



OCTOBER 1987 NEWSLETTER

**NEXT MEETING: MONDAY,
OCTOBER 19TH AT 20:00 AT THE
WEST HULL COMMUNITY CENTRE**

The Capital's most spectacular museum is raising hopes, curiosity and eyebrows beside the Alexandra Bridge. In the second of our two-part museum series, Director **George MacDonald** will take us inside the National Museum of Civilization to see work in progress and to view the promised land. It will be an evening which will give us not only a unique look at planning a great museum, but a certain sense of permanent possession, for we saw it all in the early stages. Dr. MacDonald's talk will be illustrated by slides. Questions will be handled deftly.....

LAST MEETING

.....including, perhaps, those provocative questions raised by our last speaker. That was typical of that wonderfully spirited evening with which **Dr. David Baird** opened our lecture season. Even while he was talking about organizing national and "world class" museums, he kept throwing out ideas that spurred on our own Museum Committee to a discussion which went on for hours after the meeting. Dr. Baird spared no tears for unimaginative or sloppy museum presentations of our history, and brought it all home by naming familiar names. It was great stuff, and we look forward to seeing the Baird touch in the yet-to-be-born Canal Museum being planned under his guidance at Smiths Falls.

THE MUSEUM: (1) The Big News

No doubt hard work and imagination created our museum, but you have to admit we have been lucky in our friends.

One of our guests of honour at our Anniversary party was **Cornelieu Kirjan**, in charge of heritage projects in this region for the Québec Ministère des Affaires culturelles; he was receiving our Award of Honour for his Ministry's work.

Now we have received a warm letter from M. Kirjan enclosing a cheque of \$3,000, as the first payment of a grant of \$6,000 for this fiscal year. In his words, this will permit us to make an inventory and to prepare a museum concept with professional guidance.

We are grateful to the Québec government for this statement of faith in our work. We look forward to close collaboration with our friends there.

(2) Gifts

Although gifts to the museum have not been regularly recorded, we must acknowledge the special generosity of **Arthur and Betty Davison** who have long been perceptive collectors. Planning, alas, to dispose of their Gatineau home they gave much to the Auction. Since then, remaining artifacts were offered to the Museum and accepted with great appreciation. The indelible reminders of the Davison's multitudinous good works for the Society continue to increase.

(3) The Season

The Museum closed for the year on Labour Day after admitting the last of its 2051 visitors. Income from admission fees was just

over \$1800. That is certainly a respectable record. As **Dr. Geggie** has pointed out to the NCC, it would have been higher if the NCC had lived up to its undertakings to provide publicity and signs which appeared when the season ended. The operation placed a heavy burden on the Honourary Curator, a burden which could have been fairer and lighter with voluntary help from more members of the Society.

(4) The Future

Out of offers of artifacts, buildings and help to remove and re-establish them grew a dream of a museum area on the slope above the MacLaren House. It would include farm buildings, a forge and other aspects of late nineteenth century rural life. Our landlords did not look with favour on this idea, and so we have had to decline the offers for the present.

Meanwhile we are fine-tuning our philosophy about the MacLaren House itself by going back to basics. Should it recall the MacLaren family? Should it represent a merchant family of the 1860's? or the 1900's?

Should it be used to house exhibits from different times and places? These are the fundamental questions we are debating before calling in professional help to develop a plan for the future. They are fascinating discussions. Anyone who would like to be a part of this process and of this dynamic museum project is invited to phone Stuart Geggie (459-2393).

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

And hold on to your seats.

Last June, through the office of **Barry Moore, M.P.**, we learned of a new federal program to help voluntary societies celebrate anniversaries. Within hours we filled in tear-stained forms, drawing attention to the deserving case of the the Historical Society's 25th birthday.

Barry's staff went to great lengths to thread the forms through the proper authorities so we could get our money, if any, in time for June 25.

Well, almost. We have just learned, with much gratitude, that the Secretary of State



Bob Phillips presents the Society's Outstanding Achievement Award to Jean Piggott, Chairman of the National Capital Commission, at the 25th Anniversary Party.

for Canada has awarded us \$1,000 which we will use largely for publishing projects to mark our birthday. Thank you, Canada.

HERITAGE DAY

The same gentleman has asked for support of Canadians in his campaign to mark Heritage Day on the third Monday in February with an annual national holiday.

Through this Newsletter we are telling not only Mr. **Crombie** but all our members and friends that we think it is a good thing for the preservation of our heritage and the saving of our history that we have one important day each year to focus our thoughts on the long perspective. July 1, the other possible opportunity for this purpose, falls when schools are not in session and when, therefore, we lose our most important audience. And in July many of us tend towards cottaging, but in February there is little better to think about than the elements of our past we should preserve into the future.

If you personally agree, will you please write the Minister to say so? His address is Hon. David Crombie, Secretary of State for Canada, House of Commons, Ottawa—and no stamp is needed. But please do it fast while there is still a chance to honour what this Society has spent 25 years fighting for.

MEMBERSHIP

We welcome as new members **Elsie Bedard, Mrs. Bruce Bell, Raymond Belleau, Marie Brennan, Ada Henry, Carol Martin, Norma O'Brien, Mrs. Heather Rathwell, Molly Waite, and Mr. and Mrs. Blake Watson.**

ELECTION TIME

In these pages we have expressed our intention of letting you know when members of the Society are candidates for public office. Other qualifications being equal, you might want to vote for cultured, public-spirited,

nice people who will be sensitive to preserving the history of the Gatineau.

Municipal elections are coming up before our next Newsletter. No candidates have asked for our support, but maybe some will get it whether they want it or not.

Too bad about the Ville de Gatineau. We know of no candidates who are "cultured, public-spirited etc." No wonder Cantley wants to separate.

In West Hull Judy Grant is a card-carrying member and strong supporter. So, of course, is present mayor **Vince Hendrick** (who at press time we understand is not running for re-election) and Councillor **Isobel Bayly**. In LaPêche **Hervé LeBlanc**, though not an actual member, has been instrumental in getting us support. In Low, **Michael Francis** has been a member, and if he has one tiny fault in his long list of egregious (!) virtues it is a certain slowness in renewing his membership—a shortcoming we will all quickly pardon when that modest cheque arrives.

May we be forgiven if we have overlooked any supporter. Let him/her phone the President (827-3164) who, for his sins, will—at the candidate's option—either proclaim or conceal his support.

COME TO THE FAIR

Members who enjoyed Aylmer's Annual Antique Fair as part of our first Historic Tour will wish to know, and tell their friends, that this year's dates are Friday evening and Saturday, October 16-17, in The Barn at 95 Albert Street, Aylmer. It is always a good collection, an enjoyable occasion and an important fund raiser for the Aylmer Heritage Association.

IN A BIND (continued)

Those binders for *Up the Gatineau!* finally arrived after negotiations rivalling the Canada-U.S. trade talks. (Please see last *Newsletter*.) The only remaining problem is

that each handsomely printed holder is just a millimetre too short to accomodate our publication. Back to the drawing boards.

So please save your issues. We promise to have a binder for our fiftieth anniversary celebrations.

THE AGE OF SPACE

The acquisition of office space has become an urgent problem for the Society. Our records are now scattered in the homes of the Secretary, Treasurer and President and in the MacLaren House. Our stocks of publications have worn thin the hospitality of some executive members, and we waste too much effort finding and delivering paper.

Acquiring our own building (the Union Mission Church) having been dropped, we applied to West Hull for space in the new Municipal Hall to be in operation this month; as readers of local newspapers know, it is not quite finished (or started, or approved). We have been discussing the possibility of space with the West Hull Community Centre whose new management is extremely friendly and helpful. As a voluntary society in the community, we accepted West Hull's invitation to apply for an annual grant; we did not ask for money, but for office and meeting space.

We shall report developments.

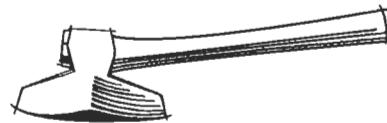
ARCHIVES

And that brings us to archives, of which **Arthur Davison** had several boxes which he kindly turned over to the Society. They are now lodged in the MacLaren House. The best news of all is that **Pat Evans**, to whom the Society owes so much, has agreed to go over them in his capacity of the Society's Archivist. This is the kind of work which Pat has performed with such distinction for the Ottawa Historical Society.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Those at the Chelsea Pioneer Cemetery last November 11 will recall what a singularly moving occasion it was.

We await confirmation that the contingent from the Royal Canadian Regiment Battle School will again come from Peta-wawa to be with us. Meanwhile you might wish to mark your calendar. For you and your family, it could be the most memorable half hour of the year.



R.A.J.P.

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