

Christmas Gala

Traditional Christmas Dinner at the Golden Circle

Tuesday, December 17th

Cocktails: 5:30 pm Dinner: 6 pm Cash bar

Tickets \$35.00 available at the Golden Circle



PRESENTING: 100 YEARS OF FASSION 1913-2013

YOU WILL BE TREATED TO:

A fashion show with commentary
And the music of the Wildrose Harmonizers.

PHOTO SHOOT:

Don historical accessories (provided) and have your photo taken against a historical backdrop. Receive a free passport size print.

New:

Red Deer History by Michael Dawe incorporates new-to-the-public archival photos. Michael will be present to sign copies. Special CAHS member price \$35, this evening only



1910s



1920s



1930s



1940s



1950s

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Visit our website

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Who has been behind the Celebration of Red Deer's Centennial?



Everyone who reads Aspen Country is aware that 2013 is the Centennial of the City of Red Deer. However unless you have been hanging around the Red Deer Centennial Office in the historic Scott Block on Little Gaetz Avenue you may not be aware that the Central Alberta Historical Society has been the lead organization in organizing the Centennial celebration. When you go

to the Red Deer Centennial Website (<http://www.reddeer2013.ca/contact/>) you will see that Sheila Bannerman is listed as the Chair of the Centennial Steering Committee. What it doesn't say is that since 2010 when the CAHS agreed to be the lead organization in the celebration of Red Deer's Centennial the bulk of this responsibility has fallen on Sheila. For at least the past 18 months this has been almost a full time job for Sheila. The focus from the start was to involve the people of Red Deer in the celebrations. About 150 people have volunteered to help out in various capacities with the Centennial Celebrations. However in addition to Sheila one other person who deserves special recognition is Leslee Burton who chairs the Events Committee. She and Sheila have been the 'on the ground' team for celebratory events. One unifying theme at all events has been the serving of birthday cake contributed by Central Alberta Co-op. To date over 15,000 pieces of cake have been served. The final event in Celebrating Red Deer's Centennial will be **Fire & Ice** in the evening of December 12 at City Hall Park. Come out and bring your friends for a great evening.

Red Deer 2013 Centennial

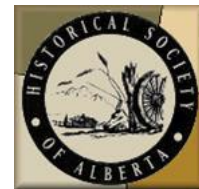
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CAHS Dinner and AGM September 18, 2013: Report

Our AGM and dinner was themed around a fictional dinner at a hotel circa 1913. For fun, we called it "A Dinner at the Arlington Hotel". The menu was worked out based on actual hotel menus from the Red Deer archives, with a bit of research into what was new and trendy at the time.

Our tables were decorated in the lavish style of pre-war hotels, with white (linen) cloths, white napkins, rose bowls filled with flowers, tall theatrical vases, candles, nutmeats and celery sticks (celery was all the rage!) and properly organized place settings of multiple items of silverware. The room itself was decorated with garlands and swags, and if it had really been 1913, would also have held a large print of the King.

His Honour Mayor Morris Flewwelling and Mrs. Hazel Flewwelling were head table guests along with society President Bill Mackay, his wife Robin Minion and special guest Paul Boulton. The blessing was said by character actor Paul Boulton, in the person of the Reverend Leonard Gaetz. Dinner was buffet style, which would not have been typical of a formal event, but was expedient for this occasion. During the serving time, song melodies popular during 1913 were played for the enjoyment of those waiting in line. Songs such as 'Gee but I like music with my meals', 'Peg o' my Heart', 'Let me call you Sweetheart', 'Come Josephine in my Flying Machine' are examples of popular 1913 songs.

The dinner menu, had it been a plated meal, began with cream of tomato soup, followed by Waldorf salad (in 1913, this was a very new and very stylish salad), beetroot salad and a jellied fruit salad to cleanse the palate for the entrée courses. In 1913, gelatin salads were brand new on the scene and again, very popular. Our entrée was roast Alberta beef only, but in reality there would also have been a fish course. The beef was accompanied by horseradish, mashed turnip, carrots and scalloped potatoes. Scalloped potatoes were also new on the restaurant scene in 1913, and were considered preferable to mashed potatoes, which had an everyday association.

Dessert was Saskatoon pie.

It was not yet common in 1913 for people to eat at restaurants except for special occasions when a set course dinner was served and families were expected. Other than this, hotel dining rooms were frequented only by men, who were most often travelling on business, or perhaps renting rooms for a period of work. Ladies who stayed in hotels were expected to either eat in the 'Ladies Parlour', where available, or in their rooms. Ladies would be served a meal considered more suitable to the delicate digestive system associated with the feminine character.

After dinner, guests were treated to commentary by our Centennial Ghosts, actors hired by the Centennial Committee to portray each of Red Deer's beloved bronze 'Ghost' sculptures. The actors were in character for our evening, giving a bit of their history while acting their part. This was a lighthearted tribute to Red Deer's history and was thoroughly enjoyed by all.



Railway worker, Rev. Gaetz, Hazel Braithwaite, Julietta Sorensen. Firemen, Francis the Pig.

Continued on page 5 See Dinner and AGM

President's Message

By: Bill Mackay

Winter is here and Christmas is fast approaching. I want to take a little time looking back but also to look forward as well. Looking back the highlight of the last three months for me was the dedication of the City Centennial Arches on October 19. This has been a 14 year project starting in 1999 with a grant application by two members of the CAHS Board at the time; Bob Lampard and Morris Flewwelling. It was appropriate that the dedication of the Arches and official handing over to the city was the last official act of His Worship, Mayor Flewwelling.

The Arches consist of nine pillars with 3 historic interpretive plaques on each pillar. Each pillar focuses on a different theme related to the impact of the railway on Red Deer. The pillar topics are: Travel before the railroad arrived; The contributions of the early Metis & mixed blood families; Getting the railway started; Crossing the river; The role of the railroad in settling the area – homesteading, etc.; Horticulture and the CPR; Early views of Red Deer as an industrial hub – ‘The Next Chicago’; Role of the railroad during the wars – Boer War, WWI & WWII, British RAF coming to Penhold during WWII, War brides, etc. and; Moving out of town – What happened when the railroad left town – Taylor Drive, etc. We intend to place a somewhat extended version of the content of all the plaques on line. Some of the topics might also make interesting reading in future issues of *Aspen Country*.



President Bill McKay presides at the official opening of the Arches

Photo by Jeff Stokoe

A reminder to renew your membership. In the past most of our members have renewed at the monthly programs but since we aren't having as many of those this year I urge you to renew using the attached membership form. When in doubt renew. We will not double bill anyone.

I would also like to remind everyone of the final event of Red Deer's Centennial Celebration; *Fire & Ice* which will take place in City Hall Park on December 12. There will be lots to see and do including pyrotechnics, ice sculpture, and of course birthday cake.

Finally a little 'heads up' about our 2014 bus tour. Don Hepburn and I have done some initial planning and have tentatively decided that we will do a six day tour following the trail of the Caribou Gold Rush, starting at Yale near Chilliwack and ending in Barkerville. Tentative dates are June 9 through 14, 2014. We will go out through the Roger's Pass and the Coquihalla Highway to Chilliwack then trace the path of the Goldrush from Yale to Barkerville, coming back to Red Deer through Jasper.

Dinner and AGM

The evening concluded with the singing of 'God Save the Queen', which of course in 1913 would have been 'God Save the King'.

Suddenly, as people were still standing after singing the anthem, our last 'Ghost' Francis the Pig 'escaped' from the cloakroom and was chased through the room by the other ghosts, while the MC read Francis' history.

With this surprise ending, the evening concluded and our guests departed.

Sheila Bannerman

The “Christmas Tree” 1930s



For children there isn't another day, or another season, or event in all the years that can compare with Christmas. But in regard to the days and weeks leading up to that happy time, I can't believe today's children will ever know quite as much as excitement, or quite as much anticipation, or even quite as much fun and gaiety as was enjoyed by the pupils of one-room school twenty-five years or more ago.

It would be about the first of December that the teacher would announce plans for the annual Christmas concert, and as the month sped by there was progressively less and less school work done as more and more time was devoted to practicing (it was never called rehearsing) for the “Christmas Tree.”

For all the work of practicing, there was an increase of freedom and relaxation of discipline that made, even the avowed school-haters admit that school was fun, for a change. You could even talk out loud or move about as you wished, provided that you appeared busy with the enterprise at hand.

It wasn't all practicing, of course; there was costumes to be made and lettered cards spelling out WELCOME or MERRY CHRISTMAS had to be cut out and coloured. There was corn to be popped and strung on yards of string to make garlands for the tree. The lower grades were put to work making red and green paper chains to decorate the room, and by the time they were all put together and hung up, the room sometimes looked a little over-decorated.

So well did the teacher retain her composure through it all her pupils took it for granted that she was enjoying it every bit as much as they were. In retrospect, it seems more likely that she may have felt embroiled in a nightmare from which there would be no awakening, until about December 23.

Each child would be given a part in the program. There were recitations, monologues, dialogues and three-act plays. There were solos, duets, quartets and mixed choruses. There might be dances and drills and acrobatics. There was humour and reverence; and pervading over all was the spruce aroma of the big, busy beautiful Tree.

With the final song by the school, a jingling of bells would be heard outside, then Santa himself showed up. He would bounce, with his Merry Christmas, boys and girls! Ho! Ho! Ho!

When the presents had all been passed out and every last little one had received a bag of treats, a box of apples, or a box of Christmas oranges would be passed among the crowd as Santa made his way back to the door amidst jokes and wisecracks from the “big boys” at the back of the room.

Then, for the next hour, the old folks visited, the young ones laughed and milled about, and the little ones ran hither and thither, and the tiny ones slept through it all atop the desks along the wall.

Finally, with the room ankle-deep in coloured paper, peanut shells and orange peel, parents began rounding up their children, and hunting for lost mittens and scarves and caps to dress them for the long ride home in cutter or sleigh.

I never heard of a school “Christmas Tree” that wasn't a complete success.

Fred Shutz

Fred Schutz wrote 2,200 columns for the Rimby Record. 220 of Fred's stories were made into a book “WEST OF THE BLINDMAN” by the Central Alberta Historical Society. *The Christmas Tree* on page 64 is one of Fred's stories. The book can be purchased from any board member of CAHS. Check out other CAHS publications, they make great Christmas gifts.

An 18 year old Teacher at Lac La Biche plans a “Christmas Tree”

I’ve just gone back 60 years. It’s now November 1953 and I am a young, full of enthusiasm in my second year as a teacher who has just left an impromptu meeting after school (no staff meetings during class time in those days!) with the other three staff members. The topic: Christmas Concert! Our Concert will be the last day before dismissal for the week. “I will get my grade two-three class to do the Nativity and a drill.” Ambitious yeah! But more frightening was the stark reality - there is no budget for costuming or set! We must borrow or make them.

For the next few weeks I planned, I met with parents and I begged. I needed large boxes for the town of Bethlehem. The manager of the Bay saved refrigerator and stove boxes for us. We collected dimes and pennies to buy crepe paper and the moms volunteered to help with costumes. Most were homemakers. I, personally, wrote notes to the parents individually (no copiers) asking for old sheets, or striped towels for boy’s robes and requesting that they each try to costume their own child for the Nativity. We constructed the angel’s costumes out of crepe paper and halos with a bit of tinsel. Crepe paper was wonderful, it could be shaped and it was yards long. It could easily form a loose gown when draped over the shoulders with a neck hole cut out—simple yes, but not very strong! A tie, torn from a flour sack served as a belt. The angels looked great and were ohh so careful! I knew we could do it!

The “Mounties’ Musical Ride” was more complicated. We needed red tunics, and hats. The pillbox hat of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police was the easiest to make so we did them out of cardboard and colored construction paper -gluing them with a home cooked paste of flour and water. Messy but it worked. We tied them on with cheap ribbon.

The tunics were another story! The crepe paper tore when the ‘Mounties’ tried to ‘ride’ their horses. We decided to buy red dye and do old sheets and cotton flour sacks. It worked! We sewed them and topped them off with a white belt and shoulder strap made of white butcher paper, folded over several times for strength and then stapled together and pinned. Our ‘Mounties’ looked great! They all wore dark pants and we stapled a yellow stripe down each leg!

The horses posed their own set of problems! We got some boxes from the Mercantile, drew heads on small ones, and painted them black with a white diamond on the forehead. (One of the kids absolutely insisted that it wasn’t a Mountie horse if it didn’t have a white star!) We tacked on ears, for a 3-dimensional effect, and attached reins cut from an old black jacket. We attached the heads to a peeled piece of willow. They were ready to ride!!

But, the effect was disappointing. The walking legs just seemed so out of place! The solution- a fence! We needed a fence for across the front of the stage to partially hide the footwork of the marching feet. The hardware had some old crates, so we salvaged the lath and thumb tacked them under a continuous piece of butcher paper. We now had a fence that could be rolled when not in use but could be attached to two chairs on either side of the stage when we needed it. It worked! The effect was perfect!

Eileen Bantjes



Dad Missed Santa

In 1948, I was 4½ years old, the anticipation for the annual Christmas concert at Fensala Hall in Markerville had been building for weeks. Finally the evening arrived and my parents, my brother George and I were on our way. When we walked into the hall, the room was so big, the Christmas tree was huge, right up to the ceiling and there was wrapped parcels under it. George was in grade 4, so he went off to get ready for the program. I could hardly wait for Santa's arrival. After the program, singing carols, the crowd all sang "Here Come's Santa Claus". There he was! Blasting through the door "Ho Ho Ho" in a cloud of cold air. My mother was by the tree but I couldn't find my father. Each child got a gift and a paper bag with candy and an orange from Santa. I remember sitting on my dad's knee crying because he missed seeing Santa Claus.

I later learned Dad didn't miss Santa - he was Santa! A volunteer job he did for many years.

Cheryl Williamson

Christmas in the Desert

In 1961, I was a newly minted Lieutenant in the Canadian Army and I was posted to the United Nations Emergency Force in Egypt. I was based at Camp Rafah where the engineering unit I was with was providing water, power and construction services for the UN force which had military units from many other countries. Our unit included a small detachment of soldiers that was providing water supply to other UN troops at Sharm el Sheikh on the southern tip of the Sinai on the Red Sea. It is a military tradition that an officer serve Christmas dinner to the soldiers and since there was no Canadian officer at Sharm, I was dispatched on a small plane loaded with turkey, fruit and all the trimmings for Christmas dinner.

There were about a dozen Canadians at the outpost and the cook made a magnificent job of preparing dinner. I was pleased to act as the head waiter and enjoyed the company of the fellow soldiers. Before dinner we sang a few Christmas songs and toasted Canada with a Black Label beer that had been provided from home by Carlings. After dinner I was invited to go on a jeep ride around the area. There had been a major battle here in 1956 and the evidence was everywhere with abandoned tanks, vehicles, minefields and few partially exposed grave sites. War is a terrible thing and I was thankful that we were serving in a peace keeping role and all was quite that Christmas day.

I remember this Christmas day with fondness. It was the first time I had been away from a traditional Christmas on the farm near Markerville and my thoughts were often about family and friends at home.

Donald Smith

Christmas at the Equator

Ed and I were born and raised around the Spruce View area. Ed worked for Mobil Oil and in 1977 we were transferred to Indonesia. We lived in the city of Medan (about the size of Red Deer with 2 million people) on the island of Sumatra. We had two children at the time Gaylene (12) and Gregory (6). We lived there for 11½ years. We really liked it there and felt safe, summer all year long.

Our first Christmas in Indonesia was hot and sunny and very humid. No snow to shovel or frost to scrape off of car windows. The average temperature being 86 degrees with 96% humidity. There were decorations to buy from the Chinese owned stores. No cards to buy but when we went to Singapore we could get them there as they had a large population of expats. We had an artificial tree that we brought in our shipment from Canada with all the decorations, but we still bought more. The company that we were there with brought in turkeys and hams, all other vegetables we could get there. We had a cook so she would do all the cooking for us. Gifts were mainly bought when in Singapore. We celebrated Christmas as we had done back home. The strangest thing was being able to shop on Christmas Day.

Marlene Potter

Ethnic Traditions Continue through Generations

As the holiday season nears, my mind, like Ebenezer Scrooge's, turns to thoughts of "Christmas Past". My maternal grandparents came from Norway in the 1870s so I can only imagine what Christmas was like in the Norwegian mountains.

By the time the family had immigrated to Western Canada they had six children, my uncle Peter and my mom were born at the homestead in the Markerville area. By then many of the Norwegian traditions had been replaced by Canadian ones.

My mom told about Christmas Eve always being a special time for her family. All the ethnic food and baking was prepared ahead of time, the home was spic and span and the only work done that day was to look after the farm animals. Roast Goose was served, traditional Nordic treats of lefse, pickled herring, home made cheese, fatiman plus Danish style roulepulsa and rice pudding with almonds.

As a child in the 40s and 50s, I remember most of those dishes being on my mothers table Christmas Eve, however the goose was replaced by a turkey. The gathering aunts, uncles and cousins would circle the table, join hands and say the Norwegian table grace.

By the time my home became the site of the December 24 family gathering, my aunt had cross stitched a wall hanger for me with the blessing in Norwegian. Those who didn't know the words could peek and recite them too. Much of the same dishes are served in my home but cries of "what is that smelly stuff" when the lutefish is being served. I always tell them, "try it with the cream sauce and melted butter!" um m m! My family has always prided itself on the work of our hands, the gifts exchange Christmas Eve after our feast were hand-crafted socks and mittens, a linen hankie with tatted edging or perhaps embroidered flour sack tea towels and of course my mothers wonderful hand dipped chocolates. I practiced the Norwegian art of rosemaling and my brother took up wood carving, these crafts often became our gifts to our families. I now have two blue eyed blonde great grandchildren to teach the joy of family traditions to.

There never was very much money to spend on Christmas and I guess by todays standards we were "underprivileged." Looking back now, I know we were very privileged to be part of such a family. In fact we were very rich indeed.

Mary Vanson





Christmas in Rural Red Deer in the 1920s

On Christmas morning my dad made us all get out of bed by 6 a.m. to listen to King George V's annual Christmas speech on the radio. Other than that, the crystal set was only turned on to hear the news. After the speech we went back to bed until we were called for breakfast.

When we, my sister and four brothers, got to the kitchen, one of our own stockings was hung on nails by the door where our coats usually hang. In the socks was a gift, my sister and I often got a doll and I don't remember what my brothers got but always something we needed. One year my brother Jim got a new pair of shoes, he was so thrilled with them that he took them to bed with him. New skates appeared on somebodies nail regularly, then old skates were passed down until everyone had skates. My dad always kept a stretch of river ice clear and flooded for us to skate all winter.

My dad had to get the cows milked and all the animals fed, and mom got us ready to go to grandma and grandpa Jones for Christmas dinner. We liked that a lot, there would be a gift for each of us, something grandma made – socks - mittens - a sweater and grandma always had lots of sweets—pies, cookies, cakes. That made the trip even more exciting. We got on our best clothes, most of which came from a box of clothes grandma Dawson brought us earlier that winter. In the winter we could cross the river on the ice, shortening our trip considerably. We didn't get to see grandpa and grandma Jones very often as they lived in the Waskasoo district, we lived in Shady Nook district. When the river ice was out we had to drive twelve miles to Red Deer and back south, an hours drive. Roads and cars weren't what they are now.

Aunt Lottie and Uncle Harry with their two children and Uncle Oscar were always there. Christmas dinner was all home grown on their farm. Turkey with stuffing and gravy. Home made buns. Vegetables, canned or from the root cellar. And pie! After dinner the kids were sent outside to play and the men took a cup of tea to the living room and talked farmer talk; politics, the weather, crops, their livestock and the price of wheat. The women cleared the table, washed the dishes and talked; about the year past and plans for the year ahead, recipes and their kids. In our family the women talked politics too.

As farmers, we had to go home early because cows had to be milked and animals fed. Again.

Eva Morris Nee Braithwaite

Christmas on The Battlefield

I went to Sylvan Lake a few weeks ago to talk to 89 year old Norman Salvie, a WWII Vet, to ask him about being a soldier at Christmas. Norman grew up in Tilbury, Ontario, when he was 15 he left home and got a job in Windsor, where they were taking up the street car tracks to make the steel available for the war effort. His job was to cut the rails into two foot lengths. When he was nearly 17 he join the army.

Norman was sent to England for training, then he was assigned to driver training, everything from motorcycles to Bren gun carriers. In 1942 he was sent to Europe; France Belgium and Holland. He told stories of battles, stories of horror, stories of wounded and killed comrades, of walking past dead civilians. Once when he was walking down a road at night and heard a tank coming, he ducked into a ditch to try sneak behind it. The Germans must have heard him as they started shooting his way. He fell to the ground unconscious, the Germans walked along the ditch, not finding him, they assumed he was dead. When the tank passed, he got up and ran.

Continued on page 11 See Battlefield

Christmas on the Battlefield

While in Holland a farmer asked them to shot his horse that had been wounded in the battle around them, he could not kill it himself, they shot the horse, all the neighbours came out to the field and cut off pieces. They were starving, many of their family and friends had already starved to death.

Norman was wounded in Holland in 1944, treated in England, then put on a boat to Canada where he had five operations and was in hospital for months.

I asked him a couple of times about Christmas on the battle field, but the real war stories continued. Finally he said, "I don't remember anything about Christmas, we were too busy, I guess" "Christmas just came and went, it was what you had to do." I was not expecting that, I had seen the movies, they always stopped shooting for a few minutes, had special rations or the General, at great risk for his own life, came and patted them on the back. It was more poignant than all of the movie scenes. He went on to say that when he was in England, people came and took soldiers to their homes for Christmas dinner. "I was treated like one of the family."

That was a man and a conversation I will never forget.

Shirley Dye

The first Christmas that I Remember

My parents were farmers in South Western Saskatchewan. Our district was known as The Bench. We were 12 miles from Ravenscrag, a village with a grocery store, a post office, and a bar. I was born in Eastend. The roads were ruts in the prairie. After the first snowfall there was no travel until spring.

Where we lived there was no telephone and no power, our neighbours lived so far away they could not see smoke signals. Our home was the original small homestead house. Our heat was coal in the kitchen stove or a small heater in the living room and for light we had 2 Kerosene lamps. After the first snowfall we almost never went anywhere. Our uncle, who lived 1¾ miles away, would go to Ravenscrag every Friday to get the mail and dad would go there to get our mail. When the Eaton's catalogued arrive my parents would prepare an order for our Christmas presents. I could see my mother and dad, sitting at the table, carefully picking out each gift with love in their hearts for their youngsters.

I was fast approaching 5 years old and my parents were very careful not to mention the word "Christmas" when we were around. Dad no doubt traveled to the bush for a tree and I know one of the turkeys disappeared about the 23rd of December. We went to bed on the night of the 24th, oblivious to what was going to transpire. We woke up in the morning and to our surprise there was a fully decorated tree with real candles burning and many gifts beautifully wrapped. We were bustling with joy.

My mother grew a large garden and canned the vegetables, she canned fruit purchased from the store. Breakfast on Christmas day was special too, with bacon, eggs and toast. We could not open the gifts until after the dishes done. Each gift handed out seemed like a surprise to mom and dad. They were trying to convince us that the gifts were delivered from Santa Clause. Later that day, we would enjoy a great Christmas dinner. We would have mashed potatoes and gravy, turnips, peas, carrots, turkey with dressing and plum pudding made with supplies my mother bought from town, raisins, brown sugar and whatever else was required to make the plum pudding with the smooth sauce that goes along with it. We did indeed have a happy and merry Christmas. After our dinner we got to stay up way past our bedtime, playing with the new toys. I still had these toys when I left home .

Larry Heth

OUR PRECIOUS HERITAGE

The Joy of Christmas

