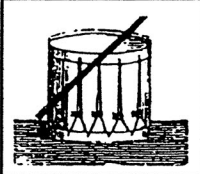


# The Fife and Drum

The Newsletter of the Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common

v. 7 No. 2 November 2003

## Contents



- 1 \_ National Historic Site At Fort York Defined
- 2 \_ Fort York Guard 2003
- 3 \_ Important Links Established with Former Fort York Staff
- 3 \_ What's Been Going On Here!
- 4 \_ In Memoriam

## National Historic Site at Fort York Defined

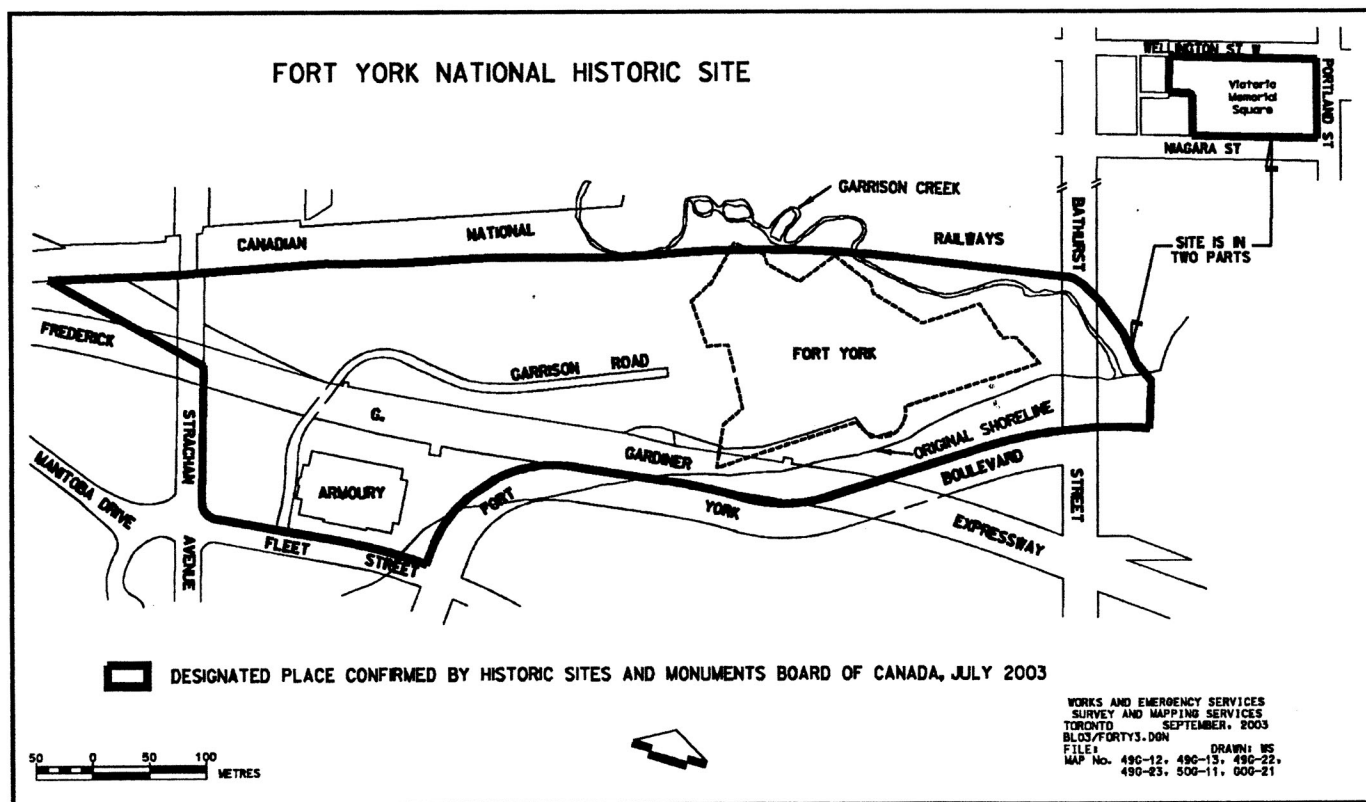
The Government of Canada has had a stake in the fort's well-being ever since it granted the property and much of the present CNE grounds to the city in 1909 on condition that "the site of the Old Fort shall, as far as possible, be restored to its original condition" as shown on a plan of 1816. Further, the agreement provided that if the municipality breached this condition, the grant would become null and void.

In 1923 the national significance of Fort York was recognized by Canada's Historic Sites Board. It was one of the first sites in the country to be acknowledged thus, which is a great honour but paradoxically brings neither

statutory protection nor assistance with the costs of preservation. Until recently, however, the Board and its successors had left unclear which aspects of the fort's history were of national importance, and what were reasonable bounds for the area making up the site proper.

These oversights had ramifications not only for how to interpret Fort York to visitors, but for knowing what lands beyond the ramparts are important in presenting the story, and should be protected.

Recognizing that some useful work could be done in this



regard, the Friends of Fort York joined with the Fort York Management Board and City's Culture division two years ago to approach Parks Canada for assistance in shaping the issues for consideration by the Historic Sites Board. The Parks department's staff became our partners in preparing reports, participating in extensive discussions, and making a presentation to the Board meeting in Yellowknife this past July. There it was resolved that Fort York is of national historic importance because it constituted the primary defensive position of early York (Toronto); and the seven buildings erected between 1813 and 1815 are important surviving examples of British military architecture.

Further, the Board recommended for the approval of the Minister of Canadian Heritage that the "designated place," that is, the national historic site, be in two parts: a large irregular polygon enclosing all structures and archaeological resources administered by the City of Toronto that are directly related to the reasons for national significance, and the smaller but related Victoria Memorial Square (see plan). Some of the boundaries deserve explanation. On the east, the 'nose' that extends

under Bathurst Street takes in where the Ravine Battery stood at the mouth of Garrison Creek. The line itself is the east side of the former "road to the Queen's Wharf" that followed closely the original bank of the creek as it entered Lake Ontario. On the south, the limits were set along the edges of Fort York Boulevard and Fleet Street, which effectively trace the shoreline in front of the fort. The large area west of the fort, including a small parcel extending beyond Strachan Avenue, was part of the fort's glacis and the battlefield of 1813, and came to be attached to Fort York when it was conveyed to the City in 1909-10.

Particularly satisfying to those involved was that the Board accepted Victoria Memorial Square as part of the site. It encloses a military burying ground that is Toronto's oldest cemetery. Although the 2-acre Square continues to be owned by the Government of Canada it has been a city park for more than a century. Soon it will be relandscaped and improved to better protect the 500+ graves there and serve more fully the needs of people in the Wellington Place Neighbourhood for a local greenspace.

## *Fort York Guard 2003*

*by Ross Flowers*

The 2003 Friends of Fort York Georgian dinner kicked off another successful summer for the Fort York Guard with the dinner raising more than \$12,000. Shortly afterwards the young men and women who portray the Canadian Fencible Regiment began their "tour of duty". In June, the Infantry squad commanded by Keiko Twist and the Corps of Drums, led by Drum Major Andrea Bouma and Fife Major Ewan Wardle, began their daily activities at the fort.

This year we were able to hire and equip sixteen students, five for the Drums and eleven for the Guard. A further six volunteers aged 11-15 were equipped to participate in the Drums. In our appearance at Nathan Phillips Square we were able to field over 20 uniformed members of the Canadian Fencibles.

The Friends are only able to operate the Fort York Guard through strong support from a number of sources. Over one third of our funding is provided under two federal employment programs, the Summer Employment Grants under HRDC and the Young Canada Works Program. This support is absolutely essential. We receive a \$15,000 Museums Grant from the City of Toronto - which provides crucial base funding. The funds generated from members of the Friends through the Georgian dinner and donations earmarked for the Guard are the next essential element. We thank our members and particularly the sponsors of the Georgian Dinner, Wittington Properties Limited and Plazacorp Investments Limited. Lastly the Friends are now the operators of the parking lot at Fort York for special events such as the

Molson Indy and the CNE. A significant portion of the funds earned in this activity is devoted to the Fort York Guard. Many thanks to those Friends who contributed so generously of their time and skill to make this activity such a success. As the summer approaches we will again be seeking volunteers who wish to perfect their talents as parking lot attendants.

Generous donations in memory of two recently departed Friends enable two special acquisitions this year. A Bass Drum was presented to the Corps in memory of Murray Philp and has been nicknamed "Murray" by the fifers and drummers. Similarly a 3lb. cannon was acquired in memory of John Barclay and is referred to as the Barclay gun. The Guard greatly appreciates these donations and the support that these two gentlemen made to the program at the Fort.

The Guard returned to Fort Henry, Kingston, for a second consecutive year to participate in the Sunset Ceremony, and the Drums were pleased to be invited to the Fort Meigs Fife and Drum Muster for the first time. The summer of 2003 also saw a number of important accomplishments for both individuals and groups. For the 3rd year in a row the Squad won the infantry competition at the Fort George Fife & Drum Muster weekend and Jeff Colden won the competition for the fastest "load" at the same event. Within the Guard, Jessica Hanna, won the distinguished Musician of the Year Award. A hearty congratulation to all for outstanding performances!

This year marked a bitter sweet time for the Drums. Mike Putnam, cofounder of the Corps and immediate past Drum Major and Andrea Bouma, the other co-founder, celebrated their wedding at the Fort. It was an exciting time shared by many of their musical colleagues and several Friends. However, the 2003 year brought an end to the active participation of both Andrea and Mike in the Fort York Guard as they have settled in the metropolis of Kingston. We wish them well and thank

them for their hard work which has provided an excellent foundation for the Corps. The mace has been turned over to Ewan Wardle as Drum Major and Jessica Hanna as Fife Major. The squad continues under the exemplary leadership of Keiko Twist.

Another great summer at Fort York due to the efforts of those in uniform and the many members of the Friends who support them! Time to get ready for next season.

## *Important Links Established With Former Fort York Staff*

by George Waters

On Saturday July 12, 2003, a reunion of former staff members was held at Fort York. In excess of eighty guests assembled in the Blue Barracks to enjoy Paul Fortier's traditional hospitality, as well as the wonderful opportunity of gathering with friends and colleagues, most of whom they had not seen for many years. Congratulations are extended to steering committee members Robert Quick (Fort York Guard 1973-85), Paul Branson (FYG late 1970's), James Hunter (FYG 1968-70, and subsequently Registrar for the THB), Brian Thomson (FYG 1973-79), and Pat Hutchinson (FY interpretive staff from the 1970's) for organizing a most pleasurable evening of fun and fellowship. Thanks also to good friend Mike Filey for his support in promoting the event.

The reunion included a number of individuals who journeyed significant distances to be present: Peter McKellar from Melfort, Saskatchewan, (who was Sergeant-of-the-Guard in 1959, when yours truly was first hired by Peter Styrmo, then the Curator of the site); Scott Watson from Dartmouth, NS, now with Parks Canada; Dan Glenney (now Director of Collections with the Canadian War Museum) and his wife, Deborah (also a former FY interpreter), from Ottawa; and John Summers (active with the beginnings of the Officers' Quarters' historic kitchen programme) and Wendy Cooper (formerly THB exhibitions staff) from Clayton, NY. Present also were our own Geordie Beal, Joe Gill, and Jo Ann Pynn.

Following dinner and the Loyal Toasts, former curatorial and interpretive staff reminisced about what life was really like in their times, at this very special historic site. Friends of Fort York Chair, Joe Gill also spoke, emphasizing the importance of support for the work of 'the Friends', as the site continues to face the challenges of the 21st century. An interesting display of (now historic) photographs, newspaper articles, and other ephemera relating to Fort York its many associated activities and programmes, became the focus for, and encouraged the sharing of even more stories throughout the remainder of the evening.

It was very evident in the words and feelings expressed, that, for those present, the years spent at Fort York had been very special and influential ones - - years which had provided a strong and positive sense of having contributed in a meaningful way, to the operation and ongoing development of a very important place in Toronto's history.

To date, a mailing list of some 160 names of former site staff has been developed, and is still growing. If you are aware of the whereabouts of any such people, please pass the information on to Bob Quick (tel. (416) 383-9581), or Paul Branson (tel. (416) 751-2089). If you are a former member of the staff at Fort York, we extend to you a personal invitation to consider extending your interest in, and support for the site through the Friends of Fort York!

## *What's Been Going On Here!*

by Jo Ann Pynn

There has been a lot of work going on in and around the fort. Much of it involves the participation of active Friends of Fort York and Fort York Management Board members. Some involves staff from other City departments, and all of it involves staff at the fort. One of the priorities for the last couple of years has been to improve the visual appearance of the fort. At the same time we are catching up on practical issues like building

and fire code deficiencies. Many of these projects are invisible to the public, but make a difference in terms of visitor comfort and safety.

**Blue Barracks**—the basement is finished! What this really means is that at long last we have public washrooms accessible to the assembly room. Owing to vagaries of outstanding purchase orders, new contracts

and seasonal work limitations, this has taken longer than anyone imagined. Landscaping is being finished now, including the service paths for caterers at the back of the building. The final piece will happen this winter when the servery is upgraded to have running water and telephone and data lines are put in for the archaeology lab in the basement.

**The West Entrance at the Canteen**—still under construction. Somewhat controversial, this project has focused interest on the procedures for future capital projects. The scope of work identified for the architect and engineers specified: gates and barriers to control entry into the site; directional cues for visitors to enter the canteen upon arrival; devices to manage vehicular traffic; and improved lighting. In addition there will be seating, signage and a drinking fountain.

**Carpentry**—by our in-house craftsman and outside contractors. One by one the 12 over 12 windows are being rebuilt to exacting standards. It is time-consuming work, but eventually all the windows on the South Soldiers, North Soldiers and Officers Brick Barracks will be replaced. At the same time, Chris Laverton, staff woodworking technician, is rebuilding part of the east door into the mess and trying something new to solve the problems of the driving rain. The key will be to follow this reconstruction work with an ongoing schedule of maintenance and painting. Repair work has been done to the porches on the north and south soldiers barracks. The timber gates at the west and east, which have not been renewed since 1934, have been rebuilt reusing the original iron hardware, and will be installed soon. The cannon platforms in the north and south bastions were replaced, however delivery of the forged iron nails was delayed, so the platforms will be complete as soon as the galvanized fasteners have been replaced.

**Archaeology**—Fort York Archaeologist David Spittal has been digging again! After a year or two of monitoring and emergency response archaeology, he has just finished

a square near the Stone Powder Magazine. His objective was to find the post moulds from the original palisade; his dream was to find the corner. He didn't find the corner, but there were three superimposed palisade trenches, one lined with stones, suggesting some structural pinning before backfilling. Depending on the weather, we will erect the palisade around the Magazine this fall or next spring. Also next spring, the ersatz wishing well just south of the palisade, will be demolished and a proper reconstruction of the 1860s wellhead and cover will be made.

**Fire protection upgrades**—you don't really need to know this but. Much work has been done and money spent verifying and correcting our fire protection systems. Some of this work involves underground cables, some involves devices in the buildings, and some involves the communication between the two. The concrete monument adjacent to each of the three hydrants is a part of this work, and we are currently looking for ways to camouflage these necessities.

**Furnaces and air conditioning**—improvements you can't see. We have replaced the furnaces in three of the buildings, and replaced all the corroded condensate pipe runs in the attics. Providing for modern comfort in historic buildings is an ongoing challenge.

**Cannons and carriages**—work in progress. Using Parks Canada patterns for an iron carriage we had three cast this summer at a foundry in Quebec. The plan is to use one of them for a 32lb cannon at the corner of Fort York Boulevard, and the other two in the north bastion at the fort. The saddles have to be ground out by 3/8ths of an inch in order to receive the trunions. Early estimates to have the carriages sent out for this to be machined came back at almost the price of another carriage, so George Webkamigad, another woodworking technician on staff, has been working with a hand-held grinder to achieve the same end. It is slow, hard, dirty work, and we are grateful.

## *In Memoriam*

### *Bill Barrett*

Fort York lost a true friend with the passing of Bill Barrett on October 21, 2003. Bill had been an active and respected member of the Fort York Management Board since its inception and he and his partner, Joan Osler were regular participants in the Georgian Mess Dinner. Bill was in his 87th year. He will be missed by those of us who were privileged to work with him.

### *Eric Johnston*

Anne Beach served for a number of years as a Director of the Friends of Fort York. Her husband Bill Johnston is a supporter of the Friends and was a key volunteer, particularly at the Fort York Festival. They both were very active members of the Niagara Community. Anne and Bill suffered the loss of their son Eric, who died in a swimming accident on October 12th. Eric was 24. Our thoughts continue to be with Anne and Bill and their family.