



THE STONE CIRCLE

by Jane Panet

COMMUNITY

Probably the most famous Stone Circle in the world is Stonehenge in England, but Rockcliffe Park Village has its own Stone Circle, too. It is located towards the west side of the Village Green bounded by Springfield Rd. on the west and Mariposa Ave. on the South. It may be hard to recognize these days. Over 50 years of neglect and abuse have taken a toll on what was once a beautiful space.

Humphrey Carver, a long-time, well-loved resident of Rockcliffe Park and a founding member of the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects, was the lead architect of the Circle. He designed it to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the founding of Canada -- a circular flagstone and river rocks-paved space, anchored in the centre by two glacial boulders, and ringed on the outside by ten maple trees. A representation of ten provinces and two territories? No reference to this exists in the Stone Circle archives, but it certainly would have reflected Canada in 1967.

The land to the east of the Stone Circle had once been the Village bowling green. These two very different spaces were a nice complement to each other, each a form of designed landscape. One full of activity and laughter, the other a place of contemplation and quiet gatherings. In 1977, to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee the bowling green was transformed into the Jubilee Garden, again with input from Humphrey Carver. The two garden rooms, which commemorate and honour chapters of history, still work well together.

Clockwise from top left:

The Stone Circle Garden, built to commemorate Canada's Centennial; intricate stone detailing as part of the landscape design; protective measures during wintertime; native fauna thriving in the Stone Circle Garden; damaged bench requiring repair; one of three recently cut down maple trees encircling the Stone Circle.

The Canadian Society of Landscape Architects has confirmed the significance of the design.

Although the Jubilee Garden has received care over the years, the Stone Circle has not and it is in state of disrepair. Of the original ten maples, five remain. Given the fresh sawdust, it looks like three of ten were cut down this past winter. Over the years, paving stones have been dislodged by city snowplows. Tree roots have pushed up the pavement in some areas. Commemorative benches around the circle are showing their age.

A lot of work has gone on towards doing something to give new life to the once magnificent, commemorative Stone Circle. Linda Dicaire, Peter Lewis, Marilyn Venner, Lola Price, Bonnie Robinson, Peter Lewis, among others have devoted countless hours to writing reports, participating in community consultations, and meeting with local officials.

They have laid a strong and solid base for moving this project forward. Now is the time to pick up what they have started.

The Rockcliffe Park Foundation and Residents Association welcome your comments and ideas on how to bring new life to the Stone Circle - please email us on:

info@rockcliffeparkfoundation.org



Did you know?

Before the purchase and development of the area around the Pond, the pond was a popular (if unapproved) swimming spot. At the time, it was known as 'The Pits' as it was the site of extensive excavation during the building of the Chateau Laurier.



Credit: Jane Panel