



The Blazon

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

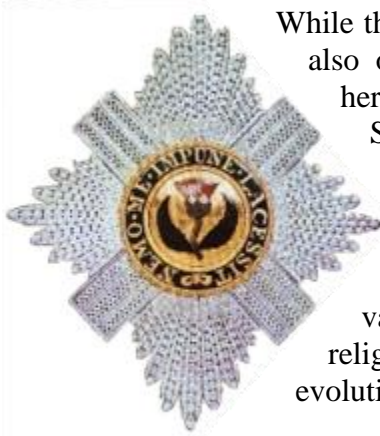
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THE CHAPEL OF THE ORDER OF THE THISTLE

By Steve Cowan, C.D., U.E., L.R.H.S.C.



Star of the
Order of the Thistle

While the City of Edinburgh offers a wide range of tourist attractions, it also offers a small corner of heraldic heaven. For enthusiasts of heraldry, and the associated aspect of phaleristics, a tiny corner of St. Giles' Cathedral is a gem. Located on High Street, better known as the Royal Mile, the Cathedral is an easy landmark to find on your walk to or from Edinburgh Castle. The building dates back to the twelfth century and has gone through various structural changes and religious, social and cultural evolutions in its existence. It is the home of the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh and has been the centre of religious life there for over 900 years. The

Cathedral has a distinctive crown steeple that can be seen the length of the Royal Mile as well as from other points in Edinburgh.

Tucked away in a quiet corner of the Cathedral is a small area of recent completion; the Thistle Chapel. By recent, I mean 1911. This is the chapel of Scotland's foremost Order of Chivalry, The Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle. This chapel is a prominent display of heraldry as the arms of the Knights of the Order are displayed on the stalls.



Thistle Chapel entrance
Photo: Steve Cowan

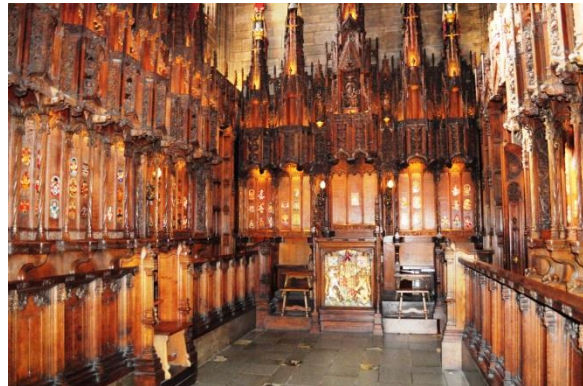


Thistle Chapel stall canopies with carved helmets
and crests. Photo: Steve Cowan

(Some background on the Order of the Thistle: While its ancient history may date back to the eighth or ninth century, and various attempts at revival were made in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries, the modern revival of the Order dates from 1703 under its reestablishment by Queen Anne. Membership was originally the Sovereign and twelve Knights; this increased to sixteen Knights in 1827.

In 1987 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II allowed the regular admission of women to the Order. There are four Extra Knights and Ladies Companion members from the Royal Family, the latest being Prince William in 2012.)

Access is through a single door and controlled by a volunteer guide who conducts twenty minute tours each half hour. While the Cathedral is large and open, the Thistle Chapel is quite small. It is about 12 metres long (40 feet) and half that in width. Along each side of its length are the stalls of the knights; above each stall is a beautiful carved canopy of the helm and crest of each Knight. On the back of each stall are the achievements, or metal stall plates, of the Knights who have used and are using each stall. As you enter the Chapel you pass the spectacular Sovereign's stall with its elaborate woodwork and heraldic carvings. Look for the bagpipe playing angel.



Thistle Chapel looking west
towards the Sovereign's Stall
Photo: Steve Cowan



Thistle Chapel stall plates
Photo: Steve Cowan

Don't forget to look up, way up. The ceiling is a delightful array of heraldic images with angels holding shields.

In the main area of the Cathedral there are also the banners of the knights on display. Several of the side aisles have regimental Colours hung high above. Some of the Colours are very faded and tattered alluding to the many decades, if not centuries, since the Colours have been laid up.



Banners of the Knights and Ladies of
The Order of the Thistle
Photo: Steve Cowan



Regimental Colours
Photo: Steve Cowan



HRH Prince Andrew leaving St. Giles Cathedral at the
Battle of Britain Service 24 September 2015
Photo: Steve Cowan

As luck would have it, when my wife Judy and I were wandering the top half of the Royal Mile we could not access the Cathedral or its immediate area; it seemed that there was a special service taking place that sunny September afternoon. At the Cathedral entrance there were various military personnel all dressed in Royal Air Force (RAF) uniforms and they appeared to be waiting for a service to finish as they formed up in ranks and stood to attention. There was a large crowd of onlookers, mostly tourists, and I was able to stand in a building stairway to see who emerged from St. Giles. The date and air force personnel, as well as an array of World War Two aircraft displays on the entrance

grounds indicated this was the local Battle of Britain Service. After waiting only a few minutes, His Royal Highness Prince Andrew came out of the Cathedral, chatted with RAF members and clergy before departing. Prince Andrew, dressed as an Air Commodore in the RAF, was wearing his sash for his membership in the Order of the Garter. Only his mother, father, older brother, sister and nephew are Sovereign and Royal Family members of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle.

I thoroughly recommend a visit to St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh, Scotland. There is a suggested donation of a few pounds to access the Cathedral. If you want to take photographs you will need to purchase a Photo Permit for £2, a mere bagatelle for what you will see and an interesting souvenir. There is no extra charge for the Thistle Chapel, just a matter of getting a place for the limited group access. You will be rewarded with seeing historical and colourful aspects of heraldry and chivalry.

MY AMAZING TRIP TO RIDEAU HALL AND THE CANADIAN HERALDIC AUTHORITY

By Lee Van Horne

The Award There I was, standing below a huge portrait of Her Majesty the Queen in the ballroom of Rideau Hall, facing a crowd of amazing people and their guests, all looking at me, while the Master of Ceremonies was reading the citation, a brief synopsis of why the Governor General was about to pin a medal to my chest. I was pumped! My thoughts were a collage of my good fortune, the people who had accompanied me from the West Coast, the people who I wished were there, and the amazing events that led up to this point. A few seconds later, I approached the Governor General, who got up from his chair, took a medal presented by a



Rideau Hall, Ottawa

military officer, and then attached it to my jacket. We shook hands as he said a few words of congratulations and we then turned to a barrage of video and photo cameras. This all occurred within a space of maybe a minute, but what an intense minute!



Their Excellencies are pictured with the first 55 recipients of the new Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers on 12 April 2016
Photographer: Sgt Ronald Duchesne, Rideau Hall



His Excellency presents the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers to Wilbert Lee Van Horne from Qualicum Beach, B.C.

Credit: Sgt Ronald Duchesne, Rideau Hall, OSGG

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Later, during the subsequent reception in the Tent Room, a lady approached me and I immediately recognized her, though much surprised to see her there. She was Claire Boudreau, Chief Herald of Canada. She said that she had been looking for me, but I was not surprised that it might have taken her a while, as the room was packed. We had a really good chat. A few hours later, I was in her office at the Canadian Heraldic Authority, enjoying a tour of their facilities. I will describe that very enjoyable tour later.



But first of all, let us back up a bit. How did this all happen?

The Notification It all started on the morning of December 15th, 2015, when I opened my email program. In my inbox was a message that purportedly was from someone representing the Governor General, and said that I had won an award. I was a little confused. I could not imagine what I could have done that would justify an award from His Excellency. Attached to the message was a form that was asking for personal information. This was beginning to smell phishy! I was really busy at the time so I just let it slide a day or two. But, of course, it was always in the back of my mind. Eventually, I was in contact with John Neill, the then president of the BC-Yukon branch of our illustrious Society, who I knew had contacts everywhere, and he said, "Think of it as a nice Christmas surprise from your country". It was legit! Wow, some surprise! John suggested that I send in the form tout-de-suite, which I did. (I later surmised that it must have been John who had nominated me for the award. Thanks, John!)



Over the following weeks and months, I received more information, both from Rideau Hall directly and from back channels via the Society. The award was under the Caring Canadian program administered by Rideau Hall and was to recognize my volunteer work within the Society, primarily to do with our branch website, over the last decade or so. But what initially was supposed to be a pin and certificate to be presented by a local official, morphed, step by step, into a medal (still to be presented somewhat locally), then ultimately to a full ceremony at Rideau Hall with His Excellency himself to do the honours, to present to me the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers!

My Visit to the Canadian Heraldic Authority

A week or so before the award presentation, when my travel plans to Ottawa were more or less finalized, I thought that this trip would be a good opportunity to fit in a visit to the Canadian Heraldic Authority. Even though I had been told that the heralds had temporarily moved out so that renovations could be done, I thought that I would drop a line to Bruce Patterson, Deputy Chief Herald of Canada and Saint-Laurent Herald, to see what was possible. (He was the herald who oversaw my grant about ten years ago, when he was the Saguenay Herald.) As chance would have it, the staff had just moved back 'home' and, though still unpacking, he would be happy to show me around.



Thus, a few hours after the ceremony, my family crew of four and I descended upon the offices of the CHA. We found the heralds all assembled in Claire's office discussing the wording for an index entry of arms still in the granting process. (I had agreed that any photos taken of arms not yet granted would not be published. All I can say is that the arms in question had a very interesting and unusual design.) Bruce then proceeded to show us around the approximately dozen offices that they occupy within the Chancellery. We saw, of course, depictions of arms in various stages of the granting process. In the Production Room, I noticed the seal press that embosses the CHA's seal on each letters patent, sitting unceremoniously on the floor, waiting for a permanent placement as things slowly find their 'homes'.



CHA seal press
Credit: Jim Marcotte

After the tour, it was time for people photos. I was very pleased that Cathy Bursey-Sabourin, Fraser Herald, the main designer of the Sovereign's Medal, kindly consented to have her photo taken with me wearing the medal. In the group photo, below, is Darrel Kennedy (Assiniboine Herald), Samy Khalid (Saguenay Herald), Kelly Massey (acting Miramichi Herald), Lee Van Horne, Claire Boudreau (Chief Herald), Bruce Patterson (Deputy Chief Herald and Saint-Laurent Herald), and Cathy Bursey-Sabourin (Fraser Herald).

After the photo taking, I put my crew on ice and had a private interview with Bruce in his office, mostly to fill in information that did not come up during the tour.

What I thought would be a 30-minute tour turned into



Lee with CHA Officers. Match each officer with their badge.

Photo credit: Jim Marcotte



Cathy Bursey-Sabourin, Fraser Herald, with Lee van Horne at the CHA Ottawa.

Photo credit: Jim Marcotte

an amazing experience of well over an hour. Many, many thanks to Claire Boudreau, Bruce Patterson, and the rest of the CHA staff who extended every hospitality during their busy day to me and my group.

Epilogue - Whew, what a ride! Months have passed and I suppose that going back to normal life is inevitable, but I am still feeling reverberations. I come from a very large family and as the news slowly winds its way through various rumour channels, I receive emails of congratulations. They help to keep alive the buzz and I treasure every one that comes in. Family and heraldry - what a great combination!



OUR NEW 2016 CARY MEWS HERALDRY LOCATION



Heraldry Display in the Cary Mews Tea Shop building
Photo: Tom Mercer

This summer our famous Laurie Patten Heraldry Display at the Cary Mews has been relocated. We now enjoy space in what was the information room attached to the Cary Mews Tea Shoppe. The move was necessary as Government House has arranged a large display of military and period uniforms that could only be displayed in our space. The adjacent room that was the stables and holds the exhibition of orders and medals is now linked to that area through a new doorway.

Our heraldry display is enjoying more traffic, mostly from the Tea Shoppe patrons. Access is through the large doorway, on the north side of the Tea Shoppe building; what I call the Mews courtyard.

This all happened just prior to the Victoria Day weekend. Tom Mercer, our BC/Yukon Branch Vice-President, has done a fantastic job in coordinating the new set up with Ms. Thandi Williams, the new Director of Operations at Government House. Thandi took over this position from Mr. Jermy Brownridge who is now the Private Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor and Executive Director, Government House.

Tom is also planning briefing sessions with the volunteers from the Tea Shoppe who will act as our docents. Our famous bookmarks are also arranged for public use at our display.

All members and the public are welcome to visit the Cary Mews at Government House. Hours of operation are Tuesdays to Saturdays from 10:00am to 4:00pm. After viewing our famous heraldry display, please enjoy the great refreshments and food at the Tea Shoppe.

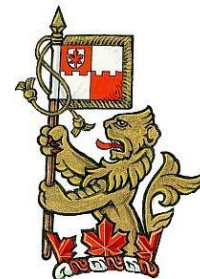
There is lots of free parking at the Mews, which is an outstanding venue to take visiting family or friends. It is also an ideal location and facility to study heraldry as you contemplate taking the Society's educational program.



Heraldry Display entrance at the
Cary Mews
Photo: Tom Mercer

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BC/Yukon Branch of the Royal Heraldry Society of Canada

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