



COUNTY OF WELLINGTON

COMMITTEE REPORT

To: Chair and Members of the Information, Heritage and Seniors Committee
From: Jana Burns, Wellington Place Administrator
Date: Wednesday, November 09, 2022
Subject: **WCMA Update**

November Update:

The fall colours at Wellington Place have been stunning. Markers are being laid on the lawn, and staff look forward to hosting the community and respecting our fallen on November 3. Staff are also grateful to Green Legacy, who spaded 20 trees on the site. This includes a large evergreen at the corner of the barn/parking lot, which will also act as the Christmas Tree during the annual Christmas Market.

The WCMA gardens have been prepared for the next season, and maintenance equipment is being cleaned and serviced. Maintenance does wonderful work, and we bid farewell to one who will be joining the Terrace next month. Shawn Hammond has been with the WCMA for ten years and while we wish him the best, he will not be far.

On the right, adorable little Serena Leightan took part in the WCMA's Halloween tots programme, dressed up as an old lady. She did have glasses, but refused to keep them on.



Exhibit Update

A new exhibit in tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II opened this month, and feedback from the public has been positive. The exhibit features commemorative artifacts, photographs, and newspaper coverage of her early life, coronation, and visits to Canada. Visitors can watch original video footage of her visit to Guelph in 1959, courtesy of Guelph Museums, and can share their thoughts and memories of The Queen on our memory wall.



To the right is an image which I personally found most moving. The Queen was visiting Kenya in 1952 when she received word of her father's passing, and of her accession to the throne.



The **Wedding Dress** exhibit will be removed from the Exhibit Hall on November 6. Staff will dedicate one week to curate “Keeping Warm,” a temporary winter exhibit to coincide with the Christmas Market. Thereafter a new exhibit, titled “Quiet Moments” and led by local artist Barry McCarthy, will run in the Exhibit Hall from January 12 to March 12, whereupon the Insights Juried Art Show will take place.

Below is an image of the Weddings exhibit, in addition to the wall which the public has adorned with words of wisdom for a healthy marriage. So many wonderful messages of advice, including:

- Happy wife, happy life!
- Ride into marriage on two bicycles and make sure to ride the rest in tandem.
- Never go to bed angry.
- Listen more than you speak!
- Don't try to change the person you fell in love with.





Below is an image of the new **Wild Child** exhibit in the west wing of the Museum, showcasing fashions and fads were influenced by the events of the 1960s and 1970s.



Donation Highlight – Nursing Sister Alice Eva Hindley, ARRC

Earlier this year, the WCMA received the First World War uniform, medals, and documents of Nursing Sister Alice Eva Hindley. Hindley was born on December 2, 1883 to William Hindley and Martha Luttrell, who farmed near Rockwood. She enlisted in the Canadian Army Medical Corps (CAMC) in 1916 and served overseas in England and France.

Her career with the CAMC was distinguished; she was Mentioned in Despatches by Sir Douglas Haig on November 8, 1918, for gallant and distinguished services in the field. Hindley was one of only 446 Canadian nurses awarded the Associate (Second Class) Royal Red Cross (ARRC), which was awarded to nurses who showed special devotion and competency in the performance of their duties over a continuous and long period, or who performed an exceptional act of bravery or devotion at her post of duty.



N/S Alice Hindley, circa 1916

Hindley returned to Eramosa Township after the war where she continued to work as a nurse. She travelled back to France in 1936 for the dedication of the Vimy Memorial, along with her cousin, George

Cecil Thomas, who also served during the First World War. Hindley died in 1968 at age 84 and is buried in Johnson-Eramosa Union Cemetery in Guelph/Eramosa Township.



Nursing Sister Alice Hindley's uniform, complete with apron and cape.



NS Hindley (far right) and her brother, Capt. George Joseph Hindley (second from right).



Nursing Sister Hindley (facing camera and wearing veil) with convalescing soldiers.



Royal Red Cross, Second Class (ARRC) awarded to Nursing Sister Alice Hindley.



British War Medal and Victory Medal with oak leaf, awarded to Nursing Sister Alice Hindley.

Hindley's uniform and medical kit were passed down to one member of the family, while her medals and badges were passed down to another. By donating each grouping to the WCMA, the family has reunited Alice's belongings in one place and allowed the WCMA to preserve her story intact.

On October 26, the family gathered at the WCMA to view the items together and share their memories of “Great-Aunt Alice.” This was the first time that members of the family had seen everything together, and museum staff were honoured to facilitate such a meaningful reunion.



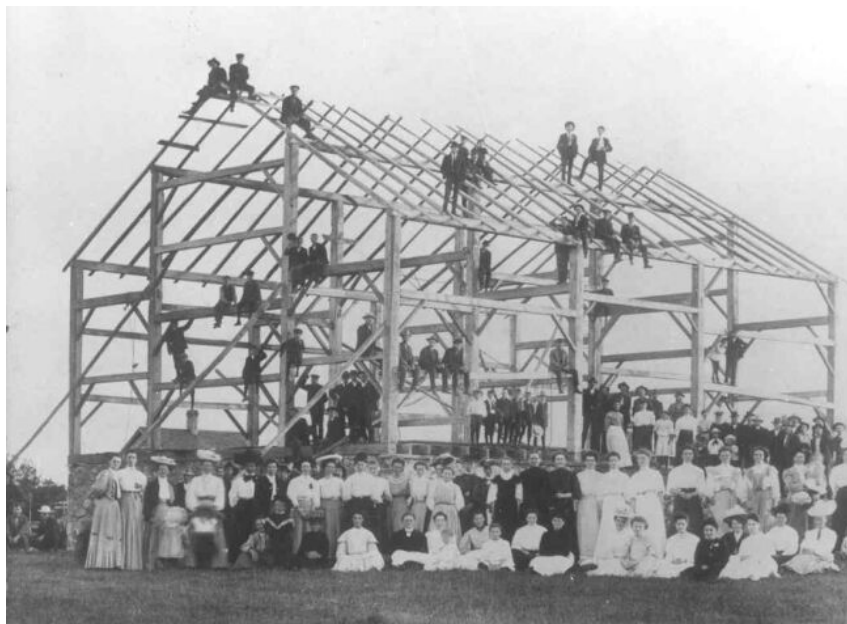
The extended Hindley family enjoying a private reunion with Alice’s artifacts in one of the WCMA textile storage rooms.

The Archives

In October, 38 members of the public visited the Archives to undertake research in person. Archives staff processed three photo reproduction orders, answered 18 phone calls and responded to 49 emails.

Inquiries from the public this month included: making appointments to donate records as well as inquiring whether records fit our collections mandate; seeking assistance with where to find adoption records; wanting to locate zoning records for a property in Guelph-Eramosa Township; looking for photographs of the original Rockwood Fire Hall; seeking to verify information on a British Home Child who was a veteran that had a street named after him in Fergus; providing feedback to correct the spelling of a family name in an archival record; looking for photographs of a Fergus rugby team that appeared in the Fergus-Elora News Express; wishing to locate property history on a building in Palmerston; requesting information on the history of property ownership in Ontario and the record collections that are available; looking for obituaries in local newspapers and seeking Presbyterian Church records.

Photo reproductions were requested for use in family histories, personal display and in academic publications.



One such photograph, to the left, was used on the front cover and in a documentary film of Catharine Wilson's book, "Being Neighbours, Cooperative Work and Rural Culture, 1830-1860. Wellington County Museum and Archives, ph 4363, Barn raising near Harriston in Minto Township, ca. 1900.

Halloween Season

It is Programming staff's favourite time of the year where the entire month is filled with spooky activities for every age. Mostly, it is an excellent time to do what the Museum does best, talk about history in a fun and exciting way. As October is the month, more than any other, that people's eyes turn to the spirits of the past, and where people that might not normally think that a museum is a fun place to visit are suddenly knocking down the door for ghosts, or cemetery tours, or horrific historical tales. As such, there is nothing staff enjoy more than pulling out all the stops and making sure the public has a good time to ensure we create some lifelong patrons.

Hallowtots

In line with our Action Plan, staff offered a new programme this year dedicated to children under five called the Hallow' Tots Party. Participants were invited to wear their Halloween costumes and get into the Halloween spirit with crafts, games, a Halloween story, and trick or treating around the Museum. Admission was by donation and registration was required in advance. Spots were filled and 50 little ghosts and goblins joined us for the event on October 31. The programme was very well received, and staff look forward to hosting it again next year!



Murder Mystery

This event was a repeat of a successful first year in 2022. A live theatrical performance was held inside the Poor House where guests were tasked with solving a murder most foul. Complete with hors d'oeuvres, drinks, and live music. While registrations were significantly slower in comparison to last year, the event did sell out with last minute bookers. Attendees were a mix of young and old. Everyone participated with the characters, with many coming dressed for the evening. Of note were the participants who came from

outside the county, and some returning participants that brought friends. Many participants appreciate that at the end of the evening staff break character and provide detail to the different historical figures used. Of all 58 tickets sold, exactly half purchased the \$50 drink tickets, versus the \$40 without drink tickets.

Cemetery Tours

These Tours were once again a big hit, taking place twice a night at 7PM and 9PM on the Friday and Saturday of the last two weeks before Halloween. In total, 200 tickets were sold at \$15 per ticket. Tickets were sold out and tours were over capacity with drop in's paying with cash for a walk down to the cemetery by lantern light, and tales from the darker side of Wellington County's history.



As an added bonus to the late show this year, guide Kyle Smith enjoyed taking people into the building itself to show off some of the ghost audio that past Ghost Hunters had recorded on site. Kyle took attendees to some of the more 'haunted' locations in the Museum while speaking to his own experiences with the paranormal investigators that have come. People that decided to stay late were thrilled by this extra addition to the tour, and were very grateful for the opportunity to stay an hour or so later than expected.

This is one of the events in which we see the greatest variation in demographics. The tours are usually filled with 20-30 somethings, and even high school aged students which is normally our hardest to reach age cohort. As such it is always such a privilege to make these tours go above and beyond, because we want this group to come back for other events, and bring their friends!

Ghost Hunting

Staff received requests from Ghost Hunting and Paranormal Investigator groups this month. This provides an excellent alternative form of advertising for the Museum, reaching an audience that tends to be younger and may not have considered themselves as interested in visiting a local museum. As a perfect example of this the two Ghost Hunters that came to stay overnight this year were Youtuber Hailey Reese (1.14 million subscribers) and @hauntinglykrista a TikToker (150k subscribers). The TikTok videos alone have already gathered 181,800 views and just anecdotally, Programming Manager Kyle Smith's 26-year-old sister in law from Ottawa came across it



when she was scrolling across her phone. Influencer Hailey Reese's Youtube videos from her night of hunting should be up soon.

[hauntinglykrista \(@hauntinglykrista\) TikTok | Watch hauntinglykrista's Newest TikTok Videos](#)

Pumpkinwalk

November 1 represents the annual Pumpkinwalk, where people are encouraged to drop up their old Jack-o-lanterns at the Museum to be lit one last time on the hill next to the barn. All pumpkins will later be collected by Solid Waste Services and donated to a local farm to feed some very grateful little critters.

Recommendation:

That the WCMA Update be received for information and forwarded to County Council.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Burns'.

Jana Burns
Wellington Place Administrator