

# Heritage Renfrew

## Renfrew Ontario

### NEWSLETTER

March 1983

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Dear Member:

Our Soup Kitchen was a success again this year. We had a profit of - \$344.32 - which will be turned over to the Council for the Restoration of the Swinging Bridge, just as soon as they are ready for it.

A big 'thank you' for all who helped in any way to make this Heritage event a happy day.

Now we are looking forward to helping in the celebration of Renfrew's 125th Anniversary.

Our Antique Show and Sale -- April 29th. and 30th. -- is the Kick-off for our celebrations. We will be asking our members to help with our lunch counter again this year.

We are hoping to bring one of the MARKS BROS. plays to Renfrew during the summer. The Renfrew Highland Pipes and Drums have offered to provide five members to play in the Band. As you probably know, there were five members from Renfrew in the original band.

In the fall of 1914 Tom Marks of MARKS BROS. approached George Carruth about getting a small group together to tour with his show - and be known as the TOM MARKS KILTIES. Those who volunteered to join were - George Carruth, Jim Young, Jack MacMillan, Davie Dick, and Stewart Affleck.

Our 'Story of Renfrew' is progressing nicely.....

Alan Gilhooly, Karen Kirby, and Anne Agnew have turned over some very good Manuscripts. Some of the organizations who have been working on their stories have contributed pictures and finished Manuscripts. As they are completed we pass them on to Don McCuaig and Carole Bennett who have agreed to edit and publish the Book.

April 6th. will be an open meeting at the Library Program Centre at 7:30 p.m. If you have anything to share, we would be glad to hear from you as this will be a "Show and Tell" evening.

..... SEE YOU THERE ! .....

Memberships may be paid at this meeting (\$3.00) .....

"Tom Marks' Kilties"

Back in 1914 when Tom Marks wanted a band to travel with his theatrical troupe he came to Renfrew and hired five men from the Pipe Band George Carruth had organized in town a few years earlier. This band took the name of Tom Marks' Kilties and travelled with the show.

In those days Tom Marks had a road show that travelled throughout Ontario playing stands of 3 or 4 days or longer in each place they visited. Their performance was usually a 3-act comedy with song and dance numbers before the curtain between acts.

The boys from Renfrew fitted in very well with this type of show. Besides putting on a parade in front of the theatre at noon and again before the show started at night they also played a few numbers inside from the stage. George Carruth and Jack MacMillan became stars with the show. George got the laughs as a Scotch comedian and Jack was always featured for his dancing.

Sixty years ago, when Tom Marks' show flourished, talking pictures had never been heard of and even silent films were mostly one and two-reelers. For theatrical entertainment people were used to live performances. In Renfrew travelling show companies used to appear regularly at the old Temperance Hall and in later years at the O'Brien Opera House.

After the war broke out most of the young actors enlisted or went into war industry and many of the road shows went out of business. Then moving pictures improved rapidly and movie theatres began opening in every town. In the late 1920's talking pictures took over and road shows such as Tom Marks' and His Kilties became a thing of the past.

By Harry Hinchley