



CANALS CANADA/CANAUx DU CANADA

Newsletter of The Canadian Canal Society/Société des Canaux du Canada

ISSN 0824 – 1954

Spring 2005

Volume 23 Issue 1

President's Message

This is my first report to the membership as President, having been promoted (?) from Vice-President at the 2004 Annual General Meeting. Since the meeting in January, the Board has met several times to consider, among other matters, the future direction of the Society. The Society is facing a number of significant challenges that need to be addressed.

The most serious and immediate challenge is the financial sustainability of the Society. The Society has experienced significant cost increases recently. Insurance at about \$1,200 a year is our single biggest expense. Mailing and publishing costs for *Canals Canada* and other notices have also risen. This year, the Society is incurring costs to re-establish its website. At the same time, money from membership fees, the Society's only source of revenue, is falling as members have not been renewing their memberships. Without wanting to be alarmist, increasing costs and declining revenues are a prescription for financial disaster. Clearly this situation must be reversed to ensure that the Society can remain financially solvent and can continue to offer programs and services for members.

The Board is considering actions to reduce costs. We are exploring different forms of insurance to lower premium costs without compromising coverage. The use of emails to send notices and even *Canals Canada* to members has the potential to save mailing and publishing expenses. A membership fee increase will be debated but such an increase by itself will not solve our financial difficulties. Individual members can do their part by renewing their memberships and by recruiting new members.

The Board is taking steps to raise the Society's profile. The Society has agreed to participate in the Canal Days Festival in Port Colborne, 30 July to 1 August, and in the Port Days Festival in Hamilton, 25 to 28 August. Canal Days is the premier canal-related festival in the Niagara area while Port Days fills the same role for inland waterways. We will be preparing and staffing displays at both events. We will need volunteers to staff the displays; please contact me at 905-934-9188 or tom.whitelaw@regional.niagara.on.ca if you are able to help at either of these activities. These events should be a good opportunity to promote the Society and Canadian canals and inland waterways and hopefully to recruit new members.

On a more cheerful note, **Bob Sears** is organizing the Spring Field Trip to Peterborough, Murray Canal and the Lower Trent-Severn Waterway for the weekend of 18/19 June. I encourage everyone to book their place for what will be a very interesting trip. (The trip has been cancelled due to a low number of members signing up. Ed)

For the Fall Field Trip, the Society is considering joining a tour of the Genesee Valley Canal on 29 October that is being organized by the Canal Society of New York State.

During the summer, I hope to visit a number of canals in Ontario and perhaps Nova Scotia. I also plan to attend the New York State Canal Conference to be held 11 to 13 September in Rochester. I shall report on my canal travels in the Fall edition of *Canals Canada*. I am sure that other members are planning interesting canal trips for the summer. Please share such experiences by submitting articles to the editor of *Canals Canada*.

Tom Whitelaw, President

Membership

The Society is saddened by the death of the following members: Rae Tomlinson on 12 March 2005, and Dorothy Purdie on 4 April 2005.

Over the years we have had various joint meetings and members may have met Peggy Zimmerman wife of Zip Zimmerman, Past President of the Pennsylvania Canal Society. Peggy died in April and we are told that Zip is also in poor health.

PORT COLBORNE CANAL DAYS® MARINE HERITAGE FESTIVAL

A new educational and membership outreach initiative will be launched by the Canadian Canal Society this summer at Port Colborne Canal Days. During its March meeting, the Society's new executive unanimously endorsed a resolution to become an official festival sponsor and place an educational display on the grounds of the Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum



Museum Curator **Virginia Anger** and her crew invite all CCS members to enjoy nautical entertainment, model boat shows, rope ladder tying, wood carving exhibits, arts and craft sales, heritage tours, and marine demonstrations and displays celebrating the 176th anniversary of the Welland Canal.

Canal Days began in 1979 as a Niagara-wide event involving the cities of St. Catharines, Thorold, Welland and Port Colborne. Since that time, the festival has become an August civic holiday tradition and the City of Port Colborne's signature event. Each year new activities have been added and festival venues expanded to include Historical West Street and several waterfront parks. Event highlights include heritage walking tours, a kite festival, a vintage car show, Tall Ship cruises and outdoor musical concerts.

As the only remaining community in Niagara where the operating canal bisects the downtown core and historic waterside businesses still operate, Canal Days offers a unique opportunity to celebrate the Welland Canal and the people involved in its construction and operation.

This year the Canal Days Marine Heritage Festival will be held from Friday, 29th July through Monday, 1st August. CCS displays and programming will be located in the Museum's heritage schoolhouse building between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m, Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

Information on Port Colborne's marine heritage and the Canal Days Festival can be obtained at www.city.portcolborne.on.ca or by calling 1-800-PORT FUN. To learn how you can help staff our Canal Days display, contact Randy Olling at olling@sympatico.ca.

Randy Olling

GONGOOZLER MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

As people often say when fundraising, membership matters. This is particularly true for an organization like the Canadian Canal Society.

The Canadian Canal Society does not receive support from any government organization or private benefactor. Currently the only source of funding for CCS research and educational programming is money received from the payment of individual, family and institutional membership fees. Much of this money is used to prepare and distribute the *Canals Canada* newsletter and cover the rising cost of liability insurance required for our member field trips.

In order to expand our member services, educational activities and public profile, the CCS needs you to renew your membership and help convince at least one other person to join the Society.

If a membership renewal form is included in your copy of *Canals Canada*, it means that, at the time of mailing, we had not received your renewal. If you have renewed recently, thank you.

If you have an individual membership, I urge you to think about getting the rest of your family involved by purchasing a family membership. If you know of another "Gongoozler" interested in the history of canals, or the preservation, interpretation, use and promotion of Canadian canals and inland waterways, please pass along a copy of this newsletter and the CCS membership form. Gentle arm-twisting is encouraged.

***Gongoozler:** an idle and inquisitive person who stands staring for long periods at anything uncommon, especially at canal boats and canal people

Randy Olling, Membership Chair

Ron Oakley Plaque Unveiled



Ron Oakley and Bobbie Styran enjoying conversation and wine at the World Canals Conference in Montreal 2002

Photo: Bob Sears

A ceremony to unveil a plaque, recording the renaming of the Barge Lock at Bridgwater, Somerset, as the Oakley Barge Lock, took place on Saturday 9th April 2005.

Guests arrived on the wide beam passenger vessel *Peggotty*. **Ron Oakley** started his waterways campaigning in Bristol and with the Inland Waterways Association in the West Country. A member of many canal organizations, including the Canadian Canal Society, he went on to found Inland Waterways International. The excellent plaque was hand-made by Edwin Fasham, who had also made two for the tercentenary celebration of the Canal du Midi.

The Chairman of the Inland Waterways Association South West Region, Peter Kelly, welcomed the supporters. He handed over to **Thomas X Grasso**, President of Inland Waterways International, who had flown over from the USA. He paid a personal and, at times humorous, tribute to Ron Oakley for all that Ron had done to campaign for the retention and restoration of waterways in the UK, Europe, the USA/Canada and as far away as Australia. Ron was also famous for precise organization of international tours of waterways in many countries.

Ron spent his final years living in an apartment at Bridgwater Docks. Terry Kemp of British Waterways was thanked for obtaining the authority to rename the Barge Lock. Those present dedicated themselves to seeing the lock reopened to connect the canal to the River Parrett and the Bristol Channel as a further tribute to Ron Oakley's campaigning.

Submitted by Paul Wagstaffe of Inland Waterways International

Annual General Meetings

Note the use of the plural in the heading; the Society held two AGM's this year. A quorum was not present at the meeting scheduled for 28 November 2004, therefore, the meeting was rescheduled to 30 January 2005. A quorum was present at the January meeting and the new constitution was passed.

The slate of officers as presented and amended by the Nominating Committee passed. **Tom Whitelaw** became our new President, **Randy Olling** became Vice-President, and **Steve**

Hinchliffe became Treasurer. The membership thanked **Carol Gaspari** for her years of dedicated service as Treasurer.

The Board was pleased to recommend two members for Honourary Membership, **Bobbie Styran** and **Rob Taylor**. The team of Styran and Taylor has published a number of books on the Welland Canals and count as their crowning achievement the publication of *The “Great Swivel Link”: Canada’s Welland Canals* by the Champlain Society in 2001. Bobbie was the editor of *Canals Canada* for 12 years and when President was instrumental in bringing the World Canals Conference to St Catharines in 2004. Rob in addition to being a co-author, was a founding member of the Society and served as its first Secretary. The membership was unanimous in supporting the recommendation of the Board. Congratulations to our two new Honourary Members, who join **John Burtiak** and **Lou Cahill** (the late **Robert Legget** was also an Honourary Member).

The next AGM was held on 14 May 2005 at the new Canada Marine Discovery Centre located on the Hamilton, Ontario, waterfront. The Nominating Committee report was passed and the Officers of the Society for 2005/2006 are: **Tom Whitelaw**, President; **Randy Olling**, Vice-President; **George Hume**, Secretary; **Steve Hinchliffe**, Treasurer; **Roberta (Bobbie) Styran**, Immediate Past-President.

Field Trips

A number of trips were available to Society Members in conjunction with the World Canals Conference in spring 2004. In the fall of 2004 a trip was planned to Peterborough, which was marking the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Hydraulic Lift Lock, and visits to the Murray Canal and lower Trent-Severn Waterway, between Campbellford and Trenton. The fall trip was cancelled due to a job action at Parks Canada. The trip was rescheduled for 18/19 June 2005. This trip has now been cancelled as only eight members signed up.

Enclosed with this edition of *Canals Canada* is an “Expression of Interest” in a field trip along the Genesee Valley Canal in New York State on 29 October 2005. This trip is being planned by the Canal Society of New York State, who will be our hosts for the weekend. Your early return of the form will enable us to better plan this activity, which presents challenges for both accommodation and dining. As the site is within driving distance for a majority of members there will only be a bus on the Saturday at the Canal and you may or may not choose to stay overnight on the Friday and/or Saturday. This makes a visit to this very interesting canal an inexpensive day out.

World Canals Conferences

2005 Sweden 22 – 24 August

The conference this year is being held in Sweden. With optional tours before and after the conference delegates will have the opportunity to see “Six Canals in Six Days”. If you are going we would like to hear about your trip. www.gotakanal.se/wcc2005 or www.worldcanalsconference.org, for further information

2006 Delaware & Lehigh, Pennsylvania 12 -14 September

The 2006 World Canals Conference is 12-14 September. The conference is being hosted by the National Canal Museum and the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor. There will be a public event on Sunday, 10th September, at Sand Island along the Lehigh Canal in historic Bethlehem and post-conference tours on Friday, the 15th. Presentations will look at the evolution of the modern, inland, canalized waterways of the US. Bob Passfield of Parks Canada is to speak on the evolution of canal lifts and inclined planes.

The conference will be headquartered in the Hotel Bethlehem in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The field trips will cover portions of the Lehigh, Delaware, Delaware & Raritan and Morris Canals. The introductory speaker will be Lance Metz, historian at the National Canal Museum, who will speak about the role these canals had in making the Lehigh Valley a birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution.

2007 Liverpool, England 13-15 June

The conference will be hosted by the Inland Waterways Association. It is an opportunity for the Association to showcase achievements and the recent and historic successes of Britain's canal system, as well as highlighting current campaigns to revitalize Britain's inland waterways. Liverpool will celebrate its 800th anniversary in 2007 and is due to become the European Capital of Culture in 2008. The 2007 conference will immediately precede the Mersey River Festival, which is due to take place from 15th to 18th June.

Liverpool's historic South Docks have recently had their ownership transferred to British Waterways. British Waterways will work with Liverpool City Council to create year-round activity and regeneration in the dock area. There is also a plan to link the dock with the Leeds and Liverpool Canal and the rest of the national inland waterways network.

Celebrate Hamilton Port Days 2005

The first annual Port Days running 26-28 June 2004 was a resounding success! The event helped to showcase the Port of Hamilton and its facilities & services to marine industry professionals and residents of Hamilton and surrounding communities. The celebration engaged young and old with nautically themed activities including the Hamilton Marine Modellers remote control boat pond, Waveline Marine offshore boat rides, Toronto Brigantine Tall Ship Adventures sailing experiences, Nautical Photo Contest, numerous giveaways, food and beverage at the Lakeport Beer Garden, Liaison College Cooking Stage and BBQ ribs at the Collins Brewhouse smoker truck. Portions of the event proceeds were donated, benefiting local charitable organizations including Mission Services of Hamilton, The Mission to Seafarers and The Navy League of Canada.

Port Days 2005 will be held from 25-28 August and promises an exciting schedule of events for all. Bigger and better in 2005! Events take place at the Marina grounds.

Port Dalhousie Development

SOS

SAVE OUR SEAPORT



In a letter from their Toronto-based law firm, Port Dalhousie Vitalization Corporation (PDVC) "directed" Port Realizing Our Unique Distinction (PROUD) Port Dalhousie to immediately remove its billboard at the entrance to Port Dalhousie. The letter states the billboard "misrepresents their stated intentions" and "includes copyrighted material which has been used and altered without authorization."

PROUD has always understood that they were allowed to reproduce materials that have been submitted to the City as part of PDVC's application and the City has, in turn, made available to the public for comment. However, in view of PDVC's concerns regarding copyright issues, we have removed the material posted on the billboard.

The Canadian Canal Society is following the lead of PROUD.

The above recently appeared on a billboard at the entrance to Port Dalhousie to more vividly illustrate the developer's proposal. Whether you are from St Catharines or from out-of-town your comments are welcome and should be directed to the City Clerk, City of St Catharines who will pass them on to Council.

Portage Canal for Victoria?

Chris Gower, an architect, has proposed a portage canal for Esquimalt/Victoria that was first suggested in the 19th century. Native Salish people had used the route for canoe travel to encampments on the oceanfront. In more recent history pioneers used the route until it was blocked by a railroad embankment.

In an area that is anticipated to see a population growth over the next 25 years, of 50 per cent, to more than 500,000 it has a number of benefits. These fall into two main areas, firstly, there is potential for a water taxi route, and secondly, by offering a circular route there is tourism opportunity.



Request for Research Assistance

Re: Gunboats on the Great Lakes - 1866-1868

My sister, Sandra M. MacDonald and I are researching the history of three British gunboats stationed on the Great Lakes between 1866 and 1868 in the aftermath of the Fenian Invasion of 1866.

- . *HMG Heron* patrolled Lake Ontario; during the winters she was docked in Toronto.
- . *HMG Britomart* patrolled Lake Erie; during the winters she was docked in Dunnville.
- . *HMG Cherub* patrolled Lake Huron; during the winters she was docked in Goderich.

Although the crews saw no action during their two years in Ontario, the officers and men were very much involved in the social life of the communities they visited. They often hosted visitors aboard the gunboats, worshipped at local churches, participated in community events and celebrations. Some of the sailors ran afoul of the law and served time in local jails, but these were the exception. For the most part, the men of the *Britomart*, *Cherub*, and *Heron* were welcome guests in the mid-Victorian towns they visited.

Sandra and I are planning to write a book on the social history relating to the gunboats. Soundly researched and written in an entertaining style, the book will focus on the interaction of the officers and the crew with Canadians at a crucial point in our history - immediately before and after Confederation.

We are looking for any information available on these boats, their crews, and their visits to various Canadian communities. Of particular interest are diaries and letters from this period; photographs of harbours or lighthouses as they looked in 1866-1868; as well as contemporary newspaper reports or village, township or county council reports relating to the gunboats.

Romances probably developed between the men of the gunboats and local women, and we are also interested in any information about possible offspring.

A list of the places the gunboats visited and is attached. If you have any information, please contact Cheryl MacDonald at R.R. 2, Nanticoke, ON N0A 1L0; 905-776-2406 or heronwood@execulink.com.

Cordially,
Signed/Cheryl MacDonald

Sandra MacDonald has a B.A. in history from the University of Southern California. A historical researcher, she is currently working on a biography of Betsy Bonaparte, Napoleon's American sister-in-law.

Cheryl MacDonald's 20-plus books on Canadian history, include *Adelaide Hoodless: Domestic Crusader*, *Niagara Daredevils* and *Deadly Women of Ontario* (available June 2005.) A weekly columnist with the *Simcoe Times-Reformer* and frequent contributor to *The Beaver*, she is completing an M.A. in history at McMaster University.

Gunboats on the Great Lakes

These are the *approximate* number of days each gunboat spent in specific Ontario ports. Days when the boats were travelling between ports are not included in the count. The locations are listed in order of the most days spent in each place. While crew members would not have been allowed to leave the boats every day, they were granted leave on many occasions. (Specific information on when the boats were in each location, *as well as names of crew members*, can be provided by contacting heronwoodent@execulink.com)

Britomart

Dunnville - 535
 Port Dover - 90
 Port Stanley - 34
 Port Dalhousie - 10
 Chippawa (Niagara Falls) - 8
 Port Colborne - 7
 Frenchman's Creek (Niagara area) - 4
 Kingston - 3
 Fort Erie - 2
 Amherstburg - 2

Cherub

Goderich - 597
 Prescott - 19
 Windsor - 14
 Collingwood - 5
 Sarnia - 5
 Port Stanley - 4
 Brockville - 3
 Bayfield - 2
 Kingston - 2
 Port Colborne - 2
 Southampton - 2
 Amherstburg - 1
 Niagara - 1
 Port Dalhousie - 1
 Sandwich (Windsor) - 1

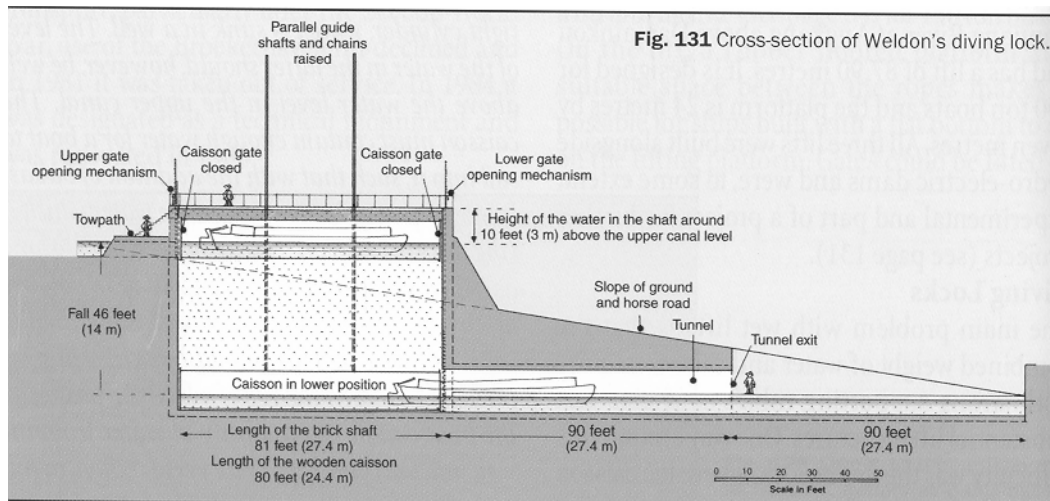
Heron

Toronto - 647
 Kingston - 50
 Prescott - 19
 Niagara(on-the-Lake) - 10
 Port Dalhousie - 6
 Belleville - 4
 Brockville - 4
 Hamilton - 4
 Port Hope - 3
 Picton - 2
 Cornwall - 1
 Gananoque - 1

DIRTY ENGINEERING EIGHTEENTH CENTURY STYLE

I wrote a rather lengthy review of Simon Winchester's "*The Map That Changed The World*" for the December 2002 newsletter (Volume 20 Issue 2.) Winchester described the career of William Smith including his first engineering assignment on the Somerset Coal Canal. Smith took an innovative and courageous approach to the challenge posed by a 45 foot (15m) elevation difference in a very short length of canal bed. Winchester's book talked of a "caisson" which lifted canal boats vertically at the problem location, but he gave little detail.

At that time I was unaware of Kenneth R Clew's book "*The Somerset Coal Canal and Railway*". I must thank both George Hume and Bob Sears for recently lending me copies of Clew's book. Clew has been able to locate some contemporary descriptions of this example of early trial-and-error civil engineering. The terminology, even as to the word "caisson" itself, is somewhat uncertain, but I feel that it is now possible to describe the novel design.



(illustration from *Canal Lifts and Inclines of the World* – Hans-Joachim Uhlemann available through Inland Waterways International)

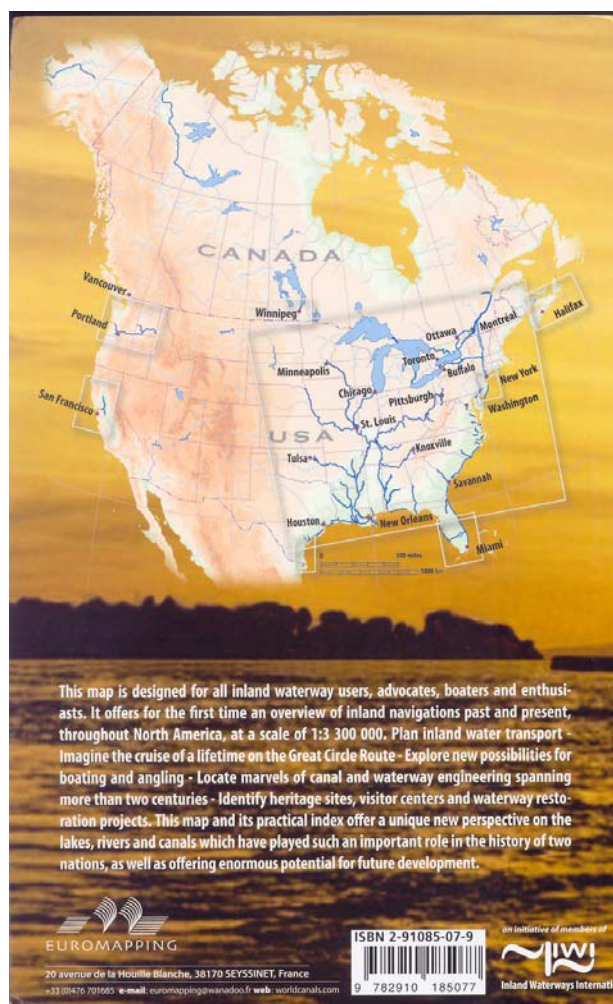
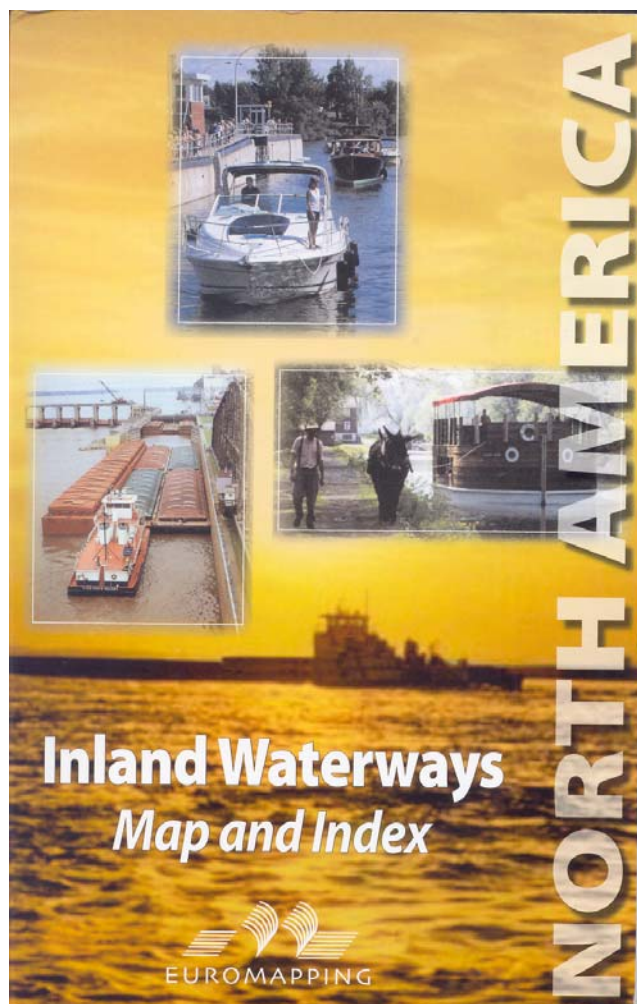
The Caisson, or Diving Lock as it was sometimes called required the construction of a strong vertical masonry shaft with a carefully constructed entrance at the lower level. This entrance had to be closed and made watertight for each boat transit. Inside the shaft, and presumably running in vertical rails, was the cylindrical iron caisson, also capable of being made watertight, at both ends. The caisson could accommodate 70 foot (20m) long boats so the caisson and the shaft, and the necessary exit tunnel at the lower level were very substantial structures. The operational cycle for upbound boats consisted of the entry of the boat and crew into the caisson, the sealing of the downstream end of the caisson and the lower masonry gate, the flooding of the shaft to raise the loaded caisson to the upper level where the upstream end of the caisson was opened for the boat to enter the upper reach. The occupants of the immersed caisson apparently controlled buoyancy by pumping water into or out of the caisson. Not a job for the claustrophobic. The cycle operated in reverse for downbound boats.

This remarkable device caused a sensation. Trials began in 1798 and the canal management made the mistake of inviting notables to witness their success. At one of the early transits the caisson seems to have twisted from the horizontal, jamming itself in the shaft and causing much damage. It took four months to repair the damage. Confidence was regained, culminating in the Prince of Wales making an upbound trip in the caisson. He left a “handsome present” for each of the crew. Sadly the masonry wall buckled not long after and was deemed irreparable so that more conventional methods had to be applied.

There must be remnants of the lock and several attempts have been made to find them. When they are found I will be among the visitors.

(See also *Canal Inclines and Lifts*, David Tew – Ed)

Ken Mackenzie



This new map from Euromapping offers for the first time an overview of inland waterways past and present, throughout North America. Included with the map is a comprehensive index of 64 pages of the canals. Bobbie Styrn and I were both pleased to be contributors to the index. This valuable addition to your canal library is available from the Canadian Canal Society for \$32.00 + \$2.00 postage & handling. Copies may be obtained by contacting the Editor at 416-285-7254 or dawnofdestiny@sympatico.ca (proceeds go to the Canadian Canal Society)

Conquering Niagara

“Conquering Niagara – The story of the Welland Canal” was a documentary prepared in recognition of the 175th anniversary of the Canal. It was premiered at the World Canals Conference held in St Catharines last year. Copies are now available from The Welland Canals Foundation, 905-682-7203 or mmalaguti@oeb.com.

New Website

With this edition of *Canals Canada* in the mail I will be shifting my attention to getting our new website up and running. Our new address will be www.canadiancanalsociety.org



Alex Sinclair has recently released *Flights of Fancy*, a CD of songs about the Welland Canal. The songs were mostly composed to celebrate the 175th Anniversary of the Canal, which occurred in 2004. You can order it by emailing us and asking for it; like all of our products, the CD costs \$17.00 Cdn including taxes and shipping.

SGB Productions, 123 Walpole Avenue,
Toronto, ON, M4L 2J4
Fax: 519-836-3534
Email: motone@sentex.net
Cheque, money order or MasterCard

The Canadian Canal Society

Executive Officers for 2005-2006

President: Tom Whitelaw
Vice-President: Randy Olling
Secretary: George Hume
Treasurer: Steve Hinchliffe
Past President: Bobbie Styran

Send correspondence to:

Secretary
Canadian Canal Society
PO Box 23016, Mid-Town Post Office
124 Welland Avenue
St. Catharines, Ontario
L2R 7P6

Contributions for Canals Canada to:

Bob Sears, Editor
Canals Canada
248 Tower Drive
Toronto, Ontario
M1R 3R1

Phone: 416-285-7254
Email: dawnofdestiny@sympatico.ca

Website: www.canadiancanalsociety.org

Canals Canada is Copyright by The Canadian Canal Society

Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Society

Erratum

1. In volume 21 issue 2 – Fall 2003 in the appreciation of Bob Voaden the name of the boats was given incorrectly as *Czarina* and *Czarevna* and should have been *Tsarina* and *Tsarevna*.

2. Also on the Agenda for this year's AGM the dates for WCC 2005 were incorrect. The correct dates are as stated in this newsletter.