

**FRIENDS OF BARKERVILLE CARIBOO GOLDFIELDS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

NEWSLETTER UPDATE – DECEMBER, 2016



“PRESERVE, PROTECT, PROMOTE”

**“THESE OLD BUILDINGS DO NOT BELONG TO US ONLY; THAT THEY
HAVE BELONGED TO OUR FOREFATHERS, AND THEY WILL BELONG
TO OUR DESCENDANTS,”**

William Morris

RESULTS FROM AGM ELECTION OF DIRECTORS



DIRECTORS ELECTED



Robin Grady
Brenda Beatty
Kristie Seaborn
Lana Fox
Richard Wright
Grant Johannesen
Derek Burdikin
Bridget Nowakowski
Doug Perdue

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

President: Brenda Beatty
Vice President: Grant Johannesen
Treasurer: Kristie Seaborn
Secretary: Doug Perdue

POSITIONS: are good for a one year term at which time there will be another election of officers at the AGM meeting in October.

COMMITTEE POSITIONS: membership, special projects, trails, cemetery projects, newsletter, website.

MEMBERSHIP is from May 1st and ends April 30th of the following year. A season's pass is included with the membership and entitles the bearer to visit Barkerville as often as they wish.

WHO WE ARE: We are a registered non-profit organization comprised of dedicated volunteers. Our main focus is to enhance the preservation, protection and promotion as it applies to Barkerville and the Historic Cariboo Goldfields area.

*MEMBERSHIP Contact: Lana Fox

*NEWSLETTER Contact: Direct submission of articles to Lana Fox

VOLUNTEER HELP ALWAYS WELCOME AND APPRECIATED!

WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED, since our formation in 1984 the Society has dispersed well over \$1.5 million in projects and programs. The majority of these funds have been spent in Barkerville for projects such as cataloguing of thousands of artifacts, public awareness campaigns, historic trail development in and around Barkerville and the Gold Rush area, improvements to the cemetery, financial support for repairing the cemetery wall, for reconstruction of the Waterwheel and Stamp Mill, raised funds to restore the Canadian Claim and donated a new bridge across Williams Creek for access to the site. We continue to make improvements at Blessing's Grave site and Stanley Cemetery. Trail signage and clearing of trails is ongoing.

VOLUNTEERS, we are always in need of volunteers! Work Bees for trail work and spring cleanup at the cemeteries are ongoing projects. Members can also serve as volunteers to assist in various needs at Barkerville Historic Town especially during special events and busy Holiday weekends. If you would like to become involved please contact us via email: friendsofbarkerville@barkerville.ca or by mail to:

Friends of Barkerville Cariboo Goldfields Historical Society,
PO Box 4152, Quesnel, BC V2J 3J2

Or if you wish to speak directly to a director, call Robin Grady at 250-992-2008.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT.....Another busy year for the Friends of Barkerville-Cariboo Goldfields Historical Society. I have been fortunate to serve as president for the last 2 years. I have been involved with several grant applications for us & in partnership with Barkerville. To make our meetings more interesting & informational I have tried to invite guests to speak to us on various occasions. We set up a booth at the Victorian Christmas event & sold memberships & FOB merchandise.

We donated \$5,000.00 to the Richfield Chinese / Catholic cemetery project.

We donated \$3,000.00 to the Bonepicker project.

We had an FOB ad put into the Quesnel & Barkerville tourism brochures, the Quesnel Observer Tourism Guide and in Marg Sharp-Eagle's book "Kimbal Creek Secrets". In June I attended the BHT AGM & Theatre Royal gala grand opening event. As of August I took on the role of FOB rep on the BHT board, replacing Richard Wright who represented us well in this position.

Aug. 20th my wife and I and another couple hiked the Richfield to Stanley Cariboo Wagon Road and the Van Winkle trail, looping back via Groundhog Lake in 9 hrs (+/- 26.5 kms.) (FOB volunteers bucked logs/brush/windfall and blazed





the trails on this route in 2015. **(The huckleberries and highbush blueberries were ripe and plentiful).* On the Labour Day weekend, Brenda Beatty guided a group of 5 persons on a hike of the 1861 Gold Rush Pack Trail (GRPT) from Keithley Creek to Barkerville, with Robin and I chauffeuring hikers and shuttling vehicles.

Our June and September monthly meetings were held in Barkerville at the new schoolhouse and Visitor Reception Centre (VRC). Monthly meetings have been at Savalas Restaurant, with the October meeting and AGM being at the Quesnel and District Recreation Centre.

It has been my pleasure working with a diverse group of individuals who are passionate about some or all aspects of preserving, protecting, and promoting Barkerville and area, enjoying heritage, culture, recreation, and helping to maintain and provide these opportunities for others to experience and enjoy.

Next year 150 year celebrations for Canada's Dominion Day will occur in Barkerville and it should be another busy and exciting year.

Respectfully submitted,

Grant Johannesen, President

BARKERVILLE HERITAGE TRUST & BARKERVILLE REPORT – FOB Representative

Richard stepped down from his role as the FOB representative on the BHT, following the June AGM. Thank you to Richard for serving us well in this capacity. I took on the position of FOB representative on the BHT, effective August 2016. I participate in monthly conference calls and quarterly face-to-face meetings in various Cariboo communities. My first meeting was Sept. 16-18 in Barkerville. The next meeting is in Quesnel January 27-29.

The BHT Board is made up of the following Directors:

Iona Campagnolo – Honorary Patron

Don Bassermann – Director & Chair – Fraser Ft. George & P.G.

Gary Champagne – Director – District of Wells

Kirstin Clausen – BCMA & HS of BC

Walt Cobb – Director & Vice Chair – Dist. of 100 Mile House & City of Williams Lake

Jacqueline Holler – Director – UNBC & SD 28

Rhonda Hunter – Director & Treasurer – At Large

Grant Johannesen – Director – FOB

Eileen Lao – Director & Secretary – At Large

John Massier – Director & Past Chair – CRD & City of Quesnel

Miriam Schilling – Director – CCCTA

Rob Rummel – Director Merchants – Merchant Licensees

Les Waldie – Director - At Large

Chris Lodder – Director – Barkerville Gold Mine – Industry Representative



The Shaolin Epo Martial Arts School performed in Barkerville August 20th, on the Autumn Moon Festival day. The Richfield Chinese/Catholic cemetery now has a picket fence around it with posts secured by hand poured cement. The Chinese apology plaque will be the first one presented in BC later in October in Barkerville's Chinatown by Minister of Trade & Minister Responsible for Asia Pacific Strategy & Multiculturalism, Teresa Wat.

FOB's First Home in Barkerville

Photo Courtesy of Lana Fox



"BARKERVILLE'S ACTIVITIES SEASON"

From Sept 26 to May 17 Barkerville is gearing up for year round activity and use. Once spring, summer, and fall season winds down, "Activities Season" occurs from the end of September to the end of April. The streets and buildings of Barkerville are alive with Ghosts and Goblins of the past, present, and future and fireworks are

the evening highlight at Halloween. A shelter structure is being built just inside the town site, as you come out of the Visitor Reception Centre. It can be used for wedding receptions, family reunions, social gatherings/events and it will have a covered children's ice skating patch. Just north of town and the Visitor Reception Centre (VRC), at the northwest corner of the public parking area, is the new Shamrock snow tube park and lift, being built with three runs. It will be operational later this winter. North and adjacent to the tube run, six cottages will be constructed. One of the six is presently under construction and a children's playground will eventually be built in front of the cottages. An outdoor ice skating rink is planned, along with skate, snow shoes, and kick sled rentals. On the trails and slopes in and around Barkerville, there are opportunities in winter to ski, snowmobile, snowmobile, snowshoe, and play in the snow. The photographic opportunities are ideal in the town site, along the trails and in the timber and alpine. Victorian Christmas occurs Dec. 10, 11, and 12th with unique gift shopping opportunities, food and drinks can be purchased, photos can be taken with Father Christmas in the Enchanted Forest, you can enjoy an old fashioned sleigh ride along the streets of Barkerville, and you can purchase your annual membership/family pass from the Friends of Barkerville-Cariboo Goldfields Historical Society for the upcoming season (this makes an ideal

gift for friends or family) Cabins with power are in use at Gov't Hill campsite. Campgrounds are being provided with power. Bike stands with locks, covered by wooden shelters will be in place for use in 2017. Several grant applications are being pursued & monitored. Preparations for 2017, Canada's 150 years celebrations are in the works. The aim is to work on a long term, 25 year plan & funding for Barkerville and hopefully Cottonwood House. We, as the Friends of Barkerville – Cariboo Goldfields Historical Society, will continue to support and partner with Barkerville Heritage Trust to improve and enhance Barkerville and area now and into the future.

Respectfully submitted,
Grant Johannesen



NEW FOB WEBSITE COMING: Plans are to over haul the Friends website over the winter. We will announce when completed.

FRIENDS OF BARKERVILLE MEMBERSHIP REPORT:

Membership for this season is 760 which are up 8% from last year. Barkerville's attendance this year is 64,765 up about 12 to 13% from last year. This is great news for everyone! Thank you once again to Barkerville Heritage Trust for continuing to sell FOB membership/season passes for us at the gate.

Many thanks go out to all our members and especially to long-time supporters from over the years. Some of you go back to 1992. This is much appreciated! Remember, money from donations and the purchase of memberships all goes back to Barkerville and area for needy projects.

STANLEY CEMETERY: FOB has hired a fellow to make new headboards for the Stanley Cemetery which are in dire need of replacing. He will be working on these over the winter and we hope to have them installed by next spring. We will be having a work bee at the same time for usual care and maintenance. We will appreciate any volunteer help we can get! Watch for an announcement in the spring. Photo was taken in 2007 during one of our work bees.

Photo by Lana Fox



TRAILS: Work was done this summer to clear the 1861 Gold Rush Pack Trail from debris and blowdown from Richfield to near the top of Bald Mountain. Thanks again guys! Thoughts are in the works for doing a hike on snowshoes and or skis later on. No decision on a date yet. We will announce on our Face Book page and also send out a message in advance via email for those of you interested and we know some of you will be.

TRAIL WORK COMPLETED OVER A 6KM SECTION OF THE 1861 GOLD RUSH PACK TRAIL

On Monday September 5 2016, two trail work enthusiasts, Gary Gale (pictured, left) and John Courtney (pictured, right) worked on the 1861 Gold Rush Pack Trail. They cleared dozens of trees and lots of brush with a power saw and a brush saw. They had a very productive day, clearing 6 kilometres of trail, from the Richfield Courthouse to the alpine area of Bald Mountain.

Their work opens up the possibility of connecting a beautiful loop hike or winter snowshoe trek on the 1861 Gold Rush Pack Trail to the Proserpine Connector or Powderhouse Trail, beginning and ending in Barkerville.

Photo Courtesy of
John
Courtney



The Friends of Barkerville is so grateful for its volunteers and depends on contributions like this to keep trails open and exhibits maintained. Thanks to Gary and John, the fiercest trail crew of the year!





1861 GOLD RUSH PACK TRAIL HIKE

Over the Labour Day weekend (Sept. 3-5), 5 hikers walked the 1861 Gold Rush Pack Trail from Keithley Creek to Barkerville. FOB volunteers (Robin Grady & Grant Johannesen) generously drove 2 vehicles of hikers to the Weaver Creek Trailhead in cool, very wet, muddy weather. Saturday was periodically rainy, but the trail was easy to find and they made steady, slow progress and installed several new trail signs. They happily woke to clear skies for day two, hiked across dry meadows, enjoyed the expansive views; and ate huckleberries and blueberries almost continuously.

The group encountered lots of mud, especially on Base Mountain and on the descent from Chumley Summit. Beavers had been working hard to flood the road across Sawmill Flats, and the group had to detour through the brush to avoid the large lakes that have formed. On the final day, they decided to walk out on the Grouse Creek Trail instead of going up and down Bald Mountain. Although the trails' distances were the same, saving the elevation gain and loss allowed the group to make it to Barkerville before dark. The Grouse Creek Trail was beautiful and made for easy walking through meadows and along pretty creeks. The sun shone and blue skies followed them for the afternoon. The decision to take the easier route was confirmed when about 1km onto the Grouse Creek Trail, a hiker slipped while crossing blowdown and hurt his ankle. The hikers took the weight from his pack, redistributed it amongst the group and gave him ibuprofen to reduce the swelling.

It turns out that he had broken his ankle. The group dynamic was excellent, despite most people starting the hike as strangers. Each person brought skills and personality traits to the group that ensured it was safe, successful and fun, despite the challenges of weather, pace, route-finding and injury. Hikers were from Quesnel, Prince George



and Vancouver and everyone thought that the trail was excellent, with fascinating historical artifacts, beautiful vistas and the best berry-picking ever!



Photos Courtesy of Brenda Beatty



ANOTHER SUCCESSFULL 7 SUMMITS HIKE & BIKE CHALLENGE EVENT 2016



And they are off, biking through Barkerville heading for the mountains!

A total of 65 participants from 14 different cities around the province braved the very unsettled weather. The organizer of this annual event Dave Jorgensen had this to say.....

“This year was as miserable as it could be, but the participants were amazing as usual. Friends of Barkerville contributed the following: Brenda Beatty: prizes from Rocky Peak Adventure Gear; Bridget Nowakowski: almost made it as a participant – missed her first one; Grant Johannesen: general organizational support; Robin Grady: vehicles, first aid, mountain support at Groundhog Lake; Richard Wright: vehicle, shuttle, mountain support at Groundhog Lake and Doug Perdue: race co-ordinator in Wells. It’s really a stunning testament to your support and commitment to this event...which I really appreciate. Incredibly, besides the three directors who were physically involved on race day, we had over 15 additional volunteers on the course on the day of the event!” Dave donated a cheque for \$600 to the Friends of Barkerville. Thank you so very much Dave!

THANK YOU



At the finish line is #12 Jacob Paul and #18 is Herve Gagnon, both of Quesnel. They finished 4th and 5th respectively and can't forget Doug Perdue director and past president of the Friends of Barkerville in the background.

All photos are courtesy of Dave Jorgenson of the Bears Paw Cafe

Groundhog Lake in the background
Hikers ascending to the top of the
peak of Mt. Agnus

Photo Courtesy of Chris Wagner of
Prince George



FRIENDS OF BARKERVILLE SCHOLARSHIP IN THE MEMORY OF JERRY MACDONALD

Congratulations to Rachel Hackler of Quesnel, one of two winners of the Jerry MacDonald bursary award for 2016. Here is her submission.....

BARKERVILLE'S BLESSING – *by Rachel Hackler*

British Columbia's smallest historic site is a simple little grave with a rundown fence, located just off Highway 26 near Barkerville. The grave of Charles Morgan Blessing has been standing since 1868, and has the original fence and headboard that was put up by his friend Wellington Moses. Known as the "Black Barber of Barkerville", Moses was the man that helped bring justice to Blessing's murderer. This is the story that led up to the first public execution witnessed in Barkerville.

This tragedy began in Quesnellemouth, now known as Quesnel. It was here that Moses and Blessing parted ways after travelling together from New Westminster. Blessing, originally from the US, wanted to continue on to William's Creek, while Moses decided to stay in Quesnellemouth for another day or two. James Barry happened to be in the same saloon as the other men, and was also travelling to William's Creek. It was decided that Blessing would start off to Barkerville with Barry, and meet up with Moses at the town of Van Winkle, which was along the way.

When Moses made the trip from Quesnellemouth, he stopped to meet his friend at Van Winkle, but Blessing wasn't in the town. Moses continued on to William's Creek, where he continued his profession as a barber, though he began to inquire about what happened to his friend. Nobody seemed to know this Blessing character, and there was no sign of him for several months. At one point, James Barry came into Moses' barbershop for a trim, and the barber noticed something strange. Barry was wearing a gold pin, one that Moses recognized as Blessing's. When Moses questioned him about Blessing, Barry explained that the man started complaining of sore feet, and turned back part way to Van Winkle. When the question of Blessing's location was repeated, Barry snapped, and told Moses that "he was not the man's keeper". Barry left and Moses was left wondering of his friend's fate once more.

Feeling that Barry had something to do with Blessing's disappearance, Moses began to make specific inquiries regarding him. It was revealed that Barry had gotten a room at a hotel on June 2nd, and had paid for the week long fee of \$12 with a \$20 bank note, suspicious considering the fact that in Quesnellemouth, he had admitted to being without any real money. Moses had his suspicions but didn't voice them until October of 1866, when a paper was published that reported a body being found. On the body, amidst other initialed objects, was a tin cup with the name C.M. Blessing scratched into the bottom. Blessing was missing no longer.



When Moses saw the description of the body and the items that were with it, he went to Chief Constable Fitzgerald and explained his thoughts of what may have happened. Barry was to be brought in, but had fled from Barkerville, and Constable John H. Sullivan was sent in to find and retrieve him. When Sullivan reached Soda Creek, it became readily apparent that Barry was two days ahead of him, and was expected in Yale. The newly built wire allowed for communication between Soda Creek and Yale, and the police were waiting for Barry when he arrived.

Barry knew exactly who his accuser was as he named Moses as the one who brought forth the allegations. When he was brought before the court, Barry explained that he had travelled part way to Van Winkle with Blessing, but then the man turned back. A witness described that he had left Thirteen Mile House with Barry and a stranger (Charles Blessing) and ended up arriving at Van Winkle before them. When Barry arrived, he did so alone, and explained that the stranger had developed sore feet, and decided to no longer continue his journey. Another witness, named William Fraser stated that Barry owned a six shooter, which he rarely let out of his sight. This evidence seemed damning as it was apparent Blessing had been shot in the head, and the weapon was presumed to be a six shooter. The other piece of evidence that seemed to be an obvious sign that Barry had killed Blessing was the gold pin,



which at least two people recognized as having been in Blessing's possession shortly before he went missing. It was unique in the fact that it had the appearance of a man's face when held a certain way. When Barry was in the barbershop, and then when he was arrested, it was recognized to be in his possession. It seemed obvious that Barry had killed Blessing for the gold pins and money that he had been carrying. The judge reigning over the court was the famous Hanging Judge, Matthew Begbie. He also felt that there was no way to reasonably argue that Barry was innocent, and with his and the jury's conviction, Barry was sentenced to hang.

The first public execution in the Barkerville region took place on Friday, August 9th, 1867. The gallows were constructed the day before, and Barry was led out to them at 6 o'clock. The signal was given, and the hanging was committed immediately. His body was hung for half an hour and when that time elapsed, the local doctor, Dr. Bell examined it and declared him dead. Barry's body was then cut down and buried in the local Richfield cemetery. The scaffold was removed within the hour, and there was no evidence of the justice that had occurred.

It was due to the Moses' unrelenting need to know what happened to his friend that brought justice to his murderer. Though there may be questions of whether or not James Barry really did kill Charles Blessing. The only people who truly know whether or not he was guilty were Barry himself, the priest who took his last confessions, and Charles Blessing, none of whom will be speaking up anytime soon.

***Photo courtesy of Lana Fox**



OLD FASHIONED VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS AT BARKERVILLE - Lana Fox

Another successful event held Dec. 10th to Dec. 12th, even though the weather was not at its best, being darn cold! This year there were two sleighs on the go making sure everyone got to go for a ride.

Barkerville's new café and gift shop were open at the Visitor's Centre. Saturday was the busiest day and at the café at times there

was not a seat to be had at the tables. A great place to sit keep warm have a drink and a bite to eat especially when the Goldfields Bakery was full. The Friends of Barkerville had our table set up in the room also selling 2017 membership/seasons passes among a few other items left over from our store at the Barkerville Hotel. We already have 52 members for the start of the season in 2017. Thanks so much for your support!

I would like to thank the volunteers, Grant & Judy Johannesen, Brenda Beatty, Bridget Nowakowski, Robin and Loretta Grady and Kristie Seaborn who helped me set up on Friday.

The photo was taken by Robin Grady, sitting left to right is Loretta Grady, Lana Fox and Brenda

Beatty and I must not forget to mention that the fellow behind us is Fred Tregillus who was once a long time resident of Barkerville!

**HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE
& SEE YOU ALL NEXT YEAR!**

