



## Friends of Fintry Provincial Park

### The Octagon - July, 2020

Greetings Friends,

Summer is here and it is really strange not to be living half my life at Fintry welcoming visitors and doing tours. However, there is a glimmer of hope as we are going to open towards the end of July for modified self-guided tours of the Manor House and Octagonal Barn. By then the two students that we have hired will be in place, ready to answer questions, give presentations etc., all adhering to Covid-19 protocols. This summer is going to be very different from past seasons but we are delighted just to be open and to be able to share this historic site even if it is on quite a different level from our usual tours. All of the self-guided tours this year will be by donation and we are asking that debit and credit cards be used for merchandise purchases, as another level of safety for our workers and volunteers.

Unfortunately, all of our Fairs have been cancelled for this year. These fairs provided us with the means to pay our expenses and utilities throughout the winter, so we are reliant on donations to carry us through these difficult times. If you cannot visit Fintry this summer, donations can also be made through our website [www.fintry.ca](http://www.fintry.ca). Our website has also been revamped, thanks to our hard-working Business Manager Shannon, and now virtual tours of the Manor House are available with the click of your mouse while staying home and staying safe!

We were saddened to hear that a past Board member, Michael Recknell has passed away. Michael was a wonderful supporter of Fintry and did much over the years getting the Fintry Fairs going and being a man of incredible foresight and enthusiasm for all things Fintry. These past years he and his wife Joan, still attended our Fairs even as it became more difficult for them due to ill health. The Board of the Friends of Fintry would like to acknowledge and thank his generous gesture of requesting that family and friends donate to the Friends of Fintry in his name.

As Curator of Fintry, Dan Bruce often undertakes some strange duties in order to keep the collection in tip-top condition, and this following article describes one of the trickiest and time-consuming jobs that he has had to do.....

*The eagle is probably the bird most frequently used as a symbol, emblem and metaphor in our own traditions, and those of many other cultures as well. Aquila chrysaetos, the Golden Eagle faces the congregation in numerous churches as its spread wings support the lectern bible. The same bird topped the battle standards of imperial Rome, and also the flags of Napoleon's armies, (one can be seen in the Waterloo picture in the Red Room). Almost every one of the native North American aboriginal groups held a special regard for the eagle, either the Bald or the Golden, and the Golden clutches his snake on the coat-of-arms of Mexico. The last Aztec emperor was Cuauhtémoc, "Descending Eagle".*



*It should be, and indeed is, that Fintry has its own eagle. The late Gordon Peacock of Armstrong donated his collection of eggs and some mounted birds to Fintry, and that included a Golden Eagle, mounted (a la Cuauhtémoc) with wings fully spread in descent, 76 inches tip to tip. This specimen is of some age, but apart from being extremely dusty, it is in very good condition. I have been spending some "isolation time" cleaning it, preparatory to putting it up in the Trophy Room. The plan is to replace the peacock, (perhaps to Gordon's amusement) above the doorway with the recently cleaned eagle. The problem with the peacock is that it was mounted as if in flight, but not with thought given to the train which would stream straight behind a flying bird, and not droop to one side. With luck, the eagle will fit into the space above the door.*

*Live eagles can frequently be seen in the Park at Fintry, although the Bald Eagle is more common than the Golden. Being a North American endemic species, the Founding Fathers of the United States chose the Bald Eagle as the national emblem. This apparently was done over the objections of Benjamin Franklin, who preferred the Wild Turkey in that role. Doubtless there are many, both then and now who are relieved that Franklin was overruled.*

Any visitors to Fintry now will notice with regret the loss of the veteran Douglas Fir that grew just to the north of the Manor House. That tree fell earlier this month, after having stood there for just about 100 years. It fell to the east, and landed on part of the labyrinth, but it also came down on the London Plane tree that was planted by Ben Lee and Mark Flanagan in 2009 as part of Fintry's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Incredibly, the main stem of the Plane still stands, and with some TLC and careful pruning, the tree will almost certainly recover.

**The Friends of Fintry Annual General Meeting will be held at the Fintry Manor House on Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2020 at 10.00 a.m.** We invite all members to attend. If your membership has lapsed you can renew at the door before the meeting or through our website [www.fintry.ca](http://www.fintry.ca). We will be adhering to physical distancing and hand sanitizer will be available. We are in urgent need of new board members so if anyone is interested in joining the Board, contact us through our email: [info@fintry.ca](mailto:info@fintry.ca) for an application form or phone me at 250-542-4139 for more information.

Stay healthy everyone,  
Kathy Drew  
Friends of Fintry Provincial Park