

## Happy New Year and Valentine's Day 2011

Love is definitely in the air with the forthcoming royal nuptials of William and Kate and the approaching week of love - Valentine's Day. I thought I would send you my 'love affair', not outlined in the book, with the staff of The Royal Collections Enterprises, St. James's Palace, prior to publication of *Interpreter of Old Ontario*.

Reference: **Manly Edward MacDonald - Interpreter of Old Ontario**, pages 74-75.

It was indeed a miracle that the image of the *Toronto Waterfront* appeared in the book at all. Knowing, from the research and news clippings that The Queen owned the painting, I was, however determined to have it included. In fact, The Queen owns two Manly MacDonald paintings; one presented in 1951 and this one in 1959.

The first contacts were made in 2008 with The Royal Collections Enterprises (RCE), the department that oversees the Queen's vast collection of art and antiquities. These offices are in St. James's Palace, London. A request of this nature must be handled in a certain way. The letter was to be typed on the same 'good quality' paper as the envelope. The envelope should be addressed in the person's own penmanship and signed with the same. There were to be no references to 'she' or 'her' in the letter; references were to Her Majesty, and/or Your Royal Highness. The request was to be signed either 'Your Loyal Servant' or 'Your Loyal Subject', of which I chose Subject. The letter was duly and carefully sent with help of the local post office employees, choosing the most appropriate Canadian stamps to send to Her Majesty.

A letter was received in October, 2009 from the staff at RCE, with an application form for reproducing the image. The forms were duly completed and returned. In November, I received a letter from the same staff with confirmation and fee pricing attached. Again, these were duly returned.

In early December, I received a long apology as to why it would now, not be possible to photograph the image. The Queen, I was told, would be at Sandringham House until the second week of February and so the request would have to be declined.

I quickly replied to staff members at RCE by email now, as we had become somewhat familiar, that this was not acceptable. They had known our timeline and deadline and that the image was integral to the fabric of the Manly MacDonald story. At that time I sent a copy to the Royal Collections Press Office, also at St. James's Palace. The next day I received an email reply from RCE staff with a forward from the Press Office entitled: "Poor Treatment From her Majesty's Staff".

Apparently that had done the trick, for an RCE staff member then wrote: "I did manage to track down a colleague who would be visiting Sandringham next week and who has agreed to take a photograph of the image for you."

The *Toronto Waterfront* was photographed and sent to the ArtPlus studio. Unfortunately, the image was not professionally photographed as the others, all done by Brant Cowie, but the distortions and shadows were able to be corrected.

The date for delivery of the book in 2010 was actually moved up so that a copy of the book could be presented to Her Majesty while visiting Canada in June. Protocol dictated that I contact Kevin MacLeod, Usher of the Black Rod in the Senate, who was the Queen's Principal Secretary during her stay in Canada. An agreed date was set in June, 2010. I went to Ottawa with a signed copy for The Queen and a complimentary one for Mr. McLeod. Photos were taken and all were pleased.

In July, I received a letter from Buckingham Palace from Edward Young, Private Secretary to The Queen, which said: "The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh have asked me to thank you for the copy of the book '*Manly Edward MacDonald: Interpreter of Old Ontario*' which they received in Ottawa during their recent tour of Canada. It was a most thoughtful present. This message comes to you with Her Majesty and His Royal Highness's good wishes."

Just as love affairs can be short-lived or forever, mine with The Royal Collections Enterprises staff has ended, but not without fond memories of the time spent together.

Best regards,  
Charles