



*June* Some of the many spectators at Bel Parc on Sunday. 22nd. 1980



Cutting the ribbon to officially open the Senior's residence.. left,  
Marlene Taylor, Vern Tebby,  
Charlie Turner Ron McNeil Lester  
Longhurst, Warden of Elgin County  
David Geier, Mr. Collins, Marion Wintermute



Belmont's Seniors' Apartment Building was officially opened on Sunday. The ceremony drew a big crowd of appreciative people. As M.P.P. Ron McNeil said later, the Fed. Government is in charge of the finances for the building, and also the weather, and planned the best day of the year for the occasion.

Harvey Murray, Vice President of the Bel Parc Committee was the M.C. and an improvised rostrum made the speeches by special guests, that much more impressive.

Mr. Murray told how Vern Tebby had kept 'plugging away' with the myriad details which had to be arranged before the project could even get off the ground. Without his drive, Mr. Murray said, the welcome building would probably not be here. If Belmont had a 'Citizen of the Year', he said, Vern would be the perfect recipient. Rev. Elgin Rintoul of the Belmont United Church gave a short opening prayer after 'O Canada' had been sung to the accompaniment of Mike Mortensen and his accordian.

President of the Committee Mr. Tebby, said that although there had been much work and many meetings to get the building underway, the project was something he believed in wholeheartedly, and he felt that he and everyone who had worked on the project, had the pleasure of knowing that something worthwhile would remain because of their efforts.

David Geier, representing the Village, expressed everyone's pleasure that village residents can now retire in their own community, among friends.

Former Reeve and owner of the lot, Ron Lake, said that it was good to be standing on familiar ground and that he was glad to see the paving. 'It makes travelling easier, and some day I might need it (for a home) someday myself'. The builder, Wm. McDougall of Bach-McDougall. Engineers, said that the building was a pleasure to construct, and that he knew how much it would mean to the community life of the village. A plaque was presented by Guy Playford, on behalf of Canada Mortgage & Housing Corp. The funds for the building came through his department, and are available only to projects which are community sponsored, and non-profit.

He said that few projects have gone so smoothly as Bel Parc, even though it is five years since the possibility was first brought up. He went on to compliment the community on the co-operation between everyone.

Ron McNeil joked about changing his mind about applying for an apartment here, since he heard Ron Lake had this in mind. 'the building wouldn't hold the both of us' he joked with his long time friend and supporter.

The Warden of Elgin County, Lester Longhurst, spoke also, and mentioned the weather 'Last week we were at Elgin Manor and were rained out and blown out and frozen'.

Representatives from groups which had donated items to the building were called up to the dias. Art McCann for the Optimist Club, which had donated love seats (to drum up a little business for the ministers, someone quipped). Alice Dale for the Lioness Club which had given a card table set and T.V. tables. Fanny Wintermute for the W.I., for a picture which hangs in the common room. Mrs. Dodson for the Monte Rebakah Lodge, for End Tables, and Clarence Cornish for the Oddfellows who joined in that donation.

A clock had been given by Mr. Servos of the Scotia Bank, and Betty Groat was thanked for it on his behalf. "There's a card under it which gives our hours, 10 to 4 and 10 to 6 on Friday"...which caused general laughter, and a remark from the M.C. that 'there weren't supposed to be any commercials'. Betty Johnson spoke for the Good Neighbour Club, and Edith Cook for the Second Thursday Club, for the donation toward the sink and stove unit.

Table lamps had been donated by Ashford Lamps, and Don said how pleased he and Carol were to be able to make the gift. The very first donation was \$100.00 cash from Charlie Baker, who said he wished it could have been \$1000.00. Flowers and plants were donated by Hazel Smith, the builders and the directors.

Mr. Charles Turner, M.P. for London East, was Guest Speaker, in the unavoidable absence of John White and Ralph Ferguson. He presented a Canadian Flag to the seniors, read the costs of the building, and with a compliment to the village and a "God Bless You All", stepped down to allow the Rev. Kenneth Oakes of the Presbyterian Church to give the Dedication Prayer.

Hearing was made easy for everyone, with the loan of a sound system by Mrs. Easton. The ribbon cutting was followed by a tour of the building, and lunch which was provided by the members of the Second Thursday Club.

The Directors of Bel Parc are: Vern Tebby, Harvey Murray, Marlene Taylor, and Marion Wintermute.



Belmont Village Council were told of the impending closure of the icecream plant on Monday. The Borden manufacturing business was bought by Silverwood's Dairies in March, and as the season slows down, each division will be gradually moved to the Silverwood plant on the Wilton Grove Road.

Most of the employees will continue their jobs in the new location..less than ten miles away.

Icecream will be marketed as Borden's until the present stock of packaging is used.

Silverwoods will not be using any of the Borden recipes, as they naturally feel that their own are the best available.

All the milk is purchased through the Milk Marketing Board, and the Wilton Grove plant, and one in Peterborough, will produce all the millions of gallons yearly for the province. As well as their own lines, they have been producing the famous Laura Secord icecream for the past four years, and also supply the Baskin Robbins dip icecream stores in the area.

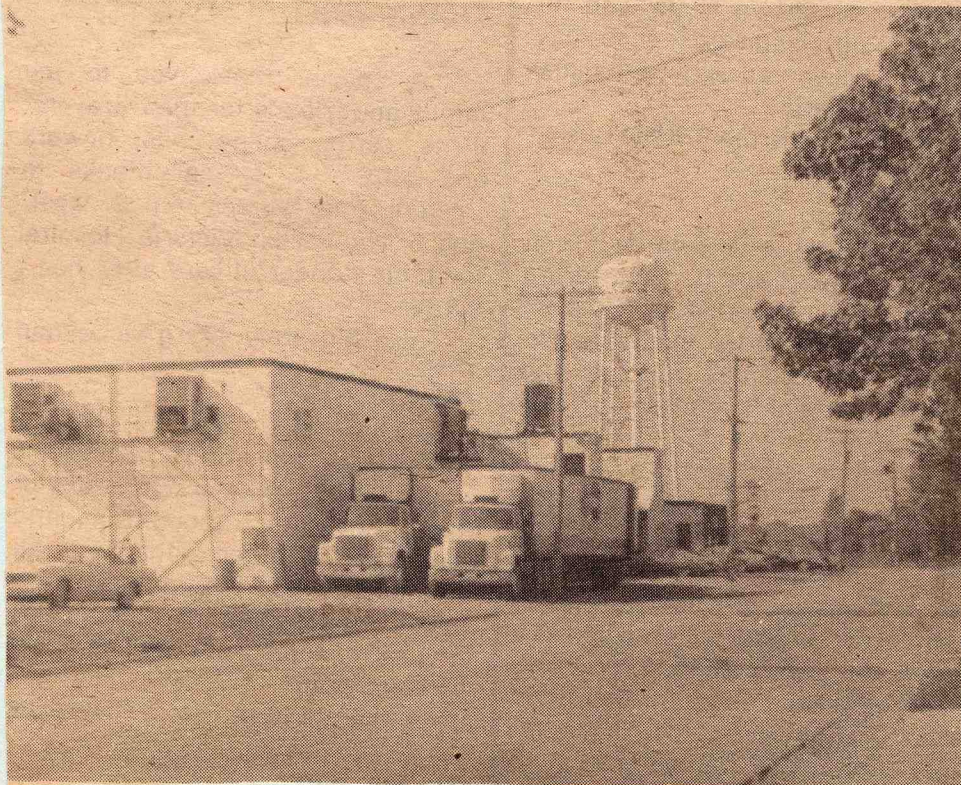
Silverwoods started in business on Bathurst St. in London, buying eggs and chickens from farmers. The top three floors of the old building were used to fatten the chickens before marketing them. Gradually, the purchase of cream was added, and so the icecream production began in the early twenties.

The following is the release from the company...

.. "the decision to consolidate the Belmont operation with the London facility was reached after a full economic and market assessment of the total company requirements following addition of the Belmont facility when Silverwood Dairies acquired Borden Dairies earlier this year. Consolidation of the two plant facilities will began soon with the complete phase-out of the Belmont facility expected over the next few months. Mr. Duffy explained the need to consolidate the production of ice cream and related products as a necessary move to strengthen Silverwood's position in an extremely competitive situation. He stressed that a gradual phase-out of the Belmont operation would allow for a smooth transition of employees and operations into the Silverwood 401 Ice Cream Plant and other Silverwood Plants. He estimated that following a normal seasonal lay-off the majority of Belmont employees would be absorbed into existing Silverwood operations in the London area. Mr. Duffy said that the consolidation represented a renewed commitment to the company's manufacturing activity in the London area for over 78 years with over 350 employees.

The Borden company own the building and the land, and some interest has been shown in their purchase.

### *Belmont's icecream plant to close down*







**THE WHOLE STORY** — The history of the Village of Belmont from 1835 to the present is contained in the Women's Institute 'Tweedsmuir Book.' Here, Bernice Taylor holds the monu-

mental volume of which she has been curator for 20 years. — (T-J Aylmer Bureau Photo).

## The Tweedsmuir Book preserves 140 years of Belmont history

Ry **RIC DOLPHIN**  
T-J Staff Reporter

**BELMONT** — In 1835, so the book says, "there was no Belmont."

Over the past 140 years or so, the book continues, there has been steady growth, change, drama, comedy and heart-break on the former properties of Josh Odell and Thomas Nugent who originally divided up into land lotments to create the village in the 1830s.

The book, Belmont Women's Institute's Tweedsmuir Book, gives as much of the history of Belmont as one is likely to find anywhere and for the past 20 years, it has been kept up to date by Bernice Taylor, a lady who has lived in Belmont most of her 74 years.

Tweedsmuir Books, found in many municipalities, were the brainchild of Lady Tweedsmuir, wife of Lord Tweedsmuir, the governor-general of Canada from 1935 to 1940.

In Lady Tweedsmuir's words: "Events move very fast nowadays; houses are pulled down, new roads are made, and the aspect of the countryside changes completely sometimes . . ."

The purpose of the books, she said, is "to see that nothing valuable is lost or forgotten."

And as we looked over the monumental volume which Mrs. Taylor keeps locked away in the Belmont Over 50s Club, it is easy to see that not many happenings in Belmont over the years have been lost or forgotten, although many aspects of the village have indeed

### Fish fry a success

**BELMONT** (Staff) — The fish fry at the Belmont Arena Saturday night was a "good success" as far as Charlie Dale, chairman of the arena board is concerned.

About 600 people showed up for the dinner and the dance, paying \$5 a ticket. Although the arena wasn't packed to capacity and there was some fish left over, Mr. Dale said the arena board made money on the event.

changed completely.

Mrs. Taylor was lost in the past as old clippings and photographs contained in the book brought back memories of people she used to know.

"She passed away," Mrs. Taylor remarked of one woman, pictured at an old time picnic. "It's too bad too. She was a wonderful woman."

There are old editions of the Belmont Enterprise, the weekly paper that went out of business in the late '30s. Mrs. Taylor remembers the type all had to be set by hand, "one by one you know."

In the years before fire-retardant buildings, Belmont, like many communities, was plagued by many fires.

Mrs. Taylor showed pictures of some of the grist mills, saw mills and the old Borden factory that used to exist before the Second World War. "Oh, there's some dandy old pictures . . . that's all gone now."

The history of the Belmont Fire Department, from the bucket brigades to today's sophisticated pumper is all related in the Tweedsmuir Book.

One contributing historian tells of the first fire truck owned by Belmont FD:

"In 1929, a model T Ford, one-ton truck equipped with three 500-pound chemical tanks was obtained by the Belmont department after it had been retired by the Aylmer Fire Department . . ."

The truck was in a state of bad repair from the very first and it was in Procumer's Garage (which still exists under another name) for repairs when its first potential chance at proving the worth of modern firefighting machinery in Belmont was offered.

A fire had broken out at the hotel garage almost next door from Procumer's. The able-bodied volunteer firemen rushed to the truck but, as fate would have it, the jalopy wouldn't start, "so it was pushed to the fire. Too much time had elapsed and the garage had burned down." No one was hurt.

Over the years, the economic picture has changed drastically in the village.

Flax was an important crop in the early days and in 1853,

the year the post office was founded, there were three flax mills. Mrs. Taylor remembers that the mills used to employ many Indians — so did the grist mills (one of which remains), the cider mill and the cheese factory.

A historian of the day described Belmont as "an extremely prosperous village considering its lack of railway facilities."

But the steel rail came to the village when the Credit Valley Railroad was built in 1880 and Belmont residents could travel to St. Thomas and back for 25 cents.

Passenger service was withdrawn in 1957.

Then there were other things that have since disappeared: the three taverns, the McKellar family, which seems to have been associated with almost every enterprise in the early history of the village, the Sovereign Bank of Canada, now the Bank of Nova Scotia and of course the old school.

Mrs. Taylor remembers attending the five-classroom, primary and secondary (then called "continuation") school which was torn down in 1969. "It just seemed a shame," Mrs. Taylor said of the demolition.

She recalled taking Latin and French at the school during the early '20s: "At that time, it was compulsory and that was a good thing . . . and boy, we had lots of homework!"

The Tweedsmuir Book con-

tains a list of all the teachers ever to serve at the school until it was closed in 1966.

All the information anyone could wish for it contained within the pages of the book; facts about all the service clubs, the first demonstration of the then-controversial "curve ball" in 1877 on the lawn of the Olstead House Hotel, the first "Sabbath School" held in 1881, the establishment of the Belmont phone company in 1905, the building of the gravel road to London and St. Thomas in the 1880s, the train wreck of 1939, the annexation of Belmont to Elgin County from Middlesex in 1948 . . . and much more.

Mrs. Taylor said anyone wanting to see the book is welcome and she hopes someday it will be put back in the Belmont Public Library where it was on display until it was squeezed out by other books.

In the meantime, she will continue clipping and filing and keeping the book up to date as long as she can. After that, she said, "I'll have to pass it on."

Try our delicious . . .  
**BAR-B-Q RIBS, CHICKEN,  
BURGERS, PORK ON A BUN**  
served with our famous  
Bourbon Street, Mexi-  
can and Hawaiian  
sauces.

**the**  
**Rib**  
**Cage**

**New!**  
CHICKEN & RIBS  
COMBINATIONS

**TAKE OUT OR DELIVERY**  
116 Curtis St.  
at Hiawatha **631-4150**