

# The Fire Mark

The Newsletter of the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum  
PORT HOPE, ONTARIO, CANADA • MARCH 2016

## Report from the Chair:

There's a lot happening at the CFFM these days and I hardly know where to begin. The Museum is receiving some extraordinary recognition lately. About 9 months ago I received an email from the Royal Canadian Mint. 2016 is the 100th anniversary of a major fire that destroyed the centre block of Parliament (only the Library survived). The Mint was producing a \$100 Gold coin to commemorate that significant event in Canadian history and they were inviting the CFFM to participate in the design process. (more about this on next page)

The exciting thing about all of this for me is that it is a concrete demonstration of the fact that the CFFM is rapidly gaining wide recognition and being accepted as a source of expert knowledge in the field of Canadian firefighting.

About the same time that we were working on the coin, I received an inquiry from the Ontario Fire College (Gravenhurst). The college is the training centre for the vast majority of firefighters in Ontario and is run by the Ontario Fire Marshall's Office (OFM). We were aware that they used to operate a fire museum at the college and that it had closed over ten years ago for want of staff. What we didn't know was that the vast majority of that museum's collection was still on-site, in storage and they were looking for someone to take it on. (more about this following)

I could go on about the terrific items we've found in some of the totes and boxes, but what I want to stress is that



Above: Two fabulous, early leather fire helmets donated from the Ontario Fire College *Read more...*

the OFM recognizes our museum and was willing to place their trust in us to carry on the legacy of this important and valuable collection.

Next, our Secretary (Marielle), received word from Fire Prevention Canada (FPC) which is the organization encompassing all Canadian fire Prevention officers and educators. They too recognized the good work of the CFFM and inquired as to whether or not we might be willing to accept 40 years worth of their archived documents from that organization. This is a matter we are still considering, but it was extremely gratifying just to have been asked.

I should also add that, out of the blue, we received a cheque from the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs (O AFC). This is an organization that we have been working with for several years. They invite us to attend their Trade

Shows and we keep them updated on the progress of the Museum. This unsolicited and surprise donation demonstrates to me that they too recognize the good work being done by the CFFM and wanted to make a gesture of support.

A lot of hard work has gone into the Museum over the past several years and there is a great deal more ahead of us as we transform the CFFM into a bigger/better cultural attraction.

To be recognized and appreciated by organizations whose bases are far from Port Hope is extremely gratifying and encouraging.

Meanwhile, we are making significant progress in our quest to move to a bigger/better site having begun a feasibility study. (see inside)

*Will Lambert,  
Chair*

## Hey! We're In the Money!

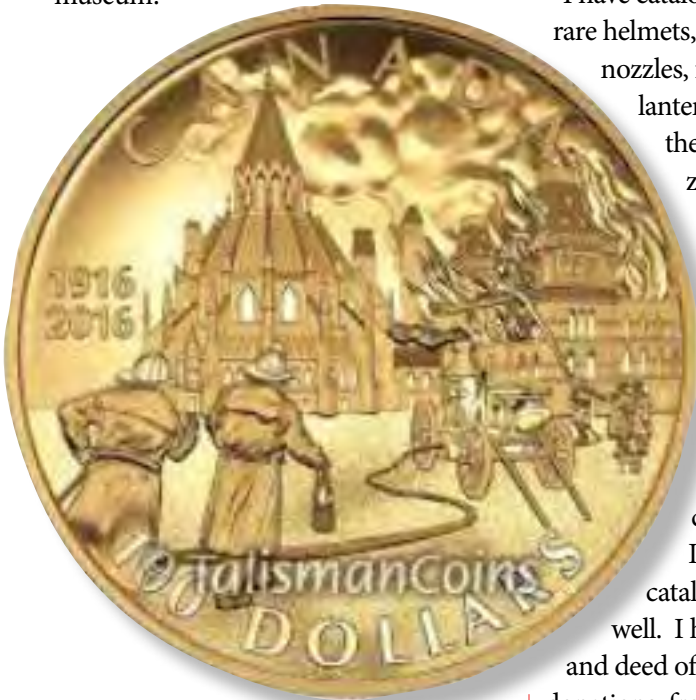
**W**ell "ON" the money at least! Last year we were contacted by a representative of the Royal Canadian Mint to consult on design details of a new Canadian \$100 gold coin to be introduced in 2016. The coin depicts the fire that destroyed the first Canadian Parliament Buildings in Ottawa in 1916.

We were happy to be able to advise on the proper fire fighting uniforms and equipment that would accurately reflect what was available and in use in that era.

The result is a stunning, shiny solid gold \$100 coin which, because of today's high gold value, retails for almost \$600!

We also helped out with the details on a new \$25 solid silver coin, part of a series depicting Canadian heroes, in this case, fire fighters. This coin will be available in April of this year.

Needless to say, it's very gratifying to be recognized as experts in the history of fire fighting in Canada by the Royal Canadian Mint. It's a valuable testament to our increasing stature as a national museum!



Above: Beautiful, solid gold \$100 coin is actually worth almost \$600!



Above: The Ontario Fire College in Gravenhurst, ON

## Ontario Fire College Donates Collection to CFFM

### Collections Report

**A**s Collections Manager, I have been quite busy this winter working on accessioning the collection you no doubt heard we obtained from the Ontario Fire College. To date I have inventoried 262 artifacts from Gravenhurst and I have entered 190 into Past Perfect, our museum software system. It has been a real challenge tagging and finding a home for all the artifacts in the Museum.

I have catalogued a range of items from rare helmets, to ferry pistols, to many nozzles, fire extinguishers and lanterns. I am just beginning on the books, manuals, magazines, photos, and the other printed items.

As well as that, I have made a contact with the Ontario Armoured Regiment and Museum in Oshawa, when they brought down a very nice La France gas mask with case and breathing canister. I also have identified and catalogued 225 35mm slides as well. I have edited new accession and deed of gift forms to use for new donations, from Past Perfect as well. I can't wait for the busy season to start!

*David Moore,  
Collections*

**T**he Ontario Fire College, in Gravenhurst, Ontario, has generously donated its collection of Canadian firefighting artifacts to the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum in Port Hope.

Not surprisingly, we're very pleased to receive this fabulous gift of hundreds of high quality, vintage items that have been in storage and out of sight for years. These valuable artifacts will extend our current collection and allow us to create even more new exhibits for the public to enjoy.

The Ontario Fire Marshall's office operates the Ontario Fire College, located in Gravenhurst. Virtually all fire departments in the Province send their firefighters there for training courses.

For decades, the College incorporated a fire museum on campus, but it was closed over ten years ago due to budget cutbacks. The large collection was originally assembled as students from all over Ontario asked their local departments to donate artifacts to this museum so that other firefighters could see, enjoy and learn about them.

CFFM has been aware of this vast collection of firefighting history for several years and has always hoped to secure it, but the college has held onto the dream of



reopening their museum. In October 2015, the decision was made that the Gravenhurst facility would not be reopening a museum and they contacted CFFM. They were very glad we were interested—if no takers had been found, the collection would have been sold off bit-by-bit with the remainder possibly going to landfill. There was no way we'd ever let that happen! Our mandate is to tell the story of firefighting in Canada through the collection, preservation and display of firefighting artifacts. We now have one of the most extensive collections in Canada!"

Says Museum Collections Manager, David Moore, "It's going to take quite a while to sort and catalogue this many new items, even with our state-of-the-art cataloging software, but we are determined to have some on display by the time we open for the season in May. There is much more to bring down from Gravenhurst but we will wait for spring to collect larger pieces."

All parties agree, this addition will significantly increase the importance of the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum in the preservation of the history and artifacts of firefighting in Canada.



*At Left:* We received many, many bins of assorted, vintage firefighting gageetry of all kinds!

*Below Left:* This "Loving Cup" was originally awarded in 1910 by the Trenton, ON Fire Chief.

*Below:* An amazing collection of Fire Fighting Badges including some very rare and valuable specimens.

*Bottom:* A short section of early riveted leather fire hose.



## CFFM Hires Top Professional Firms for Feasibility Study

**W**e're pleased to announce the Museum has appointed the firm of Bill Lett Architects Inc., Peterborough, Ontario, to produce a feasibility study for the Museum.

After extensive review of several firms and the solicitation of proposals, the CFFM Board decided to secure professional assistance to work through how it should address the issue of a new home based on best practices in the museum

community. Through this competitive process, the Board has contracted with Bill Lett Architects, assisted by Michael Lundholm Associates, museum planners, to do the work.

Lett has considerable experience in the development of facilities for heritage organizations in Ontario and Mr. Lett himself, is a Port Hope resident with a keen interest in making this project come to fruition.

Michael Lundholm is recognized as one of the most experienced museum planners in Canada. Both

Lett and Lundholm have worked together on other heritage facility projects.

The feasibility study will be undertaken in two phases. The first element will be a thorough self-examination of the Museum's vision for its future and the functional requirements that would serve that vision. The second element will be the examination of the potential of a vacant former retail property in the Port Hope core to serve the Museum's needs.

Museum Chair, Will Lambert, says, "We expect the results of

phase one will be a well thought out statement of the Museum's requirements for space in a new facility and how the various spaces will work with each other. These results are independent of any particular building and could be applied anywhere."

Christopher Terry, an advisor to CFFM, (retired CEO of the Canada Science and Technology Museums Corporation in Ottawa and now living in Port Hope), regards this feasibility study as representing a real "tipping point" for the Museum and the Board's most professional and realistic effort in recent times to chart the future of the Museum in practical and sustainable terms.

One of the Museum's supporters is already sufficiently convinced of the importance of having this foundational work done that he has made a large personal financial contribution. It will cover most of the costs of the first element of the work.

Although the Museum has sufficient funds on hand to cover the entire cost, applications have been made for grants, and sponsorship funds are being sought to cover the full cost of the study. According to Will Lambert this work is the Museum's very best hope for generating a credible, well-founded and achievable plan to carry the CFFM into the future. "This will not be the product of the wishful thinking of enthusiastic amateurs. The bones for a significant and successful heritage institution of great importance to Port Hope are all there and we intend to make it happen."

This is an exciting time for the Museum, which is on the verge of significant growth, and it's a very good time for those who may be interested to become involved as a volunteer, or committee member.



Above: "Going home for a visit!" The Six Nations pumper loaded on a flatbed for its journey back to Ohsweken, Ontario to be a guest of honour!  
At Right: The Six Nations Truck door with its original graphics.



## Museum Loans Historic Truck to its Original Fire Department

**A** fire truck that's been in the possession of the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum in Port Hope for over a decade is going home for a visit!

The truck, known as the "Six Nations" truck, a Bickle Seagrave "anniversary issue" Pumper model 400 B., originally purchased by the RCAF, later saw service in the town of Ohsweken (near Brantford) at the Six Nations Fire Department.

It is the 50th anniversary of the department and the truck will be a featured part of the celebration and on display during the 2016 National Aboriginal Firefighter Competition and Annual General Meeting which they are hosting in August at the departments new headquarters.

Says Six Nations Fire Chief, Matthew Miller, "Thank you for the opportunity to borrow

the truck. It means a great deal to us to have such a huge part of the foundation of our fire service history come back for a visit especially during our 50th anniversary and in our new headquarters."

Because the truck is not in operable condition, especially for long distance, the Ohsweken department sent a flatbed tow truck to retrieve the vehicle and transport it to Ohsweken.

Will Lambert, Chair of the Museum says, "This is well timed! The truck has been stored inside until recently when the storage barn we used was sold. For the past few months, the Six Nations truck needed to be stored outside and this is not ideal. The Fire Chief in Oshweken has offered us storage there until the Museum moves to new quarters and we may need to take him up on that offer."



## CFFM's "Ad Hoc" Committee

The Ad Hoc is a small group of Advisors. Together with myself as chair and Jim Clifford (vice chair) there is: Chris Terry (see below); Bill Hicks, past operator of the CTC store in Port Hope; and Ken Burgin past chair of the Museum.

Each of these gentlemen have knowledge and expertise that is invaluable to the CFFM, but for reasons of their own choose not to be regular board members. Our group meets as required to plan strategies, problem solve and offer advice for consideration by the board (who make all the actual decisions).

They work quietly, but purposefully in the background, with a lot of professionalism and sophistication. We would not be where we are in our efforts to secure a new home for the CFFM without their efforts.

*"I moved to Port Hope four years ago from Ottawa where I worked in our national museum system for about twenty years. My primary field is aviation but I am also interested in most other forms of transportation and industrial technology.*

*I knew very little about the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum when I moved here but that changed about a year ago when my neighbour Bill Hicks arranged for me to visit the Museum to have a look at the collection. It was a transformative event.*

*I left the Museum with a sense of the quality of the collection. I was also impressed with the dedication of the volunteers who operate the Museum and their desire to do so following best professional practice. I have years of experience working with small aviation museums in many places and the CFFM fit right into that mould. So I felt right at home even though my knowledge of the subject was pretty minimal. This has changed somewhat as I listened to the kinds of discussions about the collection which I was accustomed to have about aeronautical artifacts. The specific words are different but the basic conversations are identical.*

*It was a natural thing to become involved as a resource for the Board in its efforts to solve the Museum's accommodation challenges. This resulted in my meeting and becoming involved with Will Lambert and several other people he uses for advice. We've even become known as the "Ad Hoc Committee" and I have*

*found it to be very worthwhile and satisfying to spend time with them as we work through this complex issue.*

*It's worth mentioning that there is a strong motivation for my becoming so engaged. Simply put it is my belief in the fundamental merit of the Museum. Not only does it have a fine collection but it reflects a story about Canada which has been shared in every community for over two centuries. It also tells a story about technological and industrial development related to this indispensable and important public good.*

*Using the mechanism of an advisory group allows non Board members an opportunity to contribute their skills and experience on an "as required" basis. In my case this has meant sharing the museum planning and operating experiences I have had. I have also been able to identify people to provide professional museum planning services to the Board.*

*The upshot of this is that we have a professional examination of the Museum's facility needs underway. This will lead to a similarly professional examination of the degree to which those needs can be accommodated by the former Canadian Tire Corporation property in Port Hope. I have every expectation that the results will provide a credible and well founded basis for the CFFM project to move ahead.*

*I'm pleased to be able to participate in this very deserving project."*

Christopher Terry

## Museum Opening and Upcoming Events:

• **Saturday, May 21st**  
**MUSEUM OPENS FOR THE 2016 SEASON**

• **Sunday, May 29th**  
**CFFM FUNDRAISING 5 KM WALK**

Starting at the CFFM, walk through the picturesque town of Port Hope.

End at the CFFM with a barbeque lunch. Please go to the website for more details and to download a sponsorship form, which will be available on Monday April 4th.

• **Saturday, July 16th**  
**TOY FIRE TRUCK DAY**

From 11:00 am until 3:00 pm, kids of all ages are invited to bring down their favourite toy fire truck to show off.

Children under the age of 12 will receive a free toy fire truck to take home and add to their collection!

• **Saturday, August 13th**  
**MODEL BOAT DAY**

After the great success of 2015 the Kawartha Marine Modellers will be down with even more model boats than last year.

From 11:00 am until 3:00 pm, you can come down and check out the amazing hand-made models including a fire boat that squirts water!

There will also be a fundraising barbecue, so come on down and spend a few hours with us at the CFFM.

Please be sure to check the website for more events which will be posted as details are finalized.

Marielle Lambert  
Event Coordinator

## Thank You to Departing Board Members

**W**e're sad to be saying a fond farewell to Board Member and Membership Chair Marg Graham. One of our hardworking CFFM Board team, Marg steered us through membership drives and organizing and grant application procedures for the past three years even though she was busy planning weddings with two of her children.

We'd like to say a big "thank you" to Marg for all of her good work!



Brenda Johnson

Also on the farewell list is Board member Brenda Johnston (above) who gave freely of her time as official "Brass Polisher" and "Leather Restorer" while juggling two busy careers — one as a part time firefighter. Again, a big "thank you" to Brenda.

This, of course, opens up some positions on the Board and we are actively seeking new members. If you are interested in serving on the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum Board for a three year term, please contact Will Lambert, Chair.

## All About Fire Helmets

**O**ne of the things visitors like best in the Museum's collection, are the helmets.

CFFM has a great variety of head gear, from some of the earliest leather designs to present day composite materials, not to mention some that visitors can try on themselves!

As mentioned in a previous article, we've recently received some prime early examples that are shown in a photo on another page. Both these helmets have the rare and desirable "Seahorse" shield holder. These ornate brass attachments held the identifying shield or frontpiece firmly in place on the fire helmet. Other designs include lions and eagles (more common in the USA). In Canada, shield holders were sometimes beavers.

In the early days of firefighting, firefighting teams were more like a "club" composed of gentlemen firefighters and the headgear tended in many cases to be more of a formal (though very inefficient) style like a 'stove pipe' hat, though probably not common in Canada. (see illustration at right)

The traditional leather helmet design, with the sloping rear section to channel water away from the firefighter's neck, known as the "New York" style, was created in 1836 by New York firefighter, Henry Gratacap. But parade examples (we have one) are minus the wide brim and although providing protection from falling debris, would provide limited protection from water!

The CFFM fire helmet display is planned to be upgraded this spring to include our new acquisitions. Be sure to plan a visit and while you're there you can purchase a souvenir child's fire helmet your kids will love, in our Museum souvenir shop.

In the meantime, an informative article on helmets can be found here: <http://uniformstories.com/articles/opinion-category/the-tradition-and-history-of-the-american-fire-helmet>



Above A primitive "Stove Pipe" firefighters hat (American, not in CFFM collection)

Below: A fire helmet shield



Below: A modern composite helmet by MSA. Quite a difference!





## From Our Facebook Posts:

*Below:* The artifact below is a chemical cart from circa 1910. This small version of a chemical cart would have been ideal for the rich-man's estate. It would have been housed in his garage and brought into the house by servants to extinguish small household fires.



*Above:* This artifact is called a Batronic Resuscitator, which was very bulky and heavy when it was used. The large metal plate was placed on the ground underneath the patient and the sponge “paddle” was dipped into water and applied to the patient’s chest and charged.



This artifact is an R.C.A.F Gas Mask. It was made circa 1955 by Scott Aviation Corp. and it was used by the Royal Canadian Air Force.



Just one of the many interesting pieces that came to us from the Ontario Fire College collection. This early St. Catharines' FD badge #5. It is small by today's standards but beautifully detailed. We'd love to know whom it belonged to and some details of their career.



This 1920s leather helmet is unusual in that the front plate is sewn to the helmet, rather than secured by a decorative brass holder.

The Fire Mark is the Newsletter of the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum.  
95 Mill Street S., Port Hope, ON L1A 3W4  
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