

## **Invermere BC Historical Walking Tour**

### **Sponsored by the Windermere Valley Museum and Archives**

#### **Windermere Valley Museum**

The Windermere Valley Museum complex currently consists of eight buildings. The main building is the Lake Windermere Canadian Pacific Railway log station, originally situated in Athalmer. In 1975 a coal train derailed, hitting the station and damaging it extensively. The station was sold to the Windermere District Historical Society for \$1.00. With funding from a Federal Grant, the remains of the station was moved from Athalmer to its present site and was restored., The building houses the Reception Area, Indian displays, Transportation displays, a Pioneer Parlour and other displays that are changed annually, The other six buildings in the Museum complex have unique displays that include a Pioneer Cabin, a Pioneer Store, a Pioneer School, Mining Equipment, Farming Implements and Washing Apparatus, The flags on the Museum grounds are compliments of the Rotary Club.

#### **Kootenay Lodge**

This home was built in 1912—1913 by A. J. Dobbie for B. G. Hamilton, a prominent businessman. Mr Hamilton later became the valley historian and through his interest in archaeology, he discovered the site of David Thompson's trading post, Kootenae House, (built in 1807, Kootenay House was the first trading post in south-eastern BC. A

memorial cairn marks the site of the original trading post, along Toby Creek on the road to Wilmer). Mr Hamilton's home, which he called "Kootenay Lodge", is classed as a bungalow, and contains six rooms at ground level, three rooms upstairs, and has a large basement, The original property boundary extended well beyond the site of the present-day alliance Church, and include a large garden, barn and garage.

#### **First Hospital**

The first Invermere Hospital was built in 1914 on 10<sup>th</sup> Street. It became the third hospital in the District. The first two hospitals had been in Wilmer. This building had been used as a hospital until 10937. Salary for a matron was \$40 with room and board; a nurse or cook was paid \$35 with room and board; doctors were paid \$50 a month. At times it was difficult to staff the hospital and volunteers were needed. Patients paid \$2.50 a day in a public ward (more for a private room) and maternity was \$5.00 for 12 days.

Looking northeast from the hospital, as far as can be seen, was once the land belonging to the Upper Columbia Valley Experimental Station. This was the first irrigated farm of the Dominion Government established in BC. The site covered 35 acres here as well as 18 acres in the Toby Creek gorge. Experiments and demonstrations were inaugurated in the spring of 1913. In 1931 the experimental station was moved to Windermere.

#### **Strands Old House Restaurant**

Constructed in 1912 for Mr and Mrs Alexander Ritchie, this house was purchased about 1920 by Dr and Mrs Filmer Coy. Dr Coy, for many years, served as the only medical practitioner between Golden and Cranbrook. In 1946, the house was purchased by Mr and Mrs Ian Weir. Mrs Weir ran the first kindergarten in Invermere from their home for many years. The Weirs sold the house to Tim Strand who opened the restaurant on the site. The restaurant features small dining rooms named after the previous owners of the building.

#### **Invermere Livery**

The Invermere Contracting Company, which was formed in 1912, constructed a Livery on this site for horses that were hauling ore from the mines on Toby Creek. The Contracting Company had as its original shareholders, prominent local citizens, R. R. Bruce, Alex Ritchie and George Starke. In 1915, W. H. Cleland joined the company as its secretary and with Frank Stockdale bought out George Starke's shares. By 1915, Mr Cleland was the manager of the company and William Weir became the secretary. In 1935 the Livery was converted into a garage. In 1951, Cleland's son, Bud, became manager until it closed its doors. It is now Portabella Restaurant and Bud's Bar and Lounge. Across the street on the present The Bargain Store location, was the site of the infamous Wing Lee Store.

#### **Pynelogs Cultural Centre**

This building was constructed in 1915 for Robert Randolph Bruce and his bride, Lady Elizabeth Northcote. Tragically, Lady Elizabeth died before

her home was complete. And her grave overlooks Lake Windermere immediately south of the building. Mr Bruce moved to Victoria when he became Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia in 1926. He donated the property, known as Pynelogs, to the community to be used as a hospital. Officially opened in 1937 as a memorial to Lady Elizabeth, the building functioned as a hospital until 1956. It was then used as a Senior Citizens Home and more recently a home for mentally handicapped. In May 1990, Pynelogs was reopened as a Cultural Centre, showcasing local arts and crafts.

#### **Fort Point**

The original name of this point of land was Canterbury Point. It became Invermere Point when the town site was laid out in 1911. On the point was a well-established golf course, opened in 1911. Golfing cost 50 cents per day or \$2.00 a week. In 1922, a fort was built by the CPR and the Hudson's Bay Company as a memorial to David Thompson,. It was at that time that the area became known as Fort Point. The tourist camp was later purchased by a group of local people, They subdivided the land, selling each cabin individually, In 1956 the Weirs bought the Lodge and still reside there. Below the Lodge is a historically significant tree, which has burn marks from a campfire that was used by the explorer David Thompson and his party when here in 1807. Thompson had begun to build here but he soon realized that there were not enough trees so he built closer to Toby Creek.

Canterbury House

Built in the 1920's as a police barracks, the original interior included a jail with two cells for prisoners, a court room and living quarters for the policemen. One of the first policemen to take up residence in the building was Mr Bob Pritchard. In 1962, the RCMP barracks were moved to the present-day location of the Invermere Library at the north end of town. The old barracks still functioned as a courthouse and held the offices of the Provincial Government Agent and the Conservation Officer until 1982, with the construction of the new Provincial Building. In 1987, the building was privately purchased.

### The Cleland House

This building was constructed in 1924 by the Dobbie and Cartwright Construction Company for the Cleland family. The Cleland's raised five children here. Both Mr and Mrs Cleland actively supported Windermere District activities and organizations. The family home was sold to the Des Askey family in 1957. More recently the building housed "Myrtles", s shop named for Mrs Askey and owner by the Askey's son, Roger. In 1992, the house was purchased by Mark Hendrickson, a local architect, who renovated the building. The house is now the restaurant named McToogle's.

Canadian Imperial Bank of commerce

This building was constructed in 1928 by Nat Bavin for the Imperial Bank. It originally had steps and an entrance off 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The latest renovations increase the size of the building to twice the original, and moved the entrance to 13<sup>th</sup> Street.

### Thredz and McKay House

In 1910, the building facing 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue was a General Store owner by Messrs Pitts and Hankey. Hankey went away to WWI and JC Pitts, with his daughter Gladys continued to operate the business, which also included the Invermere Post Office. Mr Pitts died in 1935 and his daughter continued to run the store and post office until '954. The building was eventually purchased by Pat Bavin who became interested in the McKay House that sat on the banks of the Columbia River in Athalmer. The house had been built in 1911 for James Lorenzo house had been built in 1911 for James Lorenzo McKay by contractor, Dave Bales. In 1980, Pat Bavin had the house moved to its present site, immediately behind Thredz. Opened in 1981, the building now houses shops and office. Pat Bavin no longer owns either building.

### Village Arts

Built in 1911, this building originally served as a hardware store, known as "Invermere Construction and Supplies Ltd" and was owned by George Bennett and Frank Stockdale. Alex Richie bought out Bennett, eventually selling his shares to Frank Stockdale, who as sole owner renamed the store "Invermere Hardware". In 1945, the store was bought by Stockdale's niece, Joy Bond and her husband Bill, The Bonds sold to Osterloh and Tunnaclyffe in 1953. In 1958 the building was sold to Orr Newton who opened a grocery store. Since 1992, the building has been owned by Tim Strand.

The building on the north side was constructed as a grocery store in 1912 by Mr Goldie Stewart. In

1919, Stewart sold the store to Mr A.E Fisher of Fairmont. Mr Fisher, renowned for his photography, sold groceries but specialized in cameras and film development. F. W. Hillier started to work for Mr Fisher in 1927, and in 1946 purchased the business. The store was subsequently sold to the Kirsch family, the Clow family and the Hromadnik family, all of whom continued to sell groceries, In 1980, the Smith brothers restored the building and opened a gift shop. In 1992 the Village Arts building was purchased by Tim Strand.

### David Thompson and Charlotte Small Statue

