

Sites:

ROUTE ONE

1-3 ESQUIMALT GORGE PARK, FOUR MILE HOUSE, BEAUMONT AVENUE

The lovely Esquimalt Gorge Park (entry off Tillicum Road) offers superb views of the Gorge waterway and the former site of the Rodd Brothers' boat shed at 355 Gorge Road West, now home to the Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club. Emily rented a cabin from the Rodds in the late 1920s and, in *The Heart of a Peacock*, recounts a sketching trip in a houseboat along the Gorge, accompanied by her Javanese monkey, Woo, and four griffon dogs.

In *Hundreds and Thousands*, Emily describes visits with her sister Alice to the Japanese Tea Garden, destroyed in 1941, now being recreated in the park. On the other side of the waterway, at 750 Gorge Road West, now the entrance to Adelaide street, Emily first saw the "Elephant" as "it sat, grey and lumbering like an elephant, by the roadside". Hugh McAlpine's daughter remembers seeing a little old lady coming up the driveway: it was Emily Carr. Her father was quite upset to read that Emily had described his home built concession stand (also used as a trailer) as "a hideous box I got cheap".

In September 1939 Emily rented Mrs. Shadford's shack, in a wooded area next to "Cameron's Wrecking" at 1340 Craigflower Road (now demolished). She made twenty-three sketches and remarks in *Hundreds and Thousands*: "Autumn is in them and a certain lighthearted joy strangely out of keeping with war" [*Complete Writings*, 878]. One of Emily's loveliest paintings, *Happiness*, was probably painted there. Other paintings: *Young Pines and Old Maples*; *Laughing Forest*; *Young Arbutus*; *Three Tufted Tree Tops and Sky*.

Emily's childhood memories of View Royal are evoked in *The Book of Small* in which she recounts two outings, one to Millstream Falls, the other to the Four Mile Roadhouse. Local residents recall seeing Emily painting on the beach at the foot of Beaumont Avenue.

4-12 COLWOOD AND METCHOSIN

Metchosin was the most important of all the sites where Emily painted. She loved to sketch and paint its glorious coastline, dramatic seascapes and skies, quiet woods and farmlands. In Emily's day Metchosin District included the gravel pits at Royal Bay and Braden Mountain in the Metchosin Hills.

4 a,b,c Emily's first camping trip to Metchosin in the "Elephant", May 1934, was to an idyllic location beside Esquimalt Lagoon. It turned out to be a watery disaster of Noah's Ark proportions. The "Elephant" was set down at the foot of Lagoon Road, near the beach. Torrential rain, wind and high tides made life wet and miserable. Emily had the caravan hauled up to the top of Lagoon Road and parked in a dry sunny field owned by a Scottish farmer, Mr. Strathdee. There she sketched "a torn and splintered ridge across the stumps I call the 'screamers'", which was to become the painting *Stumps and Sky*. In September Emily returned to the same spot, did twenty-one sketches and wrote six stories at night.

"Pendray House" ("Havenwood", home to Coast Collective, 3221 Heatherbell Road) is the probable site of a May, 1940 painting trip. Emily had recovered sufficiently from a heart attack to make a two weeks' camping trip, accompanied by a maid, to a site near her beloved gravel pits, discovered by Humphrey Toms. Edythe Hembroff-Schleicher recalled quite clearly "the superb location of Emily's flimsy shack in the enclosed grounds of a proud, aloof manor house near the familiar pits". The painting *Light Woods in Spring* is attributed to this trip.

5 METCHOSIN ROAD – VIEW OF GRAVEL PIT

In June and September 1936 Emily had permission to park the "Elephant" in a small wood above the Producers Sand and Gravel Pit, Metchosin. In *Hundreds and Thousands*, Emily describes her struggles to paint the gravel pits and the beauty of space: "The predominating characteristic here, perhaps, is space, the great scoops out of the gravel pits, the wide scoop of sea" (*Complete Writings*, 827). Dola Acres, daughter of Bert Parker (who took over from Spencer, superintendant of the gravel pits) remembers that Emily Carr's caravan was parked up in a grove of trees on the hillside. Emily felt that she had done good work during this last camping trip in the "Elephant". Paintings: *Above the Gravel Pit*; *Reforestation*; *Young and Old Forest*; *Rebirth*; *Windswept Trees*; *Swirl*; *Juice of Life*.



Follow in the footsteps of Emily Carr, from the Gorge Waterway to Port Renfrew where the rain forest meets the sea. Visit the sites where she sketched and painted during the most productive period of her life (1927-1945). Read her letters and literary works which help to identify these sites. Remember that in Emily's lifetime the West Shore was still a densely forested, wilderness area and a popular holiday destination for Victorians.

Emily's sketching trips were limited mainly to the outskirts of Victoria. For fifteen years she camped out in cabins, tents, log huts, tool sheds, lighthouses, boathouses and garages. She told Ira Dilworth that the most outstanding event in her life was: "the buying of an old caravan trailer which I had towed to out-of-the-way corners where I sat self-contained with dogs, monk and work – Walt Whitman and others on the shelf – writing in the long, dark evenings after painting". Emily purchased the "Elephant", as she called the caravan trailer, from Hugh McAlpine in July 1933. The "Elephant" spent its first winter "bedded down opposite the Four Mile House in a quiet pasture". In May 1934 the "Elephant" was towed to Metchosin where it remained at different locations until 1938 when Emily sold it.

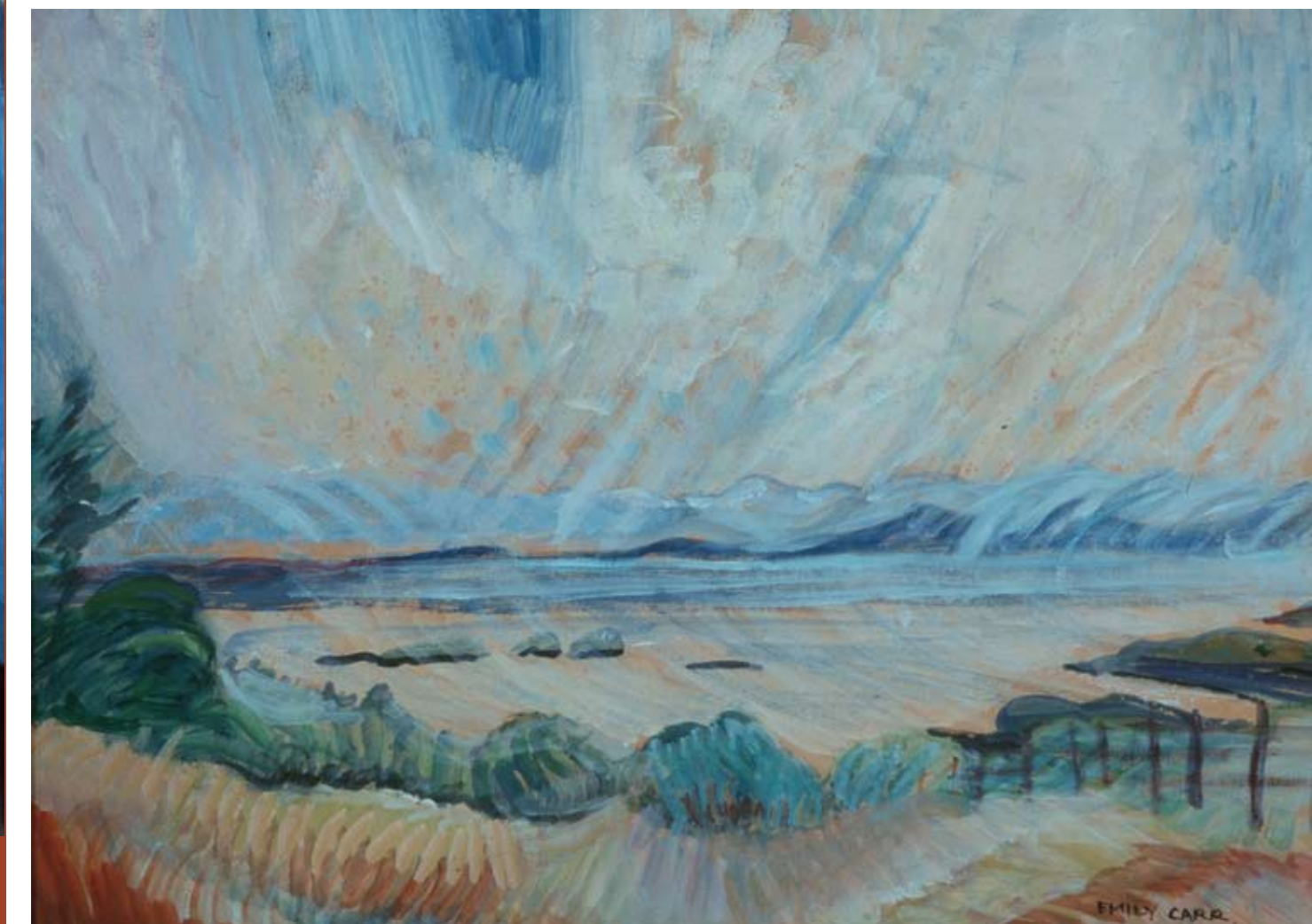
Practical considerations influenced the choice of sites: the "Elephant" had to be hauled to a level roadside site. Friends' farms in Metchosin often served as a location. Emily painted quite ordinary scenes: a landscape near a road, a small wood above a gravel pit, logged over hillsides viewed from Metchosin Road. Edythe Hembroff-Schleicher, a young painter friend who often accompanied Emily on painting trips, writes: "What people do not realize is that Emily could sit in front of a clump of trees and paint a forest". Emily's



imagination transformed an everyday site into a lyrical evocation of the regenerative powers of nature. Later, space and sky, particularly in her Metchosin paintings, were to add a metaphysical dimension to her art.

Emily Carr did not like to date or give titles to her paintings. For approximate dates and titles, consult Doris Shadbolt, *The Art of Emily Carr*, Vancouver/Toronto/Berkeley: Douglas & McIntyre, 1987. For camping trips, see Edythe Hembroff-Schleicher, *Emily Carr: the Untold Story*, Saanichton, B.C. / Seattle: Hancock House, 1978. Local historians and residents have furnished details about sites and anecdotes about meeting Emily Carr. See Maureen Duffus, *Old Langford*, Victoria: Town and Gown Press, 2003. Dennis Minaker, *The Gorge of Summers Gone*, Victoria: Desktop Publishing Ltd., 2005.

All references to literary works are to the omnibus edition, *The Complete Writings of Emily Carr*, Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1997; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997, unless otherwise stated.



TOP PHOTO: Emily Carr in her caravan "Elephant" at the southwest end of Esquimalt Lagoon, May 1934. Photo by Mrs. S.F. Morley. (Image d_03844 courtesy of Royal BC Museum/BC Archives.)

CENTRE PAINTING: Above the Gravel Pit, 1936. (Image courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria)

BOTTOM PAINTING: Lagoon at Albert Head c. 1940. (Image courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria)

COVER PAINTING: Blue Sky, 1936. (Image courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria)

Cartographer: Rob Struthers

Design & Layout: Noreen Dennis

Author: Elaine Limbrick

ISABEL TIPTON

GRETA RUTH

DAVE KING

BONNIE JOSEPHSON

MICHAEL HOLMES

MARGORY GARDNER

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Emily Carr



A GUIDE TO
ARTISTIC & LITERARY SITES
ON THE WEST SHORE





Spring n.d. (Image courtesy of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria.)



14 KAPOOR REGIONAL PARK RESERVE

GALLOPING GOOSE REGIONAL TRAIL

SOOKE BASIN

6-7 ALBERT HEAD LAGOON, WITTY'S LAGOON

Emily's stay in her caravan trailer at Albert Head Lagoon in June and September 1935 was to result in some of her finest paintings. She roamed over the beaches and through the woods. On June 15, 1935, she wrote in *Hundreds and Thousands*: "This is a place of high skies, blue and deep and seldom cloudless.... Everything is eternally on the quiver with wind". [*Complete Writings*, 789]. The magnificent seascapes and skies of this period reflect a dominant metaphysical theme. Paintings: *Overhead*; *Seascape*; *Strait of Juan de Fuca*; *Sky*; *Lagoon at Albert Head*; *Sea and Sky* (Emily's last gift to Ira Dilworth). Other landscape paintings of Metchosin: *Metchosin*; *Metchosin Glen*; *Abandoned House in Metchosin*; *A Rushing Sea of Undergrowth*; *The Pine Tree*; *Edge of the Forest*; *Scorned as Timber*; *Beloved of the Sky*; *Loggers Culls*.

8 HAPPY VALLEY ROAD – JUNCTION WITH LINDHOLM ROAD

In *Growing Pains*, Emily describes her last trip to Metchosin in the spring of 1942. Her sister Alice and a friend drove out to Metchosin and left Emily in a clearing off Happy Valley Road. Emily exulted in the sights and sounds of spring and compared herself to an old, maimed goose left on the ground but still able to honk with joy as the wild geese flew overhead. Emily asked Ira Dilworth to use her painting *The Clearing, Happy Valley* as the tailpiece to her autobiography, *Growing Pains*. The site of the painting, according to local residents, was probably the old Field farm.

9 ROCKY POINT ROAD – JUNCTION WITH TAYLOR ROAD

"Glengarry" farm on Taylor Road belonged to Dr. Jones, a Victoria surgeon, whose wife often visited Emily Carr

in James Bay. Emily parked the "Elephant" in a field near Taylor Beach. One can still see the original barn and outbuildings which figure in the painting *Mrs. Jones' Farm*.

10 ROCKY POINT ROAD – JUNCTION WITH TISWILDE ROAD

Emily camped at Maude McVicker's farm "Tiswilde", whose woods inspired the painting *The Little Pine*, shown at the Group of Seven's exhibition at the Art Gallery of Toronto in April 1930. Mr. and Mrs. McVicker are portrayed as the constantly battling couple in Emily's short story "He", "She" and the Ram" in her book *This and That*.

11 ROCKY POINT ROAD – JUNCTION WITH LOMBARD DRIVE;
12 HANS HELGESEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

As a child, Emily Carr summered with her sisters at the Helgesen farm. In *This and That*, Emily recalls fifty years later the scent of Metchosin petunias drifting up to her as she sat in a rocking chair on a warm summer's night on the balcony of "Sherwood" house. The present Lombard Drive was actually the driveway to the Helgesen's house. The elementary school was built on a section of the farm land.

13 EAST SOOKE REGIONAL PARK

Members of First Nation Beecher Bay Band recall seeing Emily Carr sketching on the beach. We know that Philip Amsden rented a cottage at Beecher Bay and Emily visited him there on October 14, 1933. She found the site to be "lovely, forsaken, free and wild".

14 KAPOOR

The well known photograph by Nan Cheney of "Emily Carr on the Ferry Pier Leaving to Paint at Kapaor, North of Victoria, summer 1930" was taken on the Vancouver dock. Emily would have travelled on the old CNR line (now the Galloping Goose Regional Trail) from Victoria to Leechtown, then hopped onto a speeder (a rail car for transporting logging crews and supplies) to the Kapaor Lumber Company Mill, a stop on the CNR line at Sooke Lake on the way to Cowichan Bay. Kapaor burned down that same year. There is no access by car to the Kapaor Regional Park Reserve.

15 WHIFFIN SPIT

One painting exists of Whiffin Spit, just beyond Sooke, now home to the world famous Sooke Harbour House hotel and restaurant, whose owners have created an "Emily Carr" room.

16 MALAHAT FARM, 2675 ANDERSON ROAD

The Malahat Farm is a heritage retreat built in 1912 on Anderson Road, off the West Coast Road, just before Shirley. A Miss M.E. Carr signed the register on July 5, 1920.

17 PORT RENFREW

In August 1929 Emily Carr sailed in a steamer up the west coast to Port Renfrew. Emily was dismayed to see the abandoned white settlement but thrilled to discover a thriving Indian village. Some of her sketches of Port Renfrew are in Doris Shadbolt's book *The Sketchbooks of Emily Carr: Seven Journeys*.

ROUTE TWO

18 HIGHLANDS – MILLSTREAM ROAD TO CALEB PIKE ROAD

In *The Book of Small* Emily Carr describes a childhood visit to a pioneer homesteader, John H. Scafe, who built a house on Long Lake (now McKenzie Lake). She relates in *The Heart of a Peacock* how she rented a hunter's cabin for the month of June, probably after 1923. Emily loved the silence, the wilderness, the wonderful bird life which still characterize this beautiful remote area. There was one unpaved road which led into the Highlands – the present Millstream Road. Emily probably ventured as far as the Caleb Pike Ranch (now part of Gowlland Tod Provincial Park), purchased by William Cuthbert Holmes in 1912. His son, Major Henry Cuthbert Holmes became a great collector of Emily Carr's paintings.

19 FLORENCE LAKE

Florence Lake is situated off the Trans Canada Highway, just before Goldstream Provincial Park. Hazel Olson (Scafe) in her unpublished Memoirs remembers Emily Carr sketching and painting around the lake.

20 LANGFORD – GOLDSTREAM PROVINCIAL PARK

In *The Book of Small*, Emily recounts tales of the early days of Langford, as told to her by Mrs. Lewis, daughter of Captain Langford. Her first camping trip to Goldstream Park in September 1931, accompanied by Edythe Hembroff-Schleicher, was a happy one. Edythe remembers how they squeezed into a "miniature ramshackle garage flush with the highway" and had to walk a mile to the park, laden with art gear and "tracked by panting griffon dogs and an indignant monkey".

Emily made many sketches and oil paintings of the giant cedars of Goldstream Park and later, in her journal, tried to express the deeply religious feelings that the trees and the deep woods aroused in her: "Go out there into the glory of the woods. See God in every particle of them expressing glory and strength and power, tenderness and protection. Know that they are God expressing God made manifest ... See God in it all, enter into the life of the trees." [*Complete Writings*, 675]

Emily's second trip to Goldstream Park was in mid-August 1933. She had just bought the "Elephant". One of her tenants, Henry, the mentally handicapped brother of Frederick Brand, came with her. The "Elephant" was hauled from Victoria, Emily and Henry riding in the hauler's truck. They stopped at a level spot near the road at Langford Flats, not far from the ice cream and pop stand. Henry slept outside under the tent awning, but the wet weather made life miserable so Emily sent him home after two weeks. Visitors to the park came and gawked at Emily and her four dogs, a monkey, and a rat. She made friends with Mrs. "Pop Shop", the concession stand vendor, and they went for nightly dips in Goldstream River. Emily describes her site: "Mount Finlayson is on one side of us and a nameless sheer rocky cliff on the other. The Goldstream Flats are a narrow lowness where Goldstream babbles its way to the Saanich Inlet on Finlayson Arm" [*Complete Writings*, 692]. In her Goldstream sketches Emily concentrated on the individual trees, not the forest. Consequently paintings – such as *Trees*, *Goldstream Flats*; *Old Tree at Dusk*; *Red Cedar*; *Wood Interior*; *Trees in Goldstream Park* – all focus on the individual form of the tree. The constant rain and early nightfall led Emily to view the site as a dark, desolate winter place. Alone in the forest she writes in her journal: "I am not afraid exactly but it's creepy". [*Complete Writings*, 695]

Emily's last painting trip to Langford was in June 1939. Her friends had found a cottage for rent on a fifteen acre farm, the site of the "Old Pond House", on Millstream Road. Emily called the cottage "Rat Hall" and a well-known photograph shows her sitting on the steps of "Rat Hall" with Flora Hamilton Burns. Although the house and farmland have disappeared, the present Larkhall Road gives a clue as to the location. Paintings: *Yellow Moss*; *Roots*; *Langford B C*; *Plumed Firs*; *Chill Day in June*.



Emily Carr and Flora Burns on the steps of "Rat Hall" (Image c_05235 courtesy of the Royal BC Museum, BC Archives)

21 HUMPBACK ROAD – MOUNT BRADEN

In May 1932 Edythe Hembroff-Schleicher's father drove her and Emily along the Humpback Road to a spot where they could scramble up to a hunting lodge on Mount Braden owned by Maude McVicker. Mount Braden is now part of the Sooke Hills Wilderness Regional Park and off limits to the public. Many of Emily's so-called "rain forest" paintings originated from sketches made during this camping trip into a wilderness area. Paintings: *Distant Hillside*; *Forest Landscape*; *Forest Interior*; *Grey*.