

# There'll always be a Thames

The London (U.K) tube map is a tangle of coloured underground transport routes. The Central Line is marked in red, the Circle Line in yellow. The Piccadilly Line is dark blue, the Victoria in light blue, the Northern in black, the Bakerloo in brown, the District Line in green and so on.

Until for a short time earlier this year the winding course of the Thames River was shown as flowing south of most of all that. Not everybody, of course, wishes to travel all the way down to East Putney, Clapham Common or Surrey Docks.

Then the deed was done. While His Worship Boris Johnson, Mayor of London, was out of the country and others were not looking somebody air-brushed the Thames out of the London Transport (now Transport for London) route map. The change was meant to simplify the picture. The quick reaction showed that Londoners were not ready to dispense with what Hilaire Belloc called "the great street of the city" even though the river's ancient name, affirmed now by actual fact, translates as "dark river".

If the St Lawrence is the River of Canada, the Thames is the water highway of Commonwealth and United States history. None of those countries would be what they are had Father Thames not flowed out of England and into the sea. It is, mostly, a benign stream flowing 350 km from a field in Gloucestershire where a stone by a spring marks its source. For 2000 years a footpath that follows its course has led to London and, from there by ship, to the world.

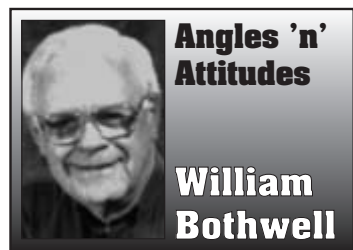
Any Maritimer, New Englander, Ontarian or Californian - even Albertan or Texan - who does not acknowledge a debt to the River Thames should be sent back to school.

In wartime, people sang "There'll always be an England". Perhaps at Transport for London they should sing "There'll always be a Thames". Every future leader of an English-speaking state or province should travel the path from Ewen (Anglo-Saxon for 'source') to the Pool of London.

This Canadian citizen, now legally a foreigner in the land where his ancestors lived for at

least a thousand years, loves the Thames as one does the Clyde, the Seine, the Danube or the Volga. It does not have the many castles, terraced vineyards and the waterfall of the Rhine, nor its storied water nymphs, but its course should be known by all who speak English as well as was the pilgrim route from Southwark to Canterbury by mediaeval people.

Before noting here some of the places one should see 'Thames side', let this be a warning not to delay your (next) visit unduly.



**Angles 'n' Attitudes**  
**William Bothwell**

Parts of south-east England are sinking into an underlying bed of clay. And the tides in the lower part of the river are rising. The Thames is also subject to high 'surge tides'. For many years the problem has been met by raising the level of its banks at threatened places. The Embankment, familiar to all who know London, not only holds back the water but also covers artfully important parts of the city's sewage system.

In 1953, the year of the Queen's coronation, 300 people were drowned by a flood in the Thames Estuary. After a similar tragedy in 1971 the Thames Barrier was planned and constructed.

It protects London from tidal bores and from the rising sea level as Arctic ice melts.

The Barrier, sunken into the river bed, has 100- and 200-foot openings that can be opened and closed in 15 minutes to facilitate shipping. Its height can also be raised.

Now, returning two-thirds of the way westward up the Thames, let's start at Oxford, above which the low lying springtime fields are often flooded.

The university city is the place where the rivers Isis and Cherwell meet the Thames, the former being the site of the famous rowing regattas. At nearby Iffley the 12th Century Norman church is a 'must see' for architecture buffs. There are those who contend that the

Thames really begins at Iffley Lock. Above that, they insist, the river is the Isis, into which the Cherwell flows from the north at Oxford.

Abingdon, 10 km from Oxford and 90 from London, claims to be the oldest town in England. Archaeologists trace its settlement back 3500 years. Farther down river Henley-on-Thames has its annual Royal Regatta at the end of June.

Nearby is Marlow where Izaak Walton was 'the compleat angler' and where at the Trout Inn and other hostleries one can be the complete gourmand and on any weekend meet visitors from around the world.

Farther still down stream is Windsor, overlooked by its royal castle. All lawyers and politicians should make the pilgrimage to Runnymede Meadow where King John signed Magna Carta in 1215. Jacqueline Kennedy asked that JFK's English memorial be situated there.

The Thames enters its urban captivity as it flows past historic Hampton Court in the borough of Richmond. From Richmond Hill one catches the first distant view of the metropolis just as from Richmond Hill ON one gets the first glimpses down to Toronto. As also with Scarborough, those who named Ontario towns were often remembering homeland scenes.

Then on into Chiswick where William Hogarth is buried in the churchyard and thence to Chelsea, the home of so many famous folk since Sir Thomas More. In Chelsea-Kensington one has become imbedded in London and when one is tired of London one is tired of the world. One can forget most of New York and other cities where one has lived. For all its defects, there is no part of London that one ever raised.

In a book of aerial views of London that I gave my late wife years ago I often re-read my inscription on the front endpaper. "If in time to come I can haunt any place on Earth I shall not spend much time above the rooftops of Orangeville or Toronto. There will be only occasional revisits of Paris, Venice, Rome. But LONDON!".

Lois and I had so many happy memories of the city and of Father Thames.

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## Obama seems to be taking the same path

Here's something worth noting. Aging Cuban dictator Fidel Castro said something that actually made sense.

Reacting to the bizarre awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to neophyte U.S. President Barack Obama, Castro said it wasn't really in recognition of anything that Obama has done but was more of a repudiation for his predecessor George W. Bush.

As mean-spirited and counterproductive as that motivation is, it's really the only thing that does help to explain it.

Obama may or may not end up being a terrific president. Who knows? He certainly gives good speeches, but beyond that he hasn't done much.

To be fair, he's only been president for nine months, so a reasonable person - or even an unreasonable one - can't really expect him to have wracked up a string of significant advances.

But it's hardly a state secret that the European elite - and the Canadian elite too - hated Bush with a passion. Next to Michelle Obama herself, the European leaders were probably the happiest people on earth when Obama managed to get himself elected and when Bush exited the White House and headed back to his Texas ranch.

Whether Bush really deserved such widespread animosity is, at least in this space, still open to debate.

He certainly made mistakes, but then who doesn't?

But on the other hand even the things he did right - take his record of helping to fight AIDS in Africa, for example - were rarely if ever acknowledged by the hostile media.

But we can argue the merits and demerits of Bush another day.

This is about Obama who, despite speech after speech demonizing Bush and his foreign policies, seems to be walking down the same path.

Remember all those promises about getting American troops out of Iraq and closing Guantanamo Bay?

Well, so far at least, they're empty promises. As for Afghanistan, Obama has overseen a U.S. military which is getting deeper and deeper into that war-torn country.

The Nobel committee says it gave Obama the award because "He has created a new international climate."

Oh yes, and he has also "captured the world's

attention and given its people hope for a better future."

And just how, exactly, has Obama done this?

By making fancy speeches. By adopting fashionable stances which please the European and Canadian U.S. haters - not to mention the bureaucrats at the United Nations, to whom Obama has also dispatched kind words - Obama has apparently made the world want to gather in a giant hug and live happily ever after.

Mind you, he hasn't done anything to calm things down in the Middle East. Iran is still Iran.

In Asia, North Korea is still North Korea.

And - with the one exception of Sri Lanka, which had nothing to do with Obama or the U.S. - in every part of the globe where wars were underway when Bush was president they are still going on. In some cases, particularly the aforementioned Afghanistan, they have esca-

lated. And he wins the Nobel "Peace" prize? Really, it's a sham.

Mind you, the Nobel gang are the same people who felt that Yassar Arafat and Jimmy Carter - arguably the most pathetic president in U.S. history - deserved the "peace" prize, despite the fact that no "peace" actually broke out as a result of either of these men holding meetings, signing pacts and giving glowing speeches.

So it's not without precedent that somebody who hasn't accomplished anything worthwhile would get the prize.

In some ways, it's actually a bit unfair to Obama to put him in this position.

Fact is, he could have recognized the absurdity of it himself and refused the prize, but he too opted for the glory even though he must know in his heart that he doesn't deserve it.

Not yet anyway. Even if they awarded Obama the prize for what he may do in the future - although that's not supposed to be the reason someone gets it - a person could argue that the current president has a lot of potential and may end up being great.

But that's not why they did it says Nobel Committee boss Thorbjorn Jagland.

"We are not awarding the prize for what may happen in the future., but for what (Obama) has done in the previous year."

Which is - exactly - what?

## Canwest papers may be sold or just perish

One of the biggest stories in Ontario politics is not about anything Dalton McGuinty is doing, but about the uncertain future of the province's biggest news media chain, which is on the financial rocks and partly nudged there by competitors.

Some of the many newspapers owned by Canwest Global Communications Corp. soon may be owned by others.

Owners of newspapers normally, although not invariably, decide which political parties they will support through their editorials, the papers' official voice. This is not surprising, because most bought them mainly so they could exert political influence.

Politicians, elected and back-room, and those who vote, which should mean everybody, have a huge stake in who owns these papers.

In Toronto, where the widest-circulating newspapers in the province are published, the Star energetically and relentlessly supports the Liberal party in its editorials, although this has not prevented its news reporters from leading in unearthing faults in McGuinty's Liberal government.

The Globe and Mail likes to think it is independent, but its editorials mostly support the Progressive Conservatives, and the Sun almost always urges vote Conservative.

The National Post, the flagship paper of the Canwest chain and therefore facing a possible change of ownership, diverges from the Conservatives' line only when it thinks they are not far enough to the right, which is often.

A National Post that no longer is Conservative would be a huge loss to the Conservative extreme right. Those who hope it will continue its present political stances also will include many in the Jewish community, who have seen it as a constantly reliable supporter of their causes and particularly the state of Israel.

Canwest's financial difficulties have been caused almost wholly because its owners in assembling it piled up huge debts and found it impossible to repay, particularly when newspapers generally are selling fewer papers and advertising in them has plummeted in the current recession.

But this writer has worked on the staffs of several newspapers that have died in recent decades, including the News Chronicle of London, England (where Charles Dickens was once a writer), the Toronto Telegram and the Ottawa Journal.

A variety of reasons contributed to their demise, but in each case repeated reporting by competitors that they were in financial trouble helped build a public image that made it more difficult for them to survive.

Advertisers who spend huge money on campaigns will not patronize a newspaper they feel may not be around long. They tend to play it safe by running their ads in papers whose continued existence is not in question.

Rival papers in Toronto reported the difficulties of Canwest and the Post regularly and even with relish.

In February, The Globe and Mail said Canwest was "scrounging for a few desperate dollars and has reached the wall."

In March, the Star reported its own readership remained steady, but the Post's had declined and it was forced to postpone a deadline for repaying, and the Globe said Canwest was merely tinkering with repaying and creditors were worried.

In April, the Star said the crunch time had come for Canwest to repay and it might be forced to sell. The Globe said Canwest's income from advertising had fallen so dramatically creditors might be less willing to wait for money owed and those most likely to take over had no insights that would win back readers anyway.

In May, the Globe reported that Canwest was trying again to extend deadlines to repay and "reworking" them several times.

In June, the Star said Canwest's debt load "threatens to topple" the company, which had to borrow money at a time when credit was tightest, and there was constant speculation about the future of its National Post, and in August, the Globe said advertising in the Post had dropped so steeply its debt was unmanageable.

The rival papers' predictions have come true, so it could be argued they were justified.

But they also helped weaken media already in trouble and may cost the public another voice that it cannot afford to lose.

## Turning of the Tide

Times are changing and none too soon. I am not alone in my feeling of urgency. I especially appreciate a letter to the editor in the Globe and Mail (Bruce Mohan, Vancouver, Sept. 29, 2009), "...the world is not nearly frightened enough about environmental degradation and so little is being done...". A significant indication of change has been the major shift in U.S. politics now that the Washington oil barons have been replaced. Barack Obama is certainly talking about new funding for alternative, non polluting energy generation.

My concern is a government in Ottawa that fits into the category "so little is being done". I tend to think of the band leader that got lost making a turn while the parade continued forward. The attitude just two years ago was 'What crisis' and now our leaders are scurrying to find the right route so as to appear to be leading the parade. Nevertheless there remains much to be done from a national perspective.

Luckily the rest of the parade appears to know the route better than the leaders. I am pleased to drive west from Shelburne to witness many farmlands with wind-mills. Electricity has become a farm product, a financial boon to landowners, adding to the energy equation and benefiting both the community and the nation. Private enterprise is picking up the ball and running with it supported by Queen's Park leadership. In fact a new era is falling into place with the parade being led by provincial governments.

Another major shift is occurring in the media. Nowadays I find many new articles in the newspaper pertaining to initiatives being made in the environ-

mental field. European governments are taking the matter seriously with great strides being made in solar, wind and nuclear energy. An article on Denmark, a country now committed providing 20% wind energy and counting. The nation is booming economically with the manufacture and sale of wind power technology. With GDP escalating, global warming emissions have decreased by 13%. If only we had that kind of leadership.

The rest of the world is thinking seriously about wind. A short article in the business section of the Globe Oct 2nd reported on the opening of a wind farm in Texas, claimed to be the world's largest (What else would one expect from Texas) producing electricity from 627 wind turbines over an area of 100,000 acres. Another note on Oct 3rd refers to negotiations for permission to build off shore wind farms in Lake Erie to eventually provide power for 2 million people.

A recent Globe and Mail supplemental section concentrated on global progress in harnessing wind power. Another article described a solar energy initiative by administrators of a girl's dormitory at U of T which will eventually and substantially reduce consumption of electricity. Tidal energy has been written up and almost daily we receive ads for converting to geothermal. I am currently moving a mountain of firewood into our 'wood' room where it will be handy to the fireplace in the cold months ahead.

Biomass heating fuel for Canadian homes is not as prominent a topic in the media despite the fact that wood remains the world's largest source of biomass. It provides the principle cooking and heating fuel in many devel-



**From the Global Classroom**  
**Doug Skeates**

oping countries. Natural Resources Canada notes about 1.5 million Canadians use wood for home heating, a growing industry in our area. Though supplies ran out last fall we had no difficulty finding 3 bush cords despite late ordering this fall.

Canada is a forest nation and wood supply as an energy source has great potential for meeting home heating needs at least in southern Ontario. Despite CO2 production wood contains little sulfur, hence providing a less serious source of global warming emissions. Many rural landowners have treed 'back 40s' capable of supplying potential remunerative farm products if properly managed.

Globally society is finally recognizing that alternatives to diminishing fossil fuels are increasingly available, important especially in a northern country. As other nations move forward we at least can take some consolation in the fact that Canada is slowly starting to show signs of ensuring that we 'keep the home fires burning'.

Your Weekly Chuckle . . .

By KEITH HUNTER

"I'm afraid," said the heart surgeon, "that you're going to need a bypass operation."

"If you don't mind, I'd like a second opinion."

"Not at all," the doctor replied. "You're also ugly as sin."

### 125 YEARS AGO

**Thursday, October 16, 1884**

The annual exhibition of the Toronto and Mulmur Union Agricultural Society was held in Rosemont last Friday. A more beautiful day could not have been desired and the fair was a success in every respect. The number of entries largely exceeded that of any previous year and all the stock and articles exhibited reflected credit upon the owners.

The Parliament Buildings at Quebec were blown up with dynamite or infernal machines about noon on Saturday. There were two explosions and the damage will not come far short of \$25,000 or \$35,000. The police are said to be after the fiends who caused the wreck.

During the past few weeks, since the rate of taxation was struck by Shelburne Village Council, many loud complaints have been heard regarding the unequal burdens of the ratepayers. Labouring men and mechanics are complaining bitterly of an assessment which compels them to

pay an unjust proportion of the taxes.

### 100 YEARS AGO

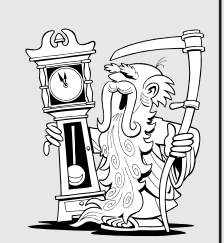
**Thursday, October 14, 1909**

A Coroner's jury, empanelled to inquire into the death on Oct. 4 of CPR brakeman Joseph Paul, while separating a 22-car freight stalled on the grade between Orangeville and Fraxa Junction, has made recommendations for safety improvements. The jury found it would be possible, at small expense, for the railway to make changes which would eliminate the need for brakemen to go between the cars being separated.

C. R. McKeown, MLA, was in Toronto last week to interview certain members of the Ontario Cabinet with regards to a grant the building of a House of Industry for Dufferin County, but was unable to see the proper official and left the matter for a future date. Mr. McKeown will make an effort to secure a \$4,000 grant for an institution for the poor of our County and the local branch of the Daughters of the Empire appar-

## Dipping Into the Past

### Coroner's jury called for safety changes to protect brakemen



ently intends to make a further contribution.

Work has been commenced on construction of a new steel tower and tank for Shelburne's waterworks system. The new tank is being placed to the north of the old wooden one.

The 28th annual meeting of the Dufferin Teachers' Institute will be held in Shelburne this Thursday and Friday.

The Assizes opened this Tuesday before Justice Teetzel, with two jury cases set down for trial. The first case is that of John Walker, of Markdale, against the CPR. On July 12, 1908, he purchased a ticket to

Dundalk, where he got off but lost a leg when the train started again, and is seeking damages. In the other case, Robert Kannawin is suing W. J. Corbett, former proprietor of the Queen's Hotel in Shelburne, for the alienation of his wife's affections. Besides alleging adultery, the plaintiff also claims he was assaulted, suffering grievous bodily harm.

The new subscribers of the Bell Telephone Company in the vicinity of Horning's Mills, Conover, Redickville and Honeywood should be cautioned as to the use of the phones if the line is to give satisfactory results. No subscriber should take down the

receiver unless he wants a connection made or hears his own ring. When each subscriber runs to the phone and takes down the receiver it is impossible to get a satisfactory service between parties talking. Leave the instrument alone unless you are the party called up.

### 75 YEARS AGO

**Wednesday, October 18, 1934**

Terra Nova United Church was destroyed by fire Sunday as preparations were being made for the church building's 32nd anniversary. Refusing to be daunted by the adversity, members of the congregation arranged seats, organ and pulpit saved from the church and the afternoon anniversary service was carried on in the open air.

There will be no more paving of Highway 10 this season, a deputation to the Department of Highways in Toronto having failed in a bid to have the 10 miles between Dundalk and Flesherton all paved to a full 20-foot width.

### 50 YEARS AGO

**Wednesday, October 14, 1959**

Rev. Dr. R. G. Davidson, a native of Australia who has been at Kitimat, B. C., since August 1958, is to become minister of Westminster United Church, Orangeville.

The most popular course at the Centre Dufferin Rural Night School, being held at CDDHS in Shelburne, is a St. John Ambulance class in first aid, with some 40 adults from the district enrolled.

For the record, it snowed on Sunday evening, quite briskly, and Monday was chilly and wet, a Thanksgiving holiday made for staying where it is warm.

### 25 YEARS AGO

**Wednesday, October 17, 1984**

A total of \$114,718.53 is still missing from more than \$172,000 stolen during the July 1983 break-in at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in Orangeville.

A tourism study is being considered for Dufferin County.