



# The Rideau Trail NEWSLETTER

**FALL  
1971**

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Vol. No. 2

## RIDEAU TRAIL

Donna Timpson

The big news from the Rideau Trail Association this fall is that there is a trail, stretching some 180 miles from Kingston to Ottawa. The whole thing has been accomplished with a lot of hard work by members of the three local groups at Ottawa, Smiths Falls and Kingston, and was made possible by the Federal Youth Opportunities Program which provided salaries for 28 students to spend the summer in the woods, blazing the trail. Since about half of the trail is on private land, the co-operation and enthusiastic help of landowners has been an important factor in the successful completion of the initial trail.

But this is just the beginning. What we have now is the bare bones of the Rideau Trail of the future, which will be really a series of winding trails, built to offer something for all tastes. This summer's work has opened up brand new areas to hikers, and the Trail travels through fields, along small country roads, follows a towpath along the canal for a while, and offers wonderful scenery typical of shield country.

There are several old mica and apatite mines along the way. Careful observers can find an Osprey's nest, and a wide variety of plants which you don't really notice until you're off the roads. There are lots of birds, including some very localized species which folk from other areas will find especially interesting. Many pilot black snakes have been sighted, and are another localized species.

There are many good access points. You can find the Trail where it crosses the Perth Road, just north of Perth Road Village, or meet it along the Opinicon Road or start a walk at Westport and Bedford Mills.

A detailed guidebook will be a winter's project. The snowshoe and skiing enthusiasts are keenly awaiting the first winter on the Trail, and will be looking for others with similar interests.

The grant for students' salaries this summer made it possible to have the Trail open five years ahead of schedule and saved the Association members a lot of hard and uncomfortable work. We can enjoy the trail right now, but it remains for those of us who care about the out-of-doors to use it to the fullest and share our enthusiasm with our friends and neighbours.

The Rideau Trail does exist. During the next five years it will be our task to expand it into the kind of permanent hiking facility that will, as predicted by Gerry McKeating at the Kingston Inaugural Meeting, "open up an interest in the Rideau and its natural features similar to that engendered by the Bruce Trail in the Niagara Escarpment". He also called the Bruce Trail the single most important event in Ontario in the last ten years for the conservation-minded. The Rideau Trail will be just as important and successful, with your help.

#### A STUDENT'S VIEWPOINT

##### GOULD LAKE

Gould Lake is scenic, accessible and uncrowded, a place where a person can view nature in its most fulfilling forms. It gives the chance to walk for hours and not see a fence or another person. It is a chance to escape into the outdoors and see the beauty of the country. Exploring is always rewarding because the area always changes, from season to season and even day to day.

It is possible to hike due to the compass orienting and map reading we receive as a type of training for outdoor work. Going through a compass course is challenging and certainly worthwhile, but also it develops a sense of companionship and group effort. This is perhaps one of the main functions of Gould Lake on a long-term basis and definitely the most gratifying.

Mike Behm

## EDITORIAL

Our association has been in existence for six months now and must have set some kind of record for growth rate. We have at least 700 members stretching from Montreal to Yellowknife. When we started we optimistically hoped that we might have the backbone finished in five years. Little did we realize that it would be finished in five months.

The rapid rate of progress however has brought its problems. We haven't always been as efficient as we might with our limited resources and I hope you will forgive us if we have been a little slow in handling our mail. Since most of our effort so far has gone into making the trail a physical reality, we have not had time to prepare maps of the parts of the route in sufficient detail to be much use to our members. The Ottawa section is well mapped but much remains to be done. We have appointed an editorial board whose function is to produce a guide book and detailed maps and these will be available to members as soon as we can get them ready.

To many people and groups, we extend our thanks for making the first six months so successful: to our many members who have given their time talking to land owners, attending committee meetings, organizing hikes, addressing envelopes and so on; to the land owners for their great generosity in allowing the trail to cross their property and for the government agencies for the assistance they gave us in those sections of the route which cross provincial parks, conservation areas and the National Capital Commission property and to the 28 students who braved mosquitoes, wasp's nests and poison ivy to blaze the trail.

There is much work still to do and if you would like to become actively involved in either the organizational or physical aspect of our work please let us know. We need your help. There are now 200 miles of trail to maintain and it is no easy job seeing that markers are painted and in position, that the trail is cleared and stiles and bridges in good condition. We have suffered from a certain amount of wilful vandalism and so the task of keeping the trail in a useable condition is no easy one.

I hope that all our members will, as they walk on the trail, assist in its maintenance. Just by walking you will make the route easier for others to find, but we can also help by picking up garbage, straightening markers which may have been bent and by letting us know if there are any problems along the routes. Please at all times remember that you may be on private land and that it is very important to treat the property which you cross with the greatest respect. The helpful landowners have been extremely kind to us, I hope you will all return some of that kindness.

In this issue of the newsletter, we are emphasizing some of the winter activities which you can do on the trail. Don't feel that the trail is closed for the winter and if you belong to a snow shoeing or cross country ski group why not introduce them to the trail. Perhaps you should check with us first as to the most suitable sections for this sort of activity, and be careful if the snow is more than five feet deep; it may have covered our markers.

Since the last newsletter a branch of the Rideau Trail Association, known as the Kingston Rideau Trail Club has been established under the chairmanship of Mr. Guy Thorne. If you live in the Kingston area you automatically become a member of this Trail Club on joining the R.T.A., so welcome to our group.

## WALKING THE RIDEAU TRAIL - KINGSTON TO BEDFORD MILLS

Some of us walked the whole Trail from Kingston to Bedford Mills on last Thanksgiving weekend. This is rather a lot of walking for one weekend, and we won't do it again in a hurry! However there are a number of pleasant afternoon or full day walks of varying lengths along the trail, and we thought you might like to hear about them. The distances given are approximate; the times are for quite fast walking and do not include time for eating, sightseeing or resting.

**KINGSTON TO SYDENHAM.** From Kingston to Hwy. 401 isn't very exciting, but north of 401, via Old Hwy. 38 and the Bullen Road, you walk through very pleasant farm lands and woods. Watch for the turn west off Bullen road - some unkind person removed the signs. If you come to a gate and a "no trespassing" sign, you have gone about 1/4 mile to far. The Trail leaves the road westward down a track just north of a large and conspicuous field on your left. The Trail from Bur Creek to the Murvale-Kepler Road is the most interesting to walk. Bur Creek itself is worth a visit - a delightful little ghost town. You will see lots of wildlife along here, and there are some lovely old roads through the woods that are really worth exploring.

Distance: about 20 miles; Time: 6 hours walking if you don't waste time. You can shorten this distance to 14 miles and 4 hours by starting at the Bullen Road off Old Hwy. 38.

**SYDENHAM TO GOULD LAKE.** This is very interesting country, but it is not my favourite bit of the Rideau Trail. It follows the road north a couple of miles, then, as you approach the Gould Lake Conservation Area, it begins to zig-zag through woods. There are a number of lovely old roads in this area which follow the lie of the land, and which are a real pleasure to walk on if you don't feel like scrambling through the woods. We found that we had to watch the Trail signs here, because we had a tendency to follow the old paths and tracks which the Trail rather deliberately avoids.

Distance: about 6 miles; Time: 1 1/2 to 2 hours.

**GOULD LAKE TO OTTER LAKE.** This is exciting, rough country, and as rugged walking as you will find anywhere on the Rideau Trail without being too far. It is swampy here and there, and there are some stiff bits to scramble up (climbing lines well secured to trees are thoughtfully provided). Don't be discouraged - it is not impossible, but avoid it if you have trouble climbing a flight of stairs! The Blue Trail north of the barn at Gould Lake is also interesting; you can follow the old mine road if you find the outbound leg of the Trail (which dodges through the woods) too rough.

Distance: about 5 miles; Time: 1 1/2 to 2 hours walking time.

The rest of the Trail we walked was from OTTER LAKE TO PERTH ROAD VILLAGE and PERTH ROAD VILLAGE TO BEDFORD MILLS.

R. G. S. Bidwell

## PROGRESS REPORT OF THE OTTAWA SECTION OF TRAIL

The main trail between Ottawa and Merrickville has been established and in doing so we have completed 68 miles of the projected 80 miles. The section not completed is the spur trail to the Rideau River Provincial Park; here negotiations are continuing with landowners and we still hope it will be in operation before winter.

The Student Work Force (Ottawa section) ceased its operations on August 27th, having done an excellent job. In addition to marking the Trail, erecting stiles and constructing a 350 feet long boardwalk, they spent two weeks helping out in the Westport area.

Throughout this summer, members of the Routes Committee negotiated access with 42 landowners and only 9 refused.

For the future, we will investigate improvements of certain sections of trail, establish more campsites and maintain the existing trail.

R. L. Billingham  
Chairman, Routes and Negotiating Committee  
(Ottawa)

## OPENING CEREMONY

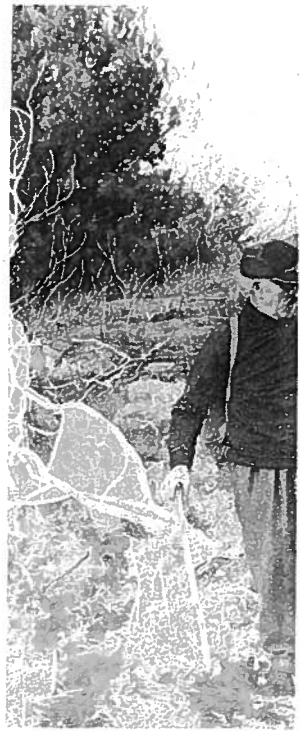
On Sunday, November 7 at approximately 11:00 a.m. the Rideau Trail officially came into being.

The ceremony took place at Foley Mountain Conservation Area through which the Trail passes.

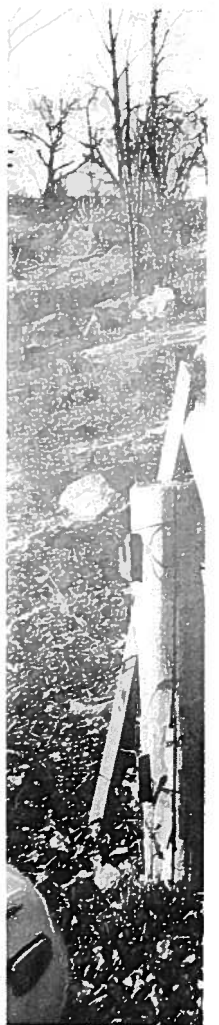
Colonel Duncan Douglas of Merrickville, Chairman of the Smiths Falls group, began the proceeding by welcoming members to the area. The Honourable James Auld, Minister of Public Works for Ontario spoke about the concern of his department for the preservation of natural areas for recreation and conservation. The Hon. John Davis, Minister for the Environment in the Federal Government offered his congratulations to the Association. Following his speech Mr. Davis nailed an orange triangle to an oak tree in the clearing to mark the official opening.

Dr. Fred Cooke, president of the Association, expressed his appreciation for all the work put in by members in completing the Trail. Then he and Mr. Davis led a sizeable proportion of the assembled crowd on a half-mile walk along the Trail, returning later to the scene of the opening for coffee and sandwiches.

**The official opening of the Rideau Trail took place at FOLEY MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION AREA near Westport at 11 a.m. on Sunday, November 7, 1971. The ceremony was performed by the Honourable John Davis, Minister of the Environment for the Government of Canada. (Mr. Davis shown left.) Also present was James Auld, Minister of Tourism and Information for Ontario.**



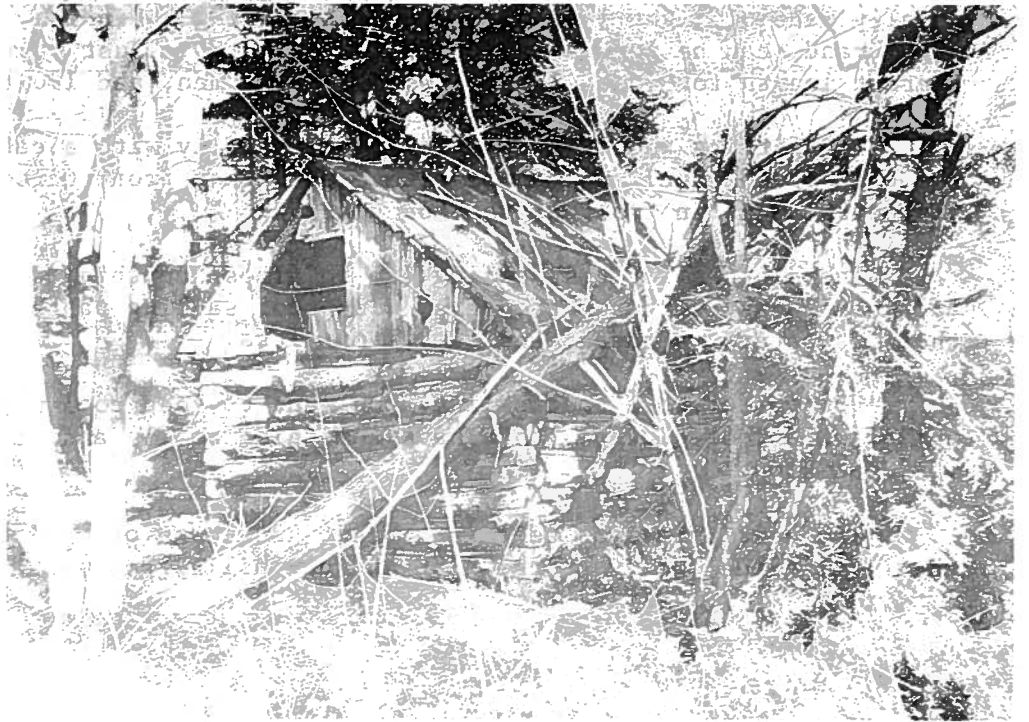
Beaver Dam, Chaffey's Locks to Skycroft area







FRONTENAC PARK



## WINTER ON THE RIDEAU TRAIL

If you have completed some of the Rideau Trail on foot during the summer and fall, a good way to keep fit and interested while Old Man Winter is here is to take up tour skiing.

People who are fed up with long waits in tow lines at the ski resorts; people who like the quiet of the woods; people who enjoy the wildlife; families who find that downhill skiing gear has skyrocketed in price; and people who like to keep fit by using their own automotive power can be found in greater numbers than ever before on trails such as the Rideau.

There are no waiting lines for the tour skier, because he just goes to where he would like to start - anywhere - straps on his skis and he's off!

On his silent skis which glide noiselessly over the snow with no machinery to frighten away the birds and animals, he can see partridge, jays, owls, hawks, rabbits and other small wildlife, and if he feeds them, he can even have chickadees land on his hand! Families can also enjoy being together in tour skiing, for the eight-year-old can also ski with Mom and Dad, and even the baby can be pulled behind father on a sleigh, or toted on his back, as the Norwegian families do.

Equipment now is readily available in most sport shops throughout Eastern Ontario, and here's what you will need.

A good pair of touring skis, with a hickory base and perhaps lignistone edges, usually made of light laminated wood and bearing a Finnish, Swedish, or Norwegian name brand, can be purchased for \$25.00 - \$40.00. Just make sure they are the correct length for you - 185 to 205 cm. for women, and 190 to 215 cm. for men.

The fitting should be touring type, usually with a cable that runs around the back of the heel and can be tightened with a front throw which is fastened to the ski just in front of the toe plate.

The clothes for tour skiing can be almost anything - old blue jeans, knickers and knee socks, corduroy trousers, windproof sailing pants, an upper body windproof shell, sweaters, a toque, and gloves or mitts.

For comfortable tour skiing, you want to keep cool while you ski with a minimum of windproof clothes, then have something woolly and heavy and warm to put on when you stop.

The next thing you need is a basic knowledge of how to wax these skis so that they will glide easily on the flat and downhills, and yet at the same time allow

continued



you to climb up a slope without slipping backwards. This is the essence of good ski waxing-finding the wax that is suited to the temperature of the air and the snow, to the amount of moisture in the snow, and to the texture of the snow itself.

If the readers of this short article are interested in learning more about tour skis and waxing, and techniques and areas, the author will be delighted to hold a free clinic in Kingston shortly after first snowfall. Others who can help you get started, and who are knowledgeable about this kind of exhilarating skiing, are Rolf Lund and Anne Turnbull of Queen's University school of P.H.E., Hugh Finlay of Nacoma, Grant Elliott of Tweed, Rich Lake of Queen's University and Al Sinclair of Napanee.

How about skiing the Rideau Trail with me from Kingston to Ottawa? Good luck.

Jake Edwards

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Sincere thanks go from the Association to the following landowners who have helped to make our Rideau Trail possible, by sharing parts of their property with us. We will continue to show our appreciation in the years ahead, by our consideration and good manners on the Trail.....

Mr. William Lett

Dodge Brothers

Mr. James A. Blakslu

Mr. Bert Maitland

Mr. H. H. Gomery

Mr. Brian Wood

Mr. D. Milton

Mr. Jim Hook

Mr. George Day

Mr. W. B. Hutchings

Mrs. D. Armstrong

Mr. Donald Good

Messrs. Henry and Sherwood Wright

Newsletter Compliments of THE KINGSTON WHIG-STANDARD

## WINTER TREKING

Hiking the Rideau Trail in the winter presents us with the problem of getting through or over the snow. Indians solved the problem by designing the snow shoe. The shape varied slightly depending on the type of country in which they lived. A turned-up toe helps keep the front from getting caught under fallen logs and branches. A shoe can be too wide for your legs to manoeuvre, or too narrow to hold you up when the snow is deep. It is helpful to test the pair you buy.

The value of snow shoes was made indelible in my memory one night in north western Ontario. Sky and stars are very different out on a lake away from artificial lights and to see these I had gone along with thirty high school students and teachers who were setting out on an all night snow shoe hike. One of the group had trouble with his harness so I lent my equipment and returned fairly easily on foot over the trail packed by thirty pairs of snow shoes. As I neared the car I took a short cut through the bush and found myself floundering in snow so deep that rolling was no help. Without a foothold or handhold I tried swimming through the deep snow, as it was very light. What an experience and how I admired the native ingenuity that designed the snow shoe.

Snow conditions in this part of the country vary from year to year and from week to week so you are constantly having new experiences.

We order our snow shoes from Faber Brothers at Loretteville, Quebec, and find them well made. They make a very good harness which sells for about six dollars. The snow shoes cost about fourteen. I like a small snow shoe because it is lighter and easier to manoeuvre. This means I rely on someone with bigger snow shoes to break trail in deep snow. Lamp wick makes a good harness when you learn the method of tying it. I use plain leather mocassins bought in a northern hardware store, and these are eight eyelets tall. I line them with a pair of cheap sheepskin liners, you will have warm feet as long as you stay dry because your feet move inside the soft material. Your toe should move up and down in the open space in front of the foot, as you walk. We often have wet snow in this climate so perhaps a rubber bottomed boot would be more practical, provided it is insulated.

I asked a friend to tell me why she likes to snow shoe and I quote from her letter.

"Why do I enjoy snow shoeing?"

"Because it enables me to get out in the winter and have the cold, fresh, wind blow on my face as I trek along, seeing the natural world as it really is. I can hear the small birds, see the formations of snow, as well as commune with whatever it is that makes life meaningful. It makes me feel as though I have found "me" when I am out in the natural world. I guess I just enjoy nature and love all that is related to it. Snow shoes enable me to do all of this in the winter."

S. Peruniak

PROPOSED SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR 1972

President: F. Cooke  
9 Grenville Road  
Kingston  
542-8062

Vice-President:

Ottawa

R. Hamilton  
Ottawa

Smiths Falls

Dr. J. Hollinger  
Smiths Falls

Kingston

Open

Secretary: Mrs. A. Hutchison  
Cavalry House, R.M.C.  
Kingston  
542-2037

Treasurer: Open

Routes &

Negotiating: Ottawa

R. Billingham  
1841 Illinois Ave  
Ottawa  
731-6071

Smiths Falls

Col. Douglas  
R R #4  
Merrickville  
269-4958

Kingston

D. Knapp  
32 Gretna Green  
Kingston  
542-2039

Design: A. Connidis  
12 Lennox Street  
Kingston  
389-0176

Financial and Legal: Open

Publicity: Ottawa

Mrs. M. Crowe  
339 Mountbatten Drive  
Ottawa  
733-2493  
or R R 2  
Portland

Smiths Falls

Mrs. Halliday  
Smiths Falls

Kingston

D. Dennis  
245 Bicknell Crescent  
Kingston  
389-3394

Flash:

We are sorry to report that the orange in the car stickers has faded alarmingly under the sun. We are getting new non-fading triangle stickers which will be available soon to members.

Do You Know The Signs?

Orange  main trail

Blue  side trail

The Triangles themselves indicate direction, with upright meaning straight ahead, and  =left, and  =right.

Rideau Trail (orange triangle) shoulder patches are available for 75¢. Get one for each member of the family!

Members are needed for further developments! Please pass your copy of this newsletter on to someone you consider a good prospect for membership. If you don't belong -- we hope to have you with us!

|                              |        |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Students (school or college) | \$2.00 |
| Adult Membership             | 4.00   |
| Family Membership            | 6.00   |

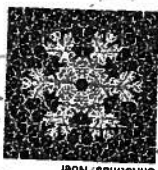
Please fill in the section below and send it with the appropriate fee to:

The Rideau Trail Association  
9 Grenville Road  
Kingston, Ontario

NAME.....MEMBER

ADDRESS.....

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Canada Christmas Seal