



Friends of Fintry Provincial Park

The Octagon – February, 2023

Greetings Friends,

February! I feel that we are finally over the worst of winter and now we will hopefully glide slowly into Spring....and our friend Okie has confirmed this!! February is that in-between month when we are all tired of dealing with snow and slush and look forward to getting outside and digging in the dirt.

Thankfully there is the Vernon Winter Carnival with a week full of activities to ward off the winter blahs. Check out what's happening at www.vernonwintercarnival.com

Also coming up is Heritage Week, February 20-26th with activities at some of the sites that are open over the winter and also some interesting walking tours. For a full list of what's happening check out www.heritagebc.ca/events or <https://www.facebook.com/heritageweekokanagan>. The Friends of Fintry will have a table on Sunday, February 19th in the Kelowna Community Theatre from 10-4 pm, so do stop by and see what we are all about. There will be displays by various groups participating in this year's Heritage events, loads of information and Hot Chocolate!

The Friends of Fintry are busy planning for this year's events with opening day on Sunday, May 14th (Mother's Day) when we will be holding our Fintry Spring Fair with vendors, tours, musicians and much, much more. Other important dates are June 24 and 25th for the Art Show and Strawberry Tea. July 9th for the Fintry Spring Fair, and August 20th for the Fintry Highland Fair. (New event). Stay tuned for more info on these and other exciting happenings at Fintry.

If you would like to volunteer to assist not only with our Fairs but in an ongoing basis, please reach out to myself at 250-309-7868. We can slot you in to an area of your interest.

This just in: The Regional District of Central Okanagan board has apparently reconsidered the Friends of Fintry's plea to reinstate its funding. It's not clear how much the RDCO board is willing to contribute to Fintry but it appears the board will restore some funding on a year-to-year basis. We've only heard about this development via Castanet. We're waiting to hear the formal details from the district's officials. Stay tuned.

Here's the link: <https://www.castanet.net/news/West-Kelowna/409742/RDCO-backtracks-restores-funding-to-Friends-of-Fintry#409742>

Next time you have a tour of the Fintry Manor House you will be able to answer the questions regarding this hide in the dressing room. Our Curator Dan Bruce continues to educate us on some of the more interesting artefacts in the Manor House rooms.

Visitors passing through the 'dressing room' immediately prior to entering the Trophy Room sometimes have their attention drawn to this small black and brown hide that hangs on the back of the Monk's Bench. Our tour guides will ask for suggestions as to what creature the hide was from. As far as I know only one has come close to a correct identification so far. (They opted for a goat).



The hide is that of a Barbados Black Belly sheep. This is a breed of sheep that has been on the island of Barbados since the seventeenth century, and is thought to have been brought there from somewhere in West Africa. This is clearly not a wool-bearing breed, and is best described as a hair-sheep, adapted to tropical conditions, and raised primarily for meat as opposed to wool or dairy products. A certain amount of the underside has been cut away from this hide, so the characteristic black belly is seen only on the outer edge.

The Barbados sheep are much in evidence on the island today, and are carefully farmed as a food source, and as part of the island's heritage. In the United States, several farmers are raising them, and there is now a breed called the American Black Belly. These differ from the original Barbados form in that they are cross-bred with the wild Mouflon (*Ovis musimon*), native to the Mediterranean island of Corsica. This crossing results in an animal with shaggier hair, (but still not wool) and the rams bearing spectacular curling horns. These are shown in this photo on the right. The Barbados rams are naturally hornless. Both these breeds are very prolific, and have good maternal instincts, so are prized as an efficient source of high-quality meat where other forms of livestock would be less suitable.



The hide was donated to the Fintry Estate by the late Dr. Weslie Combs who spent a large part of his working life as an instructor of agriculture and animal husbandry at a number of universities, and upon retiring from his teaching, did consultant work for various governments around the world. Shortly before he passed away, he presented his personal library to Fintry, as well as the sheep hide and other related items. Dr. Combs was an internationally respected authority on dairy sheep, and his library contains some fascinating, and in some cases obscure publications that he collected on his travels.

The Fintry Estate collection includes a reference library of agricultural and horticultural topics, and Dr. Combs' donation is an important part of this."

All for this month,
Kathy Drew,
Friends of Fintry Provincial Park