

NEWS views

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Simcoe County Historical Association

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President's Report

Hello everyone;

I'm very happy with how our Association is moving forward. We are continuing our programs and looking to add new ones. We have added to the list of volunteers for our Board and we have connected with our member Societies. We are in a better place than we were 5 years ago.

Doing some self reflection has made me think about just why SCHA is important to me. I have always loved history from an early age in elementary school. I went to a 2 room country school where the library was a 4 shelf closet. I was so interested in reading that I read an old encyclopedia on world history from the 1930's. But then an aunt introduced me to the PUBLIC LIBRARY. I never looked back!

World history was about famous people, generals, kings, politicians and events and dates of course. The thing about SCHA is that it is not about the big picture. It is about ordinary people, events and local places. It tells about how the people who came before us lived, built homes and raised their families. It is the history that was never taught to us when we were kids. That's why SCHA is so important to me. We tell the stories that need to be written and recorded about ourselves. It is history of our communities "local events" and our families that will be lost if we don't do it. World history can look after itself but local stories will be lost if we don't record them. I challenge you to tell your story, your family's story and your community's story. If you don't who will?

Join us and make it happen!

Ted Duncan;
SCHA President 2017-23



Get To Know your Long Ago

Reminder: 2023 Membership Fees were due 31 March 2023!

Already paid? Thank you for your support!

Renew or become a new member for only \$20.00/year payable by:

PayPal – payments may be sent to info@simcoecountyhistory.ca

Credit Card online - <https://www.simcoecountyhistory.ca/memberships/>

Cheque: download our [Membership Form](#) and return by mail

Questions? Contact our Membership Chair John Merritt at: membership@simcoecountyhistory.ca

Without your membership fees and donations we would be unable to offer our speaker series, Heritage Business Awards, Andrew Hunter Heritage Writing Awards, maintain our website and publish our newsletter.

Simcoe County Historical Association

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Date: Saturday 29 April 2023
Time: 1:00 PM (sharp) – 1:30 PM
Location: Simcoe County Museum
1151 Highway 26
Minesing, Ontario

The full information package can be accessed at: [SCHA](#)

To attend only the AGM, please RSVP to: [Deb Crawford](#)

Note:

Immediately following the AGM, Brian Charles will inform and engage with his presentation “Wampum Belts – Woven through Anishinaabe History”.

This session is fully booked. However, we have reserved a limited number of seats for Simcoe County Historical Association members. If you have not reserved a seat for the presentation, are a member of the association, and wish to attend both the AGM and Brian Charles’ presentation, contact [Deb Crawford](#) .

We will make every effort to accommodate your request.

BRITISH HOME CHILDREN



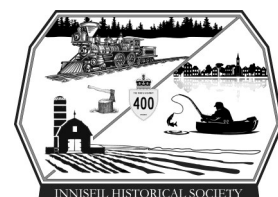
Join Karen Mahoney for a presentation about the child migrant scheme that sent over 100,000 children to Canada as domestic servants and farm labourers:

**May 20th: 2—4 PM
Knock Community Hall
7756 10th Sideroad,
Innisfil L9S 3K8**

Mark your calendars and watch for registration details!



This free in-person event is co-hosted by Innisfil Historical Society and Simcoe County Historical Association.



Museum on the Boyne



Photo supplied by Museum on the Boyne

"The Museum on the Boyne is a great place to visit in the summer! We are situated in Riverdale Park with an amazing playground, splash pad and picnic spots. We have children's activities in the museum to keep them entertained. In June we will host a travelling exhibit from the Canadian Language Museum entitled "Cree: The People's Language". This exhibit introduces visitors to Cree, the most widely spoken Canadian Aboriginal language. The museum is free to visit but donations are accepted. There is also a small gift shop. Come explore the Museum on the Boyne and learn a little bit about South Simcoe!" Katie Huddleston, Supervisor, Culture, Museum on the Boyne, New Tecumseth.

The Alliston Agricultural Society built the main building in 1914 as an agricultural exhibit hall where craft and food entries were displayed during the annual fall fair in Riverdale Park. During the First World War, 1914 to 1918, the building was also used as a drill hall and recruitment centre.

In 1937, the Lions Club leased the building from the Town for the annual fee of one dollar and renovated the building into a dance hall by installing the hardwood floor that remains in place through the original exhibit hall. Upwards of one thousand residents attended the inaugural dance on April 27, 1937. Dances were held weekly from April through to the late fall and continued into the early 1940's.

In 1945 the building was leased to the Dorothea Knitting Mill, a knitting mill in Toronto that manufactured berets, scarves, toques, gloves, and mitts for the Armed Forces. The sole function of this local mill was to finish gloves and mitts that were shipped from the Toronto mill. The company eventually added equipment to produce men's sweaters. After years of instability due to a faulty heating system, a decline in workers and cheaper imports flooding the Canadian market, the Alliston branch of the Dorothea Knitting Mill closed in 1954.

In 1959 the Town of Alliston passed a by-law establishing a "Historical Museum" in Alliston. A museum board was established consisting of two people appointed by Town of Alliston

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Council, and one person appointed by each of the councils for the Townships of Adalja, Essa, Tecumseth, Tosorontio and West Gwillimbury. The Town of Alliston offered this building and the newly named South Simcoe Pioneer Museum unofficially opened in 1960. Following a very successful first season, a grand opening was held the following year.

Subsequent to the amalgamation of several municipalities in South Simcoe, and the establishment of the Town of New Tecumseth in 1991, the museum board consisted of appointed council members and citizens appointed from the municipalities of Adjala-Tosorontio, Bradford West Gwillimbury, Essa, Innisfil and New Tecumseth. In 1996 the building underwent major renovations to better protect the artifacts within the building and to meet the criteria for government grants. In 2005 the museum's name was changed to Museum on the Boyne to better reflect the mandate and to avoid confusion with Simcoe County Museum.

Inside the Museum:

The chandelier is one of six that hung in the Opera Hall on the upper level of the former Alliston Town Hall. Manufactured c. 1895, each weighed two hundred pounds, measured six feet across, eight feet high and included ornate curled brass pieces and twenty-five gas fired mantles (eventually electrified) with etched glass-fluted shades. In 1966 the museum's chandelier was loaned to the Ontario Hydro Museum in Toronto on a temporary exchange. Upon closure of the museum, the chandelier was sent to the Ontario Agricultural Museum in Milton and upon its closure the chandelier was sent to the National Museum of Science and Technology (NMST) in Ottawa.

When members of the Alliston Historical Society (AHS) were made aware of the OAM closure, they requested that the Cu-

rator of the South Simcoe Pioneer Museum (SSPM now Museum on the Boyne) attempt to locate the fixture and arrange to have it returned to Alliston. After submitting evidence proving SSPM's original ownership, NMST released the chandelier to SSPM. The chandelier arrived in their boxes, was cleaned, reassembled, and officially hung in the museum in February 1999.

The Globe Hotel in Rosemont was built on a Crown Land grant in the 1830's. The current building dating from 1859 was one of four hotels in Rosemont at the time. It served as a tavern and a stopping point for the stage coach. Prohibition curbed its legal activities, but it still accepted overnight visitors until 1955. A popular tale involving the Globe takes place the night a fire broke out in the hostelry built where the Anglican church stands now. The main water source for the village was a well located on the Globe's property. The owner went outside in her nightgown and stood guard over the well with a shotgun until her rival's business was beyond saving.

Most people are familiar with Sir Frederick Banting as the co-discoverer of insulin, but many do not know that he was also a gifted painter. During an art show at the University of Toronto, Banting's work was viewed by A. Y. Jackson, who took Banting on as a protégé and became a lifelong friend. They frequently travelled across Canada on painting trips. Banting was quite fond of painting landscapes.

In the summer of 1927 Banting and Jackson took a trip to the Arctic region of Canada on the SS Beothic as part of the Eastern Arctic Patrol. While there Banting became concerned by the health and living conditions of the Inuit people. Particularly regarding their diet. He worried that the food shipped in by the government and the Hudson's Bay Company would lead to drastic changes in diet, and the high car-

bohydrates and sugars would lead to chronic diseases like diabetes. Banting wrote a scathing report to the Department of the Interior on the treatment of the Inuit people. In the reports he noted, “infant mortality was high because of the undernourishment of the mother before birth”, that “white man’s food leads to decay of native teeth” and that “white flour, sea biscuits, tea and tobacco do not provide sufficient fuel to warm and nourish” them. As Banting was a prominent figure, his criticisms attracted attention, particularly from the media. As a thank you from the community he was attempting to support, he was gifted the kayak or “qajaq”.

dations were later condemned in part because the basement offered no lighting, ventilation or sanitation facilities and was accessed through a trap door. A small wooden lock-up was erected directly north of the Town Hall. After the building was consumed by flames in October 1914, a new brick and cement block jail with two holding cells and a wood-burning stove was erected on site. The prefab metal mesh jail cells complete with a floor and a door were considered escape-proof and fire-proof. By the 1960’s the jail was rarely occupied and in 1962 Alliston Council ordered the demolition of the building. One of the cells was donated to the Museum on the Boyne.



Photo: Doors Open Simcoe County 2020

The 27-foot Greenland style kayak hung in the Banting barn for several years before it was donated to the South Simcoe Pioneer Museum by Lady Banting. It was originally covered in a seal skin, but many years in the barn had taken its toll and the kayak had severely deteriorated when it arrived at the museum. The driftwood skeleton of the kayak remained intact. It was sent to the Canadian Conservation Institute for restoration before being displayed in the museum.

Outside the Museum:

When the Alliston Town Hall was erected in 1893, four jail cells were installed on the dirt floor of the basement. The jail accommo-

The 100 acres of the east half of Lot 11 Concession 5 in Essa Township were first leased from the Canada Company in 1859 by Neil McDonald. Between 1859 and 1914 the property was associated with Neil and his sons Alexander and Angus. The log house was built on the property circa 1865. It is a rare example of a 2-story log house of this date. The property and log house were subsequently owned by the Feltis and then the Mackenzie families.

Salada-Shirriff-Horsey Ltd. purchased the property from the Mackenzies and donated the log house to the South Simcoe Pioneer Museum in June 1960. The building was dismantled and moved to the museum site.

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Rebuilding costs were covered by Alliston Town Council, the Alliston Lions Club and Baxter Laboratories.

Extensive restoration work was completed in 2000 and again in 2018-2019. It was designated under the Ontario Heritage Act in 2002.

The barn was built in 1858 in Bond Head. It is completely constructed of white pine, which is Ontario's provincial tree and a chief export at the time. The inside is held together by wooden pegs with hand forged nails securing the outside boards. The large beam down the centre is called the swing beam and is common in English-style barns. The barn originally belonged to the Jeffery family and was donated to the museum in 1991 by the Keffer family. A barn raising ceremony took place on July 1st, 1991 to commemorate Alliston's Centennial Anniversary. The barn raising took approximately 5 hours to complete. The barn is listed as a significant building on the Town's municipal heritage register.

In July 1919, the Alliston Town Council decided "to be in line with all progressive places and to be merely humane to the equine and accommodating to its drivers this town

must have a drinking fountain or two". The fountain was installed in October 1919 on the northwest corner of Mill and Victoria Streets. In 1942 the fountain was moved to Riverdale Park. When it was later replaced by a more modern fountain, the former town fountain was relocated to the front of the museum.

Visit the museum:

Summer (June to August)

Monday to Sunday 10:00 AM – 3:30 PM

Winter (September to May)

Monday to Friday 10:00 AM – 3:30 PM

For more information: 705 435 3900

Or visit their website:

<https://www.newtecumseth.ca/en/parks-recreation-and-culture/museum-on-the-boyne.aspx#>

Or by email:

boynemuseum@newtecumseth.ca

Admission:

There is no fee for admission but you may make a donation if you wish to support the museum.

Article adapted from the Museum on the Boyne brochure.

Photo of Log house courtesy of Museum on the Boyne

2022—2023 Board of Directors:

*Ted Duncan, President	705 326 9809	president@simcoecountyhistory.ca
*Mark Fisher, Vice President	705 728 3825	mwfisher51@gmail.com
*Donna Wice, Secretary	705 436 2578	mdwice@sympatico.ca
*John Merritt, Membership Director		membership@simcoecountyhistory.ca
*Janine Harris-Wheatley, Director	905 936 6549	Janinehw20@gmail.com
*Bruce McRae, Director	705 330 6570	Brucemcrae@yahoo.com
*Jan Blommaert, Director	705 456 1870	Janblommaert@gmail.com
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*Deb Crawford, Director	705 456 1453	Debl.crawford@outlook.com
*Karen Mahoney, Director		karenmahoney25@gmail.com
*Vanessa Kennedy, Director		redquills1@gmail.com
*Lindsay Earle, Director		historycoordinator@orilliamuseum.org
*Bryan Wood, Treasurer	705 728 5295	bwood@sympatico.ca

Member Societies

Archives of Ontario Library
Contact [Frank Van Kalmthout](mailto:Frank.Van.Kalmthout)

[Barrie Historical Archive](#)
Contact [Deb Exel](mailto:Deb.Exel)

Bass Lake Rate Payers Association
12 Ward Ave Oro-Medonte ON
705-955-2262 basslakera@gmail.com

[Bradford/West Gwillimbury Public Library](#)

Bradford/West Gwillimbury Local History
Association Contact [Jan Blommaert](mailto:Jan.Blommaert)

[Coldwater Canadian Heritage Museum](#)

[Collingwood Museum](#)
Contact Melissa Shaw 705-445-4811

Essa Historical Society
Contact: [John Beischer](mailto:John.Beischer)

Essa Public Library
[Contact](#)

[Friends of Fort Willow](#)
Contact [Bryon Wesson](mailto:Bryon.Wesson)

Heritage Barrie
Contact [Tomasz Wierzba](mailto:Tomasz.Wierzba)

[Historic Military Establishment of Upper Canada](#)
Contact [David Brunelle](mailto:David.Brunelle)

Hurononia Chapter, Ontario Archeological Society
Contact [John Raynor](mailto:John.Raynor)

Hurononia Museum Box 638, 549 Little Lake Park
Rd. Midland ON, 705-526-2844
huroniamuseum@gmail.com

[Innisfil Historical Society](#)
[Contact](#) Donna Wice

[Museum on the Boyne](#)
[Contact](#) Katie Huddleston
705-435-4030 x. 1802

[Orillia Museum of Art and History](#)
Contact 705-326-2159

[Orillia Public Library](#) 36 Mississauga St. W Orillia,
705-325-2338 jturvey@orilliapubliclibrary.ca

[Ramara Historical Society](#)
Contact [Cathy Westcott](mailto:Cathy.Westcott)
Simcoe County Archives
1149 Hwy 26 Minesing ON, 705-726-9331

archives@simcoe.ca

[Simcoe County Museum](#)
Contact Kelly Swift-Jones 705-728-3721

[Stayner Heritage Society](#)
Contact Tom Scholte 705-517-5171

Tecumseth & West Gwillimbury Historical Society
Contact: [Mark Burchell](mailto:Mark.Burchell)
705 458 8964

Township of Essa [Contact](#)

Township of Oro-Medonte Heritage Committee
148 Line 7 South Oro-Medonte ON L0L 2E0
705-487-4003 cathy.keane@oro-medonte.ca

Township of Tiny
Contact [Pamela Zimmerman](mailto:Pamela.Zimmerman)

Please contact organizations directly for current information as regularly scheduled events or meetings may vary.