



Merrickville and District Historical Society Newsletter

President's Message

Summer 2018 is well and truly here. The cheerful weather provided me a moment of courage to drop by un-announced at 106 Brock St., known to many as the “Stephen Merrick” house.

Gail and Bill Ellison, who purchased the home in August 2017, are two of MDHS’ newer members but their enthusiasm for restoration will be familiar to many MDHS members who have been custodians of other heritage homes in Merrickville-Wolford. Bill and Gail (and faithful canine companion Winston), are using Bill’s antique refinishing skills and background in Fine Arts to their advantage as the process of restoring both the interior and exterior of the house unfolds. Gail’s research skills have allowed her to create an illustrated book highlighting stories of the house and its occupants.

The day I visited, the recently restored fountain, built by Copps Bros. in Hamilton, ON in 1873, was running in the back yard – rescued by Gail and Bill from its previous life as a planter. It is inspiring to meet members who are willing to share their skills, knowledge and enthusiasm, and I’m hoping to “rope them in” to provide us with some restoration updates and stories in the future. Recognizing new members (and we have had a number of new members in the last year or so – welcome all!) is always a happy occasion, especially when we have to say goodbye to others. It is with sadness that I was informed of the death of one of our life members, Dr. Gordon Armstrong on June 24, 2018 in Ottawa. Many of you will remember Gordon and his wife Molly and other are undoubtedly familiar with their stone house, Gilnockie, on River Rd. between Merrickville and Burritt’s Rapids.

Summer is a wonderful time to get out and appreciate all of what our region has to offer. I’d love to hear your “heritage finds” from this summer. Happy exploring!

Ann Martin



Copps Bros. Fountain, 106 Brock St., Merrickville, ON. Photo credit: Ann Martin

UPCOMING EVENTS

Merrickville-Wolford Threads of Life



On **Wednesday, August 8** MDHS invites its members and supporters, residents of Merrickville-Wolford, and local businesses to join us in creating this exciting interactive exhibit. Participants will be invited to mark out their lives in Blockhouse Park using yarn and wooden stakes, alongside figures from Merrickville-Wolford's history. This exhibit, as part of the Merrickville-Wolford 225th Anniversary, is designed to celebrate our community in all its diversity from inception to today.

The exhibit will begin at **12 noon**, and an official ceremony will be held at **2 PM**. Donations of yarn of all colours for use in this exhibit are encouraged and may be dropped off at the Blockhouse Museum until August 7th.

The History Buffs

As part of Merrickville-Wolford 225 Celebrations, Holy Trinity Anglican Church is partnering with the Merrickville and District Historical Society to present "The History Buffs," a trio of musicians from the Ottawa valley who combine traditional music with storytelling to create family-friendly entertainment.

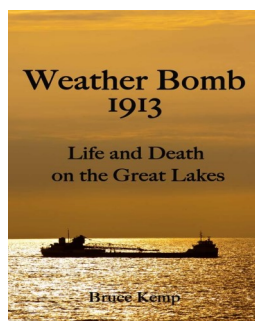
This free concert will be held outside on the lawn at Holy Trinity, Merrickville on **September 9 from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30pm** (bring your lawn chair; inside in case of rain) and will be followed by a spaghetti supper (pay what you can).



September Lecture

The infamous Great Lakes gale of November 1913 sunk freighters and took the lives of more than 250 people. Bruce Kemp, recently arrived in Merrickville and member of the MDHS, has published *Weather Bomb 1913: Life and Death on the Great Lakes*. Bruce's research, done over 40 years, led him to captains, sailors, meteorologists, contemporary news reports, interviews with survivors, and archives.

Bruce Kemp will share his journey with us as part of our regular lecture series at the Merrickville Legion on **September 25, 2018 at 2 PM**.

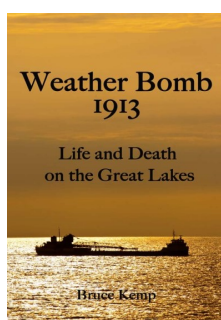
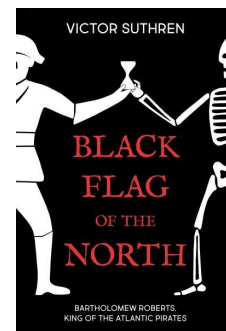


The Merrickville and District Historical Society will be holding the Annual General Meeting on **November 27, 2018**. Further details will be announced in the Fall newsletter. All members are encouraged to attend. The AGM will include dinner and a presentation.

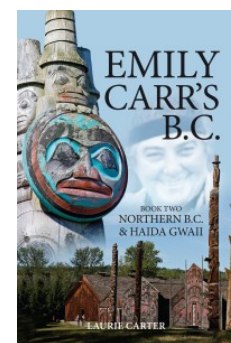
Annual General Meeting

OUR MEMBERS

Victor Suthren, past director of the Canadian War Museum, is an established writer and historian with a special interest in maritime history. Victor has published several works including *The Island of Canada*, *To Go Upon Discovery*, and *The Sea Has No End*. On **Saturday, August 4 2018 at 2 PM** Victor will be launching his latest work, *Black Flag of the North: Bartholomew Roberts, King of Atlantic Pirates*, at the Merrickville Public Library. This book explores the history of the “King of Pirates”, Bartholomew Roberts, who took over four hundred ships. Victor’s book follows the Pirate King through his incredible journey from South Wales to Brazil.



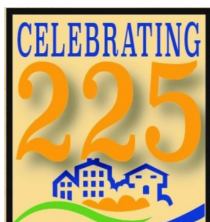
An award-winning photographer and writer, **Bruce Kemp** and his wife, Laurie Carter, have recently moved to Merrickville from the Okanagan Valley. Bruce’s works include *The Complete Travel Writer*, the *Ports Cruising Guide to Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair*, and the 2006 update to the *Ports Cruising Guide to the Rideau Canal*. Bruce has also written a historical novel, *Letters From A Fugitive Son*. Bruce’s latest work is *Weather Bomb 1913: Life and Death on the Great Lakes*. Woven together from contemporary newspaper and courtroom reports along with eyewitness testimony gathered by Bruce from survivors, the book recounts the dreadful hurricane that swept across the Great Lakes in November of 1913.



Laurie Carter is an award-winning writer and photographer who is well known in Merrickville as the author of *Emily Carr's B.C. (Book One and Two)*. Recently arrived in Merrickville with her husband, Bruce Kemp, Laurie is a journalist, author, and blogger and has presented lectures on Emily Carr and the First Nations in BC for MDHS twice in the past year. Laurie’s bibliography includes *Grandma Wears Hiking Boots: A personal guide to the Okanagan Valley* and *Gifts of the Okanagan* (a collaboration with Bruce Kemp). We look forward to hearing more from Laurie in the future.



Lesley Strutt is a poet, essayist, novelist, playwright, and blogger living in Merrickville, Ontario. Her ancestral roots are Irish and she is a descendant of the Bard of Bytown - William Pittman Lett. Her poetry has appeared in anthologies, journals and e-magazines. Her chapbook *Small as Butterflies* won the 2015 Tree Chapbook Contest. Lesley sits on National Council for the League of Canadian Poets and is an active member of PEN Canada. She edited *If There is Somewhere to Go*, the third collection of open reading poems published in the Living Archives series of the Feminist Caucus of the League of Canadian Poets, for which Susan McMaster was consulting editor. Her first collection of poems will be published by Inanna Publications.



Merrickville - Wolford 225th: Future Events

MDHS is thrilled to be part of the celebrations for the 225th anniversary of Merrickville-Wolford. Many events run and/or sponsored by MDHS have already occurred, (see p.3), but many more are on their way! We look forward to seeing you there!

Sunday July 29 at 2PM at the Merrickville Legion, Wayne Poapst will speak of his memories of HF McLean, the eccentric millionaire of Merrickville.

Sunday August 5 at 2PM at the Merrickville Legion, Jennifer DeBruin will discuss the complex history of the slaves who were brought to Upper Canada with Loyalist families.

Sunday August 12 at 2PM at the Merrickville Legion, local historian Ross Jones will explore the history of the Fenian Raids.

Sunday August 19 at 2PM at the Merrickville Legion an Afternoon of Poetry and Literature will be held. All local authors are welcome.

Sunday August 29 at 2PM at the Merrickville Legion the Castle Minstrels will perform traditional Canadian and British music.

Sunday September 9 at 2:30PM at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, the History Buffs will be performing.

Merrickville - Wolford 225th: Past Events



AT THE BLOCKHOUSE

Our Interpreters

Once again, the Blockhouse Museum has opened for the season and, thanks to Young Canada Works and Canada Summer Jobs grants, a team of hard-working and energetic students waits with smiling faces to greet our visitors.

Mackenzie Chambers is returning for her third season at the Blockhouse. She is a student at Cité Collegiale in Ottawa, studying criminal law and rehabilitation. She is interested in pursuing a career in counselling the victims of violent crimes.

Tim Dunning is a Grade 12 student at North Grenville District High School. He loves the arts, especially theatre and music, and particularly enjoys drums. He has recently volunteered at a local day camp in Smith's Falls. He hopes to one day study animation or produce music.

Lauria Pilon is a student at Ecole Catholique Ange Gabriel. She has an interest in studying psychology and a passion for stop-motion animation. She also loves fantasy thriller novels and theatre, and is excited to be part of the Blockhouse team.

Alexandra Proctor is a student at Queen's University, studying the Life Sciences. She recently moved to Merrickville, and enjoys card games, music, dance, and ice cream.



After two seasons as an Interpreter at the Blockhouse, I am thrilled to be back for another season. This year I have taken on the role of Special Events Coordinator, as part of a 6-month internship with Young Canada Works Building Careers in Heritage. As part of this internship, I am helping out with the MW 225 events, supervising the students at the Blockhouse, and helping MDHS in its ongoing mission to meet the Ontario Small Museums standards. This includes writing policies and procedures, such as a Community Standards Policy which includes guidelines for communications, social media, and community partnerships. Part of this project included participating in the Canadian Association for Conservation of Cultural Property and the Canadian Association of Professional Conservators' Care of Collections Survey, which collects data from museums across Canada to be used in deciding governmental priorities and budgeting.

All of these tasks are meant to help MDHS maintain its relevance for Merrickville-Wolford and the surrounding areas, building on community partnerships and recognizing the importance of local stakeholders. MDHS is an organization built for and supported by its community, and I am honored to be part of it. I look forward to working with you all in the coming months.

Elizabeth Robinson

GET INVOLVED

Membership

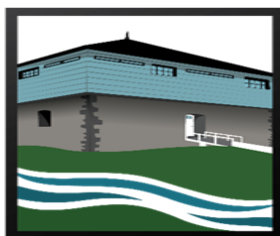
After 52 years, we're finally ready to cross the digital divide. Many of you will be receiving this newsletter via email. We're still providing paper copies to MDHS members who would prefer to receive theirs in the mail.

We are missing information for some of our members and will be doing our best to update our database in the next couple of months. This fall we'll be asking everyone who is receiving a copy of the newsletter to ensure that their membership dues are up to date. We think it's a bargain!

- Annual Membership (Individual) - \$10.00
- Annual Membership (Family) - \$15.00
- Life Membership (Individual) - \$100.00
- Life Membership (Family) - \$150.00

Membership dues can be paid at the MDHS Annual General Meeting, or sent to:

Merrickville and District Historical Society
PO Box 294
Merrickville, Ontario
K0G 1N0, CA



MDHS At a Glance

The current Merrickville and District Historical Society Executive Committee:

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|---|--------------------------------|
| • Ann Martin: President | • Nancy Warr: Secretary |
| • Jeffrey Murray: 1st Vice-President | • Michael Phillips: Treasurer |
| • Angela Beking: 2 nd Vice-President | • Andrew McKay: Past President |

Volunteers

MDHS is a 100% volunteer, not-for-profit organization. We're well-funded, (fairly) well-organized, and offer year-round heritage programming, most of it free of charge, to our community. Without our volunteers, none of this would be possible. We have a few vacancies coming available and are in need of new people to come forward and help us out – the sooner you volunteer, the sooner you can learn from our seasoned volunteers who will be sure to share their experience and knowledge with you. We need people for the following:

Blockhouse volunteers (4 hours Saturdays/Sundays Labour Day to Thanksgiving)

Secretary (5 hours/month, including monthly executive meetings on 3rd Tuesday of each month)

Volunteer Coordinator

Communications Coordinator (newsletter, Facebook, Twitter)

Fall/Spring Lecture Coordinator

Executive Member (various profiles available!)

If you'd like to get involved with our organization, or have an idea that you'd like to share, please give Ann Martin a call at (613-269-2042).

Contact Us!

Do you have questions, want information, or have an idea for a display? To get involved, please contact us:

Email: info@merrickvillehistory.org

Website: www.merrickvillehistory.org

Facebook: Merrickville and District Historical Society

Thank you to the contributors of this issue of the MDHS Newsletter; Ann Martin, Michael Phillips, Michael Whittaker, and Elizabeth Robinson.