

“Hatley Park Through the Seasons” by Maurice Robinson and Beverley Hall and Royal Roads University

I decided to review a book that is mostly one of photographs, and what amazing photographs they are. I thought club members should be introduced to a historic gem in our neck of the woods that is definitely worth a visit. The place is Hatley Park in Colwood just outside Victoria. The castle and gardens were built by James Dunsmuir, a coal baron from the Island. His father had found the coal mines in the Nanaimo area and made a fortune. The house has morphed from a residence to Royal Roads Military College and into Royal Roads University over the last more than one hundred years. The book shows parts of the garden in each of the four seasons. Along with the photographs and scattered throughout the book are poems and words of wisdom from famous writers as well as thoughts from students who attended school there.

The first time I went there, I didn't know what to expect. There was no charge then. You just parked and walked around the site. The castle and grounds were magnificent. Once my sister and I had looked around the gardens close to the house, we went down to the next level and discovered the Italian garden. Then we walked out from the side of the house and found the rose garden. After that we went through a gate and discovered an amazing Japanese garden which had beautiful stone-edged pathways and a large assortment of trees and shrubs. We then discovered another gate which led to a cutting garden and greenhouses. The garden just seemed to keep on going and going.

The garden was designed by two American landscape architects who were students of Olmsted, the architect who designed Central Park in New York. The Japanese garden was designed by a noted Japanese park designer from Yokohama who also designed the Japanese rock garden at Butchart Gardens.

Now you are charged to see the grounds. \$9.75 per person. \$8.75 for seniors. You can also get a guided tour, which will cost more, and get a tour of the castle for an additional amount. There are about 15 kilometers of walking trails within the park that encompass old growth forest, a Garry oak meadow and a wildlife sanctuary. I highly recommend it! This book was donated by one of our club members.

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