

THE GREY OWL SOCIETY

Bulletin No.22



Compiled and Edited by Betty and Colin Taylor

HASTINGS, NOVEMBER 2003

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Our thanks to Polish member, Dagmara Ginter, for typing this 22nd Bulletin. A definite improvement on my old manual portable!!

B.T.

GREY OWL. Richard Attenborough's Film (1999)

Very little to report this year, except for the few snippets below:

KAHTOU. The Voice of British Columbia's First Nations. November 2002: p. 18.

A report on APTN's "November Bingo and Movie Schedule" (Aboriginal Peoples Television Network). Amongst the five films listed, *Grey Owl* was advertised to be shown on November 1, 2002.... "Season II launches with GREY OWL, directed by Richard Attenborough and starring Pierce Brosnan...." (Copy of article sent in by Peter Ingram).

RADIO TIMES 3 December 2002. 6 p.m.

Sky Movies Premier Widescreen showing of *Grey Owl* (3 star rating) listed as a "Biographical drama about a conservationist".

Nigel Sinnott wrote to say (23 January 2003) that he had "finally tracked down a video tape of the film *Grey Owl*" in Australia. Nigel adds "I enjoyed it, but for roughly the first two-thirds of the film I did not feel I was watching a really authentic or convincing portrayal of the Grey Owl whose books and biographies I had read: rather I was watching a story loosely – sometimes very loosely – based on the life of Grey Owl. Richard Attenborough certainly took historical liberties, especially with G.O.'s relationship with Anahareo. (In reality, Anahareo was out of the picture when G.O. toured England). However, I had to choke back tears when the film portrayed G.O. visiting his elderly guardians in Hastings. The visit really occurred...., but no one really knows what was said, and this was a very moving attempt to portray Archie Belaney trying to justify to the staid, elderly ladies why he had reinvented himself as Grey Owl. And they were still proud of him! The mood, the stifled emotions, and the boy's bedroom, kept as it was with the Red Indian paraphernalia, were beautifully done! After that, I could suspend my historical judgment and enjoy the rest of the film. It was certainly a very interesting production, and I was glad I got the chance to watch it at last. It is a pity the film did not mention *The Tree*, for me the most emotionally rousing thing I have ever read...."

(We were glad to learn that the G.O. video is now available in Australia. It was also interesting that Nigel Sinnott – along with virtually all our members and others who have contacted us – found the scene with the aunts in Hastings, the most moving. Eds.).

Member Sally Truman from Salisbury, phoned on 5th February 2003, to say that her local video shop (M.V.C.) had the *Grey Owl* video in stock. We mention this, as we think that there are branches of M.V.C. throughout the country, so anyone still trying to track down a copy, may find it at a branch near them!

Waskesiu Memories Volume III. (See also p. 31). "Grey Owl – the Movie, 1999" by Margaret Charko. An outline of her visit, with husband Ron, to the Toronto Premiere (pp. 105-106). Impressions of the film by others, who attended Premieres in Waskesiu and Sidney, B.C. and the Palm Springs Film Festival (2000) (pp. 106-107). Appendix B (p. 318) is a page on the film with the words "Saskatoon Star Phoenix rated this movie *****".

The Grey Owl Society: 21st Anniversary Special Publication, 2002

The 21st Anniversary Special Publication, published last year, has been very well received and we thank all those members who have written to us with their positive comments. At least 55 copies have been sold and, of course, many complimentary copies have been sent out; to Honorary Members, contributors, Prince Albert National Park and several libraries – including 5 copies demanded by the Copyright Libraries Agency! There are now about 30 copies left. The price has, regrettably, had to be increased to 5 pounds (including postage/packing inland) as it was found that the original price barely covered the printing costs! We apologise for the poor quality of last year's flyer and so list again, the contents below:

Grey Owl's Hastings: Beaver Lodge	Colin Taylor: Paul Goble
Grey Owl. Some Personal Reminiscences	Edward H. Blackmore
Some Memories of Grey Owl	Ian West
Working with Grey Owl	Margaret Charko
Mission Accomplished	Rich Gralewski
Grey Owl's Writings: We Need A Full Study	
Of his Literary Contribution	Donald B. Smith
Poetic Renderings of the Wilderness Life	Dagmara Ginter
Grey Owl: Knight Errant of the Canadian Wilderness	Philip Chester
Grey Owl: Great White Hoax or Visionary Conservationist?	Timothy Carroll
Grey Owl's Associations with the Plains Indians	Colin Taylor
Grey Owl: Bibliography	Betty Taylor
Grey Owl's Family Background. Exhibits belonging to Ada and Carrie Belaney and Ivy Holmes at the Hastings Museum	Victoria Williams (curator)
"The Beaver Towns Are Filling Up Again"	Henrietta Smyth
In the Spirit of Grey Owl	Mavis Roberts
Grey Owl: A Famous Son of Sussex	Derek Norcross
26 illustrations (including covers)	



For a background to the Sir John Lavery portrait of Grey Owl (cover), see Bulletin 15: 16-17 (article by Arthur Andrews).

Native American Press

David C. Devenish

I recently attended a conference in Saint Paul, Minnesota. At a junction on the "Skyway" I picked up some free newspapers, including the *Native American Press/Ojibwe News*. This newspaper is mainly concerned with present-day events as they affect the native community – museum exhibitions, the Choctaws' Ford franchise, casinos, festivals, child custody, the Iraq War, obituaries, rearing bison, hooliganism at the Powwow in honour of Lori Ann Piestewa and, especially, corruption in tribal councils.

There was, however, a lengthy article on "Will the Real Indian please stand up", by Maxine V. Eidsvig. The first half of this is an account of Grey Owl, including a mention of Richard Attenborough's film and of the BBC documentary "The Great White Hoax". This account is neutral and factual. It appears to contain no controversial, indeed no new, material.

She then introduces, as a comparison, Sylvester Long, also known as Buffalo Child, or Chahuska, Long Lance. I am uncertain whether Grey Owl would be pleased by this comparison – they were almost exact contemporaries so they must have known one another, at least by reputation, if not personally. No doubt readers can enlighten me on this point.**

Long grew up in a "negro" (i.e. "African American") community and was legally classified as a "Negro". It would seem that much of his supposed life was fictional, nevertheless Ms. Eidvig appears to believe that he was in reality, by descent, White x Lumbee x Cherokee.

She finishes with a tirade against the problems of deciding who is entitled to be registered as an "Indian". In her view the matter is being decided by law firms such as "Jacobsen Buffalo Schoessler & Magnuson and Bluedog Olsen & Small – tribal governments being only 'pawns'".

** "... Long Lance, an Indian author whom Grey Owl greatly respected..." (see Don Smith's *From the Land of Shadows* 1990: 105-106).

See also *Long Lance: The True Story of an Impostor*. 1982. By the same author (republished as a paperback by Red Deer Press, Alberta, 1999). Eds.

See also p. 13

The Ethnological Content of Grey Owl's Writings

Part I: The Woodland Indians' Lifestyle

Dagmara Ginter

In the course of my research for a Ph.D thesis on the literature of Grey Owl, I was struck by the rich ethnological content of his writings. My attention had been drawn to this by Colin Taylor's preliminary paper on this topic (Bulletin 5. 1986: 6-8). Colin encouraged me to focus, at least in part, on this particular facet of Grey Owl's writings. The following is an extract from a much longer paper. I have called it Part I since others will follow in subsequent Bulletins.

Grey Owl wrote in *The Men of the Last Frontier*, "Many years ago I cast in my lot with that nation known under the various appellations of Chippeways, Algonquins, Londucks, and Ojibways" (1931: 225).¹ He refers here to the *Teme-ugama Anishnabai* (the so-called deep water people), a group of about one hundred Canadian Ojibways who, in summer, set their camp on Bear Island, near the centre of Lake Temagami which is one of the biggest lakes in the south-eastern part of Ontario.² About two years after arriving in Canada, Grey Owl began to associate with that band of Indians, handsome Angele Egwuna being one of the main reasons. He met her in the summer of 1908 and from then on, frequently visited her camp and was finally invited to do some trapping with her family in the winter of 1909-1910.³ He married Angele in August 1910 and became a father the following spring.⁴ Soon afterwards, however, he took a permanent leave from his Ojibway family returning very occasionally.⁵ In the early 1920s he lived and trapped for several years with the Espaniels, an Ojibway family, in Biscotasing not very far from Lake Temagami.⁶

While staying with Angele Egwuna and her family, he was often seen taking notes on the Indian ways of setting fish nets and traps and those were accompanied by numerous sketches. Angele's uncle, John, gave him his first Indian name, *ko-hom-see*, which meant "little owl" and could be interpreted as "the young owl who sits taking everything in."⁷ Jim Espaniel, with whom he used to trap, later on recalled: "He used to take notes whenever he thought of anything in the bush. We worked from 4.30 in the morning until nine at night in those days, and when Belaney was finished he would sometimes make notes in his notebook.... He had nearly a packsack of material written on pad sheets when he left there."⁸ Anny Espaniel would later remember: "Archie Belaney used to keep my husband up until 2 o'clock in the morning asking about the old days of my people. He used to take notes in a little book on everything my husband said."⁹

From his personal experience and the great number of notes he took while living with the Ojibways, sprang literary passages that constitute a real mine of ethnological information. Grey Owl deals in his writing mostly with the Woodland Indians, whom the Ojibways belonged to, and whom he knew personally; but his *belles-lettres* also contain some interesting snapshots of the Plains Indians and some equally attractive descriptions of the general characteristics of various Indian tribes he was not directly associated with. He sometimes appears to exaggerate or broadly generalize when dealing with the subject, but, overall, he is accurate in depicting the Indian lifestyle and highly perceptive when recording details both in his writing and sketches.

The Adventures of Sajo and her Beaver People contains a minute pencil drawing of the Indian method of stripping the bark of a silver birch tree. The use of birch bark was, in fact, one of the most distinctive features of the Woodland Indian culture. Not only did the natives use it to produce baskets and other household utensils, as Grey Owl points out in the inscription, but they also used it for wigwam covering and in the constructin of their light but very durable canoes, one of which is shown in the background with its characteristic spruce

gummed seams.¹⁰ In the picture *Gitchie Meegwon* is seen removing the outer bark with a knife, which is done without destroying the tree. In doing so, he moves clockwise around the tree and loosens the bark with both his hands.¹¹

Another sketch, which is taken from the first edition of *Men*, is a very accurate depiction of the trapper's garb. The person is dressed in typically fringed leggings and buckskin jacket, and wears the so-called Assomption sash.¹² The picture also illustrates the method of lacing of the *babiche* snowshoes, the word *babiche* referring to the woven rawhide cords which form the snowshoe webbing.¹³ The snowshoe trail gives an idea of the particular shape of these 'shoes' used by Grey Owl and, possibly, his Ojibway friends. This diamond shape is strikingly similar to that of the Cree snowshoes in Miller and Corey (1998: 46). The Ojibway snowshoes presented in the same source are of a considerably different shape, being much elongated and pointed. But, of course, different kinds of snowshoes were used by the same tribes for different kinds of terrain and the thickness and height of the snow had also to be taken into consideration. Besides, the Cree were closely associated with the Ojibway, occupying the same territory and Grey Owl must have come into frequent contact with them as well.¹⁴

The picture also contains excellent sketches of three moccasins belonging to three different tribes. What they do have in common, however, is the central seam characteristic of the soft-soled type of moccasins worn by the Woodland Indians, in contrast to the hard-soled side-seam ones fabricated by the Plains tribes.¹⁵ Grey Owl's depiction of three different ways of shaping that central seam is quite noteworthy and reveals his unusual power of observation (Fig.1). The traditional Ojibway moccasin, which is presented here, is characterized by the so-called "rabbit nose" or "crooked nose" design, with the longitudinal centre seam and anterior arcing cross seam.¹⁶ The moccasins of the same seam design, coming from Bear Island Ojibways, are now in The National Museum of Man in Ottawa (Fig.2). The Cree moccasin is similar but it lacks this crooked element, having a central seam running from the vamp to the top of the toe. It is also worth mentioning that it has a much more pointed end. The James Bay Cree moccasins from Ontario, held by the American Museum of Natural History in New York, bear strong resemblance to the Cree one sketched by Grey Owl. The Iroquois moccasin has a distinct seam shape – it does not have that additional seam running from the vamp to the toe; the central seam is just gathered into a U-shaped vamp.¹⁷

"The Trail of Two Sunsets" in *Men*, has a fine description of a typical Ojibway village, in which the author outlines some basic elements of camp organization of Woodland people. He refers to their village as semi-permanent and movable, located "amongst the growth of umbrella-topped jack-pines, on a low point midway of a lake set deep into an amphitheatre of emerald hills" (1931: 230). Among the reasons for moving camp, there is a mention of the monotony of the place and the fish retreating into deeper water (ibid: 232). This, although a rather poetic depiction, is very true to life. Ojibway people, like most of the Woodland Indians, were semi-nomadic, their mobility being necessitated by their reliance on the forest resources. Their choice of the camp location was determined by the hunting and fishing facilities and when the game became scarce, they simply moved to another place. They also made sure their encampments were close to fresh water and fuel supplies and were sheltered from cold winds, which the jack-pines from Grey Owl's description, undoubtedly, guaranteed.¹⁸

The village dwellings described by Grey Owl, consist of "tall teepees", birch bark shelters, tents, and wind-breaks, which are typical indeed of the Ojibway camps. One could only find fault with the word "teepee" Grey Owl uses here and elsewhere in his writing since, generally, this term was applied to the conical tent originally covered with buffalo hides, which was the essential dwelling of the Plains tribes.¹⁹ But the Woodland Indians constructed a wide array of lodges; one of them was the conical or pointed one which resembled to a large degree the Plains Indians' tipi, or "teepee", although it was covered with birch bark.²⁰ It is possible that

this Sioux word was simply borrowed by the Algonquians and used frequently in their daily conversations. In fact, Frances Densmore, one of the leading ethnologists of Indian music, who travelled amongst the Ojibways in Grey Owl's time, used the term "tipi" as well.²¹

The domed wigwam was certainly one of the "birch-bark shelters" referred to by Grey Owl, as it was the most common of Ojibway lodges. Its framework consisted of poles or saplings which were bent over to form arches and were covered with sheets of birch bark. This type of dwelling was constructed mainly for winter use whereas the above-mentioned conical one was generally utilized in summer months. Grey Owl could also see the so-called "peaked lodge" which, similar to the typical wigwam, was birch bark-covered but was not dome-shaped, having a long ridge pole which connected A-shaped arches of poles. It was also inhabited in winter.²² As for the windbreaks, there was not any general rule for constructing those, and usually bark shelters were turned into the wind-shields. The wigwam shown in one of Grey Owl's sketches in *Men*, seems to serve that particular function.²³ Another structure mentioned by the author is probably a canvas tent which became widely distributed in the first half of the twentieth century amongst Woodland Indians.²⁴

Grey Owl also points to "a variety of canoes" on the shore, "the canvas-covered type predominating, but some of them [being] of birch-bark, dyed red with alder sap, with black strips of gum at the seams" (ibid: 232). This provides a deep ethnological insight into the Woodland material culture. Since the area occupied by the Ojibways and other Woodland tribes was densely forested and interspersed with numerous lakes and rivers, the canoe was the sole transportation vehicle. The traditional one was made of birch bark and had many advantages. Being extremely light, it could be easily carried on the Indian's shoulder over plentiful, even several-mile portages. Besides, it was highly manoeuvrable and, thus, indispensable for the trapper running the dangerous rapids. Also, when it was damaged, one could easily repair it using just forest material.²⁵ It was distinguishable by its black strips of gum covering the seams, as Grey Owl observes, the gum being obtained from spruce.²⁶

Dying canoes red was not a common procedure amongst the Ojibways since the birch bark itself had a very attractive red brownish colour. It is possible, however, that this was a local habit characteristic of the Bear Island Ojibways and could be regarded as one of those features of Indian lifestyle that only a participant observer is able to notice. In that case this information could be seen as having great ethnological value. Certainly, the inner bark of alder mixed with bloodroot, red-osier dogwood, and wild plum was used by Ojibways to dye porcupine quills red.²⁷ Thus, it is highly probable that some of them used the same combination to emphasize the reddish hue of birch bark.

But those traditional birch bark canoes were definitely on the decline in the first decade of the twentieth century, and the majority of those lying on the foreshore could be indeed, as Grey Owl points out, canvas-covered.²⁸

In *Tales of an Empty Cabin*, while describing the Indians moving into their winter hunting grounds, the author refers to great quantities of supplies being transported by whole families in "the ordinary sixteen-foot canoes" (1936: 10). Birch bark canoes were, of course, of many different shapes and sizes but the sixteen-foot ones belonged to those most widely used in the Northeast, being specially designed to carry the large Indian family with their possessions.²⁹

Endnotes

¹ The general name of the tribe Grey Owl associated with, can be referred to as Chippeways (more frequently spelled as Chippewa) or Ojibways (spelled also as Ojibwa). The first of these names is used in reference to the Indian bands in the United States and southern Ontario, whereas the second is preferred for the rest of the Canadian groups. (See Rogers,

Trigger ed. 1978: 768). The name "Algonquins" is used incorrectly as it refers to a distinct tribe living in the vicinity of Ottawa River along the Ontario and Quebec border (See Johnson 1992: 35). Grey Owl should have used the name "Algonquian", as the general term designating many tribes belonging to the same Algonquian language family; for the explanation of the difference between the noun, "Algonquin" and the adjective, "Algonquian", see Butler and Hadlock (1957: 3). No reference can be found on the fourth version of the name used by Grey Owl, "Londucks". It is highly probable that this was a very local name applied to the Ojibways.

² Smith 1990: 37.

³ *ibid*: 39, 42.

⁴ *ibid*: 43-44.

⁵ He met Angele briefly again in 1912; then he came back to her once more, six years later, after the First World War. He frequently visited her while guiding in Temagami area in the summer of 1925. He saw her for the last time in the autumn of that year. The reason why he never stayed with his Indian family for long was his suffering from, what Dickson terms, "a domestic claustrophobia, a feeling that he must break out or die". (See Dickson 1973: 79, 82, 84 and Smith 1990: 75-76.)

⁶ Smith 1990: 71. See also the map entitled "Grey Owl's Canada" in Dickson 1973.

⁷ Smith 1990: 41.

⁸ *ibid*: 72.

⁹ *ibid*.

¹⁰ Taylor 1986: 8.

¹¹ For a detailed discussion of the Indian method of stripping birch bark as well as the bark's characteristics and its numerous applications, see Taylor 1991: 239.

¹² The trapper's costume was always fringed and worn even in hot weather, the fringes having the functional purpose of frightening away the mosquitoes (interview with Colin Taylor, Hastings, July 21, 2002). The Assomption sashes were very popular amongst Indians and half-breeds in Grey Owl's time. They were made of wool and were multicoloured. Their name comes from L'Assomption, a town northeast of Montreal, where they were fabricated. See Miller & Corey (1998: 46). These sashes, apart from their decorative function, could also play a practical role. If, for example, a trapper was drowning, his companion could quickly untie the sash and throw it to him, and rescue the man by this means (interview with Colin Taylor, *ibid*.).

¹³ Taylor 1986: 8.

¹⁴ Diamond Jenness points to the fact that the Cree and their neighbours (probably Ojibways), preferred oval forms of the snowshoes (Jenness 1977: 102). Frances Densmore mentions three kinds of snowshoes used by the Ojibways: the round bearpaw type; the flat type which is best utilized on the level ground; and the shoes with toes turned up, which are ideal for bush walking (See Densmore 1977). For a discussion of different types of snowshoes, see also Taylor (1991: 193, 197). For the distribution of the Cree and Ojibway tribes, see the map in Johnson (1992: 40).

¹⁵ For a discussion of the difference between the Woodland and Plains type of moccasins, see Mason (1946: 48).

¹⁶ Sager 1995: 36, 39-40.

¹⁷ For a discussion of Iroquois moccasins, see Lyford, Beatty ed. (1945: 28-29).

¹⁸ See Jenness (1977: 86) and Ritzenthaler & Ritzenthaler (1970: 13).

¹⁹ Laubin 1957: 15. See also Hodge ed. (1910. Vol II: 758-759).

²⁰ For a discussion of Woodland Indians' dwellings, see Lyford (1953: 17-21).

²¹ Densmore 1977: 14-15. The word is spelled by various authors as either "tipi" or "teepee", but when the Sioux learnt to write in their language, they preferred the spelling of this Sioux word as "tipi" (Laubin 1957: 15-16).

²² Lyford 1953: 17-18.

²³ Interview with Colin Taylor, Hastings, July 26, 2002.

²⁴ See Rogers and Taylor, Helm ed. (1981: 234).

²⁵ Jenness 1977: 108. Butler and Hadlock 1957: 22-23.

²⁶Taylor 1991: 241.

²⁷Lyford 1953: 152.

²⁸One of the main reasons was the scarcity of the original material used for constructing those vessels and canvas, easily obtainable from white traders, began to substitute birch bark around 1900 amongst the Woodland tribes. See Gidmark (1988: 23) and Adney and Chappelle (1983: 3). See also Rogers and Taylor, Helm ed. (1981: 234).

²⁹Taylor 1997: 29.

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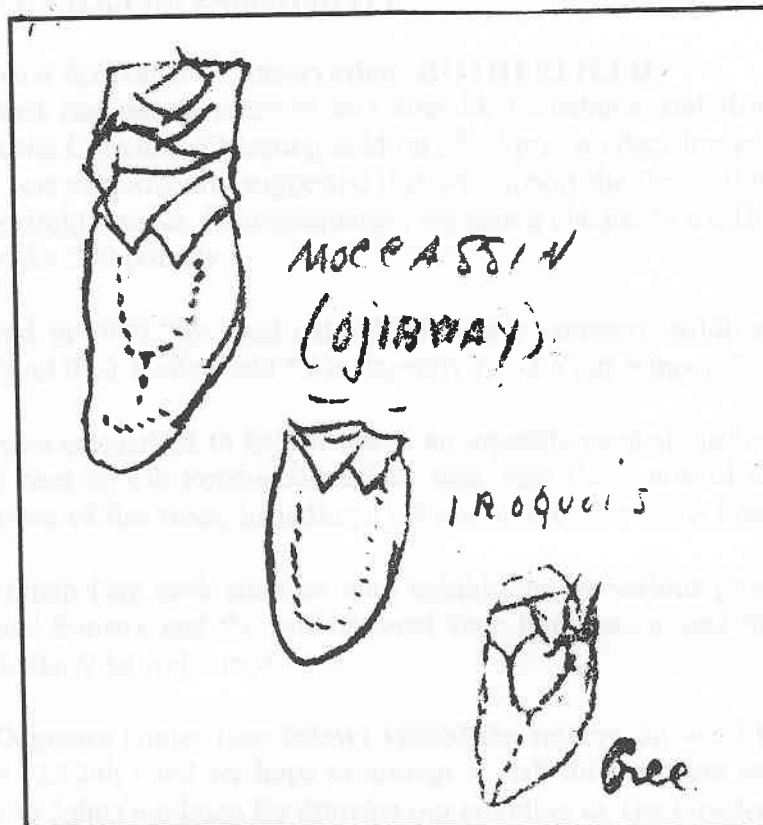


Fig. 1
Grey Owl's sketch in *The Men of the Last Frontier* (1931).

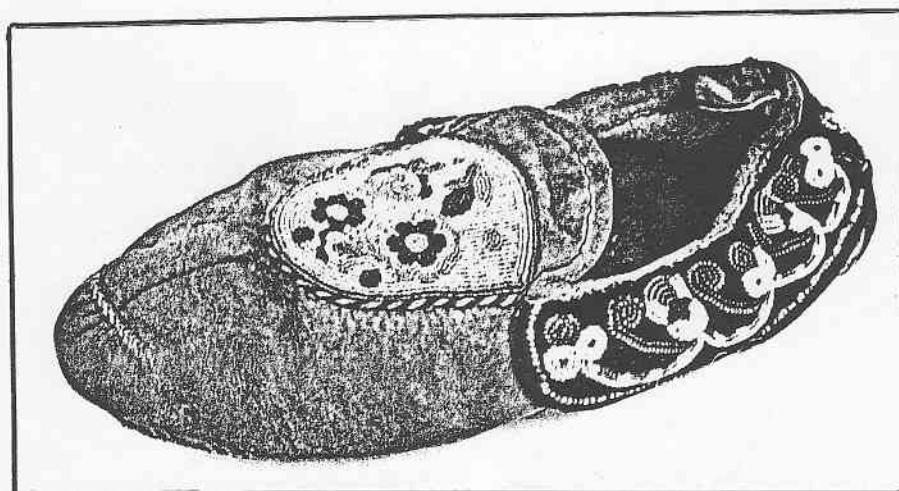


Fig. 2
Bear Island Ojibway moccasin. National Museum of Man, Ottawa (specimen number 111-G-200).

Grey Owl Society's Annual Donation (1)

The Powdermill Trust for Nature Conservation: ROTHERFIELD.

The Powdermill Trust has nature reserves at Catsfield, Crowhurst and Rotherfield, all in Sussex. Although at the Committee Meeting held on 2nd April, no decision was made for this year's donations, it was subsequently suggested that we support the Powdermill Trust and, in particular, the Rotherfield reserve. In consequence, we sent a cheque to the Hon. Secretary & Trustee, John Hicks, for 200 pounds.

The trust was formed in 1980 "by local naturalists to help conserve wildlife and safeguard natural landscapes" and their leaflets add "We Urgently Need Your Support."

Our donation has been earmarked to help towards an urgently needed shelter (cabin) which has now been sited near an old Pendunculate Oak tree, near the centre of the reserve. The reserve boasts a number of fine trees, including a tall and impressive Scots Pine.

Rotherfield has an Open Day each summer with exhibitions by various groups such as the Sussex Ornithological Society and the International Tree Foundation, and this is where the new cabin will particularly be welcomed.

Colin Taylor and Dagmara Ginter (see below) visited the reserve on one of this summer's rare, very wet, days (25 July) and we hope to arrange a visit for members next year..... on a sunny day! (Thanks to John Goodman for drawing our attention to The Powdermill Trust)



Grey Owl Society's Annual Donation (2)

Pestalozzi Student: Ray Kavuzya

Ray Kavuzya, a Zambian student at the Pestalozzi Village Trust in Sedlescombe, East Sussex (see p. 30), won the Earthwatch Young Environmentalist Award (2002), "giving him the opportunity to join Earthwatch scientists on an international research project."

What is particularly interesting, is that Ray's winning project was a study "of a wetland habitat which looked at species diversity, distributions and interactions" in the SOUTH SAXONS WETLANDS! It was coincidental that we gave a Donation to South Saxons from the Society in 2001 and that our Summer Visit this year was to there (see p 12)!

The competition was run by the conservation charity Earthwatch, under the auspices of the Royal Geographical Society in London, who "encourage 16 to 19 year olds across the U.K. to take an active interest in environmental issues...."

The research project that Ray was invited to participate in was to take place during this summer (2003) in Costa Rica. Rod Chalmers, the Fundraising Co-ordinator at Pestalozzi, wrote that Ray would need to raise some 200 pounds towards the personal side of the trip (for items such as walking boots, mosquito net, personal tropical first aid kit etc.), some of which had already been found.

The Society, therefore, sent a cheque for 60 pounds, to help towards expenses (bearing in mind that South Saxons is local and that Pestalozzi is only a few miles outside Hastings)!



Society's Summer Visit: South Saxons Wetlands, St. Leonards-on-Sea

Around twenty members gathered at South Saxons Wetlands on Sunday, 8th June, to take part in a leisurely walk through this unusual and interesting haven, amidst a built-up urban area. Members met at noon and after a damp and cloudy morning, the afternoon brightened up and it was sunny and windy for the most part. The Society made a donation to South Saxons in 2001 (see Bulletin 20: 19) and at that time, a guided walk was suggested. In consequence, Elizabeth Pye – and other dedicated voluntary guardians of the site – led the group and answered our several questions.

The Wetlands is home to a number of unusual species and we were lucky enough to watch a large dragonfly (the blue and yellow Broad Bodied Chaser) on the reeds of the large pond. However, it was too early in the year for us to spot the rare wasp spider which is, apparently, a newcomer to this site. It is described as an "impressive black and yellow orb web spider" but, fortunately, it is harmless!

This comparatively small area has recently been designated as "a Site of Nature Conservation Importance" due to its scarce habitats and varied wildlife. These habitats include Carr Woodland and Reedbeds and butterflies are attracted to the wild flower meadows. The information leaflets point out that this type of habitat is "extremely scarce in Britain" due to the policy of draining and reclaiming many wetlands and that "nowhere else in Hastings can such a diversity of habitats and wildlife be found." On this particular Sunday afternoon, we were accompanied by a variety of birds, and a persistent and melodious blackcap comes to mind! The only sad note was the badly injured slow-worm – perhaps the victim of a herring gull or kestrel?

Members had brought along picnic lunches which we were invited to take back to Bill and Margaret Van Draat's home, Freezeland Farm. We picnicked in their lovely gardens, amidst honeysuckle, roses, lupins and all manner of exotic plants, whilst they generously supplied us with wine and various hot and cold drinks. This afternoon was most enjoyable and we record here our special thanks to Elizabeth Pye and her team and, of course, to Bill and Margaret Van Draat.



Donations to the Society

We are most appreciative of the generous financial donations made to the Society by the following members: Catherine Carpenter, Gabriel Fritzen, James Gilliland, Paul Goble, Chris James, Pam Malcolm, Jennifer Phiri, Ron Sanders, and Tom Watrous.

The Taylors were able to purchase the following items during the year, from Mrs. Jillian Allonby of Chatham, and have donated them to the archives:

Tales of an Empty Cabin by Grey Owl. 2nd printing. October 1936.
Pilgrims of the Wild by Grey Owl. 6th printing. November 1935.
The Adventures of Sajo and her Beaver People by Grey Owl. 3rd impression. October 1935.
The Men of the Last Frontier by Grey Owl (signed). September 1937.
My Life with Grey Owl by Anahareo. With dust jacket. 1st edition. 1940.

Newspaper cuttings. * = new additions to the archives.

- * April 19, 1938. *The Daily Mail*. "I Married Grey Owl – He Was English." (D.M. correspondent – Montreal)
- * April 20, 1938. *The Daily Mail*. "Here is Grey Owl's Treasured Dawn."
- * April 21, 1938. *The Star*. Photo of Anahareo cooking "Grey Owl's wife – a snap by her husband." (Exclusive). Plus photo of G.O.
- * April 21, 1938. *The Daily Mail*. "Do You See The Likeness?! Grey Owl's Secret."
- * April 21, 1938. *The Daily Mail*. "A Story 'REDSKIN' by Harper Cory. The Mystery of Grey Owl has made news again of the REDSKIN by Harper Cory."
- * April 21, 1938. *Daily Express*. "Grey Owl wrote this story... Nature Drama by the 'Red Indian' who was really an Englishman all the time..." Plus, "Grey Owl: Ex-wife's story." Plus, "Grey Owl on the Trail With His Indian Wife: Ex-wife 'would have kept his secret.'"
- * April 24, 1938. *Sunday Dispatch*. "GREY OWL: Mystery Woman Brings It To The *SundayDispatch*" by Howard French (see Bulletin 18: 11-12).

(In sending the above, Mrs. Allonby wrote "I do hope you find them of some use... They have given me much pleasure over the years... I wish you and The Grey Owl Society continued success in your researches.")

Paula Fleming (see Bulletin 20: 24), has donated a stereo photo of the "Interior of Hollington Church, Sussex." This is the "Church in the Wood" where Archie married Ivy Holmes. This 19th century photo is in excellent condition and was taken by F.S. Mann, 13 Wellington Place, Hastings.

David Devenish has sent in a copy of *Native American Press/Ojibwe News*. Vol. 16, Issue 3, June 27, 2003. On p. 4, under "Editorial & Commentary", there is an article "Will the Real Indian please stand up" by Maxine V. Eidsvig, much of which relates to Grey Owl. (See the comments by David Devenish on p. 3). In this article, Eidsvig mentions the fact that *The Great White Hoax* (documentary) "can be seen on the cable channel, History International, where it is repeated at least once a month." (See Bulletins 18: 7-12 and 19: 14; and the Special Publication, 2002: 23-28. Also Pam Malcolm's comments, this Bulletin: 22).

Donations to the Society cont...

Richard and Wendy Johnston from Orillia, Ontario, have sent us a copy of an article from the *Toronto Star* for July 3rd, 2003. It is a travel promotion for Saskatchewan, entitled "A popular pilgrimage is an overnight hike or canoe trip to Grey Owl's cabin" (p. J5). These articles from the Press, with references to Grey Owl, are always interesting for the archives though they invariably include a few errors. In this piece by Carol Perehudoff, we learn that Grey Owl "burst" on to the scene in the 1940s and that he came from Hastings, Essex! However, these are minor points as she adds that G.O.'s "'you belong to nature, not it to you' seems even more significant today." (Copy also sent in by Tom Watrous).

Don Smith sent to our Polish member, Dagmara Ginter, a copy of the following: "The White Indian: Armand Garnet Ruffo's *Grey Owl* and the Spectre of Authenticity" by Albert Braz (at the University of Alberta). Published in *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 4. Winter 2002. (Dagmara has kindly donated this copy to the archives).

Henrietta Smyth has sent in the following items:

- (i) *The Star Phoenix*. Saskatoon. August 11, 2003. An article on p. A7, refers to Prince Albert National Park's 75th anniversary. Written by Henrietta with a mention of The Grey Owl Society, Hastings.
- (ii) A copy of the programme "Song of Waskesiu". Written and performed by Bradley Muir for PANP's celebrations, it includes a section from Don Smith's *From the Land of Shadows*. Performed at the Waskesiu Community Hall, summer 2003.
- (iii) Copy of the *Official Visitor Guide* "Our Heritage, Our Future", celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the Grand Opening of Prince Albert National Park of Canada. On p. 4, there is an article "Anahareo's husband" and pp. 8-11 make reference to Grey Owl's Cabin and the Grey Owl Trail. (See Henrietta's account of her visit to PANP and The Grey Owl Trail, pp. 17-20).

The Taylors have also donated a copy of *Gypsies, Preachers and Travellers Tales: Calls to Renewal From The Countryside* by member David Lazell. Privately published by author (2003), there is a short section on Grey Owl on pp. 176-177, comparing his fascination for "the life of the forest" with Ernest Thompson Seton's, adding that "Grey Owl was a spokesman for a simplicity which seemed to elude most people" between the wars. (Available from author. 12.75 pounds. David Lazell, Loughborough, Leics.).

Margaret Charko has donated an original copy of the *Prince Albert Daily Herald* for Wednesday, April 20, 1938. The headline reads "Controversy Rages Over Grey Owl's Origin" and with two or three other headings, half the front page is devoted to the mystery of Grey Owl! Also an old newspaper cutting on Chief Swimmer (undated). These are new items for the archives and we are very pleased to have them – especially, the *Daily Herald*.

Donations to the Society cont...

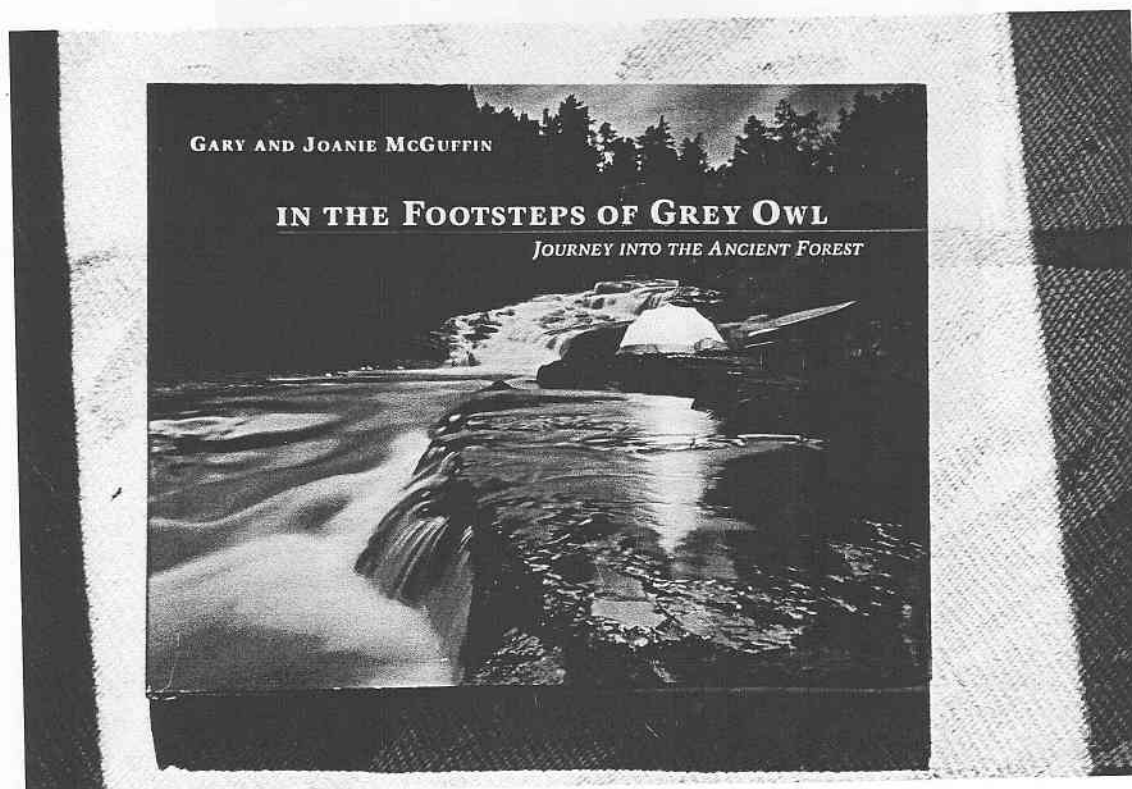
Tom Watrous has generously sent the archives a copy of the following book

In The Footsteps Of Grey Owl: Journey Into The Ancient Forest
Gary and Joanie McGuffin

This beautiful book is a most welcome addition. The McGuffins, camped and canoed for three months in 1997, through some of the most wild and magnificent scenery in Canada, deep into the ancient forest, into Grey Owl country. They travelled the same rivers taken by Grey Owl and the book has over one hundred stunning colour photographs. The photos and the accompanying text describe their route and experiences (from the sighting of a 'healthy-sized black bear' to "a pair of entwined garter snakes" and from "paddling into a brewing summer storm" to negotiating The Lady Evelyn River which is "part of North America's greatest prehistoric system of interconnected trails and water routes"). The journey commenced at Canoe Lake in Algonquin Provincial Park and finalized on St. Joseph Island. The fact that almost every page is punctuated with quotes from Grey Owl's writings, should make the book a 'must' for members' bookshelves but there is the added attraction that the McGuffins helped in Canada's "Lands for Life" project which recently added more than six million acres to their "protected areas".

With the Foreword by Monte Hummel, President of the World Wildlife Fund Canada, and published by McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 2002, this book is available in hardcover at 17.50 pounds from amazon.co.uk. Alternatively, contact member Ralfe Whistler (Tel.

). (A review from the *Orillia Packet & Times*, November 27, 2002, was kindly sent in from Richard and Wendy Johnston.... "You can flood your senses with this book....").



Donations to the Society cont...



This photo of St. Ursula's Church on Bear Island, was sent to us by Richard and Wendy Johnston. Richard writes: "St. Ursula's is the oldest original building on Bear Island – I think 1910 or so." Archie Belaney married Angele Egwuna in that year, on Bear Island, but at the Fire Ranger's Hall!

Visit to Grey Owl's Cabin

Henrietta Smyth

8th August, 2003

It has long been my ambition to visit Grey Owl's cabin in Prince Albert National Park, Saskatchewan, and to explore some of the wilderness country where he spent the last years of his life. The Park itself had lent invaluable help and support to my project at Drusillas Zoo Park (see Bulletins 13, 14 & 15), not only by giving their permission for the replica cabin to be built there but also by sending me detailed construction plans and photographs of the original cabin as a guide.

In August this year the opportunity finally came not only for me to make my own pilgrimage to this special place, but to do so in the company of Margaret Charko (Winters) who, as many will know, had spent six weeks at the cabin back in 1936 typing Grey Owl's last book, *Tales of an Empty Cabin*. Undaunted by her age (she has just celebrated her 85th birthday) and various health problems that both she and her husband, Ron, have recently had to overcome, Margaret very kindly suggested that she and I travel together on what was likely to be her last visit to the cabin which held so many memories for her. It was a great privilege and pleasure for me to have her as my companion, as not only did she regale me with many amusing stories of family life with Grey Owl, Anahareo and Dawn in Prince Albert, but she was, of course, welcomed enthusiastically wherever we went – and I enjoyed a lot of the limelight merely by association!

After spending a couple of days with Margaret and Ron (and dog Laddie!) at their very comfortable home in Tillsonburg, I travelled on with Margaret by an internal flight via Winnipeg to Saskatoon, in the heart of the plains country. The next day we hired a car and drove on to Prince Albert National Park, stopping off for a short time in the small town of Prince Albert, where Margaret and her family used to live. As we drove north the scenery, to my relief, gradually lost its prairie monotony and as we approached the boundaries of the Park itself a welcome stretch of pine and poplar forest began to line our route. I was delighted to see several large beaver lodges out on the lakes, together with signs of past beaver activity in patches of cut down forest which had reverted to beaver meadows.

By the time we had settled into our lodgings at Waskesiu, the patchy rain which had been following us north had dispersed and the sun broke through over the shining waters of Waskesiu Lake – a good omen for our trip, I felt. Waskesiu itself turned out to be a pretty resort of holiday cottages, hotels and cabins grouped along the south shore of the lake, providing fishing, boating and golfing facilities for its many summer visitors. Our own accommodation was attractively situated right beside the lake and almost directly opposite the Park's Nature Centre, an impressive log building which Margaret explained to me had originally been the Information Centre housing some of Grey Owl's memorabilia.

We decided to investigate the Nature Centre first where a selection of Grey Owl films was being shown in honour of the Park's 75th Anniversary. As soon as we entered the building Margaret was greeted by the Park's chief interpreter, Bradley Muir, a charming and enthusiastic man to whom she had already spoken about her impending visit. Margaret and I were both extremely impressed with the design and content of the Nature Centre, which featured a beautiful mural depicting famous people connected with Park, including Grey Owl, Anahareo, the first Superintendent James A. Wood, and a selection of the wild creatures who frequent this remote wilderness area. The Centre also displayed a fine collection of stuffed animals, including the wolf, caribou and bear, and had many interesting hands-on activities for children.

The priority for Margaret and me, of course, was to find out if our trip to the cabin was on schedule, as it had been planned for the next day (Friday) but with the option of trying again on Sunday if the weather proved unsuitable. We had been warned about making this allowance for weather conditions, but we also discovered there was the additional problem of unusually low water levels in the Park, caused by a lack of rainfall and the removal of a dam above Kingsmere River. This was preventing most motor craft from reaching Kingsmere Lake and making it difficult even for canoes to be portaged up the river.

Perhaps because of these problems the Park had not offered to organize the boat trip for us but had suggested to Margaret that she contact the Marina, which operates independently within the Park. Fortunately, the Marina is run by a Grey Owl enthusiast (!) Morris McLachlan, whose father managed the ice house in days gone by, supplying ice to the Waskesiu residents. We learnt from Morris that we were, in fact, the only boat trip to be organized this year (and that was only due, I am sure, to Margaret's VIP status!), and it was only much later that we learnt just how many hours Scott Nesbitt, the chief guide, and his team had put in to ensure our trip was a success.

On the morning of the great day, Margaret and I met up at a very early hour with Ron's niece, Vicky, and her trainee veterinarian daughter, Dorothy (both enthusiastic Grey Owl supporters, who had got up at 5 a.m. to drive up from Prince Albert to join us). On our arrival at the Marina, however, we were told our start would have to be postponed because there had been lightning on the lake. It was past midday when we eventually set off into the forest, decked out in a rather strange assortment of outfits, eclipsed only by our guide, Scott, who seemed attired and equipped for an expedition into the Amazon jungle!

As we trekked in single file along the narrow, winding 3 km trail, dwarfed on either side by lofty columns of stately pine and rustling poplars, Scott – a keen photographer and canoeist – kept us entertained with descriptions of the wildlife that roam freely in this protected part of the province (beavers, elk, deer, two packs of wolves, even the occasional bear, plus frequent sightings round the lakes of the bald eagle, loons and pelicans).

When we reached the little rail portage that leads to Kingsmere Lake, Scott explained some of the problems with the low water levels. He and his team had been up the day before to haul the motorboat painstakingly the last stretch from the portage to the lake, and now, at sight of the lake itself, whose ruffled surface stretched to the horizon like a small inland sea, we began to appreciate the isolation of Grey Owl's cabin. Kingsmere Lake takes some 45 minutes to cross, even in a motorboat, and with only a slight breeze blowing against us that day, we began to understand how difficult it could be to cross the lake in strong winds (apparently it can take up to three hours to cross in a canoe even on a good day).

Having waded out to where our boat was moored, we had a fairly bumpy ride to the far side of the lake where we sat down to enjoy the delicious picnic lunch that Scott had nobly carried (mainly on his head, African style!) all that way. Then we set off again along another 3 km of forest trail towards our destination, and as the path began to skirt Ajawaan Lake the tension grew and our conversation slackened – even the few sounds of the forest seemed hushed in anticipation. Then, just as our guide paused to show us our first glimpse of the cabin across the lake, the eerie, evocative cry of a loon echoed far out on the water, the first loon I had ever heard – very atmospheric!

As we emerged from the trees and made the final short descent to the cabin itself I was struck by how small and homely the cabin seemed, such a humble dwelling by the lake shore, yet of such significance to so many people from all over the world. Although nothing now remains of the original beaver lodge that stood up against the end wall of the cabin fronting the lake, I was pleased to see that a large beaver home had been built, and seemed to be in

use, only a few yards away along the shore in full view of the cabin – occupied, one would like to believe, by descendants of Jelly Roll and Rawhide.

Inside the cabin we sat on Grey Owl's bed and reminisced with Margaret about those early days. Our fascinated gaze took in the old stove where, Margaret recalled, the kettle was always boiling ("Grey Owl loved his tea"), the amazingly large beavers' enclosure at the other end, and opposite the door the old table, which Margaret recognized by one of its legs gnawed by the beaver. The table now has a metal covering (presumably to protect it) and displays the Visitors' Book, which we all signed – and we were surprised to see just how many people had made the trek out to the cabin since the beginning of the year.

Afterwards, we all climbed the steep steps to the upper cabin and, going inside, took photos of Margaret as she stood by the window where she recalled sitting all those years ago to type Grey Owl's book. The outlook from the window, however, had changed considerably, she commented, as of course the mature poplars and pines now obscure much of the view from the window down to the main cabin and lake beyond.

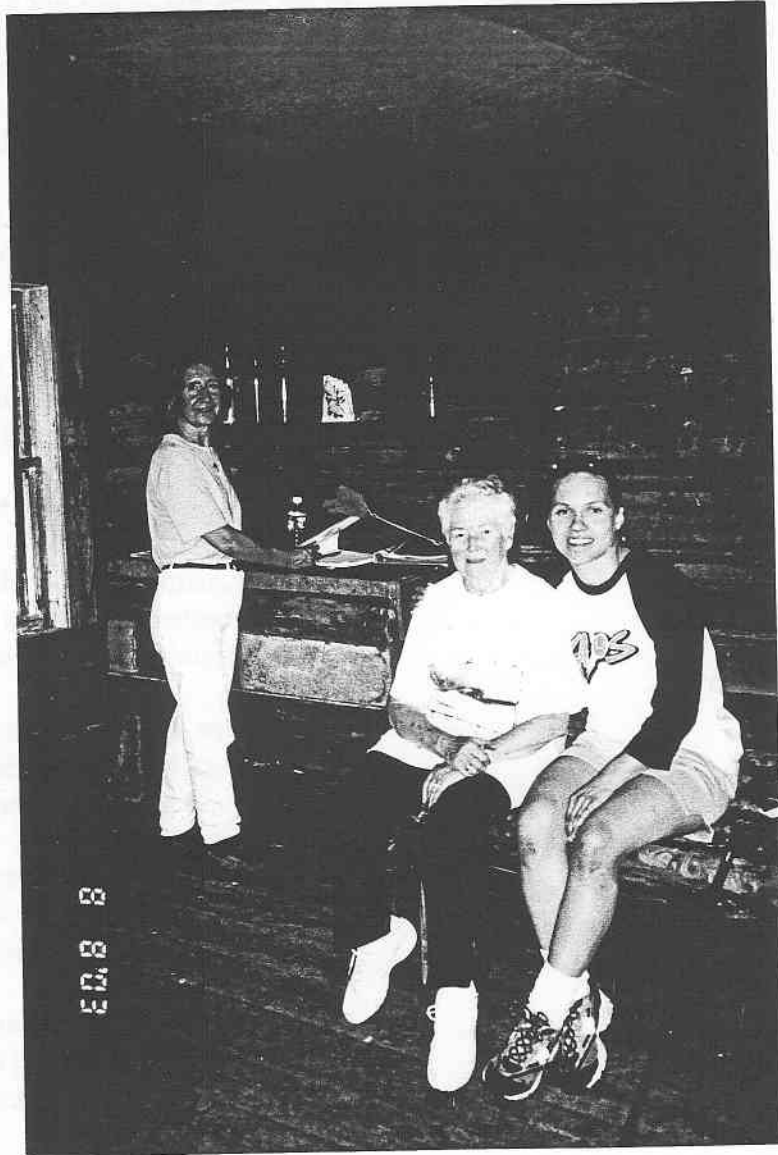
The late afternoon light was already beginning to fade so we paid our respects at the three graves of Grey Owl, Anahareo and Dawn nestled under the towering pines not far from the upper cabin, then it was time to take a last look across the peaceful expanse of Ajawaan and, with reluctance, leave this special spot to wind our way slowly back along the trail to where we had left the boat on Kingsmere. The wind had dropped completely and as we sped swiftly across the mirror-like expanse of water, the golden rays of the setting sun sparkled in the spray from our wake and the dark silhouettes of groups of ducks bobbed on the shining silver waters – a perfect farewell to Grey Owl's wilderness home.

After disembarking we hastened on against the growing dusk, Margaret ably supported by young Vicky and by Scott's expert guidance over the treacherous roots and lumps and bumps of the darkening trail. It was nearly 9 o'clock when we finally reached the car park, and as the moon rose above the treetops we drove carefully back to Waskesiu, our headlights picking out groups of elk and deer grazing peacefully along the roadside, a reminder of how successful this sanctuary for wildlife has become.

The next day (Saturday) there was not much chance to recover from our great expedition, as Margaret found herself a guest of honour at the re-enactment of the Park's 1928 Opening Ceremony on the beach, whilst I was targeted by a journalist from a local newspaper! (I was subsequently quoted, in Saskatoon's *The Star Phoenix*, as saying much more than I did, of course, but fortunately it was quite flattering to the aims of the Grey Owl Society!). The main event, however, was scheduled for the evening: a delicious dinner in the Waskesiu Community Hall followed by the performance of a one person play called "Song of Waskesiu", written and performed by the extremely talented Brad Muir. Once again, Margaret and I were given a warm welcome and, whilst having dinner, we had an excellent view of the lovely stained glass window above the stage depicting Grey Owl feeding a beaver kit, which the Society kindly co-sponsored some years ago with the Friends of Prince Albert National Park (see Bulletin 10).

The play itself was a small masterpiece and held us absorbed for nearly two hours. Based on chapters from Bill Waiser's book entitled *Saskatchewan's Playground – A History of Prince Albert National Park*, the play centred on the reminiscences of the first Superintendent of the Park, James Wood, who, of course, was there during Grey Owl's time and who had tremendous respect for him, despite his obvious shortcomings. In the play's finale, Brad quoted from a letter written by James Wood in support of Grey Owl, after the scandal of his true identity was rocking the world, and then he donned a buckskin jacket to read from one of Grey Owl's books. It was a very moving moment, particularly bearing in mind my subsequent conversation with Ken Norman, former President of the Friends, who reminded me of the

controversy still surrounding publicity of Grey Owl in the Park. I was heartened to learn from Ken, however, that he now firmly believes the tide is changing in this respect – the local Native American Indians (mainly Cree) take part in many of the Park's activities and there are plans to house the long awaited Grey Owl Museum and Gallery in part of the Friends' Bookshop. On behalf of the Grey Owl Society, I expressed our enthusiasm for promoting Grey Owl at the Park and I would certainly like to think that I could build on the contacts I have made there during my own visit to foster a closer working relationship between the Society, the Friends and the Park's staff, and thus enhance the memory of Grey Owl.



Henrietta, Margaret and Dorothy inside Grey Owl's cabin. Prince Albert National Park. August 2003.

Second Skin

Catherine Smith

Look at you, pale-skinned boy, stone-faced
in that stiff suit. This is your English world;
a terraced house, polished as a gun.

The clock's polite tick doles out your days,
but under your skin, the blood roars –
what you love's out there. The lush shock

of wet grass, streams raging home,
unpolished rocks. You're belly down
on Fairlight hills, scrubbed ears

alert to all that hops, wriggles, flies.
You lope through St. Helen's woods, quiet
as a buttoned lip, or curl on your floor,

the wilderness thundering through your dreams.
Some nights, in the moon-cooled garden,
an owl's hoot fattens your throat.

* * *

Look at you, dark-skinned man, rock-faced
and feathered up. The Canadian sun
has peeled you, your past sloughed off.

Your tongue curls round old words,
fresh news; the one who walks by night,
through a cathedral of trees.

At home, at last, inside your skin;
no longer sticky with the blood of those
whose pelts you pulled off like gloves,

of those who nudge your hands for fruit
and love, who paddle-tail your floor,
trail the lake into your cabin, your dreams.

The wild boy split the carapace, itched free.
Listen to the thump of your heart,
your warmed blood, singing.

This poem referring to Grey Owl, was written by Catherine Smith and read by her on Friday, September 12, as part of the *Coastal Currents* programme in Hastings, summer 2003.

Members' and Friends' Correspondence

Marjorie Pope of Bath, one of our long-standing members who was at the centenary week events in Hastings in 1988 (Bulletin 7:1 & 26), wrote after Ken Conibear's death, "... I had already heard from Marilyn about the sad passing of Ken... I was at the Conibear's wedding in London, when I sat immediately behind Grey Owl in his full regalia of eagles' feathers. We had the reception at Sir Horace Hamilton's, where Grey Owl cut the cake with his knife with which he claimed to have killed several Indians!...". Marjorie added how much she had enjoyed the Society meetings in the past but thought that now, at the age of 93, and not being very mobile, she should retire from the membership. We would not like to lose Marjorie from the Society and because of her direct association and reminiscences of Grey Owl, we have made her an Honorary Member. There are not many members left who have personal reminiscences of G.O. (For an obituary on Ken Conibear, see Bulletin 21:4, 22 & 24).

Marilyn Conibear also wrote after the Society's letter to her, after we had learned of Ken's death. She referred to the article/obituary in the *Globe and Mail* (Bulletin 21:22 & 24), adding, "... Ken would have been so pleased that the G & M ended the article by saying – Kenneth Conibear – author, born 1907, died 2002 – as writing was Ken's first love. Ken was always amazed that his Grey Owl connection had brought so many strangers to his door – and he loved it!!"

Carol Smith wrote to us in January to let us know, in case we had not heard, about Rich Gralewski's passing (Bulletin 21:25). She added, "...He will be sadly missed by all who knew this kind and generous gentle man..." (Carol also enclosed a short obituary on Rich).

Anne Daniel of Shropshire wrote to say how much she enjoyed reading the Bulletins and adding, "I bought *A Face Beside the Fire*, by Dawn's husband, Bob Richardson, it is a lovely book" (Bulletin 20:10).

Joanna Smith of Haywards Heath, one of our new members and who is a nurse, wrote in February after joining the Society, "...Have discovered one of my elderly patients who left Canada when she was 19, remembers sticking up for Grey Owl when 'the cat got let out of the bag' – she has all his books and we had a very nice conversation."

Nigel Sinnott, an Australian member, found "a large book on Canada's national parks" in the Williamstown Public Library (suburb of Melbourne) and he added that it included Prince Albert National Park with "some large colour photographs of Lake Ajawaan and Grey Owl's cabin."

Pam Malcolm, one of our earliest members, borrowed the video from the archives of the *Timewatch* programme *The Great White Hoax* (see p. 13). She wrote: "I saw the *Timewatch* programme at the time it went out – but seeing it again after the film, refreshed my mind and I realised how sensitively they had put Grey Owl's story across. Their point, I thought, was that people who were outraged when they found he was not born Indian were mostly so because they had let themselves believe otherwise. I felt that what came across was that Grey Owl was his own person, and had slipped into the life and identity that then gave him his anonymity and the chance to work for his ideals of conservation. In the present time many people are grateful for the fact that he was there when he was needed, and he was the first real conservationist..."

Tom Watrous mentioned his visit to the Tom Thompson exhibition in Toronto this summer: "If you're not acquainted with the name, he was the wonderful landscape artist (mostly oils) who preceded and greatly influenced the Group of Seven. He drowned under mysterious circumstances in 1917. At any rate, they had a lot of peripheral material including a photo of The Owl. It brought back to my mind the suggestion that had been put forth that Tom

Thompson and Archie might have met in the Mississauga Forest Preserve, most likely in 1912. It seemd to be a somewhat watery theory, and I remember contacting the Tom Thompson Museum in Owen Sound, Ont. They wrote back saying that tantalizing as the possibilities were, there was absolutely no proof that they had ever met...." (Would be worth looking into again? Eds.).

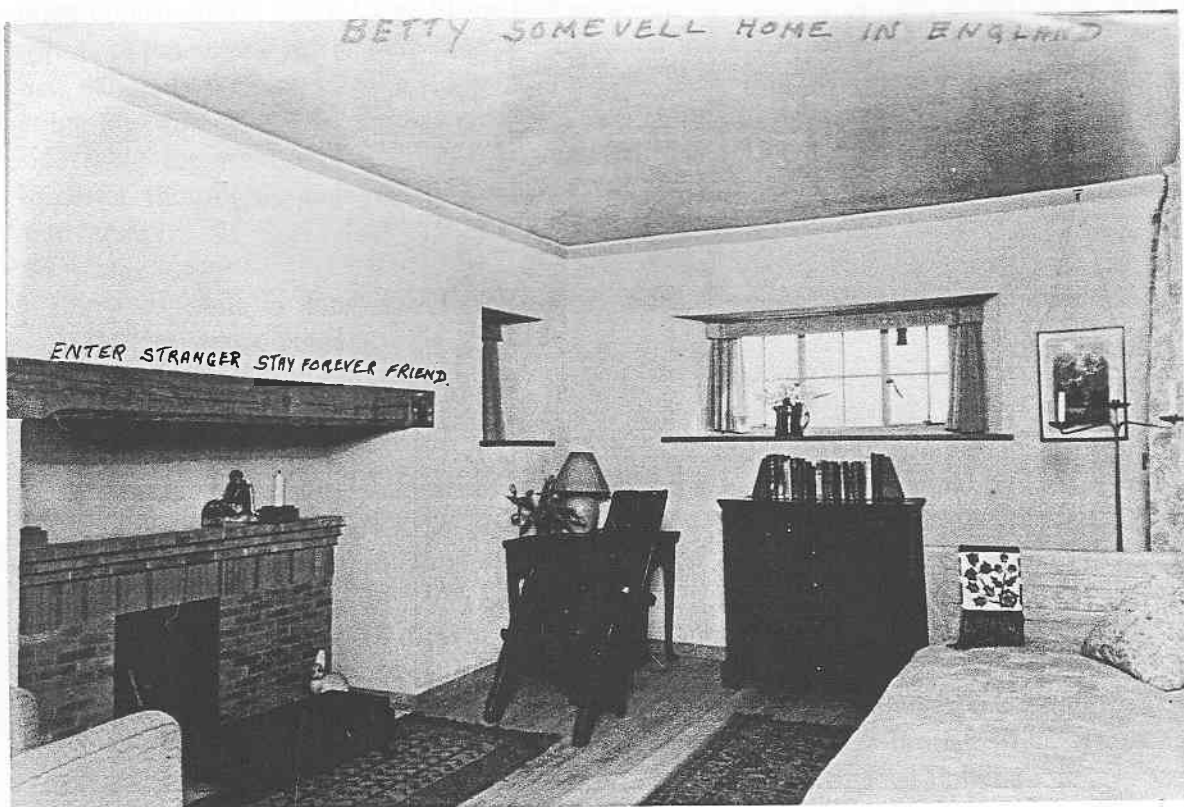
Richard Johnston of Orillia, Ontario, wrote to us in July: "... I was just reading Vol.1, Autobiography of former P.M. John Diefenbaker, born Sept. 18/1895 in Ontario but moved to Prince Albert at the turn of the century (see Bulletins 4:13, 7:30 and 16:17)... Dief writes "G.O. was one of the most remarkable men that Canada has ever produced. He was a genius; no doubt a charlatan, a poseur and a faker but no one in N. American history ever left behind him such a treasure of concern for what he described as his furred brethren of the soil and his feathered brethren of the air. Never has any Canadian since the days of Laurier so captivated the British people. He filled the halls. He became the embodiment of the movement against cruelty to animals. He spoke in Albert Hall, eloquent, direct..." (See Special Publication of The Grey Owl Society, 2002:37).

Timothy Carroll (producer of the BBC's TIMEWATCH programme on Grey Owl), sent the photo shown below, of Betty Somervell's home 'Plumgarths' in Kendal in the Lake District. Tim sent this last year but it was not used in the Special Publication. Betty Somervell acted as chauffeur to Grey Owl in January - February, 1936, during the 1st Lecture Tour.

This photograph in the family home, was presumably taken whilst Grey Owl was staying there. Note the words above the mantel shelf and the statue of Grey Owl beneath. Grey Owl's pipe bag is shown on the bed head (or sofa arm) and several of his books appear to be on the chest beneath the window.

For more information on Betty Somervell, see Bulletin 15:1-3 for extracts from her 1936 diary (courtesy, her daughter Kristin Bonney) and Bulletin 16:8-10 for a profile on B.S., including footnotes to the diary.

Our thanks to Tim for this very interesting photo for the archives.



AGM/Christmas Dinner: 21st year: Friday, 6 December, 2002

A brief report of the Christmas Dinner (with statistics!) is given under **Stop Press** as usual, but we quote below from Barry Johnson's¹ letter to our Polish member, Dagmara Ginter, written on 14 December 2002 and which outlines more fully this 'historic' occasion!

"I shall start by saying that it was dull, dampish and rather miserable but not cold... Our party was too large for us to have the Quebec Room, with its long and broad table, as we usually do. We were instead consigned to the hotel dining room.. we went in at eight o'clock, though without the usual call of 'Dinner is served'!.... Thus braced up, we got on with three splendid courses, the Christmas pudding being really first rate. It was a long dinner [and finally] Ian West, the Society's President... was called on to open the Proceedings.... Then Colin stood up to give his own introductory address.... Arthur Andrews began to speak about the late Ken Conibear².. describing in measured tones, but very movingly, his annual visits to the Conibears and, in particular, the visit which he and Tina made in June, a few months before Ken died. Ralfe Whistler then spoke about Spencer Robert's painting, "Grey Owl at Ajawaan Lake", which he owns³ and which was displayed on the side table, with the publications etc. Henrietta came next, taking Betty's place, in dealing with the 'apologies for absence' and other announcements. She showed the large Bouquet [see details under **Stop Press**] and the bottle of champagne: both gifts were in appreciation of the services of the Joint Hon. Secs. since the foundation of the Society and there was much applause. Then the Treasurer rose up in the most distant corner of the room... to make his annual report.. Your reporter should add here that a tribute was certainly made to Richard Gralewski⁴ but he disremembers (a fine old word for you) exactly at what point it came [Colin Taylor gave it in his introductory address referred to above]....

Our Canadian guests had been reserved until last. Margaret Charko⁵ put in an accomplished performance in giving her memories of Grey Owl – she never suspected that he was other than what he claimed to be – and her daughter spoke more briefly about their week together in England (which it seems they had enjoyed very much). The Joint Hon. Sec. then asked for any other contributions, when Clive Stone told an anecdote about Grey Owl in the Great War. The results of the annual raffle were then declared; and the Proceedings closed with the Joint Hon. Sec. officially wishing us all a Happy Christmas. There had been a good deal of photography going on while Mrs. Charko was speaking, and Henrietta now arrayed the Committee by the side table for what will no doubt become an 'historic' photograph.... (see p. 28). Your Reporter thoroughly enjoyed the evening, which did the Society full credit on its 21st anniversary.

¹ Barry Johnson, a long-standing member from Birmingham, who has attended every AGM/Christmas Dinner.

² Ken Conibear was Grey Owl's Tour Manager in 1937 on the Second British Lecture Tour.

³ The painting owned by Ralfe Whistler, Grey Owl at Ajawaan Lake, and painted by our late former Vice-President Spencer (Arthur) Roberts in 1991, is shown on the back cover of the 21st Anniversary Special Publication (2002).

⁴ See Bulletin 21:25 for a short obituary on Rich Gralewski.

⁵ Margaret Charko (whose mother brought up Grey Owl's and Anahareo's daughter Dawn, and who spent the summer of 1936 at Ajawaan Lake with her brother Stan, typing Grey Owl's last book) has contributed to several Bulletins and the Special Publication.

Lord Lieutenant's Visit to Hastings on 'The Grey Owl Trail'.

The Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex, Mrs. Phyllida Stewart-Roberts, OBE and her husband Lord Andrew, together with the Vice Lord Lieutenant, Peter Field and his wife Margaret, spent the day of 8 April 2003 in Hastings. The arrangements were handled by Derek Norcross, who had long talked of showing the Grey Owl haunts to his friends. It was a very successful day commencing with lunch at Hastings College of Arts and Technology, courtesy of the Principal (member Bryon Purdey also present along with the Taylors). The guests were then taken to the Museum to meet the Curator, Victoria Williams, and to visit the Grey Owl Gallery before coming up to High Wickham for tea. Some of the group had seen the Attenborough film, *Grey Owl*, and were particularly interested in the Society's archives and library and especially in the Grey Owl and Anahareo costume artefacts. The Lord Lieutenant* wrote: "Derek's enthusiasm for Grey Owl has always been infectious so it was especially interesting to visit the display at the Museum and then learn so much from you...". The Vice Lord Lieutenant also wrote to say how much they had enjoyed the day "... the subject of Grey Owl was a real highlight. We still cannot believe how interesting his life was and were delighted to hear about the impact he has had on developing conservation...".

* We understand that the Lord Lieutenant's role is, in essence, to represent the Queen locally.



The Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex and wife of the Vice Lord Lieutenant, with copies of The Grey Owl Society's Special Publication (2002). Derek Norcross on the left.

Memories of a meeting with Archie Belaney on a River Trip in 1928

Don Smith received the following E-mail this summer, which makes such interesting reading that he has forwarded it for the Bulletin!

It was sent to Don from a colleague, Brian Back, who runs *Che-Mun* magazine/Wilderness canoeing, who added, "Don't know if you are still interested in Grey Owl material, but I discovered a member of the 1928 Keewaydin Nottaway River Trip who is still alive [He is] Erhart Muller... a camper 1926-28... He is 93 years old. Appears to be the surviving member of the 1928 expedition. And Grey Owl means nothing to him! Even after I explained to whom who he was... He sent me a transposed copy of his log and he wrote a fair bit about that meeting with Belaney on Grand Lake Victoria. I am not sure if his log says Belaney or Delany, as his niece did the transposition.

Nottaway River 1928 log written by Erhart Muller

Tuesday, July 24: "We paddled a couple of miles on Grand Lake and came up to a man on a small island – an Indian from his looks but an Irishman by his name – Delany. He had two young tame beaver. He was thin and lanky and apparently very agile – not looking the forty-five years I was told he had; and he wore his hair long, hanging around his shoulders and kept from in front of his face by a dirty band of cloth around his head. Oddly enough we were recognized as a Keewaydin party because we weren't using put-puts and because he had been at Temagami some fifteen years before. One of his first remarks was to the effect that all the people of the lake were motor boat crazy and he knew we were from Ontario by our lack of them. Evidently he was quite well educated because he spoke of a quarrel he had had with another chap in which they had used French, Indian and English. This other man had tried to keep the Indians in ignorance so they would come to him for advice, had told them that the French had been in the country first and had brought over the moose and beaver to keep the poor Indians from starving. Delany told the Indians the truth and he is now staying at Grand Lake by their request. The Indians gave him a trapping ground on the condition that he would look out for their interests on any quarrels that might arise. Our meeting with him was very odd. When we came upon him he was shaving – a man shaving out in the middle of the Wilderness when he had long hair trailing down his back impressed me as quite unusual. His tent was quite old and evidently in tatters. He was going to show us pictures of moose he had taken during the past winter – an unusual thing a person to do who has lived in the territory for so long. He seemed to be hungry for some intelligent conversation for when we arrived he said, "Won't you stay and make your lunch here and we can have a grand old talk." He also had a very keen sense of humour. Looking at his fire which was practically out he said, "I guess I must be an Indian – very little fire." It was awfully hot and buggy and after a while we had to leave, had to make some mileage. I would have liked to have stayed. I'll bet he could have told some interesting tales. A most unusual fellow."

Don wrote back to Brian Back on June 10, 2003: "What an extraordinary story! Thank you for sharing it with me. This is one of the best recollections of Archie Belaney in the late 1920s that I have ever seen. Imagine it surfacing 75 years after the event! I would love to see the original of the notes as they are so important. Could you provide me with a few lines about the background of Erhart Muller – this is an incredible Grey Owl story! Congratulations on obtaining it. I would be delighted to send Mr. Muller a copy of my book directly to him, or through your good offices. All the best."

Thanks to Don for forwarding this "original research".

STOP PRESS

We are very pleased to welcome the following new members:

Alison and Duncan Hawkins, Hastings
Dorrell Taylor, British Columbia (re-joined)
Joanne Smith, Haywards Heath
Gabriel Fritzen, Luchow, Germany
Marina Froggatt, Hastings

Gwilym Evans. We were very sorry to learn of Gwilym's passing in September, 2001. Many members will recall Pat and Gwilym's interest in the "First" Grey Owl Society (Haslemere, Surrey, 1942) and the result of their researches was published in Bulletin 20:23. Pat and Gwilym attended some of the annual AGM/Christmas Dinner events and we pass our sincere condolences to Pat.

Hastings Museum. 'Grey Owl' key rings are available from Hastings Museum at 60p each! Make good 'stocking fillers'!

Grey Owl's Books. We still have a number of early editions of Grey Owl's books FOR SALE (see list in Bulletin 21:30). These are being sold for a former member, Gordon Locock, and a proportion of the monies will go to the Society's funds. Phone the Taylors () if you are interested.

Bear Island, Temagami



HUDSON'S BAY POST, BEAR ISLAND, TEMAGAMI, ONT., CAN.

The very interesting post card of the Hudson's Bay Post, Bear Island shown above, was sent to us by members, Richard and Wendy Johnston of Orillia, Canada. Established on Bear Island in 1875 (Burned in the 1980s).

STOP PRESS cont...

AGM/Christmas Dinner, 2002. The 21st gathering took place on Friday, 6 December and was held as usual at the Beauport Hotel, Hastings. Forty-three members attended on this calm and cloudy night (a very good attendance it should be said) and an Xmas menu was served. Betty Taylor was, unfortunately, absent for the first time (food poisoning from France!!) so Henrietta Smyth kindly stood in and welcomed the new members etc. The Special Publication for this 21st year, was available and a number of copies were sold. Jenny Logan organized the raffle and a profit of 46 pounds was made for the Society's funds. Henrietta made a most generous presentation to Colin and Betty (a basket of peach coloured roses and carnations with poinsettia and a bottle of champagne) and Betty is only sorry that she wasn't there! The Society was VERY pleased to welcome as guests Margaret Charko and her daughter, Janice (who put a maple-syrup toffee on everyone's plate and passed around 'Winnipeg' studs – a nice gesture!). Margaret, of course, spent the summer of 1936 at Ajawaan Lake typing Grey Owl's last book. For a fuller report on this 21st Christmas Dinner, see Barry Johnson's observations on p. 24 (written in his inimitable style) sent to our Polish member, Dagmara Ginter.

CHRISTMAS DINNER DATE 2004

Sorry – we do not have a date yet for next year. The Beauport ~~has~~ suddenly changed the usual arrangements. We will notify new date/venue (?) next year.



AGM/Christmas Dinner, 2002. At the back, standing left to right: Jenny Logan, Ralfe Whistler, Colin Taylor, Ian West, Margaret Charko. Front row, Margaret Van Draat, Janice (daughter of Margaret Charko), Derek Norcross and Bill Van Draat. (Photograph taken by Henrietta Smyth – see p. 24).

STOP PRESS cont...

Seance

GREY OWL RETURNS

**With
Medium and Channel
Theresa Matthew**



Psychic drawing of Grey Owl by Stuart Waldron

Saturday 21st December 2002

7.30 pm – 10.00 pm

**The Pinehurst Centre, 3 Avondale Road, St
Leonards on Sea.**

Tel 01424 423687

The Pinehurst Centre state that "Following the recent film, *Grey Owl*, many people have felt this remarkable Spirit present at numerous gatherings. In recent weeks channel, Theresa Matthew... has felt Grey Owl's presence to such an extent there has been a merging of consciousness. Now for the first time since Grey Owl's passing into Spirit, he has made it clear that he wishes to continue his work and has chosen Theresa Matthew as the vehicle for his communications." The public were invited "to experience this amazing phenomenon at the very first public Theresa Matthew channel of Grey Owl". Unfortunately, it does not appear that any Society member was present... so we cannot report on the outcome!

STOP PRESS cont...

Hastings Country Park. At the Committee Meeting on 2nd April 2003, Colin Taylor raised the point that it would be a good idea to explore the possibility of the 'Grey Owl Trail' being added to the map panels that are at the entrance to this conservation area. The 'Grey Owl Trail' is shown in the small map entitled "Grey Owl's Hastings", in the 21st Anniversary Special Publication (2002), on p. 1. Subsequently, C.T. spoke with Martin Jenks at Hastings Borough Council and sent a copy of the map. We hope to be able to report more fully on this matter in next year's Bulletin, especially as the Hastings/Fairlight Cliffs (part of the Country Park), have just been granted "Special Area Status" (*Hastings AdNews*, June 4th: front page). These dramatic cliffs have been "designated as a Special Area of Conservation.. under the European Habitats Directive". The *AdNews* goes on to say, "The cliffs are already designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest... the fossils found at the cliffs are recognised as some of the best examples of their type in the world.... the Hastings Cliffs are one of the best areas in the UK and... the habitat type in the south east is unique."

Roedean School, Brighton. As members will know from Grey Owl's Itinerary for his 1937 lecture tour (Bulletin 6:18-19), he visited the famous school on 31 October and gave a 'Film Lecture'. The archivist at the school has kindly sent us a copy of p. 17 of the *Roedean School Magazine*. Vol. XL, 1938, with the short mention that "Among the distinguished people who had lectured during the year were Sir George Gillett, L.A.G. Strong, and Grey Owl".

Pestalozzi Children's Village Trust: Talk and Video of Grey Owl Film. Colin Taylor visited Pestalozzi Village at Sedlescombe in East Sussex, on 3 June 2003. Derek Norcross had asked Colin to give a brief talk on Grey Owl as an introduction to the video of the Attenborough film, Grey Owl. Pestalozzi's youngsters (mostly in their teens and early 20s), came from many distant countries having earned scholarships for "Education Today For Tomorrow's World", and they are expected to return to their countries to teach and help others. After appropriate introductions by the Director, Patricia Rogers, and Derek Norcross (who is on the Board of Trustees), Colin introduced the film by briefly outlining the life and times of Archie Belaney and the circumstances of making the film. The film was finally shown in the lounge (technical details making it impossible to use the lecture hall) to some thirty students and staff and it was clear that it made a considerable impact, especially the opening scenes of the brutality of trapping. However, as the story unfolded of the transition of Archie to Grey Owl, the direction his life took and the importance of his conservation work, became apparent. The whole story was seemingly greatly appreciated by the audience, judging from the range and number of questions and comments at the end of the presentation. A letter of thanks was sent to Colin Taylor by the Residential Education Co-ordinator and signed by several students! (See p. 11 for the Society's 2nd annual Donation, to a student of Pestalozzi Village).

Hastings Country Park (see first item above). We have just heard from Martin Jenks (5 September 2003): "... Certainly I think we should be able to look at how the Country Park's interpretation could include the Grey Owl Trail..."

Gabriel Fritzen, a new member from Luchow, Germany, has a special interest in the life of Anahareo. He writes that "very little has been written and very little is on the public record on Anahareo...". Gabriel, who lived for a number of years in Canada, goes on to say "...Anahareo was an amazing person in her own right... Anyone who has spent any length of time in the bush of Northern Ontario will appreciate what this gutsy woman actually did when she travelled all over the North in a canoe by herself back in the 30s. Even today, the wilderness of Canada can be a dangerous place, but back then it was much more so...". Gabriel has a website on Anahareo – it is

www.express-toner.de

visit www.anahareo.ca – A Portrait of a Famous Canadian Woman

STOP PRESS cont...

Grampian T.V. A television listing this summer from an Orkney newspaper has details of a programme called *Stan the Man!* "Stan has an edgy encounter with Grey Owl" and a strange photo of the actor "Grey Owl" with a tomahawk, attacking Stan. (Thanks to Tom Watrous for this amusing snippet).

National Library of Canada, Ottawa. It was a great surprise to Ralfe Whistler to learn from the National Library of Canada (letter 24 June, 2003), that they did not have a copy of *The Tree* in their collections. Ralfe immediately rectified this situation, by kindly donating a copy to their holdings. They wrote back thanking him for this donation, adding "You can be assured that this publication will be added to our collection and will be made available to researchers and to the public through our library catalogue".

Waskesiu Memories, Volume III. This *Last Collection of Personal Stories* of Prince Albert National Park come from the years 1920-2003 and are edited (as with Vols. I & II), by Dorell Taylor. A copy is now in the Society's Archives (we exchanged 3 copies of the Society's 21st Special Publication). Chapter IV is devoted to Grey Owl and has articles ranging from "Shirley Dawn And I" by Frances Hanson to "The Missing Painting" by one time member of the Society, Colleen Gerwing. The articles are all written "from the heart" so to speak (there are one or two small errors; for example (p. 97), Dawn became ill at our (The Taylors) house, not at a banquet, and was rushed to hospital from here. We were pleased to see that our late friend and member, Rich Gralewski, had contributed to the volume, outlining some of his memories of visits to Beaver Lodge. 28 photos accompany the articles in this chapter, at least 13 that we had not seen before. (Price is 35 Canadian Dollars. ISBN 0-9682682-3-4. Available from Classic Memoirs, , Victoria, BC V9B 4B5, Canada).

Saskatchewan Land of Living Skies. 2003 Vacation Guide. (p. 150): "Grey Owl's Cabin, Ajawaan Lake. Access by foot/canoe during summer season.... Grey Owl was a world acclaimed naturalist, author and orator. His one room log cabin, built in 1931 and his home for 7 years is open to the public... Registration required prior to departure."

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