

## BELMONT FIRE DEPARTMENT

In earlier days local Fire Fighting was done chiefly by Bucket Brigade. A ladder was kept in a central place along with a supply of pails. In event of fire these were filled at the village pumps or creek.

In 1929 a Model T. Ford one-ton truck equipped with three - 500 pound chemical tanks, which was being retired from the Aylmer Fire Department, was purchased by Belmont. Douglas Meikle was for years the entire Belmont Fire Department. Growing obsolete it however lasted until the spring of 1932. It was in Procunier's Garage for repairs. That night a fire broke out at the Hotel garage - almost next door. The truck wouldn't start so it was pushed to the fire. Too much time had elapsed and the garage had burned down.

An I.H.C. chasis came next and the three tanks were transferred. It was manned by six available volunteers. Well remembered are the "Firemen's Balls" held in the I.O.O.F. Hall in this period.

Like its predecessor the Model T, the I.H.C. served well in the protection of property until the fall of 1952. The firemen were summoned to Randolph Foster's barn fire, only to discover that the tanks had frozen up. This ended the career of the I.H.C.

For a period Belmont lacked active fire truck protection. In 1954 a fire broke out in Satterley's store. Borden's came with their half ton truck and small chemical tanks. Springfield was called. This near disaster and lack of fire protection alarmed the village. Interested volunteers began to build a truck. Two have been built and a water truck purchased from London.

Previous to the Borden Fire of 1943 the truck had been housed at Bordens, then in Elmer Garton's garage.

In 1954 or 1955 a Fire Hall was built on the arena property by Paul Shymkiw, an extension being added in 1964 to house the two pumper trucks and water supply truck.

The Fire Call is 644-1234. It operates on a six phone system. Six telephones ring when the number is called. Each has a list of Volunteers to call. The fourteen member Volunteer Fire Brigade attends fires in the village and portions of the four neighbouring townships. The Belmont Fire Department is associated with and actively interested in Elgin County Mutual Aid Fire Association. In case of fire "Mutual Aid" is given by the other fire departments. The Belmont Fire Chief is John Betterley and Assistant Chief is Hugh Duncan. Of the original members of the Volunteer Fire Department only three remain - John Betterley, Melvin Jenkins and Fred Satterley.

Belmont has had many fires in its history. In the latter years of the last century two serious fires swept the business places; one south of the present bank and another the businesses south of Copeland Street, both on Main Street.

Four major fires since 1920 are recalled. In September 1920 a fire starting in the Bake Shop Barn, quickly destroyed the barns of the Telephone company and the Presbyterian manse. The block seemed doomed as it was very dry but it was still and this saved the day. After this fire, fire trucks of all kinds besieged the town, trying to make a sale to the "City Fathers." They demonstrated by forcing water over the top of the hotel. Once the water soaked through the lap siding into the Jones clothes closets with disastrous results.

The next major fire was in 1929 when the Elgin Middlesex Farmers Ltd. was completely burned. The coal piles smouldered for days.

The third was in September 1943 when Borden's Ltd. was discovered to be on fire. The men barely escaped. Although the Belmont Fire truck was housed here it was helpless to save it as were attending Fire Departments. At the height of the fire, although it had not rained for six weeks, a terrific storm broke and quenched the flames.

Through the years the Elgin-Middlesex Farmers Limited had suffered a number of minor fires but in 1968 it was completely destroyed.



## BELMONT BAND

The Belmont Band was organized in 1921, the members fees being \$15.00 and tuition fees 75¢. The first Instructor was Col. McEwen from Woodstock (ex. Army bandmaster).

Later, when finances were getting low, Gordon Walker took over as Instructor. Some of the members owned their own instruments prior to the opening of the band. The instruments owned in common by the band remained the property of the band -

<u>Band Members</u>	<u>Instruments</u>
Gordon Walker	Piccolo and Flute
Murray Walker	Baritone
Bill Goff	Alto Horn
F. R. Taylor	Tenor Horn
John Dawes	Trombone
Murray Moore	Trombone
George Faulds	Cornet and Drums
John Campbell	Cornet
Ross Barton	Cornet
Wilfred Faulds	Cornet
Sherman Minard	Clarinet
Frank Weaver	Bass horn
Mr. Morgan	Bass horn
Robert Laur	Bass drum
Earl Demaray	Alto or Tenor horn
Walter Knowles	Coronet
Wm. Hughes	Alto Horn
Frank B. Taylor	Alto

The band practises were held above Clarke's Store, then occupied by Frank B. Taylor, also in Alf. Bradley's tinsmith shop, since bought by Mr. R. Smith, torn down and replaced by a modern home, also in the old Alan Wright house, now the remodelled home of Roy Easton.

### EVENTS

Played for the Oddfellow's Walk a few times. Played for a number of local garden parties. Played all afternoon at a Baron's family picnic held on the old Fair Grounds.

Played in Springbank at a W.F.O. picnic and won First prize, several other bands were in attendance. It was a very hot day and someone supplied a gallon of elderberry wine spiked with half a bottle of brandy. The writer thinks it best to skip some of the happenings because that jungle soup marked like a time bomb, but propelled the band into the First prize category.



# INCORPORATION NO. 1

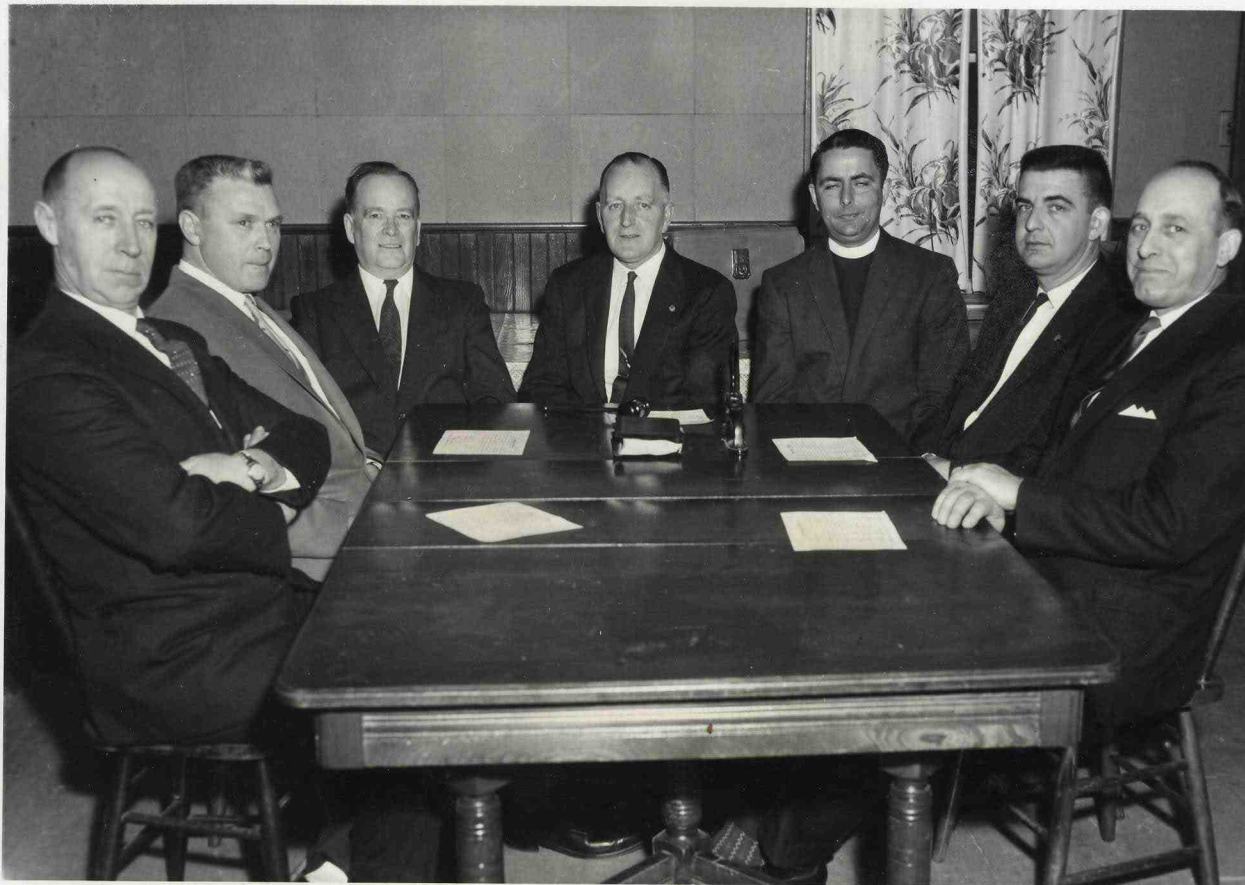


W.D. BARONS.

N. CLARKE.

J. MC. BAIN.

R. MC. NEIL.



F. COPEMAN, B. BUCHANAN, REV. KINCAID, REV. HARLEY, R. BROOKS, S. RICHARDSON,  
NELSON CLARKE

BELMONT:  
JAN. 1, 1961



## BELMONT INAUGURAL WAITS FOR NO ONE

The inaugural council meeting of the newly-incorporated village of Belmont proved something last night when it started right on schedule without the presence of an invited guest.

When returning officer William O. Barons called the meeting to order, James McBain, MP for Elgin, hadn't arrived. Mr. Barons explained "this council is new and eager and waits for no one".

The village formally attained its new status at midnight Saturday. It was formerly a police village administered by South Dorchester Township Council.

Mr. Barons took the official oath of office from the reeve and four councillors at 5:05 p.m., thereby setting the new Village of Belmont officially on its way to a new career in municipal affairs.

Taking their oaths were Reeve C. Nelson Clarke and Councilors J. Floyd Copeman, R. D. Buchanan, Ralph Brooks and Sam S. Richardson.

Rev. W. A. Kincaid, of Belmont Presbyterian Church, gave the opening address, in which he expressed hopes that the new council would do the job "to the best of your knowledge and ability". Rev. Alan Harley, of Belmont United Church, said a prayer for guidance.

Mr. McBain arrived moments before a scheduled address by Ronald McNeil, MPP for Elgin. The federal member expressed confidence that Belmont would endure nothing but "Progress and prosperity" in future years.

Mr. McNeil presented a gavel to Reeve Clarke, signifying his office. In presenting the gavel, Mr. McNeil said "it's only through the work and efforts of men like these (the council) that our democratic countries will continue to prosper and develop".

After the official swearing-in ceremony, the council retired for dinner and held its first meeting at 8 p.m.

Council appointed Mr. Barons acting clerk-treasurer and tax collector, and E. D. Layfield acting water superintendent. Council said it would invite applications for the three-in-one post of clerk-treasurer and tax collector, and also advertise the water superintendent's post.

It felt that because it is a new council, all villagers should be given an opportunity to apply for the jobs.

Sanders and Sanders, St. Thomas barristers, were appointed legal advisers and Fred Page, Higgins Ltd., St. Thomas, village auditors.

It was announced that all future meetings would be held in the Belmont public library at 8 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month.