



Friends of Fintry Provincial Park

The Octagon – November 2019

Mother Nature has really been showing off her spectacular golden coat this fall and on one of my last visits along Westside road to the Fintry Manor House, I was overawed by the stunning golden and russet views around every corner. What a beautiful part of the country we live in.

We have now closed the doors for the last time this year on the Ben Lee Room, Dun-Waters' Trophy room, Alice's bedroom, etc., and all the wonderful stories that are part of this historical site. The Manor House has been winterized and we are now letting the collections rest for the winter months.

As we hunker down for what Old Man Winter is going to throw at us this year the planning has already started for next year. Our new Business Manager, Shannon, is bubbling over with ideas and suggestions for many new Special Events which will take place at the Manor House next year, so we will definitely have our work cut out for us! Keep an eye on our website www.fintry.ca for teasersand info as it becomes available.

And now a word from our Curator Dan Bruce:

The Park is now closed for the season, and so begins the time for doing any necessary conservation, and making adjustments to the exhibits in the Manor. Several recent acquisitions have been introduced, however, our visitors have not yet seen the framed mirror that will be hung in the living room ready for the 2020 season. This is yet one more interesting item from Taylor's Antiques in Kelowna.

Collecting seashells was a popular pastime in the Victorian age that provided something to do at the beach when sunbathing was not considered with the same enthusiasm that it is today. Very often the shells ended up in boxes and soon forgotten or thrown out. In some cases however, the multitude of shapes, sizes and colours sparked a deeper interest, resulting in considerable efforts being made to enlarge the collection. What to do with them? Many evenings were spent devising ways to show them off. Some people had glass topped tables made, whereby the shells could be seen in a compartment under the glass. Others filled cabinets fitted with a series of drawers to hold their collections. Enthusiasts were known to frequent the sea ports of Britain where they would eagerly question incoming sailors to see if they had brought back any exciting specimens from their voyages. This "market" quickly became known to mariners who could often sell their shells for considerable sums to serious collectors.

On a lesser scale, shells were used to decorate the home in various ways. Our new mirror is an example of this, as the frame is completely covered in shells, carefully arranged and stuck in place. Perhaps the most elaborate and fantastic example of this is to be seen at Goodwood Park in Sussex. Here, the Duchess of Richmond and her two daughters, in 1739, started to decorate every inch of the interior of a garden pavilion, entirely covering all walls and ceiling with shells. They finished the project seven years later, having created something very likely unique anywhere in the world, and did very well by the makers of glue!

At Fintry, we have a small but very attractive glass fronted cabinet, which has stood empty in the living room all summer. This is now being restored by the removal of a lining of wallpaper, and the replacement of the glass shelving. The plan is to use it to exhibit a selection of shells that we have in the collection. It requires no stretch of the imagination to think that James Dun-Waters would have appreciated such a thing – the “Cabinet of Curiosities” was very much a part of the furnishings of stately homes, and in many instances formed the nucleus around which some of the world’s greatest museums came into being.

Many thanks to Dr. Bill Gibson of Lake Country who has kindly undertaken the restoration of this cabinet.

This has been a very busy and successful year as we continue to grow and promote Dun-Waters’ legacy. We encourage you in addition to being a Friend of Fintry to consider being a Fintry volunteer. We have several different options and are always looking for assistance with events, guiding tours, gardening etc. I can be reached through the Fintry email: info@fintry.ca.

Stay warm.....

Kathy Drew, President
Friends of Fintry Provincial Park

