

NEWS and views

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Simcoe County Historical Association

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Visit our Website

www.simcoecountyhistory.ca

SCHA

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

This Fall with the SCHA

On Tuesday, October 21 at 7:30 p.m., we will meet at the Simcoe County Museum for an evening with the new curator, Kelley Swift-Jones. Kelley will introduce herself, and update our members regarding the new displays at the Museum, including Barrie's Main Street. You will find all of the shops along the newly redesigned street depict stores that existed in downtown Barrie between 1890 and 1910.

In November, we will once again meet at the Museum for an evening with Bill Smith. He will present his book, *Midland on Georgian Bay*. His work declares that Midland has a place in the national fabric of Canada; it is not just Midland's connection, but a broader connection to the roots of the development of Simcoe County. Join us Tuesday, November 18 at 7:30 p.m.

A few words from our new SCHA President

As President-Elect, let me introduce myself. Having been born at "Mrs. Marling's" in Cookstown to Robert and Ruby Kell as part of pioneer families, and growing up in South Innisfil (including attending Lefroy Continuation School), local history has been a lifetime interest.

Marrying Ron Coutts almost 50 years ago made me part of North Simcoe pioneer families. I left a teaching career to farm full-time just east of Midhurst in the 1960s, and now live on a retirement lot in the same area. We have a daughter and a son, and six grandchildren from five to twenty years of age who live close to us.

After our son came home to farm, my newest interest became municipal politics, serving as Councillor and first woman Reeve in Vespra Township, first mayor of Springwater Township, and Warden of Simcoe

County in 1999. After fifteen years in Council, I chose not to seek re-election.

Believing in community and church involvement, I have had many volunteer positions over the years and still sing in my church's choir and benefit from Women's Institute.

Early memories include my mother driving a neighbour to volunteer at the County Museum when it was a Women's Institute initiative located in Barrie. As well, I recall beef rings, horses working the farm, and the sacrifices of World War II.

Our memberships in Midhurst Historical and SCHA have broadened our knowledge as have many of the local history books of the County. It seems sad that more people attend our local meeting than the County group, and suggestions to change that will be welcome.

Loblaw Plaque Unveiled

On Saturday, September 20, the SCHA, in partnership with the Ontario Heritage Trust, Stevenson Farms, and the Essa Historical Society, was honoured to unveil a provincial plaque commemorating the life of Theodore Pringle Loblaw. Loblaw's business aptitude and willing approach to innovation made him a giant in the grocery industry.

Along with his financial success came a life-long practice of philanthropy which impacted many organizations in Toronto including Toronto Western Hospital and the Kiwanis Club. Alliston's Stevenson Memorial Hospital is one result of Loblaw's local generosity.

The plaque is on the Stevenson Farms property, 4 km north of

Alliston on Cty. Rd. 15, where Loblaw lived during his teen years with his grandparents. The Farms property was a place of enjoyment for Loblaw throughout his life. Stephen and Susanne Milne now own the property and operate their lovely bed and breakfast. Stephen is a sixth generation Stevenson.



Stephen Milne, owner of Stevenson Farms, and SCHA Past President Brad Rudachyk share a handshake for a job well done. Both members of the SCHA worked tirelessly during the past months to see the plaque, and then the unveiling, come to fruition.

Photo credits K. Rudachyk



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

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Simcoe County Historical Association Executive

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Earl Elliott, Membership Chair	734-9808 earl.elliott@rogers.com
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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 28, 2008

Jill Hynes, Editor

More Photos from the Loblaw Celebration

The Honourable Lincoln M. Alexander, Chairman of the Ontario Heritage Trust is pictured right, addressing the crowd during his remarks at the unveiling of the T.P. Loblaw plaque. The day was attended by over 150 guests, including Terry Dowdall, Deputy Mayor of Essa Township, and Mike MacEachern, Mayor of New Tecumseth, who addressed the crowd, along with Arnold Banting of the Essa Historical Society, and SCHA immediate past president, Brad Rudachyk.

Also extending greetings was Inge van den Berg, Vice President, Investor Relations, Loblaw Companies Limited. Loblaw head offices and Peter MacEachern, manager, Alliston Zehrs generously donated all of the day's refreshments.

Wayne Kelly, Manager of Public Education and Community Development, Ontario Heritage Trust acted as master of ceremonies. Beth Anne Mendes, the Trust's Plaque Program Coordinator read the historical address.

Both Wayne and Beth Anne, along with Susan Schappart, Community Programs Officer, played key roles in seeing that the T.P. Loblaw plaque became a reality.



Photo credit above right, K. Rudachyk

Photo credit above, courtesy of the Ontario Heritage Trust 2008



Archives Expansion Approved

Simcoe County Council has approved a 10,000 square foot expansion to the County Archives, a project that will upgrade systems enabling the Archives to maintain and improve upon its high level of technical and service standards.

In addition to addressing urgent storage requirements, the expansion will include a cold storage facility, closed-environment conservation lab, additional space for unprocessed receiving, and a generator capable of maintaining the Archives' environmental integrity in the event of a power disruption.

Council's plan for the Archives and the Administration Centre helps ensure the necessary facilities to deliver effective programs and services to the public. Researchers in the county and beyond look forward to the new expansion.

OMAH Undergoing Repairs

by Gloria Taylor



WHERE PAST AND PRESENT MEET

Until October 11, the front of the Sir Sam Steele building will be undergoing a much-needed face lift as per the City of Orillia's capital plan for the renovation of the Sir Sam Steele building. The brick will be consolidated and re-pointed. The Museum remains open to the public during this phase.

Until October 6 the front door will be out of commission and we ask our visitors to access the Museum by the side door across from Tiffin's Creative Centre.

Hopefully this will not cause any inconvenience. For more information regarding this refurbishment or upcoming exhibits and events, please contact the Orillia Museum of Art and History at 326-2159 or email at admin@orilliamuseum.org.

Artifacts Speak to Students

by Gord Hanson

For the past four spring sessions, selected grade 12 students of St. Joseph's High School, Barrie, have participated in an archaeological dig at Fort Willow Conservation Area as part of an enriched curriculum under the leadership of history teacher Trevor Carter, an archaeologist licenced with the Ontario Ministry of Culture.

The dig site is inside the fort enclosure. The activities of May and June 2008 were reported in a *Barrie Advance* article dated June 13, 2008 entitled "Students...dig into fort's past". Over three thousand artifacts (fragments of objects, or whole objects) have been uncovered, and have been sent to Simcoe County Museum, as required by law.

Let us briefly look at three specific artifacts noted in the 2006 archaeological report of the site; sherds of native pottery, a brass Royal Navy uniform button, and a tinkling cone. The photographs have the same value as many words. Perhaps these artifacts will attract your interest in seeing others.



Native pottery sherds

The items with diagonal cross-hatch banding ('middleport oblique' at the

neck of the container) and with horizontal lines ('Ontario horizontal', around the body of the container) are almost certainly from the same prehistoric vessel and might be the work of a female aboriginal potter dating from approximately 1400 AD. The pot or jar would probably have been used for food storage in a transient native campsite, and could be of sun-dried local river clay.

About 130 fragments of the same object were found, some bearing a fingerprint of the maker, and it is hoped that the pot can be partially reconstructed. The vessel may be Iroquoian and may pre-date Huron occupation. Trained researchers can distinguish between such native pottery and the fired pottery of the later British fort occupants by colour differences and material composition.

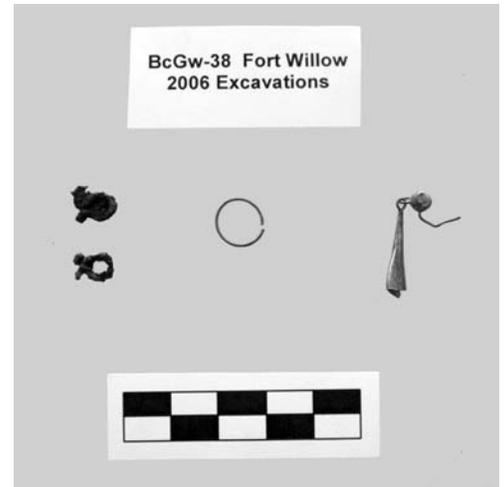


Crown and anchor design brass uniform button

This Royal Navy brass button had upon its face an anchor under a crown, had no border (the writer understands that uniform buttons of the RN from the mid-1700s to 1812 featured a rope border), and was part of the uniform of a Petty Officer during the period roughly 1812-1843. The Royal Navy added a crown over

the anchor design on the buttons of its officers to distinguish them from the buttons used by the Merchant Navy starting in 1812.

This brass button appears to have survived two centuries underground and still displays surface relief features.



Tinkling cone

These decorative items made by rolling flat metal stock into a small cone were worn in groups upon clothing, pouches, knivesheaths or moccasins, and lent a soft swishing sound to the wearer when he moved. A trapezoidal piece of scrap copper or silver was formed into a cone by rolling it around a pointed stick. Cones could be filled with animal hair or beads to enhance the decoration, with a loop extending out the top of the cone to enable it to be attached to cloth or leather garments. It is believed that cones were in use by Mississauga tribe aboriginals from the early 1600s as European metals joined locally produced copper, and that they were worn by Europeans as decoration and to indicate status. A row of cones upon clothing made a type of 'fringe' resembling the cut-leather fringes popular on jackets and

leggings. Could the tinkling cone have been a native trade item acquired by the Hurons, or was it lost at the Willow Depot site by a passing fur trader?

The descriptions provided for these artifacts have come from other published material, and are provided to stimulate the reader's interest, but are not intended to be accurate or definitive. More artifacts from the Willow Depot site may be seen at the office of Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority at Tiffin Centre, Utopia (items there are on loan from Simcoe County Museum) or at the Simcoe County Museum building on County Road 26, Township of Springwater.

Among the objectives of the 2006 dig were

(1) to uncover physical remains of the

building structures

(2) to confirm the functions of the structures as set out in the 1959 report of excavations of Dr. Wilfrid and Elsie Jury, and

(3) to examine the diet of the Willow Depot inhabitants.

No physical remains of buildings have been found so far, although paint attributed to one of Dr. Jury's corner markers for a building foundation was unearthed. The artifacts found at Fort Willow appear to correlate to the buildings identified by Jury, particularly the officer's kitchen and the officer's quarters and stable.

The diet of the aboriginal and military inhabitants of Willow Depot can be ascertained to have included various fish species, animal species and wildfowl species (detailed

analysis of the bones at the site was carried out by the faunal department of the University of Toronto, under the supervision of Dr. Max Freisen).

Information sources:

Tim Burt, "Buttons of the UK's Royal Navy"

Tara Prindle, "Native American Technology and Art"

Trevor Carter, "Willow Depot (BcGw-38) Stage 4 Excavations-2006"

Jacque Fisher, Archaeological Consulting, Hamilton

Trevor Carter, personal communication
Members of Fort Willow Improvement Group, personal communication

The kind assistance of Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority staff at the Willow Depot site is appreciated.

Elizabeth Gwillim Simcoe Statue Unveiled

by Barbara Verney

On a gorgeous summer's day, June 8, 2008, the statue honouring Elizabeth Gwillim Simcoe was unveiled by Her Honour, Ruth Ann Onley (pictured right) and sculptor Brenda Wainman Goulet. This gala event was attended by the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, David Onley, Hon. Peter van Loan MP, Julia Munro MPP, Tony Guergis Warden of Simcoe County, Bradford West Gwillimbury Mayor Doug White, and Town Council.

The Bradford Legion and South Simcoe Police Colour Guard, Bradford Pipes & Drums, Scouts and Guides, Queen's York Rangers, and Queen's Rangers led the procession while re-enactors brought the dignitaries to the stage. The Lt. Gov. brought greetings from the Queen. Entertainment was provided by the St. David's Women's Welsh Choir

accompanied by Celtic harpist Dianne Parke-Jones, reflecting Mrs. Simcoe's Welsh heritage. Also in attendance were Brenda Ingersoll, councillor from the First Nations, and Nina Burnham, a Six Nations Elder.



On either side of the life-sized statue of Elizabeth Simcoe, there are two panels, one depicting a social event at

which Chief Great Sail was an honoured guest, and the other depicting one of Elizabeth's own paintings of a church at Sibbald's Point. Elder Nina performed a native blessing on the statue. Mikki

Nanowski, chair of the Gwillim Group, was the emcee and declared this event a celebration dedicated to the 150th anniversary of Bradford. The occasion was followed by an old-fashioned social.

The Bradford West Gwillimbury Local History Association, with assistance of the Ontario Heritage Trust, unveiled a plaque situated near the statue, describing the life of Elizabeth Gwillim Simcoe.

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 every 2nd Wednesday except July, Aug. and Dec. – 7:30 p.m.

Barrie Historical Association – contact Doug Hamilton 726-1290

Barrie City Hall Rotunda 7:30 p.m.

Nov. 13 – Remembrance Day program

Collingwood and District Historical Society

Meet at Leisure Time Club, Minnesota St. – 7:00 p.m.

Oct. 6 – George Weider – The Story of the Blue Mountain Ski Club

Oct. 19 – 2 p.m. – Collingwood 150th Anniversary Concert – New Life Church

Nov. 3 – The Women of WWII – Margaret Birnie, Elsie Cruickshank, Muriel Poste

Essa Historical Society – contact Olive Lee

Thornton Library – 1:30 p.m.

Oct. 25 – Lee Redmayne (Red-Dala Glass Work) – Stain Glass

Nov. 22 – 12 noon – Christmas Luncheon at the New Penny Restaurant, Cookstown

Genealogical Society – contact Linda Mitchell

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

www.simcoeboogs.com

Oct. 18 – Ruth Blair – Doing Irish Research from Ontario

Nov. 1 – Ontario Archives Speaker – Doing Research from Afar

Nov. 29 – AGM – 25th Anniversary

Huroniam Museum Huron Ouendat Village – contact Jamie Hunter

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

Innisfil Historical Society – contact Ross Wallace

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

Oct. 18 – David Chambers – Heritage Buildings in Innisfil and area

Nov. 15 – Annual Banquet at Stroud Presbyterian Church

Midhurst Historical Society – contact Alice Mitchell 721-7553

Meet at the Library, Finlay Mill Road 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 20 – Ken Agawissa – History of First Nations in Simcoe County

Museum on the Boyne – contact Rachele Clayton

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

www.allistonontario.com/MuseumontheBoyne.html

Orillia Museum of Art and History – contact Gloria Taylor

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

to Nov. 29 – I Dreamed I was in Picasso's Shoes

Oct. 31 to Nov. 8 – Orillia Festival of Banners Viewing

Nov. 1 – Gala and Silent Auction

Dec. 2 to Jan. 5 – Celebrating Photography: Works of the Orillia and District Camera Club

Penetanguishene Centennial Museum and Archives – contact Nicole Jackson

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

to Oct. 10 – Native Beading Display

Oct. 25 – Halloween Spooktacular

Nov. 28 – Festival of Lights

Simcoe County Museum – contact Kelley Swift-Jones

1151 Highway 26, Midhurst – Call 728-3721
www.county.simcoe.on.ca

Oct. 18 – Last Blast – Equipment run

Oct. 29-30 – An Evening of Hallowe'en

Nov. 15-16 – Artisans Museum Christmas

Dec. 14 – Victorian Christmas

Tecumseth and West Gwillimbury Historical Society – contact Helen Yielding 905-936-3659

Tec We Gwill Hall, Newton Robinson – 7:30 p.m.

Oct. 20 – Hilary Dawson – Joshua Glover: escaped slave

Nov. 17 – Dr. Jim McPhee – WWII air gunner

early December – Old Fashioned Christmas Party
