



The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

April 2013 Newsletter

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

The April Excursion

Tours: **Wednesday April 17**
10:00 a.m.
1:00 p.m.
Thursday, April 18
7:00 p.m.

Place: **The Warehouse of the Museum
Science & Technology**
2421A Lancaster Road, Ottawa

Tour Guide: **Mr. Pat Hilborn**

If you would like to go and have not signed up, there is still room available in the afternoon and evening tours. **Contact Ruth Wright 613-489-3886**

An April Excursion:

We have been invited to view the warehouse of the Museum of Science and Technology at 2421A Lancaster Road. Pat Hilborn, artifact handler, will be conducting tours in small groups throughout the premises at various times over a two day period.

The times and place are given in the box on the left. Transportation to the Museum is the responsibility of the members. If you wish to car pool contact Ruth Wright at 613-489-3886 or by e-mail at ruthbrianwright@gmail.com . Ruth will give you the names and telephone numbers of people attending the session you are interested in so you can investigate possible car pools.

Please note that this excursion will be instead of the usual monthly meeting and speaker.

Bring a Friend, Light Refreshments

This Month

1. The April excursion
2. March Presentation
3. News from the Rideau Archives
4. The Mill AGM & new board.
5. Minutes of the March. 20 meeting
6. Dickinson House

Notice

Membership 2013 Membership fees are now due. \$10 for a single membership, \$15 for a family membership.

A Strategy for New Members

Three months into the new year and we are happy to welcome back sixty-seven members. Our programs have been both interesting and educational and very well received. We are hoping to build on this strong beginning and recruit new members in an effort to get to last year's total of over 100.

So please feel free to bring friends, relatives and neighbours to our meetings. For those who have lived in the township many years, it will be an opportunity to meet old friends and discover new things about their home turf. For others, new to the area, it will be a good way of learning about the charms and history of Rideau Township. Membership is well worth the \$10 single and \$15 family fee.

Hope to see you and your guests at future meetings!!!

Opening of the Dickinson House for 2013 (HELP!!!)

The Dickinson House will open on May 4 for the 2013 season. We have planned a busy season with a variety of heritage activities for all ages. On opening day we are planning a display of unusual gadgets and artifacts.

So if you have something that qualifies as such please contact Brian Earl at (623) 692-2371 or Maureen McPhee at (613) 692-8260. Your help will be much appreciated.

The May Meeting

The May meeting will be held on May 15 and will be at Knox Presbyterian Church in Manotick. It will be our annual *"Bring and Brag"* night.

Bring along a precious artifact or treasure to share and tell about its history. The projector & screen will be available.

The March Meeting

Donna Naughton on Canadian Mammals

Article and Pictures by Lucy Martin

Donna Naughton's "The Natural History of Canadian Mammals" was published in 2012 to broad acclaim as an important addition to the field of natural science. As it happens, Naughton lives on Barnes Island, near Kemptville, close enough to our stomping grounds to be claimed as a "local" author.

Thirty-four members and guests turned out to hear Naughton's two-part talk at the cosy Carsonby Community Hall. Naughton began by explaining the book in general. A life-long biologist and a graduate of Carleton University, Naughton spent over 37 years with the Canadian Museum of Natural Science. She said much of the book was based on the world-class collections and resources found at the museum, as well as supplemental material and contributions from colleagues and institutions across the country.

Naughton paid tribute to a museum colleague, C. G. van Zyll de Jong, for starting the initial work on a modern book of this scope. But circumstances were such that the project did not come to fruition during his lifetime. Naughton decided it might not happen at all unless someone else committed to taking it to completion. It took 11 years of determined effort on her part, including 7 years of daily writing, to produce the 824 page volume and its 600 illustrations, right down to animal tracks, if any. (Some mammals leave no tracks, such as whales.)

Naughton called producing the book "the hardest thing she did" across a career that has included months of field work with no days off and moving museum collections three times.

The book is also notable for its visual content, thanks to principal artists: Paul Geraghty, Julius Csotonyi and Brenda Carter, along with skull drawings by Micheline Beaulieu-Bouchard and vole teeth by Alan McDonald. Some photos came by way of collaboration with Canadian Geographic, including the book's dramatic cover photo by Michel Duchaine and Anne-Marie Boyer. This list of credits undoubtedly leaves other names out, but you get the idea: producing a book of this scope takes a scientific and artistic village.

Other points of pride: this book is 100% Canadian. Published by the University of Toronto Press it was written, illustrated and printed within this country – something that's become quite rare. The French edition will be available this year, along with e-book versions. While the book is Canadian in focus, the entire global range of each mammal is detailed as well, since animals care not a jot for political borders and need to be understood in terms of global range. Naughton's book was intended to serve as a useful reference for all Canadians, adults and children. Copies should be found in libraries across the country and personal copies can be easily purchased at book stores or through on-line sources.

Although Naughton says a compressed field guide would be a useful extension of this larger volume, she simply lacks the stamina to attempt that at present.

Having described what went into 'the book' Naughton then presented a customized talk on mammals over time in Canada, and specifically in our own Rideau watershed.



The speaker, Donna Naughton, holding a copy of her book on Canadian mammals.

Mammal populations here would have been largely undisturbed (that is, hunted at sustainable levels) until the arrival of the European fur trade. Mammals that were eventually "over-harvested" across Canada included: beaver, otter, wolf, wolverine, cougar, bear, elk, caribou and bison.

Naughton says by the time settlers began to farm this watershed, beavers and otters were already rare. One of the first goals for farmer would be to clear the land. Another priority would be to eliminate predators that posed threats to humans or livestock, such as wolves, coyotes, wolverines, fishers, etc. (All of which had some lesser value as fur too.)

Wolves in particular were hunted, trapped or poisoned with a goal of eradication. Without a change in attitude and public concern dating from the early 1900's, even beavers may have been eliminated from much of North America.

Naughton says current beaver distribution and numbers owe much to careful conservation and re-introduction. Today's beaver population is guesstimated to be between 6-15 million beaver. Before the fur trade there may have been 60-400 million on the continent. The range in those estimates reflects the difficulty scientists have gauging natural populations, now and then. Even so, the numbers suggest at least a ten-fold reduction in overall population.

Naughton said that deforestation by settlers caused “the biggest change in the landscape since glaciation”. Deforestation and cultivation fundamentally alter ecosystems. Surprisingly, that can be a plus for certain species, such as white tail deer, ground hogs, squirrels, and human introductions like rats and mice.

For those who might say there are “so many” of a particular animal, such that “we could never run out” Naughton says history clearly proves otherwise. Those making policy today would do well to grasp the implications of cause and effect. Proper application of historical perspective can help humans look backward – and forward – with a better idea of likely outcomes, in terms of human impact on natural science and species survival.

As you might imagine, the Q&A period that followed Naughton's talk was long, varied and enthusiastic. The audience wanted to learn more about practically everything!

We talked about porcupines and their habits: they eat bark, but they love salt. If porcupines seem fond of your cottage porch it's probably because humans stepped out and peed there – which evaporates as tasty salt! What eats porcupines, if anything? (Fishers and maybe bobcats.) We discussed squirrels, red grey and otherwise.

Should cougars be re-established? (Right now the ones seen in Eastern Ontario have all proven to be released or escaped domesticated pets. Cougars that have been habituated to humans are more likely to prey on humans, having less fear than usual.) What about wolves and coyotes? (Discussion followed, with an interesting comment: “everything gives way to a wolf pack...it's not worth the potential harm” of taking on a wolf pack.)

Moose in this area? (Moose need lots of space and are felled by a brain worm parasite carried by white tail deer. Between habitat needs and the health threat presented by deer, if you see moose roaming around here “those are dead animals walking.”)

What trends should be expected for white tail deer population? (Those numbers have rebounded to be close to pre-settlement levels, but fluctuate in response to winter and weather conditions.) Do we still have mink in this area? (Yes, some. Naughton recounts being able to lure kits to her canoe by exploiting their natural curiosity and

general indifference to humans. “They are a four-legged stomach... hungry all the time.”)

Humans may feel fishers are intimidating, but don't forget they were here first! Skunks - what eats skunks anyway? (Great horned owls. Maybe a coyote – if it's hungry enough.) Do skunks empty their glands when they spray? (Usually not all the way, so beware!) If fully discharged, how long does it take a skunk to 're-load'? (Only 2-3 hours.)

So many questions! (Perhaps we should all just buy the book!)



Discussions continued after a long question period and the adjournment of the meeting, an indicator of the interest in the presentation.

I will close with this comment from Naughton's talk: “If we do treat our wildlife like the early Europeans did – and slaughtered all those hundreds of thousands, millions, of beavers – then we deserve what we get – and it's not going to be nice.”

North Grenville Historical Society April Meeting

Wednesday, April 10, 7:30, 15 Water Street, Kemptville. Dr. David Shanahan will be talking about the First Nations in the history of this area, with particular reference to the recently agreed Draft Treaty between the Crown and the Algonquin peoples of Ontario, whose traditional land area includes North Grenville. Everyone welcome, no charge.

(We realize this is short notice, but some of you who get this electronically perhaps have a chance to make it.)

News from the Rideau Branch, Ottawa Archives

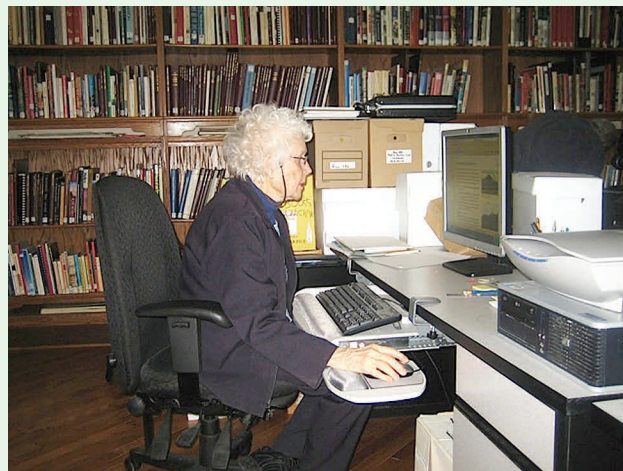
Hours: The Rideau Archives is open every Tuesday from 9:30 am to 4:30 p.m., and at other times by appointment. (613-489-2926).

Resources and Services of the Rideau Township Branch of the City of Ottawa Archives: a monthly feature in this newsletter, celebrating the services and holdings preserved in your community's archives resource centre.

The picture on the right features Coral Lindsay, a long-time Rideau Township Archives volunteer pursuing research, on a computer, in the Archives Reading Room.

We invite all who are curious and interested in the history of the Rideau Township to come in and discover your community's history.

And yes, some of that history was written by Mrs. Lindsay. You can see her at the Rideau Archives during our regular business hours on Tuesdays, from 9h30 AM to 4h30 PM. We are located at 6581 Fourth Line Road; telephone number: 613-489-2926.



Watson's Mill Events

The Mill is located at 5525 Dickinson Street, Dickinson Square, Manotick. Free parking on-site.

Web Site: www.watsonsmill.com

Watson's Mill hours of operation: Office hours: weekdays, 10:00-4:00. Watson's Mill: starting Saturday, May 5th: open to visitors daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please visit www.watsonsmill.com for a complete calendar of events. Below are some highlights for the April - May, 2013 period.

1 Raise the Roof' Concert: featuring MonkeyJunk: Saturday, April 13th. Doors open: 6:30pm. Show starts: 7:30pm: At the Manotick United Church. Tickets: \$25 per person or \$60 for a family pack.

For our second co-production of the winter/spring season Watson's Mill and the Manotick United Church are co-producing a concert featuring the Juno award winning (2012 Blues Album of the Year) blues trio, MonkeyJunk. We are very happy that The Mill Tavern has joined us as a concert sponsor. The show will be held at the Manotick United Church on Saturday, April 13th. Doors open at 6:30 (pre-concert social hour with cash bar) Show time is 7:30 PM. Tickets: \$25.00 or \$60 for a family pack.

Things will be a bit livelier for this show. MonkeyJunk's music is described as "a generous helping of swamp rhythm and blues, soul boogie and bedroom funk" and there is bound to be lots of toe tapping and knee slapping in the concert hall. Tickets are available at Manotick Office Pro, Main Street, Manotick and at Watson's Mill. If you want to make it "dinner and a show", we have discounts for concert-goers at The Mill Tavern and Burgers On Main.

2 *And don't forget the 2013 season for the Mill opens May 4th.*

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

Watson's Mill Annual General Meeting

Wind and rain did not deter a solid turnout for the WMMI AGM this past Sunday. Outgoing Board President Terry McGovern presided over a two-hour meeting that began and ended on time, with useful discussion and a few good laughs along the way.

Highlights included a very strong slate of seven candidates for five board vacancies and updates on replacing the leaky roof.

Thanks to outstanding community support, the "Raise the Roof" goal of \$500,000 is very nearly met. (Contributions to take that fund 'over the top' are always welcome!) By the time you read this, work should have begun – a full 6 months ahead of schedule. Of course, renovations can present surprises. But – if all goes well – this project may be completed by the grand opening on May 4th.

The present roof is over 90 years old, having been installed in 1922. Allister Savage showed the audience an example of stainless steel shingles (mounted on the display panel) and also held up the material that will make up the new roof: aluminum shingles.

Aluminum shingles are long lasting and were deemed the best choice for looks and historic authenticity. Savage thanked Coral Lindsay and retired architect Barbara Humphreys for their valuable contributions in vetting the project. He cautioned the new roof will require patience in terms of appearance, saying: "Don't be shocked. It's going to be shiny at first. It will dull up."

The five vacancies on the board were filled by Joe Clapp, Myra McFarlane, Maureen McPhee, Allister Savage and Winston Spratt. Officers will be elected by the new board soon. Outgoing board members include: Wendy Eberwein, William (Bill) Schaub, Terry McGovern and Diane Wastle.



Roof replacement has begun: New WMMI board member Allister Savage explains details about the aluminum shingles selected for the job.



WMMI Board for 2013: (front row, left to right) Sonja Vanek, Maureen McPhee, Myra McFarlane, Joe Clapp, WMMI Manager Isabelle Geoffrion and Winston Spratt. (Back row) Allister Savage, Karlis Adamsons and Gerry Reasbeck (Not pictured: Kris Schulz)

Minutes of the Rideau Township Historical Society March Meeting March 20, 2013 Carsonby Community Centre, 6047 Prince of Wales Drive

Opening: The Rideau Township Historical Society met at Carsonby Hall, 6047 Prince of Wales Dr., Carsonby, Ontario, for the regular March meeting and a program by author Donna Naughton on The Natural History of Canadian Mammals and Mammals over Time in the Rideau Watershed. There were about 34 members and guests present. President Brian Sawyer called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Minutes: It was moved by Maureen McPhee and seconded by Scott Cameron that the minutes of the February 20, 2013 meeting as published in the March Newsletter be approved. Carried.

Finance: Treasurer Colin Wright announced that the current book value was \$24,410.59, and explained the increase from last month was due to the receipt of city grants. \$358 is outstanding, and the bank balance is \$24,797.

Membership: Owen Cooke reported in Pat Earl's absence that there are currently 11 life members, 4 complimentary members, and 60 paid members.

Dickinson House: Maureen McPhee reported that the interior painting is almost finished. A joint meeting was held recently of the boards of Watson's Mill Manotick Inc. and the RTHS; the two groups share a vision of one heritage destination (the Mill, Dickinson House and the Carriage Shed) and agreed to work together to preserve these buildings. They will have separate meetings with the city regarding expressions of interest, and then will meet together to share findings and strategize for going forward. The summer program is on the website. The student positions have been advertised, and interviews will be taking place in April.

Brian Sawyer noted that the AGM of Watson's Mill Manotick Inc. will be on April 7 at 2:00 pm; members are urged to attend and support Maureen McPhee who has been nominated as a director.

Program: Ruth Wright, program co-ordinator, noted that the April 17 meeting is a tour of the storage facilities at the Museum of Science and Technology by Pat Hilbor, artefact handler. Pat would prefer smaller groups, so we will break up into different groups, and members are asked to choose between morning, afternoon or evening. The May program will be a history of the fire department, and June will be an excursion.

Evening Program: Ruth then introduced our speaker, Donna Naughton, author of a comprehensive book, The Natural History of Canadian Mammals.

Adjournment: After the illustrated talk and many questions, Marguerite Rogers thanked Donna and presented her with a copy of Buildings of Old Rideau Township: A Driving Tour, by Betty Bartlett. Members were then invited to browse through several display copies of Donna's book, then enjoy refreshments provided by Melanie Hayes.