



Friends of Fintry Provincial Park

The Octagon – October, 2021

Greetings all....

As we fall into October and the wrapping up of our 2021 season, the turbulence of these past few months is something we will never forget. Not only were we dealing with the pandemic, but then along came the fires, the smoke, the evacuation and the devastation along Westside Road. Fortunately, we came through it all virtually unscathed although our bottom line certainly took a hit mainly because of the inability to hold our Fairs. The two live-in students (Morgan and Holly) that we hired in July were displaced and had to work on their projects from home instead of giving tours of the Manor House and Barn. When BC Parks reopened the campground at the end of August, we too reopened with our trusty volunteers showcasing the Manor House to the visiting public. Now here we are at the end of our season with the Manor House (and campground) closing this Thanksgiving weekend. We will be open both Saturday and Sunday, October 9th and 10th from 1:00 to 4:00 pmyour last chance for a tour this year. Christmas is coming and we still have lots of Laird of Fintry T-shirts, ball caps and great books of local interest for those discerning people on your list!

For our Curator Dan, it must have felt like Christmas came early when he received this surprise box of papers from Rod Stuart.....read on!

"We held the Annual General Meeting at Fintry, finally, on Saturday September 25th, at which point, Rod and Karen Stuart presented us with a box. I have always been brought to a stage of expectation when a Stuart box shows up, there's always something of interest therein. On this occasion, the content proved to be all papers, and ranged from newspaper clippings to archival documents, almost all of which focus attention on Katie Stuart, Alice Dun-Waters' confidante, assistant and family friend. In brief, the box is a mine of items of interest that gives a candid vignette on the personality of Katie, a "fly-on-the-wall" look at life at Fintry.

In no special order, the contents of the box include a mass of unused stationery, envelopes proudly showing the Ayrshire cows and apple production of the estate. Two copies of the 'Fintry for Sale' booklet, in mint condition. Newspaper clippings about issues that were of concern at the time (1930's to 1940's). These topics were the weather, government policy as regards agriculture, and of course the growing threat of war with Germany. Poetry obviously appealed to Katie as there are several poetic essays, penciled verses in her own handwriting, some perhaps of her own creation. One piece that caught her attention is still recited at Cowboy Poetry performances . . . Will Ogilvie's "Hooves of the Horses"

*When you lay me to slumber, no spot can you choose
But will ring to the rhythm of galloping shoes,
And under the daisies, no grave be so deep
But the hooves of the horses shall sound in my sleep.*

Many of the poetry verses are written on odd scraps of paper, or the backs of other items. This is a reminder that during the 1940's, all resources were strained, so using the back of a fruit can label was not unusual. Looking at the other sides, we have quite a selection of invoices, advertisements or other notes from businesses, mostly in Vernon, that the Fintry Estate had dealings with.

There are two pictures from Scotland, one of Castle Kennedy, and one of Lochinch Castle, the domain of the Earl of Stair, who co-operated with James Dun-Waters to select and ship to Canada the best Ayrshire cattle that were available at the time. With these two pictures there is a card with Christmas greetings from the Earl and his wife.

Another Christmas card is addressed to Mr. G. R Stuart, from Wong Ying, presumably one of the employees at Fintry, or a relative. The card is interesting as it is evidence of an employer-employee relationship not at all common in the Okanagan at that time. The writing on the card seems to have been done with a brush, and not a pen. I will consult with the Calligrapher's Guild to see if they can confirm this detail.

A further surprise was an invitation card to attend the re-opening for the season of the Eldorado Arms Hotel, on April 21st 1930. (Remember, the Cecil Aldin prints in the dining room came to us from the Eldorado via Jennifer Hindle)

Also, if you remember the last Octagon issue, it showed the 'secret compartment' book, the inside of which was lined with marbled paper. The creation of marbled paper was a skill developed by bookbinders in days gone by as a decorative addition to the more expensive volumes, but not as expensive as those edged with gold leaf. The art of marbling has not been lost however, if you visit Picture Perfect, our picture framers downtown Kelowna, you will see they carry a line of greeting cards of marbled paper made by Candace Thayer-Coe in Vancouver. Unique, and can be viewed from any angle!"

Thank you Dan for this summary and thank you also to Rod Stuart...for this little glimpse into Katie's life.

At this point I would like to thank all our volunteers, tour guides and students for hanging in there during this very disruptive summer. Somehow we made it all work; everyone stayed safe and we were still able to tell the Dun-Waters' story to the visiting public. Hopefully next year this pandemic will be in the rear-view mirror and we can get back to holding Fairs as well as regular programming.

'Til next month - stay safe out there,
Kathy Drew,
Friends of Fintry Provincial Park.