

The Fire Mark

The Newsletter of the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum
PORT HOPE, ONTARIO, CANADA • JANUARY 2019

Report from the Co-Chairs:

2019 is ramping up to be different than 2018.

Last year we faced the daunting task of packing and moving our collection. It is a cold day as we write this article but we think, with a few shudders, of the crew that packed our collection in an unheated building last winter. We are grateful to those in the community who volunteered in so many ways including offers of storage and to support our auction. The energy of 2019 has one message – Canadian Fire Fighters Museum (CFFM) is an important cultural and educational institution, as well as a key tourist destination. We want to build locally and build upon our distinguished history.

There are several call outs in this newsletter — we are looking for volunteers with a variety of skillsets and available time. Philanthropy, board leadership, event planning, flyer delivery, fun fans to name but a few. Please consider how you can help CFFM achieve its 2019 message PSSST — we have been busy. Stay tuned next newsletter for a really exciting announcement.

Co-Chairs – Kathy and Michelle

Board of Directors Retiring

The current Board of Directors have led the development of the Museum and are now



Above: We bid a sad farewell to the Museum's home of 34 years. The building had to be removed to allow the soil remediation on that site. Even the bats have left!

championing the creation of a new museum in a new home. At our June 2019 AGM, some of our directors will be retiring having held posts for multiple terms. We are sincerely grateful to them but seek to fill the vacancies. We are looking for new board members with specific expertise to be part of a new team. Do you have an interest in a leadership role?

Current Directors are available to meet and share our history and vision, and answer your questions. If you are interested, please contact Co-Chair, Michelle Haney-Kileeg at: mhaneyki@gmail.com

New Collections Committee

The Board of the CFFM has reactivated a Collection Committee to oversee all activity related to the development, care and manage-

ment of the Museum's Collection. The Committee, which reports to the Board, consists of a Chair (Christopher Terry) and three members (Will Lambert, Janet Waddington and Ken Burgin). They will manage all new additions to the Collection to the extent there are any under the present circumstances, administer loans of artefacts to other museums, ensure the records of items in the Collection are complete and accurate and recommend to the Board any items which should be eliminated from the Collection. All of these activities follow current best practice. Since it was activated in late 2018 the Committee has refreshed the documents used to control outgoing loaned artefacts and the documents used when donations are made to the Collection. It has also carefully considered potential additions to the Collection and is dealing with some outstanding issues of incomplete documentation for loaned items.

Membership Marketing and Fundraising

These are exciting times at the CFFM as we venture into new territories. We are on the cusp of great things as we move to rebuild one of Port Hope's great attractions.

The board is happy to introduce a new committee called Membership Marketing and Fundraising under the leadership of Director, John Appleman. This committee is struck to grow our Membership, Market the treasures that we have been entrusted to share with the world and raise the funds to make it possible. The new committee is in its infancy and needs expansion!

Call this our "Help Needed Ad." We are looking for individuals who can grow our skillset.

Are you experienced in fundraising? Do you have the time and interest to commit to our task? Are you one of the people that can help with the building and implementation of our plan?

For more information please contact the committee chair at: jpappleman@yahoo.ca ...or call: 905-885-2146.

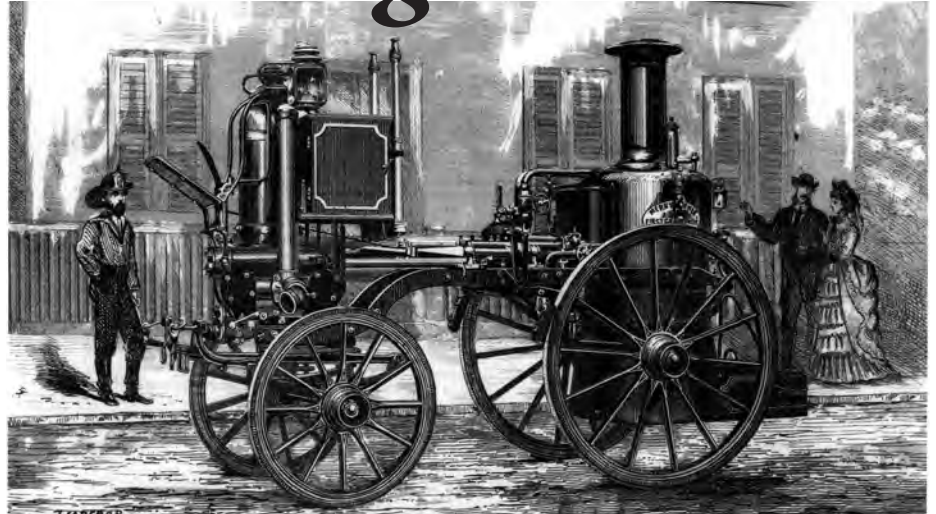
We are implementing a four-tiered approach to build the new Canadian Firefighters Museum. Our goal is to start with local fundraising and we will grow into regional and then provincial and national approaches for support. We are the *Canadian Fire Fighter Museum* but we want to be based in Port Hope. We grew from 1000 square feet in our humble beginnings to 6300 square feet before shutdown and our vision is to build and grow further as support warrants.

We will again be offering local events like last year's rain barrel sale, and a renewed membership drive, as well as other fundraising objectives.

To take the next step, we need your support. Please help us build and have some fun doing it.

John Appleman

Fire Engines 2.0



Above: The Whitby Merryweather steam fire engine that saved the town of Oshawa from destruction by fire, 9 December 1872. (Canadian Illustrated News, 4 Jan 1873 - image courtesy of Whitby Archives)

Fires are generally considered to need three components to start and continue burning: fuel, air (oxygen) and heat. At the simplest level, firefighting involves removing one of these and it is usually removal of air. This is done by smothering the fire, most commonly and historically by throwing water onto it. Technological advances over time have provided new ways to throw more water, faster and further to reach the fire.

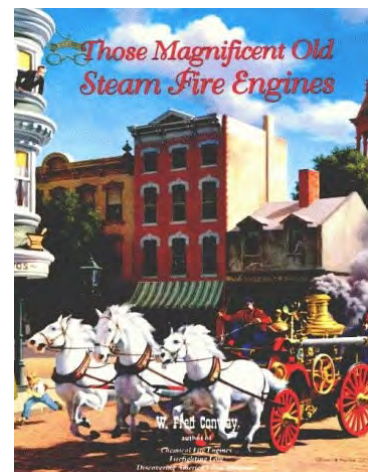
Fire Engines 1.0, in Fire Mark's July 2018 issue, examined the 18th century invention of the first "fire engines", the hand-powered pumps that continued in service until the late 19th century. Sometimes known as "handtubs", these were a tremendous advance over buckets.

The 19th century was the "Age of Steam." Steam engines powered the Industrial Revolution, which saw mechanized factories, deeper mines, railroads and sea transport, replacing animal and human-powered work. The field of firefighting was no exception as the power of steam was applied to run portable water pumps.

These consisted of a steam engine and a piston pump mounted on a heavy wagon drawn by horses. They were effective and dramatic pieces of 19th

century technology and are still the subject of reminiscences of "the good old days". The accompanying book cover photo from W. Fred Conway's 1997 book "*Those Magnificent Old Steam Fire Engines*" captures the sentiment. Ultimately, the steamers were, in their turn, so outclassed by 20th century internal combustion engine power that they retained only ceremonial roles. They are now extremely rare as many were cannibalized for parts, rusted away in barns or went to scrap metal drives for the war efforts. Of those still in existence, very few are still operational due to lost skills for maintaining and operating them safely.

According to Wikipedia, the first steam fire engine was built in England in 1829, but they really became popular and commercially successful by the early 1850s. These pumps had so much more power than the crews of 10 or more firefighters working on the handtubs that they quickly became standard equip-



ment in urban areas where building styles continued to grow higher and even the fittest of hand-pumping crews could not deliver water to the all too common fires in built-up areas. Horse-drawn steam-powered engines continued in service until the 1920s, until internal combustion took over from steam pumps and horses.



The publicly accessible steam fire engine (above) closest to CFFM's home is in Whitby, Ontario at their Centennial Building, 416 Centre Street South. It is an 1872 Merryweather & Sons, horse-drawn, horizontal single cylinder engine. When operational, with its wood-fired boiler at a steam pressure at 100 pounds per square inch, this engine could pump 350 gallons (1,591 liters) of water per minute in a stream that could clear the top of a 165 foot (50 meter) high grain elevator. And it would keep this up until it ran out of fuel for the boiler or water to shoot at the fire. Its boiler could be up to a working pressure within 10 minutes. Whitby is rightly proud of its historic engine and it has an interesting history.

In the 1871 census of Canada, the population of Whitby was 2,732 (compared to Oshawa with 3,185 and Port Hope with 5,114). In March of 1872, Whitby's Royal Hotel was lost to fire and the town council was pressured into committing to acquire the best fire engine it could get. In the spring of that year, English fire engine manufacturer Merryweather & Sons had built an engine which they shipped to Canada as a demonstrator to generate sales in



NOTE: Much of the historical information about Whitby's Merryweather engine is derived from the explanatory material provided to the public at the display of the engine itself.

Above: A newspaper clipping shows John Sawdon driving the Merryweather at Brock and Dunlop Streets West in Whitby in March 1934.

the major cities of the day. The engine stopped in Montreal and then Kingston before continuing on to Toronto in November. However, it never made it that far because Whitby heard it was coming and arranged for it to come off the train there in November for another demonstration stop. That demonstration so impressed the town council that it issued a 20-year debenture to buy it on the spot for \$2,500.

Later that year, on a December night in 1872, an Oshawa druggist decided to burn down his shop for an insurance claim. The fire soon started to spread out of control and an urgent message was sent to Whitby by horseback. Whitby despatched their new Merryweather engine to assist, arriving on scene in an hour and 10 minutes, including a change of horses halfway. The engine arrived in time to help save the residential area of Oshawa and confine the loss to one block of the downtown.

Whitby's engine was in service from 1872 until 1926 when the town acquired two gasoline-powered trucks. It was kept for parades and exhibits until 1934 when it was donated to the York Pioneer and Historical Society (an event covered by the Toronto Star, from whose article Whitby obtained

the photo reproduced here to use in their display.) Nothing more was heard of this steamer after that, so in the 1960s and 1970s some Whitby citizens tried unsuccessfully to track it down. Another Whitby resident took up the search in 2000 and in 2003 he thought he recognized its smokestack in the background of a televised Toronto Fire Service ceremony. It indeed turned out to be Whitby's lost Merryweather engine, recognized after about 70 year of absence from public life. It had apparently appeared in Toronto sometime after World War 2 but Toronto Fire knew nothing of its history. A plaque on its copper air bell shows it was restored by Toronto Fire in 1984. It was returned to Whitby in 2005 where it is now proudly on display.

Dennis Waddington

The Fire Mark is the Newsletter of the Canadian Fire Fighters Museum. Port Hope, Ontario



www.firemuseumcanada.com