

# NEWS and views

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Simcoe County Historical Association

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### Visit our Website

[www.simcoecountyhistory.ca](http://www.simcoecountyhistory.ca)

# SCHA

Preserving the Past,  
in the Present,  
for the Future.

## Our Fall Schedule

Welcome to fall! We're nearly there, and the temperature outside as I type this is convincing me as well. At least we are back to our regular schedules, and our monthly meetings! We look forward to seeing you this fall as we bring you the following topics and speakers.

Our first meeting will take place on September 20 when our speaker will be our Andrew Hunter Award winner, Alyssa Cyr. A student at Laurentian at Georgian, Alyssa won the award this past May which was presented at our AGM. Alyssa will present her paper which looks at the small community of Midland, Ontario and surrounding area from September 1940 to September 1941 during World War II to see what effect the war had on that town. Midland's contribution to the war was not only through the ship building industries. The small community contributed much more to the war effort, considering how far

removed Midland is from urban areas.

In October, the topic will turn to the War of 1812. Over the next three years, the SCHA has plans to incorporate the anniversary of this war into our meeting schedule. On the evening of October 18, we will enjoy a variety of stories and musical examples from the time, and work to link the military details with some social history. To keep current on 1812 related happenings across the county, a schedule of events and other details are available at <http://1812history.ca/home/>

The SCHA's first vice president, Mark Fisher, will speak on November 15. We are thrilled that Mark has completed this long-term project and is now in the position of educating us about the history and importance of the Gowan papers. Please see page 3 for full details.

See you at the Museum!

### SCHA 2011 Schedule – Simcoe County Museum

**September 20** – Alyssa Cyr will present her Andrew Hunter Prize winning paper, *Midland Corvette Construction: More than Shipbuilding* – at the **Simcoe County Museum, Midhurst, at 7:30 p.m.**

**October 18** – Jill and Amy Hynes – The War of 1812: Historical Tidbits and Tunes – at the **Simcoe County Museum, Midhurst, at 7:30 p.m.**

**November 15** – Mark Fisher, SCHA First Vice President, on *The Gowan Papers*, published this fall – at the **Simcoe County Museum, Midhurst, at 7:30 p.m.**

## President's Ponderings

by Helen Coutts

How have you survived summer? Ours seemed to fly by, but we can hope there's still a lot of good weather to come before that white stuff. The month with hardly any rain from June until late July really affected my gardens and a few plants died, but the crops in the fields held their own in this area and the harvest is proving it. In our travels to other parts of the province we saw many areas badly affected by too much rain and then too little. While writing these words our thoughts are with the parts of Ontario struggling with the

aftermath of nasty storms, especially Goderich whose heart has had so much damage.

Congratulations to Essa Historical as they commemorated the founding of Elmgrove on August 27.

As you see by the front page our regular meeting schedule starts up again on September 20. Hope to see you at them or at our Member Societies' events as listed on the back page. Bring along other friends or neighbours who are also interested in our history to learn a little and

share conversations over refreshments.

All summer we've enjoyed the company of our bird friends at the feeders and among the flowers. The goldfinches (who sing up a storm), chickadees, doves, rose breasted grosbeaks, nuthatches and woodpeckers are the most frequent visitors while several hummingbirds do aerial manoeuvres around their feeders and the flowers. Today one zoomed in to drink raspberry nectar from one side of a bush while I picked berries on the other side of the ever bearing variety.

## Festival at the Fort 2011

Saturday, September 17, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Festival at the Fort will bring you many opportunities to experience early Simcoe County military life.

Activities and demonstrations for all ages include numerous stations throughout the Fort, featuring a large variety of demonstrations and entertainments.

Here is a sampling of the offerings: Festival Mercantile, Homesteading Goods, Empire and Eagle Books, Its Thyme Herb Shoppe, Native Artefacts, Leather Goods, Sweets, and the Rotary Clubs Food Booth.

The following demonstrations will also be on hand: Blacksmithing, Coopering, Iron Mongering, Duelling, Mast Derrick, Military Drill and Musket Firing, Cannon, and Musket Ball Making.

Guests will include a number of re-enactors: Royal Navy – Penetanguishene Ship's Company, Officers and Commanders of the War of 1812, Ship's Carpenter and Gunner's Mate, War of 1812 Surgeon, Fur Trapper and Hunter, Voyageur and Native Encampment, Militia Volunteer of the War of 1812, 22nd US Infantry and Provincial Dragoons.

Be sure to see the following entertainments as well: Zoom Daddy's Musical Minstrels, Dr. Quimby's Medicine Show, Searching for the Forgotten War 1812, Military Recruitment and Militia Muster, Period Candle Making Workshop, Leather and Beadwork Workshop and Native Drumming and Singing.

Please note that there is no parking at the Fort. Shuttle buses will run to and from the Grenfell Community Centre on Sunnidale Road.

See <http://centraleastontario.cioc.ca/record/BAR2216> for more information.



*The SCHA acknowledges the financial support of the County of Simcoe and of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Culture.*



## Simcoe County Historical Association Executive

Helen Coutts, President	721-0587	roheco@sympatico.ca
Mark Fisher, First Vice President	728-3825	mwfisher2@hotmail.com
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Jill Hynes, Corresponding Secretary	739-6220	mark.jill@sympatico.ca
Ellen Millar, Recording Secretary	726-9300 ext. 1287	ellen.millar@simcoe.ca

For Membership Information, contact

Earl Elliott, Membership Chair 734-9808 earl.elliott@rogers.com

You are invited to submit photos and articles regarding your historical happenings in Simcoe County. Photos will be returned.

Mail to SCHA, Box 144, Barrie, ON L4M 4S9.

Deadline for the next issue is

November 30, 2011

## The Gowan Papers

by Mark W. Fisher

*The Gowan Papers: A History, a Story, and a Memory of a Time Forever Faded*

by MARK W. FISHER

"...it is my considered opinion that \$250,000 is a fair and realistic appraisal of the Gowan Papers."

*Bernard Amtmann, Montreal Book Auctions, March 1977*

"I think \$100,000 is a good figure, maybe a little more."

*Robert Gordon, Public Archives of Canada, April 1985*

"Separate verbal offers came last week...to pay between \$1.5 and \$2 million for the Sir James Gowan collection."

*Ian Hamilton, Kingston Whig-Standard, April 1985*

"It has been an archival shaggy dog for 20 years."

*Ed Phelps, University of Western Ontario, September 1991*

"No other country would give away their history like this."

*Kaye Baeggli-McClure, April 1985*

"This one went badly off the tracks."

*Ian Wilson, former National Archivist of Canada, November 2009*

**This compelling account** of the Gowan Papers, found by a twelve-year-old boy in a Barrie law office in 1958, is a tale that has followed a tangled path over the past fifty years. It is a story that was fought out between any number of dueling lawyers, sometimes flamboyant dealers or collectors, and debated vociferously by an archival community ranging from the phlegmatic to the just plain eccentric. It is a story of chance discovery,

narrowly averted destruction, lengthy historical research, wildly divergent valuations, acrimonious public debate, and a flurry of lawsuits and recriminations before the collected papers finally returned to their home in Simcoe County

The original documents were amassed by Sir James Robert Gowan, 1815-1909, the first judge of Simcoe County and later a member of the Canadian Senate. As a pioneer judge, Gowan led the way in the efficient establishment of the local courts both in Simcoe County and in the rest of early Ontario. Content with his county seat, Gowan and his extended family of Ardagh and Strathy relatives came to dominate much of the social and political life of the developing town of Barrie, while his growing judicial experience led to a flood of suggestions, memorandums and recommendations-many of which were acted on by the political leaders of Canada.

During his long career Gowan befriended, advised, assisted and communicated with leading politicians such as Robert Baldwin, John A. Macdonald, Oliver Mowat and John S. Thompson, a series of governors-general from Dufferin to Minto and leading intellectuals such as Goldwin Smith and George M. Grant.

But as fascinating as the life and achievements of James Gowan are, they are more than matched by what happened to his collected papers after his death. That is what makes this account more than a "must-read" for lawyers and archivists or collectors of the arcane and obscure,

for it is full of all the twists and turns that make any good detective story, replete with unique characters, unexpected events, and even a murder if indirectly. In short, this is a story that stands by itself and can be appreciated by anyone who relishes both a good read and a glimpse of a faded past that has made us.



243 pages

44 photographs

Price \$25 (plus mailing)

A limited number of copies of *The Gowan Papers* are being printed by RNU Press of Barrie, Ontario. If you are interested in ordering a copy please reply to :

Mark Fisher

45 Sunnidale Rd.

Barrie, ON

L4N 1G6

705-728-3825

mwfisher2@hotmail.com

Do not send any money at this time. The author will notify you of your total cost shortly before distribution, sometime in November.

## Doors Open Barrie

Saturday, October 1, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. (unless otherwise noted) you are welcome to explore the heritage and culture of Barrie at the following locations. There are a number of new sites open to the public this year.

### **Adelaide Street Gallery**

8 Adelaide Street (705) 252-3072

[www.adelaidestreetgallery.com](http://www.adelaidestreetgallery.com)

Year Built: 1877-94

### **Allandale Homes and Railway Historical Walking Tour**

Meet at Unity Christian School, 25 Burton Avenue at Noon and 3 p.m.

### **Barrie Imperial Theatre**

55 Dunlop Street West (705) 797-8862

[www.barrieimperialtheatre.ca](http://www.barrieimperialtheatre.ca)

### **Barrie Public Library**

60 Worsley Street (705) 728-1010

[www.library.barrie.on.ca](http://www.library.barrie.on.ca)

Architect: Ted Handy & Associates Inc.;  
Year Built: 1995

### **Carriage House Picture Framing Shop**

100 Essa Road (705) 735-3066

[www.carriagehousepictureframing.ca](http://www.carriagehousepictureframing.ca)

Year Built: 1880-90

### **Downtown Barrie Historical Walking Tour**

Meet at Memorial Square, 65 Dunlop Street East

Saturday: 11 a.m. only

### **Flying Monkeys Craft Brewery**

107 Dunlop Street East (705) 721-8989

[www.theflyingmonkeys.ca](http://www.theflyingmonkeys.ca)

### **Grey and Simcoe Foresters Regimental Museum**

36 Mulcaster Street

Year Built: 1888

### **MacLaren Art Centre**

37 Mulcaster Street (705) 721-9696

[www.maclarenart.com](http://www.maclarenart.com)

Architect: Howard Carter, Siamak Hariri; Year Built: 1917, addition 2001

Saturday: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### **Mady Centre for the Performing Arts**

1 Dunlop Street West (705) 739-4299

[www.barrie.ca/Culture/Pages/DowntownCommunityTheatre.aspx](http://www.barrie.ca/Culture/Pages/DowntownCommunityTheatre.aspx)

Year Built: 2011

### **Maple Hill Montessori School**

147 Toronto Street (705) 728-1008

[www.maplehillmontessori.com](http://www.maplehillmontessori.com)

Year Built: 1868-69

### **Rogers TV Simcoe County**

1 Sperling Drive (705) 737-4660

[www.rogerstv.com/option.asp?lid=14&rid=23](http://www.rogerstv.com/option.asp?lid=14&rid=23)

### **Simcoe County Museum**

1151 Highway 26 West, Minesing

(705) 728-3721

[www.museum.simcoe.ca](http://www.museum.simcoe.ca)

Saturday: 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

### **Union Cemetery Historical Walking Tour**

Meet at 338 Cundles Road

Saturday: 2 p.m. only Preregistration required.

### **Unity Christian High School**

25 Burton Avenue (705) 792-6915

[www.unitychristianhigh.ca](http://www.unitychristianhigh.ca)

Year Built: 1907

For more information, contact:

Tourism Barrie: 1-800-668-9100

Email: [info@doorsopenbarrie.ca](mailto:info@doorsopenbarrie.ca)

Website: [www.doorsopenbarrie.ca](http://www.doorsopenbarrie.ca)

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## Franklin Carmichael Lecture

by Dr. Richard Johnston

*The following article was missed in the June issue because of the postal strike. It is so interesting that I'm printing it, even late!*

On Thursday, May, 12, the annual Franklin Carmichael lecture was presented by Jennifer Browne at the Stephen Leacock Home before a packed auditorium. In honour of the youngest Group of Seven member, Franklin Carmichael, who was born May 4, 1890 in Orillia, this annual lecture has been presented to recognize his huge contribution to Canadian art.

Jennifer Browne spoke on two of Canada's most famous sculptors, her

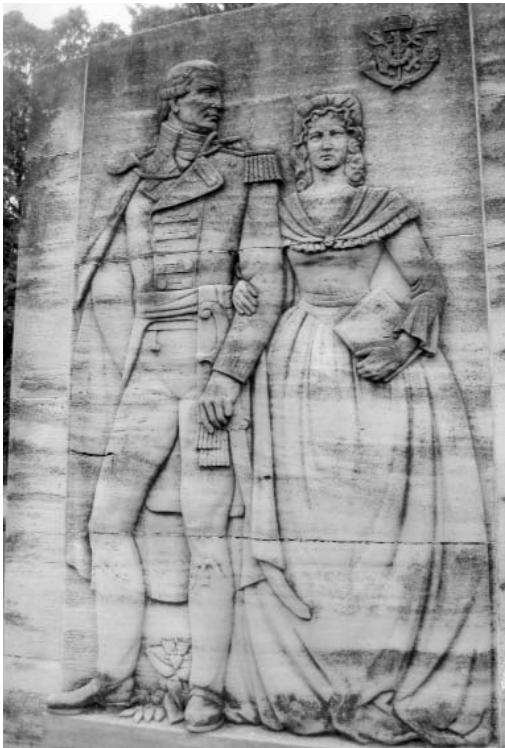
parents, Imanuel Hahn and Elizabeth Wyn Wood. Imanuel Hahn was born in Germany and came to Canada with his family in 1899, becoming a Canadian citizen in 1901.

It is estimated that Hahn produced more designs for World War I Canadian monuments than any other sculptor in Canada. Among his numerous famous works is included the Edward Hanlan (1855-1908) monument on the CNE grounds in Toronto which was completed in 1926 in honour of the world champion rower.

Both Wyn Wood and Hahn were founding members of the Sculptors Society of Canada and have works displayed in the National Gallery in Ottawa. Imanuel Hahn also did a number of memorial and monumental sculptures in the 1920s and 30s. The Sir Adam Beck Memorial on University Avenue is a familiar monument. He is responsible for the Stephen Leacock Medal first presented in 1947 and in addition is perhaps more popularly known for his Bluenose on the Canadian dime and the caribou on the Canadian quarter.

## Lecture cont.

Elizabeth Wyn Wood was born at the family's summer home on Cedar Island, Orillia in 1903 and met her future husband at the Ontario College of Art where he taught and she was a student. Wyn Wood's artistic work included limestone, copper, granite, bronze, marble and white plaster. Some of her notable works include the statue of King George VI at Niagara Falls that took approximately eight years to complete. Several War Memorials including Welland and the Fountain in the Fragrant Garden for the Blind in Toronto demonstrate her vast skill and ability.



*The Simcoes* by Elizabeth Wyn Wood  
Located at Navy Hall, Niagara-on-the-Lake

In addition to an excellent presentation on these two famous sculptors, Jennifer brought along a number of exhibits and models from her family's collection of works of Elizabeth Wyn Wood and Imanuel Hahn.

Next year's 2012 Carmichael Lecture will feature Lucius O'Brien, the founding president of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts who was born in Shanty Bay in 1832.

## The Andrew Hunter Award 2012

The Andrew Hunter Award is offered annually for historical research on Simcoe County, Ontario, written by an undergraduate student for a course in any university or college. In this eighth year of competition, we look forward to receiving many worthy entries for each of the two awards being offered.



Conditions: The entry shall be an essay between 3,000 and 5,000 words in length or a fourth year undergraduate thesis paper (no length restriction) on some aspect of the history of Simcoe County, Ontario, written in English or in French. The author must have been a part-time or full-time undergraduate student in a degree program at an accredited university or college at the time of writing. The essay must have been written to meet the requirement of an undergraduate credit course during the 2011-2012 academic year. The thesis paper must have been submitted for grading in the 2010-2011 academic year. Entries become the property of the Simcoe County Historical Association and may be published as part of an essay collection.

Submissions: Essay entries shall be postmarked by April 9, 2012 and undergraduate theses shall be postmarked by January 30, 2012. Submissions will not be returned to the contestants. Papers must be typed in Times New Roman 12 point font, double spaced, and should not bear the instructor's comments or grade. Three copies must be provided. A cover sheet must list the author's name, address, phone number, year of study, school affiliation and department, and the name of the instructor for whom the paper was written.

Entries should be sent to:

The Corresponding Secretary  
Simcoe County Historical Association  
P.O. Box 144  
Barrie, ON L4M 4S9

Adjudication: Entries will be judged by a distinguished panel appointed by the Simcoe County Historical Association. The winners will be announced in early May 2012 with the presentation of the awards to take place at the Annual General Meeting of the Association.

Award: There will be two awards offered in Canadian funds, one for \$500 for the best undergraduate essay and one for \$500 for the best undergraduate thesis. The Simcoe County Historical Association may edit the winning entries for the purpose of publication.

The Simcoe County Historical Association is under no obligation to grant the awards. For more information, see [www.simcoecountyhistory.ca](http://www.simcoecountyhistory.ca)

# COMING EVENTS

## *of our Member Societies*

### **Alliston Historical Society – contact Jackie Baillie**

705-435-5626 or  
cknowles@rogers.com

Meet at Museum on the Boyne,  
Fletcher Cres., Alliston 2:00 p.m.  
Second Wednesday of the month  
February - June and October -  
November

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### **Barrie Historical Association – contact Doug Hamilton**

Meet at Barrie City Hall – 7:30 p.m.  
www.barriehistorical.com

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### **Collingwood District Historical Society – contact Joan Miller**

705-445-1119  
Meet at Leisure Time Club, 100  
Minnesota Street, Collingwood – 7:00  
p.m. www.historicallyspeakingcdhs.ca

**Oct. 3** – Ron Emo – Engineer and  
Surveyor William Gibbard

**Nov. 7** – Glad Bryce – *First In, Last  
Out* Canadian Women in WWII

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### **Essa Historical Society – contact Olive Lee**

Meet at Thornton Library fourth  
Saturday of the month except July,  
Aug. & Dec. – 1:30 p.m.

**Sept. 24** – Alexi Ironside – Vermi  
Composting

**Oct. 22** – Bob Banting – Banting  
Homestead

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### **Friends of Historic Fort Willow – contact Gord Hanson**

http://fortwillow.com

**Sept. 17** – Festival at the Fort – see  
page 2

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### **Genealogical Society – contact Linda Mitchell**

Meet at Church of Jesus Christ of  
Latter-Day Saints  
79 Ferris Lane, Barrie – 2:00 p.m.  
www.simcoebogs.com

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**Sept. 10** – Melissa Ellis – Five  
Websites that will Jumpstart your  
Family History Research

**Oct. 15** – TBA

**Nov. 5** – Marian Press – Newspapers  
Online for Genealogists

**Dec. 3** – AGM – Mark Fisher – The  
Gowan Papers

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### **Huronian Museum Huron Owendat Village – contact Jamie Hunter**

549 Little Lake Park Road, Midland –  
Call 705-526-2844  
www.huroniamuseum.com

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### **Innisfil Historical Society – contact Donna Wice**

Meet at Knock Community Centre,  
10th SR at 9th Line, Innisfil – 2:00 p.m.  
www.innisfilhistorical.ca

**Sept. 17** – Dr. John Carter – History of  
Schools and Education

**Oct. 15** – Andrew Hind and Maria Da  
Silva – *Secrets of Lake Simcoe*

**Nov. 19** – Annual General Meeting and  
Dinner, St James United Church,  
Victoria St, Stroud

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### **Museum on the Boyne – contact Katie Huddleston-Naieb**

250 Fletcher Crescent in Riverdale  
Park, Alliston – Call 705-435-0167

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### **Orillia Museum of Art and History – contact Linda Whiston**

30 Peter Street South, Orillia – Call  
705-326-2159 www.orilliamuseum.org

**Aug. 9-Oct. 29** – The Hidden Shilling:  
Arthur Shilling From Private Collections  
Opening Reception: Friday, August 12

### **History Speaker Series – contact Dan Byers**

Meet at St. Paul's United Church, Peter  
St. and Coldwater Rd., Orillia – 7:30 p.m.

**Oct. 19** – Bruce McRae – 1912:  
Orillia's Year of Wonders

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**Nov. 16** – Suzy Longford – Growing  
up in French Indo-China

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### **Penetanguishene Centennial Museum and Archives – contact Nicole Jackson**

13 Burke St. at Beck Blvd.  
Call 705-549-2150  
www.pencenmuseum.com

**Sept. 24** – Settlers' Day honouring the  
St. Amant family

**Sept. 24 and 25** – A Walk to  
Remember – Penetanguishene  
Cemetery Tour at 2:00 p.m.

**Oct. 29** – Halloween Spooktacular – 1  
p.m. to 4 p.m.

**Dec. 17 and 18** – Breakfast with Santa

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### **Simcoe County Museum – contact Kelley Swift-Jones**

1151 Highway 26, Midhurst –  
Call 705-728-3721

**Sept. 16-18** – Quilt, Rug and Craft Fair

**Oct. 15** – Last Blast Historical  
Construction Equipment Event

**Oct. 26 and 27** – Evenings of  
Halloween

**Nov. 19 and 20** – Artisans' Christmas  
Show

**Dec. 8 and 9** – Christmas Past and  
Present

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### **Stayner Heritage Society – contact Dorothy Millsap**

www.staynerheritagesociety.com  
705-428-2540

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### **Tecumseth & West Gwillimbury Historical Society – contact June Chambers**

Meet at Tec We Gwill Hall,  
Newton Robinson, 7:30 p.m.  
Third Monday of the month January-  
May and September-November  
Call 905-775-7144

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