

Tour focuses on history of local cemetery and those buried there

Tour delves into area's past

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If you're not too afraid, members of a local ghost-hunting group welcome you to join them one night this weekend while they wander around some of the oldest gravesites in the province.

And really, you have no reason to be afraid.

This time, the Shadows of Manitoba won't be investigating a potentially haunted cemetery.

Instead of attempting to document evidence of the spirit world, the paranormal investigators are going to look into Manitoba's history at the Kildonan Presbyterian Cemetery on John Black Avenue.

The last resting place of many of the Selkirk Settlers, it's one of the oldest cemeteries in the province, established in 1851.

Alfonse Granger, one of the leaders of the Shadows group, said its members are just as passionate about discovering and preserving historical sites in the province as they are investigating the paranormal.

The Cemetery Crawl will take place Sat., Sept. 13 at 7 p.m. The tour will focus on the history of the cemetery, the Selkirk Settlers who are buried there and the Old Kildonan Presbyterian Church, a provincial heritage site which sits in the midst of the graveyard.

The tour is also a fundraiser for the restoration of the church building.

"It will take approximately \$2 million to restore this building the way it should be," said Richard Graydon, an elder at Kildonan Community Church who will be the tour guide.

The old church is under the care of the new one, located beside the cemetery. Sharon Granger, one of the leaders of the Shadows group, stressed the importance of making the public aware of local history.

"Winnipeg's history is beginning to disappear," she said. "I love our history, and I'm just learning our history."

Granger didn't know the old church or graveyard existed until about a year ago when she happened to stumble upon it.

She and some other paranormal enthusiasts were having a meeting nearby and decided to walk through the gate and check it out one night last fall. Some of them went into the old church building to

look around.

That's when Graydon and Granger met. Graydon, who lives near the cemetery, said his neighbour called him to tell him there were lights on in the building. So he walked over with a flashlight to see what was going on.

"And that's the beginning of our friendship," Granger said with a laugh.

Graydon said people can expect to learn on the tour about prominent people who rest in the graveyard and how the

church was established.

Among those buried at the church is the late Rev. John Black, the first resident Presbyterian minister in Western Canada who came to Kildonan in 1851, several decades after the arrival of the first Presbyterian settlers from Scotland.

The tour will take about 1 1/2 hours and costs \$10. For tickets, call 255-3584.

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Alfonse and Sharon Granger invite you to tour the Kildonan Presbyterian Cemetery with them on Sept. 13.