

**For Immediate Release**

**Thursday, December 14, 2017**

### **Paris Old Town Bell**

**County of Brant, ON** - The bell that once hung atop the tower of the Paris Old Town Hall and now sits atop a cairn in the municipal parking lot downtown, has always been both a symbol of civic pride and a controversial item in Paris.

While the Paris Old Town Hall was completed in 1854, it would be many years before the bell would take its place in the Upper Town of Paris. Sources at the Paris Museum tell of controversy surrounding the original decision to purchase a bell mainly because the cost would represent approximately 1/15th the town's budget. The original motion to procure a bell did not pass. However at the next election, came another vote and this time, the bell's proponents were successful.

The bell was built in 1874 by the Meneely Bell Foundry of West Troy in the USA. The final cost of the bell was \$954.20. \$333 in repairs were required to solve structural issues in the tower to allow the 1233 pounds bell to be hung safely.

Sounding out across the river valley five times per day, the bell marked the time for the citizens of Paris. The clock was set each day at noon, using a sundial kept at St. James Anglican Church. The first bell ringer did the job for \$100 per year and the task was eventually taken on by those who ran The Canadian across the street.

By 1950, the mountings were in rusty disrepair and it was decided that, for safety's sake, the bell must come down from its perch high above Paris. This was another controversial moment in the bell's history. A citizens committee fought to have the bell repaired and situated at the corner of Grand River Street South and Dumfries Street. From there, it once again rang out in 1953 to celebrate the coronation of the new Queen. It rang for the last time, symbolically, when it was installed in its current place downtown in 2002.

People often ask what will happen to the bell when The Bawcutt Centre becomes a reality. It's hard to say if the tower will be able to hold that huge bell again but time - and the engineers - will tell. The early citizens of this town took great pride in that bell and we should as well.

**-30-**

### **For More Information:**

Kari Raymer Bishop

Member of The Bawcutt Centre/Paris Old Town Hall Advisory Committee  
County of Brant  
T: 519.496.4465  
E: [karaymer@hotmail.com](mailto:karaymer@hotmail.com)