

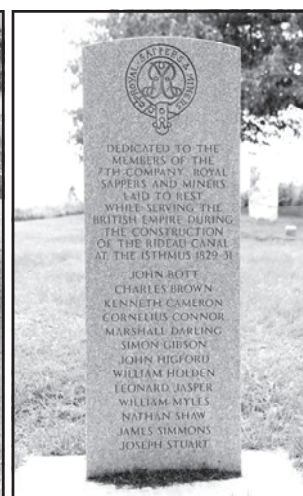
The Royal Sappers and Miners

On July 19 of this year, a headstone monument was unveiled in the newly named Royal Sappers and Miners Cemetery in Newboro (originally called the Military and Civilian Cemetery and later called the Old Presbyterian Cemetery) listing the names of 13 Sappers and Miners who are presumed to have been buried here. Who were the Royal Sappers and Miners and what role did they play in building the Rideau Canal?

Sapping is the excavation of a trench or tunnel to approach and undermine a fortification, and mining is a similar skill which includes knowledge of black powder blasting. At the time of the building of the Rideau Canal, the Corps of Royal Sappers and Miners had many trade skills including carpentry, masonry, and blacksmithing in addition to their traditional excavation and mining skills. The Corps consisted of non-commissioned officers and privates under the command of the commissioned officers of the Royal Engineers.

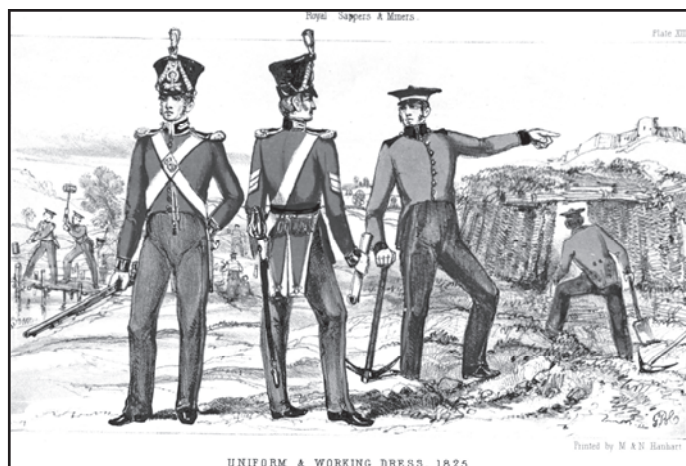
Since the Rideau Canal was to be built by civilian contractors, it was initially felt that few soldiers of the Sappers and Miners would be needed and Lt. Col. John By, the superintending Royal Engineer, was sent one company, the 15th. They arrived in Canada on June 1, 1827 and were placed under the command of Captain Victor. In July 1827, Colonel By wrote, *"I find the greater part of Capt^r Victor's company such intelligent and well instructed men, that they are of the greatest use to me"* and he requested that he be given four companies. He was given one more, the 7th Company who arrived in Canada on Sept. 17, 1827 and were placed under the command of Captain Savage. The two companies totalled 162 men. Many were married (well over half, based on the death records), most of the wives and families accompanying the men to the Rideau Canal project.

The Sappers and Miners initially camped in tents at Richmond Landing until permanent barracks were built. Those barracks were located on the top of a hill overlooking the Ottawa Locks, today's Parliament Hill (see map on page 2). They were based in Bytown, with individuals and small groups being moved to various worksites along the Rideau as needed. They initially worked on projects in Bytown, including the construction of the Sapper's Bridge which crossed the canal at the head of the Ottawa Locks. It was so well built that there was considerably difficulty encountered in 1912 when it was demolished to make way for a new bridge (today's Plaza Bridge).



Royal Sappers and Miners Cemetery, Newboro

Originally called the Military and Civilian Cemetery, there are 12 or 13 Sappers and Miners buried here along with civilian workers plus women and children who died during the building of the locks at Newboro and Narrows. The original wooden markers for the graves have long since rotted away. As with most canal era cemeteries, this cemetery saw continued use after the building of the canal, in this case well into the 20th century. Photos by Ken W. Watson



Royal Sappers and Miners

The uniform (left) and working dress (right) of the Sappers and Miners in 1825. Original illustration in colour (red tops with bluish (dress) or brown (working) trousers). Image from page 341 of volume 2 of *The History of the Corps of Royal Sappers and Miners* by Thomas William John Connolly, 1855.

Friends of the Rideau is a volunteer, non-profit organization, working to enhance and conserve the heritage and charm of the Rideau Canal.

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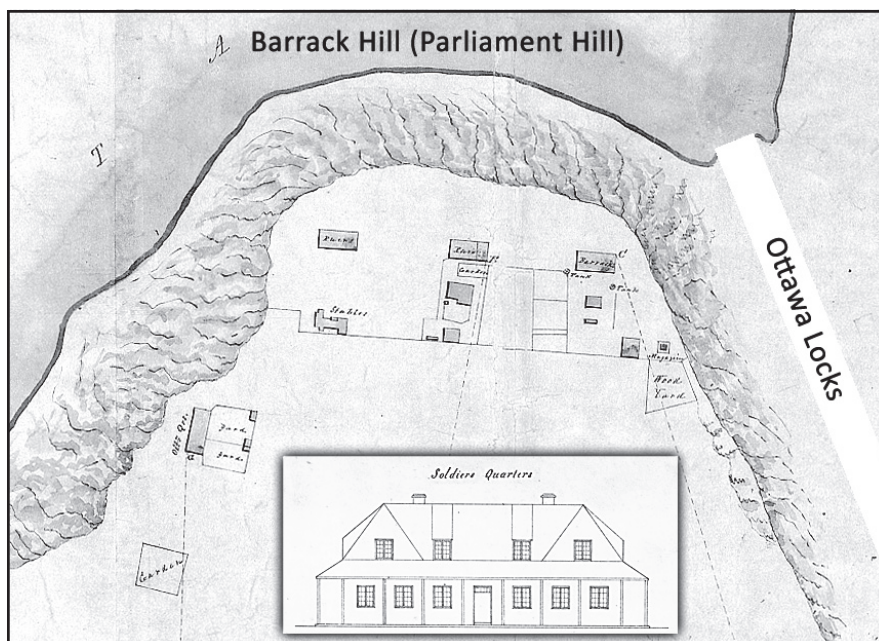
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Things were about to change for the Sappers and Miners as problems cropped up at some Rideau construction sites. In February 1828, half of the stone dam being built by contractor Walter Fenlon at Hogs Back was washed away. He rebuilt that section but on April 1, 1828 spring floodwater overflowed the coffer dam and severely damaged the stone dam. In June of that year, Fenlon requested to Col. By that he be released from his contract, he couldn't do the job. Philemon Wright & Sons, who had built the coffer dam, were given part of the contract, but by the fall of 1828, Colonel By had taken over the job of building the stone dam, using both companies of Sapper and Miners and 300 civilian labourers.

The Sappers and Miners had no more success with the Hogs Back dam than Walter Fenlon. The stone dam they were building had been raised to a height of 50 feet when it collapsed on April 3, 1829. Frozen clay inside the dam had succumbed to hydraulic pressure from spring flooding, allowing water through the dam. Colonel By gave up on the stone dam, moving to Plan B, the construction of a rock-filled timber crib dam, the dam that still exists today at Hogs Back.

There were also significant problems at The Isthmus (Newboro). Progress by the contractor, William Hartwell, was slow since extremely hard bedrock had been encountered while excavating the canal cut. These problems were compounded by the first outbreak of malaria in the summer of 1828, which ground work to a halt. Hartwell asked to be released from his contract in the fall of 1828 and a new contractor, Stevenson, took over. He didn't have any more success than Hartwell and quit by the summer of 1829. Colonel By made the decision to take over the project himself and in late fall of 1829 took the 7th company off the job at Hogs Back and moved them to the Isthmus. In 1830 there were 2 Royal Engineers, 1 commissariat official, 59 members of the 7th Company of Royal Sappers and Miners, and 250 civilian labourers employed at the Isthmus.

The pay wasn't great, a private was paid a little over 1 shilling per day, less than half the pay for a day labourer on the Rideau Canal (2 s, 6 p). Only a Sergeant exceeded a labourer's pay, by half a pence (2s, 6 ½ p). Of course they were given food, clothing and job security, but it was low pay for hard work. Accordingly desertion was a major problem. Colonel By, in order to reduce the desertion rate, proposed that each man be given his discharge and 100 acres of land upon the successful completion of his service on the Rideau Canal. Despite that, of the 162 men, 35 deserted. Records show that from their arrival in 1827 to November 1828, some 16 men deserted. Three of these were caught and sentenced to



Barrack Hill—Today's Parliament Hill

Now the site of Canada's Parliament buildings, it was originally the Bytown headquarters for the Royal Sappers and Miners and Royal Engineers. There were three soldiers quarters, each building was 108 ft / 33 m by 70 ft / 21 m in size. There were also quarters for the Royal Engineers and a hospital. Annotated portion of a map "Bytown. Plan, shewing the Land belonging to the Ordnance on the Barrack Hill, with the relative position of Wellington and Rideau Streets" by Charles E. Ford, RE, 1848.

transportation for seven years (to a penal colony in Bermuda).

The Sappers and Miners were soldiers and were often used in that capacity. An example is the "Battle of the Quarry" when the contractors at Smiths Falls, Rykert and Simpson, were let go in late 1830 and replaced by new contractors, Bell and Richardson. Simpson's quarried stone was to be measured and he was to be paid out, but Simpson balked, claiming the quarry and the stone as his. In January 1831, a detachment of 2 NCOs and 20 Sappers and Miners were assigned to Lt. Pooley, the Royal Engineer in charge of Smiths Falls. Col. By reminded Pooley that the riot act would have to be read out loud 3 times before the soldiers could open fire. It didn't come to that – there was a confrontation and Simpson's men turned Pooley and the Sappers and Miners away from the quarry with no shots fired. In the end Col. By used the Rideau Canal Act to legally take the quarry from Simpson (with suitable compensation).

Work was hard and there were deaths, mostly from disease. Twenty-two Sappers and Miners died during their service on the Rideau Canal, about 8 from malaria, another 8 from other diseases or no cause given, 5 from blasting accidents and 1 by drowning. Twelve or thirteen (there is some doubt about the 13th) were buried at Newboro, most of the others were buried at Bytown in the

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2017 AGM

Friends of the Rideau's AGM took place on May 13 in the Rideau Canal Visitor Centre in Smiths Falls. Our Chair, Hunter McGill, welcomed everyone.

Hunter reviewed the past year for Friends, noting the various partners and funders who support our work. Parks Canada for allowing us the use of The Depot in Merrickville which we operate as a summer interpretation and visitor centre. The Village of Merrickville-Wolford for a generous grant in support of our operation of The Depot and for providing storage space for our files and supplies. The Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport for providing a Heritage Organization Development Grant in support of our outreach initiatives such as our newsletter and website. The federal Ministry of Employment and Skills Development for assistance through their Canada Summer Jobs program to help fund our summer staff.

Hunter also thanked Ken Watson, Gillian Organ and Cheryl Gulseth for their hard work on various components of Friend's outreach programs including our website, the newsletter and The Depot, our interpretive and retail centre in Merrickville. Hunter thanked our members and donors, whose generous support helps to keep us going.

Hunter looked forward to greeting visitors at our Friends of the Rideau booth at various summer events such as Colonel By Day in Ottawa, Rideau Paddlefest in Smiths Falls, the Classic Boat Show in Westport and the Rideau Ferry Regatta. He highlighted the new 2017 Rideau Canal Passport, a project initiated by Friends of the Rideau and done in co-operation with Parks Canada, who produced the passport and were going to distribute it at all lockstations.

Hunter mentioned that we continue to encourage Minister McKenna and Parks Canada to restore full heritage interpretation to the Rideau Canal. We were planning to have discussions with Parks Canada on the issue of Commemorative Integrity and we were looking forward to participating in public consultations for the new management plan.

Hunter also thanked Brian Osborne, who is stepping down from the board, for his many years of service to Friends of the Rideau. Brian is professor emeritus of geography at Queens University, fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society and renowned authority on issues related to the management of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. We have been privileged to benefit from Brian's perspectives and counsel over the years and though he won't be a member of the Board, we will continue to rely on him for advice and guidance as we go forward.

The minutes of the 2016 AGM and the 2016 financial report were reviewed and approved.

Elections were held for directors, with Cheryl Gulseth, Josephine MacFadden and Dave Brett elected for a 2-year

term. They join existing directors Marcus Letourneau, Hunter McGill, Gillian Organ, Victor Suthren and Ken Watson who were elected for a 2-year term at the 2016 AGM.

Following the business part of the meeting, we enjoyed a fascinating Q&A with Fiona McKean, the co-owner of the Opinicon Resort. It is quite amazing what Fiona has accomplished in working to bring the grand old Opinicon back to its former glory. She has revitalized not only the resort itself but the local community of Chaffey's Lock. It is a shining example of what someone with a true appreciation and understanding of Rideau heritage can do.

Message from the Chair

Dear Friends,

What an interesting summer! We should have some sympathy for the team at Parks Canada responsible for water management on the Rideau Canal as they struggled to balance boater safety, water flows and flooding. I wonder how Col. John By would have coped with the situation?

Elsewhere you will read about our spring meeting and the fascinating presentation we were given by Fiona McKean, but I wanted to thank her for sharing her enthusiasm and commitment to heritage on the Rideau, and in particular for her revival of the Opinicon Resort.

On a sad note, I want to acknowledge how much we have lost with the passing of Dave Brett, long-time director of Friends of the Rideau. No one possessed more enthusiasm for canals in general and for the Rideau Canal in particular than Dave did. *Ave atque vale*. We miss him.

The combination of Canada 150 events all along the Rideau and free lockage for boaters seems to have provided considerable incentive for people to visit the Canal this year. At The Depot, our interpretation and visitor centre in Merrickville, we welcomed more than twice the average number of guests, assisted in part by a two-week longer season, from mid-June to Labour Day weekend. For those of us who are able to volunteer time to help run The Depot, the opportunity to share our knowledge and enthusiasm for the Rideau Canal is very fulfilling.

There was great interest from visitors in the Rideau Canal Passport this year and Friends hopes to consult with Parks Canada about the possibility of offering the passport again in 2018. The two objectives in offering the passport – encouraging visitors to travel to some of the lesser-known lock stations, and giving young visitors a personalized souvenir of the Canal – seem to have been met. Your feedback on the passport would be very welcome, sent to info@rideaufriends.com.

Though there have been some interesting consultations organized by the Rideau Heritage Route Tourism Association in the past several months on the economic impact and future potential of the Rideau Canal, we are still waiting for Parks Canada to launch the consultations leading up to a management plan for the Canal. Now that we don't have high water levels to distract us, let's talk Rideau Canal!

For those who are reading this newsletter and who are not members/supporters of Friends of the Rideau, don't hesitate, join now. Bring your interest in, and concern for, heritage preservation and presentation on the Rideau Canal to our organization, with your comments, suggestions and offer of volunteer support. We would enjoy very much hearing from you.

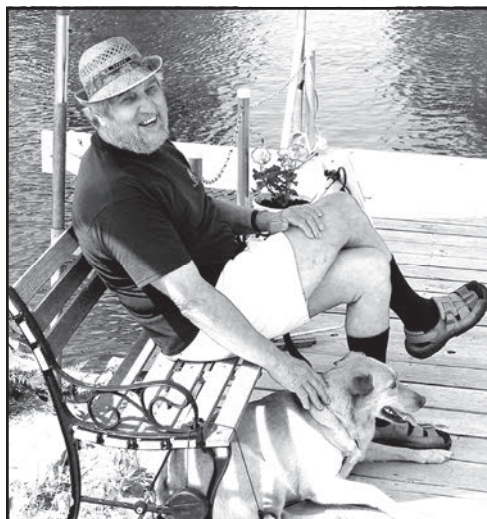
- Hunter McGill

Remembering Dave Brett

This summer we lost a dedicated Friend of the Rideau and long time board member, Dave Brett. Dave passed away on August 6, 2017 at the age of 85. Dave, a Brit, loved canals and "messaging about in boats" to the extent that he had his British narrow boat, the *Iron Duke*, brought to Canada. He later shared that love of boats and canals with many visitors as the owner/operator of the electric tour boat the *Harriet By*.

Dave joined the board of Friends of the Rideau in 1994. Dave was the driving force in arranging to convert the old Depot (c.1858) in Merrickville, owned by Parks Canada, into an interpretive centre and retail outlet for Friends of the Rideau. On behalf of Friends he got the agreement with Parks Canada for the use of this lovely old building and in 1995 it was opened to the public. The Depot, then as now, featured public washrooms built by Dave (initially one, he added a 2nd washroom in the mid-2000s).

Dave wanted to get people out onto the water to enjoy the wonders of the Rideau, but the *Iron Duke* wasn't suitable as a tour boat. For a couple of years Dave used the 31 foot trawler *Sheona* to take over 1,000 people a year out onto the water. That boat left in 2000 and Dave, looking for a new boat, came across an electric boat that resembled a Thames launch, a familiar sight from when



Dave lived in London. It was quiet, slow and genteel so Dave named it the *Harriet By* after Colonel By's youngest daughter. The official launch was in July 2000. It became a familiar sight in front of the Depot, extremely popular with visitors. We still get asked about it to this day. Dave operated it until new Transport Canada regulations made it impossible for him to continue profitable operation of the boat.

Dave and his wife Jeanne greeted thousands of visitors every year at the Depot, operating it with the use of summer students, much as

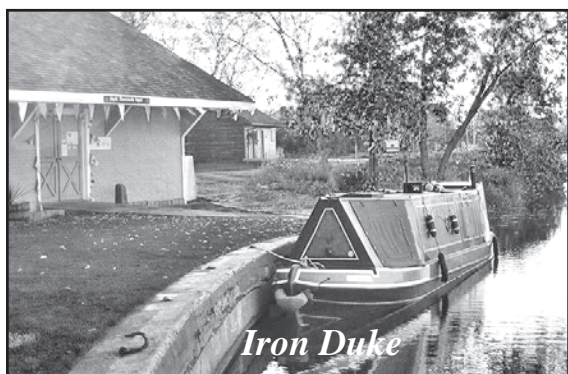
we still do today. He was an active participant in local activities such as Merrickville Canalfest in his guise of Pirate Dave.

He was also an advocate from day one for a Rideau Canal Passport, much as we had this year, not something restricted to anniversaries every 25 years, but something that would help people discover and learn about the Rideau Canal in a fun way.

Dave also sparked the idea for our "How A Lock Works" brochure back in 2001 since many land-based visitors didn't understand what was going on when they watched a lock in operation. We launched that brochure in co-operation with Parks Canada in 2002. Every time boats

were locked through at Merrickville, Dave would grab a handful of those brochures and hand them out to the crowd that gathered to watch a 19th century lock in operation.

Dave was perennially cheerful, optimistic and creative, we could use a dozen more like him on the Rideau Canal. He will be truly missed.



Management Plan

We don't have much new information about the new Management Plan, as Parks Canada has yet to come up with a consultation schedule. We anticipate however that detailed round table consultations will take place sometime this winter, with Friends of the Rideau participating, and that broader public consultations will be held during navigation season 2018. We have had a look at the draft management plan for the Lachine Canal (you'll find it on their website) and it's a very limited document, certainly not something we want to see for the Rideau Canal.

Friends of the Rideau will of course be working hard to get many issues that are important to us such as heritage interpretation, commemorative integrity and public engagement built into the new plan so that it can properly guide Parks Canada in the heritage management of the Rideau Canal National Historic Site. It's to be noted that the primary legislated purpose of the management plan is to ensure the commemorative integrity of the canal as a National Historic Site of Canada.

2017 Boating Stats

Canal traffic in 2017 was up 15.7% compared to 2016 with a total of 68,590 vessel passages recorded through the locks, compared to 59,301 vessel passages in 2016.

The numbers would have been much higher if the weather had co-operated. The Rideau opened a week late due to excess water and was partially shut down in late July/early August, again due to excess water. If not for that, and a generally wet July, it is likely that an increase in the order of 40% might have been seen. Most of the increase was local boaters taking advantage of the free lockage this year. Locals are fair weather boaters and when the weather was good, they came out in droves. August was up 30% compared to 2016 and September, with its fantastic weather, was up 65%!

Mooring, which is primarily done by non-resident boaters, was essentially the same as 2016, up by just 2.2%.

The origin of boaters tells a similar tale, 68.7% of the boats were from Ontario, 21.2% from Québec, 7.9% from the United States and 2.2% "Other". In absolute terms boaters from Ontario increased (47,114 vs 38,424) as did boaters from the U.S. (5,409 vs 4,823) while boaters from Québec decreased (14,561 vs 15,448) compared to 2016.

Parks Canada plans to return to the 2016 fee level in 2018 and it will be interesting to see how that affects boating traffic next year. It's to be kept in mind that boats are a major part of the heritage presentation of the Rideau Canal, a land-based visitor only gets to see a lock in operation when a boat goes through. For the 2017 numbers for some of the individual lockstations see:

www.rideau-info.com/canal/statistics.html

Summer Road Show

Friends is very fortunate each summer to be able to take part in several events which take place along the Rideau Canal. This roadshow enables us to get out and meet more people than is possible from our interpretation and visitor centre, The Depot, in Merrickville. This past summer Friends attended four events. Our first outing was at the Rideau Canal Paddlefest in Smiths Falls, on June 18, for a day marked by water-oriented activities, but cut short by severe storm warnings. When we saw that Parks Canada had deflated their inflated beaver mascot at 1 pm, we knew the weather warnings should be respected.

Our second appearance was at the Ottawa Lockstation for Col. By Day on August 7. A very pleasant day, lots of visitors, including Minister Yasir Naqvi, the MPP for Ottawa Centre. We shared our booth with Heritage Ottawa, a sensible link between two heritage organizations. The following weekend, August 12, we were at Westport for the Classic Boat Show, where we met many friends and had terrific conversations with people keen on learning more about the Rideau Canal. As so often happened this past summer, however, the rain arrived at 2 and by 2:30 pm, thoroughly soggy, we called it quits.

Finally, the following weekend, we travelled to Rideau Ferry, for the appropriately named Rideau Ferry Regatta. Pleasant weather for a change, in a very suitable park setting at the RVCA facility. Unfortunately the scheduled two-day event was cut short by a day when one of the speedboat racers died in an accident Saturday afternoon.

- Hunter McGill



Hunter chatting with visitors at the Rideau Ferry Regatta this summer.

photo by: Ken Watson

Royal Sappers and Miners – continued from pg.2 ...

Barrack Hill Cemetery (roughly bounded by Sparks Street to the north, Queen Street to the south, Elgin Street to the east and Metcalfe Street to the west).

All of the Sappers and Miners returned to Bytown in late 1831 and were discharged in late December of that year. Some 71 Sappers and Miners took their discharge in Canada, 9 NCOs, 61 privates and 1 bugler. Fourteen took their discharge but chose to return to England and 12 continued in service. Of those discharged in Canada, several (about 12 to 15) were appointed by Lt. Col. By to become the first Lockmasters at various Rideau Canal stations.

The work done by the Royal Sappers and Miners during the building of the Rideau Canal, and the many who settled nearby and/or served on the Rideau Canal after construction, have left us with a lasting legacy.

- Ken Watson

Le Boat

Most of you will know that the European firm, Le Boat, is coming to the Rideau Canal, their first operation in North America. A cross between a cruiser and houseboat, they are bringing 16 purpose built (in Poland) boats to Canada in 2018, with the eventual goal of having a fleet of 32 boats over the next five years. These boats will have a governed top speed of 10 kph so wake (wash) won't be an issue.

They are headquartered in Smiths Falls (in the old Lockmaster's House at 1 Jasper Ave., the former offices of Friends of the Rideau and the Rideau Waterway Land Trust) with their operational centre also in Smiths Falls. Lots of support has been given to them by Parks Canada plus a large amount of monetary support has been given to LeBoat by the Government of Ontario (\$2 million) to help ensure their success.

We can expect visitors from all over the world to be renting these boats. Le Boat is using their vast marketing network to promote boating the Rideau Canal. Le Boat is also taking a bit of a different approach than other boat rental firms, marketing suggested tours so that visitors can take in all the Rideau Canal has to offer.

It will be very interesting to see how they do in their first year of operation – there will likely be some teething pains as they learn the ins and outs of boating the Rideau Canal. Friends of the Rideau has offered to help them out in providing a rich heritage experience for their clients.

For more info about Le Boat see: www.leboat.ca

Infrastructure Program

Work continues on the repair, rehabilitation and replacement of many Rideau Canal structures. This year saw the completion of several jobs including the Kingston Mills swing and fixed bridges repairs and the Jones Falls concrete weir bridge reconstruction.

This winter will see several projects underway including:

- Black Rapids wharf rehabilitation
- Burritts Rapids swing bridge rehabilitation
- Lower Nicholsons wharf rehabilitation
- Edmonds Weir/Lock masonry rehabilitation
- Smiths Falls Combined Lock 29a gate replacement and concrete repairs – first phase
- Narrows Lock masonry repairs
- Poonamalie Lock 32 masonry repair

The planned replacement of the Jones Falls long wooden bridge, originally scheduled for this fall/winter has now been delayed until fall/winter 2018/19.

Other projects slated for fall/winter 2018/19 include concrete wall repairs in downtown Ottawa, the Hogs Back fixed bridge replacement, Burritts Rapids earthen dam (berm) rehabilitation, Jones Falls lock masonry rehabilitation, Kingston Mills Locks masonry rehabilitation and the Bobs Lake dam rehabilitation (Summer 2018) and then replacement. Also, our beloved Depot in Merrickville will undergo badly needed stabilization in fall/winter 2018/19.

While we continue to have concerns regarding problems with the cultural resource management of these projects, it is, in the end, nice to see this work being done. Part of our UNESCO World Heritage designation is that we are an operating heritage canal – and this work will help to ensure that it remains operating for years to come.



A Le Boat Cruiser

A bit of artistic liberty has been taken in this Le Boat ad for the Rideau, the boats are not this big (scaled to about 9 m / 30 ft wide in this rendering of a Le Boat cruiser entering a Rideau lock). Brownie points if you can identify the lock.

Update from Parks Canada

A Look Back on the 2017 Navigation Season

This year is truly a story of unique celebrations and unexpected challenges on the Rideau Canal. The unprecedented amount of rain certainly stands out the most when thinking back. But the announcement of Le Boat launching its first North American operations on the Rideau Canal really underscores the many successes and positive developments we've experienced over the past year when we all work together.

The offer of free lockage, which coincided with Canada's sesquicentennial, was a great incentive for people from near and far to come and explore the Rideau Canal. A total of 68,590 (non-unique) vessels passed through the locks this year; that's nearly a 16% increase over last year and represents a seven year high. The increase was most concentrated around the lockstations at Narrows, Newboro, Chaffey's and Davis as more residents took advantage of free lockage to rediscover our historic waterway and the communities that run along it.

Parks Canada participated in and supported a number of special events to assist these same communities in their Canada 150 plans. From Crashed Ice at Ottawa Locks in March, to the Rideau Ferry Regatta in August, and the Rideau Corridor Landscape Strategy Awards in October, there was no shortage of celebrations happening along the Canal. This year was also the 10th anniversary of the Rideau Canal's inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Parks Canada marked the occasion by issuing a commemorative passport to encourage visitors to explore the length of the Rideau Canal. The passport highlighted the cultural heritage of its lockstations and was developed in close partnership with the Friends of the Rideau.

You can expect Parks Canada's boater information (@RideauBoatInfo) account on Twitter to return next season, providing up to date lockstation wait times, mooring available, and nearby events. The return of the Blacksmith Shop and Sweeny House at Jones Falls was met with enthusiasm by visitors and residents alike, and will reopen in 2018. And we will continue to look for new and unique experiences to offer, with a focus on paddling and camping programs, to entice more people to visit the Rideau Canal.

The off-season is a busy time for the Parks Canada team. Significant maintenance and infrastructure projects are underway as we continue to deliver on the Government of Canada's historic investment in the Rideau Canal. Replacement of lock gates, heritage masonry repairs, dam and swing bridge rehabilitations will occupy our team right up until the next navigation season. Meanwhile, water management monitoring and dam adjustments continue throughout the fall and winter as we prepare ourselves for freshet in the spring.

Now is also the time for us to re-energize our efforts to review and update the Rideau Canal Management Plan. A lot of work has been happening behind the scenes and Parks Canada is now aiming to present a draft plan for public consultation next year. As we develop that plan, we will be engaging Indigenous peoples, community leaders and key stakeholders, like the Friends of the Rideau, along the way. This will help us to deliver a plan that is informed and reflective of our shared vision for the future of the Rideau Canal.

John Festarini
Associate Director, Ontario Waterways
Parks Canada Agency