

# Heritage on the Hill

The Richmond Hill Historical Society, P.O. Box 61527, 9350 Yonge St., Richmond Hill, ON L0C 0C9

www.rhhs.ca

Editor: Alison Hughes, Tel. 905-770-0056, E-Mail: amhughes@sympatico.ca

President: Andrea Kulesh, E-Mail: r.hillhistsoc@hotmail.ca

**March / April 2012 March / April 2012**



## President's Greetings

*From the desk of Andrea Kulesh*



My wedding anniversary appears this year on my social calendar. Doesn't everyone's? Not if you decided to get married on Leap Year Day! By now I have become used to going out for our "special anniversary" only every four years. I did a little research on some of the interesting folklore surrounding this once-in-a-four-year day. Here are some interesting tidbits.

### Watch Out Men

**It's Ladies' Privilege Day!  
2012 is a Leap Year !**

One of the convenient fictions we live by holds that there are exactly 365 days in a year. In point of fact, the earth turns roughly 365 *and a quarter* times on its axis by the time it has completed a full orbit around the sun, which means that periodically the calendar has to play catch-up -- thus the convention of leap years.

### Leap year folklore:

#### Ladies' privilege

In keeping with the theme of nature gone awry, a whimsical tradition dating back at least four centuries (and still trotted out at four-year intervals by newspaper feature writers) holds that leap years confer upon women the "privilege" of proposing marriage to men instead of the other way around. The convention was (in literature, if not in reality) that any man who refused such a proposal owed his spurned suitor a silk gown and a kiss - provided she was wearing a red petticoat at the moment she popped the question. The origin of this romantic tradition is long forgotten and steeped in legend.

Another tall tale (there's no reason to believe it's anything but) dates the origin of the leap year tradition to the 5th century, around the same time St. Patrick supposedly drove the snakes

out of Ireland. As the story goes, St. Patrick was approached by St. Bridget, who had come on behalf of all women to protest the unfairness of always having to wait for men to propose marriage. After due consideration, St. Patrick offered St. Bridget and her gender the special privilege of being able to pop the question one year out of every seven. Some haggling ensued, and the frequency ultimately settled upon was one year out of four — leap years, specifically — an outcome which satisfied both parties. Then, unexpectedly, it being a leap year and St. Bridget being single, she got down on one knee and proposed to St. Patrick on the spot. He refused, of course, bestowing on her a kiss and a beautiful silk gown in consolation.

We may conclude, among other things, that St. Patrick was better at dealing with snakes than with women !!

*Courtesy of [about.com](http://about.com) public domain*

## Upcoming Events

### March Meeting

"Heritage Tree - Preserving Our Natural Roots"

Our speaker on March 19th will be Edith George who is Advisor to the Ontario Urban Forest Council. A lone person can champion the protection of heritage trees and be successful. This is Edith's personal legacy. Edith has taken her light-and-sound show on the road, sharing her enthusiasm and knowledge with all who are interested.

### April Meeting

"Push On - Some York Families in the War of 1812"

John Warburton, UE, has spoken to our Society before and has always been well received. On April 16 he will present his side of things in the War of 1812, focusing on two heroes of York Region, bringing more local history to the story of the war

### New Meeting Time

Please take note that the monthly meetings at Wallace Hall, which are held on the third Monday of the month, will now begin at 7:30 p.m. instead of the

previous start time of 8:00 p.m. An open membership vote was taken at the Annual General Meeting in January and the vote was almost unanimous to make the time change. The executive thanks everyone who participated in the vote and we hope that this new time will be more convenient for members.

### Heritage Building Note Sets

A lovely set of four heritage buildings in Richmond Hill.

4 cards for \$5 Great for a gift!!

Contact: Andrea Kulesh 905-884-2789

## Richmond Hill Historical Society Board of Executives 2012

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Cheryl Butler	Past President

## Milk and Two Sugars, Please

We wish to welcome Joan Lund to her new position as Social Convenor. Joan comes to us with a fair bit of experience from the Richmond Hill Heritage Centre where many teas and events are held. Joan will set up the tea and coffee and refreshments at our monthly meetings. We would ask the volunteers who have signed up to bring refreshments for each monthly meeting to have their contribution already on its serving dish, unless it is something like sandwiches that have been packed for transport and have to be set out. This will help Joan to lay out the food more easily. We are sure that Joan would appreciate it if those volunteers could help with serving and afterwards with any tidy-up needed at the end of the meeting. Remember, many hands make light work! Welcome Joan and thank you for coming forward to volunteer for the Society. Every bit helps!

## A Little Step Greener

You may have noticed that we have switched to paper cups for serving coffee and tea at refreshment time. The Executive committee considers this change to be more eco-friendly by reducing waste of Styrofoam cups. We hope that the membership will support our "initiative" to reduce land fill by using a bio-degradable choice. We would welcome any suggestions about further "green" improvements we can make.

## Many Thanks For Many Years of Service

The Richmond Hill Historical Society Executive Committee wishes to thank Pearl and Chester (Social) and Bert and Elva (Membership) for their long service as invaluable volunteers in our Society.

Pearl and Chester have quietly gone about multiple tasks behind the scenes for many years. Pearl took on setting up refreshments on a temporary basis, but this past "term" ended up being seven years!! Chester has literally set up and taken down thousands of tables and chairs for our meetings during the past several years. We will miss seeing Pearl at the ready to pour a cup of delicious hot tea or coffee, and Chester just simply setting about the task at hand, always willing to share a story or two. Pearl and Chester have decided to hand over the reins to someone else so that they can simply enjoy the monthly meetings.

Bert and Elva have always been a welcome sight at our monthly meetings for the last ten years as our membership directors. Always ready to take a new application or renewal with a smile and a chat, they rarely missed a meeting. They kept everything running smoothly with the membership responsibilities. They have finally decided that they too would like to enjoy the meetings and let someone else take on the job.

You can never say enough about such wonderful volunteers as Pearl, Chester, Bert and Elva, so we will simply say thank you for your many years of loyal service to our Society.



Bert and Elva Hunt

## Remembering Jack Fullman

Chris Fullman

We were sad to hear that Jack Fullman died On January 26, 2012.

Jack was born in Birmingham, England, on July 23, 1915.

At the age of 14 he was sent to Canada from the Bernardo Group Home. He travelled by ship and arrived in Montreal where he was put on a train and sent to Belleville, Ontario, to begin work as a farm boy in Picton. He stayed there for one year. The owners of the farm treated him badly and he was then sent to Sherbrooke, Quebec, to work for the Rodell family. They treated him like a son. He developed a love for horses and family. He stayed there for about 12 years.

Then he and his best friend decided they wanted to go on an adventure and see the world. They joined the war effort and enlisted in a part of the Black Watch (Royal Highland Regiment) in Montreal. The Black Watch is a part of the Queen Mother's own regiment. They were sent to Halifax after basic training and guarded the Merchant Ships in the harbour. They were then shipped to England for more training and then shipped out for D-Day. In July 1944 his regiment was sent to Falaise, France, and took part in the attempted capture of Verrieres Ridge which turned into the second bloodiest battle the Canadian Military ever suffered. Of the 300 members of the Black Watch there were only 15 survivors. He was one of them. He was captured by the Germans and taken prisoner. He often spoke of the two German soldiers who spared him his life. The fellows on either side of him were shot but Jack survived. He was a POW and worked in the Polish coal mine. Towards the end of the war he was the only

known member of the Black Watch to participate in the death march and battle of Falaise for four months in minus 30 degree weather across Poland. Jack was saved by the American Military.

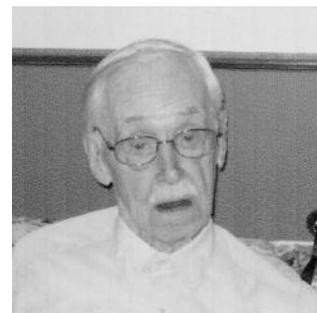
After the war, he returned to Canada and worked at E S and A Robinson, a paper products manufacturing company, for over 35 years retiring at age 65. He was married to Ivy until her death in 1970. They had 2 children, Chris and Karen. In 1990 Karen passed away.

Jack lived in Richmond Hill for close to 60 years and was known and respected by all who knew him. He lived at the Rosetown Apartments for the last few years, and when he could no longer live on his own, he went to Sunnybrook Veterans Centre and was there for two years. He met other Vets and lived out his life in the company of other soldiers and they were able to share stories and find comfort as only they knew what they had experienced.

He was always a loving father who felt very strongly about family values and the importance of family and friends. He had a wicked sense of humour.

For a man who had gone through so much, he always had a kind and gentle heart and never held a grudge.

He fought right to the end and passed away peacefully with the love of his family.



### *Goodbye, Rose Thanks For All Your Memories*

One of our members, Rose Kessler, passed away on February 13, 2012. Most members knew her through the wonderful, nostalgic stories she wrote for our newsletter, [Heritage on the Hill](#). She was honoured through the hundreds of people who came to pay their respects to her family at the visitation and her funeral. This was a true testament to her sweet personality and a recognition of someone who gave of herself in so many ways. Rose was simply an avid volunteer. She contributed many hours to our Society, the Richmond Hill Heritage Centre, her church and anywhere she thought she could help out. The stories of her childhood near Port Perry touched many readers and she will be remembered for them. On behalf of the Richmond Hill Historical Society we extend our sympathy to her friends and loved ones. Rose was such a good person and was always at the ready to volunteer. We will all miss her.

### Volunteer Service Awards 2012

Each year the Richmond Hill Historical Society is asked by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to nominate volunteers from the membership for the provincial Volunteer Service Awards. The Executive Committee nominated the following six members for the 25 Years of Service Award:

Elinor Graham, Pearl Wilson, Chester Wilson,  
Laura McMullen, Jan Lockwood, and Don Lockwood.

Each of the nominees will be awarded a certificate and pin in recognition of their volunteer service. They will attend a presentation ceremony at Leparc, Markham, on March 28th, 2012 to receive these awards. The Executive Committee and the Membership wish to extend our congratulations to these members who are so deserving of this recognition. Without dedicated volunteers such as these people, our Society would not be the great success it has been in the past and continues to be. Thank you, all of you.

## Richmond Hill Lawn Bowling Club

In 1918, some prominent residents of the Village of Richmond Hill formed the Richmond Hill Lawn Bowling Club. Each invested \$15 and a shareholders list, dated September 16<sup>th</sup> of that year, includes such familiar names as Dunlop, Savage, Monkman, Wright, Endean, Pugsley, Trench and Langstaff. One month later, on October 16th, Letters Patent were issued to the Club by Provincial Secretary, William David MacPherson, under the Ontario Corporations Act. The recorded subscribers to these Letters were Albert Lehman, Armand Savage, Matthew Boyle, John Greene and Charles Wiley. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1918, the Club purchased some property from William and Amy Graham and it was transformed into the bowling green. A smaller adjacent piece of property was purchased from Sarah Cook in January of 1925 and today the Club still resides at that same location, which is situated near the heart of the Town behind the Elgin Barrow Arena.

Over the years, RHLBC members have enjoyed playing this recreational and social outdoor activity. Some have competed in and won Provincial titles and one National title. Our season runs May through September. We currently have thirty-nine members and would welcome new members to join us and be part of our history. Our website is [www.rhlawnbowling.com](http://www.rhlawnbowling.com).

Ron Charles  
President, RHLBC  
Telephone: 416-239-3718, select option 5



Richmond Hill Lawn Bowling Club

## *Bring and Brag 2012*

Thanks to all the participants of the Bring and Brag at the Annual General Meeting in January. It is always fun and interesting to see what little gems people bring from home to show us.

Grant Husk delighted us with a painting of the sugar shack at the old Baker Farm at Bathurst and Highway 7. Not only was it a historic building but he had painted it himself!

Norman McMullen had a lovely photo portrait of Princess Louise who was married to the Governor General of Canada.

Penny Parmenter brought along one of her "Ladies" from her beautiful doll collection. This one wore clothing from the 1880's.

Linda Clark brought two very delicate house caps that belonged to relatives in her family a long time ago. She was not sure of the fibres used in the making of the caps, but she believed one to be horse hair. Both were as light as a feather.

Kevin Dark brought along a handkerchief that was a souvenir of the Dionne Quintuplets and was able to tell us some of the history of early days for the quints.

Andrea Kulesh brought a caviar spoon made from an oyster shell, a miser's purse that belonged to her mother's family in England in the late 1800's, and a silk tapestry picture.

Such a great variety of family treasures! Start thinking about what you could Bring and Brag about next year at our Annual General Meeting!

## *Telephone Tree*

We want to thank Elinor Mansbridge for agreeing to be our new Telephone Tree Convenor/Organizer. When the "call" arises, Elinor will contact the phone tree volunteers who will phone our membership with any message that needs to be circulated to the membership in a timely fashion. Thank you to all who agreed to participate as callers.

We also would like to thank Penny Parmenter, another of our selfless volunteers, for her years of service as the previous Convenor and keeping us "in the know".

## A Couple of Short Notes

Elinor Graham has moved to Bracebridge. We wish her well in her new home

Happy Belated 90th Birthday to Phyllis Sayers for January. Congratulations on your very special day!

## A Sweet Treat

Marie Thomson

### *How Chinese Chews Got Their Name*

Every Christmas I bake a slew of Chinese Chews and often am asked where they got their name. Until recently I didn't know, but I have now learned the story:

The people of Victorian England were intrigued by everything Chinese. Designs for furniture, pottery and china, decorations, etc. were often based on Chinese themes. The "Willow" pattern china is a good example as it is heavily influenced by Chinese design. During that time, some women in England developed the recipe for these little morsels and named them "Chinese Chews" because they imagined they were like the food Chinese people ate, being full of nuts and dates. Of course, we now know they are nothing like Chinese food, but the name stuck. Now the question is, do we call our dishes china because of these same women?

### *Chinese Chews Recipe*

1 cup Dates, chopped  
 1 cup Walnuts, chopped  
 1 cup White sugar  
 2 Eggs, lightly beaten  
 ¼ tsp. Salt  
 ½ cup Flour  
 1 tsp. Baking powder  
 1 cap Vanilla  
 Fruit sugar for rolling

Mix all ingredients well, except the fruit sugar, and spoon into a 9" square greased baking pan. Bake at 350 degrees for a minimum of 30 minutes, until slightly browned and no longer soft in the centre. It helps to not pile it higher in the centre, you might even make it a little shallower, as the centre takes longer to bake. When still hot, cut into small squares, scoop out with a spoon, and shape into balls. They won't be round, as the crust is crispy, but it doesn't matter. Immediately roll in fruit sugar. If you can, have two people rolling. If you are doing more than one pan (I do three or four) bake them one at a time so they are hot for rolling in the sugar. Enjoy!

## Doors Open 2012

The Town of Richmond Hill is hosting Doors Open this year on May 12th, 2012. Previously the event was the same date as Heritage Village Day. Due to the enthusiastic response, Doors Open now stands on its own merit as a separate day. For all of our members who have had some difficulty enjoying both events or trying to divide their time between volunteering for different organizations, you now have the opportunity to enjoy both days. Let's just hope for good weather!!

## *Well Done, Marj!*

We would like to thank Marj Andre for taking over the position of Membership Secretary. She has already been hard at work signing up new members for our Society. Jocelyn Grise has agreed to be Assistant Membership Secretary. Many thanks to both of you. We know we are in good hands.

We would also like to announce that Marj has received a Business Achievement Award from the Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce for her web site OnRichmondHill.com. Congratulations!

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## Central Library Exhibit

**April 1 - April 30, 2012 "War of 1812"**

Our own members, Dinah and Greg Hunter, will install a display in the east front window at the Central Library highlighting the celebrations and events going on throughout the province to commemorate the War of 1812. Dinah and Greg are avid historians and re-enact different eras in history. This year will be a very busy time for them as the special events planned which will take place at many locations will include many re-enactments. Thank you, Dinah and Greg, for developing the display and installing it on behalf of The Richmond Hill Historical Society. Please be sure to take the time to view the exhibit.

For more information about upcoming commemorative events for the War of 1812 please go to this web site: <http://war1812celebrations.ontariofestivalsvisited.ca>.

### Happy St. Patrick's Day



Spring will soon be upon us! What pleasure we will all get from watching as the crocuses and daffodils emerge from their long winter's sleep. Along with the coming of spring, we will celebrate St. Patrick's Day. We add a few toasts for those who wish to wear green and toast to the luck of the Irish!

May you be poor in misfortune,  
Rich in blessings,  
Slow to make enemies,

Quick to make friends,  
But rich or poor, quick or slow,  
May you have nothing but  
Happiness from this day forward.

May the strength of three be in your journey.

May you have warm words on a cold evening  
A full moon on a dark night  
And the road downhill all the way to your door.

### Happy St. David's Day, Too



Many people tend to associate March with St. Patrick and the Irish. But the national day of Wales, St. David's Day, is celebrated on the first day of March. St. David was archbishop of Wales in the sixth century. He was a great teacher and did much to spread Christianity in Wales. He founded a number of monastic communities. Where he died there is now a large cathedral called St. David's. It was said that four pilgrimages to his shrine were the equivalent to two pilgrimages to Rome, or one to Jerusalem.

Traditionally concerts are held to commemorate St. David's Day. I would like to remind all Welsh men and women (and those who wish they were) that—

To be born in Wales,  
Not with a silver spoon in your mouth,  
But, with music in your blood  
And with poetry in your soul,  
Is a privilege indeed. (*In Passing* by Brian Harris)

lechyd da! Cymru am byth!



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