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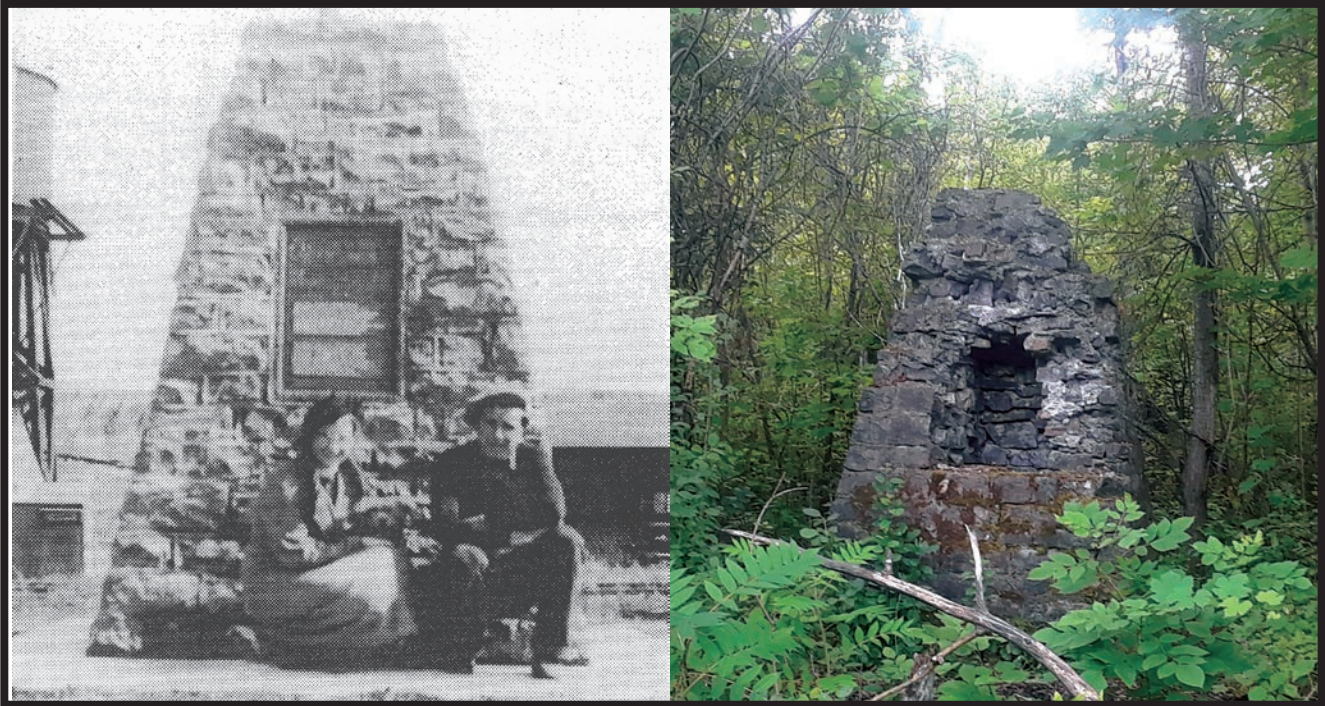
A forgotten memorial

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set up to crush the road bed ballast.

McLean bought the land for the quarry in 1919 and the operation continued until 1932, and at its peak, almost three million tons of local limestone was quarried every year. The work was hard and dangerous and there were deaths among the workers. When the quarry closed, McLean erected a stone cairn in memory of the dead workers, one of around a dozen such memorials he built at various quarries he owned across Canada.

On the stone monument metal plaques were mounted carrying the names of the dead, and one side was placed a poem, "The Sons of Martha", which McLean had commissioned from famous British Imperialist, Rudyard Kipling. Many are the stories about Harry McLean, especially during the last decades of his life, which he spent in the Merrickville area. Deek's Quarry, also, is a place of historic importance. During the Second World War, the disused quarry was used as a staging point for trains carrying munitions and equipment eastward to Halifax to be sent on ships to Britain.

But time was not kind to the McLean Cairn, and it remained neglected and vandalised for many years. The metal plaques were removed and some, at least, ended up in the care of the Historical Society in Merrickville. But the cairn itself became lost in overgrown bush and the memories of local residents until a few individuals decided in 2001 to see about moving it to Merrickville for preservation. The plan was to have it sited on the green space beside the cenotaph.

It was then that John Shawarna, one of those involved in the project, says they made their first mistake: they informed the Township of North Grenville of their plans. Meant as a polite gesture, it led instead to the North Grenville (Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee [LACAC] to recommend to the municipal council that the cairn be given a heritage designation, which would prevent it being moved to Merrickville.

An appeal to the Ontario Conservation Review

continued on page 2



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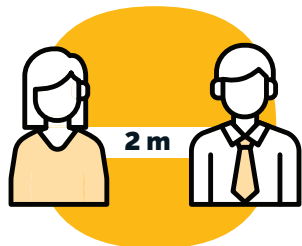

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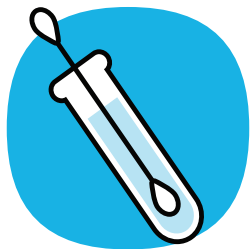
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continued from front page

Board took place in July, 2002 resulted in a recommendation that the cairn be designated on site. John Shawarna remembers being quite unimpressed by the Board hearing, and disappointed that the residents group had been thwarted in their attempt to protect the cairn from further damage.

Throughout 2002 and 2003, meetings were held in North Grenville as steps were discussed whereby the cairn would be renovated and negotiations took place with the then-owner of the site, Barry Forbes, who was prepared to contribute to the costs. The Algonquin College Heritage Institute's Heritage Masonry program was recruited to restore the stonework of the cairn. The Historical Societies in both North Grenville and Merrickville-Wolford joined

in the project. Everything seemed to promise a speedy and professional restoration of the McLean Cairn to its rightful heritage state.

But, at that point, it seems that everything stopped. The North Grenville council refused any financial support for the restoration, and would not agree to purchase the site from Barry Forbes. No tax receipts would be issued by the municipality for donations of materials to use in the project. In short, after all the effort, conflicts, and time, the cairn remained where it was, in its dilapidated state. In fact, the cairn became even less accessible when the Municipality of North Grenville closed that part of Scotch Line Road to vehicles a few years ago, so anyone wishing to see the cairn had a bit of a walk to get to it. In addition, the

cairn is now in a very sad state, easy to miss as you walk along the road, and apparently destined to simply fall apart in time.

The aim of McLean in 1932 was to provide a memorial to the workers of Deek's Quarry, itself an historic site that has been left to decay. The words of Rudyard Kipling, along with the names of the workers memorialised, have been removed from the cairn and from the site. Perhaps, in hindsight, it would have been better if those concerned citizens in 2001 had just moved the cairn to Merrickville, where it could be restored and preserved for future generations. Then the memorial would achieve its proper purpose. Is it too late to do something now?

North Grenville Public Library reopens to the public

by Hilary Thomson

The North Grenville Public Library (NGPL) has opened its doors to the public once again. The library has been closed to the public since the government shutdown of non-essential services in March. On May 25, the library started offering curbside pickup, so that patrons could access their catalogue of books and DVDs. "It started off really well," says Manager of Service Delivery, Sierra Jones-Martel. "People were starved for books."

For the past few weeks, the library has also been offering computer services, where patrons could make an appointment to access the computers for a set amount of time. Library CEO, Rachel Brown, says that, while this wasn't extremely popular, they did have some regulars coming in to use the computers.

The library was included in the province's Phase 3 reopening; however, it has taken them a couple weeks to get everything organized. As of Tuesday, August 4, the library opened to the public with a limited schedule and with a significant number of precautions in place. They are limiting the number of people in the library to 25, and are requiring everyone to wear a mask when they are in the building. There will be hand sanitizer at the door for people to use when they enter the library, and there will also be extra masks on hand for those that may forget. They are asking people to keep in mind that they are reserving the first hour of the day for seniors and other high-risk individuals. "That's when the library is at its safest," Rachel says.

Computers will continue to be available by appointment only. They now have a limited number of computers on the floor, and each station must be cleaned after every use. "We are asking people to make appointments for one-hour blocks," Rachel says.

Rachel is happy to be welcoming people back into the library, but wants to make sure it is a gradual transition. At this point, people are being asked not to come to the library to just hang out. The expectation is that they come in, select their books, and take them home to enjoy. "We have a bunch of great new books at the library; but it won't be the same as before," she says. "Like all businesses, we want to start slowly and see how things go."

The NGPL will be open from 10am-7pm on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, and 10am-2pm on Saturday. They will be closed on Wednesday, but will still be offering curbside pick up from 5-7pm. They may also be offering a few hours for curbside pickup on Friday, if needed. Rachel says staff will be using the days they are closed for extra cleaning, shelving, and organizing books, which will be difficult to do with patrons in the library.

While the library doesn't look as welcoming as usual, everything that is in place is to ensure that they can deliver confident and safe service. "It looks unwelcoming; but we want people to know we are excited," Rachel says.

She also noted that their Co-ordinator of Children's and Teen Services, Sue Bergeron, has been offering very successful outdoor children's programming throughout the Summer. She has hosted story time in the park, and something called a "word walk" through the Kinderwood Trail. They will be continuing with outdoor programs for children through September, and will re-evaluate in the Fall about whether they can start hosting their indoor programming for children and adults at the library again.

Rachel believes that if everyone follows the guidelines, they will be able to offer their services in a way that is safe for both patrons and staff. She is very thankful to the Municipality, as well as the Health Unit, for helping to guide them in the creation of their reopening plan. "If we are following the procedures, we will be fine," she says.

For more information about library hours and safety protocols visit their website at www.ngpl.ca.