

On August 25th club members enjoyed a pleasant *plein air* meeting at the lovely home of Geoff Buck and Barbara Hubbard on Beach Drive. With Barbara away on business, Geoff was a welcoming host, and we had the happy choice of working either at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club or Loon Park, as well as among Geoff's fruit trees in the back garden.

A report in the Victoria Colonist, May 8th, 1928, on a similar event almost a century ago shows how well the traditions of our club have endured:

The weekly meeting of the Sketch Club of the Island Arts and Crafts was held by invitation in the delightful garden of Mrs. Hugo Beaven, Beach Drive, on Tuesday afternoon. There was a good turn-out of members and Mrs. Beaven received them and showed them the glory of Springtime bloom in this favored spot, leaving them to sketch where they would. The afternoon's work was shown and criticized, and a very enjoyable time spent in discussion.

Ada Beaven was a daughter of J. D. Pemberton, the first Surveyor-General of the Province, and Arden, the Beaven home, was built by Samuel McClure in 1908 on part of her father's original estate in South Oak Bay. She thus had a close association with the club as her brother Frederick Pemberton was an IACS Charter member and president, and her sister Sophie already a distinguished artist.

Ada's husband, Hugo Beaven, was the son of Robert Beaven, Mayor of Victoria and the fifth premier of the province.

A man of parts, he was a bank manager, hunter, golfer and a specialist in roses, acting as a judge at flower shows and being responsible for the introduction of many new varieties to the city. His rose garden at Arden, 1176 Beach Drive, was widely known in the area. After his death in 1937, Ada, as a memorial to her husband provided fifty quality specimens to establish the rose garden at Windsor Park.



In 1939, as a further legacy, she donated a parcel of her estate to the municipality to be used as a native plant garden to preserve indigenous species. At the junction of Margate Street and Beach Drive the garden is still assiduously maintained, although the site of Arden, opposite to the Oak Bay Beach Hotel, is now occupied by the Whitehall Apartments. Well known and respected in the community for her generous support of charities, Ada could be seen cruising in her electric car in the Oak Bay area almost up to the time of her death in 1958.



It so happened that her sister, Sophie, died the following year, having spent the last years of her life on Beach Drive. Sophie had been a companion of Josephine Crease, Sam McClure and Emily Carr in the local sketching clubs of the early 1900s. Later she became the first Canadian-born artist to receive international recognition after her work in portrait and watercolour landscape painting was exhibited at the London Royal Academy and the Paris Salon. However, after her marriage in 1908, she left Victoria for England where her illustrious painting career sadly petered out due to ill health and family tragedy.

Sophie lived most of her life in England, but on one of her visits to Victoria she was able to use her Ottawa contacts to help her friend Emily Carr gain access to the national art scene. She finally returned to settle permanently in Oak Bay in 1947.

~ John Lover