‘Baker’s daughter’
Grete Hale turns 90

By Ben Weiss

This year marks the 90th birthday of Grete Hale, a remarkable member of the Ottawa community — and one with deep roots in its history.

Mrs Hale is one of the three formidable Morrison sisters — along with the late Jean Pigott (former MP & NCC Chair) and Gay Cook (renowned Ottawa food writer and advocate) — devoted daughters of Margaret and the legendary “Happy Baker” Cecil Morrison, founder of Ottawa’s iconic Morrison Lamothe food dynasty.

Like her sisters and parents, Grete has spent a lifetime giving back to the community. Among her countless positions have been: Chair of the family business, board member of various corporations, president of Beechwood Cemetery, chair and founder of community and national organizations, author, and recipient of awards too numerous to mention (but including the Order of Canada, the Queen’s Silver Jubilee Medal, Canadian Woman Entrepreneur of the Year, YM-YWCA Lifetime Achievement Award and many honourary degrees).

See STORYTELLER pages 4-5

Ben Weiss photo
Karen Lynn Ouellette, president of the Historical Society of Ottawa, during a recent visit with “Morrison sisters” Grete Hale, seated, and Gay Cook.

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The Historical Society of Ottawa

PATRON: Her Excellency the Right Honourable Julie Payette
Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada

Founded in 1898 as the Women’s Canadian Historical Society of Ottawa, the **Historical Society of Ottawa** (HSO) is the oldest local history organization in the national capital area, responsible for the establishment of the Bytown Museum and the Colonel By Monument in Major’s Hill Park. It seeks to fulfill its goal of preserving and promoting knowledge of the city’s history by conducting monthly meetings with presentations, public outreach via website and social media, publication of pamphlets and this quarterly newsletter, semi-annual excursions, and other special events and projects. The HSO publishes the Bytown Pamphlet Series, each of which concentrates on one aspect of the rich history of Canada’s capital region. Pamphlets are distributed free to Society members and local libraries and are available for purchase at the address below.

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**Membership Renewals**
For regular members of the Society, your renewal date is shown on your address label on this newsletter. Please check to see that you are up-to-date. If not, a renewal form is available to snip or photocopy on the last page of this newsletter, or just send a cheque showing your address and phone number.

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Come Events

*Beginning Sept. 2019, monthly meetings will be held on the last Wednesday of each month at the OPL Main branch auditorium, 120 Metcalfe St.*

**Sept. 25** — 1 p.m., OPL Auditorium,
**Speaker: Diana Pepall** on “Bletchley Park’s Outpost in Sandy Hill”

**Oct. 9** — 7 p.m., OPL Auditorium,
**Speaker: François Bregha** on “Prime Ministers of Sandy Hill”

**Oct. 30** — 1 p.m., OPL Auditorium,
**Speaker: Hunter McGill** on “The History of the Rideau Canal”

See poster on page 7 for much more!

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The Historical Society of Ottawa gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the City of Ottawa and the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.
To mark the 200th anniversary of the Aug. 28, 1819 death of Charles Lennox, 4th Duke of Richmond, Lennox and Aubigny, Governor General of Canada, 1818-1819, HSO member and past president George Neville recounts the story of the Duke’s death at Richmond (now part of the City of Ottawa) and shares newly transcribed documents detailing the funeral arrangements and burial of the Duke’s remains in Quebec City.

Compiled and transcribed by George Neville

In their 1968 book Carleton Saga, local historians Harry and Olive Walker have chronicled well the last days of the Duke of Richmond leading up to his death from advancing hydrophobia, drawing from the 4th Duke of Richmond Papers. “A small party of horsemen had set out from Perth [Military Settlement] for the military settlement of Richmond early on the morning of August 24, 1819. This party consisted of the Duke of Richmond, newly arrived Governor General, his two aides Col. Frances Cockburn, Deputy Quarter-Master-General, Col. George Bowles of the Coldstream Guards, the Duke’s Military Secretary; and the Duke’s personal servant, a man named Baptiste. The Duke was extremely ill and irritable. On June 28, at Sorel [Quebec], he had been bitten on the hand by a mad fox from which he was rescuing his dog, Blucher. The incubation period had not revealed the symptoms of the resultant hydrophobia until the Duke was on his tour of the military settlements of Upper Canada. The Duke and his party had spent three days – August 21, 22 and 23 – at the Perth settlement and were behind schedule. Even so, Cockburn ad Bowles tried to get the Duke to call off the final effort. But the irritable Duke insisted on continuing the nightmare journey through swamp, swale, and bush to Richmond, and set next morning (Aug. 24) for an early start. Before setting out, Col Cockburn, whose daily entries tell the story, noted that the Duke did not appear at all well and that he had eaten very little breakfast.

See DUKE on page 8
Grete Hale at 90: ‘I’m a storyteller’

Continued from page 1

In her lifetime, Grete has travelled the world, mingled with prime ministers, met the Queen and much, much more.

Ben Weiss, a member of the Historical Society of Ottawa, who has read and re-read Grete’s heartening autobiography Baker’s Daughter numerous times over the years, had the honour of interviewing Grete Hale one evening this summer.

The following are Ben’s notes from the interview.

In describing herself Grete Hale confesses, “I’m a storyteller”... and Grete particularly enjoys sharing inspiring stories about her father and mother, and what an extraordinary example the two of them set for Grete and her sisters. “I had magnificent parents who cared – they just cared.”

Here is one example of her parents’ legacy of caring that Grete recalls (from the 1930s):

“The Queensway, before it became the Queensway, was the railway line from the west and it came through about 3:30 every afternoon (except weekends). The driver of the train would slow down about Island Park Drive and by the time it got opposite our house, which was about three blocks over, the train was going slow enough that the lads (they called them hobos, coming from the west looking for work in the east) could jump off without breaking their legs.

“How they knew I don’t know, but they knew that if they stayed on, about a mile farther down, before it got into Centretown, the railway police got on and if they were found riding the rails they were arrested. So they would jump off — and we were the only house in sight.

“And, sure enough, at about 3:30 every weekday, there would be a rap at our back door — our kitchen door — and the lads would say to Mom, ‘Lady, do you have any food... we’re starving...’ And Mom, that morning — every weekday — she would get Dad to bring home the Morrison-Lamothe bread from the day before (which was perfectly good)... and eggs were cheap in those days... and she’d pass out these egg salad sandwiches to the lads (which were full of protein) and they were grateful.

“And she did that until there was no longer any need for it.”

Continued on page 5
Canadians ‘don’t laugh enough’

Continued from page 4

(The house Grete fondly speaks about is, of course, the historic and majestic Civic Hospital-area “Bayne House”, one of Ottawa’s oldest houses, “dating back to 1818” and proudly called home by Grete’s family since 1929, the year of Grete’s birth. Grete stoically concedes that now “the time has come... to sell our beautiful house.” She and her sister Gay are in a retirement home now, but “it’s hard to give up” the home, Grete admits sadly.)

Another glowing testament Grete provides about her mother Margaret: “My mother had an acre of garden (at Bayne House) and she shared it with the community. Any charity in Ottawa for the asking, in the month of June, could have the loan of the house and garden to raise money. When (a qualifying charity) would phone, she would say, ‘Okay, let’s book the date.’ I didn’t know at the time, but one year my magnificent late husband counted approximately how many came that month and he counted over 10,000 people who came through our garden that June!

“And Mom did that every year. We’d come home from school and I could hear Mom saying, ‘All right children, after supper get on your old clothes because we need to weed.’” Another worthy charitable group was on its way over for their fundraiser.

Grete says “a lot of people still care,” but worries that maybe not enough do anymore. She says she worries about the number of people now sleeping on the streets or makeshift shelters. “That’s not right. If we cared enough, we’d see that they had decent homes to sleep in”.

As Grete points out, her parents didn’t start out with much themselves.

“Dad came from a pioneer, simple little farm in the Pontiac – rocky, stony and covered with big heavy

virgin trees. Mom was just an ordinary soul with very little education”.

Grete proudly reminds us “my father built the city’s very first low rental housing... never took a penny for himself... built the very first senior housing. A remarkable story. Charlotte Whitton got him to do it. When she was mayor she challenged him to do something for these people. I heard every word of the conversation. She phoned dad (I was home from university at Carleton) and she said, ‘Cecil, I have a report on my desk, as mayor of the capital city of Canada, that there are 4,000 homes condemned by the city health officials as unfit for human habitation. I can’t put these poor people out in our climate – do something!’

“But my Dad said, ‘I’m a baker — I’ve got a thousand employees to look after.’ And she said, ‘You can do it!’ And I heard her smash down her phone and Dad turned to me and said, ‘Grete, did you hear that conversation?’ and I said, ‘Yes, I heard every word,’ because she had such a booming voice.

“He’d had no intention of doing it, but he was challenged. And so he built thousands of homes, the first low rental housing in Ottawa.”

When Grete passes by those houses today on Queen Mary and King George streets, she observes that “those houses are still as good as when he built them.

“You know, when people care it’s amazing what can be done,” she says.

Grete also talks a lot about the power of having a dream and fulfilling it: “The girl who is head of the Sons of Scotland pipe band here in Ottawa — Bethany Bisaillion — I said to her one day, because she’s a friend, ‘Bethany, do you have a dream for yourself and your band?’ And she said, ‘Yes, I do’ and I said, ‘Would you tell me what it is?’ She said, ‘To play my pipes for the Queen of England’.

‘Well,’ I said, ‘what have you done about it to make it reality?’ ‘I don’t know how to go about it,’ ” Bethany responded.

“I said ‘Well, for pete’s sake, let me help you. . . Write out on one page that you would like to come with your band to play for the Queen with your bag pipes and we will send it to Buckingham Palace care of her lady-in-waiting. I’ll get you the address... and do it!”

“She did it right away and got it off. Do you know that within a week she heard back from the Queen herself, inviting her to Balmoral Castle?

“She (the Queen) said, ‘That’s where I have my holidays in Scotland every August. Would you come with your band and play for me?’

“She (Bethany with her band) has done it (is it 5 times now?)... every summer. She’s got known throughout Scotland, she’s got all sorts of invitations to play.”

See BEECHWOOD on page 6
‘We saved Beechwood for Canada’

Continued from page 5

Grete points out the achievements of a “wonderful woman” named Zita Cobb, a native of Newfoundland — “a fisherman’s daughter” — who made her fortune in Kanata during the high tech boom and gave it back to her home province by building an incredible hotel on Fogo Island (“on the rocks!”), providing an attraction to visitors and a great boost to Newfoundland’s economy.

(Grete named Fogo Island when I asked this very well-travelled 90-year-old to name the destination that ranks as the most amazing place she’d visited during her life.)

With everything home made, communities for artists, guests treated royally and all local food, Grete says: “It takes your breath away. It’s perfection... and it’s Canadian!”.

Grete commends Zita for fulfilling the promise she had made to herself to “earn enough money to come back and help young people come back to the province”.

Grete reiterates: “You gotta have a dream!”

Grete proudly recalls her own role, leading groups (often of women) to preserve Ottawa landmarks such as the old Union Station (now currently the temporary home of Canada’s Senate) and Beechwood Cemetery (now officially designated Canada’s national cemetery).

“I was passing by the Château Laurier (recently),” Grete reflects “and I think city council made the wrong decision on that one... But I looked (across the street) at the old station.

“When the trains were transferred out to where they are now located (in the 1960s) the great talk was that it was time to pull that building down and I was part of the local council of women of Ottawa and we fought — we had protests — we got our names in the paper... and we saved that beautiful building. I thought, wow, it would have gone if it hadn’t been for that group of women.”

Grete recalls, with similar passion, her seven-year battle to save Beechwood Cemetery in the face of a plan to build condos on as-yet-unused segments of the cemetery. There were vicious lawsuits and countersuits... Grete says she and the others even risked losing their own homes over it all.

“But you’ve got to stand up for what you believe is right. We saved Beechwood for Canada. I’m very, very proud — I hold my head high for the small band of people who cared and fought for that wonderful cemetery. It’s amazing what you can do with human spirit.

“Everybody today needs to have a dream for themselves – why not? --and then have fun doing it,” Grete proclaims.

Grete gives her own example of accepting an invitation to become the first woman honourary Colonel of the Governor General’s Foot Guards. “Me!” Grete exclaims. “I had no military experience.

See GRETE HALE on page 8
SPEAKERS IN THE
AFTERNOON :

WED SEPT 25, 2019 @ 1 P.M.
Diana Pepall
OTTAWA PUBLIC LIBRARY
"Bletchley Park's Outpost in Sandy Hill"
Canada’s top secret WWII code-breaking unit.

WED OCT 30, 2019 @ 1 P.M.
Hunter McGill
SENIOR FELLOW, UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA
"History of the Rideau Canal"
The legacy of our historic waterway.

WED NOV 27, 2019 @ 1 P.M. & 2 P.M.
Joanna Dean @ 1 P.M.
PROFESSOR, CARLETON UNIVERSITY
"Ottawa’s Urban Forest"
The world that surrounds us -- hidden in plain sight.

Stephen McKenna @ 2 P.M.
AUTHOR, "GRACE & WISDOM"
"Chief Justice Patrick Kerwin"
Life & times of Canada’s 10th Supreme Court Chief Justice.

WED JAN 29, 2020 @ 1 P.M.
William Galbraith
AUTHOR, "JOHN BUCHAN – MODEL GOVERNOR GENERAL"
"Lord Tweedsmuir"
Soldier, spy, thriller writer, Governor General.

SPEAKERS IN THE
EVENING :

WED OCT 9, 2019 @ 7 P.M.
François Bregha
SANDY HILL RESIDENT & HISTORIAN
"Prime Ministers of Sandy Hill"
Fascinating tales of the 10 PMs who lived in Sandy Hill.

THU NOV 14, 2019 @ 7 P.M.
Phil Jenkins
AUTHOR, "AN ACRE OF TIME", "RIVER SONG", "FIELDS OF VISION", "BENEATH MY FEET"
"50 Years of Ottawa: What I’ve Seen & Learnt"
Perspectives from writer & musician Phil Jenkins.

WED JAN 15, 2020 @ 7 P.M.
Robin Etherington
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BYTOWN MUSEUM
"The Bytown Museum’s First Century"
100+ years of telling our stories.

The Historical Society of Ottawa gratefully acknowledges the financial support of

SPEAKER SERIES LOCATION:
AUDITORIUM OF OTTAWA PUBLIC LIBRARY
MAIN BRANCH – 120 METCALFE ST
Doors open 30 minutes before. See you there!

Please visit The Historical Society of Ottawa website for any Speaker Series updates and to reserve seating for the Evening Speaker Series.
http://hsottawa.ncf.ca
... and don’t forget to follow us on Facebook.
‘Distressing symptoms’ force rest

Continued from page 3

Both Cockburn and Bowles suggested resting at Perth, but the Duke would have none of it and sharply insisted on continuing to the next stopping place - the Store in Beckwith with a distance of 15 miles where we were to halt for the night – the road being impassable for wagons – we intended proceeding as far as a Mr. Boggs, about seven miles, on horseback after which the horses were to be sent back and we were to walk the rest of the way to Richmond."

“The Duke’s distressing symptoms again necessitated rest when both Cockburn and Bowles again tried to persuade him to return to Perth and there take the road to Brockville and thence to Montreal. However the Governor was determined on going to the Store at Beckwith. While the Duke was resting, Cockburn and Bowles secured two horses, by which his Grace was enabled to ride to the Store arriving there at six p.m. (This store at Beckwith must have been for them a beacon in the wilderness). August 25 – The Duke scarcely slept at all during the night and only joined us for a short time at breakfast, left us suddenly and went up to lie down until we were ready to start about eight o’clock. After six miles the party had to stop at Saunderson’s shanty for another rest. Here it was decided the Duke must rest while arrangements were made for another overnight stop at Sergt. Vaughan’s house, from which place the Duke would be obliged to walk.

Grete Hale: ‘We have the most wonderful city’

Continued from page 6

“But I’ve had three wonderful years with the Foot Guards – most of the time they didn’t know what to do with me, but it was a joy from beginning to end – a wonderful experience.”

“We don’t laugh enough as Canadians,” Grete laments. “First of all, we need to laugh at ourselves... and then keep going – and be grateful to our Maker that we are Canadians (and those of us who are lucky enough to live in Ottawa should just rejoice because we have the most wonderful city.)”

“Did you see what they wrote in the Citizen about me?” Grete suddenly asks excitedly. “Did you see that ad? On the morning of my birthday, there is a big ad that, in the biggest red letters at the top, says: ‘A very happy 90th Birthday Grete Hale.’ And it’s got six pictures of me in colour... and in 1, 2, 3... 4 of them I’m wearing hats (I happen to like hats!).”

“And then it says, underneath: “As one of Ottawa’s leading and most committed citizens, you have embodied what it means to be a community builder. On this very special occasion we would like to thank you for contributing your time and energy to so many important causes over the decades, for your love of your city and for making it such a welcoming place for all – Happy Birthday!”

“Isn’t that amazing? And when I opened the Citizen that Saturday morning it was a surprise. This was the Citizen’s gift to me. “Isn’t that wonderful? Imagine! And I’ve had hundreds (hundreds!) of letters congratulating me on my birthday!”

The location near the village of Richmond, along the Jock River (formerly Goodwood River), where the Duke of Richmond is said to have scrambled out of a canoe and taken shelter in the barn where he died on Aug. 28, 1819, two months after being bitten by a rabid fox.
Duke: Water ‘greatly upset him’

Continued from page 8

At this stage Col. George T. Burke, the superintendent of the Richmond settlement, had met the party. Cockburn and Burke decided to proceed for preparing Vaughan’s house and making arrangements in Richmond previous to the Duke’s arrival. Major Bowles remained with Duke August 26 – I [Burke] sent a basket, very early this morning with some refreshment from Richmond to Vaughan’s stating that we (Burke and Cockburn) had found the road through the swamp so bad that unless His Grace was better I hoped he would not attempt the fatigue of passing it – In answer I received a reply from the Duke dated 6 o’clock a.m. - an unusually early hour for him to be up – wherein he stated he found difficulty in swallowing but he should be in Richmond rather early. Cockburn did not expect the Duke until noon, but to my surprise about ten I was informed he was entering the town. I immediately went out to meet him. Cockburn was shocked at his disheveled appearance. He struck me as looking particularly ill... I asked him if he would not return to the tavern (the Richmond Arms) and change his clothes for he was very wet and dirty. His answer was that he would rather see what was to be seen first. And so a Royal Governor, with the mark of death already on him, arrived at his ‘Journey’s End’ determined to fulfill his duty to this out-post of Empire.

(The original Vaughan log cabin which sheltered the Duke on his night approach to Richmond was situated about four miles west on the fourth line of Goulbourn on the old Perth road. The site is now marked with a boulder in the centre of the field. Direct descendants of Sergt. Vaughan are W. E[Iwyn]. Vaughan and Garland Vaughan, of Richmond)."

“With considerable difficulty Cockburn and Bowles got the Duke into the tavern established by Sergt. Hill and his charming wife, the former Mary, or Maria Glennon, a comely Lancashire girl. Mrs. Hill, the later chatelaine of the Richmond Arms, received her distinguished guest with all the graciousness that the situation required.”

“When word of the Duke’s expected arrival had been brought to the settlement, a work party of settlers turned out the night before to make it as passable as possible over the swampy terrain. But even at that the last stage of the journey was heavy wet going; also the Duke had been badly splashed from the fall of Col. Bowles into the swamp. The sight of water or liquids from then until his death greatly upset him. (The course of the old Perth Road used to be diagonally across the fields to the Lyon carding mill on the Second Dam.

Continued on page 10
‘Stark drama’ on the Jock River

Continued from page 9

Then, for a mile it ran generally in a westerly direction over the later farms of Bower and Green. About 30 years ago vestiges of its corduroy construction were visible where the road entered Vaughan’s swamp). “The Duke passed the day of August 26 quietly at Hill’s tavern. He visited Col. Burke’s quarters and became posted on settlement affairs. But he refused to inspect anything within sight of the river. At the dinner that evening the outstanding event was the naming of March township after his son, the Earl of March. As the dinner ended the Duke turned to Col. Cockburn and remarked, “I don’t know how it is but I can’t relish anything to-night as usual, and I feel if I were a dog I should be shot as a mad one”. The significance of those words were apparent next day.

That night Mrs. Hill, anxious for the well-being of her illustrious guest, heard him pacing the floor. He called for Col. Bowles. She heard them talking. Feeling a premonition of death, he unburdened himself calmly to Bowles. The whimpering of his pet dog, Blucher, seemed to confirm his words and Mrs. Hill retired with a strange sense of impending tragedy oppressing her.

In Col. Cockburn’s official record of that night, to which previous reference has been made, it is stated that while waiting for breakfast the Duke paced outside the tavern in a hurried and impetuous manner. He informed us that he could not even put his towel in the basin but had been obliged that morning to direct Baptiste to wet it for him and place it by him on the dressing table and even then he was obliged to rub his face hard before he could prevail on himself to raise the towel to it. The Duke, after declining breakfast, endeavoured to take some tea but became convulsed at which he was much annoyed.

This prompted them sending again for Surgeon Collis who had started for Richmond Landing at the Chaudière where all the party were to meet the bateau for Montreal. Because the river [Jock] was navigable as far as Chapmans (three miles down stream) and because the road was so rough, it had been decided that the Duke, Major Bowles and the servant should travel by canoe while the horses had been sent on to Chapmans to which place Col. Cockburn and Major Burke would walk to meet the canoe. Cockburn and Burke saw the canoe party off at the embarkation point. (Leaving Richmond, the old pioneer route was a trail of about three quarters of a mile to the foot of Nesbitt’s Rapids which is near the present United Church Cemetery). “The Duke made no objection to entering the canoe, and Cockburn and Burke departed with their forebodings to meet the craft at Chapmans. As they were turning into the Chapman farm yard they met the Duke and Bowles walking toward the road. But the river trip and the rushing water was more than His Grace could bear.

What happened on that long day and night and another long day between the woods and wet gullies bordering the Richmond Road and the shoreline of the Jock river, was stark drama that moved as inexorably as a Greek tragedy. In late afternoon, the weary Cockburn, Bowles and the servant had not noted that they were close to the river but the dying Duke had. Perceiving Chapman’s barn, he ran for it and jumped over a rail fence and entered the barn. As Cockburn recorded it, the barn was so constructed as to have a passage through the centre which made it particularly cool.
They followed the Duke in and laid him on some bundles of corn.

That night, with great difficulty, they got him into Chapman’s log home. There Collis bled him again with little or no relief. In his lucid moments the dying Duke dictated messages to his family and friends which Bowles took down to deliver personally to Lady Mary Lennox, his daughter, in Montreal. In admiration of his courage Col. Cockburn wrote of those last agonizing hours wherein ‘the Duke showed the utmost tenderness of feeling and resignation such as bespoke the kind and noble heart of him’. These messages, in between paroxysms of pain, were the real measure of the man. Some of these last instructions were: “Tell March (the Earl of March) that I know he will regret being Duke of Richmond but that I am satisfied I leave my titles and estates to one of the most honourable men in England. . . Tell my mother I know she possesses the soul and spirit of a Roman matron with all the polish of 1817 . . . She will rejoice her son died in honour although he did not have his wish to doing so on the field of battle . . . Tell my sister, Emily Berkley, that I charge her not to repine at the dispensation of the Almighty, to be sorry for the loss . . . (the record is torn here) is allowable but immoderate grief is not so . . . Tell her to set a good example to my family who will need it . . . Give my love to the Duchess and tell her to remember the Regent (the Price of Wales) and the Duke of York (with whom he fought a duel) . . . Remember me to Anglesea and Jane Pager and the Duke of Wellington . . . Tell Rously (a servant) I know he will regret his old master . . . Let my funeral be moderate in the Lower Province of the ramparts of Quebec . . . Tell Sarah that with my latest breath I forgive her and General Maitland (They were his daughter and son in law who eloped) . . . Give my successor all my plans and beg Bathurst (Colonial Secretary) to let him have the Duke of Wellington’s (plans?) I die in charity with all the world and in perfect confidence of mercy from the Almighty . . . I think I was injured by one man and him forgive from the bottom of my heart . . . “Soon after, at eight o’clock in the evening of August 28, 1819, the Summons came to him and he went — a Gentleman Unafraid’.

“At the request of Commissary Whitmarsh, in charge of the military stores at Richmond, Mrs. Hill undertook to lay out the body at the hostelry so that it might be conveyed to Richmond Landing on the Ottawa River.

Brass plaque over the site of interment of the Duke of Richmond within the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, Quebec City, on the floor in the centre of the chancel between the pulpit and communion table.
President’s Report: ‘An eventful year ahead’

By Karen Lynn Ouellette

Welcome to our 2019-2020 program!
I hope that you all have enjoyed your summer – but rest assured your board and committees have been busy behind the scenes planning an eventful year!

First of all, our Regular Events Committee has been hard at work setting up all the ins and outs of our inaugural September afternoon meeting at the Main branch of the Ottawa Public Library and our inaugural October evening presentation. I would like to thank, so very much, this enthusiastic team!

Our Finance Committee has been committed to studying our financial information from years past and preparing a strategy for future projects. Hand in hand with our Community Projects Committee, this strategy currently includes our ongoing Crawley Plaque project, initiated by past director George Shirreff (more news to come very soon!), and several other ideas for future projects including upkeep of 19th-century Ottawa mayor John Scott’s grave in Gatineau, a plaque to commemorate what was the Indigenous burial ground near the site of the Canadian Museum of History, and a virtual exhibit showcasing our members’ oral histories of Ottawa to celebrate our city’s bicentennial in 2026.

But we also want to hear from you! What projects would you like to see our Society get involved with? Send us your ideas to historicalottawa@gmail.com.

Our Special Events Committee has also been hard at work organizing our fall outing to Vankleek Hill and a very special February luncheon, which, if successful, we hope will become a regular event.

Please remember to check your email SPAM folders for important information from our Special Events Committee coming to you from historicalottawaevents@gmail.com. As we move towards digital communication, it is vital that you, our members, receive our updates, so please add us to your contacts.

Needless to say, our Communications Committee has been busy as ever managing our website, email, and Facebook page. And of course, this newsletter comes to us courtesy our Publications Committee, dedicated over the summer months to bringing you interesting news.

We are hoping to add one more committee to our roster – a Human Resources Committee – to manage our awards to local students and coordinate our student volunteers. If you have a background in Human Resources and can help us out – please write us at historicalottawa@gmail.com.

And we are still actively recruiting our members to help out with our Regular and Special Events Committees. If you want to have some fun and help us organize our monthly afternoon meetings and evening presentations or plan our next fun seasonal outing – please let us know at historicalottawa@gmail.com.

I hope to see you all in September at our new location and I invite you to send in your suggestions for outings, presentations, community projects, or anything else that springs to mind to historicalottawa@gmail.com.

Before signing off, I would like to highlight the contributions of Regular Events Coordinator Anne McLay who (among many other contributions!) hosted our information table at the Ottawa Regional Heritage Fair last spring. She represented us in the most professional and enthusiastic manner – personally framing and displaying our beloved Ruth MacMillan lithograph and even setting out a bowl of chocolates to encourage the young folk to visit our table and learn more about us.

Thank you Anne!

Finally, I would like to feature our member Peter Ryan, who generously invited me to Billings Estate this past spring to enjoy the rich history of the Bytown Fire Brigade! I am hoping to feature more about this fascinating group in future newsletters.

HSO president Karen Lynn Ouellette attended a Bytown Fire Brigade spring display at Billings Estate.
‘...in slow time and in perfect silence’

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(This location is back of Booth street.)

This was a sad duty for Mrs. Hill. For her it was no new service. As an early Canadian Florence Nightingale she had assisted the surgeons when the wounded of Lundy’s Lane and other battles had been carried into crude dressing stations. During the war she was familiar with the sight of the badly wounded and the newly dead.

Philemon Wright was waiting with team and wagon at the crossing of the Jock to convey the body on its last journey to the Ottawa river and thence by boat to Quebec. Mrs. Hill contrived to suspend a mattress to the four sides of the wagon and in this manner the body reached the Ottawa for it could not have been taken there by canoe.

On arrival at Quebec September 2, the body lay in state until the 4th and taken for interment to the Anglican Cathedral. The hearse was followed to the grave by the officers of the Crown, civil and military, the Legislative and Executive Council and a large crowd of citizens. The body was interred in a vault of the Cathedral between the pulpit and communion table.

The text on a brass plaque at the site reads: “BENEATH are deposited THE MORTAL REMAINS of CHARLES, Duke of Richmond, Lenox and Aubigny: THE MONUMENT TO WHOSE MEMORY IS PLACED IN THE NORTH GALLERY of this CHURCH.”

The Cathedral of the Holy Trinity (for the Diocese of Quebec) was the first Anglican Cathedral built outside the British Isles, erected between 1800 and 1804 at the expense of the Crown.

The ‘Lenox’ spelling on the brass plaque also appears on a historical display set up within an alcove of the Cathedral.

Military Orders in Quebec City
for the Funeral Parade of the Corpse of the Duke of Richmond
(Transcribed by George Neville)
No. 5 — Dep’y Adj’ General’s Office, Quebec, 3rd Sept’ 1819

Memorandum
The whole of the Troops composing the Garrison of Quebec with fifteen pieces of Field Artillery will be under Arms in the Square in the front of the Chateau St. Lewis [sic] at ¼ before 4 o’clock to morrow afternoon for the purpose of attending the funeral of His Grace the Duke of Richmond late Governor in Chief and Commander of the Forces in British North America.

The Troops will form a line extending from the Gate of the Chateau by St. Lewis [sic] & Garden Streets to the Principal Entrance of the Cathedral Church.

Upon the Corpse being brought out of the Chateau the whole will present arms, after which they will rest upon their arms reversed while the procession is passing and the Drums of each Corps muffled, with roll as the Corpse passes.

Minute Guns will commence firing at 3 oclock, and continue until the Corps has entered the Church. - As soon as the Service is ended a signal will be given, when one round from the Field Guns will be fired hourly & distinctly followed by a volley of charges from the Infantry; then a second and a third round in like manner after which the Troops will move off in slow time and in perfect silence – no music Playing or Drums beating. - The officer Commanding the Troops and the major of Brigade will appear mounted, all other officers on Foot.

It is expected that all persons belonging to the Public Military Department do attend - their places in the procession will be posted out by the Town ______.

The public Military offices to be closed to morrow – also all Military canteens – the officer Commanding the Garrison will also be pleased to direct that soldiers confined in the Regimental or Main Guards for crimes not of a heinous nature may be released on this melancholy occasion.

No. 7 The pall Bearers will appear in their scarfs on Monday – and it is confidently expected that all officers, throughout British North America will evince their respect for the Memory of the late illustrious Commander by continuing to wear Mourning for six weeks.

No Fatigue duties to be furnished by the Troops to morrow.

Signed / J Harvey DaG

Order of Procession

Persons of the Public Military Department under the rank of Deputy Adjutant; Officers of the Staff and Departments and such Militia and unattached officers as may be desirous of attending according to their respective Ranks and that of their departments – the persons of each rank preceding. - This part of the procession will be closed by the heads of the several departments & the Adj’ General of Militia – the whole walking two & two.

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A spiritual place, a gentler poem

Following on from our last, somewhat acerbic haibun lamenting the sad state of development of the Chaudière Falls and its historic sites, I recall a gentler poem I wrote several years ago.

I went fishing for pickerel from the shore of Victoria Island with my buddy Pete Gariepy. It was that haunting eventide when pickerel bite and wood smoke wisps from the Anishinabek encampment with its tipi and longhouse, now levelled by fire.

It was a spiritual time, with the totem pole’s shadow pointing symbolically at the primary elements of “whiteman’s oppression”, British government, law and church, represented by Parliament Hill, the Supreme Court and Christ Church Cathedral high above on the southern shore.

Walter Harris was the pole carver and the hereditary Chief to the Fire Weed Clan of the Gitxsan Nation from Kispiox on the Northwest Coast of British Columbia. He believed that totem poles “are our deeds to the land. They serve as witnesses to the encounter of our ancestors with the supernatural beings who control all the fish, animals and plants in our world. They are our charter of rights from time immemorial.”

As we fished, a massive thunderstorm blew in from the west. Its lightning through the setting sun backlight the tipi and the concrete halls of bureaucracy in Hull, and fired the sumac leaves.

This is a very spiritual place and we were humbled in awe of the spirits of Nature, the same which Harris carved into a western cedar.

‘Spirit of the Chaudière Falls’

On Victoria Island’s sacred bank we fish the setting sun for ghosts of pickerel haunting Kichisipi’s veins, beneath silhouettes of law, democracy and the church, authority and oppression, depending on your point of view, your history.

Thunder echoes down the Valley a tipi cone back-lit in lightning glow, the restless Spirit of Akikodjiwan calls upon Great Manitou to release her concrete chains, to sever the damned noose which throttles her of life and sturgeon song.

For she too would once again boom into her cauldron boil, her foaming hair cascading; longing for her pristine glory wreathed in pine and spruce, her coronet a double rainbow, her cloaks of mist and ice.

Two centuries she has waited poisoned, pinioned by industrial man who still demands her labour, profits from her shores where the wastelands and the mills will soon be gentrified with malls and condominiums for the ultra-rich astride her flumes.

And she will keep on waiting.

Bryan D. Cook, Ottawa, 2017
History-fuelled enthusiasm at fair

By Anne McLay

There was much enthusiasm in the air at the Ottawa Regional Heritage Fair held at the Canadian Museum of History on April 24. Students in area public schools from grades 4-10 arrived early in the morning and bustled about setting up their projects in the great hall. Each project displayed various aspects of Canadian history and culture. Some of the topics included The Defenbunker (with a radiation detector on hand), the Famous Five, the Halifax Explosion and Residential School Survivors just to name a few. Some of the students dressed up in period costume for the event.

The Historical Society of Ottawa is an official sponsor of the fair. The HSO provides two of the awards for students — The Sir Richard William Scott Award and the Indigenous Sacred Chaudière Falls Award. The HSO also provides each participating student with a bilingual souvenir medal inscribed with the name of the Society and its motto.

Several HSO members, including our President Karen Lynn Ouellette, officiated at the event. HSO member François Bregha was our official spokesperson and opened the fair with some inspiring words on behalf of the HSO.

HSO members Bryan Cook and Ben Weiss adjudicated projects at the event and spent time listening to students and evaluating them on their knowledge and presentations.

There was an HSO table set up with pamphlets, newsletters and our canal lithograph featured on display. Karen Lynn, Ben and Anne McLay provided information on HSO activities to interested passersby at the table.

Mayor Jim Watson arrived in the afternoon for the official awards ceremony. He met with Karen Lynn and both proceeded to the podium for the presentation of awards.

Karen Lynn presented The Sir Richard William Scott Award to Derek Strachan and Joseph Schmidt of Glashan Public School for their project titled, “Comment le Canal a-t-il impacté le Canada?” The award is given for the best research on an Ottawa-themed historical project. The students were awarded a certificate, along with a cash prize of $200.

Karen Lynn also presented the Indigenous Sacred Chaudière Falls Award to Nevaeh Sarazin of St. James School for her project on Pikwakanagan History. She won the same award in 2018. The award recognizes participation by Indigenous youth in projects that reflect and celebrate Indigenous culture and traditions. The student was awarded a certificate and a $100 prize.

It was an event-filled day and it looked like all went home happy and looking forward to next year.

RICHMOND: Con’t from page 13

The Civil Procession consisting of the Law and other principal officers of the Crown; The Honorable The Judges; The Honorable The Members of both Councils; The Honorable The Chief Justice; A Military Band playing a dead March; The Body; The H^{bie} A Ly Duchesney — Dep^{b} Adj^{t} Gen^{1} of the Forces; The H^{Hie}\ M L Perceval — D^{a} Q^{b} M^{c} Gen^{1} of D^{a} and H^{bie} Judge Perrault — Commandant of the Garrison, as Pall Bearers and followed by the Members of His Graces family; Mourners.

The Corpse will be met at the door of the Cathedral by the Right Rev’d The Lord Bishop of Quebec and the Clergy. The Procession will be closed by a Company of Grenadiers with their arms reversed & Pikes Trusted(?). The Military Band will file off at the Door of the Cathedral and cease playing as the Body enters the Church. All Persons are expected to appear in full dress.

References

2. LAC, MG 24 A 14, 1839…
5. Ibid., p. 44.
6. Ibid., p. 46.
7. Ibid., p. 47.
8. Ibid., p. 48.
9. Ibid., p. 49.
Sept. 28, 1826: Bridge builders get to work

Stories from HSO director James Powell’s popular “Today in Ottawa’s History” blog are featured at the society’s website, and excerpts appear here, too. To see full stories linked to dates throughout the calendar year, go directly to James’ blog at: todayinottawahistory.wordpress.com

In Canada’s capital, six bridges span the mighty Ottawa River: the Alexandra (or Interprovincial) Bridge; the Champlain Bridge; the Chaudière Bridge; the Macdonald-Cartier Bridge; the Portage Bridge; and the Prince of Wales Bridge (now closed). While the current Chaudière Bridge dates from 1919, it is the site of the first and for a long time the only bridge across the Ottawa River.

The need for a bridge crossing the Ottawa River became apparent after work commenced on the Rideau Canal in the summer of 1826 under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel John By of the Royal Engineers. The plan was to build a series of bridges to link Lower Canada on the northern shore of the Ottawa River to Upper Canada on the southern shore at the Chaudière Falls where the river temporarily narrows, using the islands mid-river as stepping stones. All were to be made of stone and masonry except for the widest section which was to be made of wood given the width of the gap, the depth of the water and the speed of the current. Col. By later modified this plan. Five of the seven bridges were made of wood—(from south to north over the river,) a 117-foot truss bridge, a small bridge over a deep chasm, a 160-foot bridge, a 212-foot truss bridge, a 180-foot bridge, and two limestone bridges.

After a quick survey—these were the days long before environmental assessments—construction began. On 28 September 1826, General George Ramsay, 9th Earl Dalhousie and Governor General of British North America, placed several George IV silver coins under a foundation stone on the Lower Canadian shore. Colonel Durnford of the Royal Engineers, Col. By, and a number of prominent area landowners, including Nicholas Sparks, Thomas McKay and Philemon Wright, attended the ceremony.

After numerous setbacks, including one collapse that cost the lives of three workers, the crossing was completed in the summer of 1828, two years after construction had commenced. Upper and Lower Canada were finally united. Fittingly, Colonel By called it the Union Bridge.