

## PRESS RELEASE

# FRIENDS OF THE MERRICKVILLE TURBINE

### 97-year-old Turbine saved in Merrickville



On August 28, 2012 the Friends of the Merrickville Turbine assumed ownership of the 97 year-old Merrickville Turbine. The Turbine - a turbo-generator - which began generating power for Merrickville in 1915, was rescued from the scrapyards in 1992-3 through the initiative of Merrickville residents. They included the late Miss Phyllis Walker, the late Dr. Robert Nicholls, and the Heritage Merrickville Foundation, which had earlier saved a number of heritage buildings in Merrickville.

A permanent concrete plinth was built in the Merrickville Ruins, adjacent to the rebuilt OPG power station, and the saved turbine was erected on it. However, because of incomplete documentation on ownership, the turbine was not properly painted and had slowly become disfigured by rust.

In 2011, the Friends of the Merrickville Turbine was formed by individuals concerned about the Parks Canada plan to scrap the turbine forthwith. The Friends was incorporated under the aegis of the Ontario Historical Society and a successful application was made to the Canada Revenue Agency for charitable status. After several months of see-saw negotiations with Parks Canada, ownership of the Turbine was finally transferred to the Friends. It now leases the land on which the Turbine stands and it is responsible for its upkeep.

The Friends has begun a fund-raising campaign with the objective of restoring the Turbine to its former glory. The campaign will target Canadian and overseas organisations associated with the development of electric power in Canada, as well as other recognised funding agencies active in Eastern Ontario. One substantial donation has been made by a concerned citizen and a second major donation has been promised.

Key to the plan is the installation of informative signage outlining what foresight the original builders had in 1914, when they seemed to understand that the future lay with renewable "green" electric energy. Several monographs on the history of the development of waterpower and electricity in the region have also been drafted for publication and a website is under consideration.

The Friends expects the work to be completed by mid-2013 and a celebration event is planned for the centenary of its commissioning, in June 2015.

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