

Taken from Skulepedia ([http://skulepedia.ca/wiki/Skule\\_Cannon](http://skulepedia.ca/wiki/Skule_Cannon)) and edited:

## History

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### Origins of the Cannon

Although it was not until 1936 that the School of Practical Science (also called S.P.S. or Skule™) had a Cannon of its own, many cannons were used and honoured previously. In the 1923 Transactions, F.W. Thorold (S.P.S. '00) recalled how he and fellow classmates stole the cannon from in front of the Military Institute.

"Meds soon found out about this and after many battles they captured it. That old cannon frequently passed from Meds to Skule™ and back again, and the last I remember of it was that it had been dropped between two of the Meds buildings. Oh yes, we sure did shoot it off and broke lots of windows, too."

On November 2nd, 1905, The Varsity reported that, "During Thursday night, five large windows at the School were broken by shots from a small gun or revolver. It will cost \$100 in repairs."

### Hart House Cannons

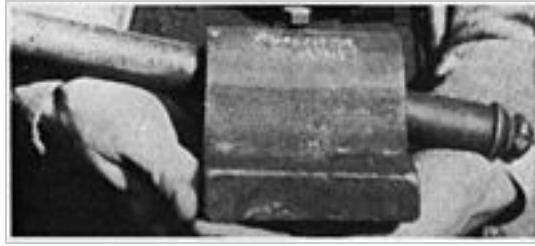
The first cannons honoured with the title 'Skule Cannon' were those in front of Hart House. In 1929, an Engineering caper resulted in the firing of one of the two cannons on the front lawn of Hart House. This however, demonstrated only 50% efficiency, as both cannons were supposed to blow.

### Early Cannons

In 1929 and throughout the early 1930s, another smaller "Cannon" began to appear at School festivities. Authorities attempted to track it down, considering it dangerous, hence it was shrouded in mystery and very little details survive to this day. It was likely made of a modified water pipe, though other sources describe a steel pipe, and *The Varsity* in November 20, 1935 described it as brass.

In 1935, during an auction, a cannon was fired on the steps of the old red Schoolhouse with such force that windows were again shattered. Once more it quickly disappeared.

### Cannon "Mark I"



Cannon Mark I, c.1950

In 1936, School unofficially approached a machinist working in the Civil Engineering shop to create the first "School Cannon". Recognizing the considerable risk he was taking, but also realizing the dangers of students' experiments with explosives in a waterpipe, W.H. Kubbinga decided to help. And so he fashioned a 10" barrel with a 6" bore from a piece of axle stock and mounted it on a cast iron pillow block measuring 4" wide, 8" long and 1" deep, with a raised hump in the centre through which a hole was bored to take the barrel. All of this was accomplished in the four hours preceding the School Dinner that evening.



Cannon Mark I firing, c.1948

The design of this Cannon was a tribute to engineering technology for it was not only a devastating weapon, but it was equipped with a built-in camouflage. It did not look at all like a cannon, thus deceiving any would be kidnappers.

This fearsome weapon was used until 1950 except for a few times between the years of 1941 and 1943 when a yacht gun was borrowed (really) from a machinist in the basement of the old Engineering building.

Naturally, the unimpeachable appearance and worth of the Cannon was irresistible temptation to anyone who gazed in its direction, but especially to the feeble-minded persons in other faculties.

### **Cannon Thefts**

In 1941, University College stole it but it was instantly returned. And in late 1944, UC stole it again after the Mulock Cup Finals. With cries of war and plans for the elimination of the nuisance at the north end of the circle, SPS undertook a restrained campaign to regain possession. This ended up as a series of ads in the Artsman's Gazette (sometimes called 'The Varsity', often called something else). Naturally, this campaign was a failure, as would be any appeal to an artsman's honour. On February 13, 1945, the UC Lit. announced that the Cannon would be returned at the annual Arts Ball. The 'Toike', in a fit of editorial passion, called it a "dastardly plot... a black infraction of civil property rights." (Feb. 23, 1945). 'The Varsity' said it was "in keeping with the Good Neighbour atmosphere."

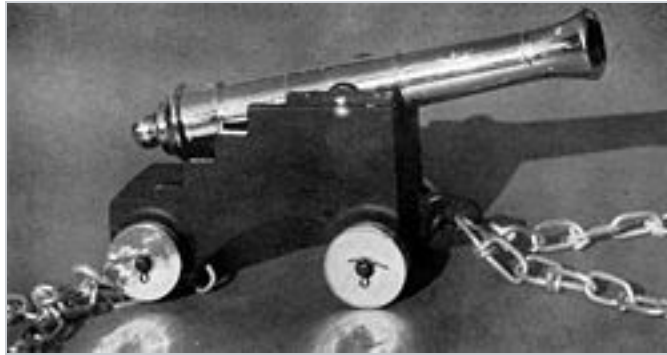
However, the hiding place was discovered and the Cannon was forcibly retrieved by a group of intrepid engineers. The Arts Ball was naturally a failure.

Soon the '49 Chariot Races approached. When the first heat was called, a devastating blast was heard. And then it happened.

"1079 Med Pre-meds students, armed with scalpels, tear-gas, thigh-bones, and trained white mice, attacked in a screaming hoard. The battle raged back and forth, to and fro and vice versa. Finally numbers and the massaging skill of the doctors told against the three engineers who did not have a lab at the time. The Cannon disappeared into the Meds building." ('Toike Oike', Feb. 9, 1949).

Negotiations went on for days as the respective values of the Cannon and missing Meds Society Vice-President Bob Hetherington were calculated by a federally appointed mediator. After a few days of debate, the Cannon was returned, marred by an inscription which read, "Captured by Meds 5T2, 3 Feb. 1949."

## Cannon "Mark II"



*Cannon Mark II, debuted in 1950 Chariot Races*



*Cannon Mark II, as pictured in Torontonesis 1952*

On Christmas day, 1949, there appeared on the doorstep of the Engineering Society a beautiful new weapon showing excellent workmanship. On it was engraved "Skule Cannon". It seemed that Santa had a close friend, a fine machinist who had been working for the Department of Civil Engineering for a long time and had created the first Cannon. In 1950, the Engineering Society honoured W.H. Kubbinga with a scroll extolling his loyalty, courage and good conduct and made him an Honorary Member in Ye Ancient and Honourable Company of Skule™ Cannoneers with the rank of Sergeant Artificer.

This new Cannon, dubbed the "Mark II" was machined from a cold rolled steel bar of diameter 2" and length of approximately 11". The barrel was mounted on a wheeled carriage fabricated from heavy steel plate. The Cannon weighed 20 lbs. Later on, the wheels and barrel were chrome plated. Its first public appearance was at the [Chariot Race](#) of January 27, 1950.

The original "Mark I" Cannon "was returned to pasture in a retreat known only to loyal Skulemen," as recorded in 'The Varsity' of October 6, 1950. But on October 29, 1952, 'The Varsity' headline screamed "SKULE CANNON PRIZE FOR BLOOD CAMPAIGN". The "Mark I" was mounted on a suitable base and inscribed as follows: "Presented to the Forestry winners of the interfaculty blood contest".

The Engineers had also promised that it would be presented annually if they did not win the contest that year. The following year, Forestry won again, followed by St. Michael's College, Nursing, and Forestry. For the 1957-58 campaign, the Engineers became wise and changed the rules. The winner would be declared on a total donation basis, rather than the previous percentage basis. Skule™ easily won back its Cannon. In the fall of 1959, 'Toike Oike' rumoured that the "Mark I" had been presented to Dean Emeritus C.R. Young.

### **Thefts of Mark II**



Window of Stores being repaired following theft of its safe by Artsmen



Safe of Stores returned following theft by Artsmen

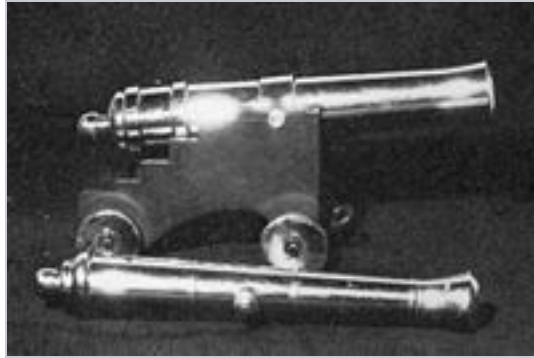
Meanwhile, on November 1, 1951, a hastily prepared mimeographed 'Toike Oike' proclaimed an attempt to "make off with Skule's favourite child", the new "Mark II" Cannon. A trio of students, two posing as journalism students from Pennsylvania State had asked for an interview and a chance to see the Cannon the night before. They were quickly escorted to the door, which was securely bolted behind them. Later a car was found nearby revealing UWO (University of Western Ontario) stickers on the windshield. The car accidentally acquired two flat tires before another feeble attempt by the thieves to gain entrance to the Engineering Society.

One fall night in 1958, artsmen broke into the Engineering Stores in an attempt to steal the Cannon. Believing that it was in a safe, they pushed the safe out a window and carried it away; however, their efforts were in vain and only the leniency of Skule™ kept them from enjoying an extended vacation (at government expense) in Kingston.

But where artsmen failed, Medsman succeeded by deceit, as in 1959 the Meds once again made off with the precious tool. To help publicize the blood campaign, the Skule™ Cannon appeared at the Blood Donor Clinic. It had been guaranteed safe conduct, so the Cannon was without its usual armed bodyguard and was attended by only two Skulemen. After a long battle, the Medsman overpowered the Skulemen and captured the Cannon. After a round of kidnapping, Engineers invaded the Meds building, removed the cleaning staff, faculty and other debris, and boarded up the doors and windows. In the morning, the Meds saw the light and returned the Cannon.

In their kindheartedness, the Engineers gave the Medsmen a replica cannon, and they built a suitable trophy case for their prize. But in a masterful piece of engineering subterfuge, this false cannon was removed from the case (without scratching the glass) and was promptly destroyed.

## 1959 Cannon



New barrel installed in Mark II

Sadly, in 1959, the score of battles finally took its toll and the faithful Cannon Mark II had to be fitted with a new barrel. This new barrel was machined from a solid stainless steel bar, 12" long and 2-1/2" in diameter. The barrel was initialled by Canoneer Bill Riggs who also oversaw its construction.

In honour of the many battles on which the Cannon accompanied Skule™, the 1950 Cannon was immortalized by placing it in the cornerstone of the new Galbraith Building.

The new Cannon was formally fired for the first time on the front campus in the autumn of 1959. It was next used in conjunction with the Lady Godiva Memorial Bnad when the Engineers literally stopped the Homecoming Show for ten minutes while a presentation was made to the director of the show, a former Skuleman.

In the same year, a group from the Brute Force Committee accompanied the Cannon on a complimentary visit to the Victoria College Scarlet and Gold Dance in Alumni Hall. The Middlehouse Four were rendering a tender ballad at the time the gun discharged, and they were stopped dead in the middle of a verse. The BFC then scattered leaflets proclaiming Skule Nite and the Cannon Ball. Later that same year, the Cannon appeared at the UC Junior Common Room to proclaim the At-Home, with more leaflets.

In 1963, when John Adam was Cannoneer, the Cannon Guard was given uniforms for the first time, based on an idea by Dave Morrison. The red-helmeted Cannon guard came into existence.



Cannon at Coventry after recovery from England

## Cross-Atlantic Cannon Heist

Nineteen-sixty-seven was the year of Canada's Centennial, but more importantly it was the year of the most infamous Cannon steal of all. Capitalizing on a lapse in security, a dreadful wretched duo spirited away the Cannon, spilling nary a drop of blood in the process. These bold fiends could not possibly be other than engineers, as exhibited by their recklessness and fearlessness. And grads at that. Their identity must be kept secret, for Joe E. Skule™ only knows what the world would do if it were to find out that Mike Chapelle (6T7) was the leader, assisted by Sorel Reisman (6T7).

The Cannon made its way to the British Isles, but six brave engineering grads took it upon themselves to restore the pride of Skule™ to its rightful owners. They tracked it down, all the way to UC in England. Don Monro (6T4, an ex-bandleader and EngSoc President) stole into Chapelle's room, and with nary another drop of blood, Skule™ had its manhood back.



And then it was on to Coventry to pay homage to Godiva. The statue of Godiva was adorned with an engineering jacket and the engineers made merry for they were overjoyed. Chapelle followed them to Coventry, but the Skule™ folks outnumbered him and he backed off after some unpleasantness. The Cannon was taken to Wales and then back to Canada.

## **1967 Cannon - Canadian Centennial**

The fact that an engineer had stolen the Cannon was very embarrassing, and hence this whole theft was hushed up. The Engineering Society had another Cannon built when they found out that the old one was gone, but the new Cannon was announced to the world to have been built in honour of Canada's Centennial. The carriage of the new Cannon was mahogany and was equipped with wheels. Both the barrel and wheels were chrome-plated.

With a brand spanking new Cannon, Skulemen's spirits were given a much needed lift. It was barely a year old when another attempt was made to snatch the Skule™ banger, this time by an Industrial Engineer. He was unsuccessful in his attempt and spent the next few weeks as a guest of a Toronto hospital.

The '59 Cannon made a brief appearance at the 6T9 Cannon Ball where it was fired by John Adam (Cannoneer '64). The Cannon was then reported to have formed the basis of the annual Skule™ Cannon Award; however, this was more fiction to cover up the '67 Cannongate. This Cannon has since been presented to Paul Baker (7T5) in recognition of his outstanding service to the Engineering Society.

The year 1971 brought the first gangbang with the Ryerson engineers, to determine who had the better cannon. Needless to say, the Polytechs were sent scurrying home with their feet in their mouths. Not only did Skule™ annihilate them in the contest, they also stole their cannon and made off with the distributor wire to their bus.

## **1973 Cannon - Faculty Centennial**

With the Faculty's centennial fast approaching, the Cannoneer decided that a new Cannon would be an ideal way to celebrate. In great secrecy, an emissary was sent down to Svart-alfa-heim (a kingdom below the earth where elves live) to commission Sindri (the creator of the mighty hammer of Thor) to

machine the mightiest device ever imagined. With a solid brass barrel of maximum diameter 3" and length of 16-1/2", this zenith of perfection would easily strike fear into the heart of any mortal.

The first formal firing of this marvellous weapon was at the 1973 Centennial Ball, and on the third try it was actually fired. Dean James Ham fired the 1967 Cannon for the last time and it was then presented to him in honour of his retirement from Deanship.

The 1973 Cannon has enjoyed a period of relative tranquility since its creation, except at a frosh dance, when it was stolen (by the LGMB) to scare the Cannoneer (who had carelessly left it unguarded in the band room).

But in 1976, Robert Gilmour (the Canoneer) was found guilty of defacing the Cannon. John Vanneste (7T3), a former Cannoneer and designer of the 1973 Cannon, was called to fire the Cannon, since Gilmour had refused to do so at his own Grad Ball. The Cannon was found to be badly corroded and in need of cleaning. When the barrel was removed from the base, Gilmour's name was found chiseled into the bottom.

The Engineering Society passed a motion of censure against Gilmour, and the entire deed was exposed in 'Toike Oike' (March 26, 1976). Furthermore, at Vanneste's suggestion, the Cannon Guard were to wear black hard hats for a year to show the engineers' displeasure, but the Cannon Guard has continued to wear black ever since.

In 1982, the glorious Skule™ banger was called upon once again to prove itself. The first round of yet another gangbang was held during Godiva Week on Front Campus. This time, contenders from Ryerson, Devonshire House and some forgotten fraternity were trying to wrest the glory from Skule™'s Cannon. The impartial judges, armed with the latest in decibel meters, quickly banished Devonshire and the fraternity from the field. Due to faulty calibration, both Ryerson and Skule™ were off the scale.

A second round was then held, this time on Ryerson's home turf. Using heavy duty equipment and special shielding, the outcome was certain. Skule™ had once again triumphed. For the record, the Mighty Skule™ Cannon was measured at a level of 113 decibels from 200 yards distance.

## **1985 Cannon - EngSoc Centennial**

In time, the years took their toll on the Cannon, and in 1985 it was decided that a new Cannon would be commissioned for the Engineering Society's Centennial. The design of the new Cannon was undertaken by Greg Forbes (Attiliator 1982) with the help of four other Attiliators. The Cannon, with its

bulbous muzzle, was designed after a naval piece. In order to reduce injuries to the guard the diameter of the touch-hole was reduced. The finished Cannon, with a bore-depth of 13-3/4" and a diameter of 3/4", was the most powerful weapon to date. At its test firing the 8" spikes used to secure it were ripped out of the ground.

At the 1985 Grad Ball held at the Royal York Hotel, the 1973 Cannon was presented to Professor Emeritus L.E. Jones in recognition of his years of service to both the Engineering Society and the Faculty. That evening, the new Cannon, in keeping with the tradition started by its predecessor, fired on its third try shortly after 11 PM on Saturday, March 23. The force of the delayed blast rolled up a large section of carpeting.

### **LGMB "borrows" the Cannon**

Over the winter break in 1988-1989, the Cannon Guard left the Cannon in the safe at the Engineering Society offices. The Bnad "borrowed" the Cannon through some coercion of the EngSoc executives, and kept it at Knox College while the Chief Attiliator was sent a fake letter from Waterloo, complete with a photo of the Cannon on a Waterloo jacket.

### **SAC President attempts Cannon thefts**

In 1990, the Students' Administrative Council (SAC, now known as the University of Toronto Students' Union, UTSU) President broke into the Engineering Society offices one night during Reading Week in search of the Cannon. Using a drill, he tried to break into the storage room where he believed the Cannon was kept. He failed and left the mutilated door unopened.

In 1991, the SAC president led a second conspiracy to steal the Cannon during the [Homecoming Parade](#). Due to an information leak (the president allegedly boasting about the plot), the Guards learned of the scheme. The CA left the uniforms behind and showed up at the parade undercover. The Cannon was fired before the thieving group found out what happened.

### **Cannon theft by "Fahrenheit 1710"**

In 1993, 26 years after the last successful attempt, the Cannon was finally captured. After the Cannon was set off for the incoming Frosh on the first day of [orientation](#), the Chief Attiliator left the cannon unguarded in the trunk of his car, thinking that it would be safe.

There were no witnesses to the theft, even though the thieves peeled the trunk off the car as it sat parked next to the Engineering Building. A ransom note signed "Fahrenheit 1710" was sent some time

later, demanding that a group of engineers run onto Front Campus wearing only their underwear, carrying a banner of specific dimensions that proclaimed how "artsies" rule.

Their demands were ignored, and the construction of a new Cannon began. The stolen Cannon was finally recaptured just in time for the 1994 Grad Ball

The recovered Cannon was subsequently presented to a very deserving [Malcolm McGrath](#) (former Assistant Dean) for his leadership and contribution to student life.

## **1994 Cannon**

The new Cannon, constructed in the absence of the stolen one in 1994, was a 90% scale twin of the lost 1983 Cannon, and was made of cold brass. The new Cannon was inaugurated on the first day of orientation in 1994.

In **1996-1997**, the Cannon was fired at Queen's orientation, and the Canadian Congress for Engineering Students conference in Waterloo. The Cannon was fired again at Queen's orientation in 1997.

By 1998, due to numerous firings, the 1994 Cannon was showing its age. As the 125th anniversary of Skule™ was approaching, along with the 70th anniversary of the Cannon, the 1994 Cannon was retired and a new Cannon was built.

## **1998 Cannon - 125th Anniversary of Skule™**

The new Cannon, made with a stainless steel barrel and a walnut chassis, was inaugurated for the 125th Anniversary of Skule™

In 1999, the Cannon travelled to Cleveland, and to Washington in 2000. The Cannon was also fired at centre ice for a minor league hockey game in Johnstown, Pennsylvania on a road trip with the LGMB.

The famous [Queen's Grease Pole Liberation](#) in 2000 resulted in a piece of the Grease Pole sold in eBay, and another piece presented to the Chief Attiliator, where it is worn on the belt to this day. The belt, incidentally, is the chain that once protected Waterloo's Engineering mascot, the Tool, before it, too, was liberated in 1982.

## **Smoke and Thunder DVD**

In 2004, the 75th anniversary of the Cannon, a commemorative DVD *Smoke and Thunder: The Story of the Mighty Skule™ Cannon* was officially launched. The DVD was produced by Todd Reichert, a former Chief Attiliator and film major. It featured a video history of the Cannon, and included interviews with past Chiefs and alumni, including [A.J. Paul La Prairie](#) and [Malcolm McGrath](#) in its special features.

During the firing on January 15, 2004 to celebrate the DVD release, no less than five fire trucks appeared outside Sandford Fleming Building as it set off fire alarms inside.

### **Replica Cannon**

Sergeant Steve Cox, an officer of the University of Toronto Campus Police and a major ally of engineering, announced his retirement from service in 2006. To thank him for his service, a 50% scale of the 1984 Cannon was forged for him and fired alongside the 1967 Cannon, 1973 Cannon, and 1998 Cannon after his retirement ceremony, which took place earlier in the day.

## **Chief Attiliator**

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*Main article:* [Chief Attiliator](#)

When Skule™'s first Cannon was created, a Cannoneer was appointed in keeping with age-old tradition. The Canoneer would be responsible for the selection of the Cannon Guards, making sure that the Cannon actually fired, and to do the actual firing. In addition to this they would have sole knowledge of the location of the Cannon when it was not in use.

## **Sources and Acknowledgements**

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*Research on the history of the Cannon was conducted by Kevin P. Siu, Mike Hawkins, Jen Pollock, Juan Fantin, Jen Assal, Dave Woods, Adam Trumpour, Alex Curelea, and Will Smith.*

## **Detailed History of Ye Olde Mighty Skule™ Cannon**

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### **1899-1900**

not to be confused with those of the Engineering Society which were quite formal.

In February, 1896, part of University College was destroyed by fire, which accounts for the extra sleepers on one wing. It was the evening of the Annual Convocation, when a cavalier carrying a tray of trimmed oil lamps, the sole illumination of the time, tripped and fell in the basement and set the whole place on fire. The nearest hydrant was fourteen hundred feet away and ten thousand people stood helplessly in evening clothes and watched the building burn down. Rumour has it that "Cass" Goodwin, the assistant S.P.S. Junior, dropped the tray of oil lamps and so thoroughly kept the college. There was a splendid demonstration of cultured bone headiness at the fire, suggesting "persecution of mind" as a compulsory study. The recklessness with which the mattresses and pillows were carried down the stairs from the residence in the Cloisters (where Miss Kruger now has her office) and the care exercised in hurling carefully articulated skeletons from the Museum windows, was truly beautiful in a cabinet way of speaking.

A noteworthy event of exactly half a century ago, was the construction of the southern portion of the present Engineering Building to meet the demands for space. The building was officially opened in 1892 and it was an auspicious occasion indeed. The whole building with the newly equipped laboratories in Mechanics of Materials, Hydraulics, Electricity and Thermo-Dynamics was thrown open to visitors and the building engineers of the graduating class chose forth in great splendor as, attired in blue jean overalls, they operated the machines which they understood little better than did the spectators.

In the fall of '98, a band of spirited Schoolmen, driven by the common rivalry between Faculties, succeeded in stealing the cannon from in front of the Parliament Buildings. They took it up to School where it stayed for one day only, when Meds obtained possession and transported it to their front lawn. The old cannon frequently passed from

Meds to School and back again and when last seen was in the basement of the Medical Building for the summer.

Taking a collopy through the hall of the School and thence into the lecture room was time consumed to the time that a full Redge Highlander playing the pipes was ushered into the gallery at the Parliament Buildings while the House was in session. Why this was done, no one seems to know but, just as it is today, there must have been a reason. There is always a reason for such things.

At the time of the South African War there was always a parade downtown when good news arrived. When Kruger, President of the Transvaal, was captured by the Boers, a large wagon was obtained by the natives and a big cage placed on it. A "very quiet fellow in the first year" was "selected" to act as Kruger and he was put in the cage and it was tied down. He wore a beard and really looked the picture of Kruger. The placard on the cage stated that this was the real Kruger. All went well until the procession of Schoolmen reached King and York and then a mob of kids plentifully supplied with cotton eggs and fruit bombarded Mr. Kruger. The cage was open on four sides and poor Kruger took a horrible beating.

Reference to the two outstanding figures during these early years must naturally be made. The late Dean Galbraith and his intimate friend and colleague, the late Dean Ellis. These men found an abiding place in the esteem and affection of their students. Their aims and objects were to build up an institution worthy of its name and to aid all who sought its benefits. Their achievements in this respect are a challenge and inspiration to all those who follow.

If one were to ask the "Little Red Schoolhouse"—"Have you anything to declare?", her answer would be, "The thousands of graduates who have gone into the field in research, in industry, and to the far flung battle fields of the world. The happy days at School which live in every Schoolman's heart. The School Spirit which lives on to-day as it did in the early years of our history. These are her declarations."

Toike Article, Nov. 19, 1942

A cannon was stolen from in front of the Military Institute sometime around 1899-1900. It was stolen by, and recovered from, the Meds several times. It was eventually dropped between two Meds buildings. It was fired several times and broke windows. Other sources mention a cannon stolen from in front of the Parliament Buildings in the fall of 1898 - both most likely refer to the same cannon.

## 1905

On Nov. 2, 1905, the Varsity reports that "five large windows at the School were broken by shots from a small gun or revolver."

4th years ought to be very close and interesting. Let every fellow turn out.

\*  
**S. P. S. Notes**

It may be interesting to some of the third year men to know that their names are already being discussed in connection with the graduating prize list.

While it is impossible to make a correct prediction, still the records of previous years form some ground on which to base an estimate.

With the civils in Prof. Wright's old lecture room the competition may be close. The class list of '05, shows the dangerous men to be Houston, Menzies and Near.

The miners will probably allow their big prize to go to J. A. McKenzie. The smaller one will perhaps be left for Rolfsen if he hurries.

Of fourteen mechanicals, four are last year's honor men. Marrs, Calhoun and Melliwraith will scramble for first prize.

Among the electricals the trouble will all be between two men. Hull made an excellent standing but was perhaps excelled by "Prof." Wood who succeeded in appropriating six first places.

The Excursion Committee has been completed, consisting of Prof. Wright, Chairman; J. R. London, T. D. Brown, R. L. Harrison, T. H. Hogg, J. J. Spence. Arrangements are not final but it is understood that the excursion will be to Niagara Falls and Buffalo.

Mr. G. A. Campbell, '07, has been called home by the sudden death of his father.

R. S. Beckstedt, who has been in Niagara Falls, N.Y., was at the school on the 23rd. He is just recovering from an attack of typhoid and will not be back this year.

During Thursday night five large windows at the school were broken by shots from a small gun or revolver. It will cost \$100 in repairs.

**Wm. Henry Lebeson**

Varsity Article, Nov. 2, 1905

## 1929

### Small cannon begins to appear

Around 1929, a small portable cannon begins to appear at school events. subtitleities attempted to track it down, considering it dangerous, hence it was shrouded in mystery and very little actual details

are known. It is likely it was made of water pipe, although another source mentions steel pipe and the Varsity describes it as brass in 1935.



Varsity Article, Nov. 20, 1935

## Hart House cannon fired

1929 also saw the firing of one of the two cannons in front of Hart House. Unfortunately, both were supposed to fire. The caper was repeated in later years, including 1943.

## 1936: The Mark I is built

The Mark I was built by a machinist working in the mechanical department. The barrel was 10" long with a 6" bore, and was machined from axle stock. The base was made from a cast iron pillow block, the base of which was 8" wide, 4" deep and 1" tall. It was built in the four hours before the 1936 School Dinner (which was Nov. 20). Because the authorities at the time were trying to track down those responsible for the earlier cannon, the construction and early firings were surrounded by great secrecy. This is likely why many earlier histories of the Cannon do not distinguish between the Mark I and its predecessor, and give the Mark I's date of construction as 1929.

## 1938



Another small cannon, possibly a yacht gun, appears in pictures around 1938. It was likely used in an Engineering Society election campaign.

## **1941**

A yacht gun is borrowed from "a machinist who worked in the old Engineering Building" on several occasions between 1941 and 1943.

## **1941**

The Cannon was stolen by University College in 1941, but was instantly returned.

## **1944: Cannon stolen by U.C.**

On November 23, 1944, the Cannon was fired at the Mulock Cup (football) final between Skule™ and University College. UC won the football game. They also stole the Cannon. On November 30, Skule™ placed an ad in the Varsity asking for its return. An ad in the next day's Varsity asked how much powder was required to load the Cannon. On February 13, 1945, it was announced that UC had the Cannon and would present it to Skule™ at their annual Arts Ball on the 15th. Skule™ agreed to send a representative to receive it, but also began plotting a way to avoid this severe humiliation. As the Cannon was being taken into the Arts Ball, six brave engineers rushed it and retrieved it.

The next day, the Cannon was fired outside UC's Junior Common Room, where their parliament was meeting. This was followed by a brief snowball skirmish. Due to this and the fact that we recovered the Cannon before they got to present it, UC declared war on Skule™ on Friday, February 16. Skule™ responded with a proclamation of hostilities on Tuesday, February 20. Plans for the permanent destruction of UC were published in the Toike Oike on February 23. UC was saved from certain destruction by an agreement to channel hostilities into the Hart House elections. These elections were, of course, dominated by Skule™.

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oper-

final game," Don Gibson, president of the  
S.P.S. Athletic Association, said yester-  
day.

After lunch, mid blaring music, rous-  
ing "Toike Oikes," lusty cannon belches,  
and lead by "a bevy of beautiful girls,  
S.P.S. will form up and snake-dance  
to the Bloor-Street Bowl. Miss O'Toole,  
of School, will be in the fore.

At the Stadium there will be music,  
cheerleading by three girls and two  
fellows, and more spasmodic outbursts  
from the cannon, which incidently is  
stuffed with old copies of The Varsity  
to pack in the explosive mixture.

U.C. will counter all of School's efforts  
with displays of its own. A snipe rally

Varsity article before the fateful game - interesting mention of what was fired out of the Cannon (Varsity, Nov. 23, 1944)



More from the Varsity (Varsity, Nov. 28, 1944)

DE BOER'S OFFICE IN THE KENT BUILDING,  
2nd Office, Kent Building, Toronto

**LOST, STOLEN OR STRAYED**  
One Skule cannon. Finder please re-  
turn to Miss O'Toole. This ad. will  
guarantee safe passage to finder.

**Scholarship**  
Winners of  
quested to call  
for cheques in g  
ment, Nov. 26  
will be payable  
C.

Varsity ad placed by Skule™ asking for the location of the Cannon (Varsity, Nov. 30, 1944)

"dirty  
perhaps  
entered  
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**FOR PRESIDENT**

Horrifier of Skule cannon desires  
to know amount of powder required  
to load same.

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**Have a Coca-Cola**

The thieves' response the next day (Varsity, Dec. 1, 1944)

principles for which the legislation they control speaks. These are  
times when they should be thinking internationally rather than locally.

**School Cannon Found!  
See It At U.C.'s Fiesta**

The School cannon, missing since the  
Melock Cup final last fall, has been  
found and will be returned to its right-  
ful owners at the Arts Hall on Thurs-  
day night, it was announced yesterday.

The cannon was presented to S.P.S.  
in 1929 and has figured in every Es-  
planade function since that date. Some-  
times hidden in lofts, with a three-quarter  
ton "heavy" stationary mounting, and  
possessing interior firing characteristics,  
this non-pocket business has annually  
beheaded the School Auction Dinner,  
elections, and football games.

Its low first location, apparent and  
immediately after the Melock Cup final  
last fall in which University College was  
victorious for the first time in some 20  
years.

Relevant advertisements in The  
Varsity failed to reveal the whereabouts  
of the cannon or the identity of the

culprit. After having been faithfully  
passed from hand to hand, the cannon  
has finally come into the possession of  
the U.C. U, who feel obliged to return  
this weapon, relic of the perjured  
Scholastic.

In keeping with the "Good Neighbor"  
atmosphere that will predominate at the  
Juni Ball Fiesta, University College  
will return the cannon, suitably en-  
graved, as a diplomatic representation  
of the Scholastic.

**FACULTY OF ARTS**

All students who wish to write at  
the annual examinations must apply  
to write before March 1. Applications  
may be obtained at the offices  
of the College and University High-  
ways.

**MEGAN?**

Robert said he'd see, and went down.

**NEWSPAPER**

Skule™ Cannon found! (Varsity, Feb. 13, 1945)



Skule™ men recover the Cannon (Varsity, Feb. 16, 1945)





# Declaration Of War Recognized By School At Tuesday's Session

## FACULTY OF ARTS

All students who wish to write at the annual examinations must apply to write before March 1. Application forms may be obtained at the office of the College and University Registrar.

## Business Course Open to Veterans

A Certificate Course in Business, opened this month for re-service men and women, has received sufficient registration to warrant its founding by the department of University Extension. Admission requirements are determined by a staff committee that takes into consideration the applicant's academic standing, maturity, and experience.

The ten-month course is divided into two sections with examinations at the end of each. Accounting, economics, Canadian government, commercial law, business administration, corporation finance, economic history, and statistics will be covered.

In order to accommodate returning service men and women, the course will be started twice, and possibly three times, during the calendar year. Prior to enrolment, applicants are advised to consult their rehabilitation boards to make sure that tuition fees and maintenance allowance will be paid by the government.

On the completion of the course the University will award certificates to successful students.

## O.A.C. A University New Gov't Proposal

Sumner that Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, may become a university have again come to the fore. This statement was expressed in an address from the throne at the opening of the Ontario Legislature.

That aim is "to provide a co-ordinated plan of administration for the Ontario Agricultural College, Macdonald Institute, and the Ontario Veterinary College, to make the utmost use of all

## Members of S.P.S. Parliament Overwhelmingly Rise Up To U.C.'s Challenge to Fight, Following Four-days' Silence

### "AN INFAMOUS ACT"

Rising as one man to the battle-cry, "School must defend her rights!" the S.P.S. Parliament yesterday afternoon staged a tumultuous session by a formal declaration of war on University College.

Whoops of joy greeted the first flash communique from the front, stating that at 1230 hrs. two S.P.S. (Secret Practical Service) agents had posted a diplomatic note containing the School proclamation of hostilities in the U.C. rebuffs without mishap.

"Now that School has picked up its courage the phony war may be considered at end," stated U.C.'s president, Bob Bell, reminding reporters that U.C. had declared war on S.P.S. four days ago, following an engineer-engineered explosion in the Royal College Parliament. "Now that they've warmed up, our forces can swing into action."

School's official resolve to fight followed a cabinet crisis in which the motion of Prime Minister Bill Tamblyn, that the U.C. Declaration of War be ignored "as an indignity reflection, beneath this Parliament's dignity," was overwhelmingly defeated by the twenty-five members present. Perceiving the unpopularity of the scripted "soft answer," the government hastily went into coalition with the opposition, called for and won a de-stigmatizing vote for war.

Summoned by the boom of the great School cannon and ceremoniously opened with the Proclamation of the Most High State Yule, Parliament entered in awe as Prime Minister Tamblyn traced the development of the crisis.

Describing the theft of "our beloved cannon" at last fall's Melock Cup game, Tamblyn cried for vengeance on "one of the most infamous and treacherous acts of aggression ever perpetrated against a peace-loving faculty."

"For fully three months," he declaimed "our cannon was hidden by one of the cabinet members of this treacherous people. Not once was it used according to our custom, for the pleasure and

(Continued on page 4)



## REFUGEE UNVEILS WARLORDS

Skulls Like Rocket Ship, Eyebrow Tweezers, Links in Titanic Plot, Says Battered Refugee: "Not a Hero"

### CERTAINLY NOT

Last civilian to leave S.P.S. before warlords barred the doors, Varsity reporter Hank Rashey, *one of Last Train from Berlin, Last Passenger from Paris, Last Stranger from Stalingrad, Last Kidnapper from Kiev* blurted some hastily jotted on the back of his last rejection slip from *The New Yorker* to prove that the Engineers have been secretly arming the moon.

"No doubt about it," said Rashey. "Their track have been leading basement children's parties since last fall. It is perfectly obvious that they armed till they felt strong enough, then provoked an incident. Their strategy was calculated to deprive future Nazis from realizing that U.C. started this war."

Summoned to a conference of U.C.'s Big Three at an undisclosed strategic headquarters on the north side of Bloomsbury Street, Rashey advised against offering a soft peace.

"They should be exterminated as a species," he said. "Otherwise our children and our children's children will be exterminated." He added that he intended to call his children's children Matt and Jeff.

"Through a keyhole," he continued, "I saw their naval minister night after night planning intrigues with cellblock docks in his bathtub. I saw their cold-blooded youth mobilized into Pioneer divisions, calmly practicing on Victorian domineers the delicate removal of Artimus's pants."

"I saw their secretaries last fall posing around what delicate installations. I heard their women hysterically offer their eyebrow-tweezers to Marx, the better to equip a glacial movement. I saw them inject Kulture into their canned, the better to infiltrate U.C. with agents."

Explaining that he did not escape unscathed, Rashey removed his glove to exhibit a gruesome scarred handball. "For three hours," he stated, "I led them

(Continued on page 3)

## CHAMPUS CAT

(Continued from page 2)

a chase through the corridors, while T. squares whistled past my ears. Once I was almost a power, when I ran to a truck-staircase to bump my head on the ceiling. Twenty boys howled at my heels. There was no escape.

"But as I banged my head, I saw stars. I thrust my wagon to one of them and careened out a window over their baffled heads."

"Please don't kill me a hero," he concluded. "I did what any Artimus would have done."

U.C. President Gell announced plans to decorate Rashey with a Left Hand and arrange him an apple stand on Blooms Street.

"He is our first battered veteran," said Gell. "His heroism must not go unrewarded."

Woe



game  
inter-  
physical

I think Joe is a very, very, very nice fella. . . . Goo'night, Diary. . . .  
SADIE McFETTERBAUM

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# Cannon Copped!

## School Saved the Great Humiliation of Formal Presentation of Heirloom

Six "frustrated" Schoolmen succeeded in capturing the famed School cannon before the formal presentation at the Arts Ball last night. In a concerted and strategically timed rush they overpowered the cannon and vanished.

## Change Speaker

### L. A. L. S.

Varsity resource/images/articles/cannon/timeline of events (Varsity, Feb. 21, 1945)

# Champus Kitty



Hart House tonight has itself and prepared for a grim old time late yesterday, after U.C. President Bill Gell's announcement that every man registered in the Royal College will turn out as a candidate in the Hart House elections.

"Foul war," said Gell, "demands total domination. School has dominated the Murrey Mansion for too long. Gilhooley is a Schoolman, Cowencher is a Schoolman. The Warden is positively lyrical about his old School tie. These men are hangovers from early School-dominated committees."

"On election day," Gell continued, "every U.C. man will be in the running, and every U.C. man will get out and vote."

Asked as to what would happen when four hundred U.C. candidates figured in the elections with one vote each, Gell brushed inquiry and pointed out that they would not, of course, all vote for themselves. "This is democracy," he stressed. "The people will elect their choice—no, for instance."

Instant response came from the Little Red Schoolhouse, where Prime Minister Phil Tablet announced that every Schoolman would run in the elections, not once but twice—under his own name and another. "We know a thing or two about running elections," he hinted. "Every man jack of us must sit on the committee. This'll save them."

Then that Potters were trampled to death as hysterical fire-eggs of prospective candidates burned outside the Warden's office to procure damp-towel papers. In and out of the fire-up went!

(Continued on page 2)

# Champus Cat

(Continued from page 1)

House Secretary W. B. Squirrel, jerking apathetic with their feet why his chair "was not of help."

At press-time Assistant Comptroller Cowencher was negotiating with the paper controller for three-hundred-foot balloons, to be popped in unison with the band and being continuously referred by unintelligent dunces to the Vice-President in charge of Bathroom Times.

It was expected that every man registered at School and U.C. would be conscripted on election day to count votes.

Woo

Varsity commentary (page 2) (Varsity, Feb. 22, 1945)



Toike publishes plans for destruction of UC (with tactical maps) (Toike Oike, Feb. 23, 1945)

## 1949: Meds students steal the Cannon

The 1949 Chariot race, held on Thursday, February 3, had a good start. Skule™ won the first heat, and the second heat was started by a blast of the Cannon. Then, disaster struck. The Cannon was grabbed by a Med student, beginning a huge brawl between all the parties present who wanted possession of the Cannon - that is to say, everybody. Eventually a Skule™ man managed to grab it and retreat to the Little Red Skulehouse. Even there, however, it was not safe from the thieving Meds. Two of them, standing just inside the door, took the Cannon from the exhausted engineer and made their way to the Medical building by a back route. The engineers quickly regrouped and entered the Meds building, but were prevented from recovering the Cannon by an overwhelming number of Meds. They took II Pre-Meds president Bob Sheppard captive, but were forced to release him later the same day. They replaced him by taking Bob Hetherington, Meds Society vice-president, from the frat where he lived. Hetherington was held hostage over the weekend while negotiations took place, and was traded for the Cannon at 17:30 February 7. On its return, the Cannon bore a blemish in the form of an inscription reading "Captured by Meds 5T2 3 Feb. 1949."



Medical students attempting to steal the Cannon outside the Clinic.



Front page of the Varsity (Varsity, Feb. 4, 1949)





Front page articles continued (Varsity, Feb. 4, 1949)



Varsity front page gloats about the Meds steal (Varsity, Feb. 7, 1949)



Cannon returned (Varsity, Feb. 8, 1949)



The Toike account of the events (Toike Oike, Feb. 9, 1949)

## 1949: U.C. steals the Cannon

The engineers had arranged for a photo shoot of the Cannon with a Varsity photographer, yet when they arrived at the meeting a group of U.C. students snatched the Cannon and fled in a car. In order to recover it, the CA Paul La Prairie assembled a large group of engineers in front of U.C. while some Skule™-folks dressed as construction workers entered the building through a side door. These engineers set up proper construction barricades around the main staircase, and carefully removed the U.C. gargoyle from the newel post on the stairway. When word got out that the wooden gargoyle was missing, the CA was summoned to Dean Young and President Sidney Smith, to whom he assured that it would be returned safely in exchange for the Skule™ Cannon. A truce was then arranged with U.C. to exchange the Cannon for the gargoyle on front campus. The Cannon was handed back, and the engineers presented the artsmen with a bag of sawdust, supposedly the remains of the gargoyle. While this happened, the gargoyle was being placed back in its post by the Skule™-folks.



Meds claim "no secret society organized for the purpose of stealing the Skule Cannon" (Varsity, Oct. 7, 1949)





Skule™ auctions Meds building (Varsity, Oct. 25, 1949)



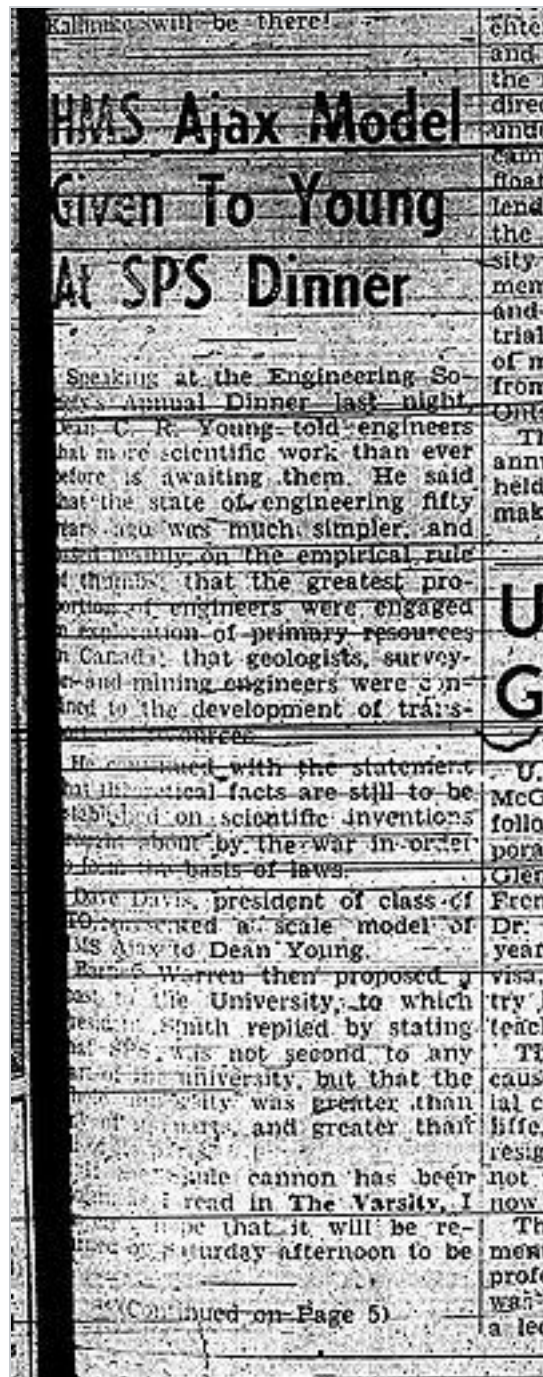
Results of Skule™ Auction (Varsity, Oct. 26, 1949)



Skule™ Cannon stolen (Varsity, Oct. 26, 1949)



Front page of the Varsity again (Varsity, Oct. 27, 1949)



President Sidney Smith comments on the Cannon theft (Varsity, Oct. 28, 1949)



UC claims they will fire Cannon at float parade (Varsity, Oct. 28, 1949)



Accounts of the float parade (Varsity, Oct. 31, 1949)



Skule™ to exchange captive UC cheerleader and gargoyle for Cannon (Varsity, Nov. 1, 1949)





Cannon is finally returned (Varsity, Nov. 2, 1949)

## 1950: First official firing of the Mark II Cannon

The Mark II Cannon was officially fired for the first time during the annual Chariot Races in January. This Cannon was built by W.H. Kubbinga, a machinist in the Civil Engineering department, and presented to the Society on Christmas day 1949. The barrel and wheels were made from a bronze alloy, and later given a heavy electroplating of nickel and chromium. The carriage was made of heavy steel plate, which was painted black. The Mark II had a barrel 11½" long, with a 2" diameter and ¾" bore.

### W.H. Kubbinga honoured by the Engineering Society

The Engineering Society honoured W.H. Kubbinga with a scroll extolling his loyalty, courage, and good conduct and made him an Honorary Member in Ye Ancient and Honourable Company of Skule™ Cannoneers with the rank of Sergeant Artificer.

## **1951: Western University attempts to steal the Cannon**

On the afternoon of October 31, three men showed up at the Little Red Skulehouse claiming to be journalism students from Penn State, interested in writing an article on the Engineering mascot. They asked to see the Cannon, but the wary Skule™-folks told them that would be impossible since it was against security regulations. The trio then feigned interest in the history of the Cannon and, after being shown a copy of the Toike with an article on it, they were escorted out and the door was securely bolted behind them. The engineers later found UWO stickers and textbooks on their car in the parking lot, and gave them two flat tires so that they'd have "something to think about on the way home". The same three students again tried without success to enter the building later in the evening. Apparently, the Varsity had been aware of the plot for a few days and was involved in it.

## **1952**

### **Vic attacks the engineering float**

Vic students attacked the Cannoneers during the Homecoming Float Parade in an attempt to steal the Cannon, but they were staved off by the group of Engineers protecting the float and the Cannon remained safe.

### **Mark I Cannon becomes trophy for Red Cross Blood Drive**

The Engineering Society decided to put up the Mark I Cannon as a trophy, to be presented annually to the faculty or college donating the greatest number of pints of blood per capita during the Red Cross Blood Drive. The objective of this measure was to provide an extra incentive for blood donations and increase the total amount donated, which was achieved. The engineers even arranged a mock theft of the Cannon by the Meds, to increase publicity. Unfortunately, Engineering lost to Forestry and the Cannon was mounted on a plaque and handed over.

## **1955: Meds attack the engineering float during Homecoming**

Medsmen, knowing that the Cannon was usually carried inside the engineering float during the parade, launched a tear gas attack on it. The Meds outnumbered the Skule™-folks and a fierce fight ensued that lasted for over half an hour. The Skule™ float was almost completely destroyed, but the Cannon remained safe thanks to the ingenuity of the CA who removed it from the area without anyone noticing.

## **1958**

### **Vic steals safe, which they believe contains the Cannon**

On the evening of November 25, a group of artsmen broke into the Engineering Building and stole a safe. They used a ladder to climb to a window which was 15 feet above the floor and then pushed the safe out through it. They believed the safe contained the Cannon, but it actually held \$1300 in cash and checks and the financial records of the Society. The students were, however, unable to crack the safe open and they abandoned it next to Elmsley Hall after painting some slogans on it. The thieves were Vic students, who were planning to steal the Cannon in order to fire it at the Mulock Cup finals in which they were playing against Skule™. The Engineering Society decided to be lenient with the thieves, who were at the legal mercy of the engineers and could have been charged.

### **Engineers win back the Mark I Cannon**

After losing the Blood Drive for five years in a row, the engineers became wise and changed the rules so that the winner would be declared on a total donation basis instead of the previous percentage basis. Skule™ easily won back its Cannon with 732 pints donated, over 600 more than the closest competitor.

### **Cannon firings publicize Hart House elections**

In order to publicize the nominations for Hart House Committee positions, the Engineering Society approved a plan to fire the Skule™ Cannon in the front hall of Hart House on five consecutive noon hours. The blasts would mark the beginning of the five pre-election campaign-speech sessions. The fact that the Cannon would be fired in the same place for five consecutive days posed a security problem, since it would invite robbery attempts by other faculties. Preventive measures were taken, however, and the Cannon was kept safe.

## **1959: Meds steal the Cannon**



On February 1959, the Meds finally succeeded in stealing the Mark II Cannon for the first time. In order to publicize the annual Blood Drive, the engineers had agreed to take the Cannon to the Blood Donor Clinic for a photo shoot. They had been guaranteed a safe conduct, so the Cannon was only accompanied by two engineers instead of the usual guard. However, the whole thing was a plot by the meds and the Varsity to lure the Cannon to a place where it could be captured by brute force. As the Cannoneers left the Blood Clinic, a large group of Medsmen attacked them from all directions and made off with the Cannon. A whole week of kidnappings and attacks ensued, until the meds finally saw the light and agreed to return it. The following is a calendar of the events as published in the Toike:

#### **Monday, Feb. 2**

Safe conduct to and from the Blood Clinic promised for the Cannon and the Cannoneers.

#### **Tuesday, Feb. 3**

Cannon stolen from two Engineers by fifty Medsmen. Meds getaway car traced to the Lee Chemical Co. Two carloads of Engineers block off car as it leaves company parking lot. Driver found to be company President; he was released with a warning. SAC-Varsity office raided by forty Skule™-folks, one roll of film confiscated.

#### **Wednesday, Feb. 4**

Handcuffs and miscellaneous chemicals purchased. Medical Society film disappears. Premeds attack Skule™ in attempt to recover same. Grand brawl including over 200 students. Two Medsmen and one Engineer taken prisoner. One Meds student chained to tree in front of Skule™, another sent packing minus shoes. Four stink bombs planted in Medical Building. Attempt to kidnap Engineer at night fails.

#### **Thursday, Feb. 5**

Three first year Meds students kidnapped and removed to remote hideaway.

#### **Friday, Feb. 6**

Medsmen released at 5 A.M. (they had an Anatomy test). Rick Schaeff (EngSoc President) denies any knowledge of the kidnapping of Medical Society President Doug Wilson. Varsity report branded hoax. Attempts to kidnap Jim Lewis and Rick Schaeff fail.

#### **Saturday, Feb. 7**

Negotiations completed for return of Cannon.

The terms of the pact established that the Cannon was to be returned exactly as it was when it was stolen, and the meds would be presented with a replica of the Cannon. All kidnapping on both sides was to halt immediately, and no attacks of any kind were to be made on the Engineering or Meds Dances the following week. The Skule™ Cannon was returned, and the replica cannon given to the meds was later stolen from the trophy case where it was displayed and promptly destroyed.

### **BFC Reorganized**

On March the Brute Force Committee was reorganized. The Skule™ Cannon and the LGMB would become divisions of the BFC, and the BFC would provide protection during events. This arrangement would go on for many years, although eventually all three became completely independent and separate entities.

### **1959 Cannon introduced**

After 9 eventful years of service, the numerous battles had finally taken their toll on the Mark II Cannon. The barrel was pitted from the corrosive action of black powder, and the plating was coming off. Chief Attiliator Bill Riggs made a request to the Engineering Society to replace this barrel with a new one, and oversaw the construction of the replacement during the summer. The new barrel was machined from a solid stainless steel bar, and it was 12" long with a 2 ½" diameter and ¾" bore. The old carriage of the Mark II Cannon was reused. The Mark II was later immortalized by being placed in the cornerstone of the new Galbraith Building.

### **Cannon stops Homecoming show**

In conjunction with the LGMB, the Cannon was used to literally stop the Homecoming show for ten minutes while a presentation was made to Jim Vasoff, a former Skuleigan. The crowd, consisting mainly of artsmen, managed no protest other than a few feeble boos.

## **1960**

### **Cannon fired at Vic Dance to publicize Cannon Ball**

A group of individuals from the BFC together with the Cannon paid a visit to the Victoria College Scarlet and Gold Dance. The Middlehouse Four were performing, and were stopped dead in the

middle of a verse by the thunderous roar which shook Alumni Hall. The BFC then scattered leaflets proclaiming Skule Night and the Cannon Ball.

### **John Bell removed as Chief Attiliator**

Since the Cannoneer John Bell had failed his year and his handling of the Cannon had proved inadequate, the Executive of the Society asked for his resignation. A new Cannoneer was appointed.

## **1963**

During John Adam's term as Cannoneer in 1963, the Guard was given uniforms for the first time based on an idea by Dave Morrison. The uniform took the form of red hardhats.

## **1964**

### **A nurse is injured by Cannon**

On Sept 23, 1964, Doug Macdonald fired the Cannon at the engineering frosh dance. A nurse from the Toronto General Hospital was injured in the right arm by a piece of unburnt wadding from the blast. She was 25 feet away, even though the recommended safe distance was only 10-15 feet. All Cannon activities were stopped until proper tests could be completed, which were overseen by Prof. MacElhinney of Chemical Engineering. When the nurse stated her intention to sue, all testing was stopped and firings were postponed indefinitely.

Late in October, permission was obtained to fire in the Hart House quad so it could be recorded for an upcoming LGMB album, under the condition that Prof. MacElhinney be present to supervise. Soon, a revised loading procedure was developed, replacing the old smokeless powder charge with black powder. When nothing more was heard from the lawyers, the Dean lifted the embargo and the Cannon was fired for the first time in the lower gallery of Hart House at the Lady Godiva Memorial Bash.

## **1967: The Cannon visits Coventry**

### **Cannon stolen by Engineers**

1967 saw perhaps the most infamous Cannon steal. Two graduate engineers, Mike Chapelle, 6T7, and Howie White, 6T6, managed to steal the Cannon, and took it with them to University College in England. Don Morno, 6T4, and five other Skuleigans, followed the Cannon all the way to England,

where two of them entered Chapelle's room and recovered the Cannon. On the way back home, the Cannon made a stop in Coventry to pay homage to Godiva. The statue of Godiva was adorned with an engineering jacket.

### **1967 Cannon built**

Meanwhile, back home, the Engineering Society tried to cover the fact that an engineer stole the Cannon. A new Cannon was built, supposedly to honour Canada's centennial. The barrel of the new Cannon was 11" long and had a bore of 5", with a mahogany carriage and chrome plated wheels.

### **Expo 67**

The Cannon makes an appearance at Expo 67.

### **1968**

An Indy attempts to steal the new Cannon. He is unsuccessful, and spends some time in the Toronto General Hospital.

### **1971: First gangbang with Ryerson**

The year 1971 was the year of the first gangbang with the Ryerson Engineers. The purpose of the gangbang was to see who had the better Cannon. Not only did the Skule™ Cannon win, but the UofT engineers made off with the Ryerson Cannon and the distributor wire to their bus!

### **1973: 1973 Cannon forged**

In Skule™'s centennial year, the Cannoneer decided that a new Cannon would be an ideal way to celebrate. So a new Cannon was built. It had an 18" barrel with a 6" bore, 3" diameter, weighed 40 lbs, and was mounted on a mahogany base and had bronze wheels. At the Centennial Ball the new Cannon fired for the first time (although it took three tries for it to actually work!). The old '67 Cannon was presented to Dean James M. Ham for his retirement.

### **1976: Robert Gilmour defaces Cannon; black hardhats in use**

The Cannoneer at the time, Robert Gilmour did not want to fire the Cannon at his own Grad Ball, so a former Cannoneer named John Vanneste was called from retirement to fire the Cannon. The Cannon was found to be badly corroded and in need of cleaning. When the barrel was removed from the base,

Gilmour's name was found chiseled into the bottom. The Engineering Society executives passed a motion of censure against Gilmour, and the entire deed was exposed in the Toike Oike. At John Vanneste's suggestion, the Cannon Guard wore black hardhats (as opposed to the traditional red) for one year to show the Engineer's displeasure. After the year was up, they decided to keep wearing the black hardhats, and they also decided to wear black t-shirts to create a new image.

## **1978: Another Ryerson gangbang**

In 1978, Ryerson made another weak attempt to outdo the Skule™ Cannon. On the day of the scheduled gangbang, a message was "supposedly" left at EngSoc informing UofT that Ryerson wasn't coming because of the rain. Due to the no-show, UofT declared themselves the winners and called Ryerson to tell them. It was only after that phone call that Ryerson decided to show up. So on that rainy day, 200 UofT engineers and 5 Politechs witnessed the 2nd ever gangbang. The Ryerson judge declared Ryerson winners, but the UofT judge declared the Skule™ Cannon superior. Once again, UofT came out on top. No one was interested in stealing Ryerson's feeble cannon, so they were allowed to return home unharmed.

## **1979: Another Ryerson gangbang**

January of 1979 was yet another gangbang versus RyeHigh. The LGMB showed up to play at the event; however due to the extreme cold, the instruments froze up, and nobody could play. The cannons fired anyway, and yet again Ryerson went home with their tails between their legs as UofT was announced the winner.

## **1982: Gangbang with Ryerson, Devonshire House and a frat**

Godiva Week in 1982 saw another gangbang between our Cannon and Ryerson's, Devonshire House's and a fraternity's on front campus. Decibel meters quickly eliminated Devonshire's and the frat's cannons from the competition. Both Skule™'s and Ryerson's were off the scale. A second round was held at Ryerson, this time using heavy-duty audio equipment with special shielding. Ye Mighty Skule™ Cannon triumphs, being measured at 113 decibels from 200 yards away.

## **1985: 1985 Cannon forged**

The 1973 Cannon is fired for the last time at Gradball and presented to Professor Emeritus L.E. Jones for his outstanding contributions to Skule™ over more than 50 years. The new Cannon successfully fires for the first time shortly after 11 PM on Saturday, March 23, after two misfires.

## **1989: LGMB "borrows" the Cannon**

### **1988-89: LGMB Steals the Cannon**

The Cannon Guard foolishly left the Cannon in the EngSoc offices in the winter of 88/89. The Bnad "borrowed" it and kept it at Knox College while the CA was sweating over a fake letter from Waterloo, complete with a picture of the Cannon on a Waterloo jacket.

## **1989-90: Guard gets new uniforms**

To commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Mighty Skule™ Cannon, and with the support of Assistant Dean Malcolm McGrath and the Engineering Alumni Association, Chief Attiliator Ken deJong establishes a new uniform for the Cannon Guard. The new outfit featured black coveralls, belts and vests in addition to the standard black hardhats.

## **1989-90**

Seven fire trucks respond to the Earth-Shattering Kaboom of ye mighty Skule™ Cannon at the Royal York Hotel during Gradball, setting a new record.

## **1990: SAC president attempts to steal Cannon**

The SAC president breaks into the Engineering Society offices one night during Reading Week in search of the Cannon. Using a drill, he tries to break into the storage room where he believed the Cannon was kept. He failed and left the mutilated door unopened. The Cannon's whereabouts are unknown to this day.

## **1990-1991**

Skule™'s first female Chief Attiliator: Sarah Ronchi, a Chem 1T2.





Sarah Ronchi, Chem 9T2, was the first female Chief Attiliator (9T0-9T1)

## **1991: SAC president attempts to steal Cannon, again**

For the second year in a row, the SAC president led a conspiracy to steal the Cannon during the homecoming parade. Due to a leak (the president's boasting), the guard learned of the plot. The guard left the uniforms behind and showed up at the parade undercover. The Cannon was fired before the thieving group found out what happened.

## **1991-1992: How many windows can we break this time?**

In 1991-92 Skule™ witnessed the birth of a new Cannon tradition - for lack of a better name, the "How many windows can we break this time?" custom. Ironically, on both occasions the shattered panes were a direct result of the interference by the management of the buildings in question. At Hart House, during the Alumni Reunion, the Chief Attiliator prepared to fire the Mighty Cannon down the hallway bordering the Great Hall. As the meticulous preparation was being carried out, an ignorant, stubborn, and quite worried staff insisted that the Cannon must be fired in the main floor hallway. Not being the querulous type (yeah right!) the Chief Attiliator acquiesced to the management's demands. With the customary earth shattering KA-BOOM the Cannon expelled its fiery breath into the quad while, simultaneously, the concussion shattered five windowpanes in the hall. The Hart House staff uttered a

collective 'gasps' as the Alumni expressed an equally unified 'cheer!' Some of these pillars of society, to the dismay of the management, even called for an encore.

The annual manifestation of the Cannon at Cannonball was a SMASHING success. It was like déjà vu as the Attiliator once more set up the piece and prepared to fire. The management once more intervened and insisted that the Cannon be fired out a bay window, even though the Chief Attiliator explained that it was much safer to fire the Cannon inside the spacious building. The manager, however, would not listen to 'sound' Engineering logic and insisted the Cannon be fired out the window. The Attiliator shrugged his shoulders and said 'OK.' The resulting concussion shattered six, one-foot square panes of glass. The sound of shattering glass hit the floor as cheers poured from the assembled Engineers and Alumni (Assistant Dean Malcolm McGrath out-cheered just about everyone). Surprisingly even the manager cheered (we got the bill about a month later).

## **1992: Tinted face shield built**

Due to recent attempts to steal the Cannon, it was decided that the new Chief Attiliator go underground. No one except the officers of the Engineering Society, the BFC Chief, the Bnad Leedur, and a regular array of guards would know the CA's identity before that year's Gradball. Brian Campanotti, the 1992-1993 CA, designed the mirrored face shield and hood in use by CAs to this day.

## **1993-1994: Cannon stolen by Fahrenheit 1710; 1994 Cannon forged**

26 years after the last successful attempt, the Cannon was finally captured. After the Cannon was set off for the incoming Frosh on the first day of orientation, the Chief Attiliator foolishly left our symbol unguarded in the trunk of his car, mistakenly thinking that it would be safe. Thieves finally got their hands on the piece, but not until they peeled the trunk off his car. Nobody saw them, even though the car was next to the Engineering building. A ransom note signed Fahrenheit 1710 was sent some time later, demanding that a group of Engineers run onto front campus wearing only their underwear, carrying a banner of specific dimensions that said some nonsense about how artsies rule. The demands were, of course, ignored, and construction of a new Cannon began. The new Cannon would be a 90% scale twin of the lost 1983 piece, and would be made of cold brass. The stolen Cannon was finally recaptured just in time for the 1994 Grad Ball. The recovered Cannon was subsequently presented to a very deserving Malcolm McGrath (former Assistant Dean) for his leadership and

contribution to student life that has aided so many undergraduate and post-graduate Engineers. The new Cannon was inaugurated on the first day of orientation in 1994.

## **1996-1997**

Cannon is fired at Queen's orientation, the Canadian Congress for Engineering Students conference in Waterloo, and crashes lectures in Con Hall.

## **1997-1998**

Cannon is again fired at Queen's orientation.

## **1998-1999: 1998 Cannon is forged**

By 1998, due to numerous firings, the 1994 Cannon was already showing its age. 1998/1999 was also the 125th anniversary of Skule™, and the 70th anniversary of the Cannon. The '94 Cannon was retired, and a new Cannon was built, with a stainless steel barrel and walnut chassis.

## **1999-2001**

The Cannon travels to the States, to Cleveland in 1999 and to Washington in 2000-2001. The Cannon was fired at centre ice for a hockey game in Johnstown, Pennsylvania.

## **2000: Part of the Grease Pole presented to the CA**

### **Queen's Grease Pole steal**

2000 saw the famous Queen's Grease Pole Liberation. A small section of the Pole was cut off and kept by us before the Pole was returned. Part of the piece was sold on eBay, the other part was added to the belt worn by the CA, where it can be seen to this day. The belt, incidentally, is the chain that once protected Waterloo's Engineering mascot, the Tool, before it, too, was liberated in 1982.

## **2002-2003**

The Cannon firings during the Bnad Wakeup on the first morning of Frosh Week appear on Pulse24 Breakfast Television in 2002, and again on Breakfast Television and the CityTV 6:00pm news in 2003.

## 2004

Smoke and Thunder: The Story of the Mighty Skule™ Cannon is officially launched on DVD on January 15, 2004. No less than 5 fire trucks appear outside Sanford Fleming within minutes.

## 2006

Sergeant Steve Cox, an officer of the University of Toronto Campus Police and a major ally of engineering, retires from service. To thank him for his service, a 50% scale of the 1984 Cannon is forged for him and fired alongside the 1967 Cannon, 1973 Cannon, and 1998 Cannon after his retirement ceremony, which took place earlier in the day.

*Research (in chronological order) by Jen Pollock, Juan Fantin, Jen Assal, Dave Woods, Adam Trumpour, Alex Curelea, Will Smith* Originally compiled and edited by Alex Curelea. Subsequent edits by Mike Hawkins.

*Contains material from Transactions of the Engineering Society, issues of the Toike Oike, Cannon, Varsity, Skulebooks, F!rosh Handbooks, and A Century of Skill and Vigour by Barry Levine*

## 2013: 1T3 Cannon is Forged

As adapted from the 2013 F!rosh issue of the Cannon newspaper:

"A new Mighty Skule™ Cannon has been built and [was fired] for the first time during F!rosh Week 1T3.

The [Chief Attiliator](#) at the time [later revealed to be David Belvedere] built a new Cannon to celebrate the 85th year of the Cannon, the 149th year of Skule™, and to replace the 1998 Cannon. The 1998 Cannon was in service for 15 years, the longest of any Skule™ Cannon thus far, and was replaced [due to] signs of wear.

The 1T3 is made from a high strength, rare type of stainless steel, and has been heat treated for maximum strength. It has new structural designs, stronger materials, and other specifications that make it the strongest, loudest, and mightiest Skule™ Cannon to date."



The Chief Attiliator holding the 1T3 Cannon at its unveiling. The belt worn by the Chief Attiliator was part of a chain used to guard the University of Waterloo's mascot (the Tool). Small sections of the mascots from Queen's University and Ryerson University are attached to this belt. These tokens, obtained in the course of "temporary liberation" by Skule™ students, serve as a reminder of the constant duty and vigilance required to protect our mascot.

## The Cannon Today

The Cannon in service today is the eighth to be built for Skule™, and was unveiled at Frosh week 1T3. Built with high-grade stainless steel and precise manufacturing techniques, the 1T3 Cannon will serve many generations of Skule™-folk.

The Cannon Guard brings the Cannon to important events throughout the year such as Frosh week, the Toronto Pride Parade and Godiva Week. Within the Skule community, the Cannon is more than just a mascot. It is a symbol of the engineering spirit at University of Toronto: Loud, proud and powerful!



Seven generations of Skule™ Cannons. Centre: The 125th EngSoc Anniversary (built 1998). Clockwise from bottom: replica Mark I (original built 1936), the Canadian Centennial (built 1967), the Faculty Centennial (built 1973), the 9T4 (built 1994), EngSoc Centennial (built 1985), the Mark II (built 1949, replacement barrel 1959).



The Cannon being fired off of the “liberated” mascot of Queen’s University: the Grease Pole (2015). Despite how the photograph appears, the two individuals pictured bracing the Cannon with their feet do not, in fact, exist.

*Have any questions about the Cannon and its history? Want to add anything to this page?*

*#EmailtheChief at [KABOOM@Skule.ca](mailto:KABOOM@Skule.ca).*



