The following is a submission made to the CBC Contest for the 7 Wonders of Canada

GARRY POINT PARK, STEVESTON, BRITISH COLUMBIA

At the place where water flowing down from the Canadian Rockies to the Pacific Ocean meets the tidal flow from the Gulf of Georgia going up the South Arm of the Fraser River, there is a park named Garry Point. First surveyed in 1824, the park was named in honour of Nicholas Garry, Deputy Governor of the Hudson Bay Company. A space originally occupied by Canada's aboriginal people, Garry Point Park juts out from the historic Japanese fishing village of Steveston, British Columbia. Created by nature and tempered by man, the Park exists because of centuries of erosion of mountain peaks brought to this point by the waters of the mighty Fraser River.

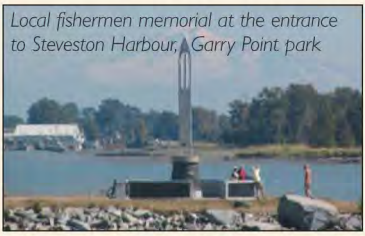
One of the most westerly parts of the Canadian mainland, it is an easily accessible, wild growth, flat terrain with its highest point barely five feet above sea level at high tide. The perpetual Pacific winds provide ideal conditions for kite flying. Children play with their small kites while large men strap themselves to very big kites and take off along the ground and sometimes into the sky.

Walking along the Scotch Pond mooring with its colourful fishing boats on the north side, around the point towards the Japanese Garden with its Cherry blossom trees on the south side, is a uniquely Canadian panoramic treasure. Piercing the distant horizons at all points of the compass peaks of the beautiful Gulf Islands and the coastal mountains serve as an emerald laced necklace around the park. Sunrise, sunset these peaks dance in a collage of bright colors; blue skies, grey skies – they change from razor edges to phantom figures.

The distant majestic Mount Baker dominates the southern horizon as a reminder to us of the importance of being Canadian. Within the micro-climate adventure that is life in BC Lower Mainland, Garry Point is more frequently bathed under blue sky and bright sunlight as rain clouds arriving from the Pacific Ocean pass overhead to bump up against the distant mountains of North Vancouver.

Often there is a clear view of airplanes silently taking off and landing at Vancouver International Airport several miles in the distance to the north. On occasion these distant flying machines have to compete for attention with large and dense flocks of Canada geese passing overhead, which are not so silent.

Local fishing vessels entering and leaving Steveston Harbour and barges towing cargoes between waterfront communities along the BC coastline manoeuvre among giant size purring container ships entering and leaving the estuary. On a foggy day a ship's horn can add that element of mystery to the experience that is Garry Point.



Local fishermen memorial at the entrance to Steveston Harbour, Garry Point park

At the southern entrance to the Park in front of Steveston Harbour a giant size fisherman's netting needle points towards heaven. At its base is a list of the names of local fishing folk who went to work one day and never returned home.

A nautical landmark for ships, domestic and foreign, as well as a place of refuge and contentment for visitors, Garry Point Park is a reservoir of so much that is Canada and Canadian.

Tim Lynch

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