

‘Great War Weekend’

Great War re-enactors return to BCHS museum

Brome County Historical Society

Like all good things, the 2016 museum season must come to an end, but it will do so with a memorable bang!

On Saturday and Sunday, October 8 and 9, the BCHS will host a “Great War Weekend” as part of our continuing commitment to commemorate the First World War. The highlight of the weekend will be the presence of a group of Great War re-enactors who will be camped on the museum grounds, demonstrating aspects of life in the trenches and on the battlefields of the Western Front a century ago.

The re-enactors, who come from the Quebec City area, were given an open invitation to return to the museum after their lauded first visit in May of 2015 during the Second Battle of Ypres commemorations. Their encore visit coincides with the centenary of another historic battle in which the Canadians fought, the Somme, which was actually a series of battles that took place in the Picardy Region of France between July 1 and November 18, 1916. The Canadians arrived on the Somme in late August after marching from Belgian Flanders.

For the re-enactors, most of whom are Francophones whose passion for the Great War was inspired by the legacy of the famous 22ième Bataillon Canadien Francais, the Somme is sacred ground. Fighting at Courcellette in September of 1916 alongside the 25th (Nova Scotia) and 26th (New Brunswick) Battalions, the “Van Doos” repulsed 17 consecutive German counterattacks, many of which ended in brutal hand-to-hand combat with bayonets. It was a grim but glorious

record that would not be equaled during the war.

Launched primarily to relieve pressure on the French who were being “bled white” at Verdun, the Somme Campaign, or “Big Push” as it was then called, cost the British a staggering 420,000 casualties, 24,000 of whom were Canadians. (The ratio of killed to wounded on the Western Front in 1916 was 1:2) Among those killed were a number of locals, including:

Corporal Myron Brown of Mansonville, who went overseas in 1914 with Canada’s First Division; Private Frederick Hughes, who was the beloved “homeboy” of the McCrums of Iron Hill; Lance Corporal Percy Johnson of Bolton Centre, who was a husband and father; and Private Curtis Taber of Cowansville, who fought shoulder to shoulder with his younger brother Wilfred.

Privates Stanley Ball of Knowlton and Robert Johnston of Brome were among those seriously wounded at the Somme. Private Charles Savage of Eastman was also injured, by bayonet, an experience that he would recall vividly in 1936 when writing his wartime memoirs. Gassed at Second Ypres a year and a half earlier, Royce Coleman Dyer of Sutton survived the Somme unharmed, earning both the Military Medal and Bar for his actions in that bloody arena.

The aforementioned eight men, along with six others from Brome County who served on the Somme, are the focus of a poignant new Special Exhibit that will be featured in the museum’s Centennial Building during the “Great War Weekend” and beyond. Called “1916: Soldiers of the Somme,” the exhibit tells each soldier’s story through photos, documents,



letters, and memoirs, many of which belong to the BCHS Archives and have been reproduced for handling to offer a more personal exhibit experience.

Artefacts from the museum’s impressive First World War Collection will also be prominently featured, enhancing the soldiers’ stories.

Everyone is encouraged to attend this fun and educational “Great War Weekend” at the museum. Admission is free and includes the re-enactments, the Special Exhibit, and samples of trench fare like bullybeef stew, hardtack biscuits, and tea! There will also be an estaminet on site, offering special comforts to soldiers just back from the Front... but not during prohibited hours!

The museum is open daily, now through October 9, from 10 a.m. to 5

p.m. Admission fees apply, including during the “Great War Weekend.”

For more information on the Somme Event or Exhibit, please contact the BCHS, or pick up one of our free promotional bookmarks, available now at stores and restaurants throughout Knowlton and at the Sutton Tourist Office.

Mable Hastings named executive director of Missisquoi-North Volunteer Centre

It is with great pleasure that the board of directors of the Missisquoi-North Volunteer Centre (CAB) announces the appointment of Mable Hastings as executive director, effective October 1, 2016.

Presently the Director of Youth and Special Programs, Mable has been with the CAB for more than 29 years, during which she is best known for her innovative and popular programs at the Youth Centre – an accomplishment that has brought accolades from groups and individuals in neighbouring communities, as well as from afar. Readers will also recognize Mable as the author of *The Scoop*, which regularly appears in *The Record*.

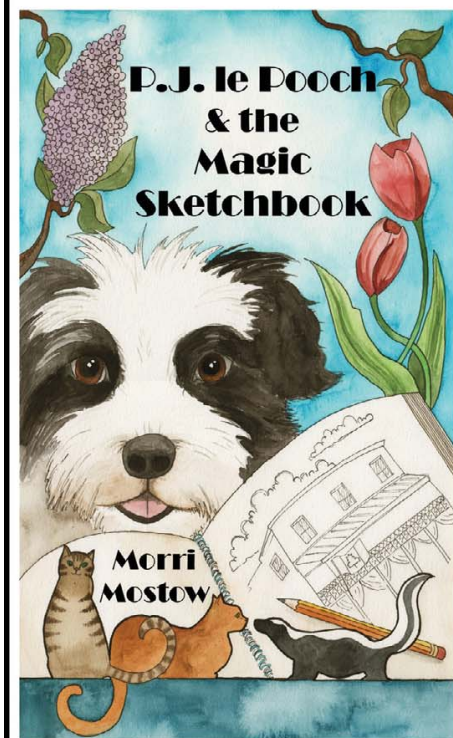
Along with retaining the same portfolio, Mable will assume full responsibility for the administration of the CAB, as well as for its various other programs.

Working in close cooperation with the local health and social services network, the volunteer centre serves the wider community, including youth, seniors, those with disabilities, and the marginalized. Service extends to the western region of the MRC Memphrémagog; governance is by a volunteer board of directors.

For more information: 450-292-3114; 450-292-4886; or infos@cabmn.org.



BOOK LAUNCH & SIGNING



Saturday, Oct. 1, 3 p.m.
BROME LAKE BOOKS
 30 chemin Lakeside
 Knowlton, QC



FictivePress.com