

ROCKtalk

The newsletter of the
London Curling Club
January 2017



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Get a better grip on your game by getting a good grip on the stone

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Recovered pins recall the days of the Forest City Curling Club

His “house calls” now directed at sweepers, not dog sled teams

Sometimes it’s the challenges we face early in our careers that give us the confidence and experience to succeed. After graduating from the University of Toronto medical school in 1960, followed up with six months as a house officer in anesthesiology at a small hospital in England, Gord Sellery struck out on his own — literally.



Sellery, a long-time London Curling Club member and a former club president, said in return for airfare home from England, he accepted a one-year job serving Newfoundland and Labrador. He was “based” at a small hospital at Harrington Harbour, on the north shore of the St. Lawrence River, 500 miles east of Sept-Isles, Quebec. This remote hospital had been established by Sir Wilfrid Grenfell in the early 1900s. More complicated cases were flown to St. Anthony on the northwestern tip of Newfoundland, weather permitting. There was no medical care there before Grenfell started the ball rolling. The government eventually took over health care for northern Newfoundland and Labrador.

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Malahide curling tradition was established before Canada was born

This year promises to be a momentous one as Canada celebrates its 150th birthday on July 1.

However, months before that, teams from London Curling Club will gather in St. Thomas in March to compete for the oldest existing curling medal in southwestern Ontario. How old? The Malahide Medal was first competed for in 1865, two years before confederation.

The Malahide Medal (shown in the photo below) was to go to winners of an annual competition between curling teams from the London Curling Club, St. Thomas Curling Club, Aylmer Curling Club and Highland Curling Club. Nowadays, it’s usually staged on the Wednesday of March break.

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While Harrington Harbour was his base, Sellery had to travel 80 miles east of his 16-bed hospital as well as 80 miles west because there were no other doctors in that region. There were also no roads. In winter, he travelled by dog sled and ski-equipped aircraft. "There was just the pilot, me and the medical box," he recalls. With the dog team it was Gord and the driver. Having a trained driver was a must because the dogs could be vicious and needed to be controlled.

"One day we were flying back to the hospital when the engine conked out. Oil was splattering on the windshield and it was hard to clean it (from the cockpit). The mayday signal came through in a lounge at the hospital. My wife was there, eight months pregnant. We were the only plane flying and someone told her the doctor was going down. We landed on a lake that was frozen but not well frozen. A small community saw us going down. A bunch of guys came out by dog team. They took us back to their community. I was stuck in their village for six days."

People primarily lived in small fishing communities along the river. Small boats provided Sellery transportation in the summer. But for six weeks in the spring when the ice was breaking up and another six weeks during the fall freeze-up, boats weren't

an option. Ski-equipped aircraft were also unable to operate during those periods.

With no other physicians in the area, young Dr. Sellery had to treat an assortment of health issues. "I did dentistry. I had to take out abscessed teeth. I assessed people for all medical conditions. I was doing minor surgery – appendectomies, a lot of obstetrics and basic trauma. I had a patient who miscarried in one of the communities. I had to go 20 miles by dog team to pick her up. She was hemorrhaging. We got her back to our little hospital. We needed blood so we had our nurses go to the church, break up the church service and asked four parishioners there to give blood." The blood drive was successful.

Sellery performed a Dilation and Curettage (D and C) procedure on the woman and the bleeding was stopped. The intervention by the nurses and Gord was successful. The woman survived.

Years later in London, there would be many more survivors of an ailment that was once a death sentence. Since his time with the Grenfell Mission, Sellery had become a specialist in anesthesiology and was one of the anesthesiologists who worked with the late neurosurgeon Dr. Charles Drake. Drake had developed a surgical treatment for basilar and giant aneurysms at the base of the brain. For years, he was the only neurosurgeon who could perform this life-saving surgery.


Now as a retired professor and anesthesiologist, Gord is still curling. His initial purpose was to expand his friendships beyond just those in his profession. He came to London in 1968 because he wanted to get into teaching and provide specialist care. Western gave him that opportunity. He became the director of the intensive care unit at Victoria Hospital in 1968.

The year 1970 was another benchmark. He joined the London Curling Club. Forty-six years later he's still throwing curling rocks here.

BY BURT DOWSETT

This is the third in a series of stories about London Curling Club members with interesting jobs.

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The name Malahide refers to one of the legislative divisions of London in Upper Canada when the medal was created. The Malahide Division covered Yarmouth and Southwold Townships in the legislative assembly. The engraving on the medal indicates it was presented to the curlers of the Malahide Division by the Honourable E. Leonard in 1865.

Elijah Leonard was a successful London financier and industrialist, establishing and running a machine shop and iron foundry. He was also a founding member of what would eventually become Canada Trust. Leonard was also London's third mayor and then became a member of the legislative assembly for Malahide Division. Upon confederation, he was appointed to the senate.

His foundry business may have led to his connection with the London Curling Club. At that time, most curling stones were actually made of iron, were shaped like tea kettles and weighed between 60 and 80 pounds (see the photo below).



History tells us that members of the 78th Fraser Highland Regiment stationed in Quebec City in 1759-60, melted down cannon balls to make their curling 'irons'. In London, in 1865, curling irons for the London Curling Club came from Elijah Leonard's foundry. London Curling Club minutes from those days note that Leonard was to charge the club 14 pounds for 16 stones.

Just how big a deal was the Malahide Medal competition in pre-confederation London? *Wilkes' Spirit of the Times* weekly published in New York in March 1866, reported on a spirited medal match played between curlers at London in Canada West. At one point, the *Spirit of the Times*, which called itself 'A Chronicle of the Turf, field Sports, the Army and the Stage', was purportedly the most popular sporting journal in the United States.

Records of the Malahide competition from the London Curling Club archives indicate that in a 27-year period between 1968 and 1995, Highland won 12 matches, St. Thomas took eight and London Curling Club won five. Aylmer won only two matches.

However, as Canada moves into its 150th year, a key point is that London Curling Club won the medal match last year, and will be the incumbent when action gets underway in March at St. Thomas.

Before that, The Malahide Medal itself will be heading to St. Thomas to become part of an exhibit at Elgin County Museum.

BY GEORGE CLARK

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Women's daytime league winners and Christmas party

On Dec. 1, the daytime women's league completed the first Thursday morning draw. The winning team, with six wins and one loss, was (left to right), Katie Ungar, Connie Harris, Cheryl Adams and Barb Gordon (skip).



Second place went to Sherry Chambers, Joyce Hetherington, Donna Millar and Mary Blasl and finishing third was Linda Bailey, Nancy Fader, Joan Crosby and Marilyn Brown. Coffee and snacks were provided for all to enjoy. Congratulations to the winners.

Out-of-town bonspiel winners

Several London Curling Club women's teams participated in the St. Thomas Two-Day Bonspiel on Nov. 28 and 29. Honourable mention goes to the team of Dianne McKenna (skip), Cheryl Adams, Lynda Reesor and Liz Oehm for winning the "B" flight trophy. Congratulations!

Christmas party

The Christmas Luncheon on Dec. 14 attracted 50 members, including five social members (Ruth Prentice, Carol Moir, Jean Walmsley, Joan Cuthbert and Penny Brown). Six-end games took place on five sheets prior to lunch with 33 members curling.

A special thank you to Fay Weiler, drawmaster for the event. She always makes sure everything is well matched on and off the ice!

We were wonderfully entertained by Cathy Banks (a former London Curling Club member) with her boom whackers and chimes. Laughter and music from the participants, was enjoyed by all.



WDS members donated food, toiletries, clothes, gift cards and cash to My Sisters' Place. All of these gifts were gratefully accepted. Thank you for your generosity.

Thanks to convenor, Heather Greenfield, co-convenor Jean Cameron, helpers Pam Harrison, Liz Oehm, Mardi McLachlan, Judy Sofalvi, Linda Round, plus everyone else who pitched in to help clean up. A special thank you to Karen Lowry for preparing our centre pieces and decorating our tables, and Rose Kuchynski for volunteering for next years' event.

Upcoming events

The seven-week event three started on Tuesday, Dec. 6, convened by Linda Bailey and Karen Jacobsen. The seven-week event four began on Thursday, Dec. 8, convened by Mary Lucas and Wanda Mara. The Grandmothers' Bonspiel will take place on Wednesday, Jan. 4, convened by Pam Harrison and Marnie Dickout. Watch for a full report in the February issue of *ROCKtalk*.

Curlers, bidders needed for Curl for Prostate Cancer bonspiels

It's not too late to sign up to play in the Curl for Prostate Cancer bonspiels, Saturday, Jan. 21 and Wednesday, Jan. 25 at London Curling club.

Here are the details you need to know:

- Fun, non-competitive bonspiels, open to all London Curling Club males and female members, curling guests and area curlers
- Two draws, two six-end games
- Single or team entries welcome
- Entry fee \$50 per person includes lunch and silent auction
- All event proceeds support minimally invasive prostate cancer therapies through London Health Sciences Foundation
- The 2015 and 2016 bonspiels raised \$47,762.18 for London's Regional Cancer Centre

You can also help by bidding

A highlight of Curl for Prostate Cancer bonspiels is a large silent auction open to all London Curling Club members and their invited guests. Bidding will be available over the entire bonspiel period. A broad range of auction items will be available, including:

- Golf and fitness packages
- Live theatre and movie packages
- Restaurant variety packages
- Auto and home services
- Much, much more

It's a great opportunity to pick up unique gift items for birthday, wedding, graduation, anniversary and other special occasions.

Check londoncurling.ca for a complete list of silent auction items.

You can also get more Curl for Prostate Cancer bonspiel information by contacting event convenor and London Curling Club member Ken Walmsley at 519-660-4299 or kwalmsley@odyssey.on.ca or by visiting londoncurling.ca.

Two mens teams compete abroad with mixed results

On Dec. 10, 2016, the team of Tim Lindsay, Steve Gilbert, Bob McKinley and Bob Bourdeau won two straight games in a regional qualifier for Ontario Senior Men's Championships in Aylmer and advance to a provincial qualifier at the Glendale Curling Club in Hamilton on Jan. 20, 2017.

On Dec. 3, 2016, the team of Tyler Childs, Ryan McNerney, Ryan Gray and Mike Penner competed in the Fairfield-Marriott Challenge at the Sun Parlour Curling Club in Leamington. They failed to win a game and so won't advance.

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Board of directors looking for vice-president and director of advertising for 2017-2018 season

The London Curling Club board of directors will have two positions available for next season: vice-president and director of the advertising portfolio. Past president Paul Pergau says the club, “welcomes and encourages your participation in either position”.

The vice-president position is the first of a three-year term. The first year is one of learning the ropes. The second year you’d become the club president, or what Pergau prefers to call the “chair of the board”. With the terrific board of directors currently in place, this



London Curling Club 2016-2017 board of directors, left to right: Bruce Turner (treasurer), Don Agnew (advertising), Fay Weiler (secretary), Paul Pergau (past president), Dave Rush (president), Marj Dudley (promotion), Joyce Hetherington (membership services), Pat Boothe (skills and development), Dave Weber (property maintenance), Kevin MacDonald (vice-president) and Bruce Thom (leagues and OCA).

is a relatively easy role to play. The third year you’d become past president when again your duties are minimal. You’ll be following Kevin MacDonald and Dave Rush through the three-year cycle.

In 2006, Don Agnew joined the London Curling Club board of directors, and

for the past five years has chaired the advertising committee. This committee was started many years ago, to cover the cost of producing the club directory and *ROCKtalk*. It has grown to do so much more. Over the past five years, more than \$50,000 has been generated for the club.

Don is retiring from the board of directors at the end of this curling season. We appreciate his contributions to our club as a long-serving member of our board.

To continue this important revenue stream, we need a new director to chair the advertising committee. Anyone with basic organization skills and a working knowledge of Word and Excel can do the job. You’ll also get help with administrative duties from Greg and Barb in the club office. Most of the activity for this position is done in June, September and October.

To find out more on how you can help the club by becoming vice-president or director of the advertising portfolio, please contact club manager Greg Lewis or past president Paul Pergau.



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Who's who in your curling club

Board of directors executive committee

President: Dave Rush
Vice president: Kevin MacDonald
Past president: Paul Pergau
Treasurer: Bruce Turner
Secretary: Fay Weiler
Executive member: Dave Weber

Portfolio directors

Advertising: Don Agnew
Leagues and OCA: Bruce Thom
Promotion: Marjorie Dudley
Member services: Joyce Hetherington
Skills and development: Pat Boothe

Club staff

Club manager: Greg Lewis
Office manager: Barb Colbourn
Head ice technician: Kevin Breivik
Ice assistants: Mark Phillips, Stan Smith, Bruce Thom, Sara Westman, Tony Verberne
Bar coordinator: Les Sonier
Bar staff: Jeff Lewis, Leslie Murphy
Housekeeper: Kristen Venner
Night housekeeper: Nilah Woodcock

Website

Peter Fewster

ROCKtalk newsletter

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Miller: Derek McClary
Winexpert: Stan Smith
Thompson Social: Kerry Traynor, Randy Coleman
Learn to Curl: Dan Neeb, Melissa Neeb
Tuesday Evening Mixed: Peter Fewster
Wednesday Open: Stan Smith
Wednesday Mixed Social: Darlene ten Haaf
Rolling Stones: Kirk George
Sweeney: Don Whitred
Teasdale: Ron McLennan, Bob Kerwin
Business Women's: Marylu Fulkerson
Friday Mixed: Dawn Lewis
Women's Daytime Competitive: Pat Bell
Women's Daytime Social: Jan Murray
Men's Daytime Social: Michael Leisinger
Thames Valley: Mike Ernewein, Mike Ramsay
Sunday Mixed Social: Nancy King
Bantam/Juniors: Jennifer Cuddie, Tony Francolini
Little Rocks: Heather Bugler, Scott Bugler
Western Mixed: David Ferguson



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Getting a good grip can improve consistency

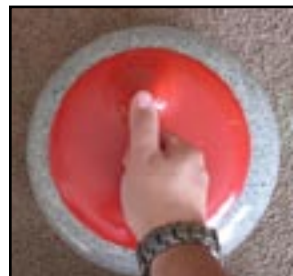
Curling legend Ed Werenich once said something to the effect that if you have a million dollar slide and a five cent release, then you have a five cent delivery.

The proper way to hold a curling stone is with the second pads of your first three fingers under the handle, with your middle finger over the center of the stone. Your thumb and forefinger should be on the side of the handle applying a firm but controlled amount of pressure. The “V” formed by your forefinger and thumb should point to your opposite shoulder when the stone is in the 12 o’clock position (straight ahead). Your wrist should be high, not slumped down along the handle.



Common grip faults

Club coaches often see curlers grip the stone with their thumb on top of the handle (see photo at right). The problem with this comes when you put rotation on your stone. With your thumb on top of the



stone, when you rotate your wrist to apply the turn, you’ll tend to “fling” the counter clockwise turn if you’re right-handed and clockwise turn if you’re left-handed. You’ll also tend to under-rotate the opposite turn. It’s simply how your wrist works. A high wrist and fingers allows your wrist to move practically the same way with both turns. This means a more consistent turn and releases of the stone.

Another fault is “the death grip” or holding the handle too tightly. A light but firm grip allows you to gently open your hand when you’re releasing the stone for more control and a finer touch.

Remember this pin?



Many London curlers migrated to the London Curling Club when the Ivanhoe Curling Club closed in 1993. Opened on Brookside Street in south London in 1962, the Ivanhoe quickly expanded two years later to 16 sheets, and became home to a handful of curling clubs.

Forest City Curling Club was one of the clubs which thrived at the Ivanhoe. A foursome from Forest City, skipped by Bruce Munro, was the last London team to compete in the Brier in 1982.

Among the many curlers who moved from the Ivanhoe to the London Curling Club was a man termed by many as “the gentle giant”.

Ken Harper was an enthusiastic curler, and when he was on London Curling Club ice, you’d recognize the distinctive red, white and black Harper team curling jacket and easily hear his calls for sweeping.

Ken passed away three years ago but his daughter Cheryl brought back these memories in a box of her late father’s which contained several gold and green Forest City Curling Club pins.

She’s turned them over to London Curling Club manager Greg Lewis who will happily supply one to any former Forest City curlers or anyone else who is interested, until they run out. All you have to do is ask.

BY GEORGE CLARK