



Friends of Fintry Provincial Park

The Octagon - May, 2020

Greetings Friends,

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us.....” Charles Dickens.

As we continue through this difficult time we are looking ahead and forever hopeful that the worst is now over. It would appear that we are nearing the end of some of these restrictions that have transformed our lives over these past few weeks. At Fintry we are sad that it has meant the cancellation of our Mother’s Day Fintry Fair, our new event The Fintry Fusion Art Show in June and probably the July Summer Fair as well. Tours of the Manor House, even after the Park opens, will also be in jeopardy. In the meantime, check out our website at www.fintry.ca to keep apprised of what’s happening and have a virtual tour of the Manor House.

The Friends of Fintry has applied for several grants to assist us over the coming year.....some of which were in the works before Covid-19 came along. We have applied for a Gaming Grant for our Education Outreach program, two students through the Canada Summer Jobs program and funding for a Syilx Okanagan Territory Recognition plaque through Heritage BC. In these uncertain times all we can do is hope that we are successful and can move ahead with some, if not all of our intentions.

Following is another curious account of an artefact in the Fintry collection.....courtesy of our Curator, Dan Bruce.

“The “Cabinet of Curiosities” was a feature of many aristocratic homes in England and Europe from late mediaeval times onward. Consisting of collections of natural objects and artefacts from a variety of sources, this is where the origin of museums is to be found. Going even further back, the church, and many secular rulers assiduously collected relics of saints, and other religious tokens. The cabinets ranged in size from a modest small cupboard, to whole suites of rooms. Of the more famous ones, that of Sir Hans Sloane in London (1750’s) became the foundation of the British Museum, and in Philadelphia Charles Willson Peale’s collection (1820’s) was the first of several in the United States. Such a cabinet would have been very close in concept to the “Trophy Room”, a feature that Fintry shares with numerous stately homes in the U.K.

A bezoar stone is one of the items in the glass fronted showcase in Fintry's Trophy Room. These were regarded as a valuable substance to be included in various preparations used in mediaeval medical practices. They were said to be found in the stomach of certain animals, and their rarity was of course emphasized to keep prices high. The specimen at Fintry, shown with pens for scale, was donated by the Hanson Family of Barnum, Kaycee, Wyoming. Several years ago, Leif Hanson noticed what he (understandably) took to be eggs, while working cattle on the family



ranch. Returning to the spot he at once realised that the group of ball-like objects were not eggs. With a great deal of care, one was cut open to reveal a very tightly compacted mass of dark brown hair. These enigmatic items were carefully kept and during a visit with the family, I was asked for an opinion. After a bit of research and consultation, I was able to suggest that they were bezoar stones, i.e. hair-balls from the stomach of a bison that had died there a long time ago. The egg-like outer coating is apparently the result of a calcium build-up and the churning action of the animal's stomach. The Hanson family kindly agreed to part with one of the stones for Fintry, the only one that has been given away."

In spite of an unusually cold spring, the plants around Alice's grave are showing signs of life. Kathy, Dinham and Dan spent time on Sunday last at Fintry training the climbing roses up the steel framework around the grave. This involved putting up temporary wire supports to get the climbing stems up to the top of the structure, a job to be done before the leaves develop. No- one was on hand to appreciate the daffodils, but members can be assured that they are all doing well, and the deer seem to have left the plant material alone. For the first time, certainly due to Kathy and Keith's work last Fall, the roses have reached the top of the framework, and are now extending over the arch at the entrance. The lavender along the front of the Manor House has come through the winter just fine, and should be thick enough to really reduce the weed growth in the front border.

Hoping that this finds you all safe and well,

Kathy Drew,
Friends of Fintry Provincial Park