

History of Toronto Brigantine

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It all Began with a Movie

- Toronto businessman, James Garfield Lorriman and his family went to see “Windjammer”, a film about life aboard the fully rigged Norwegian sail training ship *Christian Radich*.
- He thought it was a shame that a similar program did not exist in Canada.
- But he was wrong. A program did exist in Kingston with a vessel called St. Lawrence II.

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Mr. Lorriman

- He discovered that the naval architect who designed SL2 was Lieutenant Francis A. MacLachlan (R.C.S.C.), an engineering professor at Queen’s University.
- A charitable organization called Brigantine Inc was set up in 1950 by Francis MacLachlan’s father, Mr. Grant A. MacLachlan.
- SL2 was launched in December 1953 at Kingston Shipyards to be commanded and sailed by the Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps.
- A successful program had been developed for Kingston, and Lorriman dreamed of such a program in Toronto.

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TBI is born!

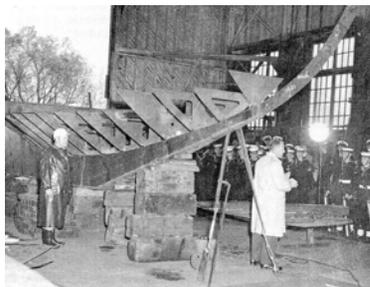


- Letters and patent were signed and Toronto Brigantine Incorporated was registered as a charitable organization on May 13th, 1962.
- Francis MacLachlan was commissioned to design the vessel.
- Drawing heavily from the design of *SLII*, he designed an almost identical sister ship. The new vessel had virtually the same lines and rig, but improvements were made in the deck layout and accommodations below.

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Laying the keel

- In 1962, the estimated cost to build and outfit the vessel was \$120, 000.
- This figure was reduced to about \$75, 000 by the generosity of various companies and individuals who were able to provide goods at cut rates.
- Her keel was laid at Kingston Shipyards on November 10, 1962.



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What about a name?

- The name for the new vessel was found when Mrs. Lorriman's father, Mr. Stuart B. Playfair came forward and agreed to support the program if the board would consider naming the new vessel after his yacht *Pathfinder*.
- He had lent the Navy his yacht during WWII, but when she was returned to him he decided she was a useless commodity.
- The board quickly agreed, as the name had a prophetic ring to it considering the purpose for which she was to be built, and henceforth it was decided that the new vessel would be called *Pathfinder*.

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A Bare Hull

- After her arrival in Toronto she remained moored at the foot of Spadina Road where she remained for several months.
- She was essentially a bare hull, with no interior joinery below of any kind.
- Maurice Smith, her first captain, enlisted the help of the teenage cadets from the cadet corps he belonged to in Toronto. He soon had a dedicated group of regulars coming down to work each weekend, including numerous adults who donated their skills and time during the week.
- She was tied up for most of the summer, but was rigged enough to participate in an infamous Labour Day race against the *St. Lawrence II* after a long night of preparation. Still without square sails or yards, it is said that *Pathfinder* won the first of many Brigantine races.

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The First Winter Program

- That winter, Maurice Smith and Al Hazell began the Winter Program. The vessel was de-rigged, and work was continued on the vessel in preparation for her first summer of sail training. Instruction sessions were begun for the members of the wardroom in seamanship, navigation, pilotage and safety.

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The first summer

- The following summer was *Pathfinder's* first real season.
- They also used the vessel *Renown*, a schooner from the Sea Cadet Corps in St. Catherines as a shore training base to teach the new crews the basics of sailing before they came aboard for their trip.
- The first summer was filled to capacity. Eighteen new teenage boys stepped aboard each week, from the first to the last.

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Pathfinder's Commissioning

- *Pathfinder* was officially commissioned in July 1964, presided over by the retired Governor General, Vincent Massey. Later that summer, the *Christian Radich* came to Toronto, offering an opportunity to exchange officers and information, as well as have first-hand interaction with the program that brought T.B.I. into existence.

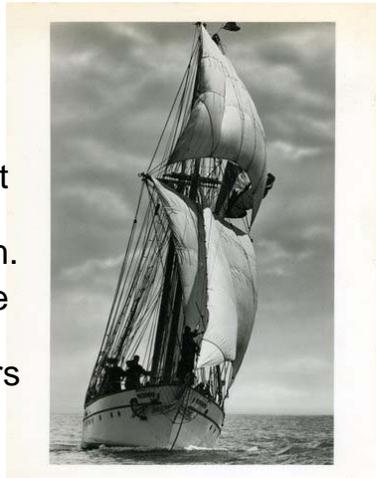
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A Departure from the Sea Cadets

- T.B.I. consciously drifted from its Sea Cadet beginnings, preferring instead to move in a direction where it would be an organization unto itself. The following summers saw changes in the shore base program, including the addition of another vessel, *Trident II*, a 37 foot steel hulled schooner donated to the program for one dollar in 1966.

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- In 1967 *Pathfinder* sailed to Montreal to take part in EXPO '67, an experience that brought a great amount of much needed publicity to the program.
- The shift away from the Cadet style of training continued, and numbers of trainee applications grew steadily.



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TBI needs another Brigantine



- By the end of the 1960s TBI decided to build a second brigantine because of the number of trainee applications.
- Once again Francis MacLachlan designed a similar vessel, but with a slightly wider beam and fuller stern, as well as a different layout on deck and down below.
- She was named *Playfair* after the organization's founding patron, and she was launched at the Kingston Dredge and Dock Co. in the end of May 1973.

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A Royal Connection

- Playfair's naming ceremony was conducted in Kingston on Wednesday, June 27th, 1973 during the Royal visit.
- Her majesty Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip attended the ceremony, with the Queen making *Playfair* the first Canadian vessel ever to be named by a reigning monarch.

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First sail for Girls

- *Playfair* arrived in a similar condition to the way *Pathfinder* had arrived, and building and outfitting her would cost \$203 000 by the time she was completed the following summer.
- With *Playfair* came the first regular sail training course for girls. She was commissioned on July 30th, 1974, and a week later an all-girl crew signed aboard. In these days boys and girls sailed on separate boats.

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Atlantic Voyage

- In 1976, the three brigantines sailed to New York City, their first taste of salt water, to participate in the Tall Ships Parade of Sail as part of the 1976 American Bicentennial celebrations.
- During this trip Captain Irving Johnson (Peking Battles the Horn) went aboard *Pathfinder* and complimented the Captain and Crew on how smart and seamanlike their attitude and ship was.

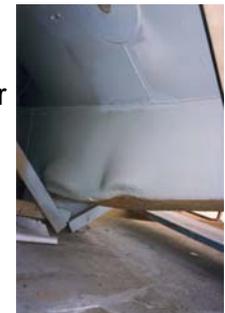
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Females in the Wardroom?

- 1980 marked the start of co-ed programs and female officers in the wardroom, a major step for the organization.
- In 1984, the vessels participated in the Great Lakes Rendezvous tall ships gathering in Toronto.
- The program continued to enjoy success throughout the eighties.

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- *Pathfinder* has undergone several refits in her life.
- For a while she had a bump on her keel from being dropped by a crane.
- In 1993 some of her hull plating was replaced, but serious system problems led to the cancellation of three courses that summer, her entire fall season, and the entire 1994 sailing season.



Ouch, that's a serious Dent!!!



Repairs to the dent in 1998

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“The (1995) Refit”

- *Pathfinder* was towed to Bristol Marine in Port Credit on January 6th 1995 and work began on January 17th.
- She had been stripped to bare steel, sandblasted, faired, and recoated.
- Bulkheads were moved to create an engine room, a new engine, transmission and electrical systems were installed.
- Most of her spars and sails were kept, but everything else was made or bought brand new.
- The total cost of the refit was \$406,000. The old diesel stove was replaced by a propane one, a working refrigerator was installed, etc. The list of additions and improvements is long.
- She returned to Brig House in the first week of May, in much the same condition she had been in when she was tied up at the foot of Spadina Rd 32 years earlier.

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Ice in January when she was towed to Bristol



Deck with all the brightwork removed



New steelwork in Galley



Fairing in the bow

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More than Just Brigantines!

- Toronto brigantine has, in the past, been more than just brigantines. At times, the organization has had sloops, small dinghies, and shorebases.
- The sloop program grew out of the old Trident junior program. In its first year a 26' folkboat donated by Capt. Dana Kennedy was used.
- In subsequent years the sloop program used a number of different boats including the Douglas Hay (30' HO steel sloop), Canopus (30' wooden bilge keeled sloop), Velerita (26' folkboat was loaned to the program by the Lorriman's), Egrette (42' wooden cutter), and Tupik (32' fiberglass sloop loaned to the program by the McLean's).
- Each of these Boats offered 11-13 year olds the chance to sail, while giving junior officers the opportunity to sail on different boats and gain new experiences. They also provided training for Captains and XO's. The sloop program closed in 1994 when the organization decided to focus more on the brigantines due to financial reasons.

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Shorebase?

- Shorebase programs originally used the Sea Cadet base in St. Catherines. About the same time as the organization began to move away from the naval routine, a base was established on Wapoo Island (near Picton).
- The idea was to spend a week at Shorebase where trainees would be broken into watches, and experience a summer camp like setting while preparing to sail on the brigantines.
- Under Al Hazel's watchful eye the program flourished with a full wardroom on the island, three lug rigged P-boats, and many adventures to be had.
- As with all things shorebase slowly became less of a priority for the organization and was abandoned in the late seventies only to be resurrected in 1992 and 1993. This time the base was on the grounds of Discovery harbour in Penetanguishene.
- It was deemed after two seasons that once again concentrating on the brigantines was more important than running a 'summer camp'.

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Brig House

- Brig House in its self has become an institution. As you know the current Brig House is in the underground parking garage, which is not ideal.
- Previously Brig House was on Maple Leaf Quay where H2O park currently sits. This Brig house was originally built to last 2 years but it lasted over twenty.
- Prior to 1982 brig house was on the same pier but part of larger building that also housed a sailing school, a bakery at one time and some offices.
- The Brigantine Room, which is part of Harbourfront Centre, was also a Brig House in the seventies. Pier Four which now hosts the Storehouse Restaurant has also seen time as Brig house.
- During the nineties several other buildings on Toronto's waterfront have also been used. The Rover's Pub off of Cherry Street, and 5 Bathurst.
- Inquiries are being made into potential permanent locations for Brig House.

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1980's



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TBI recognition

- Awards and recognition have always been part of brig's history, in the time-honored tradition of competition both Pathfinder and Playfair have done well.
- The organization and the people in it have been internationally recognized many times. TBI won the American Sail Training Association (ASTA) Program of the Year 1994 and the Black Pearl Award 1998.
- T.B.I. ships and crew are always competitive during ASTA's tall ships challenges.
- During a 1998 race in Lake Michigan *Pathfinder* and *Playfair* crossed the line first and second respectively, after being handicapped as the two slowest boats in the race.

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Awards

- The Deep Sea Award has been given annually to the programs brightest and most promising sailor. The award itself is in one part a plaque that features the recipients' names and a mounted sextant. The antique sextant was used to navigate on board a vessel employed in the maintenance of Trans Atlantic cables.
- Until his death in 2002, Ozzie Schenk presented the award. Ozzie Schenk was a long time T.B.I. supporter and marina

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Seamanship Award

- In the past, additional awards have been presented to the brigantine crews. Known as the Captain's Awards they recognized the contributions and merits of those who were seen as hard working leaders in various ranks.
- Though most of these awards have come and gone, the Seamanship Award is still presented annually to the most promising new Petty Officer. The award is a rigging knife and is generally won by people who go on to enjoy successful brigs careers.
- Seann O'Donoghue has generously donated the award year after year, though he is usually at sea for the presentation.

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The Story of The Figure Head

- Pocohontas (Poco) is the lost and then found figurehead for Pathfinder. It was carved in 1970 at the Toronto Boat Show by Jack Whitehead, a renowned figurehead carver from the Isle of Wight.
- It was lost in 1978 in a storm on lake Erie, and found approximately twelve years later by Ron Rowe while walking on a beach near his home in Selkirk.
- Ron eventually donated it to the Port Dover Harbour Museum, where it remained on display unidentified, with an invitation to the public to speculate about what it might have been.
- In 2005 Eric Natte, a Lake Erie drill rig operator suggested to curator Ian Bell that perhaps it was an old figurehead off a tall ship... maybe the Pathfinder?
- A few phone calls later, and with the help of this photo provided by alumnus Doug Hunter, and Poco's identity was confirmed.
- After a homecoming ceremony at the annual Toronto Brigantine Pirate's Ball, Poco was returned to the Port Dover Harbour Museum for safekeeping.

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Poco when new



Poco after it was rediscovered



Alumni

- Toronto Brigantine Alumni have always been a valuable resource and many continue to support the program in various ways.
- Though the present crew is always seen as the heart of the program, the alumni (that's you in a couple of years) donate their time, skills, materials, equipment, and money so that we can maintain the heritage and philosophy over a broader span of time than the "life" of a wardroom.
- T.B.I. Alumni who choose to follow maritime careers have crewed on many exciting vessels and fill out the ranks of the world's tall ship fleet, as well as merchant, Coast Guard, Navy, research and tour ships creditably.

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Board of Directors

- The board of Toronto Brigantine over the years has included prominent Ontario men and women who have contributed greatly to the success of the organization.
- In 2003 a new board made up completely of alumni took over after the previous board had decided the program was no longer financially viable.
- The board of Directors sets the policies and operation plans for the organization, while also responding to the needs and wants of the participants and members alike.
- By working closely with the Captains and General Manager, the combined experiences of the board members ensure that all TBI activities are safe, well founded, and fit TBI's mandate of Building Character Through Adventure.

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Transport Canada

- The newest chapter in the history of TBI is that we now fall under Transport Canada regulation.
- Though we have always strived for high levels of safety and training this was something that was previously internally regulated.
- As of spring 2008 both our vessels have become Transport Canada inspected ships, and our Captains and Mates are now licensed officers.
- We are engaged in an ongoing process with TC, and we will be working with them to develop Manning and Operating standards for sail training vessels in the years to come.

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Pathfinder's Captains

- Maurice Smith
- Richard Birchall
- R. Bruce Macdonald
- Ron Bessey
- David Perry
- Gordon Sloane
- Jim Barry
- Neil Autton
- Jeremy White
- Brad Carter
- Tim Pyron
- Chris Chafe
- Julian Schroer

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Playfair's Captains

- Fred McConnell
- Greg Cooke
- David Hughes
- Ron Bessey
- Dana Kennedy
- David Perry
- Jim Barry
- Darren Holmes
- Trevor Schwellnus
- Rick Moore
- Neil Autton
- Gordon Sloane
- Lesley Mclean
- Stefan Read
- Catherine O'Neill
- Kyle Boland
- Rhys Weed

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