



The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

February 2011 Newsletter

Newsletter Editor: Ron Wilson (rideauarchives@ottawa.ca)

Next Meeting, The Annual RTHS "Bring & Brag" Event.

Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2011
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: Knox Presbyterian Church
5533 Dickinson Street
Manotick

Don't forget Heritage Day in Ottawa to be held in the lobby of City Hall at 110 Laurier Avenue West from 11:30 am to 2pm, Tuesday February 22.

Topic

The annual "Bring and Brag" session will be held at Knox Presbyterian Church, Manotick.

Speakers

RTHS Members are the speakers at this annual event which allows members to show their historical artefacts.

So unearth that old treasure! Dust off your special antique! Dig out that ancient relic! Do some research, spin a tale, share your feelings and memories.... It will be hard to top last year's collection of treasures and tales, but let's try!

2011 Memberships Are Now Due

The Rideau Township Historical Society remains the same educational and entertainment bargain it has always been - only \$10 a year for a single membership or \$15 for a family. To join for 2011, please fill out the at-

tached form (even if your address and phone are unchanged), sign and either pay by cash or cheque at the February meeting, or mail to:

Membership Director
Rideau Township Historical Society
5343 Driscoll Drive
Manotick, Ont

Bring a friend

Light refreshments

From the Pen of the President

Annual Meetings are a time for renewal, to report on the past, and to build for the future. Before reflecting on either of those paths, allow me to express my thanks and appreciation to Bill Schaub for his lecture, which from all reports was excellent. Bill is a member of our Society and President of the Watsons Mill Board. His presentation in another sense was equally gratifying because it speaks to the bond that is developing between the Mill Board and the Historical Society.

The past year was a positive one for the Society. We were privileged to have excellent speakers, an educational field trip, published "Kars On The Rideau, Second Edition" and enjoyed a most productive year at Dickinson House, where we received a record number of visitors.

The Annual Meeting brought changes. Five members of the Executive are leaving either for constitutional or personal reasons, namely Ellen Adamsons, Owen Cooke, Brian Killins, Lucy Martin and Brian Sawyer. Each brought a skill set and perspective to the Executive Meetings that provided energy and direction for our Society. On behalf of the Society, may I express our thanks to them.

Three new members were elected to the 2011 Executive, Pat Earl, Will Pearl, and Colin Wright. We are grateful to them for volunteering their services to our Society and Community. We hope their involvement will be a positive experience for them and we look forward to moving forward under their direction.

This Month

1. The New 2011 Executive
2. From the pen of the President
3. The January Presentation on Central Europe
4. Calling all Home Children
5. News from the Rideau Archives
6. RTHS records

The New RTHS Executive

The January meeting of the RTHS, being the Annual General Meeting of the Society, lead off with the report of the nominating committee on its recommendations for a slate of officers for the year 2011. The following list of candidates were prepared to stand for office. After the report was read there was a call for additional nominations from the floor, but none were forthcoming. Consequently the following candidates were elected. The retiring officers and the new officers then met in executive session on January 31 to effect the turnover of responsibilities and agree to the duties of the new officers.

The following is the result of the process just described.

President: Bill Tupper

Vice President: Coral Lindsay

Immediate Past President: Mark Jodoin

Secretary: Maureen McPhee

Treasurer: Colin Wright

Publications Editor: Will Pearl

Publications Custodian: Ellen Adamsons

Membership Director: Pat Earl

Program Director: Susan McKellar

Communications and Digital Applications: Ron Wilson

Youth Program: Cam Trueman

Watson Mill Presents...

The Naming of Mahogany Harbour

Wednesday, February 23rd, 7:00-8:30pm at the Carriage Shed in Manotick.

Mahogany Harbour is situated at the south end of Manotick and is a familiar name to those who live there. At one time it had a wharf for the river steamers to drop off and pick up goods for the village. It also had a 75,000 bushel grain elevator.

At the presentation in the Carriage Shed, local resident Jimmy Potter will explain the naming of Mahogany Harbour, the beginning of the Manotick Classic Boat Club and perhaps share some of his experiences growing up in Manotick. From classic water craft to local farming, Jimmy has the right answers to your question.

The Dickinson House 2011

Its now February and the Dickinson House will be opening for the 2011 season. In fact we will be off to a very early start as the house will be open on **Family Day, February 21, from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm**. The theme will be genealogy.

We are looking forward to an exciting season this year. The RTHS Dickinson House Committee has been busy over the winter with ideas and inspirations on how to make the 2011 season the best yet. Some of their ideas;

- Craft Days with demonstrations on topics that were a prime necessity for the settlers. Examples include such things as cheese making, heritage trades, and domestic skills.
- Training sessions for volunteers to improve the experience for visitors by providing more history and stories for their enjoyment.
- Improving the communications aspect of the Dickinson House project by developing appropriate advertising and a brochure.

A Plea for Volunteers

Please think about including volunteer work at the Dickinson House in your summer plans. The experience is a rewarding one. Volunteers meet a great variety of interesting people and get to work with colleagues who share interests and good times. It's a lot of fun.



Wool winders, 3rd floor, Dickinson House

Our Trip to East Germany 20 Years After Re-Unification

Presenter: Bill Schaub

Article by Lucy Martin

Many of us grew up in places that felt rather remote. Thanks to freeways, discount airfares, an explosion of TV channels and the Internet, it now seems far easier to explore the world, in person or from a comfortable armchair. But before all that, it was fairly common to gather and enjoy slides shows presented by neighbors who actually went out and traveled. Well, slide projectors have largely been replaced by laptops. But apart from that detail, it was like old times, as 29 RTHS members gathered for the AGM and a detailed show from our own Bill Schaub.

Though he was born and raised in this area, Schaub has strong ties to Germany. His parents, Gerhard Schaub and Hannelore Schaeferlein, grew up there before coming to Canada in 1953. Schaub speaks German and also spent 2 years living with his grandmother in Coburg, in the 1970's.

In the fall of 2010, Bill and his mother, Hannelore, traveled back to see relatives, familiar haunts and new territory. They spent four weeks touring mostly East German towns such as Gotha (Gerhard's birthplace), Zeulenroda (Hannelore's birthplace), as well as Erfurt, Dresden, Bautzen, Wernigerode, Quedlinburg and points in between. The latter part of the trip included visiting Coburg (where his parents grew up and met) as well as Rothenburg ob der Tauber. Coburg is the birthplace of Prince Albert, husband of England's Queen Victoria.

With over 3100 digital images from that trip, Schaub chose a smaller selection to illustrate interesting features of German architecture and culture, especially as related to historical preservation and restoration. Traveling between cities, Schaub also snapped images of well-managed farm land, wood lots and even wind and photovoltaic farms – evidence of Europe's strong interest in resource conservation and alternative energy.



Look closely – this is actually a tarp, maintaining a nice, cohesive look during renovation



Hannelore (Schaeferlein) Schaub and Bill Schaub at the summit in Brocken

Schaub came away with various impressions, including a sense that present-day Germany makes historic and cultural preservation more of a priority than is generally found in Canada. Of course, that wasn't always the case in East Germany, where Schaub says many things “stood still” after WW II. Post-war construction there favored the grim block style so common under Communist control, leaving most older structures in varying states of neglect. But Schaub says this has completely changed since the Berlin Wall came down in 1989. He feels East Germany in particular has benefited enormously from post-unification restoration efforts.

In places, scars of evil and devastation unleashed during WW II have been intentionally retained. Other sites now represent the resurrection of hope and beauty, as with Dresden's Church of Our Lady.

Built between 1726 and 1743, the Protestant church was considered a masterpiece of Baroque architecture. It was reduced to a heap of rubble after allied fire bombings in February, 1945. Dresden's beloved FrauenKirche was painstakingly rebuilt following German reunification. Fire-blackened original stones were used in combination with new blocks. Reconsecration came in 2005, a year ahead of Dresden's 800th anniversary, and the church has attracted many millions of visitors since. Restoration was largely funded with donations from ordinary citizens and former foes across Europe and serves as a powerful symbol of peaceful reconciliation.

Other items of note from the presentation included:

- the common practice of Catholic and Protestant congregations sharing space or even sharing the same church

- each town typically has its own family-run bakeries and pastry shops, which do good business
- farmers' markets are a valued feature of ordinary life
- squash has become a popular vegetable, which was not so in the past
- Some aspects of food and beverage marketing seem less regulated than in North America, but appear safe and wholesome, nonetheless
- Chimney Sweeps in traditional attire, etc. appreciate being asked before having their photo taken.
- cobblestone streets are still common, and are still being built
- cobblestone streets notwithstanding, public transport (in the form of street cars, trams and trains) is much in evidence too
- chain restaurants (Subway, McDonald's) can also be found, but often within buildings that are centuries old.



Confronting a dark era: metal cobblestones embedded in ordinary streets mark where German Jews once lived before being deported and murdered ("ermordet") in the Holocaust. ("Überlebt" means survived.)

Which raises interesting questions about just what historic preservation is, or should be? Something frozen in place, with a particular time-stamp? Or a continuum?

Schaubs summed his presentation up with praise for Germany's ability to integrate new and old, while keeping much of what symbolizes a culturally rich past.



Buildings so close-packed they hold each other up



Time and gravity have yet to overcome these long-enduring structures.

Like so many North Americans who visit Europe, Schaub felt overwhelmed by the breadth and depth of history, culture and craftsmanship found there, inside and out. On parts of the trip he said it seemed impossible to not be within sight of some significant castle, palace or cathedral. A number of cities put that rich heritage to good use, with guides conducting walking tours of the highlights particular to their town. (Might that be worth doing in our historic areas?)

Schaub mentioned he collected supplemental material on his trip (on subjects like half-timber houses and such) which he would be happy to share with interested persons.

With many buildings in continuous use century after century, it was interesting to note that in Germany the emphasis on preserving a historic look generally allows for perfectly modern interior renovations, as well as the use of modern materials for interior and exterior efforts, so long as the core external appearance is maintained.



A city walking tour stops to admire a old-time 'comfort station' (Look out, below!)

Calling All Home Children

Between 1869 and the early 1930s, over 100,000 children were sent to Canada from Great Britain during the child emigration movement. Some were poor, some orphaned, some had parents who could not or did not care for them, some were ill and needed treatment. Shipping them overseas through “homes” or agencies was a solution to the twin problems of too many children in the streets in British cities, and a need for cheap labour in Canada. Generally the boys worked as farm labourers and the girls as mother’s helpers. Some, not all, were treated well. All worked hard. And most felt a certain stigma, and were reluctant to talk about their experiences.

However, that is changing. The Government of Canada declared 2010 to be the Year of the British Home Child, and Canada Post released a commemorative stamp. Books are being written, societies are honouring these children, genealogists are tracking their lives.

One of the homes, Fairknowe Home in Brockville, sent children to the North Gower/Manotick/Kars area, and some of their descendants still live in the area. We want to hear their stories, and are planning a program on this topic for May 2011. If you have a family member who was a home child, or if you know of one, please contact Susan McKellar (susan.mckellar@rogers.com or 613-489-3961) and share your story.

We Are Trying to Find Our Own Past

The RTHS is looking at how we handle the important records of the Society’s activities. Since we are concerned with the historical record of the former Rideau Township and now rural south Ottawa, we should make sure our own records are in order. This is a plea to both members and former and past executives of the Society to check

their desks and offices at home for any papers, reports or documents that pertain to the activities of the Society and which you think should be archived for future reference. These records can be passed to a member of the Executive, handed in at any meeting of the Society, or dropped off at the Rideau Branch in North Gower on Tuesdays between 9:30 am and 4 pm.

News from the Rideau Branch, Ottawa Archives

Hours: The Rideau Archives is open every Tuesday from 9:30 am to 4:30 p.m., and at other times by appointment. (613-489-2926).

The Rideau Branch of the Ottawa Archives is currently offering two displays in the office in North Gower. The first in on the history of the post offices in the former Rideau Township and the second celebrates the 20th anniversary of the Archives itself.

For the post offices there are display boards and booklets with names, pictures, short histories, and a story of the development of mail services in the area. For the Archives there is a short history, list of visitors from afar, a listing of the exhibits over the years and albums of photographs. Please come and enjoy the stories and historical fact of these days gone by.

More Watson’s Mill Day Camps & Winter Fun!”

- Friday February 18th 2011
- Monday February 21st 2011- Heritage Day Camp
- Monday March 14th 2011- March Break Day Camp

Day Camp programs are located in the Carriage Shed community space across the street from Watson’s Mill and are recommended for children ages 6-10. Camps begin at 9:30 and runs through to 3:30 pm. Children will

be provided snacks but are responsible for their own lunch. Program cost, \$25/child, \$5 discount for Watson Mill Members, all proceeds go to support Watson’s Mill programming.

To register or for more information:

- Phone: Cam at 613-692- MILL (6455)
- E-mail: Cam Trueman at watsonsmillprograms@rogers.com
- Or drop in at our Offices, 5524 Dickinson Street (the Carriage Shed across the street from the Mill)

The RTHS gratefully acknowledges the financial support received from the City of Ottawa

RIDEAU TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2011 MEMBERSHIP

Single: \$10.00 _____ Family: \$15.00 _____ Life Member: \$100.00 _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal code: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

I/We prefer to receive notices and news by: e-mail: _____ hard copy by mail: _____

I/We agree that the Executive Committee may use the above personal information for internal Society use. Members' names will not be made available to individuals or organizations outside the Society.

Signature(s): _____

Please submit this form with your cheque payable to **Rideau Township Historical Society**

To: Owen Cooke, Membership Director
Box 56
North Gower, ON K0A 2T0

Note to New Members:

The Society can no longer afford the increasing cost of embossed plastic name tags. We shall provide a paper tag in a plastic holder. If you would like an embossed name tag, we can provide them for \$5.00.

Please indicate here for an embossed name tag at \$5.00 each: _____. Please show number required and names to be embossed: