



OMMC
inc.

5th June–11th June 2011



45th Annual Museum Studies Program
Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

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June 5-11 2011

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Sunday 5 June 2011

The 2011 OMMC annual training program got under way on Sunday with registration at the historic Rodd Charlottetown hotel, followed by an evening gathering at the Queen Charlotte Armoury, home of the Prince Edward Island Regiment and PEIR Museum. The evening opened with words of welcome from the OMMC President and senior military VIPs. Following an excellent meal, attendees and guests explored the impressive exhibits in the P.E.I. Regimental Museum, hosted by the museum curator, Greg Gallant, and volunteers.

Monday 6 June 2011

On Monday morning, course attendees gathered in front of Province House, the provincial legislature building and birthplace of Confederation, for a memorial service at the Charlottetown Cenotaph. A CF padre and piper were on hand as the group had a moment of silence to remember Canada's fallen. The padre spoke of the importance of preserving history for future generations.

Following a group photograph at the nearby Confederation Centre, the contingent separated into smaller groups for guided tours of Province House and the Confederation Centre. One of the highlights of the provincial legislature building was seeing the grand meeting room where the fathers of Confederation (less Mr. Smallwood!) met in September of 1864 to discuss the possibilities of union.

At the Confederation Centre, OMMC members were treated to a guided tour of the Centre's art gallery, featuring both traditional and modern works of art, many with particular historical relevance to Canada and Prince Edward Island.

To wrap up the morning, the group crossed the street to the headquarters of Veterans Affairs Canada, for a tour of the historical collection displayed in the building's foyer and atrium. The collection focuses on veterans' experiences and artifacts, particularly medals, and was very informative.

At lunchtime the group went to the HMCS Queen Charlotte, where the rest of the week's information sessions would take place. The building is on the waterfront at the eastern end of downtown Charlottetown, and during breaks the members enjoyed seasonable weather and expansive views from the deck outside the officers' mess.

The afternoon started with the election and Annual General Meeting. Afterwards, members were treated to a colourful presentation on the history of the military in P.E.I., delivered by Boyde Beck – author, and history curator of the P.E.I. Museum. One of the many notable points was that P.E.I. has been occupied by hostile military forces no less than three times over the course of its history.

In the evening, the members enjoyed dinner in the Georgian Room of the program's host hotel, the Rodd Charlottetown. The guest speaker, Senator Mike Duffy, entertained an appreciative audience with his reflections on Canadian politics and society, and a very full first day of the program was thereby brought to a close.



OMMC President Marilyn Gurney welcomes course attendees.



Examining a work of art at the Confederation Centre.

Tuesday 7 June 2011

On Tuesday the attendees separated into two groups for lectures on topics particularly pertinent to today's museums: WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System), and Archival Preservation.

In the WHMIS training session, Terry Jeffries from TnT Training Solutions, an area safety training firm, covered the basic symbols and what they mean, and provided attendees with a quick reference chart and aide-memoire to take home.

In the Archival Preservation presentation, Claire Trainor from P.E.I. Archives provided an extensive demonstration of various archival materials, and the issues and options related to preserving them. She noted that archival materials have special requirements compared to museum artifacts, because the archival materials must often be available for research and physical handling, as opposed to being exhibited. Dozens of different samples were available for the group members to examine. Among the many topics covered in Ms. Trainor's presentation were the following:

- when to use gloves & when not to
- different kinds of paper and their durability (e.g. paper from the pre-wood pulp era is more durable)
- how to deal with a folded document that you receive at your museum
- the effects of light and relative humidity on archival documents
- what materials to use to mend maps (e.g. NOT tape, even archival quality)
- how to make tubes for storage
- how to deal with staples leaching rust onto documents
- issues particular to photographs, including daguerreotypes, dry plates and other kinds of photographs
- how to detect the deterioration of cellulose – the smell of vinegar (wear a respirator!)
- pest monitoring and management

Some basic principles can also be found on the website of the Canadian Council of Archives / Preservation Committee, at <http://>



Claire Trainor, P.E.I. Archives, discussing archival materials.

Wednesday 8 June 2011

The middle day of the program opened with a digitization briefing from Rafael Sandoval, the senior programmer-analyst at the Directorate of History & Heritage. Rafael covered the main points for museums to be aware of, and touched on some new developments in the digitization technology field.

Next there was a presentation about preserving works on paper, with archival specialist Jill McRae, curator of the Confederation Art Gallery and Museum, who focused on the following issues:

- pest management
- issues particular to book bindings
- procedures for lifting large documents in a way that protects them
- storing and lifting matted objects
- how to recognize "mat burn"
- how to encapsulate documents in Mylar
- UV coatings on light fixtures – they degrade over time
- general housekeeping principles.

The morning wrapped up with a briefing on the care of metal artifacts, with conservation specialist Linda Burko from the P.E.I. Museum and Heritage Foundation. Ms. Burko brought two tables' worth of metal artifacts of various descriptions & states of deterioration, which the course attendees spent some time examining after the lecture. She also demonstrated the application of various treatments. Among the other topics covered in this session were:

- initial steps on receiving a new donation of a metal artifact – for both health & safety purposes, and conservation
- when & how to freeze incoming artifacts
- cleaning metal
- dealing with corrosion
- care of attached organic components such as cloth, leather, wood
- preparing metal for painting

She noted that Margaret's Cleaners, in Hollywood, has a good website dealing with insect infestations – more can be seen at this link: <http://www.margarets.com/InsectDamageFashionableCare.html>



Course attendees examining the metal artifact samples.

After lunch, David Panton, who co-authored a study called “Drafting the Vimy Charter for Conservation of Battlefield Terrain”, provided program attendees with an update on the conservation of the Vimy memorial. He discussed issues such as the nature & repair of stone, carbon-based accretion and preserving the remnants of the battlefield. He also reflected on the process of designing the overall site to preserve the spirit of the location and retain a sense of reality to the events that took place. This influences many decisions in the preservation process, including everything from direction of access to deciding which trees to plant.

The afternoon continued with a lecture on “New Media”, including handheld devices and downloadable media, with Rev. Barry King, PhD. He covered creating files that can be accessed by iPods and similar devices, as well as things that are relevant to the museum but not IN the museum, such as walking tours. He noted that creating an on-line, downloadable presence helps tell people that (1) you’re there, and (2) you have “the real thing” – in terms of artifacts and exhibits.



A model of the Vimy memorial, in the atrium at Veterans Affairs Canada headquarters.

After dinner at the Rodd Charlottetown, the evening proceeded with unit presentations from the Rocky Mountain Rangers (Major Wendy McKenzie), the Canadian Forces Museum of Aerospace Defence (Bethany Aitchison) and the Royal Canadian Regiment (Claus Breede). All were interesting and informative, holding the attention of the crowd despite the ample meal just consumed. After the unit presentations there was a brief “free flow round table” discussion and Q&A session, and another day’s official sessions drew to a close.



The unit presentation of the Rocky Mountain Rangers

Thursday 9 June 2011

Thursday morning opened with the final classroom presentation of the program, covering “Exhibits on a Shoestring”, by Barry King, Executive Director of the Community Museums Association of Prince Edward Island. Mr. King spoke about the following issues:

- the basics of planning a small exhibit
- balancing three things: purpose, resources and audience
- being clear about what you want to accomplish, and who the audience is
- how to control the message that people are getting
- developing a storyline
- determining which objects need interpretation, and which speak for themselves clearly
- labeling: lots of words are not always needed – sometimes fewer is better
- use large text for ease of reading, especially for older visitors
- fragile or valuable artifacts: enhance the display with other artifacts that are not as delicate
- using mock-ups and models, to get a sense of the general flow before the expense of the full-size installation
- standardizing your panels
- visual range & perspective are very important
- typical field of vision = roughly 40°
- approximate height of most visitors – and therefore labels: 3.5-6.0'
- “maze” configuration: maximizes space, allows control of sequence (but must not be convoluted or confining).
- give opportunities for rest, change of scene

On Thursday afternoon, the “touring” portion of the program got under way in earnest, with visits to two notable sites in Charlottetown: Beaconsfield Historic House and Government House, the official residence of the Lieutenant Governor of P.E.I.

Beaconsfield Historic House is a grand residence from the Victorian era, built in 1877 for a wealthy shipbuilder and merchant. The tour guides on-site gave an informative tour, highlighting many of the home’s unique and historic design features.

At Government House, course attendees were fortunate to be welcomed personally by the then-Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Barbara A. Hagerman. Ms. Hagerman spoke about her distinguished career as a musician and how this has informed her approach to the role of Lieutenant Governor, and she reflected on the importance of culture to the development of society.

Following Her Honour’s warm welcome, course participants were given a guided tour of the residence by site staff. The house dates from 1834 and includes reception areas, apartments for official visitors and the private living quarters of the Lieutenant Governor and family, all in a beautiful and expansive garden setting with a view of the ocean.



Beaconsfield Historic House

Before returning to the Rodd Hotel, several members took a short walk to the Fort Edward Battery (Prince Edward Battery), established in 1805 in order to defend Charlottetown harbour. The battery's guns were never used in action, but were used throughout its history for ceremonial purposes and drills. The site had fallen into neglect in recent years, but restoration efforts began in 2001 and now the site is a popular and scenic tourist attraction.

Thursday evening brought members a presentation on new DND medals, by Major Carl Gauthier of the Directorate of Honours & Recognition. Major Gauthier showed members the revised version of the Special Service Medal, and the new Operational Service Medal with six different ribbons, denoting particular operations. As the highlight of the presentation, Major Gauthier showed images of the new Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, to be struck in 2012 commemorating the 60th anniversary of Her Majesty's reign as Queen of Canada. He described the rationale and process behind the selection of the visual components of the reverse side of the medal. A link to the medal is here:



Government House

<http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dhr-ddhr/chc-tdh/chart-tableau-eng.asp?ref=DiamondJubilee>



Government House grounds

Friday 10 June 2011

The final full day of the training program found members boarding coach buses to visit several notable sites around the central part of the island. The first stop was the Confederation Bridge, whose construction was completed in 1997. The buses crossed the length of the bridge (12.9 km), affording group members an excellent view of the Northumberland Strait before turning immediately around on the New Brunswick side and heading back to P.E.I. After the crossing, group members had some time to visit the bridge interpretive centre and gift shop, before heading to visit a scenic outlook a short distance away, and a historic church at Searletown, P.E.I.



Slemon Park Historical Aircraft Static Display

The tour then continued to the town of Summerside, where members were treated to a delicious meal at Anson's restaurant, at the former site of the air force base, as well as a very informative presentation by the Summerside Historical Society, complete with visual displays and volunteers in historical costume.

After lunch, there was an opportunity to walk through the Slemon Park Historical Aircraft Static Display and memorial garden, established by the Aviation Heritage Society of P.E.I. Among the aircraft on display are a CP107 Argus, a CF101 Voodoo and a CP121 Tracker.

The next stop on the tour was the Acadian Museum of P.E.I., at Miscouche. This small museum presents some fascinating exhibits and insights into the history of Acadians on P.E.I. and in the Maritime region.

Following the museum visit, the buses took a short drive along the very picturesque north shore of the island, making brief stops at Cavendish and Rustico to admire the shoreline's red cliffs and pastoral scenery, before continuing back to Charlottetown.

The evening – and the course overall – wrapped up Friday evening with the annual formal dinner, held at the Queen Charlotte Armoury. The parade floor was decked out with cloth bunting hanging from the rafters, in the P.E.I. Regiment colours of gold and black, and music was provided by the P.E.I. Regimental Band. The convivial atmosphere and fine food contributed to an enjoyable evening for all.

Saturday 11 June 2011

Saturday morning's activities consisted of breakfast, checking out and embarking on the journey home. The next OMMC course is in Montreal, 27 May – 2 June 2012. See you there!



The scenic shoreline near Rustico, P.E.I.