



# Heritage News

CENTRAL OKANAGAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

Fall 2021

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Top right: Renwick House c 1915 courtesy of Allan Lietz. Lower left photo c 1960's S.O.S. and lower right J. Henry August 2021.

## When is a Heritage House no longer a Heritage House?

The 900 block of Lawrence Avenue, in Kelowna's north central neighborhood, is graced with two houses on the City of Kelowna's Heritage Register. 963 Lawrence Avenue, which served as the Old United Church Manse, and 999-1001 Lawrence Avenue, the James Knowles House.

For a period of time, 987 Lawrence known as the Renwick House, was also on the City's register but was removed due to significant changes to the exterior that impacted the Character Defining Elements. These are the features that are listed in the Statement of Significance .

The original house was built in 1912 by Ernest Leslie Clement.

Built in the Queen Anne style, the original exterior walls were covered with a decorative, concrete block that resembled the more expensive cut sandstone. The original two-colour (polychromic) concrete was one of the Character Defining Elements.

Along with its architectural interest, the house was associated with the Renwicks, with members of the family living in the house for close to seventy years. Firstly, by Thomas, a fruit grower, and his wife Mary, and subsequently by daughter, Mildred Renwick, who taught in four different elementary schools in downtown Kelowna, until she retired.

The Renwick House underwent a major expansion starting in 2002 when the owners at the time, Bela and Margaret Jenei, applied to the city of Kelowna to add additional height to the house. The house was also more than doubled in size with extensions to the east and west as well as off the back elevation. The project stalled in the middle of the work when the couple went their separate ways.

The house was next purchased by Brenda and Vern Huculak who bought the house in its unfinished state. While the Huculak's retained some of the original elements, others were lost.

The Renwick House was purchased in 2008 by Allan Lietz. "Many things were changing in my life at that time," says Allan. "I was needing a new place to live. My lease on the building where the Trophy Den was located was expiring, and my mother lived in the Lawrence Avenue neighborhood. The old Renwick House was a perfect fit for all my needs."

Allan purchased the house and moved his business to the Lawrence Avenue location. To his surprise, during a family reunion later that same year, Allan discovered that Earnest Clement was a shirt-tail relative (someone who is either a relative by marriage, distantly related or a family friend with honorary status as a relative). Allan's maternal Aunt, Iris, was married to Ernest Clement's eldest son, Leslie Clement.

Allan has deep roots in Kelowna, and has lived here his entire life. His mother, Doreen (Williams) Lietz, was also born in Kelowna. "The barn that had to come down to build the current COSTCO was on her family property," Allan shared. Allan's Grandpa, Jake Lietz, also owned 770 Bernard Avenue, the F.D.E. Dehart House, another heritage house.



A photo of Ernest Clement, his wife Maggie and their two eldest children Leslie and Clifford. Photo credit—Bob Hayes family fonds

## The Renwick House - now the Trophy Den

While the Renwick House is no longer on the City of Kelowna Heritage Register, many people stop to take photos and read about the history of the house.

The Trophy Den has been a long-time supporter of the Central Okanagan Heritage Society through the provision of the Annual Heritage Awards and the commemorative bricks that adorn the Memorial Garden at Benvoulin Heritage Park.



Above—photo of Mildred Renwick, standing in front of the Renwick House c-1950's. courtesy Allan Lietz. Right, photo of the door to the Trophy Den, Photo credit: J. Henry August, 2021.

### Heritage Conservation Basics Talk

An informative talk will be presented by two of Kelowna's leading experts on Heritage Conservation. Heritage Consultant, Lorri Dauncey, and Building Designer, Peter Chataway, will co-present.

The talk will provide an overview of heritage conservation and sustainability in planning. Topics that will be explored include:

- ◆ What is heritage conservation and why is it important?
- ◆ What is heritage value?
- ◆ What are the social, economic and environmental benefits?
- ◆ The design process for a heritage conservation project.
- ◆ What is sustainability in design?



The Kelowna context will be looked at including the tools and incentives available.

**DATE: Tuesday November 9th, 2021. TIME 7:00-8:30. LOCATION: REID Hall - 2279 Benvoulin Road**  
**SUGGESTED DONATION \$5.00. per person. Masks and Pre-Registration are required. To book your spot please call the COHS office at 250.861.7188. If COVID circumstances dictate the event will be held virtually.**



## J.N. Thompson House new location - Two points of view

Say what you like about the moving of the J.N. Thompson house, but no one can deny it is safe and sound, which was the goal. This stately house, which had graced a 1/3 acre lot on Kelowna's Richter Street since 1911, is now nestled into the side of a low hill on 13 acres in South East Kelowna.

The house's current owner, Dr. Shona Harrison, is no stranger to heritage. Shona has served on numerous heritage committees and boards. She has received local and provincial awards from Heritage BC and the Central Okanagan Heritage Society.

Shona's first step into heritage began when she purchased a rather sad looking heritage home in Victoria. In fact, "it was the eyesore of the neighborhood," says Shona. Built in 1911 by the Parfitt Brothers Construction Company, who built such prominent buildings in Victoria as the Christ Church Cathedral, the Armories, and dozens of other high profile buildings, Shona worked to restore the house and even got the house designated. The house still stands at 2645 Fernwood in Victoria.

"There have been three constants in my life," states Harrison. "Heritage, literature and ponies." As a professor at both UBC and Okanagan College she fuels her passion for literature. The accomplished horsewoman feeds her love of ponies with her beloved bay mare named Heirloom. Her love of heritage is demonstrated through serving on a variety of heritage committees, living in a heritage house, and through her Old Kelowna Facebook page which features photographs of Kelowna's history.

Shona has worked tirelessly on the Queen Anne Revival house with her contractor, Rob Waylyshen, owner of Rostka Enterprises - Interior and Exterior Renovations. The work is being done to a high heritage standard and in 2017, the duo were presented a Heritage BC Award for the conservation of the J.N. Thompson house.

In 2021, speaking with local realtors, and with development pressures increasing, Shona made the agonizing decision to move the house. A very expensive undertaking.



Shona Harrison on the porch of the J.N. Thompson House now located in East Kelowna. Photo: J. Henry September 2021.



J.N. Thompson house on the move June 1, 2021. Photo credits S. Harrison

## J.N. Thompson House new location - Two points of view

The Kelowna South-Central Association of Neighborhoods, KSAN, has a different view on things. In a conversation with association president, Susan Ames, the neighborhood position was expressed. “While the house may have been saved, the neighborhood has suffered a significant loss. The removal of the J.N. Thompson house has left a huge hole in the neighborhood that will be filled with new construction. KSAN has reached out to the developer with ideas for the new building that would best fit into the surrounding properties and neighborhood. The door has been opened for those who want to pick up these beautiful homes and move them to what they may perceive as more desirable locations. Ms. Harrison did a lot of work to conserve the house, and yet denied a new owner the chance to live in it.”

In heritage conservation, it is not all about the building. The Statement of Significance, the document that outlines why a particular building is important, often talks about the contextual elements which include the nature of the property, the neighborhood, the location of the structure within the property, as well as the history of the people who originally or subsequently lived there. When a house such as the J.N. Thompson house is moved, it loses many of these important elements which gave the house its heritage value.

And yet Shona responds “ I have preserved the house—it has the same elevations it did downtown and in fact, it still faces west; all the windows, even in the basement were saved. I even used the original brick to rebuild the chimney. The interior and exterior are all back to the original. I see it as a continued labour of love.”

Shona has received letters of support from two previous owners, who are thankful that the house has been saved. Here is one from Mary Vacca from Victoria:

*Dear Ms. Harrison: Words cannot express the delight we felt when we read “Heritage House on the Move.” Our friend in Kelowna had sent us a copy.*

*My parents owned the Queen Anne from 1989-2006 dedicating those years to restoring it, struggling to save it from developers. Health issues forced them to sell their home and join me here in Victoria. We visited only once a few years later and were devastated to see it run down with the once lovely garden, then a parking lot of debris. It appears that it suffered six other owners before you rescued the Grandam. I cannot thank you enough for giving my mother great joy knowing that their Queen Anne now resides in a beautiful green space. My father would have been more than pleased ..... Mary Vacca*

In subsequent COHS newsletters, we will explore the topic of heritage buildings that have been re-located, with numerous local examples. We will also take a closer look at development pressures on historic buildings.

Heirloom grazing with the J.N. Thompson house in background. Photo credit: Shona Harrison. Right, the J.N. Thompson house at new location: Photo credit J. Henry Sept 2021.



## Edith Gay Playground

Many of Kelowna's parks are associated with significant people from the community's past. One of the landmark parks in Kelowna is Edith Gay Park/Playground in the neighborhood of Rutland.

Edith moved with her family, father William, mother Sarah and older sister Annie, from London England in 1899. They settled in Vancouver for close to ten years before the Gay family purchased twenty-acres of pastureland on the south corner of what is now Fitzgerald and Rutland Roads in the District of Rutland. William Gay was a plumber and worked in the area for many years. When William joined the army in World War 1, Edith was responsible for looking after the farm as well as her invalid mother Sarah. A heavy load for a young woman in her early twenties.

Annie Gay married Fred Meek in Rutland in 1920 and subsequently moved to the coast leaving Edith as the only adult child left in Kelowna. When William and Sarah passed away, Edith paid off the remaining mortgage and continued with a mixed-use farm on the family property. She was often seen in her farming attire of a fringed mushroom hat and a comfortable pair of knickerbockers. She had chickens, cows, pigs and a large garden market. It was not uncommon for Edith to have baby chicks or orphaned animals in her house. It is also recorded that she once had a calf in her bed!

Edith never married and had no children. In spite of her many commitments at home, she found time to follow in her father's footsteps and volunteer and contribute to the Rutland community.

In 1922, The Rutland Women's Institute sponsored the First Rutland Girl Guides. Edith was their first leader. In 1946, Edith became a member of the Order of the Eastern Star and in 1965, she was made a Patron and Life Member of the SPCA. She also taught Sunday School and was the secretary-treasurer for the Rutland Methodist Church. Edith gave generously to all the causes she felt strongly about. In 1972, she was named Rutland "Citizen of the Year" for her many contributions of time, effort, and money to the community.

While Edith had no children of her own, she had a special affection for them. In 1962, a newly formed Minor Baseball League was looking for a suitable place for children to play the game. In 1965, with her generous heart, Edith gave twelve acres of pastureland to be used for the purpose of creating a ball park and playground. Edith's baffled lawyer called her "crazy." She could have sold the land and made a tidy sum.

Volunteers helped transform the unused pastureland into a park and playing fields by planting grass and trees. For many years Edith officially opened the annual Playoff Days by pitching the first ball. She was delighted to see the land being so well used.



Aerial view of Edith Gay Playground/Park, on Moyer Road in the Rutland Neighborhood of Kelowna.



## Edith Gay Playground

As age took its toll, Edith left her home on Rutland Road and following a time with dear family friends, Joy and Elwin Cross, moved to Cottonwoods Extended Care. There she spent her last years, passing quietly on June 30, 1980 at the age of 86. The funeral was held at Rutland United Church where Edith had also donated the land. In attendance were Guide leaders in their uniforms as well as Brownies and Guides. Little League Baseball players and coaches in baseball attire were mixed in with Edith's friends and neighbors.

Edith was laid to rest close to her parents in the Pioneer Section of Kelowna Memorial Cemetery. Tucked under a lovely spruce tree lies this simple grave marker.

The Legacy of the Gay family is felt daily in spring, summer and fall. Hundreds and hundreds of boys and girls from ages 5-18 have played baseball since the park was first established. I am one of those parents who have spent countless hours at Edith Gay Playground/Park as a volunteer and fan. The Gay family is yet another example of an early Kelowna family who gave so generously to it's citizens.



Photo credit: J. Henry, August 2021

## Gardens at Benvoulin Heritage Park

The grounds at Benvoulin Heritage Park have continued to evolve over its long history. From its historic country roots with simple surroundings, to its current condition with impressive specimen trees, a wedding lawn and the Marrietta Lightbody Memorial garden. While parts of the grounds are lovely, others needed work.

*"Parts of the gardens at Benvoulin had become overgrown and difficult to manage," says COHS board member Mary Browne-Clayton "When our world went into lockdown the board decided it would be a good time to clean them up. To this end we put in many volunteer hours and hired a contractor to dig out brushy areas that had been encroaching on our neighbour (farm) to the north as well as the overgrown garden along the driveway. This created the opportunity to re-imagine the gardens."*

The Kelowna Master Gardeners made the gardens at Benvoulin one of their projects in 2021. volunteering many hours. With direction and support from KMG, Alison Lennie, great strides were made this past season.

On another corner of the property the original xeriscape garden, has turned into a memorial garden, where benches and bricks are woven in with plants, shrubs and trees.

This fall two new bricks were added to the memorial walk way. The Hobson family marked the passing of a beloved family member Rosemary Stiell, and long time Benvoulin caretakers, Ray & Fran Helgeson, who worked tirelessly on the grounds, were also remembered with the placing of brick.

To get more information about the memorial brick pathway contact the office at [cohs@telus.net](mailto:cohs@telus.net) or call 250.861.7188



## 2022 Annual Heritage Awards

Nominations are now open for the 2022 Annual Heritage Awards, to be presented as part of Heritage Week February 21-27, 2022. We are interested in receiving nominations for buildings, people and projects within the geographic boundaries of the Central Okanagan region in the following categories:

- ◆ Distinguished Community Service
- ◆ Conservation of a heritage building in non-residential use
- ◆ Conservation project on a heritage building currently in residential use
- ◆ Continued conservation on a heritage building
- ◆ Preservation or restoration of a neighborhood or area
- ◆ Special Heritage project

Deadline for nomination is November 30th. Contact Kathy at the COHS office 250.861.7188 or by email at [kathyh.cohs@telus.net](mailto:kathyh.cohs@telus.net)

**Westbank Museum:** The exterior of the Westbank Museum is undergoing some major changes. Museum executive director, Jeremiah Ryder, says, “We have erected a new front on the building. Now instead of a boring cinder block, flat-roofed building, we have changed it to make it resemble an early-20<sup>th</sup> century streetscape.” Plans included the painting of a blacksmith and fruit packers signs on portions of the new front. “On our north wall we are currently having a mural painted. This painting will depict a fruit loading dock, farm truck and an orchard,” says Ryder.

**To the south of the building, there is a compound that** has been used for storage. This portion will see a major transformation as they create a public picnic area. A number of artifacts are being repurposed, that were otherwise unsalvageable, and turned into planters, and a children’s noise wall. Additionally, they intend to recreate an old irrigation system with flumes and wooden pipes and turn it into a fountain. For more information contact the Westbank Museum.



New façade of Westbank Museum. Photo Credits J Henry  
September 2021.





## The tale of two buildings - one corner

The City of Kelowna deserves our thanks for its on-going maintenance efforts with respect to Kelowna's Water Street #2 Firehall Station. This handsome heritage building (on the City of Kelowna's Heritage Register) underwent a major exterior conservation project over the summer. Based on an assessment done in 2019 by Reid Jones Christopherson, the brick and mortar were repaired and replaced where necessary by Sawchuck Developments Co. Ltd. This \$590,000 project has left the fire-hall in good repair as it celebrates its 100th birthday, having been constructed in 1921.

Kelowna Fire Department Station #2. Photo credits: J. Henry August 2021.



On the north west corner of the same intersection sits what remains of the Courier Building and the adjacent 1570 Water Street. In the Fall 2020 edition of the COHS newsletter we reported on the plans for the building. We stated that the "work on the façade should be underway this fall, with completion expected in the fall of 2021.

It appears that the developer had a change of plans mid-way through the project, and may be looking at increased density.

There is nothing left of the original building but the front facade, which is heavily braced at present. A big empty hole sits waiting for the next steps.

Time will tell if the developer and architect can retain the front facade, into their design and meet their goal of increased density.

While the building has been demolished the front facade on Water Street, with its contemporary the #2 Fire Hall as its neighbour, is an important feature on this much used inner-city intersection.

The heavily braced Courier Building Facade, Photo credits: J. Henry, August 2021.



## Kelowna Heritage Grants Program



The City of Kelowna Heritage Grants Program (CoKHGP) provides financial support to buildings on the Kelowna Heritage Register. Grants assist with a portion of the costs in maintaining and conserving the building's exterior, including foundations.

In 2022 the application process will go on-line, similar to the other City of Kelowna grants. To learn more about how to submit the on-line application, as well as to find out about application requirements, the annual **CoKHGP Information Session** will be held in early March. Applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their applications with the program manager prior to submitting an application.

A recent example of the types of projects funding by the program is the **W.R. Foster House, 486 Cadder Avenue:**

The Foster House is a one-storey wood-frame shingle Craftsman bungalow that was built in 1921. The Craftsman style, the most popular housing style between 1910 and 1930, was "typified by rational space planning, the use of natural materials and a mix of traditional design elements inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement." The house was built for William R. Foster (1879-1961), superintendent of the real estate department of Okanagan Loan and Investment Trust. By 1948, the house was owned by Julian Monteith, president of Kelowna Builder's Supply Ltd., President of the Board of Trade, and Chair of the Kelowna Hospital Board. A heritage grant was recently approved for a new shingle roof, as part of a larger rehabilitation for the house's new use. The Foster House, located in the Abbott Street Conservation Area, was previously used as the medical offices of Dr Ernest Alan Broome.



All granting decisions are made by a committee of community volunteers with heritage expertise. The Kelowna Heritage Register can be accessed at: <https://www.kelowna.ca/our-community/arts-culture-heritage/heritage/heritage-register> For more information on the program contact ~ Lorri Dauncey at [ldauncey.cohs@telus.net](mailto:ldauncey.cohs@telus.net)

## News in Brief

### J Barb Charman - passed March 30th, 2021

A dear friend of COHS, Barb Charman, has died. Barb volunteered with COHS for many years, including service on the board of directors. Barb volunteered with the Guisachan Garden Show committee as well as in the Guisachan gift shop which was run completely by volunteers. We will miss her fun, wit, warm genuine spirit and her wonderful stories.



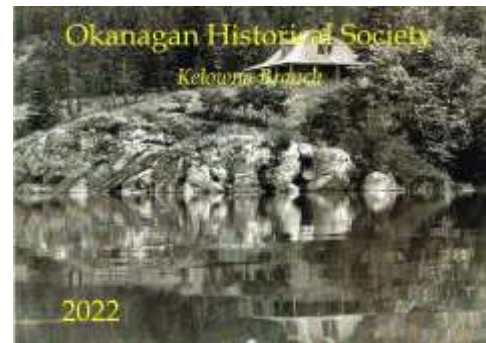
### Gretchen (Aird) Dawson - passed May 1, 2021

Gretchen was born in Pointe-a-Pierre Trinidad. The family returned to Canada when Gretchen was 13 years old. She spent seven years working with Trans Canada Airlines. During her years in Kitchener she started to develop her love of built heritage. Upon her arrival in Kelowna in the 90's, she got involved with the COHS where she worked on the Guisachan Garden Show committee, and served for several years as President of COHS. Gretchen also volunteered with the Friends of Fintry. In 2005, Gretchen was awarded the COHS Distinguished Service Award. On May 28th, a small gathering was held in Gretchen's honor at Guisachan Park.



The Kelowna Branch, Okanagan Historical Society 2022 calendar is now available for sale. The calendar contains a variety of photographs – from private collections and the Kelowna Public Archives – in addition to historical information for each month of the year. The calendar's cover features a spectacular circa 1910 black and white image of the Paul family summer home, its pitched roof and dormer windows beautifully reflected in the waters of Okanagan Lake.

The 2022 calendar is a fundraiser and currently available from Chris Jennens (250-862-2801) or Bob Hayes at 250-763-8859.



**Heritage BC:** Every year Heritage BC creates a poster which is distributed to schools, libraries, and municipal offices. Heritage BC encourages everyone in the heritage sector to participate in Heritage Week by organizing an event that showcases local heritage. In BC, Heritage Week is always celebrated the third full week of February, which for 2022 will be the 21st -27th.



**COHS Day –Timer:** COHS is developing a day –timer as a fund-raising project which will be available for sale for \$20.00 at COHS events and through the office. Photos of local landmarks are shown through-out with this stunning photo of a double-rainbow over Benvoulin Heritage Church on the cover. To purchase a day –timer please contact the COHS office at 250.861.7188 or email at [cohs@telus.net](mailto:cohs@telus.net).





## HERITAGE NEWS

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COHS thanks the City of Kelowna for an Arts, Culture and Heritage Operating Grant for 2021



Thank you to the Central Okanagan Foundation for the generous 2021 Operating Grant.

COHS acknowledges that we operate on the unceded territory of the Sylix Okanagan Peoples.

COHS acknowledges the financial support of the Province of British Columbia

### COHS NEWS

- ◆ The Okanagan Master Gardeners recently held a hands-on workshop on how to split Peonies. The Peonies were lifted from areas of Benvoulin Heritage Park and the divided roots are now newly planted along the driveway fence. Thank you OMG for the lesson and the expanded flower beds!
- ◆ Michael Avrill entertained in story and song on July 17th at Benvoulin Heritage Church, our first live in-person concert in a I-o-n-g time; thank you Michael!
- ◆ Tracey Read a long-time supporter of the COHS and many other organizations in Kelowna, has left the city and is making her new home in Nova Scotia. All the best Tracey!
- ◆ The Dangers of the Dog Park. As many of you know Don Knox was 'tackled' by some cavorting canines at his favourite dog park. Don was knocked off balance, fell and broke his hip. Happily he is on the mend and once again at the COHS helm.
- ◆ Many thanks to Alasdair Smith for some excellent 'heritage quality' repairs to the Benvoulin gazebo. Alasdair has also re-oiled the logs at McDougall House located at Guisachan Heritage Park. Many thanks Alasdair!
- ◆ Don Branch has volunteered to do some much-needed repairs to the rear steps at Benvoulin Heritage Church; thank you Don! What would we do without our volunteers?!
- ◆ Concert at Benvoulin with *Gail and Karl* and special guests *Graham Ord and October Sky*, October 30th at 7:00 p.m. For tickets go to: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/gail-karl-tickets-177353377727>
- ◆ Christmas at Benvoulin – Treble in Paradise – performing! Limited seating - Covid Protocols in place. Please contact the office to reserve your spot.

Please feel free to email Kathy at [kathyh.cohs@telus.net](mailto:kathyh.cohs@telus.net) if you would you like a paper copy of this Newsletter mailed to you!

