

The Lindsay Post

Heritage put in its rightful place - Post point of view

July 24, 2009

Something you'll hear all too often around these parts is how our heritage is slowly fading away. There goes another piece of history, they'll say. And most of the time, it seems our elected officials take the heat.

Historic Lindsay buildings like the old post office and the home of Sir Sam Hughes were torn down. The band shell in Victoria Park disappeared. So did the Skylark tour boat. Parks aren't what they used to be.

There was an outcry when Lindsay's first motorized fire truck was recently put into private storage.

They should do something with that, people used to say about the Stelco locomotive as it sat eroding away in storage. First at the old shaft building and then another enclosure at Old Mill Park.

Well, "something" is being done.

Council's recent move to put money into restoring the old train at its new home in Memorial Park and the lead of the Lindsay and District Model Railroaders should give us all reason for optimism.

As movers and city staff slowly transported the old train to its new home in Memorial Park on Tuesday, dozens of spectators took in the moment. They snapped pictures and shot video. One man explained to another the role of the train, how it functioned and who operated it.

Here in the morning sun was concrete evidence that our history will, in fact, be preserved. That our heritage will not become the subject of stories told to generations to come, but remain something to be seen and touched.

The railroad legacy of Lindsay -and the former Victoria County -will not become nothing more than a distant memory. It will be represented by a symbol that will no doubt become synonymous with the town.

That is where our history belongs. Not rusting away. But on display for all to see, permanently engrained in the fabric of our community.

Entering our lovely town from the south, tourists will see the display before anything else. And those with foresight are keenly aware of this great tourism opportunity.

The train display is only the beginning. The downtown has realized heritage is vital to its sustainability. Just look at the design of its newest building, or any recent restorations of old ones.

There are many opportunities. Volunteers are working feverishly to restore our old jail.

They too share in the vision that our heritage can be a focal point for tourism and something to be proud of - especially when restored to its original glory.

A sustainable future begins with doing more with our history than storing it somewhere.

Copyright © 2010 The Lindsay Post