



Rideau Township Historical Society

September

Newsletter

2023

*Preserving
the Past
to Enrich
the Future*

September Event

Rideau Township Historical Society

Presents

STEAMBOATS ON THE RIDEAU

In Person or Via ZOOM

**Sept. 20
2023
7:30 P.M.**



**Manotick
United
Church**

Since 2020, Dickinson House Museum in Manotick has been home to a popular exhibit tracing the history of steam transportation on the Rideau Canal system. The Rideau Township Historical Society has recently published a companion booklet to the exhibit.

Join us on September 20th as Maureen McPhee, curator of the exhibit, shares insights gained and images found while researching and creating the exhibit.

This is a FREE EVENT ~ ALL ARE WELCOME!

*Refreshments and social time will follow the presentation;
"Steamboats on the Rideau" will also be available for purchase*

**To attend via ZOOM visit rideautwphistory.org,
or scan the QR code on this page**



Preserving the Past to Enrich the Future



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

President's Message

Welcome back everyone, I trust that it has been a good summer for all.

After our summer excursion in June to Smiths Falls (see the summary article in this month's newsletter) the 2023/24 Fall/Winter/Spring program series begins September 20th at the Manotick United Church.

Maureen McPhee will be presenting "Steamboats on the Rideau" based on the exhibit she created for the Dickinson House Museum. RTHS has also published a booklet based on the exhibit, and it will be available for purchase at the September meeting. I am certain that the author will be available to sign your copy. For those interested in a little pre-reading, Ken Watson has authored a short paper in the Friends of the Rideau Newsletter on Colonel By's "First Rideau Trip." The link is below.

<https://www.rideau-info.com/canal/articles/first-steamboat.html>

The planned October launch of the most recent RTHS publication project "North Gower" may be delayed; more information will be forthcoming about the meeting in October. In November, RTHS member Owen Cooke will be speaking to us regarding the *Drill Halls and Armouries in Eastern Ontario*. As well, planning is underway for a Christmas get together, and for the Annual General Meeting in the new year.

RTHS is always on the lookout for both new members and individuals to serve on the Board. The work is not onerous and there is always a social nature to our meetings. If you know of anyone who might be interested let me know and I will reach out to them. In addition, if you have any topic that might be of interest to the Society, please let me know. One of the interesting finds lately is a book titled: *Rideau Township Roads, 1800 to 1925* authored by Kathleen James and published by RTHS. This would be an interesting topic for one of our monthly meetings.

~ Doug Culham



Rideau King - 1920, by Jack Cook

In Memoriam

Edward Anderson

July 5, 1940 - June 16, 2023

It is with sadness that we announce the peaceful passing of Ed Anderson on June 16, 2023 after a lengthy illness.

Ed, along with his wife Jane, was a long-time member of RTHS. Born in Aberdeen, Scotland, Ed emigrated to Canada in 1966 and settled in Carleton Golf & Yacht Club and later Manotick.

Dr. Anderson fulfilled the dental requirements of many faithful patients at the Manotick Dental Clinic for 34 years until his retirement. He was an outdoor enthusiast and loved to golf, garden, and ski to name only a few of his passions. He was a keen artist, a founding member of the Manotick Art Association and an active participant in and supporter of many community events.

Our heartfelt condolences are extended to his wife, Jane, and to his children Lesley (Glenn), Kevin, Karen (Jonas) and their families.



Coral Lindsay Memorial History Award

Each year RTHS awards the Coral Lindsay Memorial History Award to a graduating high school student from the 2 schools in our area.

This year we are pleased to announce the successful candidates:

Trinity Shane - South Carleton High School
Liam Nearing - St. Mark Catholic High School

We hope this scholarship will assist them in their scholarly pursuits and we extend our best wishes to them in the years ahead.



Trinity Shane Receiving the Coral Lindsay History Award at South Carleton High School

Report on Our June Event

Excursion to the Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario and Heritage House Museum

Report by Sandy McNiece

Photos by Rod Brazier, except where indicated

An excursion was made to Smiths Falls to tour the Railway Museum and Heritage House on June 17, 2023. We had a large group in the order of 25 attendees to take in the day's activities.

The day started with a guided tour of the newly updated and expanded Railway Museum on Abbott Street in Smith Falls. The museum is located on 10.5 acres of land in the heart of Smiths Falls and was originally owned by the Canadian Northern Ontario Railway. With the closure of the train operations at this site in 1979, it was scheduled for demolition. A community group interested in the railway history and site intervened to save it from destruction in 1985 and raised funds to purchase the station building and lease a short section of track. Since this initial purchase, a massive effort has been made again by the local group to rehabilitate the station buildings, signal equipment and various infrastructure to put together the historic museum that is in place today.



The original railway initiative dates back to 1853 when the Brockville and Ottawa Railway Company (B&O) was incorporated and started building a railway line from Brockville to Smiths Falls, with plans to extend it to various Eastern Ontario communities. The first train ran from Brockville to Smiths Falls in 1859 and reached a top speed of 15mph.

Before the arrival of the railway, the Rideau Canal was the major transportation route for goods and passengers, but was limited to operation in the months when the waterway was open. The advent of the rail system in the area was instrumental in development of a number of manufacturing industries in the area, resulting in Smiths Falls becoming the industrial centre for Lanark County.



Back to the actual tour: one of the museum staff gave our group a good overview of a steam locomotive built in 1912 for the Canadian Northern Railway – a massive looking machine which was described as a strong yet simple design used for both freight and passenger service. This locomotive was moved to the railway museum in 1992. To give you an idea of the train size, the engine and tender has a combined weight of just under 100 tons, is 62 ft long and has a pulling power of 25 tons.

The museum has a number of rolling stock including a passenger car, a dining car, a sleeper car for railway workers, even cars suited out to provide dental services to remote locations and, of course, a caboose. The group was treated to a caboose ride on a short track and offered a walk through the various other cars.



*Riding the
Caboose*



*Tender
Providing
Power for
Our Ca-
boose Ride*

We finished our visit to the railway museum with a guided tour of the station including the operator's bay which was the nerve centre of communication for the station. The telegraph operator had many tasks from receiving and shipping express orders to selling tickets and giving orders to train crews and sending/receiving telegrams. The station and operator's bay area was a particularly fascinating part of the tour with so much to see and take in.



Stationmaster and Telegraph Office



Refurbished Station Interior

We broke for lunch at the "The Lockmaster's Taphouse" restaurant on Beckwith Street. This provided a time for the group to have some good food, socialize, and discuss the day's events so far.

Heritage House Museum

In the afternoon, the tour moved to the Heritage House Museum of Eastern Ontario on Old Slys Road in Smiths Falls.

This 19th century heritage home was built in 1861 for Joshua Bates and his family. Bates was a prominent mill owner and industrialist in the area who had both a grist mill and wool-carding mill. Unfortunately, Bates fell on

hard times with his investment in the Ottawa to Brockville Rail Line and went into bankruptcy. Bates died shortly after building the house, which was subsequently auctioned off and bought by his arch industry rival Truman Russell Ward.

The heritage house has two distinct unique features: one is described as a mirror image facade with the front and back side of the house identical in structure; the second is the house boasts the only two-story privy remaining in Eastern Ontario. The house was acquired by the Town of Smiths Falls in 1977 and was restored and opened to the public in 1981.



Rear Facade of Heritage House (identical to front)

The museum collection in the house depicts the lifestyle of an upper middle class family in Smiths Falls in the mid to late 19th century. The tour started in the lobby of the house which is currently used as the reception and gift area but originally was the woodshed and storage area for the house. Artifacts in the lobby include a tall desk dating back to 1860 which was used in the blacksmith's shop on Main Street in Smiths Falls and a sideboard which was originally built circa 1860 for a house in Carleton Place in Lanark County.



Museum Lobby

The first floor of the house has a series of smaller rooms starting with a summer kitchen, a pantry, a winter kitchen, dining room, hallway, library study and parlour.



Summer Kitchen

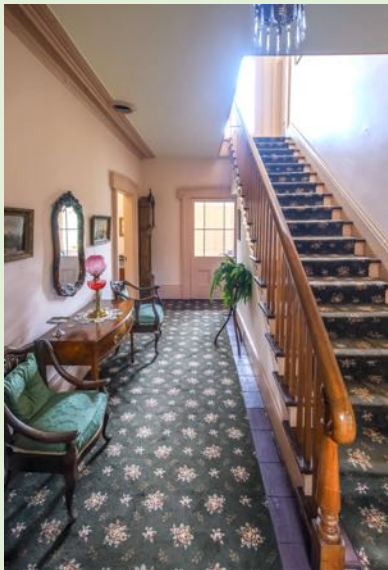
The rooms were wonderfully set out with a number of heritage pieces of furniture, mirrors, drapes and dishware that dated back again to the mid 19th century. Items of particular note were: in the hallway, the brass works for the Tall Case of a Grandfather Clock which were brought from Scotland in 1850; in the hallway and study, the oil lamps were suspended from the ceiling with a pulley systems to allow for changing the lighting conditions and filling the lamps; in the library/study, the antique telephone switchboard which was used by telephone operators to connect calls; in the parlour, a boudoir-sized Grand Piano with rosewood veneer and octagonal tapered legs which had been brought from England and was made around 1855 by Broadwood and Sons in London, England.



Staff Dining and Hallway to Main Living Area



Parlour



Main Hallway



Cookstove

The second floor consisted of a hall with huge triple-arched Palladian windows with one side facing the road and the other side facing the railway.

Two rooms upstairs which were originally ladies' sitting rooms for entertaining and crafts now serve as exhibit rooms for Smiths Falls industries current and past and an art gallery. There are just so many artifacts and items of interest in the house and I have only been able to touch on a very few of them.

Our tour group was then treated to tea and a dessert of fresh fruit, scones and cookies – a very nice finishing touch to our Heritage House tour.



Tea & Treats are Served (Sandy McNiece photo)

Our day ended with a short guided tour of the Old Slys Lock with highlights of the geography, local flora and fauna.



Exploring the Grounds

It was a very full and most enjoyable day with much appreciation due to our tour guides at the Railway Museum and Heritage House, to Rod Brazier for the many pictures he took on our tour through the day, and Maureen McPhee who did all the organizing for the excursion. WELL DONE TO ALL!

Note: The full photo collection can be viewed on the RTHS Flickr page here: <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjAJ0N9>

RTHS Online

RTHS Website

Be sure to stop by the RTHS website to keep up-to-date on RTHS activities and browse new content.

This month we are featuring “British Home Children in Canada ~ Part 1” an article originally published in the RTHS newsletter in 2011.

RTHS Facebook Page

It’s been a busy summer on the RTHS Facebook page. In addition to reaching **1,000+ Followers** on our page, we’ve continued to add new posts daily (Monday to Friday). A sampling of recent posts include:

- The Presence of the Past articles: 2381 Church St., North Gower; Echo Farm and the North Gower Observation Tower, 6412 Prince of Wales Dr.; 1136 Mill St., Manotick; 6653 Rideau Valley Dr. South, Kars; 6576 Fourth Line Rd., North Gower; 4307 Donnelly Dr. (William Kidd House)
- The Absence of the Past in North Gower Twp: The Manotick Grain Elevator; the Falls House, 5514 Manotick Main St.
- A Walking Tour of Kars (1934)
- Early Days in and Around Carsonby
- S.S.#2 North Gower (Watterson’s Corners) - 1926
- S.S.#3 Marlborough (Pierce’s Corners) - 1945
- Fire Prevention in Early North Gower
- The North Gower Volunteer Fire Department
- SS#9 North Gower (Reeve Craig) -1912
- Stephen Burritt Finds His Rapids
- S.S.#3 North Gower (Kars) and S.S.#19 (Osgoode) - 1949
- School Gardens in North Gower – early 1900s
- A Profile of Manotick Village in the Late 1800s

Click on the links under “How to Connect with RTHS” on this page to check us out.

How to Connect with RTHS



<https://rideautwphistory.org/>



www.facebook.com/rideautownshiphistory



rideautwphistory@gmail.com



<https://twitter.com/RideauTpHS>

Sign me up as a member of RTHS



Members of the Society enjoy:

- Monthly meetings featuring engaging presentations, followed by refreshments
- Group excursions to historical points of interest in Eastern ON
- Local books published by the Society, and a monthly newsletter
- Opportunities to participate and contribute as volunteers

For more information visit <https://rideautwphistory.org> and facebook.com/rideautownshiphistory.

Please **mail** this form with a cheque for membership dues payable to: Rideau Township Historical Society, Box 56, North Gower, ON, KOA 2T0, **OR** pay by e-transfer to rideautwphistory@gmail.com and email a scanned copy of the form to the same email address.

Name:

Address:

City & Postal Code:

Telephone:

Email:

Date:

Are you a new RTHS member?

Yes _____ No _____

Individual Membership \$15 _____

Life Membership \$100 _____

Family Membership (2 adults & school-age children) \$20 _____

Donation \$50 _____

Other Donation \$ _____

Receipts for paid memberships will be issued in-person; tax receipts for donations will be issued at the end of the year.

Thank you for supporting RTHS!