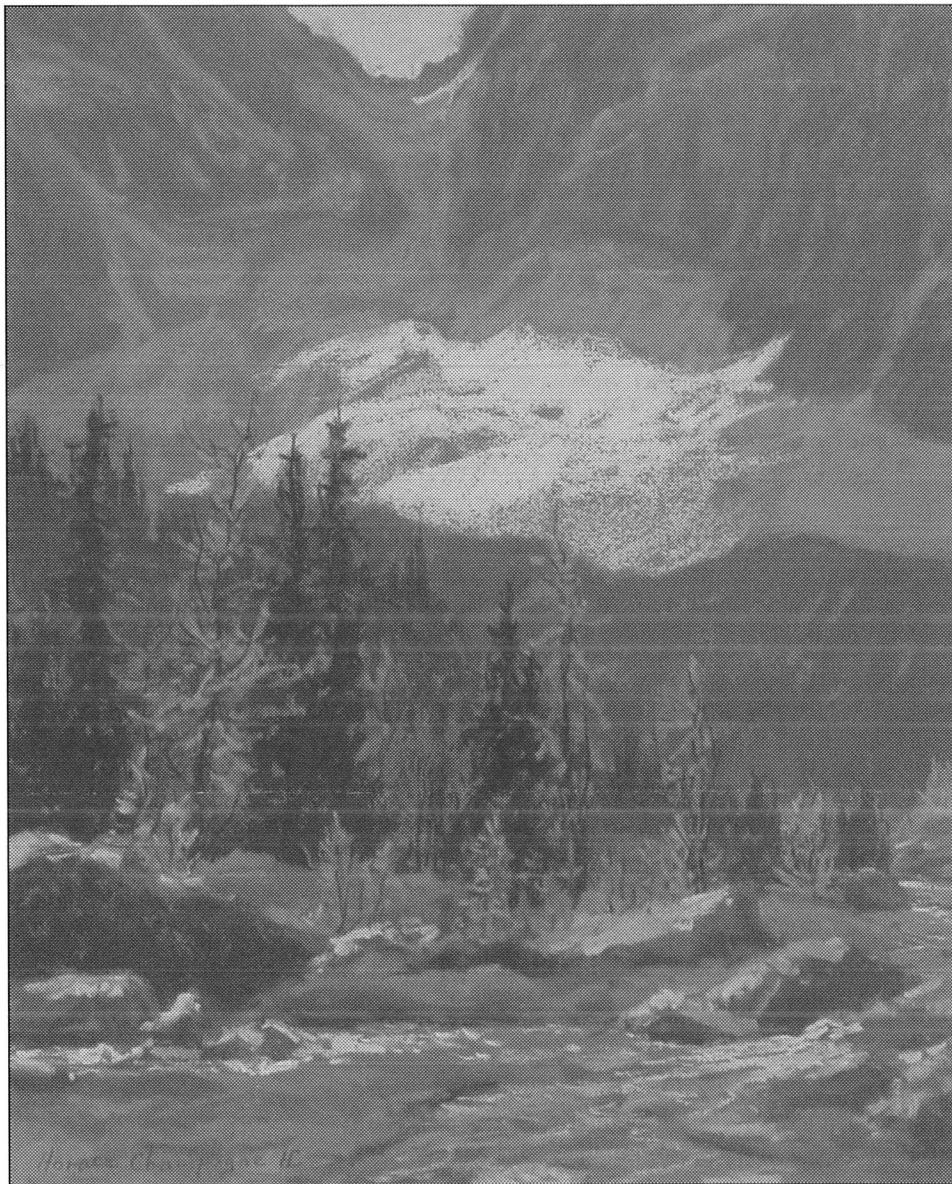




# O'Hara 2002

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## Lake O'Hara: *Inspiration For Artists*



By Jane Gooch

For more than a century, artists have been inspired by the spectacular O'Hara landscape. Although it has often been said that O'Hara has attracted many artists, the scope of

*Pastel by Horace Champagne*

paintings has never been documented. I decided five years ago to do some research on what O'Hara images were in the public galleries across Canada and whether, in fact, there were enough to

form a significant collection. I had embarked on a fascinating project: I received many wonderful slides dating from the 1890s to the present. I was astonished by the number of paintings in the public domain, and I suspect that many more are in private collections. These slides of O'Hara art do, indeed, form a collection in a range of styles illustrating the history of Canadian landscape painting over the last 100 years.

When I realized the extent of O'Hara art, I did some work on the biographical and historical context. A pattern emerged showing the influence of the C.P.R. in the early days, the impact of the Group of Seven in the 20s and 30s, the move toward abstraction beginning with Lawren Harris, and the present enthusiasm for the O'Hara landscape, expressed in a variety of styles and media, including oil, watercolour, woodblock, pen and ink, and pastel.

The C.P.R. was instrumental in bringing artists to the Rockies to promote tourism, including one of the first painters at O'Hara, F.M. Bell-Smith. Two of his watercolours have come to light, one portraying Cathedral Mountain—c. 1895–1914—and a second showing Lake McArthur in 1904. Both paintings illustrate the 19th century landscape artist's concern with atmospheric effects. John Singer Sargent arrived at Field by train in August 1916, and he spent three weeks completing his famous oil of O'Hara and Lefroy, camped on the site of the present

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# Trail Work and Education, Update

We were excited to start the 2001 season of trail work at O'Hara. We had the completed copy of Don Gardner's trail assessment in hand. He has carefully prioritized trail work needing to be done which has allowed us to decide short term and long term solutions to trails that are in constant need of upgrade with the ongoing trail usage each summer.

The intent was great and we were particularly excited that Don was going to take on the physical work himself on the Lakeshore trail and the Wiwaxy trail. Don worked (through some very soggy days) on the Wiwaxy trail and left the area for a week hoping things would dry out before returning to continue his work. While the trails dried out Don had an unfortunate accident that injured his shoulder and left him incapable of working for the rest of the season, which in turn left our trail work undone.

The present plan for 2002 is to hopefully have Don back supervising the trail maintenance and hiring 2

summer students to do the manual labour and glean some of his trail building secrets from him. We hope to have work completed on the Lakeshore Trail as well as repainting the alpine trail markers on the higher routes. We have received many comments and concerns over the past years of how difficult some of the markers are to see as many of them have faded.

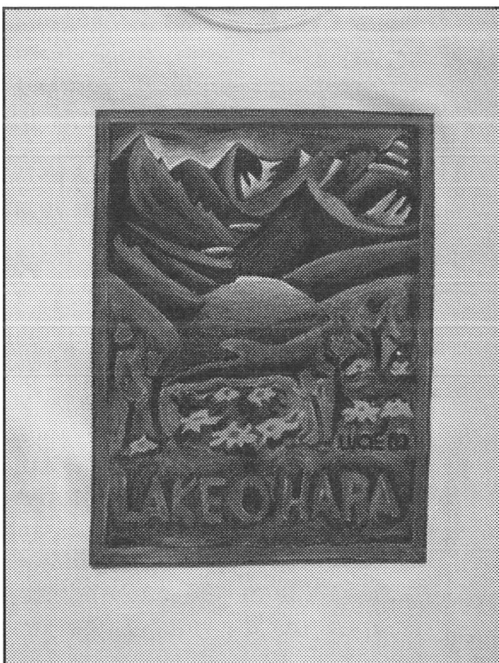
In 2001, a total of \$4,700.00 was spent on trail work. Of that sum, \$3500.00 was spent on Don's trail assessment (time spent at O'Hara going over the trails and the actual report). Don sent a copy of the report to Parks Canada and they are now using it as a reference for trail work needed in the area.

As well, \$7,600.00 was spent on educational initiatives in the area. \$3000.00 was given to the bear habituation project in Yoho National Park. The objective was strictly bear education for area visitors, particularly folks visiting the front country. This was accomplished by hiring a roving interpreter who would

set up roadside displays throughout Yoho Park. We have been supporting this program for 3 years. It is not being run this summer as Parks Canada wishes to fully review it to ensure its objectives are being met.

The remaining education amount was spent on the highly successful speaker series that operates 4 evenings a week at Le Relais throughout the summer season. Talks are offered on a variety of subjects and most evenings you will find standing room only if you arrive a little late! The speaker series will continue to run in 2002 and we thank Parks Canada for continuing to pledge a portion of the bus fares into the Lake O'Hara area to the Trails Club. In 2001 the amount donated by Parks Canada was \$7000.00. They have pledged the same amount for 2002. Many, many thanks!

If you have any comments, concerns or suggestions regarding trail projects and or educational initiatives in the area, we welcome your feedback. Please write to us at Box 98, Lake Louise, AB. T0L 1E0 or drop off your responses in the suggestion box at Le Relais.



## Order the 2002 Trails Club T-Shirt by Mail!

The selling of t-shirts at Le Relais each summer is the biggest fund-raiser done each year. All profits go towards trail maintenance and education of area visitors. You may not be visiting the O'Hara area this summer but you can still sport one of these beautiful t-shirts featuring original artwork by local (Lake Louise) artist Lucie Bause.

To order a t-shirt please forward a cheque or money order for \$25.00 to: **Lake O'Hara Trails Club**  
**Box 98, Lake Louise, AB**  
**T0L 1E0**

If you want a t-shirt shipped to the U.S.A., please send a cheque/money order (US funds) for \$20.00.

*We look forward to hearing from you!*

# Great Bears and Heritage Tourism, The Lake O'Hara Perspective

By Joe Jazvac

Returning visitors to Lake O'Hara have been asking about some new events in recent years. Banners and flags have been hanging in park communities: Swiss Guides Festival, Year of the Great Bear, Year of Mountains (currently underway) and in 2003, Year of Water.

The Le Relais evening speaker series has scheduled its summer programs to enable more audiences to get in on the themes being highlighted during the annual events. All of these significant celebrations of nature and culture are examples of heritage tourism in practice.

Heritage tourism in the mountain national parks is driven in part by the recognition that park visitors deserve an exceptionally rewarding experience. The mountain parks are, after all, not only some of Canada's finest parks, they also comprise a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Businesses and organizations participating in heritage tourism strive to provide services that sustain the environment and celebrate mountain culture. You'll probably notice some creative stewardship initiatives in place during your visits.

The knowledgeable, inspired staff we have learned to associate with our visits to Lake O'Hara are exemplary (some business in the mountain parks struggle with high staff turnover rates, sometimes exceeding 100% per year). Participating businesses require new staff to attend an orientation created jointly by heritage tourism councils, business leaders and Parks Canada representatives. New staff learn about their surroundings and are encouraged to give guests quality local knowledge inspired by a genuine connection to place.

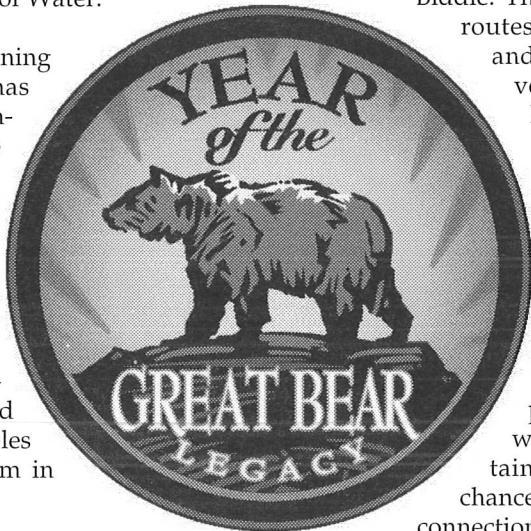
Lake O'Hara has always been a special place to visit. O'Hara people are among the mountains' keenest and most respectful stewards. Newcomers are quickly acquainted with the ridgelines and summits of Odaray, Cathedral, Wiwaxy, Victoria, Hungabee and Biddle. The trails and alpine routes quickly elevate and inspire all who venture into the landscape.

Mountains have much to offer, and, heritage tourism is an effective tool, helping to ensure that more and more of the people who visit or work in the mountain parks have a chance to make a better connection. By focusing celebrations around important themes,

visitors can enjoy the parks as they always have and they can also take advantage of the added heritage tourism opportunities. Some of the celebrations like the 100th anniversary of the Swiss Guides and Year of the Great Bear were locally created events that had components that enjoyed international profiles and publicity. The Year of the Great Bear demonstrated that sales proceeds from high quality memorabilia could generate significant funds for bear research. Other heritage tourism efforts represent a local contribution to an international celebration, for example, this year's UNESCO International Year of Mountains.

Whatever the event, visitors can enjoy many opportunities to learn about the featured heritage tourism theme.

Visit: [www.yearofthegreatbear.com](http://www.yearofthegreatbear.com), [www.yearofmountains.ca](http://www.yearofmountains.ca), and [www.mountains2002.org](http://www.mountains2002.org) for more information.



## Moss Champion

By Mike Potter

The incandescent pink flowers and emerald green cushion of moss champion make it a favourite among the alpine specialties of the Lake O'Hara region. Seeing moss champion is a welcome sign that you have reached exalted elevations, high in the bracing air among the rock, snow, and ice of this renowned Rocky Mountains landscape.

Moss champion is a hardy survivor—it has to be in its preferred zone above the trees. The island-like growth form protects moss champion from desiccating winds, as well as collecting particles of earth and vegetation to slowly build up soil.

The deep taproot of moss champion anchors it in often unstable ground subject to frost heaving, and allows the plant to obtain water in what are usually quick-draining locations.

Despite such adaptations that enable it to grow in harsh conditions, moss champion is also fragile...it can take ten years or more to first flower. While exploring this hiking mecca, take care to avoid trampling this or other plants. Take time, too, to savour their beauty and the wonder of their lives.

Mike Potter is the author of *Central Rockies Wildflowers* which is sold at Le Relais.





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Warden's cabin. While Sargent's letters complain of camping in the rain, this particular problem for artists was alleviated when the C.P.R. built the lodge beside the lake.

Much artistic activity occurred in the years 1924-44, at a time when the artists could retreat from mountain weather and when members of the Group of Seven, J.E.H. MacDonald, Arthur Lismer, and Lawren Harris, were attracted to the Rockies in their search for the spirit of the northland with all its energy and colour. Although his Algoma paintings are better known, MacDonald's mountain pictures form a significant body of work at the end of his career. Fortunately, MacDonald's O'Hara diaries have survived, and they give us an insight into his personality and the challenges of trying to capture the mountain landscape on canvas. MacDonald formed friendships with Peter and Catherine Whyte, the painters from Banff, and with the Links, annual visitors to O'Hara Lodge; this congenial group went on painting expeditions to Oesa and the Opabin. About this time, also, Charles Comfort, W.J. Phillips, and Carl Rungius found inspiration in the O'Hara landscape.

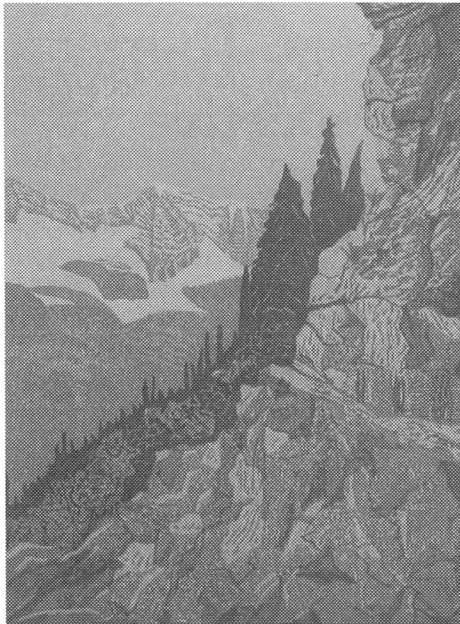
Lawren Harris painted in a style different from MacDonald and the Whytes; Harris' works have a greater simplification of form, verging on abstraction, even though his impressions of the Goodsirs and Lake McArthur are still recognizable. J.B. Taylor spent twenty years in the 50s and 60s painting at O'Hara, and one can see in his work, also, the move toward abstraction.

Most recent images of the O'Hara landscape show a return to a more realistic representation, including works by Glen Boles, Alice Saltiel-

## ANNUAL MEETING

The 2002 Annual meeting of the Lake O'Hara Trails Club will be held at Le Relais at 8:30 p.m. on Tuesday, July 30

*All Members Welcome!*



### *Woodblock by Wilfrid Lambert*

Marshall, William Townsend, Wilfred Lambert, Donna Jo Massie, Zelda Henrick Nelson, Bern Smith, Greg Leckie, Holly Middleton, and Horace Champagne. All of the artists are faced with the same challenge – to capture the feeling of this incredibly beautiful landscape through rhythm, design, and colour.

*Jane Gooch first went to O'Hara in 1976. Currently she is teaching at the University of British Columbia. She is planning to publish a selection of O'Hara paintings in a single volume.*

## **We Need Your Help!**

Your donation to the Lake O'Hara Trails Club will help further the preservation of Lake O'Hara and its trail system.

The Trails Club is a registered non-profit organization and will issue a receipt for income tax purposes. You may donate directly at Le Relais, or mail your donation to:

**The Lake O'Hara Trails Club  
Box 98  
Lake Louise AB  
T0L 1E0**

## **Would You Like to Join Us?**

Life membership in the Lake O'Hara Trails Club is available at Le Relais for a mere \$25. For this you will receive this newsletter annually and help support club activities in the Lake O'Hara area.

# Remembering Donald Gilchrist

The magic of Lake O'Hara has touched the lives of many, perhaps none more strongly than Don Gilchrist who spent many years walking the trails, enjoying the beauty and stillness of the experience and sharing a smile and a story with all who met him on their hikes.

Don was born in Calgary in 1925 and spent his formative years in rural Alberta, the son of pioneer school teachers. Having survived both a World War and an illness that claimed many of his colleagues, Don returned to Canada and in 1951 pursued a career with the Department of Mines and Minerals with the Government of Alberta. He stayed with them until his early retirement in 1985.

Don's greatest passions were his extended family, his love of trains and travel. His travels took him all over the world, yet his favourite travel destination was the week he spent each summer at Lake O'Hara Lodge. There he joined family and reacquainted himself with his O'Hara friends and proceeded to spend the week sharing his enthusiasm for the trails and life in general.

Don passed away on September 13, 2001 in Calgary, Alberta surrounded by family and friends. His presence will be missed by all of us at O'Hara but his memory will stay with us. It is difficult to forget someone who infused us continually with his warmth, his friendship and his genuine love for the Lake O'Hara area and the people around him.

Produced by:  
The Lake O'hara Trails Club

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*Preservation through  
Appreciation*

