



Preserving Canada's Nuclear Heritage NEWSLETTER

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Deep River, ON

Society Carries on Activities Despite Lengthy Pandemic Constraints

The Society continues to make steady, if quiet, progress since our last newsletter in November.

On May 14, we had a very productive and promising first meeting with Mr. Fred Dermarkar, the incoming AECL President. We look forward to working with Mr. Dermarkar and Mr. McBrearty, President of Canadian Nuclear Laboratories (CNL).

SPCNHI participated in the virtual "Get to Know Deep River" meeting organized by the Algonquin Chapter of the Professional Engineers of Ontario and the Renfrew County Science Fair. The event was held on March 24 as part of National Engineering Month. SPCNHI contributed a 20-minute introductory video on the Society. The video is now available on YouTube, and a link to it is posted on the Society website.

While the latest lockdown due to COVID-19 has stemmed the flow of artifacts to the Society, it has allowed us to concentrate effort on examining in detail and cataloguing material previously donated but not fully documented. Among this material are several Montreal Laboratory original photographs donated by the estate of Don Stewart. Also included is a 1950s-era aerial photograph of Deep River, clearly showing the early dormitories in both the downtown and Hill Park areas

Through the efforts of Marilyn Charbonneau, John Fleurie, and Tom Alburger, the Society has been able to separate and catalogue an increasingly large collection of AECL-series publications. The Society collection to date is a small fraction of the 12,000 total publications, but should prove to be an excellent reference source for future researchers. Many duplicate copies will be available to visitors along with copies of duplicate books.

Despite the limitations imposed by the successive pandemic lockdowns, we continue to reach out safely to other groups and individuals. We are working on a

presentation on the history of the development of the design of the NPD reactor for a UNENE webinar.

We are also working with the Deep River Public Library to issue a visitor's guide to notable homes and buildings across Deep River related to its integral role in the early development of the Chalk River Nuclear Laboratories.

CNL has replaced two rear doors with one wide door in our interim storage facility at 51 Poplar St. We can now bring larger artifacts into the building, including the impressive model of the ACR-700 that AECL loaned to the Society over a year ago.



Grace Stewart, Don's wife, was a collector of Montreal-Lab era photographs. In her collection was one showing Bruno Pontecorvo displaying one of his previously-unidentified skills, expertise on a mouth organ. The two ladies enjoying his talents were identified as Grace McKercher and Beth O'Brien.

Maintenance and housekeeping work at 51 Poplar St. is being done to prepare to resume receiving visitors after the current lockdown ends. The building grounds have been cleared of accumulated detritus, building trim has been repaired and painted, floors have been cleaned and waxed, etc.

Our website now features under the “People” tab fifty photographs of groups at Chalk River personnel going back to 1945.

Our articles on Canada’s nuclear history continue to appear in the North Renfrew Times (NRT). Recent stories included the visit of Prince Philip to Chalk River in July 1954, Canada’s involvement in the world’s radium industry in the early part of the 20th century, and nuclear-related Canadian postage stamps. We have now contributed well over 60 stories to the NRT, which are also saved on our website under the “In the News” tab.

The Canadian Museum of History did not accept our application for a grant to create a virtual museum as part of our overall objectives. We are unsure of the reason for this, as the proposal was very comprehensive, detailed and well supported, and we will be following this up.

Abra O’Leary has had to step down from the Board to devote more time to her university studies. Many thanks to Abra for her numerous contributions. She continues to add Twitter items to our website.

We continue to issue monthly email updates to Society members to keep everyone better informed and to invite them to help with current projects.

We are looking to reach out to more parts of Canada’s nuclear community to expand our membership, and contributions of a broader range of artifacts, contacts and funding.

How You Can Get Involved

If you belong to a group that would like a tour of 51 Poplar, or would like to have a Society member make a presentation on our activities, contact Michael Stephens (613-584-9210) or Jim Ungrin (613-584-3055) to make arrangements.

If you have something you may be able to donate, please call Jim Ungrin (613-584-3055), Michael Stephens (613-594-9210), or Morgan Brown (613-717-1588).

New Items in Our Collections

In our fourth year of activity, our collections continue steadily to expand. We now have more than 450 documented artifacts, over 1500 catalogued books, pamphlets, periodicals, videos, and digital media. We have over 20 linear m of documents awaiting archiving. Items received since our last newsletter include:

- “Publications from the Montreal Laboratory and the Chalk River Atomic Energy Project of the National Research Council of Canada, 1943-1952,” a bibliography of NRC reports issued before AECL was established.
- A large collection of personal documents from Doug Milton, including many photographs of the early nuclear physics experiments and researchers that made Chalk River a world-renowned center for nuclear physics during the 1950s and 1960s.
- We have received permission to use Tom Holden’s excellent document, “The First Two Decades of Neutron Scattering at the Chalk River Laboratories” on our website. It covers the ground-breaking work by Don Hurst and later by Brockhouse.
- From Phil Simpson, a large cache of photos including one of the handover of NPD to AECL from OH, plus videos of the used fuel transfer from NPD to Chalk River.
- From Tim Page, a set of slides his father Ron Page (AECL fuels guru) used for community talks, as well as a collection of talks by Ontario Hydro to Orenda and Avro engineers in 1957.
- Several books and photos from Bill Buyers.
- One of Walt Woytowich’s hand-cranked Geiger counters which was commercially made for Walt in Japan. The Canadian Clock Museum has one of Walt’s three early, much larger prototypes that are used during tours to show the radioactive dials on alarm clocks in the 1920s and 1930s.
- Three photograph albums and artifacts from the family of Marcel Pochon, the first manager of the Eldorado radium refinery at Port Hope and collaborator of Marie and Pierre Curie in Paris.
- Large models of the NRX reactor and its fuel storage and handling bays.