



Friends of Fintry Provincial Park

The Octagon – December, 2019

Mother Nature has been kind to us this year with a very pleasant November. However, just one step outside and one realizes that yes, it is winter....but only 3 more weeks until the days start to get longer again!

The Friends of Fintry held their Annual Volunteer Appreciation night in conjunction with the date of J.C. Dun-Waters birthday, (November 28th) at Okanagan Spirits here in Vernon. It was a great evening and we were so happy to mix and mingle with many of our trusty volunteers and chat about all things Fintry.

Now that we have our Business Manager (Shannon Jorgenson) in place we have been brainstorming some special events to hold at the Manor House next season thus increasing awareness of this jewel in our very own backyard. Stay tuned and watch the website for announcements early in the spring.

The planning never stops.....and we are excited to be able to offer some really great programs to the school children and senior's groups next year. We have loads of historical photographs from the Dun-Waters' era which are being digitized and as we now have a digital projector and screen we will be able to show these to the various interested groups as well as having them up on our website.

And now some interesting facts from our Curator, Dan Bruce.....

Fintry's one hundredth anniversary took place on May 10th, 2009. The date was chosen based on the autographed portrait of Albert, Earl Grey, the Governor General of Canada who invited his friend, James Dun-Waters from Cambridge University days to move from the UK to Canada. The autograph reads "Grey, in memory of May 10th 1909". We have not been able to ascertain exactly what took place on that day, but it might have involved hunting and whisky. (His Excellency was not in Ottawa on that date).

We celebrated anyway by planting a tree near the Labyrinth, and a London Plane was selected. Two guests of honour were invited to plant the tree, the late Alderman Ben Lee from Kelowna, and Mark Flanagan, Supervisor of the gardens at the Royal Estate at Windsor Castle, who came to Fintry for this occasion.

Platanus x hispanica, the London Plane, is a very large tree frequently planted in urban settings as it withstands atmospheric pollution very well, not that that is a problem at Fintry. The tree is perhaps an accidental hybrid that was first recorded at Vauxhall Gardens in London. (Some of you will recall that there is a coloured engraving of Vauxhall Gardens hanging in the living room, the gift of Jennifer Hindle) The tree was first formally described by the Scottish botanist, William Aiton in 1789, but it had been noticed by John Tradescant the Younger in the mid-17th Century. (The dark red rose by the front door steps of the Manor is a David Austin creation, named “Tradescant “in his honour).

A little known fact is that our now defunct one cent coin was supposed to feature the Maple Leaf on the reverse side. Apparently, in 1937 G. E. Kruger-Gray asked for a maple twig to use as a model for the design drawing, but was given a plane twig in error. Maple leaves are all opposite, whereas plane leaves are alternate. Botanical expertise was not a requirement at the Mint, so the mistake was not noticed.

There are a number of London Plane trees around the Okanagan, and they can also be found in many of the world’s large cities. In London itself there are several specimens now close to or over 100 ft. high. Doubtless James Dun-Waters saw them as young plants on his various visits to the city.



As this is the last Octagon for 2019, I would like to wish you all the very best of the season and hopefully you will be able to partake in one or more of the many activities planned for Fintry in 2020. Watch our website: www.fintry.ca for information regarding upcoming events.

Stay warm.....
Kathy Drew, President
Friends of Fintry Provincial Park

