



Friends of Fintry Provincial Park

The Octagon - June, 2021

Greetings all....

Finally, we are seeing a glimmer of hope in these difficult days as more and more people get vaccinated; restrictions are gradually lifting and people are tentatively expanding their social circles.

We look forward to being able to start tours again at the Manor House (with Covid protocols same as last year) opening weekends starting 19th June and then four days a week in July and August when we have our students on board. This year we will have a new room for viewing (Dun-Waters' master suite) as well as several new artefacts, one of which our Curator Dan Bruce will talk about (see below).

We would like to thank all our members who have renewed their membership for 2021/22. Your continued support of the Friends of Fintry is crucial at this time of reduced tour hours and bodies through the Manor House. There is of course still time to renew or become a member of the Friends of Fintry, just check out our web-site at www.fintry.ca for more information. On Saturday, June 12th we will be having our annual Spring clean-up at the Manor House starting at 11:00 a.m. so if any members want to come and join us, you will be more than welcome.

I would like to thank one of our newer members, Sue Cseh for her wonderful contributions, stories and photos that she has been adding to the Fintry Estate Facebook page. From bears to hummingbirds, as well as the flora and fauna of the area, she brings to life much of the interesting facets that the Estate and the Fintry Provincial Park offers our visitors.

Following is some very interesting information on a beautiful Turtle shell donated to Fintry by Jim Dawson. When next you visit the Manor House be sure to look for this beautiful piece as well as some other treasures which have been added over these past months.

The Friends of Fintry members have been doing well in the way of awards recently. First our Curator Dan Bruce received the Heritage B.C. Honour Award in the Lifetime Achievement category and we just received word this past month our own historian and Director Paul Koroscil will be receiving a Certificate of Recognition from the B.C. Historical Federation for his life's work promoting not only Fintry but numerous areas in BC. (Because of Covid regulations this presentation will be done virtually on Saturday evening.) Congratulations to you both for all your accomplishments over the years and for promoting British Columbia's diverse history.

Now for some very interesting information on our latest acquisition.....the beautiful Green Turtle shell.



“The photo shows Jim Dawson and Curator Dan Bruce attending a small outdoor gathering of eight people, some of Gretchen's close associates that was arranged in her memory in the gardens at Guisachan House in Kelowna. Jim had just presented the turtle shell to Fintry that hung on Gretchen's wall for many years, a souvenir of her early life in Trinidad.

Fossil sea turtles, contemporary with the dinosaurs grew to huge size, *Archelon* for example is estimated to have weighed around 6,000 pounds, (2,700 Kgs.) Today, the sea turtles are represented by seven much smaller species, Fintry's shell being that of the Green Turtle, *Chelonia mydas*. This and the other species range throughout the world's tropical seas, excepting the Flatback, which is restricted to the northern coasts of Australia. The largest living species is the Leatherback, which has been recorded on rare occasions off the coast of BC.

The Green Turtle has been exploited by humans for centuries,

and together with the rest of the sea turtles, has now joined the list of endangered species. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the ships of the world's navies collected these creatures as a source of fresh meat for the crews, as turtles could be kept alive on board for weeks. Green Turtle was also the chief ingredient in the turtle soup traditionally on the banquet menu of the Lord Mayor and Corporation of the City of London. The beautiful, mottled translucent material used to make combs, mirror-cases, snuff boxes etc. called 'tortoise shell' in fact comes from the Hawksbill Turtle, and not from the land-living tortoise. (On land, Tortoise, in fresh water, Terrapin, and in the sea, Turtle). Demand of this has caused the Hawksbill to be hunted wherever it could be found, but well-made plastic imitation is now available, and this seems to have reduced the threat to the Hawksbill's survival.

Several scientists have specialized in the study of these marine reptiles, but still many aspects of their biology and behaviour remain mysterious. Gretchen's shell having just arrived does not yet have a certain location in the Manor House, but we will make sure that this season visitors will be able to see it. Once very common, and now very rare, we are privileged to be able to show this to our guests.

In addition to the *Chelonia* shell, those visiting Fintry this season will be able to include the Main Bedroom in their tour. This has not been open before, but now is, and features a 1930's bedroom suite, originally from the Hudson's Bay Co. in Vancouver, the gift of Dave Richmond of BC Parks.”

'Til next month....stay safe,
Kathy Drew,
Friends of Fintry Provincial Park.