



Friends of Fintry Provincial Park

The Octagon - November, 2022

Greetings Friends,

Another season has come and gone and as we look back on all that we accomplished this year, I feel we did quite well despite having no students to assist with summer tours. Our team of volunteers went above and beyond to ensure that the Manor House was open every weekend for tours and in addition to our Fairs, we were able to hold a couple of extra musical events thanks to federal funding that we were able to secure. Our only regret was not being able to open the barns for tours this year as we were so short staffed. Unfortunately, in the past month vandals have destroyed several of the windows in the Octagonal barn and gained access to both barns. A police report has been filed and we are in discussions with BC Parks as to next steps. It would be devastating to lose these historic structures.

The Park is now closed for the season and the Manor House winterized. We also have caretakers living upstairs which gives us a sense of security during these long winter months.

As many of you know I was in the UK from mid to September to mid October and while there I arranged to meet with various members of the Fintry Museum Society in Fintry, Scotland. Following is a brief outline of my visit to this historic place where Dun-Waters grew up before moving to England and ultimately to Canada.

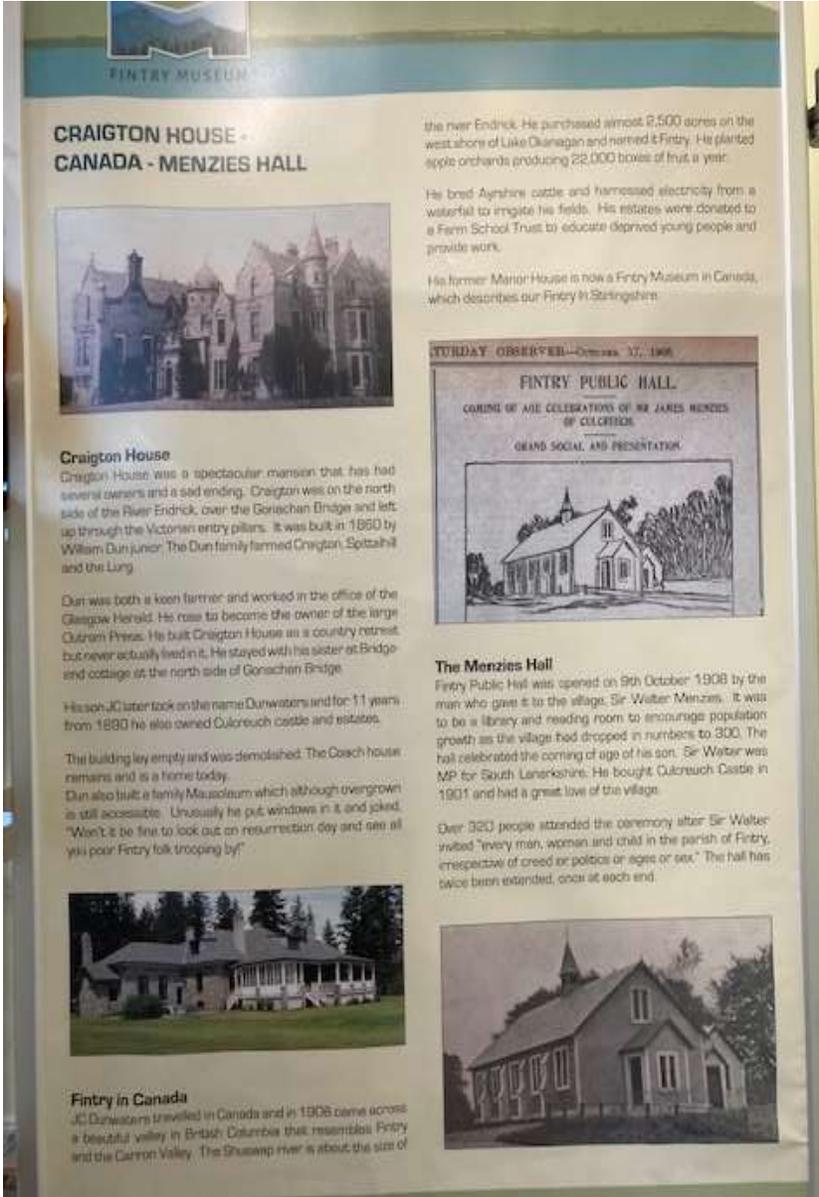
Fintry, Scotland is nestled between the Campsie Fells and the Fintry Hills in the heart of Scotland, about an hour's drive from Glasgow. As we approached the village, (population 600) the views of the rolling hills, where sheep were grazing peacefully, were serene and beautiful. The village itself consists mostly of one main street with many very old buildings (including a pub) that has stood there since 1750. People have lived in Fintry for over 4000 years.

I had arranged to meet at the Fintry Museum with David Smith, who has visited our Fintry. Along with David were local historians Hugh Edmond and Meg Duckworth. Hugh Edmond is a founding member and Treasurer of the Fintry Museum Society, and the Fintry Museum is also named the "Edmond Gallery" as a tribute to him. Hugh has been a Fintry lad all his days and is the last in his family still living here after over 500 years of a continuous Fintry family line. There is no other known Fintronian, present nor ever in the past, who can make the same claim.



Historian Hugh Edmond MBE, beside present day Fintry pic.

The museum just opened last November after the Sports Club offered ground space for the historical society to build the interpretation centre, (adjoining the Sports Club.) The community rallied around and in no time £100,000 was raised and the building erected. Their museum contains information boards explaining the history of Fintry, including one board which has our Fintry Manor House, showing the connection with Canada. There are no artifacts yet but this could change as archaeological digs take place and discoveries are made. The Sports Club has a huge indoor area (the size of a football pitch), where various sports including squash and lawn bowling all take place. For weddings and ceilidhs, a wooden floor is put down over the artificial turf. It is the heart of the community as it also has a small store and restaurant with some of the seating within the museum area.



One of the information boards at the Museum. Fintry Manor House bottom left.

As the weather was changing and rain forecast, (this was Scotland after all), it was decided that we go first to the Mausoleum hidden up in a woody hillside on an estate owned by a rather eccentric gentleman! This estate was owned in the 18th century by William Dun, J.C. Dun-waters' father. He built a castle (Craigton House) see above information board..... with extensive stables but never lived in it, preferring to live closer to the village in a smaller house. The castle has since been demolished and the stables now converted into a beautiful house in which this eccentric gentleman lives with his five cocker spaniels. (He is a hunting and fishing guide and the dogs are all trained to the gun).



Converted stables

After donning welly boots we trudged along a track, jumped across a ditch and climbed up a wooded and muddy hill (with this eccentric gentleman and his five cocker spaniels)! We eventually came to this surreal little building, and after shouldering open the door were led into the mausoleum where William Dun lies in this massive stone and iron above-ground crypt. We were in almost total darkness as the two tiny windows did not let in much light. There were other small crypts below the floor on either side of his (one with the lid partially moved off). Nothing inside was visible!



The Mausoleum hidden away in the woods





In order to take photos we all had to turn on the flashlights on our phones!

After we trudged down the hill and returned to the Museum, we had lunch. Unfortunately, another member of the Society (who is coming to our Fintry next year) came while we are at the Mausoleum, could not stay and we missed seeing her. After lunch and a photo shoot, Hugh took us to the 800-year-old Fintry Kirk and gravesite. Hugh (83 years old, rings the church bell every Sunday)!

Hugh and David were delighted with the bottle of Okanagan Spirits' the Laird of Fintry whisky that I presented to them and said once emptied it would be filled with tea and put on display in the Museum!



Inside the church.



Note: Bottom says window erected by William Dun's sisters

In the graveyard outside the church...



I hope you enjoyed this little journey back in time which gives a glimpse into Dun-Waters' life before he emigrated to Canada.

'Til next month,
Stay warm, stay safe,

Kathy Drew,
Friends of Fintry Provincial Park.