



# The Historical Society of Ottawa News

ISSN 1207-1838

Issue No. 120

April 2008

## President's Report

By Alan McLay

It has been a long, cold winter in Ottawa with near-record snowfalls. As we come to the end of March, spring still seems far away. Members of the Historical Society, however, have enjoyed an active and successful program of events during the winter months.

Dave Mullington reported that the visits to our Web Site have doubled in the past year, averaging 100 visits a month. In January there were 89 hits, including 6 from Sweden. 119 hits were recorded in February, including visits from the U.S. the UK, Italy and China. Members of the Society are invited to submit stories or events of local historical interest to our Web Master John Reeder for posting on our web site.

The new publicity brochures for the Historical Society of Ottawa were printed in February in time for Heritage Week. Our thanks to Barbara Whitfield for preparing the English text and to Judy Hilliker and Pat Hartney for providing the French translation. The Board agreed to place copies of the brochure in branches of the Ottawa Public Library and also at information booths at special events.

In response to an appeal from the Board at the monthly meeting in February, Susan Moss volunteered to serve as Events Coordinator. She will assist the Board in planning a booth for special events such as Heritage Day and Colonel By Day.

In celebration of Heritage Week George Neville arranged a public lecture on February 17th in cooperation with the Ottawa Public Library. Mr. Doug Stewart, Director General, National Parks, Parks Canada, gave an

illustrated lecture on "The Rideau Canal as Living History" to a small but captivated audience. Also on February 17 Dave Mullington gave a lecture "Seeking Charlotte's Soul," sponsored by Heritage Ottawa. Bad weather unfortunately limited the size of the audience for both events. Heritage Day was held at City Hall on Tuesday, February 19th, this year.

At our February meeting the Board of Directors approved a motion to support the Bytown Museum in their ambitious program of preparing audio tours of the Museum in six languages - English, French, German, Spanish, Mandarin, and Japanese. The Historical Society will assist in sponsoring the English language tour with an annual contribution of \$500 for a period of five years.

In March the Collection Committee had a special meeting to review the status of the collection and the process for deaccession. The Museum staff have completed their review of the collection. Every artifact has been labelled, fully described, and photographed, and the computer records are accurate and up to date. The committee can now proceed to deaccession unwanted items. A work party at the Diefenbunker is

planned to begin the process in the spring.

At our March meeting the Board discussed a request from a member of our Society for a microphone system at our monthly meetings as some members find it hard to hear our speakers. The building is not equipped with an amplifier system. The Board investigated the cost of purchasing an amplifier and microphones and the problems of storing of storing the equipment, setting it up before the meetings, and taking it down afterwards. The Board decided not to invest in an amplifier system at this time, especially as the future of the Routhier Centre is still somewhat uncertain. Members who find it difficult to hear are advised to sit near the front of the room.

Members of the Historical Society had an opportunity to attend a special open house to visit the National Portrait Gallery Vault 34 at the Library and Archives Preservation Centre in Gatineau. Visits were limited to 15 people at a time. One group went on Wednesday, March 19, at 1 p.m.; a second group went on Wednesday, March 26. After the special presentation of selected famous portraits in

*Continued on Page 3*

### **In This Issue:**

<b>President's Report</b> .....	1
<b>Coming Events</b> .....	2
<b>Bytown Museum Report</b> .....	3
<b>Treasurer's Report</b> .....	3
<b>Another Successful 'Show and Tell'</b> .....	4
<b>The Christie Memoranda: Reader Feedback</b> .....	5
<b>St. Onge Presentation</b> .....	5
<b>History of the University of Ottawa</b> .....	6
<b>I Remember Ottawa</b> .....	8
<b>Spring Bus Tour</b> .....	10
<b>HSO/Ottawa Library Co-Sponsor Heritage Lecture</b> .....	10

# The Historical Society of Ottawa

Patron: Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., C.D.  
Governor General of Canada

The Historical Society of Ottawa was founded in 1898 (as the Women's Canadian Historical Society of Ottawa). Its objective is to increase public knowledge of the history of Ottawa by its publications, meetings, tours, outreach and participation in local heritage events and also by its co-operation with the Bytown Museum, a store of artifacts reflecting Ottawa's history from Bytown days and into the present century. Its headquarters is in the Bytown Museum, Colonel By's Commissariat Building, constructed of stone in 1827 and located at 1 Canal Lane by the Rideau Canal between the Château Laurier and Parliament Hill.

## Board of Directors

<b>President:</b> Alan McLay		613-730-2264
<b>Secretary/Treasurer:</b>		
Patricia Hartney	<a href="mailto:pat.hartney014@sympatico.ca">pat.hartney014@sympatico.ca</a>	613-523-6248
<b>Membership:</b> Don Baxter	<a href="mailto:marydon@cyberus.ca">marydon@cyberus.ca</a>	613-745-3430
Don Carrington	<a href="mailto:don.carrington@sympatico.ca">don.carrington@sympatico.ca</a>	613-733-8740
Dave Mullington	<a href="mailto:dmullington@rogers.com">dmullington@rogers.com</a>	613-829-8430
George Neville	<a href="mailto:george.neville@ncf.ca">george.neville@ncf.ca</a>	613-729-0579
Herb Sills		613-231-5535
George Toller	<a href="mailto:grtoller@3web.com">grtoller@3web.com</a>	613-731-0112
Barbara Whitfield	<a href="mailto:pthosteo@rogers.com">pthosteo@rogers.com</a>	613-722-2209

## Committees

<b>Awards</b>	
<b>Collections</b>	Dave Mullington, Dorene Hirsch, Barbara Whitfield
<b>Monthly Meetings</b>	George Toller
<b>Nominations</b>	George Toller, Don Baxter, Herb Sills
<b>Publications</b>	Don Carrington
<b>Tours Coordinator</b>	George Neville
<b>Telephone Committee</b>	Barbara Whitfield, Pat Richardson

**Newsletter Editor:** Paul Reside-[hso.news.editor@sympatico.ca](mailto:hso.news.editor@sympatico.ca)-613-825-3104

All correspondence should be addressed to:

The Secretary, The Historical Society of Ottawa  
P.O. Box 523, Station "B"  
Ottawa, ON  
K1P 5P6  
Society Email: [hsottawa@storm.ca](mailto:hsottawa@storm.ca)

## Coming Events

### Wednesday April 9<sup>th</sup>

Ottawa Regional Historica Fair  
National War Museum  
9:30 a.m. To 3:30 p.m.

### Friday, April 25<sup>th</sup>

Monthly Meeting  
Speaker: Michael Petrou  
"Canadians in the Spanish Civil War"  
Routhier Community Centre  
Cumberland Ave. at Guiges St.  
1 p.m.

### Friday, May 30<sup>th</sup>

Annual General Meeting  
Meeting  
Speaker: TBA  
Routhier Community Centre  
Cumberland Ave. at Guiges St.  
1 p.m.

### Friday, March 28<sup>th</sup>

Monthly Meeting  
Speaker: TBA  
Routhier Community Centre  
Cumberland Ave. at Guiges St.  
1 p.m.

### Thursday June 5<sup>th</sup>

Spring Bus Tour  
Lyn/Brockville  
8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

**A note regarding Membership renewals** - For regular members of the Ottawa Historical Society, your renewal date is shown on your address label on this newsletter. Please check it and see that you are up-to-date. If not, a renewal form is available for you to photocopy on the last page of this newsletter.

**Editor's Note:** Anyone wishing to receive the HSO Newsletter by e-mail may request it by sending your e-mail address to the editor at:  
[hso.news.editor@sympatico.ca](mailto:hso.news.editor@sympatico.ca)

**President's Report**

*Continued from Page 1*

Vault 34, the visitors were given a guided tour of the Preservation Centre building. My thanks to Don Baxter and Barbara Whitfield for organizing the visits and arranging car pools.

Once again George Toller has arranged an excellent program of speakers for our monthly meetings. In spite of the cold weather meetings were well attended. Our thanks to the Telephone Committee for keeping our members well informed about these events. Thanks also to Barbara Whitfield and the volunteers who provided the refreshments at our meetings.

George Neville is planning the Spring Bus Tour on Thursday, June 5th, to visit places of historical interest in Brockville and district. For more information see p. 10

Members of the Historical Society are invited to attend the 6th Annual Ottawa Regional Historical Fair. 150-160 student projects from local SCHOOLS ON TOPICS OF Canadian history will be on display. It will be held at the National War Museum on Wednesday, April 9, from 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.

I regret to announce that Pat Hartney has given notice of her intention to resign from the Board of Directors at the AGM on May 30. She has given us invaluable service as our Secretary—

Treasurer for the past four years. The Board is searching for members who are willing to fill either of these positions. Nomination of candidates may be made to any member of the Board before May 30th.

**Bytown Museum Report**

*by Steve Dezort*



**New Spring Museum Hours – OPEN WEEKENDS!**  
**April 3<sup>rd</sup> – May 16<sup>th</sup>**

The Bytown Museum's new spring hours are Thursday to Monday, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm and by appointment Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

**2008 Temporary Exhibition: Building Blocks and Growing Pains: the lives of children in early Ottawa**

Free weekend April 26th and 27th to launch the exhibit.

From the night shift in a lumber mill to a costume ball at Rideau Hall, explore the desperate and decadent lives of children in urban Ottawa. The exhibit examines children's lives at home, at work, at school (if they were so lucky) and at play in early Ottawa.

Our family Play Space will showcase interactive activities related to the exhibit. For more information, including educational and public programming visit our website. The exhibition runs until November 30th, 2008.

**Treasurer's Report to March 30, 2008**

Source	Revenue
Memberships	\$605.00
Donations	215.00
Pamphlet sales	15.00
Grants (Ottawa: \$3,000; Ontario: \$900)	<u>3,900.00</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,735.00</b>
Expense	Paid Out
Diefenbunker rent (paid to June 30 <sup>th</sup> )	647.34
Membership dues (CHOO & OHS)	116.50
Newsletter production (pre-payment)	400.00
(actual costs of Jan 2008 issue: \$230.46)	
Office supplies	22.54
Photocopying	10.17
Postage	6.20
Post box	64.13
Publications - Publicity Brochure	327.73
Routhier room rental for 2008	103.84
Telephone (paid to June 30 <sup>th</sup> )	
(actual phone charges for 1 <sup>st</sup> 3 months: \$152.58)	340.00
Website (NCF fee & domain name for 2008)	<u>115.90</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,154.35</b>

**Bank Balance as at February 29 2008: \$18,642.54**

*Continued on Page 4*

## Bytown Museum Report

*Continued from Page 3*

### Community Gallery: Celebrating the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the Polish Kashubs in the Ottawa Valley

The exhibition, organized in partnership with the Canadian Polish Congress and the Wilno Heritage Society, will provide an introduction to Canada's first Kashub immigrants and will describe their arrival to this area in 1858.

### New Guided Tour of the Museum + Ottawa Locks Tour

An official Rideau Canal UNESCO World Heritage Site tour offered in partnership with Parks Canada.

Discover the Ottawa Locks, set next to majestic Parliament Hill in the heart of the nation's capital. Let your costumed guide take you back to the early nineteenth century, the time of the Rideau Canal's construction - North America's oldest operating canal system. Tour Ottawa's oldest stone building, now the Bytown Museum and explore the exhibits related to this UNESCO World Heritage Site and experience the stories of the people who made Ottawa what it is today - uncensored, unembellished and unforgettable! This new, 90-minute tour is available in English and French to groups of 10 - 60 people.

### Sunday, May 18 International Museums Day (FREE)

Explore the Museum's permanent and special exhibitions. The Rideau Canal, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, also opens for its 176th year of operation. 10:00 am to 5:00 pm.

The Bytown Museum is launching a six language audio guide of the permanent museum exhibits. It will be a small MP3 player that will guide visitors through the Museum. The guide will be

offered in English, French, Mandarin, Japanese, Spanish and German. The guide will be launched in late spring.

## Another Successful 'Show and Tell'

*By George Neville*

The November HSO meeting scheduled as a 'Show & Tell' event, only the second one in recent years, attracted a nearly full lounge at the Routhier Community Centre with many varied presentations. One particularly diverse collection, yet pertinent to the Ottawa area, was that presented by Jon Church, a new HSO member. He began by showing a 3 gallon stone-ware jug with a cobalt blue floral decoration (made from the finer clay of upper New York state, possibly Ogdensburg, and) used by wholesale grocer and tea merchant H.N. Bate & Sons located at 52 Sparks St. at the time of confederation.



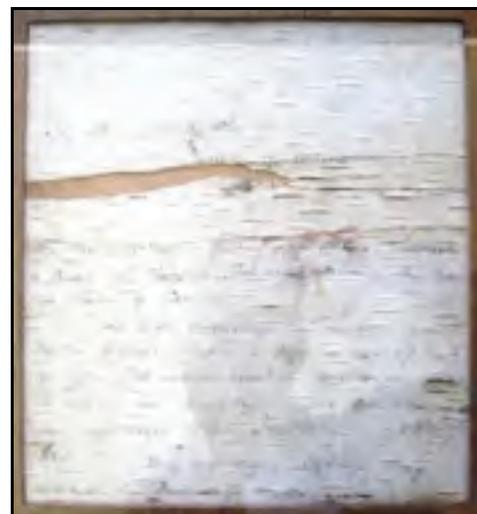
Jon also had an Anglo Saxon Tea tin from the same store, and sheet music entitled Anglo Saxon Year Two Step and distributed with the compliments of H.N. Bate & Sons Tea Merchants.

Next, he displayed a stock certificate for The Ottawa Milling Company dated 1902. It is shown in the 1903 Ottawa Directory to be operating at 17 Duke St. Jon also had a stock certificate for the Ottawa, Rideau Lakes and Kingston Railway Company dated 1914, but he has been unable to learn

if the company ever functioned on-track.

Finally, he produced a large "journal" from the G.E. Housen Hull Wollen Mills located at 100 Brewery St. Hull. The journal is full of hand-inscribed purchases and sales, including many involving Ottawa-based enterprises and individuals for the period Aug., 1900 - May, 1906.

Another interesting and unique exhibit was that presented by long-standing member and HSO Director, George Toller, in the form of a framed white birch bark copy on which was inscribed a commemorative Address from the Raftsmen of the Upper Ottawa River and presented to H.R.H., the Prince of Wales, at Arnprior, Upper Canada, August 19, 1860, by George Bryson Sr. of Fort Coulonge on the occasion of the Royal Visit to Canada. The text of the hand-written inscription in black ink reads as follows:



*"To His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales*

*We the Raftsmen of the Upper Ottawa constitute a Body of Thirteen Thousand Men - The Bone and Sinew of Canada.*

*We take advantage of meeting your Royal Highness upon a Raft respectfully to offer You our heartiest welcome and to express our Loyalty our Devotion and our Affection to the Queen God bless her.*

*May your Royal Highness long remain the Prince of Wales."*

## The Christie Memoranda: Reader Feedback

By George Neville

First, writing as a retired civil engineer with experience of river hydraulics, John Bathurst, HSO Member, provided the following definition: A sny is a side channel of a stream. He pointed out that "ie" was commonie (!) written in olden times where "y" is the contemporary usage. Hence Christie's "snie". He understands the word is a pure Canadianism, being an anglicisation of the French Canadian "chenail" - pronounced shny - itself a slight corruption of the word "chenal" (channel).

Secondly, writing as a genealogist with 60 years' research under his belt, Mr. Bathurst provides the following insight to surname origin: Tyrconnel is a slightly variant spelling of Tirconnel, which was the ancient name for what is today the Irish County of Donegal. As a surname it has barely survived through the past 1000 years. Offhand he doesn't think that he has ever come across a more rare surname than this. He suspects that the very few examples that can be found during the past 300 years may be modern revivals of the name. Thus the Neville theory advanced in the Foreword that "Billy Tyrconnel" was Christie's imaginary friend is very plausible. However, Mr. Bathurst offers a second possibility - that the man was real enough but had for some reason, legal or otherwise, chosen to be known by this name. For example, he might have been born William Donegal (or O Donegal, McDonegal etc). Even Donegal is quite a rare surname, strangely enough. John, however, neither has nor had the time to do any census searching in this matter, but his quick look at the index to the 1880 US census - on the internet - shows a Donegall family in Manhattan, New York. While certainly not implying that it was related to "Billy", the family was headed by an Irish-born shoemaker who was of an age compatible with him

being a surviving son or younger brother.

Thirdly, John notes that it should be remembered that in English writing, particularly manuscript, until relatively modern times, a double-s in a word spelling was conventionally written such that the first "s" was formed somewhat like an "f" but with the lower loop reversed. Try it yourself: it's much easier (more smoothly flowing) to write "ss" in that manner! Alas, one often comes across people who think that the first letter was, weirdly enough, meant to be an "f"!

*George & Iris Neville, who transcribed the two memoranda, which pair they entitled as "Rideau Canal & Bytown Memoranda by Dr. A.J. Christie, Physician to the Rideau Canal Works", were delighted to receive these further insights adding to the fuller understanding of the subject matter and the times.*

## St.-Onge Presentation Draws Capacity Audience

By George Neville

The HSO presentation on Friday, 25th January 2008 by Denis A. St.-Onge, L.Sc., D.Sc., O.C., Emeritus Geoscientist, Geological Survey of Canada, and Emeritus Professor at the University of Ottawa, was packed to the walls by attendees (~65) some of whom were Members of the Arctic Circle and a few professional colleagues.

In his power-point illustrated talk on "The Arctic Passage, Some of the Key Explorers", Dr. St.-Onge presented a very engaging overview of the principal explorers from Frobisher to McClintok and concluded it with some photos and

*Continued on Page 6*

### Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting  
of the  
Historical Society of Ottawa  
will be held on  
Friday, May 30, 2008, at 1 p.m.  
in the  
Routhier Community Centre  
(172 Guigues St. at  
Cumberland Avenue).



*Leah Batisse receiving her Historical Society of Ottawa Award from president Alan McLay for being an outstanding student in the Applied Museum Studies Program of Algonquin College. Details of her work can be found on page 5 of the January issue of the HSO Newsletter.*

### St.-Onge Presentation

*Continued from Page 5*

a short video from an expedition of last summer with 100 passengers on board the polar expedition ship R.V. Akademick Ioffe.

The video captured an on-board hatched ceremony whereby a Canadian flag was sunk within the Passage (really



*This photo of Denis St.-Onge, O.C., was taken in his office at the Geological Survey on Booth St., Ottawa, on the Monday following his talk to the February HSO monthly meeting.*

an east-west combination of routes) near Banks Island at the western entrance of the Passage at 71° 11' N and 120° 55' W as the route was re-christened "The Canadian Arctic Passage" with toasts of champagne and singing of 'O Canada'. Besides Dr. St.-Onge, O.C., Dr. Conrad Grégoire (also a retiree of the Geological Survey of Canada) and Jacques Sirois, a guide and naturalist from Edmonton, who gave the ceremonial speech, the event was attended by Doreen Larsen Riedel, the daughter of (the late) RCMP officer Henry Larsen who sailed the St.-Roch both ways through the Passage in the 1940s, and recent HSO member Jon Church.

### Call for Nominations

The Board of Directors is searching for a member of the Society who is willing to serve as our Secretary in the year 2008/2009. We are also searching for a candidate to serve as our Treasurer in 2008/2009.

## History of the University of Ottawa

*By Alan McLay*

On February 29 Michel Prévost gave us a lively and informative presentation on the history of the University of Ottawa. Michel is Chief Archivist of the University. He outlined its development from its founding in 1848 to the present and illustrated its buildings, leaders, and programs with large reproductions of historic paintings, photographs, and artifacts from the archival collection.

In 1848 Bishop Guigues, the first bishop of Bytown, established the College of Bytown for the education of Catholic boys and young men. The college was housed in a wooden frame building on the grounds of Notre Dame Cathedral. From the beginning instruction was bilingual - English in the morning and French in the afternoon. The students were taught by French Oblates and Irish priests.

In 1852 the college moved to a stone building on Guigues St. and Sussex Ave. (later known as La Salle Academy). In 1856 a new stone building was erected on Wilbrod St. in Sandy Hill on land donated to the college by Louis-Théodore Besserer. There were 9 teachers and 136 students. Additional wings were built in 1860 and 1885.

Father Joseph-Henri Tabaret was the Director of Studies from 1853 to 1864 and served two terms as Superior of the College between 1867 and 1886. He was responsible for the expansion of the college program to include commercial courses and the physical sciences.

The college was renamed the College of Ottawa in 1861. It was also known as St. Joseph's College. In 1866 the title University of Ottawa was first used. In 1903 the college buildings were destroyed by fire. In 1905 Tabaret Hall was built on the site. The architectural plans included a majestic dome modelled on the Cap-

itol in Washington, which was never built. Additional wings were built in 1914, 1922, and 1930.

A new phase of rapid expansion began in 1945 due to a large increase in the student population at the end of World War II. New buildings were erected and new Faculties of Medicine, Common Law, and Pure and Applied Sciences were established.

From the beginning in 1848 the College and later the University had been administered by the Oblate Order. In 1965 under the leadership of Father Roger Guindon the University of Ottawa became a public institution eligible to receive provincial grants. At that time there were 5,000 students on campus. Father Guindon continued as Rector to lead another phase of expansion from 1965 to 1986.

Today there are 35,000 students at the University of Ottawa. About one-third of the students are francophone. There are many international students from around the world. The University has become a multiversity.

Michel Prévost answered a wide range of questions about student life and programs at the University. He presented the Historical Society with a copy of *Un Héritage pour Demain/ A Tradition for Tomorrow*, an illustrated history of the University of Ottawa, and also a colourful banner with the slogan "A Capital Choice." In addition, he distributed bookmarks and gold pins with the coat of arms of the University to all the members of the audience.

### Membership Report

Submitted by Don Baxter.

There are currently 200 active members in the Society

We warmly welcome the following new members who have joined since

Jan.1, 2008:

Myrna and George Collins

Denis St. Onge

Michel Prévost

Douglas Stewart

**VISIT TO THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY – March 2008**

*By Don Baxter*

On March 19th and 26th groups of HSO members visited the Portrait Gallery of Canada, which is housed within the Preservation Center of Library and Archives Canada in the east end of Gatineau.

It has been collecting portraits since 1872, and it is the second oldest national portrait gallery collection in the world, second only to the National Portrait Gallery in London, England. The building is striking and has an unusual style of “realist” (to an engineer) architecture. Perhaps somewhat less than half of the building houses the specialist staff who repair and preserve the artifacts of Library and Archives and the equipment that they work with. The other half is for storage of the paintings, drawings, video and movie tapes, stamps, medallions, books and papers which make up the holdings of the Archives. There are 4 million photos and some 20,000 paintings, drawings and prints, for example.

The exterior of part of the building is



shown in one photo here. It covers two football fields in area. The other shows our guide in front of some of the portraits in one of the many storage vaults. The 4 paintings arranged horizontally are of the Four Indian Kings, which were done in 1710 when the native chiefs visited London, UK, and have recently returned from an exhibition there. Above them are ones of a young John A. MacDonald and of Margaret Atwood.

The day of the first tour was not the most pleasant of weather (how few of this winter’s days have been!). In contrast, the afternoon of the second tour (led by Barbara Whitfield) was a beautiful, sunny day which showed off the glass building to perfection. In both cases however, the visit was



*Our guide in front of a portrait storage area containing works of the Four Indian Kings, which were done in 1710, and portraits of Sir John A. MacDonald and Margaret Atwood*

thoroughly enjoyed by all. Many thanks to our guides: Dominique Hébert, Dr. Katie Cholette and Suzanne Pagé.

**I REMEMBER OTTAWA**

*By E.W. Devlin*

*This is the third and final instalment in a series of reminiscences by Edward W. Devlin, a former resident of Ottawa and a longtime member of the Historical Society.*

**I REMEMBER SIS TOMKINS (Lisgar Collegiate, 1902-1933)**

She was really Miss E.A. Tomkins, but you learned that formality after you left the Lisgar Collegiate. My father just managed to be taught by her. So did Percy Harris, the coal dealer, whose daughter Betty married my brother Bob. Miss Tomkins induced a succession of mutinous young Ottawans to learn algebra, or at least to pass exams in it. I was one of them. To do this she used an exciting mixture of wit and sarcasm and sheer terror, controlling classrooms full of smart-alecks and hellions with a glare, a word or a hiss. We dreaded being the centre of her attention. She was an Ottawa legend long before she retired. In her postretirement serenity she visited Dad in his office. How did you do it? he asked her, and got the memorable reply: “Always razzle-dazzle the other fella before the other fella razzle-dazzles you.”

**I REMEMBER PAUL HORSDAL (1930s-40s)**

He was one of Ottawa’s favourite photographers, with a studio on Sparks Street near Elgin. He was Danish-Canadian with a soft and amusing accent and a quirky sense of humour. He and my father were devoted fishing pals. When the peeping and whistling of frogs and treetoads around the lake kept them awake at night, he roared at them “Shut up, you demmed weesil-birds! Paul Horsdal is enemy of weesil-birds!”

*Continued on Page 8*

**I Remember Ottawa***Continued from Page 7***I REMEMBER "THE SWAN"  
(1930s)**

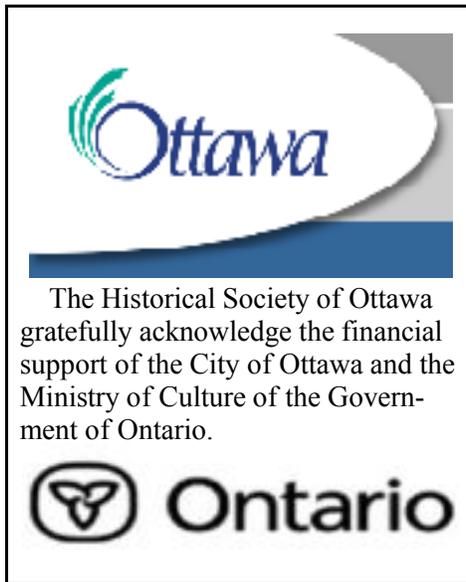
The Ottawa Drama League could not know that the Molnar play would become a famous movie starring the divine Grace Kelly, Alec Guinness, and Louis Jourdan, in the roles played here by Jocelyn Chapman, Lawrence Freiman and myself. Ottawa had to make do with us until the real thing came along.

**I REMEMBER THE PEACE  
TOWER (1930s)**

Percival Price, who was the first Dominion Carillonneur, wore a black beard because the Belgian carillonneurs with whom he learned his trade could only take him seriously with a beard. In the playing-chamber under the bells he sat on a curved bench and slid back and forth to work the higher bells with both fists while his feet hit wooden rods under the bench to sound the big bass ones. He had an apartment a story or two below the bell-chamber where he had friends in for parties. In a corner of the room rods connecting the clock mechanism below with the bells above clanked up and down every hour, and the bells boomed overhead.

**I REMEMBER C.P. EDWARDS  
(1920s-30s)**

He was one of Dad's best friends and he was a fascinating and amusing uncle to my brother and me. He and his wife Ethel lived in a small cottage at the north end of Cloverdale Road, where the Rockcliffe streetcars turned around. Later we learned that he was a famous and important man, a pioneer, almost the pioneer, of radio communications and broadcasting in Canada. In Wales, as a young electrical engineer, he was enlisted and trained by Marconi, when he was setting up the first transatlantic communication by radio. Later, Marconi sent him to Canada to join his



The Historical Society of Ottawa gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the City of Ottawa and the Ministry of Culture of the Government of Ontario.



Canadian company and to set up wireless transmitters. Then the Government employed him as Director of Maritime Radio. In World War I he won the OBE for designing a system for detecting enemy code messages. He represented Canada at international radio conferences, he headed the committee that allotted radio channels throughout North America, and he initiated the equipping of all large ships with radio safety-devices. In World War II he won the CMG by directing the building of 100 airports for the Commonwealth Air Training Plan. He set up the corporation that controlled all external communications, radio and telegraph in Canada. He wound up as Deputy Minister of Communications. Some uncle!

**I REMEMBER SOLANGE**

She and her mother came from Tours "where the purest French is spoken". They lived in a dark apartment on one of the glum little streets of Centretown. She worked for a mining company with an office on Wellington Street. There she translated technical journals and letters into English. She was not only French but very French. She was not beautiful, but in the French way she was vivacious and charming and captivating. She acted

with both the French-speaking and English-speaking theatre groups. I was first enchanted by her as "La Belle de Haguenau" in a production by Le Caveau, the French group. Later, with the very Anglo-Canadian Ottawa Drama League, she played an authentically French wife of Samuel Pepys in the London play "And So To Bed". To a stolid Anglo-Saxon like myself Solange seemed to be always performing, with eyes and teeth and hands and elbows and shoulders, modulating in seconds from high drama to glittering comedy. We were devoted friends for many years, and I managed to write a play for her, which the Ottawa Drama League entered in the Dominion Drama Festival. After her marriage to the ascendant Yousuf Karsh the two of them were among my most entertaining friends. I last saw her at their home on the Rideau River shortly before her death.

**I REMEMBER YOUSUF KARSH  
(1930s)**

A shy young Armenian with a large camera stood in the wings as members of the Ottawa Drama League rehearsed a play. He was studying the effect of stage lighting on faces. He had come from war-torn Armenia by way of his uncle's photographic studio in Sherbrooke and after studying in Boston. He was courteous and diffident and intense. He opened his studio in 1935. Through the Ottawa Drama League he met the first of his distinguished sitters, Lord Duncannon, son of the Governor General, who sometimes acted with the ODL. The Prime Minister became his patron, and Karsh was launched. He and Solange were married in 1939. I remember her telling me about his return home after taking the famous portrait of Churchill, which he had prefaced by removing the cigar stump from the great man's lips. (In that portrait I can see both what Churchill felt toward Hitler and what he was feeling toward Yousuf Karsh.) "When he

*Continued on Page 9*

**I Remember Ottawa***Continued from Page 8*

got home," said Solange, "he was pale green and shaking. He hoarsely confessed what he had done."

In 1988 Louise and I called on him in his studio in the Chateau Laurier. He and his second wife, Estrellita, were just back from organizing exhibitions in several European capitals.

**I REMEMBER THE OTTAWA DRAMA LEAGUE**

Dorothy White - Gladys and Leslie Chance - Bill Cromarty - Madeleine Charlebois - Jocelyn Chapman - Nancy Barrow - Vals Gilmour - Solange Gauthier - Marian Osborne - Audrey Fellowes - Michael Meiklejohn - Beatrice Whitfield - William Brodie - Dorothy Cruikshank Nora Hughes - Julia MacBrien - Roger Watkins-Pitchford - Dorothy Yule ... some of the names are still with me from the ODL's golden age of the 1930s. Above all there was Bill Adkins, the English-born stage-manager and set-builder, who put it all together and made it happen on the stage. And above all there was Rupert Caplan, who directed us year after year, endlessly encouraging and creative. Many of the actors were English or Scottish, transplanted to Ottawa as teachers or diplomats or civil servants. They lent some artistic verisimilitude to our productions of Drinkwater, Shaw, Pinero, Maugham, Coward, Baffle, Fry, Galsworthy, Rattigan. We native Canadians considered ourselves adaptable enough to blend with them in those plays, and at the same time American enough to bring off the plays of Kaufman, Barry, Behrman, Maxwell Anderson, Odets and Wilder.

**I REMEMBER THE FREIMANS (1930s-40s-on)**

For decades before it was swallowed up by The Bay the Freimans Department Store stood foursquare between Rideau and George, a block or so east of Sussex. Its only rival as a major department

store was Ogilvy's, a few blocks farther east on the other side of Rideau. (No nonsense about "Rideau Place" in those simple old days.) A.J. Freiman and his wife Lillian were for most of their lives among the most valued benefactors Ottawa had, particularly when refugees from Hitler's Germany needed vast amounts of organization and provisions. I remember that the Freimans were honoured by the governments of Canada and Israel. But I have personal memories of the family. A.J. and my father were -- at least in the field of clothing -- business rivals. They were also personal friends. Their son Lawrence and I acted together with the Ottawa Drama League. Lawrence's son A.J. Junior and my brother's son Michael began a lifelong friendship during summers spent at Kingsmere up in the hills. Later, much later, Louise and I discovered that A.J. Junior was living in our apartment house on Daly, and that he was managing the Robertson Galleries, a distinguished gift-shop on Laurier. I followed Lawrence's work in support of the Stratford Festival. He sent me a copy of his book of memoirs, "Don't Fall Off the Rocking-horse". We last met when Louise and I went back to Ottawa for a visit, and we called on Lawrence and Audrey in their home beside Mackay Lake. That was a matter of months before he died.

A happy memory of the Freiman family and their business was their treatment of their biggest rival in the department-store business, Ogilvy's. Ogilvy's had a disastrous fire which put them out of business for months. When they rebuilt and reopened, Freiman's welcomed them back with a large box in their full-page advertisement in *The Citizen*.

**I ALSO REMEMBER**

- the snowshoe clubs, racquettes on shoulder, wearing their gray and white and red blanket coats, leaving St. Anne's church after mass and forming

a parade along St. Patrick Street.

- Will Rogers coming out on the stage of our vast arena and remarking that they seemed to have taken a piece of southern Ontario and put a roof over it.
- John Philip Sousa and his massed brasses blasting our happy ears in that same arena.
- at the Russell Theatre, Anna Pavlova as the Dying Swan, Sir John Martin-Harvey as "Hamlet" (when he should have been Polonius), DeWolfe Hopper as "Chu Chin Chow", and sundry opera and Shakespeare companions.
- the ice-palace on the old Plaza, attacked by men in blanket coats carrying torches, defended by men with roman candles, and finally going up in a blaze of red flares and skyrockets.
- the handbell in the street that told you the Italian knife-grinder was coming. How he slipped his grinder off his shoulder to the ground and pumped a pedal with one foot to set the grindstone spinning. Watching the spray of sparks as he pressed your scissors and knives to the stone.
- favourite bookshops: Thorburn and Abbott on Sparks Street, A.H. Jarvis on Queen, where we bought our John Buchan, Stephen Leacock, Mazo de la Roche, A.A. Milne, Mary Webb, and that wonderful Everyman's Library.
- sore-throat lozenges called, mysteriously, Zymole Troches.- Bob Bowman, who lived down our street, whose father was the editor of *The Journal*, who went to London and became the voice of Canadian hockey on the BBC.

*Continued on Page 10*

*Continued from Page 9*

- taking the Belt Line streetcars in a tunnel below the Plaza, beside the Chateau, to go to Hull and Wrightville.
- coonskin coats, rumbleseats, hip flasks, the Charleston, and the flapper cartoons of John Held Junior in "Life".

And all that

### Spring Bus Excursion to Lyn/Brockville Area

**By George Neville**

On Thursday, 5th June, the HSO spring bus excursion will depart for the Lyn/Brockville areas of Elizabethtown Twp., Leeds Co. The village of Lyn, 6 miles NW of Brockville in the early 1800s was a greater industrial centre than Brockville due to its mills and integrated waterpower. We will see the ruins of one of these mills and parts of the waterworks while touring the area, but the full story of this mill and others with wonderful artifacts will be revealed

in a visit to the Lyn Museum. Tentatively, a catered lunch is planned in a large assembly room off the 2nd floor of the Lyn Museum reached by a flight of some 20 low-rise steps (no elevator). In the afternoon, we will tour various parts of Brockville including seeing the railway tunnel that runs under the community from the waterfront to the mid-northend of the city as described by yours truly who was raised and educated in Brockville, finally culminating in a visit to the Brockville Museum before resuming the return journey.

Departures: 8:00 a.m., St. Richard's Anglican Church, Merivale Rd., 8:30 a.m. Lansdowne Park, Bank St. Cost: \$50.00/person (probably the last excursion at this rate of many years' duration).

### HSO/Ottawa Public Library Co-Sponsor Heritage Lecture

**By George Neville**

In spite of hail mixed with freezing rain moving in on Sunday afternoon, 17th February 2008, some 30 keenly interested persons were treated to a very informative and pleasing 2-hour special illustrated lecture on "The Rideau Canal's 20th Century Evolution and its Future Promise: The Rideau as Living History" by Mr. Doug Stewart, Director General, National Parks, Parks Canada. The presentation, made in the Main Library, 120 Metcalfe St., intermixed with questions and discussion, was well received by attendees.



*Doug Stewart*

## Membership Renewal Form The Historical Society of Ottawa

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal/New \_\_\_\_\_ No. Members \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name (for mailing) \_\_\_\_\_

Address Unchanged(Show Changes Below)

Street \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (res) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (work) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Interest (Activities?) \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer? \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership fees

- Single \$35/year
- Student \$10/year
- Family \$50/year
- Single Life \$350

### Payment

Membership \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Receipts will be issued for both membership and donation

Please photocopy and complete this form and mail it with a cheque, made payable to **The Historical Society of Ottawa**, to:  
**Membership, The Historical Society of Ottawa**  
**P.O. Box 523, Station B.**  
**Ottawa, Ontario**  
**K1P 5P6**