

The Rideau Trail NEWSLETTER

WINTER
1972

Published by The Rideau Trail Association



This footbridge is a feature part of the trail which is proving to be very popular to members in the Ottawa area.

It is situated in the Ottawa Carleton Conservation Area west of Moodie Drive, and was constructed by eight members of the Opportunities for Youth Programme last summer.

RIDEAU TRAIL - Winter Edition

For my money, one of the very best Sunday walks in the area is the Rideau Trail between Moodie Drive and Fallowfield Road.

That piece of trail has character, variety, wildlife, accessibility, easy walking - all the things that add up to a pleasant outing.

I like the Moodie Drive end best. The route leads straight into a hardwood stand full of squirrels, weasels, a ruffed Grouse or three, and the odd patch of Staghorn Sumac complete with red tassels.

Next comes a reforested area. Follow the trail around the planting. The little trees are brittle and easily damaged.

Be sure and explore the beaver pond. That's something you can't do in summer. The beaver are snug under the ice and won't mind as long as you don't poke about their home. Leave the lodge alone.

Across the swamp are several old, dead trees on which the woodpeckers have been working overtime. One tree has a hole chipped right through the trunk.

Wander on now into rabbit country. A narrow trail through evergreens is criss-crossed with rabbit highways. Try to spot the little beggars. You'll need sharp eyes.

Here weasel tracks show up again - plenty of them. The pattern is distinct. Neater than a squirrel track, and smaller, with two staggered paw prints showing clearly.

Look, too, for the deer mouse. Tiny matched prints with a distinct tail drag down the centre of the track.

A short rise opens onto Cedar parkland. Here are some classic examples of cedar tree castles. Huge, symmetrical, green spires as much as 30 feet across at the base.

It was here that we found the watering hole.

At the bottom of a shallow depression water had gathered and formed a small pool of slush. There was a maze of tracks around it including three perfect samples of grouse taking to the air: footprints leading from the water, a couple of long strides and the brush of wingtips.

I can't remember ever seeing such a watering hole before. But all the little creature tracks were there to prove it was being used.

A good place to watch some evening. Assuming more mild weather.

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Annual meeting will be held on Saturday, 11th March at 10:30 a.m. in the Smiths Falls Collegiate Institute. Ample parking is provided and a Saturday morning was chosen to give members a chance to attend and get home in daylight. Agenda for the meeting consists of business meeting including election of Officers for 1972-73 followed by descriptions of parts of the trail illustrated by slides. If weather is suitable a short walk on a nearby part of the trail will be arranged to take place in the afternoon. Members must make their own arrangements for lunch.

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!



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TIPS FOR NOVICE CROSS COUNTRY SKIERS

Being presently in the midst of a Ski Instructor course, a certain feeling of authority, sweeps over me as I begin to sermonize on do's and dont's of cross country skiing. The feeling of certainty slowly ebbs away as I search for answers to some relatively basic questions. However, most of you have enough questions of your own so I won't burden you with mine. Instead, a few tips for the novice touring skier who will find the Rideau Trail equally as beautiful in winter as it is in summer, and perhaps even more so.

If you do not already have a pair of skis, poles and boots - by all means get some. Don't be fussy unless you are buying new equipment. Then just be sure your boots are comfortable with two pair of socks, your poles reach your armpit and your skis are long enough to reach your wrist when arms are extended over your head. Your skis should be more than two and one half inches wide with a hickory base and lignistone edges. (These skis will last the longest). Don't buy the most expensive ski, because it is probably a racing ski which is too flimsy and can be destroyed in ten minutes in crusty snow. Stick to a Tempo (cable) binding for better control of your skis. Have your bindings put on by someone knowledgable.

Put on your skis and boots and stand on the living room rug. Unweight either leg and swing it backward. Observe the tip of the unweighted ski as it passes your weighted foot and swing it forward. Do this two or three times with each leg. If there is a tendency for the tip to wander or you must consciously turn your ankle, you do not have a proper fit and will find it very tiring if you attempt any lengthy excursions. Consult with a ski expert. If you lose your balance while doing this, consult with a "Y" expert.

Now out to the snow, ensuring of course that you are neither overdressed nor underdressed - both can be uncomfortable - a small pack will be beneficial in this respect.

Waxes - Three will do for now, green, blue, red and a cork for spreading. A check with the existing temperature and consulting the waxing tins will tell you which wax to use. Waxing is a science requiring many empirical determinations before you know how much of which kind.

Apply the wax you choose by using a brushing motion across the ski at even intervals all the way down the ski. (The shorter the interval, obviously, the thicker the layer will be). Use the cork to spread the wax along the ski by rubbing vigorously. Always wax both skis, then cork both skis. (You figure it out). Use the ball of your hand and lightly brush up and down the ski. Allow the correct angle of the ski to reflect light on the waxed surface and look for dull spots. If there are any unwaxed areas, rewax both skis until you are satisfied, (or exhausted). As with a good wine or cake recipe remember what you did. Place your skis outside in the shade out of the snow for five to ten minutes allowing the wax to harden. Pick up some snow in your bare hand, look at it and try to understand and define that particular snow. Are the flakes large, small, hard, soft: squeeze it, is it dry, wet: blow on it, does it fluff away and so forth. Assuming you haven't become too engrossed with the snow and have some time left - try on your skis. Lightly pack the snow under your skis and lift one leg. Bend your weighted leg slightly and straighten up sharply with a slight back kick. If your ski doesn't move, try it again harder. If it still doesn't slip try it as hard as you can without exaggerating the kick. If it still doesn't slip or if it slips on the first try, take your

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skis off because you are not properly waxed. If you slipped on the first try, put some of the next warmer wax on the area under the boot for about two feet and try it again. If that doesn't work put that colour on all of the ski and try again etc. If the opposite is evident, you must remove the wax and put on a colder colour, i.e., green in lieu of blue. If you are not sure, pick a modest gradient and ski up it. If you slip back (backslip) or stick (clog) you are certain.

It might sound like a lot of work but there is no substitute for a properly waxed ski.

Hopefully the temperature will remain within your waxing area, no new snow will fall and your body is capable of taking you there and back without too much pain. For the first two, take along your next higher and lower temperature waxes. For the last one - ski frequently.

Hopefully, these tips will be useful to you but pick up a book on cross country skiing from any ski shop and read it carefully.

GOOD SKIING - BON SKI DE FOND

Ray Laws.

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. Robert J. Rice
Mr. James Moore
Mr. Howard McEwen
Mr. J.H. Frizell
Mr. N. McMullen
Mr. Herb Cuthbertson
Mr. L.E. Parsons
Mr. Ernest Miller
Mr. Donald Hosie
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Mr. D.R. Somerville
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Mr. Wm. T. Moore
Mr. Wm. Rathwell

Mr. Howard Roberts
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Mr. Elwood Conboy
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Mr. George Bourne
Mr. Howard Doods
Mr. & Mrs. W. Mowat
Mr. Wilson Leach
Mr. J.H. Brownlee
Mr. Floyd Pratt
Mr. Allison Pratt
Mr. & Mrs. Graham Rowley
Mr. T.H. Manning
Dr. R.G. Blackader
Dr. A.M. MacPherson.

MERRICKVILLE

Visitors coming to Merrickville whether by car, by boat or on foot along the Rideau Trail will find the little village one of the most interesting spots on the entire Rideau Waterway. Founded by United Empire Loyalists and closely linked with the construction and operation of the Waterway it has played a significant part in the development of the area between the Ottawa and St. Lawrence Rivers.

There are two Historic Sites Plaques in the village erected by the Archaeological and Historic Sites Board of Ontario, one to commemorate the founding of Merrickville and the other to tell the story of the Blockhouse. These are both on the blue triangle trail through the village.

The inscription on the first one mentioned above reads as follows:-

FOUNDING OF MERRICKVILLE

In 1793 William Merrick (1760 - 1844), a Loyalist from Massachusetts, acquired from Roger Stevens a sawmill at the "Great Falls" on the Rideau River. Here he built new mills which formed the nucleus of a small community that grew up before 1816 and was known as "Merrick's Mills." The establishment of new settlements on the Rideau and the building of the canal, 1826 - 32, stimulated the growth of the village. Streets were laid out and a post office named "Merrickville" was opened in 1829. By 1850 the community contained about 700 persons, two flour mills, a cloth factory and other industries and was incorporated as a village in 1860.

William Merrick was a Welshman and a mill-wright by trade. He came to this area and organized his small community long before work was started on the Rideau Waterway and indeed before Bytown the forerunner of Ottawa was established. Merrick dammed the Rideau to provide power for his mills and the site of his dam can still be seen about a quarter of a mile up-stream from the bridge over the Rideau. When Colonel By and his Royal Engineers came to instal the locks at Merrickville he found a ready-made dam to provide the volume of water required to negotiate the rapids.

There is an interesting story told about Merrick's dam on the Rideau. When the Waterway was completed at the end of the Summer of 1831 Colonel By decided to make an inaugural trip from Kingston to Bytown. He found to his dismay, however, that Merrick had chosen this time to open his dam to effect some repairs to his mills. By doing this he lowered the level of the canal almost to Smiths Falls and Colonel By was forced to postpone his inaugural trip until the Summer of 1832.

There are some very fine old buildings in Merrickville. Some of these are houses built by the Merricks and their descendants and on the Eastern outskirts of the village is a brick house built by Colonel By as a Summer residence. These houses are in an excellent state of repair and are still occupied. Merrick's original mills can still be seen on the North Shore of the river beside the bridge. These stone buildings are still being used but unfortunately not for the purpose for which they were originally intended.

As the Rideau Trail (red triangle) enters Merrickville from Burritt's Rapids area it passes one of the most interesting small cemeteries in Ontario. This is the "Collar Hill" cemetery in which William Merrick and his wife Sylvia are buried together with their eldest daughter, Charlotte and her husband, Elisha Collier (hence Collar).

This article by Col. Duncan Douglas of Merrickville will be continued in the spring edition of the newsletter.

Roadside Delight

Perhaps a lad, one late September noon
 Sat here to eat his homemade bread and cheese;
 Saw squirrels hiding nuts in hollow trees,
 And hoped that winter would not come too soon.
 This highway was a slow and crooked trail--
 The lad was helping clear a patch of land;
 He let the near-ox nuzzle in his hand
 For salty morsels from his dinner-pail.

Then, finishing his apple, crisp and sound,
 Swung back an arm and flung away the core;
 Watched it arc high and light in brushy ground:
 Could he have guessed the friendly forest floor
 Might nurture it--until it grew to be
 All boys' delight--a roadside apple-tree!

Canadian Poetry Magazine

Ruth E. Scharfe
 Winner of Short Poem
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MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Why should I renew my membership? The whole question of being a member hinges on one's attitude to the development and maintenance of a recreation facility of this sort.

Tremendous investments of time, energy and money are necessary for the creation and maintenance of a trail of this sort. Many of us have contributed all three but without the third, the other two become pointless. Expenses borne by this association have amounted, over the last year, to over \$2,000.00 and funds to meet these have come entirely from memberships, except for a donation of \$500.00 from the Federation of Ontario Naturalists and several smaller but well-appreciated donations from individuals.

Expenses fall mainly into four categories,namely:

1. communications (postage, stationary, newsletters,advertising,etc.)
2. materials (trail signs, markers, stiles, bridges, etc.)
3. membership crests,and
4. maps

Obviously, these expenses, as well as the need for volunteer workers, will continue as long as the trail exists. Conversely, if the essential financial support should disappear, the trail can no longer exist.

In conclusion, your financial support is essential to the healthy growth and maintenance of this most worthwhile enterprise. Don't procrastinate. Renew your membership now!

Membership Application Form

New Renewal

Membership Type:	Family	(\$6.00)
	Single Adult	(\$4.00)
	Student	(\$2.00)

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

TELEPHONE NO.....

Please mail this application along with your cheque, to -
 Mrs. Val. Colgan,
 8 Couper Street,
 Kingston, Ontario

PROPOSED SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR 1972

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

Vice-President:

Ottawa

R. Hamilton
1210 Placid St.
Ottawa
828-3172

Smiths Falls

Dr. J. Hollinger
Smiths Falls

Kingston

Stan Segel
140 Casterton Ave.
Kingston

Secretary: Mrs. A. Hutchison
Cavalry House R.M.C.
Kingston
546-2037

Treasurer: Jim Smith
204 King St. E.
Kingston

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 Dr.
Ottawa
733-2493 or
R.R. # 2 Portland

Smiths Falls

Mrs. Halliday
Smiths Falls

Kingston

D. Dennis
245 Bicknell Cresc.
Kingston
389-3394

MIDNIGHT ON THE TRAIL

On the last Saturday in January the Outers Club of Rideau District High School took an overnight hike on the section of the Rideau Trail from the Narrows Locks to Westport.

It was one of those rare perfect winter nights, cold but not bitter, no wind, a full moon and very still.

The walk began with a lot of shouting and fun and gradually settled down to a quiet appreciation of the surrounding beauty. The trail at this point winds over fields and along a gravel road for about 3 miles, with an intermittent view of the Upper Rideau Lake for about the next 4 miles.

The snow was crisp and sparkly, crunching underfoot. Sometimes clouds hid the moon and giant fluffs of snow softly settled around us. Where the road leaves the lake part of the trail is unmarked. Here we paused and built a fire in a small sand pit while we got our bearings and figured out where the trail picked up again. From here the going was a bit rough as there was not enough snow for snowshoes and the hidden rocks were often ice-covered. But we were rewarded and surprised by the number of deer and bird tracks everywhere along the trail. We arrived at the top of the Foley Mountain Conservation Area at about 4:00 a.m. where we viewed the village of Westport below. Snow was falling and the lights of the village blended into each other in the haze. A few dogs barked at our intrusion, but otherwise in the village everyone slept. We were tired too, and soon joined them.

Mrs. Ruth Pedherney,
Westport, Ontario

Memberships for 1972-73 can be renewed any time and are due on April 1st 1972. Mail appropriate fee to Mrs. Val Colgan, Box 15, Kingston accompanied by name and address, or pay at the Annual Meeting.

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"The Mill" - Richmond Landing

Close to the thundering Chaudière Falls on the Ottawa River stands the remains of a historic structure partly restored as Ottawa's newest first-class dining establishment now called "The Mill". While Parliament Hill has been designated as the symbolic start of the Rideau Trail at the Ottawa end, the official National Capital Commission plaque will be on Richmond Landing near the site of this old mill.

Richmond Landing was one of several names applied to Ottawa before it became known as Bytown and was named in honour of the Fourth Duke of Richmond, Governor-General of Canada from 1818-1819 who died after having been bitten by a rabid fox. After the war of 1812-1815 soldiers of English regiments disbanding in Canada - thus the settlement of Richmond, approximately 25 miles south of Ottawa came into being. Richmond Landing was the centre for travellers going to and from Montreal, where the settlers from Richmond picked up their mail, enjoyed social gatherings with friends, and frequented the tavern by the wharf. The present town of Richmond is very much alive and it and the cairn commemorating the place where the Duke of Richmond died are close to our trail.

The mill, known as the Thompson-Perkins grist and saw mill, was built in 1842 and survived the disastrous fire of 1900 but ceased operating shortly afterwards. Much of Hull and the then west end of Ottawa were levelled by the fire, leaving 15,000 homeless. Old records state that the mill was a substantial stone building 50 by 60 feet and contained three stones for flouring, each stone capable of grinding 12 bushels of wheat per hour. The saw mill contained two single saws and one circular.

This whole area came under the jurisdiction of the National Capital Commission in 1963 and the task of planning the restoration, the refurbishing of this old structure with a mid-19th century flavour, and the development of the surrounding area is now well under way thanks to the foresight and ingenuity of this government body. The west wing will remain as a ruin but its walls have been reinforced and the squared timber beams rebuilt. With the high stone walls open to the sky, the three magnificent stone arches still intact which mark the position of the millstones, with the sight and sound of water rushing through the mill race, outside terrace dining as well as inside, should prove a charming experience in a picturesque setting.

This point marks the beginning of one end of our Rideau Trail - a trail through natural beauty and places of historic interest.

V M. Humphreys

NOTICE

All members please note that there will be a meeting in the Smiths Falls Collegiate Institute in Smiths Falls at 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday April 5th to consider the formation of one or more trail clubs composed of members and future members of the Rideau Trail Association from the areas centered on Smiths Falls, Perth, Carleton Place, Merrickville, Burrets Rapids and Kemptville.

Dr. Fred Cooke of Queen's University, the chairman of the Rideau Trail Association will attend the meeting and will give a talk on the aims of the association and show some slides of the trail as it exists today.

Guy Thorne has resigned as Vice-chairman - Kingston and Chairman of the Kingston Trail Club. He is off to Africa for a spell and our good wishes go with him as well as our gratitude for all the enthusiastic work he put in to help put the Rideau Trail on the map. Norman McLeod takes Guy's place as the new Chairman of the Kingston Trail Club.

14 To April 3
KHO

