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VICTORIA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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FEBRUARY, 1978

WHO WAS FREEMAN KING?

To most of our members this is an idle question, but it would probably stump most winners of the Freeman F. King Scholarship at the University of Victoria, even if they were born and bred here. To remedy their ignorance, Gracie Bell suggested that each Freeman King Scholar be sent a short memoir of the man in whose name the scholarship was established, describing who he was and what he had done to have his name held in such high honour by the naturalists of Victoria. She also recommended that Yorke Edwards, Director of the Provincial Museum and a Past President of the Society, be asked to write it. Yorke readily agreed, and this splendid tribute to another Past President is the result.

FREEMAN KING, Naturalist

1891 - 1975

Freeman King was a man to remember. In any setting he stood out. He was tall, thin, and straight, with a rough-cut face featuring a wonderfully hooked nose; even in his last years he moved with the vigour of a youth who could hardly wait to get on with life's next adventure. Through most of his years he was to be found in green forest environments where usually he was surrounded by a group of people.

Freeman loved the wild places about Victoria, and he had a deep understanding about how plants and animals in those places lived their lives. Being a born storyteller, he enjoyed telling others what his sharp eyes were seeing and what his sharp brain was understanding. He was a spellbinder, in green places or by a campfire, to people of all ages, but he liked children best, and they loved him as only children can love a grown-up who has not outgrown the wonder, the enthusiasm, the sense of adventure that is part of childhood.

COVER

"SKIPPER" courtesy of the Victoria Press

For many years Freeman was the major force behind the most successful nature club for children in Canada. Victoria's Junior Field Naturalists (part of the Victoria Natural History Society) was envied by naturalists across Canada, but none could duplicate its success because none had a Freeman King. Through his years with his Juniors, and his years before that with the Boy Scouts, Freeman led thousands of youngsters into the green world, and into life, with a delight for exploring the outdoors that none could ever forget.

Freeman was born in England in 1891, came to Canada as a young man, and after some years on the prairie as a cowhand, policeman and homesteader, he came to the Victoria area in 1925, where he soon found himself running camps in the woods for the provincial government. Many Vancouver Island provincial parks were established in those depression years by men in such camps, and many of their trails were made by men working with Freeman. Later he was well known in the Boy Scout movement where he became a Field Commissioner. Then, in the last two decades of his life, his fame as a nature interpreter and park naturalist spread far beyond Victoria and British Columbia. He was a familiar figure in both Thomas S. Francis Provincial Park to which he devoted part of most days, and Goldstream Provincial Park where he was Chief Naturalist every summer. He became famous in those years as a communicator and teacher in wild places. For over a decade the government of British Columbia passed a special Order-In-Council each spring so that Freeman could be hired for yet another summer, for he was long past 65, the age when the law does discourage hiring people.

A long list of people that Freeman helped to understand green places were inspired to make natural science their life's occupation. Many of them took biological subjects at university, often going on for advanced degrees. Now, those who are helped by the Freeman King Scholarships of the Victoria Natural History Society are following in the footsteps of many others helped directly by this remarkable man. Were he here, he would be pleased to help in this way now, just as he helped so many others personally before. And the only return that he would ask is that those helped would learn to really see what they looked at in this green

and living world, and that they really try to understand what they saw. "What is it?" he would ask, pointing to something like a leaf. All he asked was that you tried to find the answer from the leaf. Books were acceptable, but the leaf was the one to believe.

If you have received a Freeman King Scholarship, welcome to the growing list of people who have been helped by Freeman King.

by R.Y. Edwards, 1977

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

In a letter addressed to our president, Michael Gye, Chairman of the Heritage Tree Committee of the Victoria Horticultural Society, seeks our help in looking for people who are enthusiastic about trees.

You may say "Of course I am", but are you prepared to back up that statement? To help what is becoming a heavy workload that has grown beyond the Society, owing to the very successful work done on the Heritage Trees? (To date the inventory includes 10 Heritage areas and 178 individual specimens.)

The most pressing requirements are:

- (1) Someone to take charge of the Inventory.
- (2) Someone to complete maps.
- (3) Help to complete their forthcoming book.
- (4) A Public Relations person.
- (5)&(6) A Vice-Chairman and a Secretary.

Anyone prepared to help with the above or other duties, please get in touch with Michael Gye, 1030 Iris Avenue (479-8525) or Mrs. Virginia Bartkow, 2772 Vantilburg Crescent (478-5320).

Our Society owes a debt to those who are trying to save our Heritage Trees, and our directors hope some members will be able to offer their help.

WHERE ARE "SKIPPER'S" JUNIORS NOW?

by Gail Mitchell

Twenty-two years ago I joined this society as a junior member. At that time the junior meetings were held on Tuesday afternoons, after school, in the Provincial Museum, under the direction of Dr. Clifford Carl and Miss Betty Newton. There we had access to the expertise of the museum staff and spent many intriguing afternoons in the basement of the old museum learning about natural history.

I hadn't long been a member when Freeman King became involved with the Society and took charge of the junior group. He had new ideas and our meetings were changed to Saturday afternoon field trips.

Many of you will know of the great success of "Skipper's" junior group - children learning to appreciate the natural history around them. Hundreds of children have been involved over the last twenty-two years. I know that all of them have benefitted from their experiences with our junior group - from a simple generation of awareness gained from one or two hikes, to a career in a related field. Some of my fellow Junior Naturalists who have accomplished the latter include:

DAVID GRAY - who obtained his Ph.D. in Zoology from the University of Alberta and is now Assistant Curator of Vertebrate Ethology at the National Museum of Natural Sciences in Ottawa. David has done research on wolves and especially musk oxen on Bathurst Island. He has written a number of research papers and given several presentations. Some of you may have read his article on Marmots in Nature Canada. David is one of the directors of the Macoun Club, which is a group of junior naturalists affiliated with the Ottawa Field Naturalists.

Many readers will recognize the name NANCY TURNER, as she has lead field trips and given presentations to the Society. Nancy received her Ph.D. in Botany from the University of British Columbia, specializing in Ethnobotany. Nancy has a number of publications to her credit including a museum handbook entitled "The Food Plants of B.C. Indians".

She is working on further publications with both the Provincial and National Museums of Natural History. She is Vice-Chairman of the Environmental Centre, Secretary of the Thomas S. Francis and Freeman King Parks Board, and has also been a tremendous help in assisting me with our junior group.

ROSS STORY is now an Entomologist working for the Department of Primary Industry in Mareeba, North Queensland, Australia. After obtaining his B.Sc. at the University of Victoria, Ross travelled to Australia, where he worked at the University of Brisbane for four years before acquiring his present position. Ross's special interest is Dung beetles, and he has, in fact, discovered a new species: *Amphistomus storeyi*!

A Reclamation Officer with the Ministry of Mines was a Junior Naturalist with me. He is JOHN ERRINGTON - a modest man with a very impressive set of academic degrees - B.Sc. from the University of Victoria, Masters of Philosophy in Plant Ecology from the University of York, England, and a Ph.D. in Forestry from the University of British Columbia.

After receiving his M.Sc. from the University of Alberta, DAVID ZIRUL worked as a Senior Biologist with a private firm for a number of years. David is now a Land Management Biologist with the Ministry of the Environment. His job involves advising on matters relating to policy in integrated resource management at various levels of organization.

ANDREW HARCOTBE received his M.Sc. in Plant Ecology from the University of Victoria and now has a position with the Resource Analysis Branch of the Ministry of the Environment based in Kelowna. Andrew's brother, RICK is finishing a B.Sc. degree at the University of Victoria.

Consider this information I have given you - I believe it is proof that our aims can be accomplished.

I, myself, have been involved with the leadership of the Junior Group for about six years now and it is time for a change. Nancy and I will be "retiring" this year. Perhaps in a few years, when families and jobs are not so time-consuming, we will again become involved.

I urge the membership of this Society to give its support to a continuing Junior program. Please carry on with Skipper's goal "... to make people realize that they are only one small part of this big, wonderful world."

"FUN WITH LITTLE FISH"

by John A. Mitchell

Every so often, one of those memorable days comes along and such a day was Saturday, February 4th - a day of seining with Dr. Alex Peden, assisted by Grant Hughes.

Meeting at Mayfair Lanes at 9:00 a.m., a dozen of us proceeded to Colquitz Creek, off Burnside Road, under the Island Highway Bridge. To the uninitiated it looked an unlikely spot, the Creek being high and muddy, meandering through an industrialized area. Not to be daunted, Alex and Grant donned waders and plunged in, Alex holding a small dip-net, while Grant operated a battery-powered fish stunner. In no time we had a collection of fish, the species being freshwater stickleback, prickly sculpin, and sunfish.

We were told that on previous trips to this creek, small salmon, trout, and bass had been caught, bringing home the fact that what would appear to be "dead" areas are in reality teeming with various forms of life.

Following a couple of hours of sloshing along the banks of the creek, arrangements were made for us all to meet at 7:30 p.m. at the beach south of Sidney, off McTavish Road, for a session of beach seining at low tide. Our group was somewhat smaller, but the evening was perfect for this form of activity, being mild, a flat calm, and unlimited visibility. The winking navigational buoys, ships lights, and the lights of aircraft approaching the Airport, added to the scene.

Once again Alex and Grant donned their waders, and this time launched their trusty Zodiac, taking the fifty-foot wide seine some 75 feet off shore. Three hauls were made during the period of lowest tide, and each time a wonderland of marine life was exposed. At first glance, the seine appeared to be a mass of seaweed, but on close inspection under the expert guidance of Dr. Alex Peden,

it was observed to be literally teeming with marine life of all sizes - little fish of brilliant green, some with scarlet markings, others of light blues - a whole spectrum of colour. (On the third haul, we even netted a wayward trout, which was promptly returned to the water).

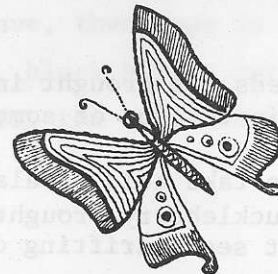
Selected specimens having been placed in an aquarium, Alex then gave us a detailed explanation of our catch, some of the species identified being; showy and ribbon snail fishes, pricklebacks, saltwater sticklebacks, lumpsuckers, tubesnouts, buffalo sculpin and great sculpin.

Truly a great day, and our thanks to Alex and Grant for their considerable efforts, and their patience in answering a host of questions. We departed in a slightly damp state, and full of enthusiasm and anticipation for our next peek into the wonderful world of Marine Biology.

Editor's note:

Owing to the great success of the above trip, Dr. Alex Peden has arranged a meeting in Room 112 in the Provincial Museum at 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, 16th March. This will take the form of a discussion on a proposal for more comprehensive programs on a regular basis. Proposals could include future field trips, lectures, classroom studies, methods for members to involve themselves in observation, etc.

Dr. Peden emphasized that special collecting permits are required for netting fish, issued for research work by the Provincial Museum. Also, that it is illegal to keep salmon, trout or other game or commercial fish for personal use, and it is also unlawful to transport live fish from one place to another without proper authorization.



NURSE LOGS

Beside the forest trails one can see old downed logs that are covered with new growth. These are called "nurse logs" for they are nursing and giving life to many species of plants and animals. Each and all are helping to perpetuate a living forest.

Inside and outside the log you will find life.

Within the log are many little creatures that are essential to life itself. Beetles of several kinds live here under the bark and in the soft wood. Deep within the wood you may find the carpenter ant or, perhaps, the white grub that in time will be a large wood-boring beetle. Down on the moist bottom may be a colony of termites.

Under a piece of loose bark there may be a little salamander waiting and watching for the tiny fly that inhabits a mushroom growing nearby.

When the log has become soft, the fungi move in and send their long fibres along the cells of the wood.

All these inhabitants are "breaker-downers", creating material to rebuild a wonderful world.

On the outside of the log, the lichens have taken hold. Some will be the crustose, some fruticose like the match stick group, and some may be the foliose that seem to be attached to the log in spots.

Many kinds of mosses spread along the surface. As these break down, they form soil with the help of the dust from the air. After the mosses, the poly-pody ferns may take hold and grow, and so make the media in which flowering plants live.

The flower seeds are brought in by the wind, or by a bird, or, perhaps, in the fur of some small mammal.

Now shrubs can take hold - salal with its ever-dividing roots; the huckleberry brought by the birds; the ocean spray, its light seeds drifting on the wind.

Our log is now very much alive. It is soft and pulpy so that the seeds of the conifers and broadleaf trees may find a place to live. Soon they, too, are established. So, gradually, there is a place for shrew or field mouse, for a bird to build its nest, for bees and other insects to search for and find food and shelter.

After years, the old log has slowly vanished and a new living world has taken its place. Nothing is wasted, or lost. It has gone back to where it came from, back to a green and living world that man himself may survive.

Freeman King (1968)

"Skipper" wrote many articles for the "Naturalist" of which the above is one culled from the December issue, 1968. They are all worth re-reading and some that can be recommended to new readers are:-

- (1) "Spring Flowers" February and March 1975
- (2) "Thomas S. Francis Park" October 1968
- (3) "New Forest" November 1968

A SEA DUCK

by Robert C. Harbach

The scoter scoots with the coots thru the surf,
 While I, a clod of the sod, cuff the turf
 With my boots, and spy with telescope eye,
 Tracing their racing, a line in the sky;
 Or forming a "v", they fly o'er the sea.
 In flight or alight, the sight gets to me.
 A bevy bevels to dip, then to dive
 To watery grave, then pops up alive.
 Bright heads, black bodies make me their doter,
 Lovely in life, the Common Surf Scoter!

EDITORIAL

This issue is dedicated to the memory of "Skipper", and we are sure that old and new members alike will appreciate the gesture.

The AUDUBON FILM on 10th and 11th March will show "Queen of the Cascades". Charles T. Hotchkiss filmed many of the wildlife to be seen in Mount Rainier Park, and also the 14,410 foot climb to the summit, through spectacular scenic Ingraham Glacier ... A treat indeed!

The GENERAL MEETING on 14th March will have Leon Pavlick speaking on Plant Ecology, and showing scenes from the Okanagan. Those going to this district this summer will have the opportunity to become well primed on what to look out for. (There is a possibility of a bus tour to the Okanagan in May).

As you can see from Gail Mitchell's article, she is retiring in May from the Junior Naturalists. We shall be hard put to find someone to replace her dedication in carrying on Skipper's work among the young.

Dr. Alex Peden, who is Curator of Marine Biology, has been encouraged to arrange a meeting on Thursday, March 16, to discuss the possibility of future meetings, lectures and field trips in this subject.

BRITISH COLUMBIA HERITAGE TRUST

It has been announced by the Ministry of Recreation and Conservation that the British Columbia Heritage Trust will commence work shortly. The purpose of the Trust is "to support, encourage and facilitate the conservation, maintenance and restoration of heritage property in the Province." We hope that "property" will mean wildlife habitat as much as man-made buildings. If all the "Heritage" buildings in the world were to be demolished, it would not affect our life, except aesthetically. But natural habitats are necessary for the continuance of our life on earth.

An immediate endowment of one million dollars has been provided from the Lotteries Fund.

THE NEHRING LEGACY

Letters on the Society's policies by interested members will always be welcomed by your editor.

Margaret Wainwright's letter in the December issue is a case in point. If other members would let their views be known through the medium of the "Naturalist" then our directors would find it easier to make decisions.

The following letter is an answer to Margaret's from A.R. Davidson:-

"My personal viewpoint (and I am one of many) is that Mr. Nehring left this legacy to the Society for the benefit of the Society itself. This is the view, too, of Rob McKenzie-Grieve, who knew Mr. Nehring well and who introduced him to the Society, so that he joined, and attended some of the meetings.

Our revenue from dues, the Audubon Lectures, and the interest on our net funds should be placed in the general account and used to put the Society into a healthy financial position and enable it to expand. The net capital of around \$61,000 should be held intact for the time being, and not used for research. We all know the Federal and Provincial Governments and Canada's Universities are spending millions on environmental studies and other projects of a similar nature.

Raising the club dues again will only reduce our membership and possibly our revenue. There is no need. Last year the balance at the bank increased by \$2804, and the previous year by \$2977. We are a non-profitmaking society. Let us at least use the interest to increase our membership, enlarge the "Naturalist", and advertise our existence."

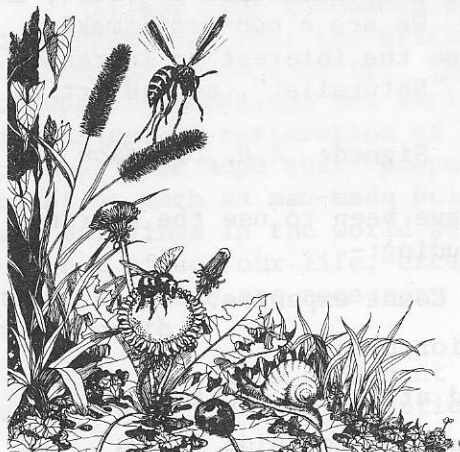
Signed: *A.R. Davidson*

Other suggestions have been to use the Nehring money in various ways, including:-

- (1) To pay the Bird Count expenses.
- (2) To help the Junior Branch.
- (3) To erect a blind at Quick's Bottom.
- (4) To preserve a part of Lochside Drive.

JANUARY BIRD RECORD

<u>No.</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Area Seen</u>	<u>Observer</u>
1	Wh. Thr. Sparrow	1	Ascot Pond Area	J.B. Tatum
2	Wood Duck	1	Quick's Bottom	Mike Bentley
2	Gadwall	1	" "	"
1	Townsend's Solitaire	2	Mystic Lane	Helena Rocchini
2	Slate. Juncos	2	1827 McKenzie	Wm. F. Stoba
4	Redhead	2	Portage Inlet	Vic Goodwill
1	Rhinoceros Auklet	2	Ross Bay	L.G. Roberts
1	Y/B Sapsucker	3	Lovers' Lane	Ken Walton
1	Saw-whet Owl	3	" "	" "
3	Golden eagle	5	Goldstream R. Estuary	Tom Briggs
1	Glaucus Gull	7	Goldstream Park	R. Satterfield
1	Ringbill Gull	7	" "	V. Goodwill
1	Spotted Sandpiper	11	Whiffen Spit	"
1	Anna's Hummingbird	15	Florence Lk. Rd.	Gwen Briggs
3	Brow-headed Cowbirds	17	McIntyre Road	Vic Goodwill
12	Rock Sandpiper	19	Cattle Point	E. & A.R. Davidson
5	Trumpeter Swan	19	Tod Creek Flats	" "
34	Band-tail Pigeon	20	2700 Arbutus Rd.	Mary Clark
1	Peregrine Falcon	22	McMicking Point	J.B. Tatum
1	Goshawk	23	Beacon Hill Pk.	B. & M. Meikel- john
1	Eur. Green Teal	26	Esquimalt Lagoon	G.W. Calvert
2	Skylarks	26	Victoria Airport (International)	Doug Turnbull

MARCH PROGRAMME

TUES.	MARCH	7	Executive Meeting.
FRIDAY	MARCH	10	AUDUBON FILM: in Newcombe Auditorium. 8:00 p.m. Speaker Charles T. Hotchkiss. "Queen of the Cascades".
SAT.	MARCH	11	
TUES.	MARCH	14	GENERAL MEETING: in Newcome Auditorium. 8:00 p.m. Speaker Leon Pavlick. Plant Ecology with scenes from the Okanagan, Thompson Plateau, Keremeos and Osoyoos.
THURS.	MARCH	16	Room 112, Provincial Museum. 8:00 p.m. (See Editorial).
SAT.	MARCH	18	ORNITHOLOGY: Leader Mary Winstone. Meet Mayfair Lanes 9:00 a.m. or Witty's Lagoon Carpark 9:30.

JUNIOR PROGRAMME

WED.	MARCH	1	NATURE FILM. Room 112, Provincial Museum. 4:00 p.m.
SAT.	MARCH	4	AFTERNOON HIKE. Francis Park. Meet Mayfair Lanes - 1:30 p.m.
WED.	MARCH	15	INDIAN BASKETRY. Dr. Andrew Laforet. Room 112, Provincial Museum. 4:00 p.m.
SAT.	MARCH	18	TO SEALAND - to learn about marine animals. Meet Mayfair Lanes, 1:30. COST: Approx. Children \$1.50 Adults \$2.50
WED.	MARCH	29	Room 112, Provincial Museum. 4:00 p.m. What is an Ecological Reserve? Jim Pojar answers the question.
SAT.	APRIL	1	SWAN LAKE NATURE CENTRE. Meet Mayfair Lanes, 1:30 p.m.

MAYFAIR LANES CARPARK

is on the corner of

RODERICK & ASH