



Friends of Fintry Provincial Park

The Octagon – April, 2019

Greetings Friends and hello Spring!

Yes.....Spring finally did arrive and already my garden crocuses are blooming and the bees are as busy as...well... bees!

We, at Fintry are also busy bees and looking forward to another busy season with requests already coming in from various tour groups. Seniors' residences are keeping our Education Outreach Coordinator, Gwendy Lamont and Curator Dan Bruce on their toes with requests to bring their extensive knowledge and some Fintry artefacts to their homes' Activity Days.

I am going to put a shout out at this juncture for anyone willing to lend a hand with our Mother's Day Fintry Fair (Sunday, May 12th) as several of our regular helpers are going to be away on holiday. No experience necessary, we will just slot you in for a few hours as a body in the Manor House for security or at one of the entry tables. (Call Kathy at 250-542-4139 or email kathdin@shaw.ca) It is always a fun day with a full roster of entertainment already signed up.

Our Curator, Dan Bruce has once again been doing some research and has uncovered some interesting facts about one of our more popular specimens in the Trophy Room of the Manor House.

In a previous issue I wrote about the giraffe in the Trophy Room, a truly excellent example of local taxidermy. A short while ago I was asked to give a "Brown Bag Lunch Special", a mid-day entertainment hosted by the Penticton Museum. It was great way to get re-connected to our colleagues at the south end of the Lake. I used the title "Outpost of Empire" to introduce the Fintry Estate, its history and cultural origins.

On that occasion, I was able to get some more detail about the taxidermist who worked on the giraffe. Abraham "Abe" Braun was born in 1917, in the Ural Mountains of southern Russia, and immigrated to Canada in 1924 --- that pivotal year at Fintry when, among other things the Trophy Room was added to the Manor House. Settling first in Manitoba, he took a correspondence course in taxidermy. After several years, the milder climate of the Okanagan lured him westward, where he almost certainly excelled his instructors and developed his



taxidermy skills into a successful business. Not a hunter himself, a number of his clients were, and he also mounted specimens that were killed on the highways. Specimens also came his way when animals died at the Okanagan Game Farm, as in the case of the giraffe. Abe died in 1985, and we are fortunate that by means of his skill, we can still appreciate and learn about a variety of creatures that passed through his hands.

It is perhaps fitting that a recent acquisition in the Manor House re-affirms the Russian connection. Visitors will now see a porcelain Polar Bear, created by the Lomonosov Porcelain Factory in St Petersburg. Founded in the 18th Century, under

the regime of the Tsars, the factory has been kept in production by the Soviet government, and still operated today.

Mark Taylor, of Taylor's Antiques in Kelowna has donated a photo showing Earl Grey, the Governor-General and friend of James Dun-Waters, taken by the Norwegian photographer, Erling Olav Ellingsen. It is inscribed "Earl Grey and party at King Solomon Dome, August 18th 1909". This visit then took place some three months after the presentation to Dun-Waters of the autographed portraits of Grey, 10th May, 1909. (King Solomon Dome is the supposed origin of the gold deposits of the Klondike). I cannot be sure that Dun-Waters is present in the picture, but it's possible he may have been involved. The photo has had some water damage, but this is limited to stains in the upper part of the picture, looking as if a serious thunderstorm is about to break on His Excellency's parade, however, the important lower half is crystal clear. Our photography wizard volunteer, Lynda Miller will be able to clear the skies with photo-shop.

In closing I would just like to remind everyone of the dates of our Fintry Fairs this year.

Sunday, May 12th (Mother's Day)

Sunday, July 14th

Sunday, September, 8th

Mark them on your calendars and if you can help out at all, please give me a call.

*Kathy Drew,
Friends of Fintry Provincial Park.*