



# The Blazon

Patron of the BC/Yukon Branch: The Honourable Judith Guichon OBC, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia

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The Royal Heraldry Society of Canada

Summer 2014

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I would like to welcome Branch member Dr. Darren George as our new editor of the *Blazon*. Darren comes with considerable experience of producing and editing newsletters and as many of you will know he formerly edited our national magazine, *Gonfanon*, as well as previously founding the Society's Prairie Branch as well as editing its magazine, the *Prairie Tressure*. We look forward to having Darren as part of our team as we move forward with promoting heraldry in British Columbia and the Yukon.

This will also be the first *Blazon* to report on a Branch AGM since the new Vancouver branch was established. We were delighted to see officers and members of the new branch in attendance at our AGM as voting members of our own branch, and we look forward to a mutually beneficial relationship as the new branch gets off the ground. Our AGM attracted 12 members and six guests to hear Dave Obee, Editor-in-Chief of the Victoria Times Colonist, give an illustrated presentation on *Genealogical Research Today*. Several of our guests were prominent local historians and after a hearty lunch, Mr. Obee explained some of the common pitfalls that can hinder genealogical research using online sources, especially those related to scanned original documents and the limitations of Optical Character Recognition technology.

The business part of the AGM saw a new set of bylaws approved for the operation of the Branch and another new face on our board of directors, David Hjalmarson. David brings with him a wealth of experience from other organizations he is involved with and we look forward very much to his valuable contribution on Branch affairs. The doyen of heraldic artisans, Laurie Patten has retired as a Branch director but will happily remain on the Board as our *ex-officio* heraldic advisor.

A recent event our Branch was involved in was the 151<sup>st</sup> Victoria Highland Games, held over the Victoria Day long weekend. L.Cdr. Steve Cowan and myself manned a booth at the event and enjoyed the excellent weather introducing heraldry to interested members of the public and some of the other stallholders, who often have heraldic items on display and want to learn something more about them. Last year, visitors to the event included HRH the Duke of York, and our Patron the Honourable Judith Guichon, Lieutenant Governor of BC, who was given a tour of the heraldry display. The Lawrence J. Patten Heraldry Exhibit at Carey Mews, Government House will be open for the season again this year and for those of you who haven't yet seen it, I highly recommend a visit to this impressive display when you are next in Victoria. We are hoping to have volunteer docents trained to help with the interpretation of the display this year which will add to the richness of the experience for visitors.



Pictured above, your President John W. Neill in the company of Ted McNabb, National First Vice-President and Ken Turriff, a member of the Ottawa Valley Branch at the Society's 48<sup>th</sup> National Conference dinner held in Toronto on May 31.

Later in 2014, our Branch annual black tie dinner will take place at the Grand Hotel Nanaimo on Saturday, October 18. Our Guest of Honour will be our Branch Patron, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor of BC who, we anticipate, will talk about her new grant of arms. Please mark your calendars for this important event. A booking form and hotel reservation details will be sent out to members later in the season.

In closing, I would like to say a few words about the recent National Conference of our Society which took place between May 30 and June 1 at the Arts & Letters Club in Toronto ON. It was a well-organized and enjoyable event with a previous *Gonfanon* and *Hogtown Heraldry* editor, Dr. Jonathan Good, presenting Friday evening's Beley Lecture on 'College Heraldry.' After the AGM on Saturday morning, during which the new Vancouver Branch received its charter, a tour of Queen's Park, otherwise known as the Ontario Legislative Assembly, was arranged. Our evening gala dinner event was at the Arts & Letters Club on nearby Elm Street, when Prof. Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek of Indiana delivered this year's Wilkes Lecture entitled *Heraldry in the Kingdom of Hungary*.

## CANADA'S FLAG DAY

By Steve Cowan, CD, UE

Recently we enjoyed St. Valentine's Day, an occasion for couples to express their affection of each other. Earlier in the same week we celebrated the British Columbia holiday of Family Day when the range of our affections widens to encompass our family as well as our friends and fellow provincial citizens.

Closely following these events was an occasion where all Canadians can express their association for each other as citizens of a proud nation. The occasion of February 15 was National Flag of Canada Day. It was 49 years ago in 1965 that our distinctive flag was raised across our nation and at overseas locations around the world.

The National Flag of Canada Day was an integral part of the BC/Yukon Branch involvement at the recent Cumberland Heritage Fair held on February 15, 2014. Branch members Don Mayers and Steve Cowan manned the Royal Heraldry Society of Canada booth at this well attended all-day civic event.

At the beginning of the day we were the only participants who seemed to be aware of the birthday of our national

flag. By the end of the day we had handed out a good supply of our national flag (courtesy of Heritage Canada). Booth visitors were questioned about our flag and all were pleased to know about the significance of February 15.



*Don Mayers (left) and Steve Cowan (right), both RHSC members from the Comox Valley, distributing flags at The BC/Yukon Branch table-top display on National Flag of Canada Day at the Cumberland Heritage Fair on February 15, 2014.*

Part of our message was to explain how our national flag was the harbinger of Canadian heraldry, and from the development of our national flag the Canadian Honours System and the Canadian Heraldic Authority arose.

A more detailed description of the development of our national flag was given at the heraldry presentation to the Victoria Genealogical Society on February 13. With National Flag of Canada Day soon after this presentation, I had included heraldic aspects of our flag, as the Canadian Pale was developed in 1964 and then proclaimed by Her Majesty on January 28, 1965.

The salient item was the development of the Canadian Pale as an official heraldic design. In a flag with the ratio of 2:1 length to width, the Canadian Pale results in a square in the centre and a quarter of the width as a border on both sides. This was a first in official heraldry of the Commonwealth. The concept of a wider centre pale has been seen earlier in vexillology, that part of heraldry dealing with flags. For instance, the state flag of the State of Iowa, in use since 1921, has a broad pale of one-half of the width; but with a flag ratio of 3:4, the centre area is not a square as in our flag. Our flag has a symmetrical and simple charge compared with the Iowan flag with a charge, a motto and a title in its pale.



Interest in our national flag was evident at our Heritage Day booth. Both adults and children were surprised and pleased when handed them a free flag, and most of the parents of the young children in attendance hadn't been born when the new flag was raised.

One member of the public dropped by our RHSC booth and recalled the occasion of the first raising of our new national flag. On February 15, 1965, Chief Warrant Officer Rick Grinham, OMM, CD (retired), of Cumberland BC, was a young soldier attached to a surface-to-surface missile battery of the Royal Canadian Artillery and the flag-raising ceremony had a very special meaning. On that date Rick and his fellow soldiers were on a field training exercise along the border separating West Germany from East Germany. Being February the weather was sub-zero and the countryside and forest were covered in snow. At 11:00am on the big day, and in full view of the East German border guards, the old flag was lowered and the new National Flag of Canada was raised. A trumpeter played *O Canada* as the soldiers saluted. Afterwards the soldiers gathered and celebrated the occasion with a tot of army rum. Over the next few weeks the various military vehicle decals were replaced with the new national flag maple leaf.

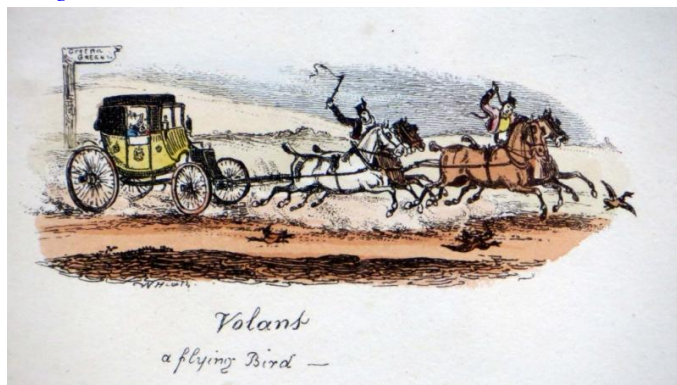
Next year, 2015, is the sexagenary (60<sup>th</sup>) anniversary of the National Flag of Canada. We have an opportunity to spread the word about heraldry as our flag has special heraldic meaning. Your participation in any civic events you either develop or learn about will help with the mission of the Society to make Canadians aware of Canadian heraldry.

#### SINCERE THANKS FOR THIS ISSUE TO:

Steve Cowan, Shirley Greenwood, Charlie Kingston and Rob Walsh.

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The design of our flag did not match the formal heraldic designs, called the "Ordinaries"



Cross

Pale

The closest design is the Pale.



Bend



Pile

The Pale was a shield divided into thirds.



Pall



Chief

This didn't fit our flag so a new heraldic term was approved in a Proclamation by Her Majesty on 28 January 1965.



Chevron



Saltire



Bend sinister



Fess

### The Canadian Pale

The central portion is one-half of the width.

The outer portions are one-quarter of the width.



### SOME PHOTOS OF THE BRANCH AGM

Duncan Travelodge, March 29, 2014



Rideau Herald and Sir John Cave-Browne-Cave, Bt.





*David Hjalmarson and Dr. John Bosher*



*Laurie Patten*



*Lee Van Horne*



*Dave Obee*



*Sir John and Lady Cave-Browne-Cave*



*Tom Mercer and Jennifer, Lady Cave-Browne-Cave*





*Gary Mitchell*



*Lesley Patten*



*The Chief Heralds' Postcard*



*Steve Cowan*



*Doris Gray*



*Les Underwood*