

The Rideau Township Historical Society

Preserving and Promoting local history for the former Rideau Township

December 2012 Newsletter

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

The January Meeting is the AGM

Date: January 16, 2013
Time: 7:30 pm
Place: Knox Presbyterian
Church
5533 Dickinson Street
Manotick

In addition to the business meeting there will be a program on Scottish heritage with Coral Lindsay. See below.

This Month

1. The Annual General Meeting
2. From the Pen of the President
3. The November Meeting
4. The Dickinson House
5. News from the Rideau Archives

Bring a Friend, Light Refreshments

Nominations for the RTHS Executive for 2012

Would you like to take on a more active role in your historical society? Do you have some good new ideas? Or could you simply do it better?

If you would like to take up a position on the executive for 2013, or wish to nominate someone else for a position (with their permission, of course), please contact a member of the Nominating Committee:

Nominating Committee:

- **Marguerite Rogers** - smrogers5560@hotmail.com - 613-692-3802
- **Owen Cooke** - oacooke@gmail.com - 613-489-3962
- **Lucy Martin** - lucy@voiceworksnorth.com - 613-489-4005

Please note that there will also be an opportunity to make a nomination at the annual meeting on Wednesday, 16 January.

Program for the January Meeting

Scottish Heritage Night
Speaker: Coral Lindsay
The Adventures (or Misadventures) of Robbie Burns

Piper: Scott Cameron will entertain.

Bring in any special Scottish relics or artifacts you would like to share.

Enjoy some special Scottish treats.
Invite a Scottish friend.

Och! Bound to be a wee bit 'o fun!!
See you there!

RTHS Annual Christmas Party

Wednesday, December 12th, 2012
Manderley Golf Club,
5920 Prince of Wales Dr.
6:00 p.m.

Musical Entertainment by Mr. Len Goldfarb

Hot turkey buffet. Cost: \$30.00



Remember the delicious buffet at the RTHS Christmas Party last year. Well we're doing it again this year.

From the Pen of the President

Some months ago I read an article in the Globe and Mail by John Ibbitson entitled "The Charter proves to be Canada's Gift to the World". The Charter being Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms which was adopted thirty years ago. Ibbitson argues that the Charter has not only become a "national bedrock, but the Charter has replaced the American Bill of Rights as the constitutional document most emulated by other nations".

Many of us will recall the role Jean Chretien, Roy Romanow and Roy McMurtry played in drafting the "Kitchen Accord". Most also acknowledge that we would never have had the Charter without the creativity of Bill Davis. Recent evidence suggests Brian Peckford also played a major role in crafting the deal.

The Charter prohibits discrimination based on gender or race, protects language rights and guarantees the presumption of innocence. The "notwithstanding clause" pro-

vides balance between legislatures and courts by providing legislatures with only limited powers to override court decisions.

The other pillar in our governance model, our Supreme Court has established itself as a world leader in balancing constitutional and legislative powers, a role the American Supreme Court may have lost.

Canada was the first commonwealth nation to adopt a Charter of Rights. Many other common law countries as they attempt to create or revise their own charters or constitutions draw on the Canadian model. That Canadian Model, built around our Legislative Assemblies, our Charter and our Courts is an example to the world. We have a rich governance heritage. We must be vigilant in protecting and where possible enhancing this governance system which forms the foundation of our wonderful country - Canada.

The November Meeting Speaker: Robert Fleck

Article and Pictures by Lucy Martin

November's focus on remembrance is an appropriate month to feature military-themed topics. Speaker Rob Fleck certainly fulfilled that goal by speaking about WW II's British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP) and efforts by Vintage Wings of Canada to promote greater appreciation of aviation history in this country.

By my count, the hall at Pierce's Corners already boasted a fine turnout of 64 adults when the doors opened again, ushering in 14 scouts and troop leaders from 1st North Gower/Kars.

The scouts found space alongside the main audience and politely endured a run-through of minutes and reports. They listened attentively to the main presentation and asked good questions after Fleck's talk. Hopefully they enjoyed the experience. It was also gratifying to see a number of Air Force veterans and various pilots in the audience.

Speaking of usual business, Membership Director Pat Earl was able to announce RTHS reached its 100th paid membership that night, a good sign of vigor for the organization.

Rob Fleck is a Royal Canadian Air Force veteran and a pilot with considerable experience in commercial aviation. He is nearing the end of a 3-year stint as CEO of Vintage Wings of Canada before returning to Air Canada in 2013.

Some RTHS members will recall visiting Vintage Wing's main Gatineau facility on our 2009 June field trip. It was impressive: hangars were pristine, planes were polished to a high gleam, the volunteers and staff exuded can-do spirit and wry humor. (There must be something in the

coffee there!) That same élan is on display at Vintage Wings' extensive website: <http://www.vintagewings.ca/>

Fleck explained how high tech magnate Mike Potter's personal fancy for vintage planes evolved into a not-for-profit organization dedicated to remembering and telling Canadian stories that share the experience of aviation. Fleck claims the planes at Vintage Wings are only a tool to unlock doors, that it's really about the people. Sorry, but I don't fully buy that. It's clearly about both: planes and people.



Photo Credit National Film Board of Canada / Canada. Dept. of National Defence /Library and Archives Canada / PA-136047

Pilot trainees with Curtiss P-36 aircraft at the Little Norway training centre, Toronto Island

Telling Canadian stories that celebrate early aviation and honour war heroes is something Fleck and others at Vintage Wings clearly relish. As he flashed through an extensive slide show, Fleck detailed name after name, with

hardly enough time to explain what made each one remarkable. Some of those figures are well-known, others less so. I'll include two.

John Gillespie Magee Jr. was one of roughly nine thousand Americans who came to Canada to train as pilots and participate in WW II before the U.S. entered the conflict. Magee learned to fly as part of the BCATP program in Ottawa and served in the RCAF's 412 Fighter Squadron. He wrote what became aviation's most famous poem a few months before he was killed in a training accident in England in 1941, at age 19. The first and last lines of "High Flight" are inscribed on his grave marker: "Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth...Put out my hand and touched the face of God."

442nd squadron pilot Arnold Roseland died in July of 1944, after taking on a superior number of German planes in a dogfight witnessed by French villagers below. One observer, Pierre Behier, grew up to become Mayor of St. Martin de Mailloc and was part of a 50-year effort to locate and thank the pilot's survivors in Canada. (This is more fully recounted in "The Hero Behind the Resurrection of the Roseland Spitfire" in the "stories" section of the Vintage Wings website.)

Moving beyond individuals, the talk turned to Canada's crucial contribution to the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP). Why build airfields and training programs across Canada? Well, when World War II began in 1939 it was clear that more pilots and flight crews were desperately needed. Canada was the answer. Unlike embattled England, this country had the space, the resources and still-peaceful skies, where a massive training program could be conducted.

As mentioned in the announcement for November's meeting, in manpower and cost, the BCATP exceeded building the Canadian Pacific Railway. 105 airports were built in only 18 months - many of which are still in use today.

According to Veterans Affairs Canada:

The BCATP was an outstanding success. By the end of the war, it had graduated 131,533 pilots, observers, flight engineers, and other aircrew for the air forces of Canada, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. While over half the BCATP graduates came from the North American continent, the plan trained personnel from all over the world including about 2,000 French, 900 Czechoslovakians, 680 Norwegians, 450 Poles, and about the same number of Belgians and Dutch.

Fleck credits Vintage Wings volunteer Rob KostECKA with organizing the material he presented on BCATP. Fleck explained the program by following what the BCATP process was like for an individual trainee, Bill McRae, from Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Starting as a civilian McRae went to a manning depot (recruitment office) in Brandon. Then he got two weeks of basic training and Initial Training School in Regina, SK. Elementary Flying Training School took place in Portage La Prairie, MB.

Fleck said whereas today's military bends over backwards to prevent loss of life during training, at that time the BCATP program anticipated and accepted up to a 16% casualty rate. Why? Because flying is a life and death activity and that's even more true in wartime. A certain level of "do or die" reality was perhaps a logical prequel to the even more harrowing casualty rate encountered when flying actual combat missions.

McRae's last stretch in Canada was Service Flying Training School at Camp Borden, ON, where trainees learn skills needed to fly fighters, bombers or transports. This stage included time spent in a Link Trainer, an early flight simulator. (Five thousand of those were built in Ganoque during WW II.) McRae graduated as part of Borden's 18th war-time class, after losing two classmates during training.

Once trained, McRae still had to get to the action in Europe. He departed Halifax in a convoy of 31 ships - nine of which were sunk while crossing the submarine-infested Atlantic. Only after all that could the new pilots start the "real" flying and dying. McRae was one of the lucky ones who did come home at war's end.

Returning to the present, Vintage Wings has an ambitious program called "Yellow Wings" intended to share the



Eric Field and Audrey Renton chatted with Robert Fleck after the meeting.

BCATP story with Canadians. In 2011 that program trained pilots to participate in the 2011-2012 western & central tour. A "down home down east" tour began in 2012 and will continue in 2013 with a "Cross Canada Air Cadet Tribute". This will further the theme: "On the wings of history go the leaders of tomorrow".

There's an all-in-the-family side to this adventure, Fleck's daughter, Heather Fleck, is Assistant Chief Pilot at Vintage Wings and served as team leader on the 2012 Yellow Wings project.

In the extensive question period that followed Fleck's presentation, he began by rebutting a recent Ottawa Citizen article that suggested Vintage Wings benefitted from potentially inappropriate in-kind services from the Department of Defense. The Nov 18th headline for the article by David Pugliese read: "Military gives private vintage air firm more than \$600,000 in free services"

Fleck disagreed with the article's characterization of certain facts, including ones that are not in dispute. Yes, the

military did provide Vintage Wings with a period ejection seat - borrowed, Fleck says, from a plane not currently in use. But Fleck rejects assigning a like-new purchase price tag for the loan of old, dormant parts.

While Pugliese's article questions whether tax dollars (or equivalent services) should be extended to non-governmental organizations, Fleck expressed frustration about the harm such accusations can cause for groups which run on volunteer efforts and are dedicated to public service.

Besides further questions from the young scouts in attendance, several knowledgeable members of the audience recounted personal memories of early aviation and war experiences during the discussion period that followed.

We certainly appreciated Fleck taking the time to come share his expertise and passion for Canadian aviation with us in a thoroughly enjoyable manner.



We were pleased that a number of veterans as well as the boy scout troop were able to attend the presentation in Pierces Corners. We apologize but we did not get the name of the gentleman shown here talking to Robert Fleck after the talk.

The Dickinson House, a Great Season

It was a banner year for Dickinson House (DH) in 2012. With support from a City of Ottawa grant of \$6,000, and federal contributions totalling over \$12,000 for the hiring of students, DH was able to be open to the public from Wednesdays to Sundays and holidays from May to August.



Part of the apples and honey displays for the harvest weekend. Display by Coral Lindsay.

From September 1 until December 4, the house reverted to a weekends and holidays schedule, supported by volunteers. As a result of the extended summer hours, the number of visitors to DH increased from an average of 4,000 per year to 6,000 in 2012. Another metric. We logged 1478 volunteer hours in the house. We've concluded the community is lucky to have us.

As in previous years, DH took part in Doors Open Ottawa in May. A program of special theme weekends was deliv-

ered throughout the summer, focused on subjects such as spinning and weaving, vintage automobiles, heritage gardening, domestic skills, heritage trades and tools, and Victorian Christmas crafts.

As part of Dickinson Days, there was an artifact identification contest; apple and honey production was featured during the fall Harvest Festival; and a Victorian Tea was held on Women's Day. Enjoyment of these events was further augmented by the installation of rotating exhibits in the foyer and on the third floor, reflecting the theme of each special weekend. In addition, space was provided on the second floor for an exhibit on 19th-Century Etiquette, which was installed courtesy of the Goulbourn Museum. Through research at Library and Archives Canada, a series of photographs of the Dickinson family was identified and copies were made available for visitors to enjoy.

DH sponsored three public concerts in 2012 featuring local musicians on keyboard, bagpipes and brass instruments. In particular, RTHS worked in cooperation with Watson's Mill to help present a Canadian Royal Salute by the Manotick Brass, in honour of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee. This concert was followed by an old-fashioned homemade ice-cream party.

Judging by the many positive comments in the DH Guest Book and the smiling faces that we saw throughout the season, a good time was had by all who visited DH in 2012.



Part of a vintage toys display by Coral Lindsay



A display by Melanie Hayes for the Victorian Tea.

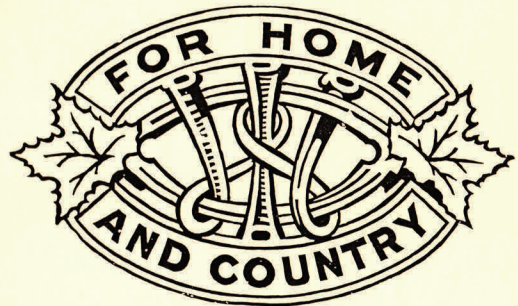
News from the Rideau Branch, Ottawa Archives

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

The Women's Institute is an educational organization made up of women interested in the domestic arts, e.g. quilting, nutrition, homemaking in general, and are also interested in literacy, education, world affairs, consumer affairs, agriculture, health, etc. The whole concept was striving to improve domestic skills and to educate, "for home and country."

The Rideau Township Branch of the City of Ottawa Archives holds the records and documentation gathered by the WI of Kars, Manotick and North Gower. It includes historical photographs, documents from the community's residences, organizations and institutions and stories preserved by institute members.

This collection includes one of the most treasured of projects of the local Women's Institutes, the Tweedsmuir histories of Kars, North Gower and Manotick.



Tweedsmuir History
of Kars

Volume One

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

MINUTES OF THE RIDEAU TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING

November 21, 2012, Pierces Corners

Opening: The Rideau Township Historical Society met at Pierce's Corners Hall, 3048 Pierce Rd. (at Malakoff). The President, Bill Tupper, opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m. and welcomed everyone present and especially guest speaker, Robert (Rob) Fleck, who spoke on the topic "The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan". The meeting was well attended with about 75 people present, including some young boy scouts.

Minutes: Minutes of the Oct 17th meeting held in Burritt's Rapids were published in the November RTHS Newsletter.

Finance: The Treasurer Colin Wright announced that the bank balance was \$15,886.38 at the end of October with an outstanding cheque of \$92.50. The finance report was moved to be accepted by Pat Earl and seconded by Bill Adams. Carried.

Membership: Patricia Earl reported that there are now 12 life members, 6 complementary member and 100 paid members. There was pleasure expressed that the paid membership had reached 100!

Publications: Director, Ellen Adamsons not being present, there was no report.

Grants: There was no report on grants.

Youth: Cam Trueman, the Youth Director, not being present, there was no report.

Communications and Digital Applications: Ron Wilson reported that this committee had met earlier in the week.

Dickinson House (DH): Bill Tupper announced that DH is open now only on Saturdays and Sundays. He reported that the Sunday Nov 3rd Ladies Day in Manotick called "Victorian Memories" with an elegant high tea at which all ladies were provided a small memento of the occasion was a great success enjoyed by all. There also was a Victorian dress exhibit at the Carriage Shed where about 30 costumes were shown. It was noted that a report had been received on artifacts in DH, for the RTHS insurance program that had been prepared by a well-known artifact appraiser, Janet Carlile.

The President also mentioned that Owen Cooke is Chair of the Nominating Committee for the 2013/14 RTHS Board of Directors and was looking for potential candidates to stand for election at the Annual General Meeting planned for January 16, 2013.

The President also mentioned the Watson's Mill's Annual Christmas Market and Fine Art Sale which would be the same weekend as the Manotick Olde Fashioned Christmas weekend with special events throughout the village on Dec 1 and 2.

Program: Ruth Wright, program co-ordinator thanked our President Bill Tupper for his leadership and efforts on behalf of the RTHS.

Ruth also mentioned that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the RTHS would be held in Kars on Wednesday Jan 16th at the Presbyterian Church. It will be planned as a Scottish night and that Coral Lindsay would be speaking about Robbie Burns. ***(Please note that the location of the AGM meeting has since been changed to the Knox Presbyterian Church in Manotick.)***

A sign-up sheet was circulated for the RTHS Christmas party planned for Dec 12, 2012 to be held at the Manderley Golf Club at 6pm. Hot Turkey buffet for \$30 each and entertainment by Mr Len Goldfarb are planned for the evening.

Evening Program: The British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP)

Rob Fleck, President and CEO of Vintage Wings of Canada, presented a slide show on the history of the BCATP.

Adjournment: The presentation ended at 9pm and the speaker was presented with a contribution to Vintage Wings from the RTHS. The meeting then continued with informal discussion and refreshments organized by Melanie Hayes.