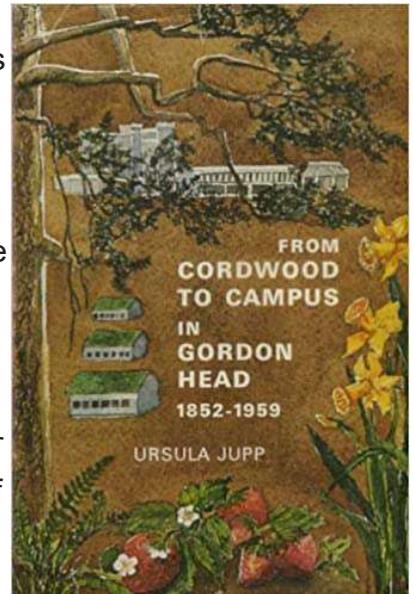


VSC member Nirmala Greenwell recently brought to our attention a book entitled “From Cordwood to Campus.” The author was Ursula Jupp, born in the Scilly Isles and brought here with her parents in the early 1900s. She was to become a well-known writer/historian, who made a big contribution to preserving Saanich history.

This volume offers a fascinating account of the history of Gordon Head. It chronicles the development of the area from its days as a primeval forest, through the time when its fertile soil was cultivated to yield phenomenal flower and strawberry growing, to the era of World War II with the construction of an Army Camp and the subsequent sale of this site to establish the nucleus of the present University of Victoria.



Nirmala noticed the book was illustrated by an artist named Mary Allard, and wondered if Mary had any association with our club. Indeed, she had, and Mary is still remembered by a few of our long-time members. A notable reminiscence comes from Kathleen Metcalfe, who, as a new member having inherited the role of treasurer, was firmly told by a stern Mary that she was “too young for the job.”

Mary was born in Scotland in 1907 and was a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan. Remembered as an influential figure in our club and as a great organizer and scribe, she became interested in our history and the records show that she produced some of the earliest pamphlets on the subject. Her obituary shows her to have been a lady of wide cultural interests and activities.



Apart from her work as a book illustrator, Mary became recognized as a very able and talented watercolour artist, noted for her paintings of sea and landscapes, and scenes featuring lonely indigenous totems. The attached illustration features orcas in the Strait of Juan da Fuca. It is dominated primarily by white and blue with the orcas standing out through the stark black and white of their bodies. It also suggests that from her residence in Rithet Street, close to the waterfront in James Bay, she was able to enjoy the views across the Strait to the Olympic Mountains.

Mary attended an annual paint-out at Cowichan as recently as 1984, finally resigning from the Club in 1990. She passed away in Victoria in 1995, at the age of 88 years.

*~John Lover*