

# GATINEAU VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

JUNE-JULY 2005

2005-03

~~Apr - May 2004~~

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Number ~~2004-02~~

## Coming Events

Monday, May 30th, 2005  
Dunnderosa Golf Club

### GVHS Annual Dinner

*A stone's throw to the past: Tales unearthed from Ottawa's history.* Once you lift up a rock, you never know what you'll find underneath. Noted Ottawa writer and raconteur **Daniel Drolet** elevated a mountain of them in authoring a series of stories for the Ottawa Citizen to mark the City of Ottawa's 150th anniversary. He will talk about what he's found - and how he's found it - as he researched the series. No stone left unturned here!

Tickets: \$25.00 per person. To purchase a ticket, please contact Rene Nielsen at 827.1845

Sunday, June 5th, 11:30 am  
Old Chelsea Protestant Burial Ground

### Book launch and Chelsea Cemetery Tour

On June 5, attend an inauguration ceremony at the Old Chelsea Protestant Burial Ground and tour the cemetery with **Carol Martin**. This cemetery "a treasure of Chelsea history" has recently been acquired by the Municipality. In connection with Chelsea's 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Community Days Festival, Chelsea's Mayor, Jean Perras, and Councillors, will hold a brief ceremony at 11:30 a.m. at the cemetery grounds. This will be followed by a book signing (see page 3) and two cemetery tours at 12:15 and 1:00 p.m., June 5th.

Information: [www.chelsea.ca](http://www.chelsea.ca) / 827-1124

**(More coming events on page 4)**

## The William Fairbairn House

*Wakefield's treasured house to be made into a GVHS Museum.*

At the May 2 La Pêche Council meeting, councillors voted for the municipality to purchase the **William Fairbairn House** from Wakefield Harbour Development and relocate it across the river to Hendrick Park, adjacent to the Wakefield Covered Bridge. The municipality agreed to spend up to fifty thousand dollars to move the building and bring it up to municipal code.

Once in place, the GVHS will lead a project, in partnership with the municipality, to turn the building into a quality bilingual museum focusing on the local history of La Pêche and the Gatineau Valley.

### Wakefield treasure saved again!

The William Fairbairn House has great historical significance. It is one of the oldest houses in Wakefield and is certainly the first house in the village to be constructed of sawn lumber. More importantly, it is the house of Scottish settler William Fairbairn, who built the first grist mill on the La Pêche River in 1838, establishing Wakefield Village as an important commercial centre within the region.

This homestead was built in the late 1860s to replace the first house which was constructed of logs and situated closer to the river. The house and farmland was passed to the Stevenson family and later the McNally family who farmed the property until 1989.



The Fairbairn House (ca 1993), HSG 002209-007

The Fairbairn House was relocated to its current location in 1993 from its former site just below the present fire hall, by the late Andy Tommy who owned the property at that time. He did this at his own expense, since no one was willing to save the old farm house from being bulldozed to make way for the highway A5/105/366 intersection. The house remained unused until Andy sold the property to the late Dave Rinn who renovated the house and it became part of Wakefield Marina, and later Wakefield Harbour.

For many in Wakefield, the house has come to symbolize the threat of rapid development on the village's unique cachet. In his address to La Pêche council, Society member Neil Faulkner noted that *"... as it stands now, Wakefield Harbour Development is singularly unattractive. The only building that has any grace or style and which still catches the eye is the old Fairbairn home. It really does evoke memories and qualities of past times. How can we stand by and see it destroyed?"*

### Museum Objective

There are many good reasons to create a museum in La Pêche. Currently, there are no other museum facilities from Hull to Maniwaki and the establishment of a museum in La Pêche will enhance the Municipality's potential as a recreo-tourism destination. At the same time the museum will focus attention on maintaining and preserving the heritage elements that contribute to Wakefield's unique and marketable historical landscape.

### Museum steering committee

The Society has formed a steering committee, consisting of representatives from our Board of Directors, someone from the Covered Bridge Committee, representatives from the CLD and Municipality of La Pêche, and members from the wider community with relevant abilities and experience.

### Historic Site Designation

The first order of business for this committee is to have the building registered on the *Quebec Répertoire des biens culturels et arrondissements*<sup>1</sup>, and *Canada's Historic Places Register*<sup>2</sup> in order to facilitate securing funding from these levels of government. We are confident that we can build the case for including this site on these registries based on the historic importance of its builder, and by the fact

that the house is an important example of the historic architecture of this region.

### Feasibility Study

By the end of May the steering committee expects to submit a proposal to the CLD des Collines-de-l'Outaouais seeking funds to write a feasibility study and business plan.

The study will enable us to determine the costs related to getting the building ready for public use, including the costs of basic services, exterior renovations, and the interior renovation required to create space for permanent and temporary museum exhibits, administrative space, and possibly space for a gift and coffee shop. We will also want to determine the costs associated to acquiring, managing and mounting displays of museum artifacts and archival materials.

The feasibility study will identify potential sources of funding from local, provincial and federal government agencies, as well as from local fundraising activities. The study will identify sources of revenue generation for the museum such as entrance fees, tour fees, the sale of publications and gifts. As well, we want to study the potential of securing other funding to run heritage related programs in the areas of genealogy, new bilingual publications, education programs, historic mapping, etc.

With a Business Plan in hand, we can begin applying for grants from government and to seek contributions from the wider community.

This is good time to move forward on this project. Both the recent federal and provincial budgets made new funds available to create and maintain museums. There is also a new emphasis on promoting heritage resources within regional tourism strategies. There are unprecedented opportunities to harness the resources and local abilities required to create a quality heritage attraction in the Municipality of La Pêche.

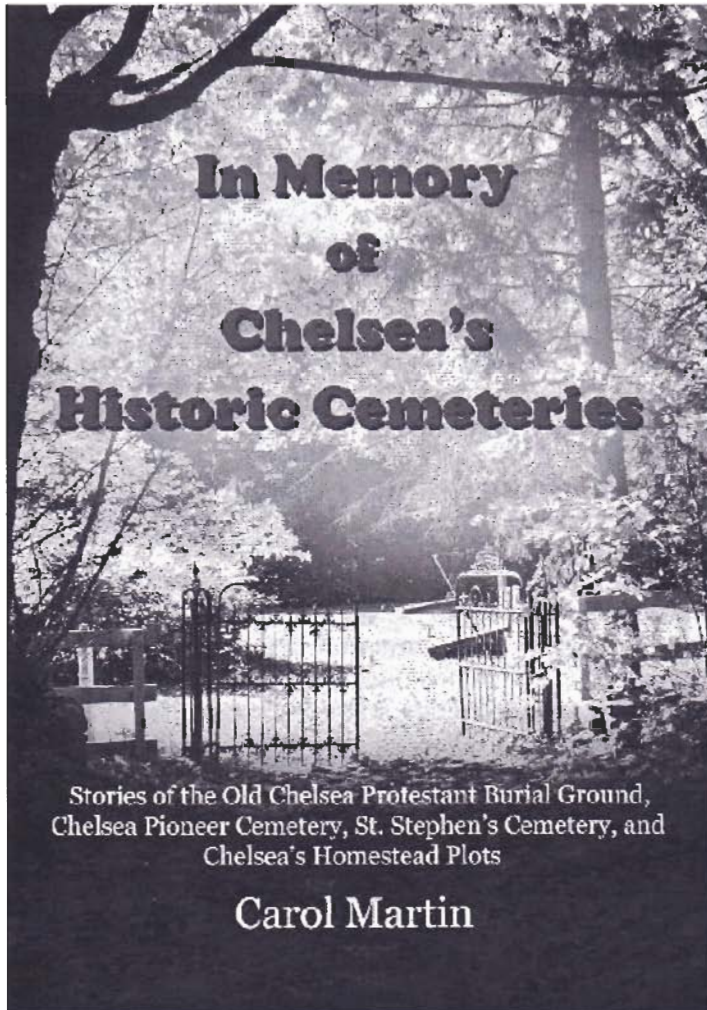
(For more information on the Fairbairn family, see *A tale of Two Sisters*, by Gordon Roy Fairbairn, in *Up the Gatineau!* Vol. 28)

1. Répertoire des biens culturels et arrondissements  
[www.mcc.gouv.qc.ca/pamu/biens-culturels/](http://www.mcc.gouv.qc.ca/pamu/biens-culturels/)
2. Canada's Historic Places Register  
[www.historicplaces.ca/](http://www.historicplaces.ca/)

The GVHS would like to acknowledge the individuals whose efforts have helped get the Fairbairn House "off the ground". They are: Neil Faulkner, Ernie Mahoney, Norma Geggie, members of the Wakefield Covered Bridge Committee, La Pêche Mayor Robert Bussière, Wakefield Councilor Bill Gonzalez, and all the Municipal staff who helped with the logistics of the move. Thank you to all!

**In Memory of Chelsea's Historic Cemeteries:  
Stories of the Old Chelsea Protestant Burial Ground, Chelsea Pioneer Cemetery,  
St. Stephen's Cemetery, and Chelsea's Homestead Plots**

By Carol Martin



Here is a historical book with a difference. It traces the story of Chelsea's community development in relation to its well-preserved cemeteries and the people buried in them.

Cemeteries were designed to be visited: the tombstones selected, the inscriptions chosen, are meant for the living. This book gives directions for finding each cemetery, "quick facts," a site plan and descriptions of three walking tours. Carry it with you and visit Chelsea's cemeteries!

Read about the types of cemeteries organized during pioneer days, and how they continued and changed over time. Who are some of the persons important in Chelsea's history? And who are some of the others, less well-known? Here are stories of many of the families using each cemetery, and also a reference section with research notes. For family historians and genealogists, there is an extensive index of names on monuments and from burial records.

Chelsea's cemeteries—resting places for the community's people of the past.

**To order, please contact:**

Carol Martin  
1086 Route 105  
Chelsea, QC  
J9B 1P3

e-mail: [rjcmartin@primus.ca](mailto:rjcmartin@primus.ca)

telephone: (819) 827-1633

**Price:** \$14.50 (+ postage, if required)

**Published by:** Castenchel Editions, 2005

## GVHS Archives Report

The Historical Society Archives will be closing for the summer--from Monday, June 6, until just after Labour Day, reopening on Wednesday, September 7. Anyone with an urgent need to use the resources of the Archives should make an appointment by calling Jay Atherton at 827-1703 (e-mail address: [jayatherton@sympatico.ca](mailto:jayatherton@sympatico.ca)).

Closure for the summer does not, however, indicate a lack of activity. Work will be underway on renovations to the municipal Library, which should include dedicated space for the "archives" function, including our own activities on the lower level. Architectural design is underway and the projected completion date is late this autumn or early in the winter. Stay tuned!

We now have two functioning microfilm readers, one of them loaned to us by the municipal archives, and a growing collection of microfilm reels containing census and church records for our region. The Image Bank continues to grow, to the delight of its users.

Jay Atherton, GVHS Archivist

## Correspondence

Feb 5, 2005

Dear Sir

I was amused to read of Duncan Dufresne's recent account of the caterpillars on the tracks of the Maniwaki train. Maybe I can match, or even better his account.

My mother (born 1902) grew up in Ottawa and went to Elgin Street Public School. She had a fund of stories of her childhood and one she often told was about a classmate, Morris Luke, whose family rented a cottage at Rockland every year from May to September. Morris had to take the train into Ottawa every morning and she remembered being very impressed by his most original excuse — "I'm late because there were caterpillars on the train tracks and the train couldn't get up the hill."

I also grew up in Ottawa. When I was at Queen's University I met an engineering student, Trevor Luke, and when he came home with me to "meet the parents", we quickly discovered he was Morris's nephew — but had never heard the caterpillar story.

Trevor and I have tried to locate the site of the Rockland cottage but with no success. We still own my family's cottage at Wolfe lake. My father built it in 1940 and I have spent part of every summer there since then.

I greatly enjoy both the Newsletter and the annual booklet.

Catherine Luke

### RAWQ Cultural e-Bulletin

Upcoming events of the Historical Society are now posted regularly on the Cultural e-Bulletin, attached to the website of the Regional Association of West Quebecers (RAWQ).

Launched in the fall of 2003, the eBulletin continues to be expanded and updated thanks to the volunteer editors, Noel and Ilse-Marie Gates, who gather information on cultural happenings from various sources in the community.

Check it out, by going to the RAWQ website ([www.westquebecers.com](http://www.westquebecers.com)) and following the links through "Community Outreach" to "ebulletin."

June 11, 12 & 18, 19, 2005

10 am - 6 pm

#### *Pontiac Artists Tour — Expression in Profusion!*

The artists of the annual Pontiac Artists' Studio Tour are celebrating 16 years of art in the Pontiac. Brochures with maps are available at stores along Highway 148 between Aylmer and Fort Coulonge.

**Web Site: [www.pontiacartists.com](http://www.pontiacartists.com)**

## Coming Events

Saturday, June 11th, 2005 9:30

### Restoring and conserving our Parliament Buildings - the stonemason's view.

**Bobby Watt** of La Pêche, Scottish-born master stonemason, will lead GVHS members on an insightful tour of our Parliament Buildings on Saturday, June 11, from 9:30 - 11 am. Bobby's team of experienced conservation masons have been involved in the restoration of both the Centre Block facade and the current Library of Parliament project.



Since 1987 they have been involved in many significant projects in both Canada and the US, including Queens Park, the Washington Monument, Commonwealth War Graves, and many, many more. Bobby will share expertise, experience and enthusiasm on this practical site tour. Note: please dress for the weather - rain or shine.

#### Itinerary

8:45am — car pool departs Wakefield Library.

9:00am — car pool departs Chelsea Elementary school.

9:30am — group meets Bobby Watt at the Centennial Flame on Parliament Hill for walking tour.

11:00am — departures.

More info? Michael Cooper - 459-2787

Saturday, Aug 20, 2005, 9:00 am

St. Stephens Church, Old Cheslea

### GVHS Annual Auction and Flea market

The GVHS Annual Auction returns with the 42nd edition of this popular summer event on Saturday August 20, 2005. Again the Society will be counting on the help of volunteers for the organizing committee or on the day of the event, and on donations of items to be auctioned. If you can help, please contact Jay Atherton (827-1703), Marc Cockburn (459-2004), or Ernie Mahoney (459-1180).