

SAVE
ONTARIO
SHIPWRECKS

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SOS NEWSLETTER

November 2009



SOS NEWSLETTER

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The *SOS Newsletter* is published by *Save Ontario Shipwrecks (SOS)*, a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to furthering public knowledge and appreciation of Ontario's Marine Heritage.

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Opinions expressed by contributors to the newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Board of SOS.

Save Ontario Shipwrecks gratefully acknowledges the support and financial assistance of the Ontario Ministry of Culture.

**Submission deadline
for the next issue is
February 15, 2010.**

From the Editor:

This issue is unfortunately rather short (once again I urge everyone in the membership to submit items for the Newsletter!) but we do have some interesting content ranging from recent news (the grounding of CSL *Assiniboine*) to political lobbying (letters regarding UNESCO's Underwater Heritage treaty) to a wide slate of upcoming events (Outdoor Adventure Show, AGM, NAS courses, and more).

Enjoy the Newsletter,



The Mission of Save Ontario Shipwrecks is the preservation and promotion of marine heritage through research, conservation and education.



View from the Bridge

Everyone I'm sure has had a great season of diving. I know I did. Not quite as many dives as usual but certainly there were some great times. Diving on shipwrecks and drift diving just anywhere is part of the fun of seeing new rock structure, fish and items you'd never expect. I suppose the strangest thing I came across this year was what looked to be a big metal and glass refrigerated display case. This was way out of the way tucked between two of the 1,793 islands in the Thousand Islands. It was fully covered in Zebra mussels so it has been there a while. It was standing on its end. Some of the panels to cover the compressor compartment were missing. Was it dumped? Did the ice pull it off the shoreline? Was it being transported somewhere when it fell over the side of a boat? We might never know. I'm sure there is a good story there. It is an odd item to be found away from any commercial location.

Of course we also dived our good old shipwrecks in the area cleaning the SOS plaques (using the scrubbers available in SOS Ships Stores) and checking the sites for damage. I have to say that silt disturbance in many vessels continues to be a problem. Every year, more and more inner ceiling planking (floor boards, keelson etc.) of the wrecks is exposed. For example, the Gaskin now has the huge steel barrels more exposed than ever. Ten to fifteen years ago only one had a three inch hole in the top; now six barrels have no steel tops at all.

The Kinghorn and Rothesay have a natural degradation happening where the sides are slowly collapsing. You can see the hull planking peeling away and the futtocks being compressed to the point of separation. The Gaskin's wood (and I'm sure all the other wooden wrecks) continues to erode, getting more and more natural holes which make the wreck more fragile. The current is no help to the process as wood is continually blasted by suspended particles, not to mention all the diver impact and in some rare cases boat impact.

I could not help but notice the Kinghorn's steel "L" channel deck reinforcements that were bent outward towards the surface. The natural process is compression yet these were facing upward where a huge hole in the deck is also evident. It's not what we like to see... Big anchor damage

where the anchor gets stuck on the wreck and a careless boat operator decides to rip it out, as opposed to carefully lift bagging it out. There are big fines for this if one gets reported to the OPP and prosecuted. Any damage or site changes are strictly illegal and this includes disturbing the silt which helps to preserve the site ten-fold in time. Thus we encourage LID - Low Impact Diving.

The moorings were all deployed this year and I'd like to thank all the SOS members for taking such good care of them. Getting them all in and out and keeping them in good shape throughout the summer is a labour of love. The buoys are showing their age, but I'm sure a bit of winter maintenance can get them shining bright. Please everyone encourage your dive buddies to join SOS and to lend a hand. There is much to learn and enjoy in caring for our great heritage resources.

With a great year behind us, the leadership people in all the Chapters (Chairperson, Treasurer, Project managers, etc.) and the Board of Directors will be putting pen to paper (or keystrokes to screen) to wrap it all up. We have seen everything from new survey work, new buoys deployed, new items in Ships Stores, new plaques, public exhibitions, NAS licensing of SOS, return of NAS courses, and much more. All of these reports and more will be in the next two issues.

SOS has just taken delivery of a new colour printed fabric display that will be used at all exhibit venues in 2010. The artwork on the fabrics speak to 5 themes (SOS Identity, NAS, LID, Plaques, Moorings) and a PowerPoint show on an attached LCD screen gives the details. This project has been in the planning for 5 years and I am happy to say the ship has arrived. The display is 10ft wide by 8ft tall and can be used at events, exhibitions and left unattended at museums. Seeing the photo in this issue does not do it justice, but it is all that is available till we get it out there in 2010.

Hope you had a great Christmas and New Year everyone and thanks again for your contribution to our goals!

Sincerely,



Brian Prince
SOS President

SOS Letter to Ottawa: Preserve Canada's marine heritage!

In the February 2009 issue of the Newsletter, we were pleased to announce that UNESCO's 2001 Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage entered into force after its ratification by twenty countries.

The treaty calls for international cooperation to raise awareness and promote education about the precious legacy of underwater heritage sites, and embodies principles such as the obligation of signing nations to preserve underwater cultural heritage, and the preference to preserve this heritage *in situ*.

With more and more stories in the news every day about plundered shipwrecks and legal battles with treasure hunters, UNESCO's Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage has never been more relevant. SOS recognizes the importance of this treaty, and has been encouraging the government of Canada to sign for years. To this end, our Ethics Chairperson recently sent another letter to key politicians in our Federal Government, asking them to outline their intentions with regards to this issue.

The letter is printed on the following page for the information of our members, along with the letter we received in response from Alan Latourelle, the CEO of Parks Canada.



Save Ontario Shipwrecks
P.O. Box 2389
Blenheim, Ontario
N0P 1A0

Monday, November 2, 2009

The Honourable Jim Prentice
Minister of the Environment
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Re: UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage

Dear Mr. Prentice:

With ratification by its twentieth signatory nation, UNESCO's 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage went into force on January 2nd, 2009. To date, twenty-five nations have now ratified this important international commitment to our shared marine heritage. Unfortunately, Canada is not among them. That Canada has never ratified this agreement is especially embarrassing because the convention's logo is a drawing of the *San Juan*, a shipwreck in Red Bay, Labrador, excavated by Parks Canada staff.

Save Ontario Shipwrecks is a volunteer organization dedicated to the preservation of underwater archaeological sites and public education about our marine heritage. Following the creation of the Lake Superior National Marine Conservation Area, our group submitted a letter (dated November 26th, 2007) to the Government of Canada encouraging the ratification of the UNESCO treaty. Our letter was forwarded to the Hon. John Baird, then Minister of the Environment. Although Mr. Baird was the minister responsible for Parks Canada and the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, we received no reply from his office.

Citizens of the world have declared their dedication to preserving mankind's marine heritage, and we at Save Ontario Shipwrecks are proud to share this mission. We invite you to stand with us in preserving Canada's marine heritage, and we look forward to your reply, outlining the Government of Canada's intentions on this matter.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Ferguson
Director and Ethics Chairperson
Save Ontario Shipwrecks

c.c: The Right Hon. Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada
The Hon. Michael Ignatieff, Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada
The Hon. Jack Layton, Leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada
Mr. David McGuinty, Liberal Environment Critic
Ms. Linda Duncan, NDP Environment Critic
Mr. Gilbert Laurin, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Canada to UNESCO



Parks Canada

Parcs Canada

Chief Executive Officer

Directeur général



Parks Canada

Chief Executive C
Gatineau, Canada
K1A 0M5

Mr. Jonathan Ferguson
Director and Ethics Chairperson
Save Ontario Shipwrecks
P.O. Box 2389
Blenheim ON N0P 1A0

DEC 04 2011

Dear Mr. Ferguson:

I am replying on behalf of the Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of the Environment, to your letter of November 2 regarding the protection of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.

The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of preserving underwater cultural heritage for present and future generations and the value of the Convention for protecting submerged cultural resources. The Government provided leadership during the development of the Convention and voted for its adoption in 2001. Given the implications of the Convention for a number of sectors in the country, an analysis is being carried out on the various steps that may be required before Canada can consider its ratification.

The Parks Canada contact for inquiries regarding the Convention is Dr. Larry Ostola, Director-General, National Historic Sites Directorate, Parks Canada, 25 Eddy Street, Gatineau, QC, K1A 0M5.

I trust this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Latourelle
Chief Executive Officer
Parks Canada

c.c.: Mr. Michael Ignatieff, M.P.
Office of the Honourable Jack Layton, P.C., M.P.

Canada



***Conestoga* 's temporary sister “wreck”**

By: Brian Prince

CSL *Assiniboine* ran aground in Cardinal, Ontario on Monday, November 16 at 8:15am and was stuck there for 6 days until Saturday, November 21 just after 9pm. So our favourite shipwreck, *Conestoga*, temporarily had a sister (see picture). The *Conestoga* was not endangered by CSL *Assiniboine* with the exception of perhaps some additional silt being deposited on the *Conestoga* as the *Assiniboine*'s predicament confounded those attempting to free her.



While the CSL *Assiniboine* was traveling east on the St. Lawrence, one engine stopped ~3km after passing under the Johnstown Skyway Bridge to Ogdensburg. While crews were scrambling to get the engine restarted, the other engine quit and she drifted sideways onto a shoal outside the narrow channel at about the same time they got the engines restarted. But it was too late... with the current in the area and a bend in the channel, there was no way to get the ship out the way it went in under her own power. The only way out was to reverse course as she balanced amidships on the shoal.

CSL *Assiniboine* was carrying 33,000 tonnes of soybeans from Toledo Ohio to Baie Comeau when it grounded. Seaway traffic could still get by as she was just outside the channel. It is estimated that it cost the company \$30,000 per day before repairs and salvage costs.

Crews working around the clock had performed a number of tasks to try and free her. They tried towing with two tugs, then three with no luck. A large barge brought in from the Welland Canal area was not considered clean enough by food inspectors and was rejected. One smaller barge took 3 loads (~4000 tonnes) to Prescott where they could be loaded onto another ship. Added complications included keeping American cargo segregated from Canadian to prevent any cross contamination. They brought hundreds of feet of gas welding hose aboard from the Lock 28 site where a work boat named "Dusky" ferried over supplies and people. A ballast tank had apparently been damaged which would not put the ship in further peril. Tugs were seen surveying depths in more detail using sonar to get a better idea of the bottom contours.

Just after 9pm Saturday, with a lighter load and using 4 tugs, they finally pulled the *Assiniboine* off the shoal and brought her to the Port of Prescott for underwater inspection by divers. I'm sure there was also investigation as to why two engines quit - possibly a diesel fuel issue.

She'd hardly have been a new dive site as most of her would never have been underwater in that area. Impact to the *Conestoga* site is minimal: just some silt stirred up pulling the *Assiniboine* off the shoal sideways the way she went in. The Seaway only guarantees 27' of water and the draught of these large ships fully loaded is 26' 6" leaving little room for error. The Seaway water levels in the fall and these days in particular are about 2' lower than summer levels which further compounds any issue and the time to react to it.

So while many would like more steel wrecks sunk to help take the diving pressure off the older more sensitive wooden wrecks, the *Assiniboine* was not to be the one. Come to think of it, the *Terra Nova* project apparently is also not going to happen as word is that it was sold for scrap steel. So the *Conestoga* and other wooden wrecks are still going to be very active dive sites. Please keep in mind to dive them using low impact techniques.



HOT OFF THE PRESSES!

Two new books by veteran SOS member

Paul Carroll

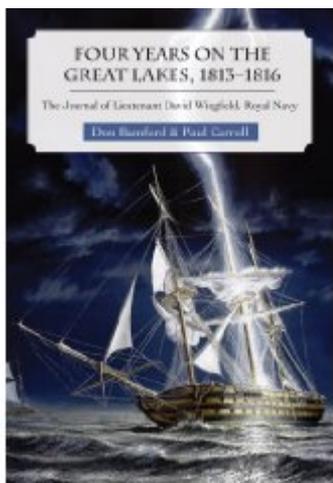
now available in Ships' Stores

Four Years on the Great Lakes, 1813-1816

The Journal of Lieutenant David Wingfield, Royal Navy

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Dundurn (Jun 1 2009)



David Wingfield joined the Royal Navy in 1806, at the age of fourteen. His service took him to the Great Lakes during the War of 1812. Captured, he was a POW in the United States for nine months. Following his release, Wingfield had some intriguing adventures on the Upper Great Lakes before returning to England. Once home, he used his handwritten notes, kept during his time in North America, as the basis for an account of his experiences there.

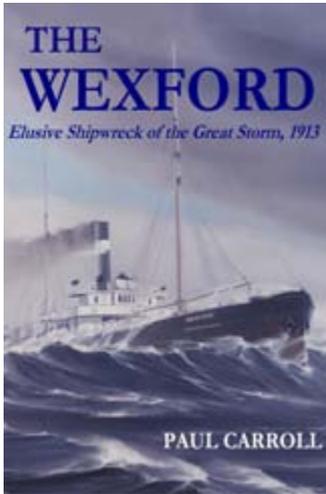
This unique account of the history of Canada during the events of the War of 1812 and the stories of the people and places he was exposed to during this time is being made available in book form for the first time. This is the only account of the War of 1812 as seen through the eyes of a young seaman. Included is a Wingfield genealogical description that spans the modern world.

The Wexford

Elusive Shipwreck of the Great Storm, 1913

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Dundurn (May 31 2010)



The Steamer Wexford, with her flared bow, tall masts, cabins amidships and her open, canvas-sided hurricane deck, charmed spectators as she carried cargo across the Great Lakes. The adventure and romance of her British & French history in the South American trade followed her. Along the docksides whenever they made port, her good-humoured young crew of largely Collingwood and Goderich boys offered friendly waves to admirers and shoreline visitors.

Under newly-appointed, 24 year old Captain Bruce Cameron, her fateful final voyage was punctuated with opportunities to be saved from destruction, but Cameron persisted with his charge to complete the final voyage. With 16 year-old Orrin Gordon at the wheel, she fought for hours trying to make port at Goderich, but eventually fell victim to the storm.

She eluded many efforts to find her remains. Over the period of 87 years, she was said to be found and found again – in half a dozen different places. But she was finally discovered by sailor Don Chalmers when he caught her image on a simple fish finder as the pros searched the bottom further northward.

Our story traces her history from her British origins in 1883, through the transition to become a 'Laker', her crew, the eventful storm, the 87 year search, her ultimate discovery in southern Lake Huron and the controversy over how she should be protected.

Check out these, and other great books from Dundurn Press,
at SOS Ships Stores:

<http://www.saveontarioshipwrecks.com/QMstore>

Search for Sunken Cannon in St. Lawrence River

**Dennis R. McCarthy – St. Lawrence River Historical
Foundation, Inc.**

Cape Vincent - The St. Lawrence River Historical Foundation conducted an underwater survey of a very specific location near Carleton Island off Cape Vincent, NY, from June to September 2009. The survey was the result of two years of discussions with Cape Vincent officials, historians and scuba divers about the possibility of locating a cannon that may have “been placed beyond use” of the Americans by the British military before the start of the War of 1812.

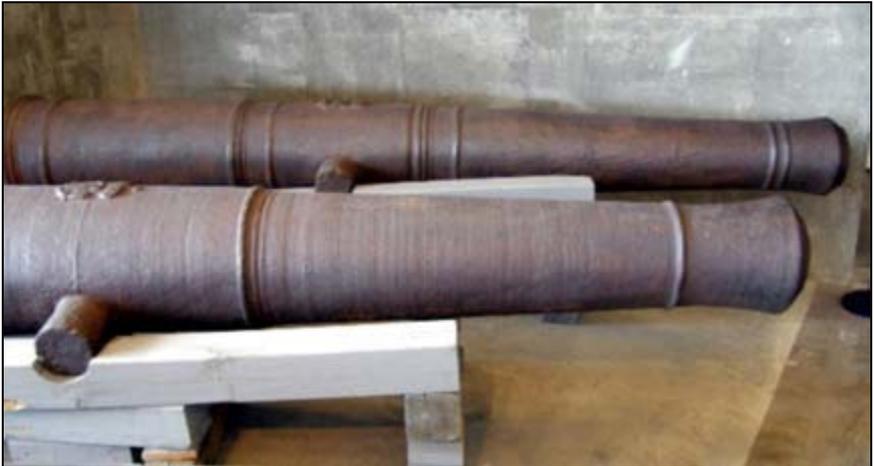
In 2007 the Cape Vincent Lions Club had a presentation given by a retired NYS Director of the Historic Parks about the three cannons recovered from Carleton Island. As part of the presentation, he stated that historical records indicated that there were five un-serviceable cannons at Carleton Island in 1804. In 1807 an unknown number of these five cannons were disposed of. In the 1960s and 1970s, three iron cannons were recovered by scuba divers. These cannons belong to the New York State Museum. Two are on loan to the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa and the third is on outside public display at the Sackets Harbor Battlefield.

Several members of the Cape Vincent community were interested in the possibility of obtaining a cannon for display in the local park. In the summer of 2008, two scuba divers came forward and informed some of these people, that they had discovered a cannon off Carleton Island several years before and believed it to still be there. The divers provided a specific location where the iron cannon was located as well as information that it “was under two feet of mud, resting close to vertical, and a diver could put his fist into the muzzle’s opening.”

With this information, a series of local meetings and commutations with New York State officials resulted in SRHF obtaining a Section 233 Permit to attempt to confirm the cannon’s existence. The permit would be used to locate and determine the size, position on the bottom and condition of the cannon. This would allow Cape Vincent officials or local organizations to determine the feasibility of recovering and preserving it for public education and display.

Confirming the existence or not of a fourth cannon was very important as the previously found cannons may be some of the oldest identifiable artifacts ever found in the Upper St. Lawrence and Great Lakes. The cannons were at Carleton Island during the Revolutionary War. Carleton Island was a major base for British operations on Lake Ontario and a staging area for raids into the Mohawk Valley. Located on Carleton Island was Fort Haldimand whose construction began in 1778 and was still in British control in 1812.

Two cannons, each weighing about 6000 pounds, were recovered in 1962 & 1963 by Jack Schum of Harpursville, NY and Harold Baker Jr., of Binghamton, NY. They are technically Iron Guns of the Calverin type. This is a class of artillery with a bore of 5.2 inches that fired an 18 pound ball. Each cannon is decorated with a Rose and Crown Cypher dating from Charles II of England on it. The third cannon recovered in 1973 by Peter Perrault and the Syracuse Scuba Society Dive Club weighs about 3400 pounds and belongs to a type of artillery know as a Demi-Calverin that fired a 9 pound ball. This cannon had the Rose and Crown Cypher of George II.



Two 17th Century Rose and Crown Cannons on display at Canadian War Museum, Ottawa, were recovered from Carleton Island .

Ordnance of these types was listed as being at Carleton Island as late as 1804 in the British Military Records RG8 series. These records also indicate that in 1807, with the possibility of the outbreak of hostilities between the US and Britain, steps were taken to prevent ordnance at Carleton Island from falling into American hands. The guns were most

likely sunk in the river where they rested for more than 150 years before being discovered.

In 2008 Charles Trollop of the Ordnance Society of Great Britain provided additional information from the markings on the iron guns using the “The Browne Survey”, a survey of British ordnance carried out in 1699 and preserved in the British National Archives. He was able to specifically identify the guns. The oldest gun marked 4632 was entered in the Board of Ordnance Bill Book on the October 17th 1668. It was allocated to Tilbury Fort in Essex, England. The second gun marked 5633 was entered in the Board of Ordnance Bill Book on the July 4th 1678. It was allocated to the *HMS Vanguard*. Both guns were sent to New York in November 1739. The third cannon found in 1973, a 9 pounder that was cast between 1731 and 1734, was sent to New England in 1754. During the French and Indian War, the cannons were moved to Oswego or Fort William Henry. They were captured by the French in 1756 or 1757. In 1760 they were recaptured by the British at the Battle of Isle Royal near present day Ogdensburg, NY. During the Revolution, they were moved from Fort William Augustus (Isle Royal) to Fort Haldimand at Carleton Island. Just before the start of the War of 1812, they were sunk in the St. Lawrence River to keep them from falling into the hands of the Americans. The two oldest cannons were over 150 years old when they were sunk in the St. Lawrence River in 1807.



George the 3rd Cannon at Sacket's Harbor Battle Field recovered from Carleton Island.

The SRHF formed a small team of volunteers for the survey. Doug Pippin, a SUNY Oswego Professor, was the team's consulting archeologist and the scuba divers were Bob Seiselmeyer of Syracuse and Dennis McCarthy of Cape Vincent. Logistics were provided by Kathi McCarthy of Cape Vincent and Skip Couch of Clayton. Jim Kennard of Shipwreck World provided a Magnetometer and a DeepVision Systems high resolution side scan sonar.

The survey was conducted in 3 phases. Phase I was an underwater visual survey and examination of the river bottom in the target location. Phase II used a high resolution side scan sonar to map the bottom. Phase III used a magnetometer to identify any large iron targets such as a cannon.



Skip Couch , left, and Jim Kennard using a magnetometer off Carleton Island.

No cannon or large iron targets were found in the specific location identified by the scuba divers. Not the results that were hoped for but a known possibility at the beginning of the survey. With the completion of the three planned phases of the original permit, the decision was made to do additional research in the historic records seeking the exact number of cannons sunk in 1807. The large amount of side scan images of the general area around the target site will be further analyzed this winter.



UPCOMING EVENTS

The Outdoor Adventure Show

February 26-28

The International Centre
6900 Airport Rd.
Mississauga, ON

Join SOS at **SCUBA WORLD** for the premier of our new booth display! Stop by to chat with fellow SOS members, and don't forget to check out the demonstrations in the portable SCUBA tank and the talks at the show's SCUBA Stage.

Follow the link from the SOS Facebook page for a
"2 for 1 Admission" coupon:



Niagara Divers' Association's Shipwrecks 2010

Saturday, March 13, 9am

Centennial Highschool
240 Thorold Rd.
Welland, ON

The 16th annual Shipwrecks symposium promises to be a good one, with 9 full length multi-media presentations by world-renowned speakers and a selection of five-minute "shorts".

Lunch, refreshments and door prizes are included.

For more information, go to the following website:

<http://vaxxine.com/nda/shipwrecks/sw2010index.html>

UPCOMING EVENTS



2010 Annual General Meeting

Saturday, April 10, 1pm

London Museum of Archaeology
1600 Attawandaron Rd.
London, ON

We value your input! As a member of SOS, you are entitled to a vote at the AGM. We rely on our members to help make important decisions for the future of the organization.

To see the meeting Agenda, go to the following URL:

<http://www.saveontarioshipwrecks.on.ca/agm2010.html>

This year, we are pleased to hold our AGM in conjunction with the following event:

London Museum of Archaeology's 9th Underwater Heritage Event

Sir John Franklin: Quest for the Northwest Passage

Saturday, April 10

Conference during the day, wine and cheese in the evening. Featuring as Key Note Speaker, author and explorer David Woodman.

For more details as they become available, keep checking the Museum's website:

<http://www.uwo.ca/museum/index.html>



UPCOMING EVENTS

2010 NAS 1 Courses

May 14-16	Niagara Divers' Association Contact: marshall2@vaxxine.com
June 11-13	Hamilton Chapter Contact: chapple@hotmail.com
August 13-15	1000 Islands Chapter Contact: tomcwilson@gmail.com
October 1-3	Toronto Chapter Contact: jonathanferguson@hotmail.com



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