



Nicholas Thomson

CCSF Award Winner 2012 & 2013

Nicholas Thompson is a Canadian stone carver who studied Historic Stone Carving at the City & Guilds of London Art School, where he was awarded a diploma in 2014. Nicholas was awarded the Canadian Centennial Scholarship Fund's Belle Shenkman award for the Study of Arts in 2012 and the CCSF recognized his unique skill and contribution to stone carving again in 2013 when he was awarded a second CCSF scholarship. Since then he has gone from strength to strength.

Prior to studying stone carving in the UK, Nicholas was awarded a BA in History from the University of British Columbia, an MA in History from McGill University and an MSc in Urban Planning from the University of Toronto.

While working as an urban planner on heritage buildings in Canada Nicholas became concerned about the quality of repairs on some of Canada's historic buildings and noted that Canada generally contracted historic stone carving expertise from Europe due to a lack of local talent. Following his graduation from the City & Guilds of London Art School, where he trained in drawing, clay modeling and carving, Nicholas was invited to go to Ottawa to work on the restoration of Parliament and spent several months carving stone ornaments for the West Block. It was a unique opportunity to do important stone carving work in Canada on, arguably, our most important historic building.

Most recently Nicholas has been commissioned to return to the UK to work at Guildford Cathedral as part of its First World

War Centenary Project. Following a competition run in conjunction with City and Guilds, Nicholas was selected to carve a Mother and Child sculpture of his own design on the east elevation of the Cathedral tower, on a block of uncarved Clipsham stone. It is being carved in situ from an open air scaffold high atop the Cathedral overlooking the town. The 2.5m sculpture is a reflection on World War One, which focuses on the concepts of reconciliation, sacrifice and hope.

Guildford Cathedral has some important Canadian connections. R.B. Bennett, then Prime Minister of Canada, purchased and donated part of the land on which the Cathedral was built in the 1920s as a gift from Canada to England after the war. This gift is commemorated in a plaque at the Cathedral. In addition, during both the First and Second World Wars, the majority of Canadian troops were stationed in the Guildford area and indeed many are



Nicholas Thomson with Ottawa Transom Stone.

buried nearby at the Brookwood Military Cemetery.

Nicholas's skill and knowledge of historic stone carving together with his background in history and urban planning has allowed him to make a unique contribution in Canada on important historical buildings including the Parliament buildings and in the UK on Guildford Cathedral, a project which has a special connection to Canada and our two countries' shared history.

The CCSF is proud to have Nicholas Thompson among our distinguished scholars.

- written by Matilda Kentridge, January 2016