

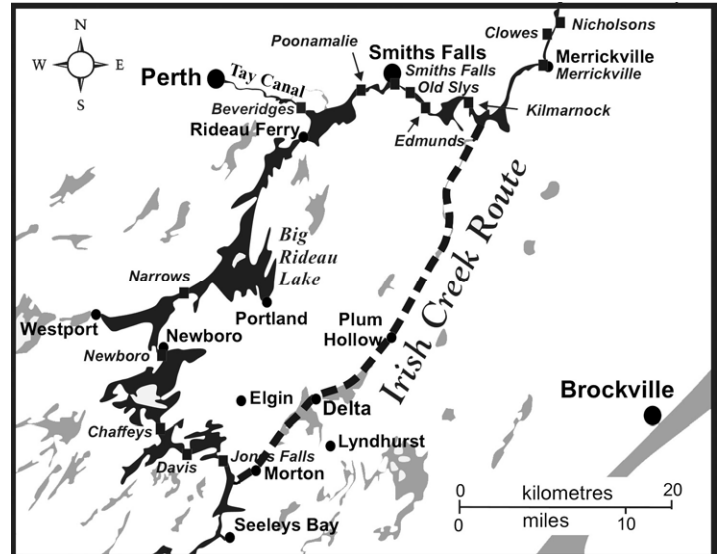
THE IRISH CREEK ROUTE

In the aftermath of the War of 1812, when we did not become what would have been the 19th state of the U.S., (since we won), it was realized that a safe military supply route from Montreal to Kingston was needed. This was because the route to Kingston via the St. Lawrence River was highly vulnerable to American attack. The back-door route was the Ottawa-Rideau route, up the Ottawa River and then south along the Rideau Route to Kingston. So, in 1815, plans were made to survey the route as a navigable waterway, with some initial work done by surveyor Reuben Sherwood.

In 1816, Lt. Joshua Jebb, a 23-year-old Royal Engineer, was tasked with surveying the Rideau Route. Jebb would later become Sir Joshua Jebb, but in 1816 he was a young, newly-minted Royal Engineer. He received his commission in 1812 and came to Canada in 1814. Today the canal goes by way of the beautiful Rideau lakes, but information from Sherwood included a potential shortcut by way of Irish Creek. Jebb completed his survey in July 1816, producing both a report and a gorgeous map of the entire route. He surveyed both the Rideau Lakes Route and the shortcut by way of Irish Creek. His report recommended the Irish Creek Route.

At the time, the boats envisaged for use on a canal were small bateaux and Durham boats, which drafted less than 3 feet when fully loaded. The north end of the Irish Creek Route is the mouth of Irish Creek, located on the Rideau River just south of Merrickville. Today's small village of Jasper is located on that creek. The proposed route went up Irish Creek to Irish Lake and then over the watershed divide and down Plum Hollow Creek to Upper Beverley Lake. From there it went into Lower Beverley Lake, then up the White Fish River (Morton Creek is a remnant of that river), through Morton Bay to Whitefish Lake where it would join back to the original planned Rideau Canal to Kingston (see the profile map on page 2).

This cut off quite a bit of distance for the route. The Irish Creek Route in total would have been about 51 km long whereas the Rideau Lakes Route for that section is 77 km long. It would have shortened the overall Rideau Canal from 202 km to 176 km. But there was a little 8 km problem, the watershed divide near Plum Hollow was dry land. Young Lt. Jebb's solution was a railway to span that divide. Goods would be offloaded from a boat, put onto the railway, railed across the dry land gap and then loaded into a boat on the other side.



The Irish Creek Route

The dashed line is the canal shortcut proposed by Lt. Joshua Jebb in 1816. The Rideau Canal today goes by way of the Rideau lakes, a beautiful chain of lakes connected by locks. Map by Ken Watson

Jebb was also aware of the first iron foundry in Ontario, which opened in Lyndhurst in 1801 but burned down in 1811. There was talk in 1816 of opening it up again. Jebb described what he envisioned to cross the 8 km gap: "I would construct a rail way using a particular description of low cart for transporting stores. It is usually made of cast iron, which would be easily obtained and brought by water, if Government would again Occupy and work the furnace on the Gananoqui Stream [Lyndhurst]. The finest ore is in abundance on the spot." The foundry at Lyndhurst never reopened – that full story can be found at: www.deltamill.org/history.html

The next surveyor, civilian surveyor Samuel Clowes, was hired by the Macaulay Commission in 1823 to investigate internal navigation in the province of Upper Canada (Ontario), including the Rideau Route. He was specifically asked to investigate the Irish Creek Route in addition to the Rideau Lakes Route. At this point he was looking at a very different canal than Jebb had been tasked with, one for much larger boats. Clowes (who had Sherwood with him), discounted the Irish Creek Route for a few reasons, the main one being no water over the divide. By contrast, the top of the Rideau Lakes Route was a large body of water (Rideau Lake). Clowes

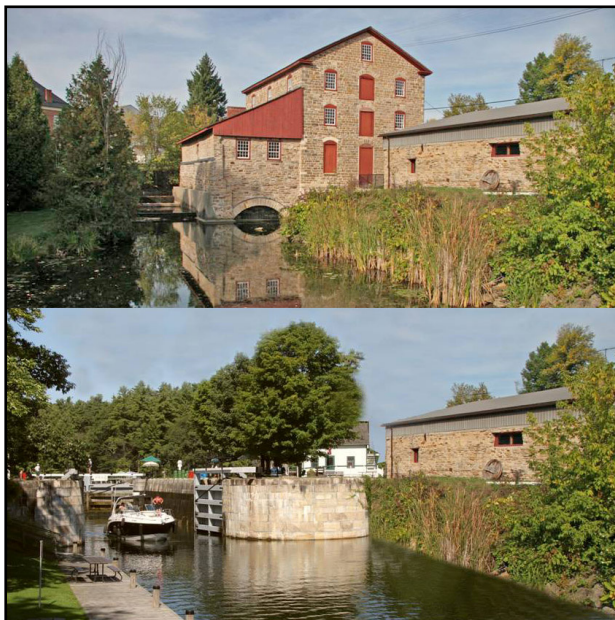
noted that a 10 mile long feeder canal would need to be built from Rideau Lake to the summit of the Irish Creek Route, so it would be much less expensive and faster to build a canal by way of the Rideau lakes.

By the time Lt. Colonel John By arrived on the scene in 1826, he only considered the Rideau Lakes Route as the Irish Creek Route had been completely discounted.

In addition to the lack of water issue, if the canal had been done to later Rideau Canal standards, with the final lock size of 134 ft long by 33 feet wide, and a minimum 5 foot navigation depth, the Irish Creek Route would have required more locks. There was 180 feet of topographic change to overcome compared to less than 160 for the Rideau Lakes Route. That would have meant 18 locks each with a 10 foot lift (as was the standard of the day). When originally built, the Rideau Canal had 17 locks through this section, with individual lifts ranging from 2.2 to 15 feet. Today that section has 15 locks with lifts ranging from 2.2 to 26 feet. Rideauphiles will know why that is (hint, see the Smiths Falls writeup in “A History of the Rideau Lockstations”).

For more information about the Irish Creek Route, go to the articles of interest page on rideau-info.com: www.rideau-info.com/canal/articles/ and scroll down to “The Irish Creek Route, the Canal that Wasn’t” which is an online version of a PowerPoint presentation I did in 2014. Full transcriptions of the Rideau Route surveys, including Jebb’s and Clowes’ reports, can be found in the book, *The Rideau Route*, which is now available as a free download from the Friends of the Rideau website.

-Ken Watson



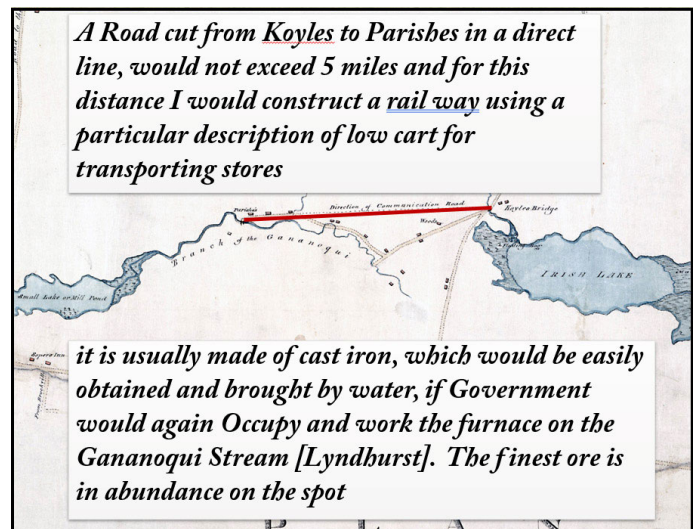
Locks at Delta

If the Rideau Canal had gone by way of the Irish Creek Route, the Old Stone Mill National Historic Site in Delta, built in 1810, might be a set of locks today.

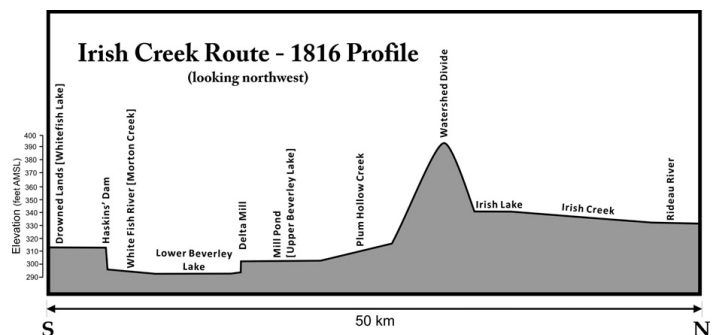


Irish Creek

You can still paddle Irish Creek today. This photo shows a problem that Jebb would have encountered in 1816, beaver dams spanning the creek. This is as far as I got when I paddled Irish Creek several years ago. Jebb’s crew would have just hauled their canoes over that dam and continued on. I debated, took a photo and headed back to where I started (I wasn’t planning on doing the whole creek).



The quote from Jebb’s July 1816 report overlaid on a section of his map showing the area of his proposed 8 km railway. The full map and more details can be found in “The Rideau Route” available as a free download on www.rideaufriends.com



This profile, with a large vertical exaggeration, shows the problem, the watershed divide north of Plum Hollow. Measurements show a total of 180 feet of topography that would have to be overcome by locks to have a navigable canal with a minimum 5 foot depth of water.

Message from the Chair

Dear Friends,

Writing this spring missive for the newsletter is much easier than the fall version. Out my window I have early spring taking place, with the Rideau Canal filling up and the prospect of the Canal resuming operations in a few weeks.

We participated in the Ottawa Boat Show in February, sharing a booth with our colleagues from the Rideau Roundtable. Together the two organizations delivered linked messages about the heritage and the environmental significance of the Rideau Canal. These messages complemented the information provided by Parks Canada from its adjacent display.

We are presently planning the operating season for our visitor centre at The Depot in Merrickville. I'm pleased to report that Joshua Terpstra will serve again as the Manager of the Depot. Friends thanks the Village of Merrickville-Wolford for providing us with a grant to help meet our operating costs, as we received only half of what we requested from the Canada Summer Jobs Program for staff employment. It is our hope to run The Depot from mid-June to Labour Day.

An important part of Friends' program of activities over the summer is our participation in celebrations and festivals along the Rideau. In 2025 we hope to take part in Paddlefest on June 7 at Lower Reach Park in Smiths Falls, Stewart Park Days in Perth on July 19, Smiths Falls Old Home Week August 4 (Friends will have a booth in Lower Reach Park that day), and the Classic Boat Show in August, on a date not announced yet, possibly at Westport.

Friends has been invited to participate in the new Rideau Canal Stakeholders Advisory Committee, hosted by Parks Canada and chaired by the Director of Ontario Waterways, David Britton. We are one of a number of civil society organisations, including environmental groups, private sector interests, lake association groups and other entities with direct interests in the management and sustainability of the Rideau Canal. There have been two meetings of the group so far, with topics discussed covering progress on implementing the Rideau Canal management plan, preparation for Canal operations in 2025, and initiation of the planning process for the celebration in 2032 of the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Rideau (to name a few of the issues covered). Friends is pleased that this committee has been set up, as

Depot Report

Friends is getting ready for the 2025 season opening of the Depot, our Rideau visitor center located in Blockhouse Park in Merrickville. We are hoping to be open by mid June and we will operate until Labour Day. Schedules are presently being worked out, but in July and August we will definitely be open seven days a week, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm each day. Check the Depot page on our website for the latest information.



If you have any questions in regard to the Rideau, from Rideau trip planning to history and everything in between, feel free to stop by. Our helpful staff will gladly assist you and answer all your questions.

Our primary purpose at the Depot is to offer Rideau visitor services including travel advice about the Rideau, a large selection of brochures, public washrooms and WiFi. We also have a good selection of Rideau

related items for sale including many books, clothing items and souvenirs.

Friends would like to thank Parks Canada for their continued support by providing us with the Depot building to operate. We would also like to thank the village of Merrickville-Wolford for providing us with both a financial grant and water and sewer services. The support of both Parks Canada and the Village of Merrickville-Wolford is greatly appreciated and essential to our operation.

We look forward to welcoming you as well as visitors from far and wide to the Depot again this summer.

Joshua Terpstra

Depot Manager and Chair of the Depot Committee

we have been calling for its establishment for some years, as a successor to a similar group from the 2000s.

Finally, we congratulate the Newboro and Area Heritage Society for its work at trying to establish the Newboro Blockhouse as a heritage centre, with support from Parks Canada. When that is up and running, we should all go and pay it a visit.

I hope you will find the opportunity to visit The Depot this summer. It would be a pleasure for us to introduce you to the public face of Friends of the Rideau.

Best wishes,

Hunter McGill

Chair, Friends of the Rideau

Rideau Canal Landscape Studies

A Rideau Canal Management Plan commitment was to complete five landscape studies of lockstations by 2025—to quote “By 2025, the cultural landscapes and heritage values of five lockstations are described and documented to support conservation initiatives, interpretation and authentic visitor experience opportunities.” Parks Canada is now way behind in that commitment (as they are with many other management plan commitments, including the promise of an annual report on the progress in meeting targets as set in the management plan).

As the person who initiated the concept of detailed landscape studies and fought hard to get these into the management plan, I well know the reasons for these studies (the Parks-speak lexicon used in the management plan is a bit obtuse). One purpose is to document the landscape use over time, from indigenous use to present day. This is to properly document these sites (which for much of the Rideau Canal has never been done) to aid in future interpretation. Parks Canada written policy is to ground heritage interpretation with good research and well documented facts.

The five planned studies are: 1) the Ottawa Reach (Ottawa Locks to Hogs Back), 2) the Smiths Falls Reach (Old Slys to Smiths Falls Detached), 3) Jones Falls, 4) Newboro and 5) Merrickville. All the lockstations need to be done, but this promise was at least a start. The Ottawa Reach study has yet to be completed and it was not done as a landscape study, it was done as a landscape planning document which is a different beast. I’m now watching, in real time, this very important initiative, and a commitment in the management plan, going off the rails. This is due to lack of resourcing provided to the Rideau Canal by Parks Canada HQ and new priorities which are now shunting aside management plan commitments.

I will be pushing very hard for the Jones Falls and Newboro Landscape Studies to be proper scientific studies, not just a simple planning exercise. Jones Falls has never been studied by Parks Canada and Newboro only has a couple of reports. A lot of work needs to be done to understand and document the landscape uses over time. While Parks Canada has abandoned heritage interpretation for the Rideau Canal (since 2012), at some point it will hopefully come back. These landscapes studies, if properly done and resourced, will be invaluable aids for developing interpretation and for our deeper understanding of these sites, including indigenous use. These studies are also intended to be living documents that will provide a foundation to protect things such as the visual values and heritage character of these sites. These are specific UNESCO World Heritage Site commitments that Parks Canada is also presently ignoring.

- Ken Watson

Undercapitalization of the Rideau Canal

Back in 2003, the Auditor General of Canada slammed the Federal government for not looking after the built cultural heritage that it owns. This included significant issues with federal agencies such as Parks Canada. In her report she explained why these places are important to Canadians:

These places recall the lives and history of the men and women who built this country, and they foster awareness of how Canadian society evolved. They help us to better understand the present and prepare for the future. They contribute in important ways to Canadians’ sense of belonging to their community. When important parts of Canada’s Built Heritage are lost, future generations of Canadians are deprived of access to key moments of their shared history.

This report eventually led to Parks Canada doing their National Asset Review, which identified over a billion dollars of needed work since many of its heritage assets were in poor condition. A good portion of this needed work was on the Rideau Canal and the Trent-Severn Waterway. The reason for the problem was Parks Canada’s continued undercapitalization of its heritage canals, making the later fixes much more expensive than if they’d been doing proper capital work all along.

It’s happening again. Even in the management plan, despite some intense public lobbying, Parks Canada only committed to “by 2032, at least 70 percent of engineering works of national significance are maintained in fair or good condition.” Flip that statement around and already you see that they accept that 30% of nationally significant engineering works are going to be left in less than fair (i.e. poor) condition and there is no mention of non-engineering heritage assets (i.e. lockmaster houses, blockhouses, etc.). It’s a national shame that the government has allowed Parks Canada to do this.

So why? Yes, it’s expensive, but Canada is in fact a rich country, we can afford to protect our heritage should there be the political will to do so. Reading the 2003 report (available on www.SaveOurRideau.ca), many aspects of the problem the Auditor General identified are still present in 2025. The infrastructure program initiated in 2015 did make good headway on the Rideau and Trent-Severn, but that’s now gone and we’re back to the original problem the Auditor General detailed back in 2003. Hopefully a new government will pay attention to this and provide the needed resources to properly protect and restore the heritage assets of the Rideau Canal.

Biography of a Blockhouse

by Sue Warren

In 1832, the British military, who would supervise the Rideau Canal until 1856, ordered the building of five blockhouses – Newboro, Narrows, Kingston Mills, Merrickville and Burritts Rapids. Four were completed (Burritts was only half completed) before the British government shut down this military initiative. The buildings were of a similar design except the one in Merrickville, which was larger due to its proximity of roads leading to the American border. William Tett, brother of local entrepreneur Benjamin, was selected as the contractor for Narrows and Newboro. By August 1833 the Newboro blockhouse was substantially completed. The walls were of local sandstone, likely drawn from the Halladay quarry near Elgin, the timber top was made using local white pine.

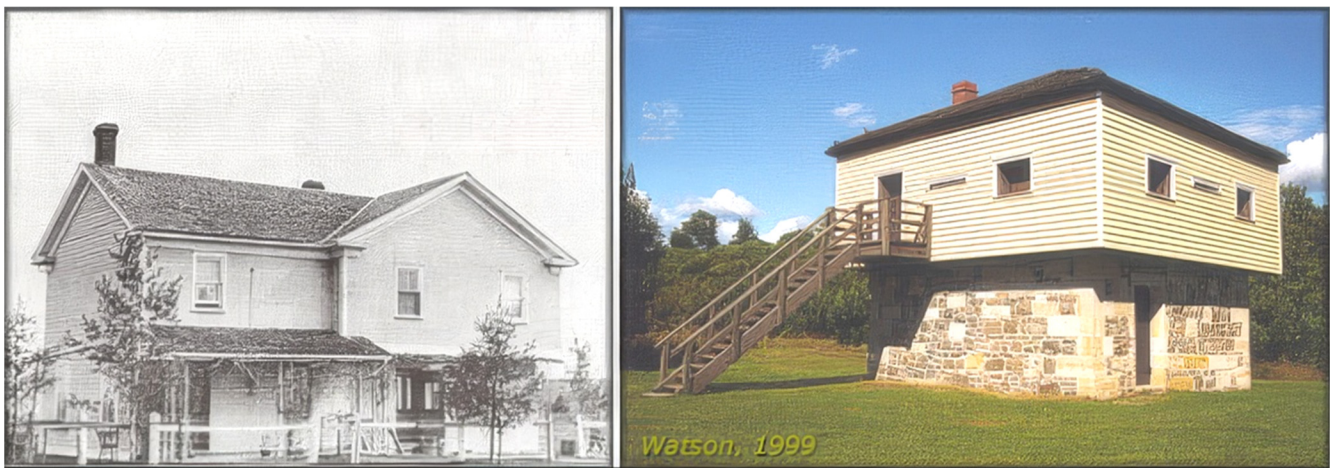
The blockhouses were designed for defence with a solid masonry base and an upper protruding storey with gun slits. But their use in the first 100 or so years was as homes for lockmasters and families. The first Newboro lockmaster, Daniel McDonald (a former member of the Sappers and Miners) and his wife Elizabeth lived in the upper storey, which was accessed using an exterior staircase. The lower storey, which was initially used to store munitions, was only accessible from within the upper storey, an exterior door was added later. Elizabeth died in 1849 and shortly after this Daniel married a much younger woman, fathered seven children, and entered a new career as a merchant. There was one military occupation in 1838 during the Upper Canada Rebellion, when local militia were called up to protect the lockstations from Newboro to Jones Falls. They only served a few months as there were no local threats to attack these stations.

Daniel retired just before Confederation and was replaced by David Forster. Only three years into the job, he died and his young son Alfred, a well-known local character, took over. In 1871 Alfred moved to Davis Lock, exchanging positions with John Johnston, who then became lockmaster at Newboro, serving there until his retirement in 1887.

By this time, the blockhouse was not a suitable living space. It was cold, drafty and difficult to access. When William Dargavel assumed the position of lockmaster in 1887, the house was totally revamped to resemble a typical Eastern Ontario farmhouse. Few people remembered its function as a military building. Dargavel, brother of a prominent merchant and politician, received the position through patronage. He was a real gentleman who often wore a top hat and suit when he locked through the boats. His canal man, Jack Lyons, took over the position in 1921 and lived in the house until 1946. Lyons was followed by H.E. King who died in 1961 at which point the house ceased to be a home for lock staff.

During the planned electrification of the Rideau Canal, the Department of Transport decided to restore the blockhouse to its original shape. However, by the time it was accomplished in 1966, the restoration was not completely accurate. If I remember correctly, it looked more like a wooden fort that might have been built on the American frontier. The electrified lock gates were initially painted an ugly orange. In 1972, Parks Canada took over the operation of the canal. In the 1980s, more restoration was done to make the blockhouse resemble its appearance in 1833. One change was to paint the clapboard the yellowish colour shown in an 1841 painting of the blockhouse done by Thomas Burrowes.

Since the 1980s, interpretive programs have been hosted at the lockstation and for a brief while, the Newboro villagers hosted an exhibition of artifacts inside the blockhouse. Unfortunately, these were stolen. Today, the brand new Newboro and Area Heritage Society is making plans to use the blockhouse to highlight the long history of the community.



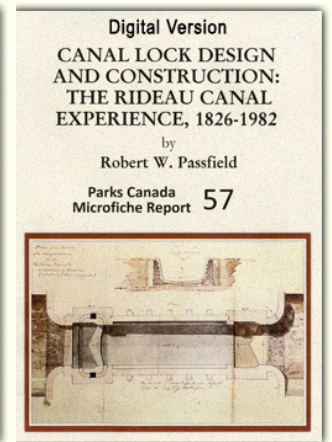
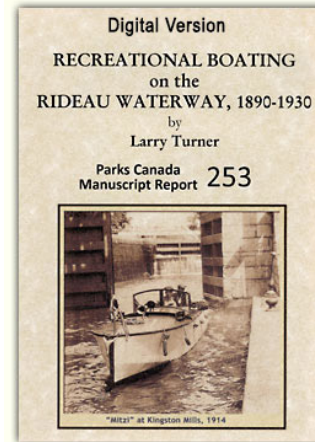
Newboro Blockhouse—1930 and 1999

The Newboro blockhouse was heavily altered to make it livable for the lockmaster and his family. Can you spot where it is in the left photo? The photo on the right shows it in restored condition, similar, except for the door in the masonry bottom, to its 1833 design. It is closed to the public, Parks Canada removed the stairs many years ago. We hope to see it open again as a heritage centre run by the Newboro and Area Heritage Society.

Resources for the Rideau

A few years ago (2008), Friends initiated a project to digitize several Parks Canada manuscript reports to make them more accessible to the public. Flash forward to December 2024 when we moved the Friends' website to a new hosting service with much more capacity than our old one.

Accordingly, a project done in January 2025 was to load up the website with several (now over 60) documents related to the Rideau Canal. It's a tremendous online resource for anyone doing research about the Rideau Canal and for those with a general interest in certain Rideau topics. We opened two new sections, one for Parks Canada manuscript reports and one for everything else. Just click on the "Books and Reports" link on the side menu of www.rideaufriends.com and scroll down that page to the Manuscript Report link and the Books and Reports link. All files are PDFs with a file size noted beside them.



FREE LOCKAGE

Currently July 1 (Canada Day) and July 19 (Canada Parks Day) are planned to be free lockage days on the Rideau Canal.

This is being written during the election so results are not known, but one party has made an election promise of free access to Canada's National Parks and National Historic Sites in 2025, including the Rideau Canal, to allow all Canadians to enjoy our national treasures without a financial barrier. Keep an eye out on our website and the Parks Canada Rideau Canal website for information should this in fact happen.

Free lockage was done in 2017 as part of Canada 150, so the government procedures for this (compensating Parks' sites for lost revenue) is well established.



LASALLE CAUSEWAY

Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC) are still dragging their feet on implementing a proper solution to a problem they caused, irreparably damaging the Lasalle Causeway lift bridge in the spring of 2024. It was an engineering mistake on their part that caused the structural failure of that historic bridge. They have implemented a slow and very expensive temporary solution to allow that channel to be opened on rare occasions (summer schedule is not yet available as of this writing). The latest information can be found on Parks Canada's Rideau Canal website: parks.canada.ca/rideau

But, for boats that are less than 14 feet high, the east channel opening in the causeway can be used. Parks Canada is installing a gauge in that location to monitor the daily clearance of that bridge which changes with the level of Lake Ontario. That clearance can vary from 14 to 16 feet. Boaters can do their own calculations given that the bottom of the bridge is at 79.64 m / 261.3 ft. AMSL and the level of Lake Ontario at Kingston on any given day can be found on the Internet (it's at 74.787m at the moment (late April) — so 15.5 ft. of clearance).

For more info and a link to Lake Ontario water levels, see: www.rideau-info.com/canal/statistics.html (scroll down to just below the canal statistics listing)

Rideau Canal 2025 Hours of Operation

Dates	Days	Hours
May 16—June 19	Mon to Thurs	10 am to 4 pm
	Fri to Sun, holidays	9 am to 7 pm
June 20—Sept. 1	Mon to Thurs	9 am to 6 pm
	Fri to Sun, holidays	9 am to 7 pm
Sept. 2—Oct. 13	Mon to Friday	10 am to 4 pm
	Sat to Sun, holidays	9 am to 5 pm

Rideau Canal 2025 Fees

Single Lockage & Return	= \$ 1.25 per foot
One Day	= \$ 2.00/ft
Transit (one way)	= \$ 5.25/ft
Six Days (any six days)	= \$ 5.75/ft
Seasonal (power boats)	= \$ 10.00/ft
Seasonal (paddle craft)	= \$ 5.00/ft
Mooring (overnight)	= \$ 1.25/ft

RIDEAU200

The countdown has started towards the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Rideau Canal (literally—you'll find a countdown clock on the Friends of the Rideau website on a new Rideau200 page.). The first steamboat transit of the canal started in Kingston on May 22, 1832, with Lt. Colonel John By and his family aboard Robert Drummond's steamboat *Rideau* (nicknamed *Pumper*), 80 feet long and powered by a 12 hp steam engine. It arrived in Ottawa on May 29, 1832, completing the first steamboat transit of the Rideau Canal. It was a celebration all along the route of the completion of the Rideau Canal.

There were adventures along the way. After leaving Chaffeys, they spotted two native groups who were flying union flags and firing their muskets in a feu de joie salute. To quote an account from a person who was on board the *Rideau*; "Col. By received them on board to the number of about 40 men, women and children, who went on to the Isthmus [Newboro] with us, their boats and canoes towed astern of the steamer, ten in number." Relations between the canal builders and indigenous peoples who were doing their traditional hunting and gathering along the Rideau during the construction of the canal were very good.

When the *Rideau* steamed into Smiths Falls at 6 am on May 25, 1832 it fired a salute from a signal cannon mounted on the bow. An enthusiastic group of villagers answered that salute by stuffing gunpowder into a 40 lb cannon, tamping it in with sod and then firing the cannon in a return salute. But the villagers got a little carried away with their last salute to Colonel By. To quote from my story Bye By in Tales of the Rideau, "They crammed in 10 pounds of powder and then tamped sods of earth down the barrel. The cannon was primed and then the shot was fired. The cannon exploded — literally — the end of the barrel blasted apart. Pieces of metal travelled up to 425 feet (130 m) from the shattered cannon. Only four feet of the muzzle remained. Miraculously, no one was hurt in the incident."

Unfortunately for Colonel By, on that very day (May 25, 1832) in London England, a Treasury Minute was being written, recommending that Colonel By be removed from duty and return to England to answer questions about cost overruns. It's to be noted that this was not a question of fraud, it was an issue that By had exceeded the yearly parliamentary grants being given for the construction of the canal. While he was fully exonerated prior to arriving back in England, he was caught up in the politics of the day and never got his due recognition. That story is told in detail in Bye By (in Tales of the Rideau, book and online). By only started to get his due in the early 20th century, when his genius in the construction of this remarkable engineering achievement started to be recognized.

Stay tuned for more Rideau200 information. Parks Canada has set up a small planning group and are currently soliciting ideas for various things that can be done in celebration. We have Rideau150 and Rideau175 as examples and there are lots of ideas. Friends of the Rideau's main push at the moment is to bring back the Rideau Passport which was extremely popular in 1982, 2007 and 2017—but it was never made into a permanent program. It's not just the physical passport, it was designed as a tourism program, get your passport stamped at all the lockstations and you'll be entered into a draw to win a prize (i.e. free season lockage). It's a remarkably cost effective program to get people to visit all the lockstations and it is extremely popular with youth. It serves both heritage and tourism, since getting people to visit all the lockstations will give them a good sense of Rideau heritage and it's an economic boon for the less visited sections of the Rideau Canal (ie. outside of Ottawa and Kingston). It's also "shovel ready" – the 2017 program could be easily be updated for Rideau200. Friends of the Rideau partnered with Parks Canada in 2017 on the passport project and we've offered to do that again.



Upcoming Milestone Dates

May 15, 2025—100th Anniversary of the first National Historic Site of Canada designation for the Rideau Canal (NHS designation expanded in 1967 and again in 2011).

September 26, 2026—200th anniversary of the start of the building of the Rideau Canal and the founding of Ottawa. On September 26, 1826, Lt. Colonel John By and George Ramsay, the 9th Earl of Dalhousie and the Governor-in-Chief of British North America, stood at the foot of Entrance Valley (today's Ottawa Locks), deciding that it was the best spot for the northern end of the Rideau Canal. This is the official start of the canal and the founding date of Bytown, later Ottawa. Work started that fall on clearing Entrance Valley in preparation for the locks.

January 1, 2032—200th anniversary of the opening of the Rideau Canal. Although May 22 is the start of the first steamboat transit, celebrations are expected to start on January 1 and extend through the year (as was done for Rideau175 in 2007).

Oh Canada !!!

Heritage people are by nature proud of our country — from its indigenous origins to its present-day multicultural landscape. Our long history is part of our national identity. But, speaking for myself, we seem to have lost some of that national pride in recent years. It's unfortunate that it is now taking an external threat from what should be a friendly neighbour to bring back a sense of pride in our nation.

To our American neighbours, we understand the situation, the majority of you like and respect Canada as a sovereign nation, very different in culture and history from the U.S. We invite you to come to Canada this summer and to explore our national treasures such as the Rideau Canal.

The Rideau Canal was built as a military canal to help stop invading Americans. But today we welcome "invading" Americans as friendly visitors to our great country. We started off in conflict but have, since the mid-1800s, had reasonably friendly relations with the U.S. So, to our American friends, come to Canada this summer and see what we have to offer.

- Ken Watson



Our Flag among the Pines

I took this photo several years ago on Newboro Lake—it just was so iconic, our flag flying among a stand of white pine. See the digital copy of this newsletter on our website for the colour version.

The Historic Rideau Canal—A Photo Exhibit

This past winter I was involved in a project initiated by Glen Russell to create a photo exhibit of enhanced and colourized period photos of Rideau Lockstations. Glen is doing this on a volunteer basis for the Elgin and Area Historical Society (EAHS). Glen originally started with a set of Pennock photos and my wife Pat and I helped with the identification of several of these.

One problem was that the original set of Pennock negatives, rescued by Neil Patterson and later given to Parks Canada, were sometimes scanned or printed backwards, making it a bit more difficult in terms of identification. Since the Pennock photos didn't cover all the lockstations, I delved into my large digital collection of Rideau heritage photos to help fill the gaps.

Glen has tremendous skills at enlarging, enhancing and colourizing photos as anyone who visited the Pennock photo exhibit in the Red Brick Schoolhouse in Elgin last summer will attest to. This Rideau set will be on display on weekends in July and August this year at the Red Brick Schoolhouse. It is well worth a visit. See eahs.ca

I've also very strongly suggested to Parks Canada that they work with Glen to have these printed panels (each panel is 2 feet wide by 6 feet high) on display during Rideau200.

- Ken Watson



The Rideau Canal and the Parliament Buildings, c.1865

This is an image that few have seen before since it's two images stitched together. The c.1865 date of the photo is because we can see the Parliament Buildings in their final stage of construction. They opened to the public in June 1866. That entire complex, with the exception of the Library, burned to the ground in 1916.

In the foreground, behind the cannons, is the defensible lockmaster's house built in 1849. The Commissariat building, built in 1827, now the Bytown Museum, is visible behind it. The top of the Royal Engineers building, located directly across from the Commissariat building, is just barely visible. It was demolished in 1911-12.

The lockmaster's house was demolished in 1875 and the present day stone lock office was built adjacent to the upper lock in 1884. The Chateau Laurier, built between 1908 and 1912, now occupies most of the foreground of this photo.

Stitching, enhancement and colourizing was done by Glen Russell. See the digital version of our newsletter on the Friend's website for the spectacular colourized version or better yet, visit the Red Brick Schoolhouse in Elgin this summer to see the printed panels.

MEMBERSHIPS/DONATIONS

Friends of the Rideau is an all volunteer group that depends on the generosity of our membership and donors. Please consider a membership and/or donation today. See the donation page on: rideaufriends.com