

# DIGGIN' IT! LOCK ONE OF ONE

*Jon Jouppien finds it where he predicted.*



*Jon Jouppien and Crew at beginning of dig in Lakeside Park, Port Dalhousie*

**I**t doesn't happen by magic or good luck. It happens by studying maps and being able to plot a course. Archeological Consultant **Jon Jouppien** struck the proverbial gold in Lakeside Park on his first penetration of the backhoe bucket on October 16th in Lakeside Park. Granted, this gold was made of wood but wood that was set in place in 1829. The treasure we're talking about is the lock walls of the first lock of the First Welland Canal.

At 9:00am, Jon began the dig and within minutes had uncovered the solid timbers of the Lock located in the west end of Lakeside Park just beneath the Dalhousie Street stairs. 46 feet to the east and before high noon had arrived, he'd found the east wall.

Dalhousie Peer was there from the start and, as the day progressed, members of the local community began to filter in to see what had been uncovered. It could have been nothing or just the remnants of rotting timbers, but this was not the

case. What was discovered was wood in pristine condition laid nearly two centuries before. 16 inch squared timbers were as solid as the day they were placed and their orientation defined the line of first channel of the First Welland Canal.

Aligned on a North-West bearing, the west edge barley touched the corner of private property before meeting the shore of Lake Ontario where the submerged piers veered a few degrees to the west beneath the surf.

The dig defined one fact—remnants of the old lock and first channel do indeed exist and any development of Lakeside Park needs to take this into account. On the downside, the exposed lock walls cannot remain exposed for long before rot will set in. What has been preserved for 180 years would decay within a season if left to the elements. What we do have is evidence of its existence. What we do with it is up to the wisdom, or lack thereof, of our political leaders.



*One detail of the construction of the old lock—what appears to be a tenon joint.*



*Uncovering a bottom timber of the lock*



*Canal historian, Rene Ressler, who assisted on the dig, settles in with the old timbers*