



Ross Bay Cemetery – Victoria BC

The last time we visited Ross Bay Cemetery it was during summer and we ventured out to the amazing scenic grounds at twilight, a particularly befitting time with the sun beginning to sink and shadows emerging along the spectacular winding paths. Ross Bay Cemetery which opened in 1873 is the oldest surviving formal landscape design in BC and overlooks the Pacific Ocean. Known as the Fowl Bay Farm because of the abundance of water fowl, the original impressive 99 acres was once owned by Métis woman, Isabella Mainville Ross, who was the first female registered land owner in British Columbia. She was married to Charles Ross, a fur-trader, who worked for the Hudson Bay Company.

Isabella Ross purchased the waterfront land several years after Charles passed away. She eventually sold off parcels of the farm and the cemetery now makes up 27.5 acres displaying marble, sandstone, granite and wood monuments. The burial grounds house many notable people in BC's history as well as Commonwealth personnel from WWI and WWII. Isabella Ross was originally buried on the grounds in an unmarked grave but today you can visit a much newer monument erected in 1994 by the **Old Cemeteries Society**. Other

prominent members of history buried at Ross Bay Cemetery are James Douglas, Emily Carr, Robert Dunsmuir, and Billy Barker, to name few.

We meandered through the serene, magnificent cemetery aware that a few spectres are said to roam the Victorian era burial ground. The apparition of Ross herself is said to be seen sitting on a bench gazing eerily towards the ocean. White mists, thought to be murder victim David Fee who died on Christmas Eve in 1890, have been captured in photos and have been seen wafting around tombstones. We didn't see any haunted images but the twisting walkways did seem to pull us towards an unmarked grave. It was the grave of a very young child. To this day we aren't sure why we felt we HAD to find it. Maybe with more research we will be able to find out more about why it was important and so compelling.



We were able to take many beautiful photos as we read the poetic epitaphs feeling honoured to be among so many unique souls, pioneers and past residents of Victoria's history. The cemetery grounds are wonderfully park like with majestic old trees complimented by distant mountain views. We can't wait to come back to Ross Bay to check out more of the grounds as well as the historic residents. It would be thrilling to visit at the brink of nightfall to see if we might catch a fleeting glimpse of the mysterious elderly couple in formal Victorian clothing who are said to be seen gliding soundlessly among the graves.