

Catherine Whyte *cont. from page 1*

Seven painter, botanist, trail builder, and chemistry professor sharing companionship in a place of great significance to all of them. MacDonald would later describe the group's adventures in his poems and journals – fondly recalling his days “spent in living in sunlight” feeling as if they were cloud people. They formed a club - The Opabin Shalesplitters - and vowed to meet again the following year to continue their discussions of art, photography, music, philosophy and religion, and to paint and hike together in the place they were all so in love with. Sadly, MacDonald would never reunite with the fellow club members, illness and his premature death in 1932 ended his love affair with O'Hara, but Catharine would return many times with Peter, and later with her nephew Jon Whyte, taking him to the very spot she painted with MacDonald. On one such visit, pulling down a branch high on a once short conifer, she broke off a branch

still crusted with paint where MacDonald had wiped his brush. The branch is still on the fireplace in her log cabin home.

During her lifetime, Catharine produced an enormous body of work, almost all of it on-the-spot Rocky Mountain sketches, in oil on small sheets of canvas. Portraiture and landscapes from other parts of the world feature prominently among her works, as do her portraits of Stoney individuals, which are sensitive and fine. But it is her O'Hara work that we celebrate here. Her sensitive eye and keen feeling for the subtleties of mountain light and shadow underline her close relationship with the O'Hara places she painted. Hers are not the sketches of an occasional visitor to O'Hara, rather they are those of an insider, one who came often and stayed long.

Lisa Christensen,
Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies

LOTTC 2006

Champagne Raffle

Last year we raffled the third of four framed limited edition lithographs by renowned Quebec artist and Trails Club director, Horace Champagne. Tickets were on sale at Le Relais, Lake O'Hara Lodge, by mail and on our web site. Gross ticket sales totaled \$2095.

Once again we extend a sincere thank you to Horace for his generous donation and many thanks to those who bought tickets (some of you bought a lot of tickets - again!) Our congratulations go to our winner Natalie Sonosky of Banff, AB.

One LAST Chance

Champagne Raffle Part III

The LAST framed limited edition lithograph by Horace Champagne, Parc National Yoho, C.B. will be offered by raffle this year. Tickets will be for sale - for \$5 each - at Le Relais, Lake O'Hara Lodge and by mail until December 1, 2006 or until all tickets are sold whichever comes first. Only 700 tickets will be printed so your odds are better than ever. The winning ticket will be drawn at the January 17, 2007 Directors' Meeting. Details and rules are also available on www.LOTC.ca. To purchase your raffle ticket by mail send your full name, address,



phone number (with area code) and appropriate funds by cheque or money order plus \$1 handling to:

Lake O'Hara Trails Club
Box, 98 Lake Louise, AB T0L 1E0

By mail!

2006 T-shirt

This year, our T-shirt design is from an original Catherine Robb Whyte oil painting.

LAKE O'HARA



MOUNT BIDDLE by Catherine Whyte

For Canadian orders, send a cheque or money order for C\$32.50.

For orders outside Canada, please send a postal money order for US \$32.50.

GST, shipping and handling are included.

Donations & Membership

You can make a difference. Be a part of O'Hara by becoming a member or making a donation to support the trail work. All donations made in 2006 will be earmarked for the 2007 Interpretive Programme and Year Three trail work –shortcutting remediation on Grandview and East and West Opabin, obstacle remediation and box repairs on Opabin Plateau, water bar repairs on east and West Opabin.

Buy your membership for \$25 or make your tax-deductible donation in person at Le Relais or Lake O'Hara Lodge or by mail by sending your cheque or money order with your full name and address to.

Lake O'Hara Trails Club
Box 98, Lake Louise, AB T0L 1E0



The 2006 LOTC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Le Relais at 8:30 p.m.
Monday, July 31, 2006

All Members Welcome!



O'Hara 2006

• Published by the Lake O'Hara Trails Club, Box 98, Lake Louise, AB. T0L 1E0 • www.LOTC.ca •

Catherine Robb Whyte • Celebrating her 100th birth date

In celebration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Catharine Whyte, it is fitting to follow in her footsteps along some of the trails she loved the most – those at Lake O'Hara.

Born Catharine Robb in Concord, Massachusetts, in June 1906, Catharine grew up surrounded by intellectual and artistic stimulation in an age when museums were being founded against the backdrop of a world exploring its various cultures and traditions. She and her brother Russell were raised in a family with a strong tradition of intellectual, artistic, and business interests, the impact of which cannot be underestimated. Catharine attended the prestigious Mary C. Wheeler private school in Providence, Rhode Island from 1921 – 1924 studying drama, art, and music. She was a curious child, strong-willed and imaginative. Her interests were widespread, and she had a thirst for knowledge, inspired and nurtured by her maternal grandfather, Edward Sylvester Morse (1838 – 1925), a prominent biologist, specialist in Japanese ceramics, and one of the first directors of the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. Her mother Edith Morse Robb designed and produced needlework patterns in the 1890s. She trained Catharine in these same pursuits while preparing her to move in social circles and to engage in charitable pursuits in preparation for her debut to Boston society (somewhat against Catharine's own wishes) in 1924. Catharine's father was a successful engineer in the Boston firm of Stone & Webster, and he provided Catharine with grounding in the technical and business worlds. Exploring her artistic

interests, Catharine enrolled as a half-day student at the Museum School of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in the fall of 1925 and was a student there until 1930. An engaging young woman, she dated John D. Rockefeller III, but abandoned this romance upon falling in love with a fellow student, artist Peter Whyte of Banff. Peter was a guide and packer for Brewsters and a lover of all things outdoors from skiing to snowshoeing to trail riding. Through Peter, Catharine found a shared love of the Canadian Rockies and all that they

of Seven founding artist J.E.H. MacDonald. Catharine embraced this new subject of mountain landscape with the enthusiasm she gave to all her tasks, producing small, intimate sketches of out-of-the-way mountain corners in many regions of O'Hara, as well as more panoramic scenes of the Opabin Plateau, Cathedral Mountain, and Mount Schaeffer.

Catharine's work at Lake O'Hara depicts a vast range of territory and captures O'Hara in her many moods. In the vast collection of her work housed at the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies in Banff, there are sketches of clear, sunlit afternoons that she spent at the Opabin Terrace Pools falls. Catharine was fascinated with the changing weather; cloud patterns as they rolled over the top of Mount Biddle, rain squalls high against the cliff faces. In her sketches of forests, the young, scraggly larches with their brown trunks fuzzily tufted with saffron yellow are delightful. She was fond of the deep green-blue colour of water in the shadows and painted numerous sketches of shorelines. These smaller



Mount Biddle by Catherine Whyte, courtesy of Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies

offered. The two artists were married in 1930 and built a log cabin on the banks of the Bow River in Banff, now a historic home operated by the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies. From this base they began to undertake painting trips into the backcountry.

One of the first areas Peter introduced Catharine to was one of the places he loved the most: Lake O'Hara. There they met and painted with the famous Group

moments of nature's grandeur often take centre stage in her work, giving her paintings a sincere feeling of intimacy and charm. In fact there are very few large canvases known to have been painted by her; the majority of her work is in the form of small, on-the-spot format sketches.

In 1930 Peter and Catharine Whyte, J.E.H. MacDonald, and Tommy and Adeline Link found themselves together at Lake O'Hara at the same time. What a remarkable season that must have been - the newlywed artists, celebrity Group of



100 Years Old and Going Strong

Alpine Club of Canada Defines Canada as an Alpine Nation

Early in the 20th century, a woman columnist at the Winnipeg Free Press read a letter inviting enthusiasts of the young pursuit of mountaineering to support forming a Canadian appendage to the fledgling American Alpine Club. Not a mountaineer, but an ardent fan of Canadian mountains, Elizabeth Parker wielded her pen in disgust. "Certainly", she suggested, "Canada has at least a dozen persons who are made of the stuff, and care about our mountain heritage, to redeem Canadian apathy and indifference."

Sufficiently spurred, in March 1906 Parker and respected surveyor A.O. Wheeler co-founded the Alpine Club of Canada (ACC) in the mountain-less centre of the nation, Winnipeg. Not only the first national mountaineering organization to accept women, the ACC elected Parker to its executive as secretary. In July 1906, 100 eager ACCers rode the Canadian Pacific Railway to Field B.C., then marched 10 kilometres to Yoho Pass alongside dozens of horses and wagons carrying food, cooking equipment, 40 canvas tents, bedding, climbing ropes and personal luggage - including proper dining attire. Paying \$1/day they slept in tent quarters divided into male, female and married and dined in a 100-seat tent. By week's end 44 - including 15 women - had achieved "Active Member" status by climbing the 3066-metre Vice President with CPR Swiss guides.

Today, the General Mountaineering Camp hosts 32 guests per week for six weeks. Delivered by helicopter to remote locations amidst glaciated peaks in the Rocky and Columbia Mountains and led by Association of Canadian Mountain Guides certified guides and experienced amateur ACC leaders, participants enjoy hot showers before dining in fleece and Dry-loft. These camps are based from ACC backcountry huts - now numbering 24 and built and maintained largely by volunteers - including Lake O'Hara's hut, which is named after founding member, Elizabeth Parker.

While the Club prides itself on introducing average Canadians to the wonders of the alpine, it also supports elite undertakings - including a 1925 expedition to the nation's highest - and world's biggest massif - 5959-metre Mount Logan. Requiring two two-



The founding members of the ACC at the inaugural meeting in Winnipeg, March 27 - 28, 1906. Back row: (left to right) Rev. T. Fraser, L.O. Armstrong, Tom Martin, W.H. Belford, Rev. Alex Gordon. Middle Row (left to right) Miss Jean Parker, Stanley Wills, S.H. Mitchell, Lucius Q. Coleman. Front row (left to right) J.W. Kelly, W.J. Taylor, Arthur Oliver Wheeler, Elizabeth Parker, E.A. Haggen, Rev. J.C. Herdman, Very Rev. Dean Paget, Bill Brewster. Photo courtesy of the Alpine Club of Canada collection at the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies.

month reconnaissance journeys just to locate its base and cache 9000 kilograms of supplies, three ACC members joined by three AAC representatives endured six weeks of storms and metre-deep snow to establish high camps. Shortly after summitting they became hopelessly lost in a whiteout and dug shelters with their snowshoes. Separated the next day, three descended to camp while three others endured a second night out above 5500 metres. Recorded in the pages of the Canadian Alpine Journal, the gripping account endures as one of history's most astounding escapades.

Published since 1907, the Canadian Alpine Journal is the country's longest running adventure publication, whose early issues include some of the first glacial studies ever recorded. The historic voice for Canadian mountaineering, the journal annually publishes the nation's top climbers, including Barry Blanchard, Raphael Slawinski, Karen McNeill, Sean Isaac and Jeremy Frimer.

As climbing has evolved over the past century to encompass an octopus worth of individual disciplines, the ACC too has sprouted arms. A member of the Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme (UIAA), the ACC is the only sanctioning body for competition climbing in Canada. More recently ACC assumed the role of Canada's national governing body for another growing competitive activity - ski mountaineering.

"Credit for the fact that Canada is recognized and respected worldwide as an alpine nation", said Bob Sandford, ACC vice president of mountain culture, "is owed largely to the ACC. The Club was our first vehicle for understanding our mountain landscapes, and our first mechanism for learning about traveling safely in the alpine. It was our means to becoming an alpine nation."

Celebrating its centennial in 2006, the ACC now boasts 10,000 members across Canada, the U.S. and overseas. To mark the occasion, 18 regional sections have planned local celebrations, while numerous national events include mountaineering camps - now a century-old tradition.

Lynn Martel, ACC

Are you interested in joining in the celebrations?

Go to www.alpineclubofcanada.ca or call (403) 678-3200 to sign up for the following and other events.

JULY 1 TO AUGUST 12, 2006:
Premier Range Centennial General Mountaineering Camp, with six one-week camps.

SEPTEMBER 1, 2006:
ACC Toronto Section members celebrate the Club's centennial and their section's 50th anniversary at Bon Echo's lakeside cliffs.

OCTOBER 11, 2006:
One-day seminar Climate Change in the Alpine presented by the UIAA (International Mountaineering and Climbing Associations) and the ACC, in Banff.

NOVEMBER 28 THRU DECEMBER 13, 2006:
ACC Montreal Section members host an exhibit of original mountain artwork at the Montreal Mountain Equipment Co-op.

TRAILS WORK REPORT

Have you seen these men?



Parks Canada trail crew members Matt Cadden (l) and John Morrisson (r) setting the trail sign at the new East Opabin trailhead.

The summer of 2005 was a great year for trail work in O'Hara thanks in part to the gents shown here. As part of LOTC's agreement with Parks Canada, trail crew employees John Morrisson and Matt Cadden spent more than half their summer in the O'Hara area. From early June until September John and Matt worked on the re-routing of East Opabin Trail, elevating the east end of the Adeline Link O'Hara Circuit, Seven Veils Falls bridge repairs and an assortment of other smaller projects on West Opabin and the ledges. The two-man crew was funded through a grant from LOTC and the work completed was as defined in the first year of the four-year plan. (Four-year plan was outlined in the 2005 newsletter available on line at www.lotc.ca.)

John and Matt began work on the East Opabin trail work in early June, clearing trees, cutting into the bank, hauling rocks to and from the site, setting steps and lastly putting those new benches in place at the end of the lake and relocating the trail signs. The project also involved the rehabilitation of the old trailhead using natural sod and relocating brush to protect the area until this new sod takes hold. At the 2004 AGM, LOTC directors heard loud and clear from the membership that the new section

of trail needed to meet not just physical standards but also esthetic concerns. LOTC trail consultant Don Gardner spent several days in the area working with the crew to ensure these standards were understood and met. The pride of workmanship that the crew exhibited was a real delight for LOTC and shines through in the details like the resting place at the new trailhead and the hand crafted hand railing on the Seven Veils Bridge. It is especially gratifying to know these gents will be returning to O'Hara to see the maturing of their work.

Regular Parks trail crews were also in O'Hara conducting routine trail maintenance such as tree clearing, drainage improvements and removal of minor obstacles. The regular crew also made repairs to two wooden bridges on the trail from O'Hara to the campground.

2006 and Beyond

Both Parks and LOTC were very pleased with the outcome of the partnership and a new three-year agreement is in the works to ensure this relationship will continue to the completion of the four-year plan. This summer, watch for John and Matt working on the work defined by year two of the four-year plan; work on Oesa, Wiwaxy and the Huber and Yukness Ledges. Year two also includes work on the outlet bridge, which is need of extensive repair. This work may disrupt travel around the lake for part of the summer. You will still be able to go around the lake by taking the trail down to the campground and back via the outlet creek trail. While this adds a bit of distance to the circuit, this detour will allow you to see the new bridges on this route; materials funded by LOTC in 2004.

Kim Baines, Parks Canada, Patty Cucman, LOTC

Thanks from LOTC

Firstly, our thanks go to Parks Canada for their reception to LOTC concerns and for welcoming our involvement; with special thanks to Kim Baines. It has been a pleasure to work with Kim and his staff in getting this work planned and completed.

Thanks to Don Gardner who, in the midst of his work at the Nordic Centre in Canmore and his involvement in the work in Whistler for the upcoming Olympics, still made time for Lake O'Hara. Walking the trails with Don is a real treat. He not

only sees the trails but has a sixth sense (Is it the Grassi eye?) for what is under the trails and what will feel right under the hikers' boots. I learned to look at the trails in a very different way.

And lastly, but by no means least, our thanks to those of you who have given so generously ensuring that LOTC will go on supporting trail work and education in the O'Hara area. We were so pleasantly surprised with your generous response to our plans. We would welcome your feedback, concerns and suggestions at lotmessage@hotmail.com or in writing at Le Relais.

Patty Cucman, LOTC

Greetings from Parks Canada at O'Hara

The Parks Canada Lake O'Hara staff extends a warm welcome to all Lake O'Hara users. As a result of a public tendering process, Cardinal Coach Lines Ltd. will be providing public transportation services for the next four years. The bus schedule remains the same and we will continue to collect a one-way fare for walk-in visitors who want a ride from the lake to the parking lot.

We will be making a couple of improvements to the campground this year. To improve the quality of potable water at the lake an ultra violet water treatment system will be installed at the campground. We are also adding 18 new lockers to increase storage space for personal gear at the campground. As always, we appreciate your comments and feedback. Feedback forms will be available on the bus or from the Parks Canada staff. Enjoy your stay at Lake O'Hara!

Beth Weaver, Parks Canada