by faculty and students by demanding the resignation of the President and Board. It was all about the possible, a new ambivalent order, a new democracy. Although activist exuberance squandered practical administration, the early start forever left its innovative imprint on the future growth of the institution. Hugh Johnston was there and speaks from the perspective of having taught at SFU for 37 years.



Hugh Johnston is an SFU history professor emeritus and former president of the Vancouver Historical Society. After studying at universities in Ontario and England, Johnston taught until his retirement from SFU and is the author of numerous books on local and wider history. His talk will focus on his latest book, *Radical Campus: Making Simon Fraser University* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2005)

**PLEASE  
NOTE!**



**Due to a special event at the Museum, our next meeting has been pushed back one week to:  
Thursday, November 2, at 7:30 pm in the Vancouver Museum**

## PREZNOTES

### *Lumens, Letters and Rock Gardens*

Brief notes from behind the scenes at the VHS..

**Lumens.** History is going hi-tech. Increasingly, our Speaker Series presenters bring their visuals on a laptop and rely on us for equipment to project them. Renting such from the Museum would be too costly, so Exec decided to invest in our own LCD projector and authorized Bruce Watson and me to purchase one. With help from the internet and the folks at Future Shop, we learned about lumens (brightness) and resolution capacities and we now have our very own VHS Epson 76C (2000 lumens, XGA). It performed flawlessly with Dudley Booth's marvelous Cyril Littlebury photos at our September meeting, and we expect it to serve us for years to come.

**Letters,** especially to the Prime Minister. At its October meeting, the Executive considered the recent, devastating cuts in the federal government's long-standing Museums Assistance Program, and decided VHS needed to speak out. Wayne Norton researched the issue and drafted an excellent letter, which I edited to one-page size and the Executive approved for mailing to the PM and others (see right). We invite you to add your voice to the cause.

**Rock Gardens.** VHS members don't just appreciate history, they also strive to preserve it. And when such efforts make the press, we like to share the news. Did you see, in the August 18 Vancouver Courier, a n article about the long lost Rock Garden in Stanley Park? It featured VHS member **Chris Hay**, whose grand-grandfather John Montgomery created the nearly mile-long garden in the park in the early 1900s. After years of searching, Chris has found articles, photos, and actual remnants of the garden itself. At our November 2 meeting at the Museum, he'll have copies of the Courier article and a display of his findings. Don't miss it!

**Paul Flucke, President**  
604-732-7742; paulflucke@shaw.ca

## Letter to Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper

The following letter, drafted by Wayne Norton and Paul Flucke and approved by the VHS Executive, is being sent to the Prime Minister with copies to Finance Minister Jim Flaherty, Heritage Minister Bev Oda, and five Vancouver MPs. We urge VHS members to send their own letters on this vital issue. For more information, check out the websites of the Canadian Museums Association ([www.museums.ca](http://www.museums.ca)) and the Museums Assistance Program ([www.pch.gc.ca/progs/pam-map](http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/pam-map))

*Dear Prime Minister:*

*The directors of the Vancouver Historical Society have asked me to convey to you our surprise and dismay at the government's recent funding cuts in the Museums Assistance Programme (MAP). Surprise because we recall no discussion of such intentions during this year's election campaign; dismay not only at the depth of the cuts but also at the characterization of MAP as not meeting the needs of Canadians, not delivering value for money, and not being efficient.*

*Not meeting needs? Our country's history receives too little attention. The thousands of Canadians who volunteer with museums, heritage groups and historical societies strive to make our history accessible to a broad public. MAP helps us all by raising the profile of history in our communities. No value for money? MAP funding has not increased for thirty years. The withdrawal of half of that already too modest funding is a keenly felt slap in the face to our efforts. Inefficiency? How, specifically, could MAP become more efficient? If the recent cuts are intended to be part of a general new museums policy, why were they not presented in that context? We would certainly support a museums policy that reflects respect for our history and for the people who work so conscientiously to preserve it.*

*We sincerely hope we can look forward to an announcement that will not merely restore but increase funding of the Museums Assistance Programme and make clear that efforts calculated to preserve and present history to Canadians are valued by your government.*

*Yours sincerely, Paul Flucke, President*

---

## Coming up at the VPL

*VHS members are invited to these upcoming evening talks in the Vancouver Public Library, lower level.*

### **October 25, 7.30 pm**

The first collection of Chinese Canadian family stories, many of them set in the Vancouver area, will be launched. Among contributors to ***Finding Memories, Tracing Routes: Chinese Canadian Family Stories*** who are participating in the evening are long-time Vancouver activist Shirley Chan and upcoming VHS speaker Henry Yu. More information is available on the website <http://www.cchsbc.ca/>

### **November 16, 7.30 pm.**

VHS members Bruce Watson and Jean Barman will give a visual presentation on the longstanding, but little known, Hawaiian presence in British Columbia. The event will launch their co-authored ***Leaving Paradise: Indigenous Hawaiians in the Pacific Northwest, 1787-1898***, published by University of Hawai'i Press.

# VHS Supports

## The Begbie Canadian History Contest

The Begbie Exam Society is delighted that its efforts to promote Canadian History have been recognised and rewarded by the Vancouver Historical Society. In the summer of 1993 a group of active and retired BC Social Studies teachers worked together to produce the first annual Begbie Canadian History Contest. The group wanted to raise the profile of Canadian history in secondary schools. The contest, offered in both English and French, was designed to allow senior level students to use their knowledge of Canadian history while challenging them to apply their critical thinking skills.

Now, more than a decade later, the Begbie Canadian History Contest is sponsored by the non-profit Begbie Contest Society. The contest is prepared and administered on a volunteer basis primarily by retired public school teachers. Participating schools are charged a fee to partially offset costs, and university students are hired to mark the contestants' papers.

The contest questions are based on major events in Canadian history from 1850 to the present. Students are provided with a rich variety of primary and secondary sources—such as political cartoons, paintings, posters, graphs, maps, statistics, songs, speeches, diaries, letters, newspaper articles and memoirs—and must use the critical thinking skills of historians to analyze the sources in order to answer the questions. The contest is two hours in length and is normally written on a designated day in schools from coast to coast under the supervision of classroom teachers.

The contest will be written on April 4, 2007. There will be five \$750 prizes in the English and the French versions of the contest, and the top entrant in each school who achieves a score of 80% or more will receive a Begbie Contest medallion.

Last year 1,400 students from coast to coast took part in the contest, with the winners coming from BC, Ontario and Nova Scotia. Few Vancouver schools have participated in the contest in the past, but this year the VHS will provide five \$100 prizes to the top five students from schools in Vancouver. The support of the Vancouver Historical Society will help to raise awareness of the Begbie Exam Contest and to increase participation from students in Vancouver.

### Welcome New Members:

Emily Beliveau                      Audrey Fox  
Joan Goold                          Dave McCormick  
Ron Keillor

## Upcoming Speakers & Events

The VHS invites everyone (including non-members) to attend our monthly talks. The talks are free. They are held at the Vancouver Museum, 1100 Chestnut Street (close to Vanier Park) at 7:30 pm on the fourth Thursday of every month (unless noted).

Thursday, November 2, 2006

**(Please Note—**due to a special event at the Vancouver Museum, this talk will be on the first Thursday of November instead of the usual last Thursday of October)

### **The Making of Simon Fraser University**

**Speaker: Hugh Johnston**

Simon Fraser University sprang onto the world stage in 1965, coinciding with the biggest building boom in the history of universities and the awakening of the counter culture from the rigor mortis of the comfortable 1950s.

Thursday, November 23, 2006

### **Saving the Pantages Theatre**

**Speakers: John Atkin and Peter Fairchild**

Opened in 1908 in Vancouver's original entertainment district, and venue to notable performers of the time, the Pantages Theatre went through seven different name changes until it was closed in 1994. Hear the history of this architectural gem and current attempts to save it.

Tuesday, December 12, 2006 (Note earlier start time: 7:00 pm)

(A Special Event at the Performance Centre at The Roundhouse, Yaletown)

### **The Great Barrier: Hollywood's version of the Canadian Pacific Railway building its line through the Rockies**

**Moderator: Chuck Davis**

A special 90-minute treat, this 1937 movie starring Richard Arlen and Lilli Palmer was filmed around Revelstoke. It's Hollywood's attempt to show the CPR's difficulties crossing the Rockies. While not very accurate historically, it *is* good fun to watch. A former resident of Revelstoke who was an extra in the movie, will be our guest. Free.

Thursday, January 25, 2007

### **100-60-40-10: The Rise and Fall (and Rise Again) of Pacific Vancouver**

**Speaker: Henry Yu**

The year 2007 marks a series of anniversaries of watershed moments in Vancouver's relationship to Canada and the Pacific world. Come and see the changes that took place and nudged Vancouver into its place as a global city.

Thursday, February 22, 2007

### **Vancouver Through the Archives of the CBC**

**Speaker: Colin Preston**

The CBC film Archives are a treasure trove of insights into the last 50 years of Vancouver History. The CBC radio archives go back even further. Treat yourself to a refresher course in news events, personalities and home-grown drama.

*The rest of this season's program will be announced in future newsletters.*

## *Littlebury Photos: A Fabulous Glimpse into Vancouver's Past* September Meeting

The regular VHS meeting for Thursday, September 28 was one of the most thoroughly enjoyed of the year. The speaker was Dudley Booth, now retired and living in Port Moody, and a man with a lifelong interest in photography.

What he brought us was a stunning collection of photographs from an amateur Vancouver photographer named Cyril Littlebury. Littlebury's life was short, from 1898 to 1936 (he died of cancer at 38), but productive: from 1922 to 1932 he took hundreds and hundreds of photographs of the city and beyond. If not for an accident of timing they might have been lost forever, and that would have been tragic: they're wonderful. (Murmurs of appreciation from the audience all through the presentation confirms that!)

The story of their rescue is wonderful, too. It begins 60 years ago in the spring of 1946 when Dudley Booth's father was asked by an acquaintance if he would remove some litter from a vacant house in Vancouver. "Dad had a car and a utility trailer," Booth explained, "hence the invitation." The house had been owned by a man named Arthur Littlebury, who had recently died. Arthur was Cyril Littlebury's father.

"Everything of value had already been taken from the residence," Mr. Booth told us, "except a pile of junk in the basement. Sitting on the foundation wall was a small wooden case. My father brought it home, and handed it to me. 'Dudley,' he said, 'have a look at what's inside.'"

What was inside was a mass of photographic negatives, about 1,000 of them. 14-year-old Dudley riffled through them, then closed the dusty old case and put it aside. He didn't open it again for 45 years.

"I finally had a half dozen negatives printed," he said, "and was amazed at the quality of the images. I took a handful to the Maritime Museum and met Len McCann for the first time, and it was he who recognized that they might be Littlebury photos. My photo quite closely matched a small print that he had stored away; everything was the same, except for the height of the tide, as that was the only difference between the two photos of the old Comox, a very small coastal freight and passenger ship. This revelation got me on the track of Cyril Littlebury."



Littlebury, by the way, was fond of photographing things that moved: boats, planes, trains. Mr. Booth's collection includes hundreds of shots of them. They're the kind that make it possible to count every rivet.

The intervening years had seen the introduction of the computer. That would prove to be immensely useful to Dudley Booth in his restoration of the photographs. "As time went by computing power and programs emerged that permitted photo restoration to be performed, and the present Adobe programs are most helpful in this regard."

Some of the photographs took hours of work—at least five hours for some and 20 or more for others—to restore them to their original clarity and beauty. Mr. Booth decided to learn how to restore them himself, when he learned that local shops that do that work charged \$100 an hour. "I acquired the programs and began learning, reading and finding tutorials that helped me to advance my abilities. How I judge my work, is that it is completed when I can't see that I have altered the photo."

Dudley Booth has performed a hugely valuable service in the preservation and restoration of these marvellous pictures.

*PHOTO: Looking east along Hastings from the cenotaph at Cambie and Hastings in the 1920s. (Cyril Littlebury photo, courtesy Dudley Booth collection.)*

### Vancouver Historical Society - Leadership, 2005 - 2006 (elected May 25, 2006)

#### EXECUTIVE:

President	Paul Flucke	Director	Chuck Davis
Vice President (Programs)	Bruce Watson	Director (Membership)	Elizabeth Hawkins
Treasurer (Vacant)	Paul Flucke (pro tem)	Director (Newsletter Editor)	Jim McGraw
Secretary (Historica Fair)	Sidney Madden	Director (Research Service)	Wayne Norton
Director (Newsletter Mailing)	Barbara Coles	Director	Larry Wong

#### OTHERS:

Webmaster	Quasar Design and Data Management Inc.
Info Line	Nancy Stubbs
Archivist	Elizabeth Walker

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

Vancouver Historical Society Information Line: 604-878-9140  
 Mailing Address: P.O. Box 3071 Vancouver, BC, V6B 3X6  
 Website: [www.vancouver-historical-society.ca](http://www.vancouver-historical-society.ca)  
 Newsletter Submissions: [jmcgraw@vancouver-historical-society.ca](mailto:jmcgraw@vancouver-historical-society.ca)