

Preserve

Your voice for heritage in the Capital Region and the Islands since 1973

A Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 35, Number 3, Autumn 2008

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National Historica Fair a rousing success

For the week of July 7-13, Victoria hosted the National Historica Fair. 165 student delegates from all the provinces and territories of Canada converged on our City in a celebration of history.

“Home” for the week was historic Victoria High School – a heritage site for a historic fair. According to the student reports, “Many participants were overwhelmed with the 4 floors, which seemed to house an endless amount of staircases!” After a tour of the facilities and room assignments, delegates were encouraged to begin the creation of a felt wall hanging named appropriately “Felting the World We Want to Live In”.

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The British Columbia delegation at the National Historica Fair



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Mandate



The Hallmark Society was registered on April 18, 1973. We encourage the preservation of structural, natural, cultural, and horticultural heritage within the Capital Regional District. We accomplish these goals through education, public speaking, advocacy, tours, exhibitions, and the annual Awards Night. We are a non-profit society, financed principally by membership dues and members' contributions. 

Photo credits

All photos are by Helen Edwards except as noted. Page 3, Nick Russell; Page 4 and 10 - unknown photographers. 

Deadline for articles and advertising for the Winter 2008 newsletter is October 31, 2008.

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Notice of Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday, September 15, 2008 at the James Bay New Horizons Centre, 234 Menzies Street at 7:30 pm. Our featured speaker will be from the Victoria Police Department outlining the rich history of the Police Department.

The December General Meeting will take place on Monday, December 8, 2008 also at the James Bay New Horizons Centre. Speakers and further details to come. 

*P*reserve welcomes submissions, both written and photographic, on topics related to the preservation, conservation, and restoration of heritage from a local, provincial, national, or international perspective. The Editor reserve the right to edit material for consistency and length, and to reject articles.

Please submit manuscripts to the Editor, *Preserve*, 810 Linden Avenue, Victoria, BC, V8V 4G9, deliver to #18 Centennial Square, or send via electronic mail to newsletter@hallmarksociety.ca. 

Nick's Notes

by Nick Russell

From the Janion to Cridge Park and the Crystal Court

So—the news media asked—are the “For Sale” signs on two Downtown heritage sites Good News...or Bad News?

And that, I could only reply, is a very good question!

It's good news that the owner who obviously doesn't love the Janion Hotel and the two warehouses (colloquially called the “Northern Junk” buildings) is finally unloading them. The three structures really cannot stand indefinitely without a lick of paint or any other care. But what will new owners have to do, to resuscitate them, after such long neglect? And what's the best use for these buildings?

The one thing we now know is that they have a measure of protection: Victoria City Council has gone on record as wanting to give the Janion Heritage Designation, and that should be a clear signal to potential developers: Yes, you're welcome to come up with creative, intelligent adaptive re-uses for this building. But NO, that does not include demolition!



Fine stonework on the 1864 Donald Fraser Warehouse, 1316-18 Wharf.



The 1891 Janion Hotel, dressed in its new For Sale sign.

The other buildings that have caught public attention and consumed Hallmark energies recently have been the Crystal Court Motel and —across the road—the Cridge Park and the Bowling Green.

We have added our voice to the Cridge debate for two several reasons.

Obviously, preserving green space in the inner city is important, though not Hallmark's primary mandate. And preserving an Old World activity such as Lawn Bowling is good for the city's soul as well as for tourist photos. But what tends to get lost in this debate is the historic, designated Church of Our Lord. This beautiful little church used to be the transition between the Inner Harbour and the oasis of the Humbolt Valley, but increasingly it is an isolated island amongst the high-rise towers. (There's a wonderful Maynard picture of Sir James Douglas' funeral winding down to the church across the open valley in 1877. [BCA A-01265] Douglas gave the land to the church from his own estate.) The few remaining views of the church need to be fiercely protected.

And that is also part of the argument against the latest proposal for towers to replace the Crystal Court Motel. Four times, the developers have been to Council with proposals for this important site, starting with 23 storeys...to 21...to 17. The Planning Department has recommended throwing it out, as the developers want DOUBLE the allowable height and triple the allowable density.

Who are these people? Westbank Projects has among its credits: the Azure (Dallas: 31 storeys); the Shaw Tower (Vancouver: 40 storeys); the Living Shangri-La (Vancouver's tallest building: 61 storeys); Shangri-La (Toronto: 65 storeys). So perhaps they have difficulty visualizing the context of Downtown Victoria and James Bay.

As we said in our letter to Council,

“The context is unique: This is NOT Dallas or Vancouver. It is a wonderful space enjoyed by visitors and citizens for its ambience and its mixed use. ... A huge tower outside the Downtown core will overpower our iconic skyline: Instead of seeing the Empress, the legislature, Thunderbird Park and St Ann’s Academy nestled in the Humbolt Valley, the visitor would be reminded of Downtown America.”

A reporter quoted the Westbank architect as being in a hurry, “because he believes this council is sympathetic to developers.” What we want is a Council that is sympathetic to citizens.

Bouquets and Brickbats:

We (That’s the “me” We, not the “Us” We !) sometimes forget to give credit where credit is due. So busy pitching brickbats (whatever they are)... So here are some Bouquets:

§ To Linda Richards, and through her Marlene Halliday, for the recent gift of a wonderful 1916 photograph of the Lemon Gonnason Mill, which once stood at the southeast end of Rock Bay (see picture below);

§ To the same folks for a collection of photographs taken by Richard Edward Spurrier, who died in James Bay aged 80 in 1945 –so the shots are all at least 60 years old;

§ To Ann Bolt for two dozen pictures—a nice

freeze-frame of James Bay in 1995;

§ To Chris Hanna for generously identifying pictures and providing valuable research on the Wharf Street Warehouses (popularly called the “Northern Junk” buildings);

§ To two anonymous sources (You know who you are) for asking questions about work being done on the Government House outbuildings (See separate report).

If you have other nominations for people who have made useful contributions to Victoria’s heritage recently, please pass them on.

Of course, where there are bouquets, brickbats cannot be far behind!

§ B.C. Government, for building an ugly little box on a tiny lot on Government St, between two important heritage buildings (601 Superior, designed by Teague in 1878, & 507 Government, possibly by Ridgway Wilson, 1911). The office block will be shoe-horned in, significantly demeaning its neighbours. As if the government doesn’t have acres of ill-used parking-lot.

§ A Victoria realtor (unnamed, but we’d like to wring his neck): “What used to be known as the Humbolt Valley is now known as the Valley of the Giants.” –Cited despairingly by Councillor Pam Madoff at Committee of Whole.

Any other nominations?

And talking of nominations, you won’t forget those names for the Hallmark Board, will you? 📷



The Lemon Gonnason Mill, about 1916. Mill stood at the southeast end of Rock Bay and contributed lumber and finished wood to hundreds of Victoria homes. Picture is a recent donation to Hallmark Society.

Old Wood Windows – Keep them or replace them?


Still the debate rages on. On one side are those who save vintage wood windows, doing all they can to preserve the original material; on the other side are those who advocate removal of everything old, replacing them with new vinyl framed windows.

In the spring, BC Hydro ran a commercial in print that made that statement that “having old windows is like having no windows at all.” Of course, we know this to be completely false, but the way in which it was presented to an unsuspecting public made it a dangerous statement that went against the very principles of heritage conservation. Ironically, it also goes against the sustainability movement that BC Hydro is so fond of being considered a part of.

Rick Goodacre, Executive Director of Heritage BC wrote a masterful letter to BC Hydro in which he pointed out that “some old windows are indeed old: many have functioned well for a century or more, with the promise of many more years to come. With routine

care and the application of external or internal screens they can also attain very reasonable levels of energy efficiency. They most certainly do not equate to “no window at all.” He then added pertinent facts about the provincial government’s investment of millions of dollars to conserve heritage properties and concludes with the statement: “It is deeply frustrating to see a crown corporation spend further dollars on a campaign bent on undoing these investments.”

Faced with public pressure, BC Hydro has pulled the ad, and has changed the wording in future ads to “having bad windows.”

This seems to be an issue in the United States as well so we present for your reading pleasure, the Top Ten Reasons to Restore or Repair Wood Windows, courtesy the New England Window Restoration Alliance whose members share a common commitment to the preservation and restoration of historic wood windows. See page 8 for the entire list. 


Office Update

In May, we again hired student Caitlin Wright to work in our office for the summer. She began her work where she left off last year, and has been cataloguing the heritage articles from the Islander supplements, scanning relevant photographs and entering key words into a database. We now have over 15 years of Islanders complete with only a few years to go. We eventually hope to get this material up on our website.

Caitlin has also been doing extensive research on properties on the “Gone” list and has prepared Statements of Significance for 4 more properties. Later in this year, we plan to present our preliminary list of buildings worthy of notice to City Council.

She has also scanned the slides that were loaned to us for copying and has been answering public enquiries both on the phone and in person.

We have been given a grant of \$1,000 from the HBC Foundation to assist with our video project. Unfortunately, the BC150 folks did not think our project was worthy of funding so we reduce the scope of the project and should have it up on our website by the end of the year.

We have also been working with a volunteer who is helping with technical questions related to databases on the web. 

Free to Members

We have some copies of new publications from Natural Resources Canada’s Office of Energy Efficiency.


The first brochure continues our theme of windows and their efficiency, and outlines steps that homeowners can take to ensure their windows work to maximum capacity.

The fact sheet explains the composition of different types of windows, how to repair them, and steps to take to reduce air loss. A further section discusses both outside and inside storm window systems

There is also a list of sources, both print and online, that homeowners can use for more information.

The second brochure deals with Moisture Problems and is subtitled: “Why Should I Worry About Moisture Problems?”

If you are interested in these publications, let us know and we can send them to you, or you can visit the office during regular hours and pick them up.

The BC Heritage Branch gave us some postcards of historic places that we can give out until they are gone. We also have a limited number of brochures on national and provincial historic sites in BC. 

On Tuesday, the Village Mayor, Denise LeFebvre-Sefton, and the Assistant Mayor, Tony Goodman, were introduced to the delegates and Butch Dick representing the Songhees nation, drummed and sang a traditional First Nations song of welcome and peace. After he was done, he explained the significance of the chant. The students then boarded buses for a trip to the Duncan area where they toured the Quw'utsun Cultural Centre and the Forest Discovery Centre.

During the next days, Victoria came alive as the students and their chaperones visited sites as diverse as the Legislature (site of the group photo), the Royal BC Museum, St Ann's Academy, Beacon Hill and the Victoria waterfront. Of course, no trip for teenagers would be complete without shopping and this, they did. Other sites included the Government House grounds, Craigdarroch Castle and Ross Bay Cemetery. A tour of the UVic campus and a pizza dinner were followed by a much-appreciated swim at the pool. Tours took a different focus on Friday as buses were loaded for CFB Esquimalt, Fort Rodd Hill and Goldstream Park.

Saturday was the public exhibition day. Historica staff transformed the Cedar Hill Recreation Centre into a dynamic exhibition venue. Coloured flags and banners served to identify provincial and territorial project locations and the students presented their work to an eager audience.

procession, carrying the talking stick. Invited guests and speakers were seated on the stage and the students in their colourful Historica t-shirts, waving provincial and BC 150 flags, filed into the seats on the floor level.



The Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia, the Honourable Steven Point was the featured speaker. As he usually does, he did not use his prepared speech, instead asking Lawren to bring the talking stick onto the stage. He then explained the meaning of the talking stick and noted that when he is holding the stick, everyone must listen to what he is saying. Other dignitaries brought greetings from the provincial government, municipal governments, and the school board. 2008 is a year of celebrations so 3 delegates were chosen from British Columbia, New Brunswick and Quebec to cut a birthday cake for their provinces' anniversaries.



The opening ceremony featured Butch Dick and the Unity Drummers who set the beat for the parade of delegations. Our South Vancouver Island Regional Heritage Fair representative Lawren Wallace led the



Next it was on to the exhibition. Students explained their work to the hundreds of visitors who worked their way through 165 projects on a variety of subjects.

Local community groups and organizations set up information booths. The Hallmark Society was proud to be part of the day, joining the Province of BC Heritage Branch, Heritage BC, the Provincial Capital Commission, and BC 150 among others. This was a good opportunity to meet people sympathetic to heritage in a public venue and we had many interesting conversations with visitors.

On Sunday after a reflection service, the students toured Old Town and Chinatown. Following a Chinese banquet, they returned to Vic High for a dance to live music.

This fair would not have been possible without the many volunteers who worked for two years to plan the event and those who spent hours with the students the week of the fair. Kris Andersen served as the chair of the committee and deserves credit for her leadership and ability to get the most out of everyone.

We are hoping the energy and enthusiasm that the National Fair generated can be translated to our regional fair next May. The contacts that we made during the last two years should prove valuable in the years to come.



Photos:

p. 6, lower left: Butch Dick and the Unity Drummers set the beat for the parade of dignitaries and student delegations; p. 6, upper right: His Honour addresses the assembly; p. 6, lower right: Cutting the birthday cake; p. 7, upper right: project from Alberta on the Famous Five, women who made history; p. 7, middle right: project from Nova Scotia on Pier 21, the gateway to Canada for generations of immigrants; p. 7, lower right: BC Heritage Branch display as part of community involvement.



Top Ten Reasons to Restore or Repair Wood Windows

1. Because your windows fit your house. Quirky as they might be, your older windows fit your house. Care was taken to match the weight & style of window to the building, the trim, etc. They have expanded & contracted with the seasons. With proper weather stripping they can be made to fit & seal even better. Replacement windows have a rigid structure that fits within your window openings. Old houses move & shift over time & frequently the gaps that open up around replacement windows & the window openings result in more drafts than the original windows.

2. Because you appreciate good craftsmanship. The true mortise & tenon construction of antique windows is incredibly strong & even when it begins to weaken is easily repaired. Many unique window shapes were created because of the craftsmanship with wood joinery. Antique windows were built to last & not land in landfill.

3. Because you value good materials. Antique wood windows are constructed of old growth timber. The wood is much denser & more weather resistant than today's tree farmed softwoods. Delicate profiles are possible because of the density of the wood. The reason these windows are still around, even with years of neglect, is because the wood is of very high quality requiring no cladding or additional materials to give them weather resistance. Minus all the ugly paint your wood windows are usually quite beautiful, graceful, & strong.

4. Because you love the character of antique glass. Even the glass in antique windows tells a story. It may be roundel or cylinder glass, each indicating a certain era of manufacturing. Old glass has varieties of color & texture that are a delight to the eye. Two layers of glass are better than one, & in an antique home that second layer of glass should be the storm window that protects the original window.

5. Because you think a warranty should be more than 20 years. Chances are your windows have done their job for fifty or more years already. Sure, they may be a little creaky & may not be as attractive as they once were, but it's a far better investment to repair a proven performer than to sink money into a new window that only has a 20 year warranty at best. With proper maintenance your antique windows should last another 100 years. Heck, even without maintenance they may last that long!

6. Because you want to avoid vinyl. Poly vinyl chloride (PVC) is becoming one of the greatest concerns in the building industry. Not only does the production of it create an environmental nightmare, but the gases it emits over time are becoming a concern. Heaven forbid your house catches fire, & PVC burned will release toxic amounts of dioxin. If you are concerned about lead, please understand that it is used as a stabilizer in the manufacture of PVC. If you are concerned about our planet's health you should read up on efforts to reduce the use of vinyl.

7. Because you want more light. Replacement windows are set into the window opening, & the sash is smaller than the originals. You get less viewing area & less light. Who wants less light?

8. Because windows are a functional part of your house. Weights & pulleys are the best balance systems ever invented. There is a prevalent myth that a lot of cold air comes in through the weight pocket. If there is cold air in the weight pocket it's generally because there is a gap between the outside trim of the house & the siding. It may also indicate a poor seal at the floor joists. Replacing easily serviceable weights & pulleys with vinyl jamb liners or invisible balance systems means installing a system that has a maximum life span of 10-20 years but generally fails in less time. You can't believe how joyful it is to open & close windows easily with one hand when everything is restored to the way it was designed to work!

9. Because you really can save 30-40% on heating costs. According to the Field Study of Energy Impacts of Window Rehab Choices conducted by the Vermont Energy Investment Corporation, the University of Vermont School of Civil & Environmental Engineering & the U.S. Army Cold Regions Research & Engineering laboratory the estimate first year energy savings between a restored wooden window with a good storm window vs. a replacement window was \$0.60. Yup, less than a buck. In their conclusions section they noted "The decision to renovate or replace a window should not be based solely on energy considerations, as the difference in estimate first year savings between the upgrade options are small." Broken glass, failed glazing, no weather stripping – these small & repairable items are what really effect energy efficiency in windows.

10. Because the greenest building is one that is already built. Replacement windows are touted as a way to save energy. But when evaluated from the perspective of the entire production, shipping, installation & removal process replacing windows consumes a whole lot of energy, or viewed the other way an older building has a great deal of embodied energy. If the total energy expenditure to manufacture replacement windows is considered the break even period stretches to 40-60 years. Repairs & restoration work are done by local craftspeople paying local taxes. The use a minimum of materials & resources & a maximum of labor. Restoring windows is the best use of existing materials & the best way to support the local economy.

For more information, check out the website at NEWRA (www.windowrestorationne.org).

Chicken coop...or Cottage? A heritage dilemma

by Nicholas Russell

Some buildings have had so many uses over the years, it's hard to know –if you're restoring them—what to restore them TO.

At the Ross Bay Villa, it was simple: Despite 150 years of use, it had always been a single-family home, and the bones were clearly 1865: A wonderful opportunity to re-create an authentic 1865 country cottage.

But the outbuildings at Government House are much more problematic: Chicken coop...gardener's cottage... junk-storage! But what was urgently needed was a tearoom and an interpretive centre: How does one blend these –Tea in the chicken-coop?

An eagle-eyed Hallmark member reported concerns about work that was happening at the buildings this summer, so I talked to some of players, and they described the context and the thought-processes that took place.

“It has to have a function,” explained architect Jonathan Yardley. “It was a matter of how to make it usable as a Tearoom and Interpretive Centre. So this is not a restoration [to its original use as a chicken coop]. It's a rehabilitation. And the date we're taking is when it was last occupied as a gardener's cottage.”

The original chicken coop had a dirt floor and lime-washed walls: Not practical for contemporary, public use, let alone serving tea! The interior, for instance, has been frequently renovated, with T&G paneling over painted walls, and plywood over that. So the paneling is no more original than the plywood. As a result, the various layers will be exposed in places, with signage to explain the evolution.

Similarly, the window sashes have survived, but were modernized, decades ago, from multi-pane to single-light. (They will be kept that way: A pity, I think!) Years ago, in an early renovation, the building was also raised 15 inches, and a concrete pad under it. As a result, interior walls were left hanging 15 inches off the floor! Such anomalies will be rectified. Where early linoleum can be rescued, it will be re-used, and appropriate new lino will be added. Early paint colours will be replicated, but the exterior surfaces will not be stripped down to look like new.

The restoration has to be a compromise –done on a slim budget, largely funded by the Friends of Government House. A ribbon-cutting is planned for Sept.18, and Hallmark members can check it out for themselves.

In the meantime, thanks to Hallmark supporters who monitored this work. 


Heritage Updates

Mount St. Angela

The cooling economy has its upside! On February 14, 2008, Victoria City Council approved the plans for the redevelopment of the property, but owners have determined that market conditions are not right for the proposed redevelopment at this time. They owners have, therefore, signed a lease agreement with VI HA that the site and its three buildings will be used for housing individuals in need. The houses at 929 Burdett and 924 McClure are included in the housing proposal.

According to the press release, “each individual will have a private room, some with private showers and bath and will share meals in the existing common kitchen/dining room, just as the Sisters of Saint Ann did.” The move-in date is anticipated to be October/November 2008 and the duration of stay may be two to three years. This means the site is safe for now, but must be watched.

Lawn Bowling Site

This greenspace on the fringe of downtown is threatened with development. It seems that lawn bowling is to be replaced with a tower and underground parking. Plans are not firm at this time and we understand that the current tenants have made a very emotional presentation to the City Council. The space is leased for \$1 per year but the lawn bowlers are responsible for all maintenance. This is a favourite site for tourists who stop to watch the bowlers, clad in white play their game that dates back to the Egyptian Pharaohs. If that isn't heritage, then what is. Keep an eye on this issue. 

Recent donations to our Hallmark Archives

As noted in the President's message, the Hallmark Archives have been increased by generous donations from members. Unfortunately, we do not know the exact location of all the buildings or sites. Can you help?

Please remember, we are always willing to accept donations of archival material - slides, photographs, written material, books, magazines, etc. It is through donations that our archives grows in relevance. 🏠



Number 311 Somewhere Street. Simcoe, perhaps? Recent Hallmark donation



This lunar landscape represents excavations around 1980 for a James Bay highrise. But where? Donation.



Beautiful little house...but where? The hedge and the Monkey-Puzzle tree might help. Picture antedates 1945. We'd love to know if the house survives. Donation.

Now it's Your Turn!

As noted elsewhere in this newsletter, the Annual General Meeting will be held on September 15, 2008. Elections to the Board of Directors are scheduled so that one-half of the Board positions are available each year. There are several opportunities for new board members.


Despite the appeal – Whither Hallmark – in the Summer 2008 newsletter, we have had NO nominations for board positions. Many of our long-time board members are leaving as they have more than done their share. Without a board, we cannot operate as a non-profit society. **Does anybody really care?** The status-quo is not workable.

It is now up to YOU to fill the positions. The responsibilities are not particularly onerous. Meetings are held monthly at members' homes, providing a social interaction that allows members to get to know each other. Board members are expected to attend special events including Awards Night and general meetings, but the time commitment is not overly heavy.

We can offer one-year terms, rather than the regular two-year terms if you would like to try, but are not willing to make a long-term commitment.

The following Board positions are available this year:

- President
- Vice-President
- Secretary
- 6 Directors-at-large

If you would like to serve on the Board, or wish to nominate someone for a position, please contact the office (office@hallmarksociety.ca or 250-382-4755). If you have any questions about the duties or responsibilities, please call President Nick Russell at 250-996-0022 or Administrative Director Helen Edwards at 250-382-4755. 

Calendar

- September 6, 2008** Life-long Learning Festival, Bay Centre, 11 am - 4 pm.
- September 10-11, 2008** Life-long Learning Festival activities, Hallmark office 10 am - 1 pm.
- September 15, 2008** Hallmark Society Annual General Meeting. James Bay New Horizons Centre, 234 Menzies Street, 7:30 pm. Guest speaker: Victoria Police Department representative speaking on the history of the Department.
- September 25-27, 2008** Heritage Canada Foundation conference, Quebec City. Theme: "Work That Endures." See <http://www.heritagecanda.org> for details & registration forms.
- December 8, 2008** Hallmark Society general meeting. James Bay New Horizons Centre, 234 Menzies Street, 7:30 pm. Speaker to be determined.
- February 16-21, 2009** Heritage Week.
- May 1, 2009** South Vancouver Island Regional Heritage Fair, sponsored by Historica. Royal BC Museum, Clifford Carl Hall, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm.
- May 5, 2009** Hallmark Society Awards Night, St. Ann's Academy Auditorium, 7:30 pm.



Membership Application

- Student \$15.00
- Individual \$25.00
- Family \$35.00
- Group/corporate \$50.00
- Individual Life \$200.00
- Corporate Life (20 yrs) \$400.00

- New
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All members are entitled to voting privileges at Annual and General Meetings, receive four Newsletters a year and access to the Society library and archives which contain information on over 10,000 buildings in the Capital Regional District. Memberships are due September 30th and are tax-deductible. The Society also offers special events and tours for members. New memberships are pro-rated quarterly.

The Hallmark Society collects personal information about you only when you voluntarily provide it, and only for the purpose for which it was intended, and in handling such information we comply with the provisions of the British Columbia *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. We do not sell, rent or trade our membership/donor information to or with others. The Society makes all reasonable efforts to ensure that personal information collected from you is protected against loss and unauthorized access. If you wish to change information on file, please contact us.

In the interest of timely communication, we may occasionally send you electronic messages regarding current issues or reminders of meetings. If you do not wish to receive such messages, please let us know and we will remove your name from our email list. We would appreciate being advised of changes to your address, telephone number, email address, etc. so that we can continue to serve you efficiently. 

*Hallmark Society Annual General Meeting
Monday, September 15, 2008 - 7:30 pm
James Bay New Horizons Centre
234 Menzies Street
Heritage updates, election of officers
Guest speaker from Victoria Police Department*