

## What is the fencing for along Highway 60?



Anyone driving along the Park's Highway 60 corridor will notice the black drift-fencing that has been temporarily installed in various places by both Park staff and construction contractors working on the highway. It is intended to keep Snapping and Painted Turtles off of the roadway in an attempt to reduce their mortality. These turtles prefer soft ditches and banks of roads for nesting.



Painted Turtle: Note the brilliant colours!



Snapping Turtle: Be careful to avoid its jaws as it will feel threatened and may snap!

### Help Protect Us!

*If you see a turtle on the road, slow down!  
If possible, you may want to try to assist the turtle by moving it in the direction it was heading.*

**Be careful with Snapping Turtles — you should not try to pick one up!  
Avoid its jaws as it will feel threatened and may snap!  
And, always remember, watch out for other traffic!**

## Fish Research on Lake of Two Rivers

Over the next two years (2017-2019) the Harkness Laboratory of Fisheries Research is conducting an in-depth population assessment and monitoring of fish movement in Lake of Two Rivers.

In May 2017, fisheries researchers caught 20 Lake Trout and 10 Smallmouth Bass and surgically implanted them with acoustic transmitters. The transmitter (about the size of one AAA battery) emits a unique sound frequency every 5 to 10 minutes. The sound from the transmitter is picked up by acoustic receivers in the lake, which are installed one metre below the surface of the water.



Fisheries researcher implanting transmitter.

With 49 receivers in the lake, the exact location and depth of each fish with a transmitter will be accurately determined. This study is anticipated to yield detailed information about habitat use.

If you happen to be fishing on Lake of Two Rivers, keep an eye out for fish with a small, red tag near the fin on the back. If you do catch one, please release it, so it may continue to contribute to our understanding of its species. If it cannot be released, please return the transmitter to a Park Office. Keep in mind the fishing regulations prohibit the harvest of Lake Trout from Lake of Two Rivers with a total length between 40-55cm.

This valuable research helps improve our understanding of Lake Trout and Smallmouth Bass by producing accurate population estimates and determining where and when fish use specific habitat. The results of this study will help inform future fisheries management planning and resource management decisions, not only for Lake of Two Rivers, but all of Algonquin.

For more information see the bulletin boards or park office.



If you catch a fish with a red tag, please release it.



Algonquin

# The Raven

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## Tom Thomson came paddling past...

by David LeGros



designer. His skill as an artist was recognized, but he was unremarkable. In 1908, at Grip Limited of Toronto, he became acquainted with several artists also working there, who made efforts to instruct and share techniques with Thomson, who at this point was largely self-taught in the arts. His friends, several of whom would form the Group of Seven in 1920, would eventually be overshadowed as the student surpassed the teachers. To continue developing his painting skills, Thomson would head into natural areas near Toronto to sketch, but would soon seek wilderness for inspiration.

Arriving by train in Algonquin in the early 1910's, Thomson would have found a new park, a big landscape subject to large forest fires, littered with tree branches left by loggers, and containing old and young forests. At this time, Park Rangers met guests arriving by train at Canoe Lake Station to determine the purpose of their visit. Thomson did arouse suspicion when ranger Mark Robinson first met him, but they would quickly become good friends. Robinson kept very meticulous notes about the comings and goings of park visitors, and much of what we know from that period in time comes from his diaries.

At a time when practicality and hard work were qualities highly regarded by the people who lived and worked in Algonquin Park, you can imagine that Tom Thomson, as an artist, must have seemed a little strange when he first arrived here in 1912.

As a young man in Leith, near Owen Sound, he spent much of his time outdoors; fishing, hunting, and hiking. He even spent time in the woods with the prominent naturalist of the day, Dr. William Brodie. Thomson left his rural home for larger cities such as Seattle and Toronto, eventually taking jobs as an engraver and

*\*Note – Tom Thomson and details surrounding his life, death, art and influence are rather complex. In this issue, we hope to introduce the reader to Thomson and his time here in Algonquin. There are many excellent and detailed references available for those interested in finding out more.*



## ALGONQUIN VISITOR CENTRE

HOURS OF OPERATION

Museum • Bookstore & Nature Shop • Café **WiFi**

Open Daily  
9 am - 7 pm

June 17 to October 9, 2017

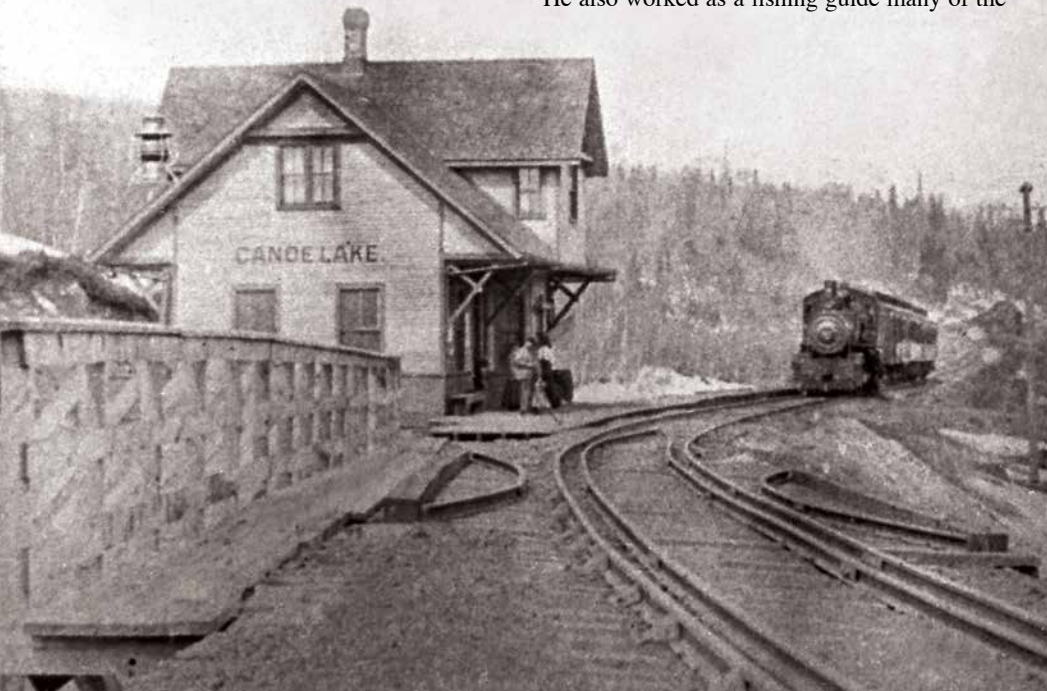
Algonquin Logging Museum - Open 9 am to 5 pm June 17 to October 15, 2017.  
The 1.3 km trail with outdoor exhibits is available year-round.

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algonquinpark.on.ca

Thomson first came to Algonquin in 1912 to camp with a friend, and was immediately taken with the landscape, the “North Country” as he called it. The charm and inspiration he found in the lakes and pines captivated him. Though he did return to Toronto to resume work, he planned on coming back. By the spring of 1913, he found himself in Algonquin, first at Mowat Lodge, where he would have a room and meals prepared for him, and later canoeing and camping. He started painting his sketches on birch panels, smaller than letter paper. With his sketches he would return to Toronto for the winter, and work the best of them into full size paintings. One of his early sketches turned painting, *Northern Lake*, was soon sold for \$250 (about \$2000 in today’s dollars), which is an amazing sum for the time, considering Thomson’s graphic art job was paying about 75 cents an hour. The art he began to produce and be known for was rather different than the realistic drawings and painting of commercial art – his paintings were stylized, with bold colours, broad brush strokes and very expressive. It was

*The Canoe Lake train station, as it would have looked when Thomson arrived in 1912.*  
ALGONQUIN PROVINCIAL PARK ARCHIVES AND COLLECTIONS (APM 28)



as if the reality of nature was emboldened by his interpretation of it.

Over the next several years, Thomson would return to Algonquin like a migratory bird. In late winter or early spring as the ice started to melt he would get off the train at Canoe Lake and stay at Mowat Lodge until the lakes opened up and he could travel by canoe. If we look at many of Thomson’s sketches and paintings, he does focus on changing seasons and transitional times; when daylight, landscapes and colours were at their most vivid and influential – fall colours, ice-out, dawn and sunsets. Some of Thomson’s critics on the art scene were harsh about his liberal use of colour. However, he found many admirers in the woods of Algonquin, being most pleased when a local girl stated that his painting looked “just like the alders were a week ago” – a compliment he took to heart. Thomson painted dramatic landscapes, but rarely people. A quick look at his works show only a few, and they were typically men working in the woods or someone enjoying nature, such as fishing by a dam.

During his summers here, Thomson did try to earn some money apart from his art. He worked odd jobs at Mowat Lodge, helping owner, Shannon Fraser, with a variety of tasks. He also worked as a fishing guide many of the

summers he spent here. In 1914, like many other young men of his day, he tried to enlist in the Canadian military to fight in Europe in World War I, but was apparently denied several times over fallen arches. Thomson always felt guilt for this; watching his friends go to war, many of them never to return. He did eventually come to the realization that he could still help the war effort by doing a job that was left vacant by an enlisted man. In 1916, he became a fire ranger in Algonquin Park, in the newly added East Side. He was stationed at Achray on Grand Lake, and lived in the ranger cabin for which he painted a sign “Outside-In”. It was while living at Achray that he painted the sketches that would become one of his most famous and iconic paintings, *The Jack Pine*. During the last four years of Thomson’s life, with summers spent in Algonquin, he made 300 sketches and in turn produced 24 full canvas paintings. He often gave sketches away as payment when he had no money, so some think there could be other sketches in attics and cottages in the area.

By 1917, Thomson had become recognized in the Canadian art scene, and had introduced several other artists to painting in his beloved North Country. He was back at Canoe Lake that season, and was guiding tourists on fishing trips. What happened to him is still shrouded in mystery, a century later. On July 8th, Thomson went missing on Canoe Lake, and his body was found decomposing and floating eight days later near Little Wapomeo Island. It should be noted that Thomson had several loops of fishing line wrapped around one leg, and a bruise on his temple. The official cause of death, determined by the coroner Dr. Arthur Ranney was drowning. The community of Mowat buried him at their cemetery on July 17th. A day later, at the request of his family, the body was exhumed by undertaker F.W. Churchill of Huntsville, put into a steel casket which was soldered closed. It was then sent by train back to his family home in Leith to be buried near relatives. The following day, Superintendent George Bartlett sent Mark Robinson to make sure the grave had been filled in. What he found was rather startling - Robinson reported just a small hole in the ground, but why?

There are still many questions and seeming inconsistencies regarding Tom Thomson’s death and what followed. The first of many is the cause of death; he appeared to have drowned in the lake but was known to be an excellent canoeist and swimmer. Secondly, why was there fishing line wrapped around his leg? The wound on the temple is also suspicious. Could it be that he simply fell in his canoe, hit his head and slipped out of the canoe? Many suspected that, but others believed there could have been foul play. Some suggested that Thomson had crossed a Mowat community member, perhaps over money, the affections of a woman, or the war. He may have been seriously injured or killed in a fight, then placed in his canoe and taken out into the lake, where the canoe would be tipped to make it look accidental. There are suspects, but none are conclusive. The accounts of eyewitnesses from the time are contradictory on several aspects, from where and when he was last seen, to the weather on that July day. Lastly, the current location of his body is still up for debate 100 years later. The sealed casket that was put on a train to Leith was reportedly opened for viewing by some family members, but did that actually happen? Did anyone check the undertakers work? Did the undertaker simply fill the casket with rocks to make it heavy, seal it, send it off and collect payment? This and much other rampant speculation has contributed to the Tom Thomson mystery.

We will never know the answers to what exactly happened to Tom Thomson, but we have a pretty good idea of what his posthumous influence was. Prior to Thomson, most Canadian artists imitated the landscape styles of European and American artists - realism and portrayal of manicured, human-modified pastoral landscapes. In the early 1900’s, wilderness was still a scary place; the unknown, the dark and wild animals were something to be tamed and dominated, or simply feared. Thomson’s love for nature and his brilliant depictions of it started a change in attitudes about wilderness, and began a uniquely Canadian artistic style. Following Thomson’s death, his wealthy patron Dr. William McCallum, began to actively promote his work, building the legend of the woodsman



*Tom Thomson cairn on Canoe Lake. Many of Thomson’s artist friends attended the dedication of the plaque on Canoe Lake in 1917.*

artist. A romantic image of Thomson began to emerge which was perpetuated by the art community and Canadians in general. While he is largely credited with the founding of the Group of Seven, Tom Thomson had died well before its establishment. He was, however, close friends with many of the members, and some even visited Algonquin with Tom.

Among the most touching words written about Tom Thomson are those not on paper, but rather inscribed on a bronze plaque on Canoe Lake. His fellow artists built the cairn, dedicated to their friend.

Thomson’s skill as an artist developed very quickly once he found his style and muse. The hundreds of sketches made from 1912-

1917 are a significant departure from his early attempts at painting. The inspiration he found on the landscape of Algonquin and other wild places in Ontario continues to be celebrated today. His paintings command exorbitant sums of money, the Group of Seven were wildly successful and many artists continue in his tradition of painting to this day. The iconic landscapes Thomson captured have become part of the Canadian identity, and have inspired countless canoe trips. If you do happen to spend some time at Canoe Lake this summer, take a few minutes to ponder what the place might have been like, when first Thomson stepped off the train at the north end of the lake in 1912.