

# National Presbyterian Museum *Museletter*

## Greetings and Welcome!

This is the first newsletter ever issued by the Museum. The Museum Advisory Committee which operates the Museum would like to update you about events, activities and notable donations during the past year.

## Artefact Arrivals

Ian Mason, volunteer cataloguer, continues to accession incoming items. A primary activity in the museum community is to register and number incoming artefacts and record all information provided by the donors related to their use, significance and provenance.

Photos of a couple of the more notable items are included below.

## Feature Artefact - Minister's Study Desk



**This desk belonged to the Rev. Dr. George Milligan, minister of Old St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Toronto (distinct from St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, King Street). It had been used by him in the 1860s while he was serving on his first mission field at Vanneck (a.k.a. English Settlement) northwest of London, Ont.**

## Doors Open 2014

On Sat. May 24 and Sun. May 25, 2014, the Museum and our host church of St. John's Presbyterian Church co-operated in our inaugural appearance on the Doors Open Toronto event. The event encourages buildings and sites to be open so that the public can tour free of charge. The Museum hosted as many over the course of two days as the number who attended the opening of the Museum on Sept. 29, 2002.

The theme of this year's event was "Secrets and Spirits: Exploring the Mysteries Behind the Doors". Over 400 visitors expressed appreciative surprise at finding in the basement such an attractive exhibit area and fascinating artefacts. This diverse cross-section of tourists included members of our own PCC family and those of other denominations, other religions and those with no faith.

Al and Ian were on site and answered questions (or were educated in subjects) which covered a wide spectrum of: believer's versus child baptism; individual spiritual examination of members by the elders prior to partaking Communion; political affiliation of prominent Presbyterians; early glass lantern slide projectors; early photographic mounting techniques; types of praise music; Gaelic hymnody; history of the organ and instruments in Presbyterian worship; standard architectural characteristics of historic Presbyterian churches; type of ornamentation used; technique of book-binding; etc.; etc. *and etc.*

## Doors Open 2014 - Hamilton and Burlington

Al Clarkson eagerly accepts invitations to participate in Doors Open events. He brings along the Museum's promotional display. He delights in helping people find Presbyterians lurking in their family trees!

Al visited MacNab Street Presbyterian Church as part of the Hamilton Doors Open tour on Sat.

May 3-Sun. May 4. He travelled to Knox Presbyterian Church for the Doors Open Burlington tour on Sat. Sept. 27.

### **Offsite Visits**

Recently, Al took the Museum display board to: Presbytery of Pickering; Presbytery of West Toronto; winter weekend of the Presbyterian Young People's Society of the Synod of Central, North East Ontario and Bermuda at Westminster Church, Barrie, Ont.; the Women's Missionary Society East Toronto Presbyterial; the 100th anniversary celebrations of the W.M.S.; and the Men's Breakfast Program of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Scarborough, Ont. Either Al or Rev. Angus Sutherland, Chair of the Museum Advisory Committee, are glad to visit Presbyteries and make presentations (anywhere from 3 to 30 minutes long).

### **Museum Tours**

Al Clarkson, the Site Liaison, primarily, and Ian Mason have hosted various groups or individuals for tours of the Museum throughout the year. Those who have toured have been generous in their praise and include:

WMS East Toronto Presbyterial; the Clerk of Seaway-Glengarry Presbytery and her husband; a group of women from St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Scarborough; summer student working for Presbyterian Church Archives; a group of ministers on an architectural tour of historic churches; a communicants' class; General Assembly commissioners . . .

- even police officers who had responded to a call in the neighbourhood!

### **140th General Assembly, Waterloo**

Ian Mason grew his beard, then shaved it according to a style popular in the 1860s (i.e. beard minus a moustache). He donned replica costume appropriate for both a minister and a layman. Rev. Dr. Tom Hamilton, outgoing Convener of the Committee on History, dubbed him "Mr. I.M. Strict", an elder from the 1864 Synod of the Canada Presbyterian Church. "Mr. Strict", along with Rev. Angus Sutherland, Al Clarkson, Rev. Dr. Hamilton and Marilyn Repchuck,

incoming Convener of the Committee on History, enjoyed many encounters with inquisitive commissioners who conversed at the Museum's display on the Assembly floor or elsewhere during the Assembly.

### ***Museum Musings* - New Issues**

Four new issues of *Museum Musings* were produced and distributed at the 140th General Assembly. Each issue of *Museum Musings* highlights a significant artefact with a photograph of it and provides additional background as to its purpose and the context in how, why, when and where it was used. After General Assembly concludes, *Museum Musings* are uploaded to the website. See: [www.presbyterianmuseum.ca/museumMusings.html](http://www.presbyterianmuseum.ca/museumMusings.html)

### **New Website**

Barb Summers and James Laurenson are developing a new website for the Museum. Much of our content is current, but the template for the website has not been changed since it was created in 2002. The Museum Advisory Committee is excitedly awaiting its unveiling!

### **Installation of New Air Conditioner and De-humidification Unit**

A very costly expense surprised us this past April. The air conditioner, which had been considered state-of-art when it was installed in 2002, ceased to function. Technicians advised us that repair would be too costly and there would be no guarantee for the extended operation of the air conditioner. The cost to replace it and install a system de-humidification unit was close to \$8,000. Owing to the fact that the Museum had completed its fund-raising campaign in Dec. 2012, it was necessary to draw from the campaign funds -- funds which the Advisory Committee had hoped could have been used to meet regular operating expenses.

### **Al Clarkson, Breaking News Correspondent**

When Al Clarkson heard fast-breaking news on the evening of Jan. 31, 2014 being broadcast over the internet, he immediately left the Museum and headed to the scene. Al heard that a fire was being

fought in the former Dufferin Street Presbyterian Church. After closing in 1994, the church eventually became home to Hope Church. After the closure of Hope Church, a developer was reconfiguring the church so that it could be included in a condominium complex. While on scene, Al spoke with Christine Tenaglia, a CP 24 News reporter. Within a couple minutes of their conversation, Al was being interviewed on the air and provided some history related to the original congregation whose church was being consumed by the flames as he spoke.

### **The Pictorial Plate Collection on the Move**

The Museum's Pictorial Plate Collection is comprised of nearly 500 ceramic plates, mugs, bells, etc. with images of Presbyterian or United (i.e. pre-Union Presbyterian) Churches. It was safely packed, stored, then unpacked, washed and displayed just in time for our Doors Open event on May 24-25. During demolition of the former Don Jail (the 1960s building) across the street from the church, the demolition contractor was nervous about what havoc demolition tremors might cause to our plate collection. The contractor provided the staff and materials to pack the plates while demolition occurred between Jan. and May.

***Are there any Presbyterian Church (or United Church, formerly Presbyterian) plates in your possession that the Museum does not have -- and that you would be willing to donate?***

### **Planning to Visit the Museum?**

To arrange visits of the Museum, please contact us by phoning or by emailing ***in advance*** of your visit. We are thrilled to host a visit, but it must be pre-planned. The Museum is open by appointment only.

### **Admission**

There is a *suggested donation* of \$5 per person. Children 12 and under are free.

### **Questions about Presbyterian History?**

The best source of information about Presbyterian

history is the Presbyterian Church Archives located at 50 Wynford Drive. However, the Museum may also be able to help. We often serve as the "connector" helping identify people who know about the person, church or event in which you are interested.

### **Farewell Gift**

A poignant and generous gift was received from the former Knollwood Park Presbyterian Church of London, Ont. Always a faithful supporter of the Museum, the congregation requested that \$2,000 be donated to the Museum from the proceeds of the sale of their former church building. In March 2014, the congregation amalgamated with its daughter church, St. Lawrence, which it had established in 1951.

Al and Ian travelled to Dorchester (Ont.) Presbyterian Church on Tues. Sept. 9th where they received the cheque at the meeting of London Presbytery.

Thank you to former Knollwood Park Church members and the Presbytery of London!

### **Site Visits to Closing Churches**

Members of the Museum Advisory Committee have been able to assist congregations which are downsizing to another building or closing. In many cases, congregations are not sure what to do with some of their furnishings. Occasionally, an item will be obtained for the Museum's permanent collection. Sometimes we know of a congregation which is interested in acquiring an item which will upgrade one which they already possess.

Museum "staff" recently successfully found a home for an early 20th century reed organ -- no mean feat. Reed or pump organs are not presently in demand! We can provide names of organizations which accept Bibles, hymn books (*with music*), old Sunday School and Christian education materials, devotional material, etc.

As Ian visits historic churches which are closing, he photographs them to document the rich architectural history of Canada's Presbyterian churches.

### Response to Resolution of General Assembly

The 139th General Assembly passed a resolution which encouraged every congregation to consider donating \$50 to the Museum on an annual basis. We thank those congregations who have responded to this resolution and who have donated.

**Suggestion to ponder: Would a congregation consider a donation in honour of the work of the local church historian or history buff who has preserved their congregation's history?**

### Free Bulletin Insert Available

In 2013, the Advisory Committee produced a bulletin insert which can be used to raise awareness about the Museum and encourage the congregation to contribute to its work and activities.

Copies of the bulletin insert can be ordered free of charge (including postage) by contacting the Museum.

### Funding

**The Museum is 100% self-supporting.** The Advisory Committee receives no money from Presbyterians Sharing. We depend entirely on donations which are used to pay utility, office and exhibit expenses.

### Donations

Donations to support the ongoing work of the National Presbyterian Museum may be sent to the Museum's mailing address. Online donations can be made via the "**Donate Online**" at the top right hand corner of every webpage.

### Tax Receipts

Tax receipts are issued by The Presbyterian Church in Canada for individuals who have given donations over \$25.

### Farewell and God's Peace to a Faithful Supporter --- Death of Michael Millar, FRPSC (1934-2014)

The Advisory Committee is very saddened to hear about the sudden death of Michael Millar of Barrie, Ont. who died on Sun. Oct. 19th. A Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada, Michael had a passionate interest in history, especially that of the Presbyterian Church. He was a faithful member and former elder of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Barrie. His loss will be keenly felt by those who shared his interest in the heritage of the Presbyterian Church -- namely, the Presbyterian Archives, the Committee on History, of which he served as convener and secretary; the Canadian Society of Presbyterian History on which he served for many years as secretary-treasurer; and the Museum which he had generously supported since the time of its creation.

### Feature Artefact - Communion Token Dies



Brass dies, or moulds, which produced the Communion token for

**Londonderry  
(Nova Scotia)  
Presbyterian  
Church. Dated  
1844**



### Museletter Delivery

**Would you like to receive future annual issues?**

**If yes, would you prefer a paperless newsletter?**

**If yes, please send us your email. We won't share!**

## *National Presbyterian Museum*

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