

C.S. May 22/84

Cairn honors Fisher

Preservation work recognized in park



Cairn unveiled

Cobourg Mayor Mac Lees, right, and former mayor Jack Heenan unveil a cairn and plaque erected in Victoria Park in honor of the late Lenah Field Fisher. About 125 people attended

the ceremony yesterday in memory of the woman who first pushed for the restoration of Victoria Hall.

About 125 people gathered in Victoria Park yesterday to pay tribute to a woman whose dedication to her community helped establish Cobourg's foremost landmark.

The occasion was the unveiling of a cairn and plaque honoring the late Lenah Field Fisher, the former politician and local character who was a driving force behind the restoration of Victoria Hall.

The plaque commemorates Fisher's part in saving the Lakeview portion of Victoria Park as parkland and preventing it from being turned into an apartment complex.

But it was her role as an instigator of the Victoria Hall restoration for which most people seem to remember her.

"She had a lot to do with saving the grand old lady of King Street," said Cedric Haynes, former head of the restoration society, "and she always said she was the other

grand old lady of King Street. So perhaps they've joined hands."

Said former mayor Jack Heenan: "If Cobourg ever needs spirit, let that spirit be Lenah Fisher, because she is Cobourg."

After the unveiling by Heenan and Mayor Mac Lees, many of the spectators walked down to the hall for a champagne reception highlighted by a rendition of Lenah, the song written in Fisher's memory.

Fisher was a former owner of Dressler House restaurant and lived until her death in 1980, in a small house beside the restaurant.

Her first involvement with Victoria Hall was in the 1950s, when she urged town council to have basic repairs done on the decrepit building, said Haynes.

Fisher's fight to have the hall brought back to its former glory lasted through the years.

"While she was not active day to day as some of us were," said

Haynes, "she was really the inspiration for the restoration of Victoria Hall to get going."

In 1956 she began a 16-year career on town council and eventually was elected as deputy-reeve.

She espoused a number of causes and with each one gave a huge amount of energy, Haynes said.

"I don't have to tell you Lenah was a fighter, a real fighter," he told the Victoria Park crowd.

"Although this doughty lady was small of stature, she could act like a juggernaut if she thought her favorite community project was in jeopardy."

Although Fisher died three years before the opening of the newly-restored hall, she left a much-needed legacy to the restoration society — her \$175,000 estate and about \$50,000 worth of antique furniture.

She had already contributed

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A-Fisher, Lenah (07-15)