



Lanark Rocks

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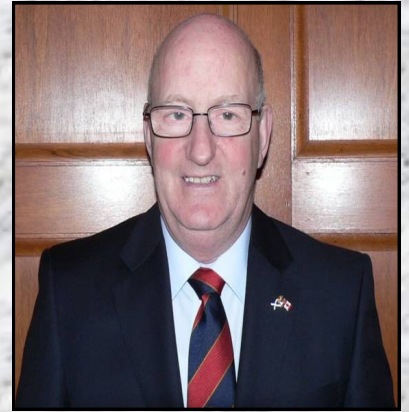
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DRESSED AND READY TO GO!

President: Alistair Mackintosh

Presidential Musings



Hi

I'm happy to give this edition of Lanark Rocks over to Wilson Heatlie who has provided us with a wonderful account of his recent RCCC Tour to Canada.

Wilson was part of the 'Western Canadian' group.

I sincerely hope you enjoy Wilson's report and I thank him for taking the time to produce this report.

Our annual dinner and presentation of prizes is taking place at New Lanark Hotel on Friday 22 March. I have over 30 names to date so if you have yet to decide to come then can I encourage you to attend and to give me your name promptly? Cost is £26 per person.

Our last event is our annual friendly match with Boswall CC which is to take place at Murrayfield on Monday 25th March at 6 pm. If you wish to attend then please give your name to Anne Hood soon.

Alistair

President—Lanark CC





RCCC 'WEST' CANADIAN TOUR 2013

Somewhere crossing the Prairies I woke on the coach to overhear Harry, our Canadian courier, and Laverne, our driver. "These guys are really hurting", said one. "Yes, and it's not like they're all in their 30s or 40s. This schedule is really hard on them", replied the other.

These Canadians are very observant!

The schedule in question had been drawn up by the Canadian organising team, and clearly they had planned it meticulously and timed it to the minute! And it all went like clockwork, no hold-ups for traffic, mechanical problems or weather, despite a blizzard and wind chill temperature of -41 one day (exposed skin will freeze in 10 minutes in that).

Playing 28 games in 22 days is, as the sweeping calluses on my hand can testify, quite gruelling. And that isn't counting the 1 game in 5 "off" rota, when the non-playing team was commissioned to take photographs of the action, log the scores, or take orders for ibuprofen, muscle gel, knee strapping and other medication at any nearby pharmacy. Nor does it include the 2000km across the Prairies, three internal flights, three ferries and "local" bus travel around British Columbia and southern Ontario.

It all started very well, arriving in Vancouver at midnight, UK time, and whisked off at 3.00 a.m. for a wonderful welcome evening at the magnificent home of Bruce Beveridge, in mega-affluent West Vancouver. Back to bed for 6.00 a.m. But hey, we could cope at that stage!

Then 4 days of glorious frosty sunshine to whiz around the metropolis: a stunning welcome banquet in North Shore, when we were presented with a rare and much prized "talking stick" by an elder from the Tsleil-Waututh First Nation; a guard of honour (complete with Mountie) and an inside tour of the superb Winter Olympic venue at Hillcrest; an impressive array of malts over lunch at Royal City; mouth-watering barbecued bison steaks at Tunneltown; a sumptuous but sadly rushed lunch of traditionally addressed haggis, steak, salmon and other delights at Hoburn.



Wilson never heard the stick say anything but the general idea is that whoever holds the stick has control of the meeting. Perhaps this is something we need for Lanark CC committee meetings?



Our hotel for the 4 nights tantalisingly offered a hot tub but there was never a moment to use it! (Sigh.)

Two glorious ferry trips took us to the “Sunshine Coast” and Powell River, where the entire town seemed to have turned out for our welcome dinner and the first ever visit of a Strathcona tour group. Unfortunately, next morning sunshine had been replaced by leaden skies and snowy drizzle, so no views on that day’s ferry to Vancouver Island, but an invitation to a tour of the bridge, a shop to buy postcards and a brief break between curling games and bus trips.



Ferry to
Sunshine
Coast.



Finally in BC, a night at the Strathcona Hotel in Victoria, where a biography in the lobby informed us that Donald Alexander Smith, later Lord Strathcona (who donated the impressive trophy we were out to reclaim) had originated in “Forres, England”. They have been put right about that. Lord Strathcona (he made up the name) was a sort of Canadian counterpart of Andrew Carnegie: among other things, he ceremonially hammered in the last spike on the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Onward to Alberta, armed with a cushion of points from some very successful curling. Other Canadians told us that in the Prairies they don’t have anything else to do in winter except curling, and certainly they gave us some stiffer opposition. The Director of Tourism in Calgary presented us with white stetsons, with the request that we wear them in Edmonton. Realising that the cities’ relationship was a bit like Glasgow – Edinburgh, we decided not to be provocative.



Outside Edmonton, at Sherwood Park in Strathcona County (average income £72,000; Scotland £33,000) we were presented with named team jackets. All so attired, the welcoming ceremony on the ice here was very impressive, with the first “rock” being delivered to the button by the Mayor, Linda Osinchuk - this was the first place where those of Scottish heritage seemed to be outnumbered, here by Ukranians. My rink faced Randy Ferby, introduced as “8 times Canadian Champion, 6 times North American Champion, 4 times World Champion”. We held him to 4 ends each, but he had 4 x 2s, to our 4 x 1s. Still, an honourable defeat, and we even stole an end.



Amidst rather a blur of hotels, ice rinks and freeways, the Don Turner curling museum in Weyburn was unforgettable, with Lanark, Upperward and Lanarkshire Province badges on show amongst the thousands of others. Also memorable, a Burns' Supper in Brandon, making contact with hitherto unknown relatives in Regina and a fabulous finale to the Prairies at the Granite Club, in central Winnipeg. Granite had never been involved with the Strathcona Cup before, but it has a club trophy presented by Lord Strathcona himself, plus the Air Canada Silver Broom trophy, and a painting of Ailsa Craig on the stairs up to two full-size snooker tables. The dining room has the air of a grand Edwardian gentleman's club.

Next morning, time to squeeze in a final game at Deer Lodge before a dash to the airport, a flight to Thunder Bay, on Lake Superior, and a game there before dinner and an overnight stay. The weather was lousy and the landscape monochrome, but the welcome was as warm as anywhere and what had looked a step too far on the crowded schedule proved a very enjoyable stopover. Clearly a "working" town, in contrast to those rich from oil, pot-ash and farming we had seen previously.



Don Turner Curling Museum at Weyburn—note the Lanarkshire curling pins that are part of the collection!



Finally, the vast sprawl of “Tronno”, with the unprecedented luxury of two bits of sight-seeing: a whistle-stop trip to a foggy Niagara and a warplane heritage museum at Hamilton. Plus the final two games, at up-market St George’s and the almost overwhelming Burlington Country Club, which had recently spent \$12 million (that’s right) rebuilding their clubhouse. It was there that we had our farewell banquet, when the Strathcona Cup was formally “presented” in absentia to the Scots (it lives in the vaults of Hamilton & Inches in Edinburgh).

At every stage we were treated like royalty, and we collected an astonishing cache of gift souvenirs. We were fed like kings and rarely had to put our hands in our pockets even for drinks. A fiddle orchestra, Highland dancers, First Nation performers, a school choir, some very slick improv comedians and even Polynesian dancers entertained us. The welcome and enthusiasm from everyone we met was astonishing. The organisation and planning on our behalf was beyond impressive. We were hugely indebted to a great number of people.

And behind it all was the thrill and privilege of representing Scotland in the oldest international curling competition in existence - and winning!

Was it worth doing it? Oh yes. But just don’t ask me if I had a nice holiday!

Wilson Heatlie.



Thank you Wilson.

We're delighted that you had such a memorable experience.



Scrapbook



A cleared walkway in Regina.

Oh look—there is a bend and hill!



A guard of honour in Vancouver.





Curling mural
at Thunder Bay

All smiles
at end of
last
match—the
score
is also
shown.

Well done
Scotland!



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I NEED SOME NEWS AND STORIES!!!!

Anne Hood - 4 Murray Road LAW ML8 5HR

