



KING TOWNSHIP

Historical
SOCIETY

2920 KING ROAD, KING CITY, ONTARIO, L7B 1L6

NEWSLETTER MAY 2014

NEW LECTURE SERIES: LEARNING FROM THE PAST

Did you know there was one musket per five militiamen in early Canada? Have you ever heard of the long, winter march of 57 days from New Brunswick to Kingston in 1813?

On Sunday April 27th Military Historian Gavin Watt was the inaugural speaker for our lecture series *Learning from the Past*. Gavin gave a comprehensive talk on **the Role of the Soldier in Canadian conflicts from the 1700s to the war in Afghanistan**. He made special mention of the positions occupied by the soldiers in early settler society, particularly the militia, who often were the musicians, judiciary and political leaders. In the 20th century, many former soldiers contributed to Canada by founding charitable institutions, like CNIB and War Amps, or major corporations, like Air Canada. Gavin spoke with humour and insight about soldiers from all backgrounds and ethnic groups who contributed and continue to contribute to the life we have today. Thank you Gavin!



Our next lecture in the series is on **Tuesday, May 27th at 7:00 pm** at the King Township Museum.

Author **Dorothy Duncan will speak on Potions, Powders, Poultices and Prayers: Home Remedies in Early 19th Century Upper Canada**. Women were often the only caregivers for their families and neighbours, and gathered medicines from their gardens or nearby streams and forests. Ms. Duncan is the author of numerous heritage cook books that tell us much more than just what

people ate! She has served as a curator at Black Creek Pioneer Village, among other positions, and as Museums Advisor for the Province of Ontario.



HERITAGE BUS TOUR - JULY 19TH

KTHS in partnership with Arts Society King will be holding a **Heritage Bus Tour of King Township on July 19th from 9:30 to 4 pm**. The tour will start and end in King City. Learn about the hidden historical treasures in King.

Highlights will include Seneca College Eaton Hall; Mary Lake Augustinian Monastery (originally the farm and home of Sir Henry Pellatt) and the amazing brick barn; the quaint village of

Kettleby with a stop for refreshments; Dutch houses of Ansnorveldt; Carrying Place Trail marker; the historic village of Schomberg for a lunch break and self guided walk; Lloydtown Cemetery; historic buildings in Nobleton and the King Township Museum. Keep the day available for this exciting tour. More information will be available in the ASK Festival King brochure coming out in Spring 2014.

2014 BOARD MEMBERS

President: Elaine Robertson

Vice President: Ann Love

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2014 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Renewal of your membership for 2014 is now due. If you have already renewed, then your membership card will be enclosed with this newsletter and we thank you for your support.

We rely on membership fees and donations to cover our operating costs including the printing and mailing of this newsletter and we will be very appreciative of your renewal. A membership application form and pre-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.



KTHS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The King Township Historical Society's Annual General Meeting was held at the King City Seniors Centre on March 16, 2014. A package of information was provided to all attendees including an agenda, the treasurers report, archives report, program report, and the minutes from last year's AGM.

Our president Heather Robertson was not able to attend due to ill health however her President's report was delivered on her behalf:

I regret that my health does not permit me to be here in person to celebrate another strong, successful year for the King Township Historical Society.

It is always a good time to praise our fellow enthusiasts. For two years, Teresa Chan, art director at King City Secondary School, supervised and encouraged our Art on an Historic Theme contest. In the spring of 2013, artists Ed Bartram and Mary Bromley chose first, second and third place winners from a dozen works submitted. These accomplished works were displayed in the townships libraries, among other locations. I presented the prizes at the school's awards day in November.

Praise also to John Wilson, a descendent of the Webb family of Kettleby, who has offered to the Historical Society a \$3,000 donation to create and install outdoor storyboards in Kettleby. Thank you John!

In closing, I leave you the challenge of the Museum's strategic plan. Our board received a thorough briefing from Chris Fasciano, Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture but declined to vote on it. If my own reading is an indication, our feelings were negative.

I am retiring from the board but intend to remain an active enthusiastic member of KTHS. It has been a stimulating few years and I treasure the friends I have made.

THANK YOU!

Sadly Heather passed away on March 18th.

Tributes were given by Ann Love regarding the contribution of Heather Robertson, Fiona Cowles, who passed away in 2013 and for Rolf Davis and Barry Wallace who served as members in 2013.

The audience was offered the opportunity to view a 1878 map reproduced by Tony Rolph of the portion of King Township south of Davis Drive. This map will be made available in limited numbers for purchase at fairs and events in King Township.

In the fall of 2013 Mr. David Love gave a talk on legacy planning and fund raising called Greatest Hits and Fondest Dreams. The results of our brainstorming session were made available to the general membership.

A pot luck lunch was enjoyed by everyone followed by a fascinating power point presentation by guest speaker **Dr. Amy Barron (pictured)** an expert in Mesopotamian History and Archaeology, entitled Agatha Christie, Archaeology and Alzheimer's.

KING TOWNSHIP ARCHIVES UPDATE

Archives Volunteer Appreciation



Did you know that April is National Volunteer Month in Canada?

To show their appreciation of their dedicated, thoughtful and ever-curious Archives volunteers, Co-Chairs, Elsa-Ann Pickard and Louise Di Iorio treated Tony Rolph, Denny Starritt, Diana Armitage and Anne Peat to a luscious lunch at Pine Farms Orchard. Volunteer Ellen Hoffman was in Florida and unable to join them.

Picture (from left to right): Louise Di Iorio, Elsa-Ann Pickard, Tony Rolph, Denny Starritt, Diana Armitage, Anne Peat Absent: Ellen Hoffman

Photographer: Pam Rolph-Romeril

Pine Farms Orchard: 2700 16th Sideroad, King City

Recent research leads to happy ending...

Flying Officer Edward James McCabe

“On 24th July 1945, when just four years old, I witnessed the crash of a Mustang III just 200 yards away from my garden in Hull, Yorkshire, England.”

The volunteers at the King Township Archives receive many intriguing requests for information, but few are as moving and as compelling as the one we received from 73-year-old Ivor Rogers in January of this year. As we read more of Mr. Rogers’ email, our interest grew:

Mr. Rogers continued: “Recent researches show that this single-engine fighter had suffered a catastrophic mechanical failure. The pilot was Flying Officer Edward James McCabe, service no. J/43858 of 441 Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Force, and son of Joseph and Mary Meagher McCabe, then of King Township Ontario...It is very likely that I owe my life to the pilot’s courage in just missing my house.” Mr. Rogers believes that he may be the “sole living witness of this tragedy” and he wished to make contact with any living relatives of this brave young pilot. Mr. Rogers discovered that the McCabe family had attended the Sacred Heart church in King City, and he hoped that we would continue the search on his behalf: “any help that your Society can offer in this regard would be incredibly welcome.”

Our first step was to contact Reverend Michael Martell, the parish priest of Sacred Heart Parish. Rev. Martell knew that the McCabe family had helped to establish the original Roman Catholic Sacred Heart community on Jane Street during the Great Depression of the 1930s, but not even the oldest parishioners knew where the family had gone. We found a McCabe in King City, but she was from a different branch of the family. We thought we had found the right McCabes in Colgan and then near Brockville, but we soon realized that they were not direct descendants either. Sharon Bentley of the King Township Library, and Kathleen Fry of the King Township Museum, talked and wrote to their many contacts but to no avail. Discouraged, and almost ready to admit defeat, one day we entered “Flying Officer Edward James McCabe” into the Search field of the Library’s online Ancestry.ca link. Suddenly, to our surprise and delight, the picture of a smiling young man in a dapper suit jacket appeared on our screen, along with his family tree and the email address of Bill Harper, who had posted the photograph and the information. This was a picture of our elusive Edward James McCabe and we had found his family at last.

Bill Harper, the son of Edward’s older sister Caroline, was in the midst of creating his family tree on Ancestry.ca. His mother had talked very little about her youngest brother, who had died so tragically near the end of the war, although she named Bill’s brother after him. Bill’s mother and all of her siblings had passed away, his cousins were scattered far and wide, and Bill thought that he had posted all he would ever know about his long lost uncle.

The Archives volunteers took great pleasure in connecting Ivor Rogers and Bill Harper: the magic of the internet allowed us to bridge time and to link interesting people, far away places, and fascinating stories. Ivor Rogers intends to visit Edward’s grave in Harrogate, Yorkshire “in order to pay my utmost respects.” Bill plans to share Edward’s story on the Canadian War Museum website. The bravery and sacrifice of King Township’s young Flying Officer Edward James McCabe has not been forgotten – his story has touched and connected all of us.

THE GREAT WAR

submitted by Gavin Watt

As a member of the museum's planning committee for the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Great War, I never expected that the conflict's name would generate consternation, or that any Canadian would be confused about the name used by generations to describe that "war to end all wars."

A few people thought the adjective "Great" was meant to suggest something wonderful or fabulous, not massive or gigantic as intended. When Kathleen told me that she had received anguished comments over the committee's decision to use the name Great War rather than First World War or World War One, I made an extensive survey of what terminology is now in common use. To my surprise, institutions such as Library and Archives Canada, the Canadian War Museum and the Royal Canadian Legion now refer to the war as the First World War, as does the Imperial War Museum and National Army Museum in Britain. Many non-governmental organizations continue to employ Great War, but First World War is more prominent. It appears that the term Great War fell out of use when the Second World War occurred, which is perfectly understandable, as a comparison of which conflict was the larger was inappropriate. Yet, one of our famous military historians, Jack Granatstein, entitled his Globe and Mail article this past Monday, "Why is Canada botching the Great War centenary?"

The Great War was certainly not the first world war in history and that is why the newer name is rather jarring to historians. The Seven Years' War of the mid-18th Century was fought in Europe; Africa; North, Central and South America; the West Indies; the Philippines, and India – the Baltic Sea, the Atlantic, Mediterranean, Caribbean, Pacific and Indian Oceans. That seems to be a great part of the world to me.

Canadians often think of the First World War as occurring solely in France and Belgium, and the other theatres fade into the background. At times, we forget the sea war in the Atlantic Ocean, or that Newfoundlanders fought at Gallipoli in Turkey, or that Canadians were in Palestine and Italy. And, a brand-new theatre – in the air war – four Canadians were in the top-ten list of most successful British Empire fighter pilots.

Four major monarchies were central to the conflict – the Hapsburg dynasty of Austria-Hungary; the Hohenzollern of Germany; the Romanov of Russia, and what became in mid-war, the House of Windsor of Great Britain. Ironically, the latter three sovereigns were grandsons of Queen Victoria of Britain. In addition, the massive colonial empire of the French Third Republic (eg. Algeria, Indo-China (Viet Nam), Morocco and Senegal) was an equally significant combatant, as was Turkey's Ottoman empire, which made an unsuccessful thrust through Palestine against the Suez Canal. In turn, Britain and France waged war in the Ottoman-controlled Arab countries. (think Lawrence of Arabia)

The war was triggered by the assassination of an Austrian Crown prince in Bosnia-Herzovigna and the Balkans were a very active theatre with- Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, Greece, Romania and Serbia involved with or against Austria-Hungary, Greece, Germany, Italy, Romania, Russia and Turkey. An ancient enmity between Italy and Austria opened a secondary theatre along their common border, and the Ottomans initiated an uprising in Italian-occupied Libya which drew in British and Egyptian troops.

On the northern European mainland, the war was fought on two major fronts -- the Eastern, which saw the Central Powers of Germany, Austria-Hungary confronting Russia, and the Western, where the French, Belgians and British Empire tackled Germany and Austria-Hungary. Many countries such as the Netherlands, Scandinavia, Switzerland and Spain were able to avoid being drawn in, although Portugal supplied troops in support of France and Britain. The neutral countries were badly affected by the British naval blockade which was intended to strangle Germany's will to fight.

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All the protagonists neared exhaustion by the third year of the war. Then, a revolution irrupted in Russia, taking her out of the war and allowing Germany and Austria-Hungary to pull vast numbers of troops onto the Western Front. This permitted the mounting of a major offensive that was only checked by immense effort. In reaction to the naval blockade, Germany initiated unrestricted submarine warfare, a measure that brought the United States into the war. American industrial might and the availability of fresh manpower signalled the end for the Central Powers in 1918. But, conflict did not end there. In 1919 Britain, the United States, Canada and Czechoslovakia sent troops in futile support of White Russia in Siberia.

In addition to Great Britain, the British Empire countries that supplied sailors, troops and airmen were Australia, Canada, China (Hong Kong), India (Pakistan), New Zealand, Rhodesia, South Africa and the West Indies. A world war indeed!

This article is the first in a series commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the start of the Great War (1914—1918) Please stay turned for more in this series.

A Celebration of Heather Robertson's Life

The King Township Historical Society was privileged to host a celebration of Heather's life on Sunday afternoon, March 30, at the King Township Museum. Kathleen Fry, curator of the museum, graciously facilitated the event.

For this gathering of family, friends and admirers, Heather's husband Andrew Marshall shared photos of their family. He also provided a background soundscape of loon calls and songbirds from her beloved summer home. Andrew and their son Aaron spoke eloquently and personally about Heather as wife, mother and grandmother. And Andrew's daughter Amy read from Heather's book on dying.



Heather, a long-time member of the King Township Historical Society, served many years on the Board and as our President for the past two years.

Heather had a searing mind – she brought clarity to our discussions and kept us focused on our mission.

She introduced and supported some of our most creative activities including the *King Olympian* project which is now circulating the schools and was her idea to engage kids in living history. She took up the art contest for King secondary students as another way to bring King's history into the present. And she worked hard to make the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the French in Ontario a success.

She was committed to research – when we recently polled the directors for future projects, she spoke about the need for a new and scholarly history of the Township.

A nationally acclaimed author, she put her name to two class action suits to benefit all freelance writers in Canada in copyright and intellectual property issues... but despite having one foot in this high level, political, almost celebrity life, she was not above rolling up her sleeves for editing, folding, addressing and stamping our newsletters ... including this past January's issue.

We will miss our leader and mentor – a woman of brilliance, passion and energy. As one King friend said, Heather had a real sense of place; wherever she was, she dug deep. *Ann Love*

