



Friends of Fintry Provincial Park

The Octagon – January 2020

Happy New Year to all,

As we step into this new year with 2020 vision, we are excited to be embarking on some great new ideas, fun events and hopefully, if our federal grant application is successful, some summer students to help us with it all.

At this time of year, we have to submit our plans and ideas for the coming year to BC Parks who will then hopefully grant us our Annual Operating Permit. We are putting our creative heads together to try and come up with some new revenue sources for the Friends and some new experiences for our members and visitors to this historic site.

Thanks to Shannon our Business Manager, the Fintry website is in the process of being revamped with several new pull-down menus giving a better overview of all that we offer. It is still a work in progress so check back periodically to see the new developments. www.fintry.ca

While giving tours of the Manor House, there is always great interest and a few chuckles from our visitors when they see this framed print. Dan Bruce, our Curator explains it all quite eloquently as follows,

“Late for School” is the title of a chromolithograph that hangs in the Ben Lee Room, facing the portrait of Ben himself. The artist was Arthur J. Elsley (1860 – 1952), a Londoner who was well known for his idealised pictures often of children in rural settings with domestic animals and pets included. These could be described as “chocolate box art”, and indeed he produced many images for commercial use. Sunlight Soap and Peek Frean’s biscuits being among his customers. These sentimental pictures were extremely popular in late Victorian and Edwardian times.

“Late for School” however has a slightly darker tone. It is a classic example of a picture that presents a set of circumstances to the viewer, who may then imagine the course of action to that point, and then speculate on the outcome. Here we see a traditional fox hunt in progress, but at a point where it is going to go so wrong. The fox, crafty



creature, has taken control and opted for a variation of the “Samson solution”. By choosing to divert through the open door of the school, he will have brought the house down upon his enemies. The fox is shown exiting the scene R, very likely having noted a conveniently open window through which he will return to his interrupted business. The hounds, closely followed by the mounted hunters will be left to face the fury of the school teacher, which will not be long in coming. Several hounds are already among the pupils, and furniture is going down. Doubtless the whole community will be aware of the mayhem at school that day, and one can imagine a satisfied fox looking back on an escape well managed.

Arthur Elsley was a contemporary of James Dun-Waters, who might well have seen some of his pictures published in the Illustrated London News and other journals. Perhaps the Glasgow Herald included some. He was awarded a silver medal for works shown at the Crystal Palace Exhibition in 1891. “Late for School” was painted in 1898, and the chromolithograph at Fintry was printed by Orford Smith Ltd. of St. Albans, just north of London. Our picture was purchased from Blast from the Past Antiques of Vernon. At some point it had been spattered with a cream coloured house paint, and had suffered slight water damage. This was all corrected after a short session on the conservation table, and the framing expertise of Picture Perfect in Kelowna.

So there you have it! Next time you take a tour of the Manor House take a good look at the action in this incredible picture.

On that note I will close and wish everyone a healthy and prosperous New Year.
Kathy Drew,
Friends of Fintry Provincial Park