

Metchosin **on Victoria's West Shore**

The agricultural community of Metchosin is one of Vancouver Island's oldest. Tucked away between Victoria and Sooke on the southern tip of Vancouver Island, it has been farmed since the mid 1800's.

In the village, historic sites of interest include the Metchosin Schoolhouse and St. Mary's church. Built in 1871, the one-room schoolhouse was one of B.C.'s first schools. Now one of the province's smallest museums, it contains a fascinating array of area artifacts and photographs. The tiny church, built in 1873, nestles in a churchyard full of history, and in spring, wild fawn lilies. A tour of the churchyard introduces one to the names of many of the area's pioneer families. A short distance from the village, down at the end of Taylor Rd. there are earthwork fortifications - evidence of Spanish landings in the 1790's.

The name "Metchosin" originates from the Ka-Ky-Aakan word "Smets-shosin". This first nations tribe lived in the area and had a summer camp at William Head. Since 1974 Metchosin has been home to Lester B. Pearson United World College of the Pacific, a unique facility dedicated to "educating leaders for a changing world". It's goal, to promote peace through understanding, yearly brings 200 young people from over 70 countries to live, study and work together. The college is one of 10 such institutions located all around the world. Its beautiful west-coast setting makes it well worth visiting.

Metchosin is an outdoor and nature lover's paradise with many trails, beaches, and parks, including The Galloping Goose, a 56 km hiking and riding trail which was once a rail line. For birders there's a variety of forest, meadow, and seashore birds at Witty's Lagoon Park - a bird sanctuary, and Matheson Lake Park - a great place to hike or swim. Ocean beaches, where eagles, seals and otters may be spotted, include Witty's beach, Taylor beach and Weir's beach. If you're interested in fishing there's Pedder Bay Marina and a number of independent charter businesses. For golfers there's Metchosin Golf & Country Club, Olympic View Golf Club, and Green Acres par 3 driving range. For divers Metchosin even boasts a marine park, Race Rocks Marine Ecological Reserve.

At the hub of the community you'll find the Metchosin Country Store (the old general store with a new twist), the My-Chosen Cafe restaurant, several gift shops, and other services. At the main intersection stands the Metchosin Community Hall in which a variety of events are held including Scout and Brownie meetings, wedding receptions, dances, art & craft shows, dog training classes, and many community meetings some of which are very lively affairs.

Just down the road is the Metchosin Fire Hall and on our municipal grounds there's the cricket pitch, the Pioneer Museum, and the Pony Club riding ring. Throughout the community a number of very talented artists and craftspeople have studios where you can find pottery, jewelry, stained glass, hand crafted furniture, fabric art, paintings, and carvings. In the spring, summer and fall the Metchosin Farmers' Market has lots of fresh fruit and vegetables as well as delicious home baking and jams.

Other events include "Fired Up" an outstanding pottery art exhibition held in May, the Metchosin International Summer School of the Arts held at Pearson College in July, the Metchosin Sheep Dog Trials in late July, Metchosin Day (our little country fair) and St. Mary's Blackberry Festival in September, The Metchosin Gift Show & Studio Tour in November, and in December the students of Pearson College give a concert at the Community Hall. From September to May there are monthly concerts at St. Mary's Heritage church and the Community Hall holds craft fairs in March, October and November. As you can readily see, Metchosin is a vibrant and engaging place to visit.

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Visits:

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