

President's Message

From Mark Harding

2017 was an exciting year for Canadian decoy collectors. The Brown collection came to market and was the largest assembly of Canadian decoys ever to be offered at Auction. Ducks Unlimited was the beneficiary of the proceeds and the decoys were sold through Guyette & Deeter. The highlight of the collection was the pair of Fernlund Pintails which sold for \$201,250.00. It was nice to see many decoys stayed in Canada. We also liked the large variety of decoys available for all levels of collectors. Jon Deeter has advised that the last installment from the Brown collection will be coming to auction this April in St Charles.

As if all that wasn't excitement enough, in October CDOCA held our annual show in Kingston. We have an extensive write-up on the show for you in The Rig. It was good to see so many rooms open on Friday night for the room-to-room. On Saturday the 170+ people who attended were greeted by over 30 dealers with 55 tables of decoys & outdoor collectables. After the show members attended a reception and our AGM. Thank you Guyette & Deeter for once again sponsoring the Reception.

Thanks to show coordinator Bill Meggs and his committee for all the effort to put on a successful show, as always, the displays & contest were top notch. I would also like to thank all the dealers who support our show and bring such a wide variety of decoys, outdoor collectables and folk art.

Next year we turn our attention back to the Niagara region. Due to unsuccessful negotiations at the Ramada Beacon, we will be changing venue. For 2018, we are going to the Americana Resort in Niagara Falls. This is a large, modern facility with everything we need to put on a comfortable and successful show. I encourage you to check it out online at <https://www.americananiagara.com/>

The 2018 show dates are Oct 19th and 20th. We will provide further updates in The Rig as the show gets closer. You can also keep up to date by going to our web site at <http://canadiandecoy.com/>

The CDOCA is only as strong as its members. To that end we are attempting to reach out to many members who

have not renewed. We will be emailing and mailing a renewal notice and hope for your continued support.

As we have now entered 2018, some of you may have allowed your membership to lapse effective 31 December 2017. Some, in fact, have already expired at the end of 2016. We have perhaps created some confusion in this regard by continuing to mail copies of The Rig to members after the date of expiry. You can check whether your membership is still current by looking at the expiry date included on the mailing label for The Rig. All memberships expire at 31 December of a given year.

To renew, please send a cheque to our treasurer at

CDOCA
c/o John Battaglia,
132 October Crescent,
London, ON
Canada
N6K 4E1

Alternatively, if you have access to online banking, you can simply send an Interac transfer to optician@sympatico.ca

Fees are \$30 for one year or \$75 for three years. (Due to increased mailing costs south of the border, fees for our US members are the same dollar amounts, but, in US currency.)

Also, if you know anyone who is interested in Canadian outdoor collectibles or decoys, please let us know. The more people we can bring into the hobby the better we can promote it!

2017 CDOCA Show

October 20th and 21st, Kingston, Ontario.

The 2017 edition of the Canadian Decoy and Outdoor Collectibles Association annual show was held at the Ambassador Hotel in Kingston, Ontario the weekend of October 20th and 21st. The association now moves the show location between Kingston and Niagara Falls area in alternate years with remarkable success. The best part is that both locations are in prime Ontario wine growing regions. We did manage to sample some excellent wines in Prince Edward County on the way to the show. It seems that there is more than just ducks and old decoys in the County!

The show kicks off with Friday evening room-to-room buying and trading activity. This year, I believe, there were more rooms open than at many of our previous shows. There were also many fresh faces with some great Canadian birds out for sale. One room was full of Nichol family decoys of various species, both pairs and individual birds. This continued throughout the evening and I know that some great pieces found new homes.

The one-day show with over 30 dealer tables had a wonderful selection of decoys from all regions of the country. While the offerings were mostly focussed on Ontario decoys, there were Maritime, Quebec and even the odd British Columbia bird out on the dealer tables. There was also a wide selection of outdoor-related artwork, folk art, fishing tackle and hunting equipment to look over. The show organizers did an excellent job to



promote the show in the newspapers, media and with online media. This resulted in a larger than normal turnout of interested locals.

The club prides itself on the quality of the displays presented each year at the show. Typically, the displays are related to the locale of the show. This year there was

an exceptional display of Quebec outdoor collectibles. The collectibles included fish and animal carvings, painted canoe paddles and folk art. The second Quebec display was of teal decoys. Both fabulous displays were organized by Pierre Menard.



The Rig – Published by the Canadian Decoy and Outdoor Collectibles Association, c/o 66 Texas Avenue, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, P6A 4Y8, as a club newsletter intended for the enjoyment and entertainment of its members and friends. CDOCA's missions are "to promote, share and maintain interest in decoys and other outdoor sporting collectibles." Annual memberships are available for \$30 Cdn or \$75 for three years. US rates are also \$ 30/75 in US funds

The third display was of the carvings of Tom Martindale whose TM brand can be found on so many decoys and decorative carvings in both Canada and the United States. He currently lives along the St. Lawrence River outside of Brockville, Ontario.

Tom is a 3rd generation carver, hunter and fisherman. His father and grandfather were market hunters on Mitchell's Bay in southwestern Ontario where he spent much of his youth. He started gunning when he was just 11 years old.



Tom has been carving for over 40 years. He recalled the early decoy shows including the Toronto Sportsman's shows out at the airport strip. Often, he sold out of decoys before the show started and had to take orders to accommodate all the customers.

He enjoys carving working and decorative birds, fish and large birds like eagles, falcons, etc. It was his grandmother who taught him to carve his first fish! He harvests his own wood, drying and curing it before beginning to create his next piece. He enjoys both the carving and painting process and has his own technique to age the finished creation.



While now retired from carving full-time, Tom still carves for fun. (And would consider a custom order if it fits into his schedule.) Fishing has now taken over hunting as his passion. The good news is that his son has taken up carving giving the family a 4th generation in the business.

The other highlights of the show are the decoy and outdoor collectibles contests. This year there was a category with a patriotism theme, honoring the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation, with any outdoor collectible featuring a beaver. The other two categories were any Tom Martindale carving (decoy or otherwise) and any decoy from the Peter Brown collection. The Brown collection garnered a lot of interest in 2017 through the Guyette & Deeter Inc. auctions with all proceeds benefitting Ducks Unlimited. All the contests were well represented with some truly wonderful examples. The winning entries are shown below.

Decoy from the Peter Brown collection:



- 1st - John Latreille – Fernlund black
- 2nd - Mark Harding – Fernlund teal
- 3rd - Bill Meggs - Nichol mallard

Any carving by Tom Martindale:



- 1st - Paul Brisco – Dolsen-style canvasback
- 2nd - Bruce Johnson – Suss family-style fish decoy
- 3rd - Dean Hyde – Red-breasted merganser

Any outdoor collectible featuring a beaver:



- 1st - Pierre Menard – Beaver-inlaid coffee table
- 2nd - Art Philp – Canoe cup
- 3rd - Bill Meggs – Beaver carving

The show ended mid-afternoon. It was followed with the Annual General Meeting and a cocktail party sponsored by Guyette & Deeter Inc. The end to another great show!

Next years show will be held in Niagara Falls, Ontario on Friday, October 19th and Saturday, October 20th, 2018. Please mark it on your calendars. For information, contact Mark Harding at m.harding@outlook.com



A Visit with Ralph Malpage

From Jim Lackenbauer

In March, while I was participating in the Canadian Wildfowl Carving Competition in Waterloo, Ontario, I had a welcome visit from Ralph Malpage. He is probably the last of the active, old-time decoy carvers. Ralph had driven down by himself from London, over 65 miles away, and it was good to see how spry, upbeat and alert he was, especially, for an 89-year-old!

In July, I made a brief visit to Ralph's house where I found



him in his extensive basement workshop. He is still making wooden lawn furniture and carving decoys. The decoys are made in his old traditional style with carved wing feathers and feather-stamping. He still makes at least one decoy a week and there were many birds in

different stages of completion, neatly tagged and placed on his shop shelves.

Early in his carving career, Ralph had some basic help and advice from the well-known, Michigan maker Ben Schmidt of Detroit. This influence is still obvious even in his most recent carvings. He was a good friend, fellow hunter and major influence on the younger carvers Allan Wragg and Doug Burrell (W&B brand) who he has now outlived.



Photos courtesy of Jeannine Barkhouse and Jim Lackenbauer

Orval Pyle (1927-2017) – In Memorial

With assistance from Don Blyth

Orval R. Pyle passed away in Guelph, Ontario on September 11. Orval was greatly respected and admired by many who knew him and will be missed in the collecting community. He was born in Dunnville, Ontario and early in life moved to Guelph. There he worked in carpentry and later purchased a farm, where he both farmed and operating a riding school.



On retirement, Orval took up carving and produced dozens of great carvings. He was passionate about his garden and loved the great outdoors. He enjoyed both fishing and hunting, particularly, deer and moose. He was an expert

horseman and was a long-time member of the Guelph Carving Club.

Decoy collecting and, if I recall correctly, taxi/chauffer pins were of great interest. His decoy collection contained many Ken Angers, Doc Smith, Bud Frees, Myril Smith decoys of various species and even a couple of Pringles reminding him of his time in Dunnville. I will always remember him as having a Tom Chambers redhead for sale in his room at decoy shows that I attended!

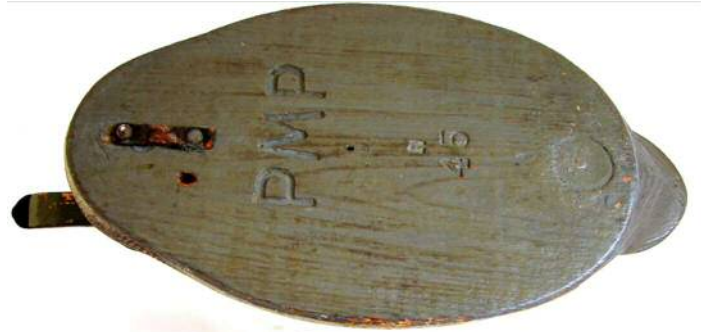
Plato Auctions – November 18, 2017

Vineland, Ontario

The highlight of the November Plato auction for decoy collectors was the Peter Pringle redhead head hen from the Orval Pyle collection. It was included in the dispersal of this collection after his recent passing.



The redhead hen, number 45 in the final rig, is pictured and discussed in the Pringle book authored by W. Reeve. It was in excellent condition and in all original paint apart from the bill being repainted or touched up, most likely by Pringle.



At the auction, the decoy sold to the phone for \$9500 plus a 10% buyer premium. The good news is that this decoy is staying in Canada.

Other items of interest were the Anger drake goldeneye selling for \$1000 and a drake redhead for \$800. In total, there were 39 decoys in the auction. While several items were passed, the remaining decoys generally sold in the range of \$300-700.

Guyette&Deeter, Inc. Auction – November 9, 2017



A hollow Canada goose by Phineas Reeves of Long Point, Ontario was sold in the Fall auction in Easton, Maryland. This decoy was branded "GBH" for George B. Harris, a club member from 1872 – 1892, twice, once under the tail and once on its side.

The condition was described as "original paint that was dirty with grunge and has oxidized to create a very dry looking surface: a crack in the body running almost the length of the back; shows old filler as well as several other imperfections with filler probably applied during the construction of the decoy".

Building the Collection

I would like to summarize a recent article in the Globe and Mail newspaper dealing with investing strategy. Of course, it has a certain similarity to the acquisition of our favorite collectibles. These five basic rules are followed by many successful investors with stunning results.

1) Never pay full price

Some collectors make a lot of money by jumping on trends, buying examples in hot markets and riding the surge. Think of fish decoys, miniatures, shell boxes, etc. over the last few years. Instead, buy high quality pieces for less than their replacement cost. In other words, every time you buy, try to buy it on sale.

2) Hunt where no one else is hunting

So where do you find items at discounted prices? Look for sellers who may be "under duress" or situations in which there are few competing buyers. It will probably cost you less and there will certainly be less competition for your piece.



3) Think long-term

If you are buying for the short-term flip, you can chase hot items and you don't have to be too picky about quality. If the trend bursts, you may be left holding the bag. If, on the other hand, you always buy top quality and pay less than the asset is worth, once the deal is done, there's not much that can go wrong.

4) Move fast

If you are risk-adverse, that doesn't mean you can't dither and overanalyze. Once you spot something that you truly like, and it fits in your collection, do your research and wait. When opportunity knocks – such as when there's a forced sale, a trade-up, etc – strike like a viper.

5) Don't invest to get rich

It is ironic that some of the best collectors and their collections are not focussed solely on personal wealth. Greed can cloud your thinking and you should look at the numbers dispassionately and be prepared to walk away if the numbers don't add up.

From "Better than Buffett" by Duncan Hood – Report on Business
Nov/Dec 2017

Canada Powder Company

The early 1850s saw the start of a railway building boom in this part of Canada which required blasting powder imported from Britain and the United States.

Twenty-seven-year-old Charles Kelly, as a local hardware dealer in Hamilton in then Canada West (C.W.), probably had been an importer of black powder. Seeing an opportunity in 1851, he acquired Crown land located at Cedar Springs. He cleared the forest and erected several buildings on the land. The powder mills were supplied with 30 horsepower of water-power provided by a dam and sluiceway. By June 1851, his Gore Powder Mills was producing black powder and it was being used extensively to build the Great Western Railway, from Niagara Falls through Hamilton and London opened in 1853 and to Windsor which was to open in 1854.

Gunpowder and blasting powder were made from a mixture of sulfur, saltpeter and charcoal. Sulfur came from Turkey and the saltpeter came from Chile. The charcoal was burned on-site in kilns, made from the wood of willow trees grown on site.

POWDER MILLS.
KELLY, CHARLES, & Co., Gore powder mills, City of Hamilton, C. W. See Card.

GORE POWDER MILLS.

THE above Mills situated near the City of HAMILTON, Canada West, are now in full operation, and the subscribers are prepared to receive orders for all the different brands of

BLASTING, SPORTING, AND RIFLE POWDER,

In Kegs and Canisters, to be delivered either at Wellington Square, or Hamilton.

These are the only Mills in the Province,

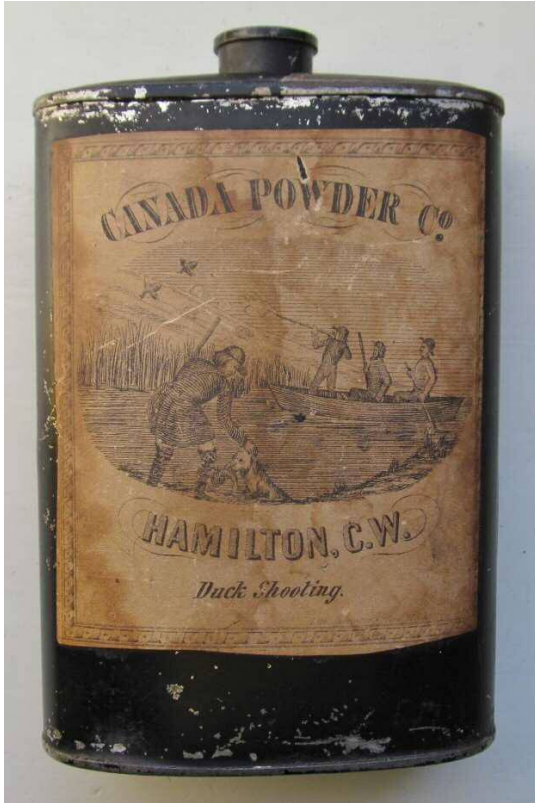
For the Manufacture of Powder, and in order to insure extensive patronage, the prices have been placed as low, and the terms made as liberal as possible, consistent with the success of the undertaking.

BELLHOUSE, IRELAND & Co., Agents.

CHARLES, KELLY & Co., Proprietors.
Hamilton, C. W., 1851.

from the Canada Directory 1851

An ad in the Canada Directory of 1851 announced that the Gore Powder Mills were prepared to receive orders for blasting, sporting, and rifle powder, in cakes and canisters. Built at a cost of £3,000 (maybe \$400,000 today), it had 10 employees and could produce 20 kegs of powder per day. Located in Cedar Springs, the Gore Powder Mills was the very first commercial powder mill in all of Canada. And Canada's only mill to 1862, the peak of the American Civil War.



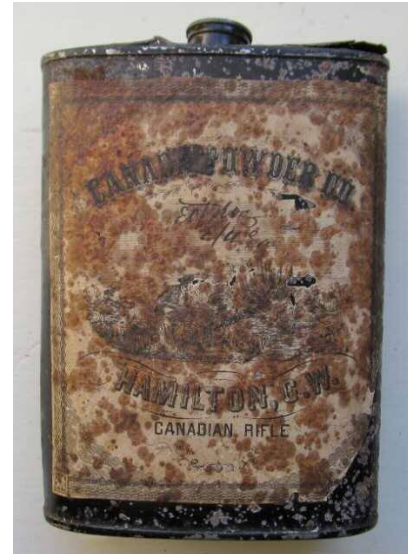
Here is what the facilities looked like back then. As you entered, there was a cooper shop where the little 25-pound wooden kegs were made, the storehouse where the empty kegs were stored, the barn, the manager's house and then the bridge over Twelve Mile Creek. There were heavy frame buildings a considerable distance apart among mature trees, for safety. Each building provided one of the processes required in the manufacture of the powder. The Cracker building, the Glazing Building and the Press building were, nevertheless, all destroyed in a later explosion. Each building was connected with the others by a narrow gauge wooden tracked railway, pushed by manpower. A large storehouse located on the north side of the creek was also heavily damaged in the explosion. About 200 yards downstream were low wooden structures, including the packing house, wheel house, pulverizing house, change house, mixing house, grist mill, refinery, engine house, dry pan and saltpeter

house. At a great distance from all of them were the charcoal kilns

The mills operated by water power for which the company had constructed two dams. One upstream and the other one was situated close to the mill buildings. Several acres of water were constantly in store and only awaited the opening of the sluice gates to permit the water to flow swiftly through the millrace to the great waterwheels in each of the buildings. The sluice gates were closed each night when the mills finished up for the day. Thus, the dams retained throughout the night the water from a flowing Twelve Mile Creek.

In November 1853, Charles Kelly's mills exploded, with the shock felt 40 miles distant. As it happened in the middle of the night, there were no casualties. Charles Kelly then transferred the part of his lands containing the powder mills to a second better-capitalized Canada Powder Company, when it was formed in 1854. Kelly continued as an investor.

In 1855, Canada Powder Company built an enlarged powder mill at an expense of \$200,000 (about \$5 million



today). It was capable of manufacturing 150, 25 lb. kegs of powder per day. The company expanded to occupy 140 acres of land in the valley. These Mills were in successful operation the first two years after they were built, and the company found a ready sale for all it could manufacture.

Following the depression of 1857, the company was less successful and curtailed production, running the mills only for five or six months in the year. By 1859, Canada Powder Company mortgaged their lands to raise funds. Later, the mortgage was foreclosed.

James Watson, who came from Glasgow, Scotland about 1858, was the leader in organizing a third company in 1862 to take over the powder mills. Watson arranged for the newly-formed Hamilton Powder Company to obtain the lands from the mortgage holders and equipment of the defunct Canada Powder works.

Gunpowder tins from the collection of Don Blyth

Ralph Malpage 1928-2017 – In Memorial



Ralph “Sammy” “Tapper” Malpage of London, Ontario passed away December 10, 2017 at the age of 89. A highly prolific wood carver, and an avid hunter/fisherman, he spent most of his free time creating many decorative and working duck decoy carvings.

Malpage began making decoys for hunting in 1943 at the age of 15. His decoys were subsequently found in many rigs across south-western Ontario. A sloped neck joint, roughened texture with carved wing feathers and feather stamping are characteristics of his work. The feather stamping is a result of the assistance provided by Michigan’s Ben Schmidt on creating functional hunting birds.

Paraphrasing J. Parrish from Facebook:

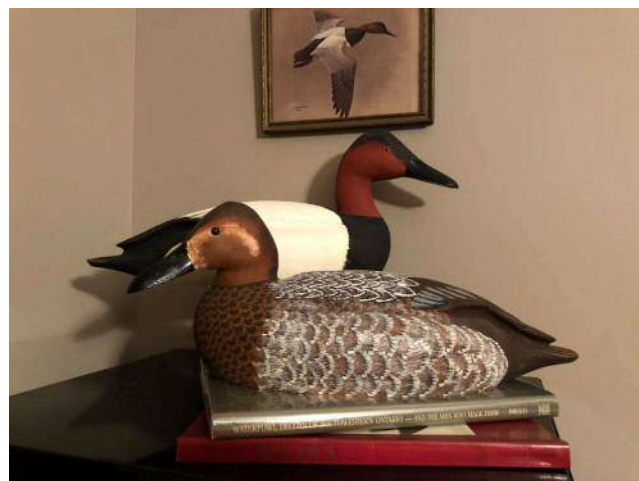
“Ralph’s shop was an interesting place. On one side of the basement, raw cedar was stacked up like firewood. On the other side was his carving area. He had a few power tools hanging around, but, also a had a large stump behind his jointer where he used his hatchet to hand-chop decoys. It was both awesome and nerve-racking watching him chop out a decoy. He swung a hatchet with great confidence and accuracy but seemed to come so close to his fingers each time!



Ralph had lots of reference material and decoys in various stages of completion. He had boxes of books and old photo albums of fishing and hunting adventures from

years past. Ralph was soft-spoken, kind and friendly. He was a hard worker and dedicated to his craft. He was always willing to share his knowledge and experience without any hesitation.”

Malpage was probably the last of the old-time carvers in Ontario. His decoys were documented in the reference books authored by P. Brisco and B. Gates. He was known to have interested fellow hunters Dave Burrell and Al Wragg (partners with the B&W brand) in carving both hunting and decorative birds.



If you have any interesting articles, items or photographs that you would like to pass on to the membership, please email it to The Rig editor at dness@shaw.ca