



The Historical Society of Ottawa News

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June 2008

President's Report

By Alan McLay

The Annual General Meeting of the Historical Society of Ottawa was held on Friday, May 30, at 1 p.m. in the Routhier Community Centre. Forty-four members and visitors were present.

Our guest speaker was Dave Mullington, a former journalist, a historian, and an active member of our Board of Directors. He spoke to us on the topic "Seeking Charlotte's Spirit." For the past three years Dave has been researching the life of Charlotte Whitton as the subject of his next book. He has sifted through 135 boxes of archival records in the National Archives and also a collection of materials in the archives at Queen's University.

Dave described her as a forceful personality, an ardent feminist, and a suffragette as early as 1910. After graduation from Queen's University she was active in social work, organizing the Canadian Welfare Council, and she was appointed as the Canadian representative on the Child Welfare Council of the League of Nations in Geneva. A single woman, she travelled fearlessly across Canada and overseas on her own.

Charlotte Whitton is best known for her political career as a Controller and Mayor on the Ottawa City Council. She was fierce in dealing with the men on the Council. Dave cited several anecdotes that illustrated her sharp tongue and combative behaviour. She was indeed a memorable character. She was a strong supporter of the Historical Society of Ottawa and the Bytown Museum.

Dave hopes to publish his book next year.

The business part of the meeting began with a minute of silence in memory of Joan Dagger, Joan Finnigan MacKenzie, Lillian Gertsman, William King, Margaret Moffatt, and John Taylor who passed away in 2007 and also in memory of John Moodie and Elva Skuce who died recently.

I commented on some of the highlights in our activities in my President's Report for 2007 and I thanked all the members of the Board of Directors for their faithful service and cooperative teamwork in the past year. A motion to approve the Annual Report with the exception of the financial statements was carried.

Pat Hartney explained some of the changes in reporting items in her Treasurer's Report for 2007. Under the heading of Revenue she used the term Activities to indicate income from the bus tours and Christmas luncheon since these activities were not intended primarily to raise funds. Under Expenses items formerly listed as Secretarial were reported as Office Supplies, Photocopying, and Postage. Pat thanked Carmel Rombough for verifying the financial statements again. A motion to approve the Treasurer's Report was carried.

Don Baxter presented the report of the Nominating Committee. He explained that Pat Hartney and George Toiler had decided to retire from the Board of Directors. Pat Hartney has served for the last four years in the dual role of Secretary-Treasurer and George Toller has been a member of the Board for twenty years, for the last eight years being responsible for arranging speakers for the monthly meetings. Don proposed the following slate of nominations for the Board of Directors in 2008—2009: Donald Baxter, Donald Carrington, Anne Carruthers, Alan McLay, David Mullington, George Neville, Herbert Sills, and Barbara Whitfield. A motion to close nominations was carried. Two positions on the Board remain vacant.

Under new business George Toller described the problems in advertising our monthly meetings in the Our Town column in the Ottawa Citizen. The Citizen recently required the payment of a fee of \$35 in advance by personal credit card. Also the column has been changed from the Sunday edition to Thursday. The Board of Directors had agreed to present this situation to the members at the Annual General Meet-

Continued on Page 3

In This Issue:

President's Report.....	1
Coming Events.....	2
Treasurer's Report.....	3
Irish Workers on the Rideau Canal.....	3
Canadians in the Spanish Civil War.....	4
Dr. Martin and his Spirits.....	4
City of Ottawa Cup Award.....	5
The Story of the Erection of a Plaque Honouring Lt-Col. John by.....	5
UK news from Mike Nelles.....	6

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

President: Alan McLay	613-730-2264
Secretary/Treasurer:	
Patricia Hartney <i>pat.hartney014@sympatico.ca</i>	613-523-6248
Membership: Don Baxter <i>marydon@cyberus.ca</i>	613-745-3430
Don Carrington <i>don.carrington@sympatico.ca</i>	613-733-8740
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George Toller <i>grtoller@3web.com</i>	613-731-0112
Barbara Whitfield <i>pthosteo@rogers.com</i>	613-722-2209

Committees

Awards	
Collections	Dave Mullington, Dorene Hirsch, Barbara Whitfield
Monthly Meetings	George Toller
Nominations	George Toller, Don Baxter, Herb Sills
Publications	Don Carrington
Tours Coordinator	George Neville
Telephone Committee	Barbara Whitfield, Pat Richardson
Outreach Coordinator	Susan Moss

Newsletter Editor: Paul Reside-*hso.news.editor@sympatico.ca*-613-825-3104

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Web Site: hsottawa.ncf.ca

Society Email: hsottawa@storm.ca

Coming Events

Thursday, June 5

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

Tuesday, July 1

Canada Day Celebrations
Bytown Museum
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Monday, August 4

Colonel By Day
Bytown Museum
11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Friday, September 26

Monthly Meeting
Speaker: TBA
Routhier Community Centre
1 p.m.
(parking from Cumberland Ave., between St. Patrick St. and Guigues Ave.)

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

President's Report*Continued from Page 1*

ing for a final decision. A lively discussion ensued. It was pointed out that fewer people now subscribe to the newspapers. It would be more effective to place our brochures in Abbotsford House, the Good Companions, and some retirement residences. Notices could also be placed in the local community papers. A motion to suspend payment for the advertisements in Our Town for the period of one year was carried on division.

George Neville announced that six places were still available for the spring bus tour on June 5. The tour will include a visit to the Lyn Museum, a

catered lunch at the Oddfellows Hall next door, and a visit to the Brockville Museum in the afternoon.

The audience gave a round of applause in thanks to Pat Hartney and George Toller for their outstanding contribution to the Historical Society of Ottawa. The meeting adjourned at 3.15 p.m.

After the meeting a volunteer work party mailed out copies of the Bytown Pamphlet #73, "J. Bowes & Son, Architects in Ottawa," to those members who had not yet received a copy.

I hope that all our members enjoy a pleasant and relaxing summer.

Irish Workers on the Rideau Canal*by George Neville*

At the 28th March HSO monthly meeting, Kevin Dooley* read a paper that he had prepared entitled, "**The Human Side of the Building of the Rideau Canal**". Prior to this reading, Kevin delivered a vivid oral prologue extemporaneously on the background to employment and conditions of Irish canal workers (navies) for the construction of the Rideau Canal. By the breadth of his historical sweep, he provided a wealth of information and understanding of the times and conditions all rendered naturally in Irish dialect and some Gaelic much to the edification and delight of the many attendees. A lengthy question and discussion time followed.

Treasurer's Report to May 30, 2008

Source	Revenue
Memberships	\$1,425.00
Donations	590.00
Pamphlet sales	15.00
Grants (Ottawa: \$3,000; Ontario: \$900)	<u>3,900.00</u>
Total	\$5,930.00
Expense	Paid Out
Diefenbunker rent (paid to Sept 30 th)	971.07
Membership dues (CHOO & OHS)	116.50
Newsletter production (pre-payment)	900.00
(actual costs of Jan 2008 issue: \$479.46)	
Office supplies	132.62
Photocopying	227.13
Postage	520.39
Post box	64.13
Publications	778.61
Routhier room rental for 2008	103.84
Telephone (paid to Sept. 30 th)	
(actual phone charges for 1 st 4 months: \$203.44)	510.00
Website (NCF fee & domain name for 2008)	<u>115.90</u>
Total	\$4,440.19

Bank Balance as at May 30, 2008: \$21,009.79



*Kevin Dooley is the author of the recently published book, "The Other Man" (Baico Pub., Ottawa, 2007). This is an historical novel based on the life and times of Private Michael James O'Rourke VC, MM - 7th Battn CFF (1879-1957), a quintessential WWI Ordinary Private soldier, a stretcher-bearer who served on the front for years, and a legend in his own day. In him we see the carnage, the contradictions and futility of all wars – and the common soldier's opposition to it all, in his quest for peace, decency and even utopia.

Canadians in the Spanish Civil War

by Alan McLay

On April 25th Michael Petrou spoke to the members of the Historical Society about the 1700 Canadians who served in the International Brigade in Spain from 1936 to 1938. In 2002 Michael took time off from his career as a journalist to write a Ph.D. dissertation at Oxford University. His book has recently been published under the title *Renegades:*

Canadians in the Spanish Civil War.

Michael interviewed the ten survivors of the war who were still living when he began his research and he consulted the collections of letters and documents in the national archives in Ottawa, London, and Moscow. The Soviet Union had only recently allowed access to its archival collection.

The International Brigade was formed by the Communist International to support the democratically elected government in Spain against the military coup led by General Franco, who received arms and equipment from Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. Western governments virtually abandoned Spain to its fate in fear of antagonizing Hitler and Mussolini.

The civil war in Spain broke out in the middle of the Great Depression when many young men were unemployed or worked in bush camps for twenty cents a day. Few of the Canadian volunteers were doctrinaire Communists; most joined up to fight in the cause of freedom. The Canadian government viewed them as renegades who disobeyed the law against serving in a foreign war without permission. The RCMP kept files on the volunteers as subversives until 1984.

The most famous of the Canadian volunteers was Dr. Norman Bethune, who gave up his medical practice in Montreal in 1936 to go to Spain. He pioneered bringing blood transfusions directly to the front lines in order to save lives, an important innovation. Bethune had a magnetic personality, but

he was often belligerent and difficult to work with. He quarreled with the Spanish doctors and left Spain after six months to go to China.

The Canadian volunteers in Spain formed the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion. In August 1938 they were sent to the Ebro Offensive in Castile where they were assigned to Hill 609. The terrain was mountainous, the weather was hot and dry, and there was little groundcover. They used sandbags as protection against enemy fire. The mortality rate was very high - 400 Canadians died in the war.

By late 1938 the war was almost over. The International Brigade was disbanded and the survivors returned to their homes. For those who had participated, the war was the central experience of their lives. In spite of the dirt, danger and death around them, they felt that they had fought in a good cause and they valued a strong sense of comradeship.

A lively question and answer period followed Michael's presentation.

Doctor Martin and His Spirits

by Edward W. Devlin

"This story of Doctor Oliver Martin and the Echo Beach Fishing Club came from my grandfather R.J. Devlin to my father and from my father to me. I have written it up as a family memoir."

Doctor Oliver Martin was one of the group of Ottawa business men who in the 1880s founded the Echo Beach Fishing Club. They had their clubhouse on



3rd row Dr. Martin, ? Avery, B. Powell, R.J. Devlin,
2nd row S.E. Heureux, R. Fleming, W. Allan,
J. Gouin, C.J. Bate
1st row F. Newby

Continued on Page 5

Membership Report

Submitted by Don Baxter.

The current membership total for the Society is 198, broken down as follows:

Type	Members
Family	37
Honorary	11
Honorary Life	19
Life	34
Regular	96
Student	1

(In addition, HSO material is sent to 21 Heritage Organizations)

We welcome two new members who recently joined:

Simon N. Doyle and Michel Petrou

Unfortunately, we also have two members who Died in May:

John Moodie (a Past President) and Elva Skuce

Dr. Martin and His Spirits*Continued from Page 4*

the shore of a beautiful long lake, Echo Lake, many miles northeast of Ottawa, in the Laurentians. They got themselves (by rented carriage, I think) to Buckingham on the Ottawa River and turned north, up the rough roads beside the River Blanche. At the halfway point they dismounted, brought out the glasses, uncorked the whisky bottle and drank two toasts: farewell to the City Spirits, greeting to the Lake Spirits. On the way back they did it in reverse.

In Camp after the poker games Dr Martin entertained his cronies with tales of the spirits that haunted the woods and hillsides around them. These spirits wandered and drifted on the wind, they lurked on bare cliff-tops and slept in the tops of dead pine-trees; rampikes, we called them. They were The Guppies, The Ogles, Bal Lal, Briar Vo, Go Bi Or, Pargobilio and the mysterious Willopus Wallopus.

I think he was doing for fun what our native people did seriously giving names and presences to the forces they felt around them in nature. The Irish and the Norse did it too.

My grandfather R. J. Devlin put one of the spirits in a verse, "Adieu, Old Echo Beach! , which ends:

*"Then play your games upon the lea,
Old Pargobilio, play
For sailing West-Southwest are we,
So Echo Beach, good day!"*

City of Ottawa Cup Award
by Alan McLay

The winner of the City of Ottawa Cup at the Ottawa Regional Historica Fair on April 9 was Morgan O'Dea, a Grade 6 student at St. Laurent Academy, for her project on Rockcliffe Park. At a special assembly at the school on April 30, I presented Morgan with a cheque for \$150 from the Historical Society of Ottawa. Cynthia Smith of the City of Ottawa Heritage Unit gave her a handsome replica of the Cup. The original Cup



*City of Ottawa Cup Winner, Morgan O'Dea receives a cheque from HSO President, Alan McLay
Photo -Daria Locke - City of Ottawa*

will remain in the school's possession until the next Regional Fair in 2009.

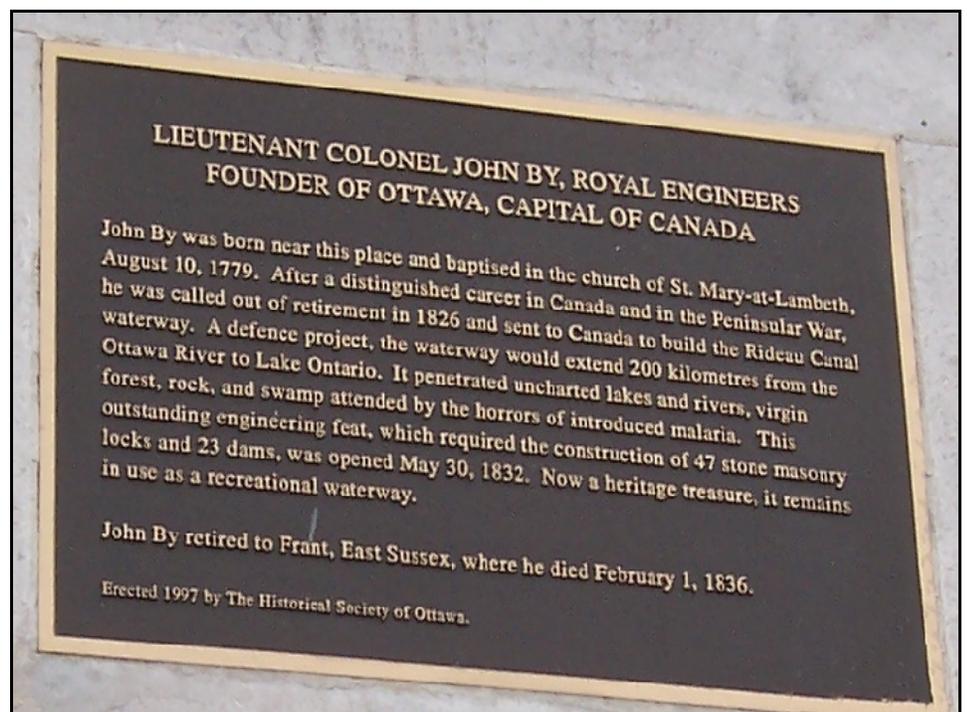
The Story of the Erection of a Plaque in London Honouring Lt-Col. John By*by Herb Sills*

For a number of years Dr. Robert Legget, a member of the Historical Society of Ottawa did research to find the birthplace of Lt.-Col. By in London. He made several trips to England

and finally found it on the south shore of the river Thames (Bishop's Walk in Lambeth St. Thomas Hospital is now on that site).

The decision was made by the society's board to erect a plaque near the place where Lt.-Col. By was born. Joe Konst, who was a director at that time, obtained permission from St. Thomas Hospital to put a plaque on the wall which faces the river across from the Houses of Parliament. The bronze plaque which is shown here was manufactured in Merrickville.

Herb. Sills was asked to arrange a tour of members in southern England to historic sites ending at the unveiling of the plaque on May 28, 1997, by the Canadian High Commissioner Roy MacLaren. Thirty-eight members and friends signed up for the tour and the flight was booked with Mr Canada. Ground transportation was arranged with L.J. Edwards Coach in Hailsham, East Sussex. Accommodation was booked at Herstmonceux Castle near Hailsham which is owned by Queen's University.

Continued on Page 5

Colonel By Plaque*Continued from Page 5*

Our itinerary was as follows:

May 22 to the Royal Engineers museum at Chatham

May 23 to the village of Frant where Lt-Col. By is buried

May 24 to Dover and Dover Castle

May 25 to the Pavilion at Brighton

May 26 to Chartwell-Churchill's home and museum and to the home of Rudyard Kipling.

May 27 to Canterbury Cathedral where Bishop Thomas A. Becket was killed by knights of Henry II.

May 28 to London in time for the plaque ceremony and registration in our London hotels.

After the unveiling of the plaque the party moved off to a hall belonging to the St. Mary Lambeth Museum. Our president Bill MacKinnon was master of ceremonies and he introduced the speakers - The Duke of Wellington, General Sir John Stibbon of the Royal Engineers and Major General John Stewart representing the Canadian Military Engineers.

As you can see the plaque is still in place informing people of the accomplishments of Lt-Col. John By who is not well known in England.

U.K. News From Mike Nelles**by George Neville**

HSO members will recall that Mike Nelles, as an Honours History student at Carleton University, was awarded the 2006 Col. John By Award presented by the Society for his essay on "Pre-Confederation Health Care in Bytown" which was published as Bytown Pamphlet No. 70. In his final undergraduate year, he was able to contribute another well researched paper on "Steamboating on the Rideau Canal", published in August 2007 as Bytown Pamphlet No. 71 thereby enabling the Society to commemorate the 175th Anniversary of the opening of the Rideau Canal and in celebration of

the declaration that the Rideau Canal is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Not only did his fascination with steamboats stemming from boyhood drive his enthusiasm in undertaking research for the latter topic, but it also underscored his desire to spend time working in association with the Southampton Maritime Museum in the United Kingdom (U.K.) prior to choosing a program and thesis topic at post-graduate level. Since I had suggested the steamboating and blockhouse topics to him, Mike and I have maintained a steady exchange of correspondence. His 3rd April 2008 correspondence set forth below is so delightfully self-explanatory and interestingly informative that the Board of Directors agreed that it should be shared with HSO members through the HSO Newsletter.

3rd April, 2008.

Hi George!

Good to hear from you. I'm sorry I haven't sent as many updates as I had planned. I figured you'd want the complete package, and I am pleased to say I now have some good news for you.

I don't recall where I left off with the last update so I'll briefly recap from the beginning for continuity. After landing at Gatwick, I headed straight for the village of Romsey, north west of Southampton. I'd read about it and planned to find a flat, and it turned out to be nice, but unsuitable. An estate agent turned me onto Winchester, & after some searching I found a spectacular flat with two friendly Brits close to the High St.

After I briefly toured Hampshire paying courtesy calls on some of my British relatives, I started work at the Southampton Maritime Museum. At first I did little more at the Museum than scan ocean liner postcards into a database. I soon progressed to work on bits and pieces of research assignments, and was asked to write several

short summaries describing the careers of various elaborate ocean liner models loaned out to various corporate and civic offices. Soon after this I began research for the slated November exhibit on containerization, and realized after a short time I was the only researcher assigned to the project.

Around this time, plans for the new display of some restored items were conceived. I'd played a minor role helping with the restoration of a vintage Edwardian brass-helmeted diving suit that was once used at the Docks. I was asked to draft a panel to go along with the revamped display, and they were pleased with the results. After my first panel draft was approved, they asked for two others to go with it-- an additional panel about the diver who wore the suit (his daughter had donated several thousand pounds for the restoration and some archival material for the new display), and another on a local salvage firm who had given us some of their artifacts. These panels are now in the pipeline and slated to be unveiled late in May at some kind of suited cocktail reception thing designed to thank the donors who gave money for the restoration. I'm quite chuffed of course!

By the end of January, I was looking for some kind of part time job to avoid bleeding money during my internship. I initially wound up behind the bar at a British pub, but this of course was a bore, and not a very lucrative one either. I sent a resume to the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich, and won an interview-- but afterwards I realized that the expensive and time-consuming commute from Winchester to London would be a problematic drag, and scrapped plans to take the post.

Around this time, one of my favorite curators in Southampton turned me onto this competition for a part-time Visitor Assistant position with the Winchester Museums Service. After winning an interview, I read lots about the Museum Service and had some rather detailed

Continued on Page 7

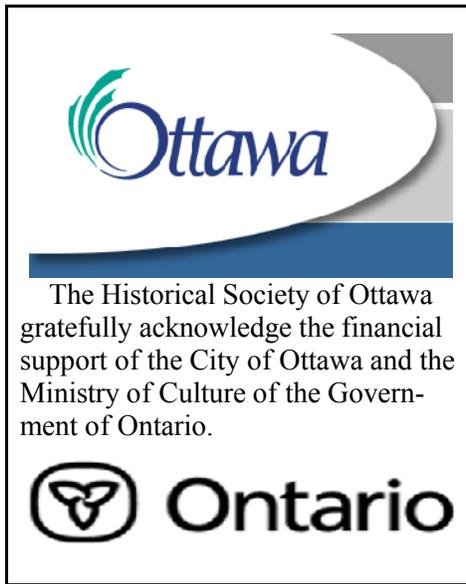
News from Mike Nelles

Continued from Page 6

questions to ask. At the interview I was asked among other things about my work in Southampton and the pieces I wrote for the Society back in Ottawa.

An hour later, the Museum Services Manager called me and told me I wasn't selected for the position. She said she thought I was overqualified--and asked me instead to apply for a more senior position involving more hours, more responsibility and a higher salary grade. I was a bit anxious to start the application process all over again, but the next day she came into the pub while I was behind the bar to reiterate her suggestion that I apply for the higher post.

Thankfully, after sending in a new application I was shortlisted for interview, & after this I won the post. I started work at the end of March, managing Visitor Services at three different Museum sites in Winchester. It involves looking after the Museum Service's retail operations and nine front-of-house visitor assistants. I quite like it so far and it's vastly more rewarding than



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.

pouring pints in pubs. It is also a perfect complimentary fit for the more academic curatorial work I've continued in Southampton.

As for sightseeing, I haven't actually done very much--I've not even been inside my local Norman Cathedral! I saw the London Eye from the train while I was heading to Greenwich, but haven't yet managed to get to the gates

of Buckingham Palace or the House of Commons. I suppose I should make some trips before all the "real" tourists get here!

I'm also afraid I haven't managed to put much additional thought into the subject of Blockhouses, as I am not sure what archival material exists for me to use in this country. For that reason I have become much more interested in examining Colonel By's fall from grace from a British perspective, with an eye to completing an essay for submission to the Society in Ottawa. I reason in this country there are likely to be primary sources in the archives that I could use. Let me know what you think of this idea.

Please tell everyone at the Society that I am thinking of them on the other side of the ocean & hope they are all staying out of snowdrifts and keeping warm in the colonies. Hope all else is well Mike.

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