

# WIs champion local history

BY ERIC BUNNELL  
TIMES-JOURNAL STAFF

It's a glimmer of the past that caught Jan Row's eye. "There's this one little line," Row says.

"Wallacetown went in with Southwold and Dunwich townships, and bought a machine gun."

And that's it.

"Period."

The one-line paragraph is a fleeting glimpse of an Elgin community at arms in the First World War which may pose more questions than it offers answers.

In that, it's not your typical history.

But it's history, all the same, as recorded by Wallacetown Women's Institute in response to a challenge posed by Lady Tweedsmuir, widow of Canada's governor-general from 1935 to 1940. She called on Ontario WIs to preserve Canada's rural way of life that even then was disappearing.

The community stories the WIs recorded in scrapbooks and in elegant, leather-bound volumes, were christened The Tweedsmuir Village History Books.

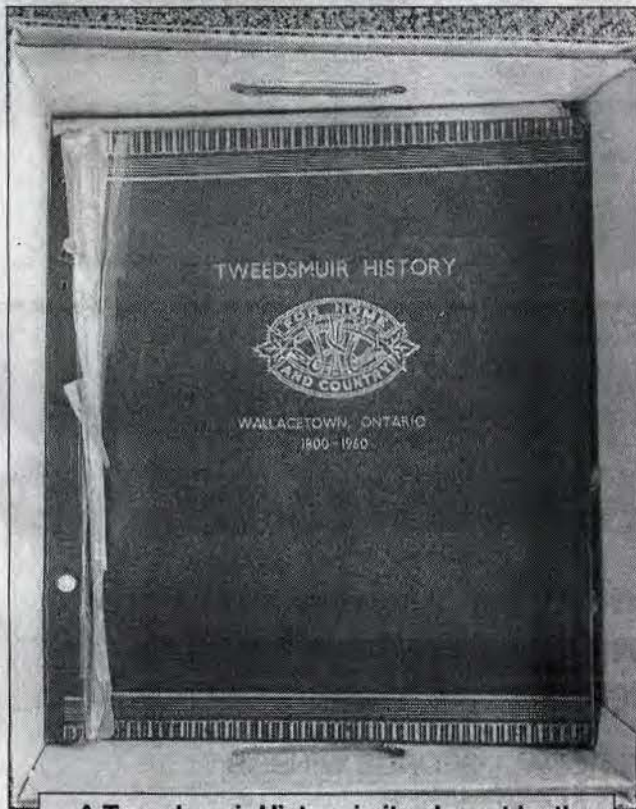
And for five months until the end of March, Row scanned the 8,000 pages of 51 volumes of Elgin Tweedsmuir histories in a project by Elgin County Museum and Elgin County Archives to make them widely available on line.

The result, *Home and Country Perspectives: Elgin County Tweedsmuir Histories*, was unveiled April 5 — coincidentally, on the 50th anniversary of the founding by Elgin WIs of the then Elgin County Pioneer Museum.

The books can be seen by clicking to [www.elgin.ca/tweedsmuir](http://www.elgin.ca/tweedsmuir).

Elgin archivist Brian Masschaele calls the histories an invaluable record, especially for the photographs that many contain.

He notes rural areas weren't photographed as much as urban areas, which had resident studios like the Scott Studio, whose early images of St. Thomas are a motherlode of history preserved today in the Scott-Sefton Collection of the archives.



A Tweedsmuir History in its elegant leather binding. (T-J photo)

"This is one of the best opportunities to document our rural communities — it fills a huge gap in our collection."

The books also look back from a different point of view which Row says adds a more social dimension to the past. Generally, history is written by men about men.

#### GRANT

The project, which included microfilming each volume, was supported by a \$9,100 grant from the Canadian Culture On-Line Program of Canadian Heritage, Library and Archives Canada, and the Canadian Council of Archives, matched by Women's Institute branches, the Elgin Historical Society, the Elgin Photographic Heritage Society and the archives.

Row is an Elgin photographer, artist and poet who previously had document-

ed the permanent collection of the St. Thomas-Elgin Public Art Centre.

Her familiarity with Tweedsmuir histories dates to her childhood in Delaware, Ont.

"My mother belonged to the Delaware Women's Institute. I remember when I was a little girl, helping her paste things into the Delaware book."

That book today has suffered the fate of not a few Tweedsmuir histories.

"It's been lost."

In fact, a fire at the West Lorne branch of Elgin County Library which threatened Tweedsmuir histories in the local collection, prompted the digitalization project. Fortunately, the books at the branch were saved.

The project also has resulted in rescue of some histories from oblivion. Originally planned to include the 27 volumes in the county library collection, the digitalization project grew as word spread and histories were deposited with the archives.

A Richmond WI volume turned up in Burlington, Ont., where its custodian had moved to a nursing home, and where, Masschaele says, it faced a threat of being discarded as valueless once its owner passed on.

In some instances, the books are in bad shape. The archives, however, plans to conserve what it can.

#### BEING WRITTEN

Though a number of Elgin's WI branches have wound up, not all of the histories are closed books. Some still are being written.

"Wallacetown has seven



Brian Masschaele, left, and Jan Row look over a fragile Springfield WI Tweedsmuir History book. (T-J photo)

volumes," Masschaele notes.

"They are actively contributing to them. In 1998, they took it upon themselves to do a house-by-house photo exposition of Wallacetown, knowing that what we take for granted today, may be of interest to future generations."

The Wallacetown book also contains a largely unknown photograph of Ellis Wellwood Sifton standing in uniform at attention

on the front steps of what is thought to have been his family farmhouse before he left for Europe and the First World War, where he earned the Victoria Cross.

For Row, who Masschaele calls "the heart and soul" of the digitalization project, the image brought the war hero to life.

"He's standing on the steps of his house; this is a real human being.

"... It adds such a human dimension to things."



Feb 2007 Rodney Mercury - Sun 1986  
 Can you identify the Women's Institute members attending the 1935 convention in Iona



Halls - Mrs. N. A. Bell, Mrs. J. A. Cannon  
 Dutton - Mrs. M. M. Brown, Mrs. E. L. Miller, Mrs. A.

Here are the names of some of those attending from the West Lorne, Rodney and Clachan Institutes: Rodney - Mrs. J. B. McGugan, Mrs. Carl Wray, Mrs. Dan McPherson, Mrs. Wm. Purcell, Mrs. Ben Graham, Mrs. J. B. Schmid,

Mrs. Ben Eggert, Miss Pardo, (Mrs. N. Taylor), Mrs. Tom Davies, Mrs. Henry Mark, Mrs. Brad, Miss Mary Brad, Mrs. Adrian Shippey, Mrs. J. Patterson, Mrs. Gillies, Hannah Brad. West Lorne - Mrs. J. B. Ferguson, Mrs. H.

C. McKillop, Mrs. Dan McKillop, Mrs. J. B. Sherk, Mrs. Wm. Merrett, Mrs. Earl Lemon, Mrs. Philip Schleihauf, Mrs. A. J. McMillan, Mrs. Elliott, Principals wife, Mrs. Henry Smoke, first, Mrs. Wm. Bole, Mrs. F. Branch-

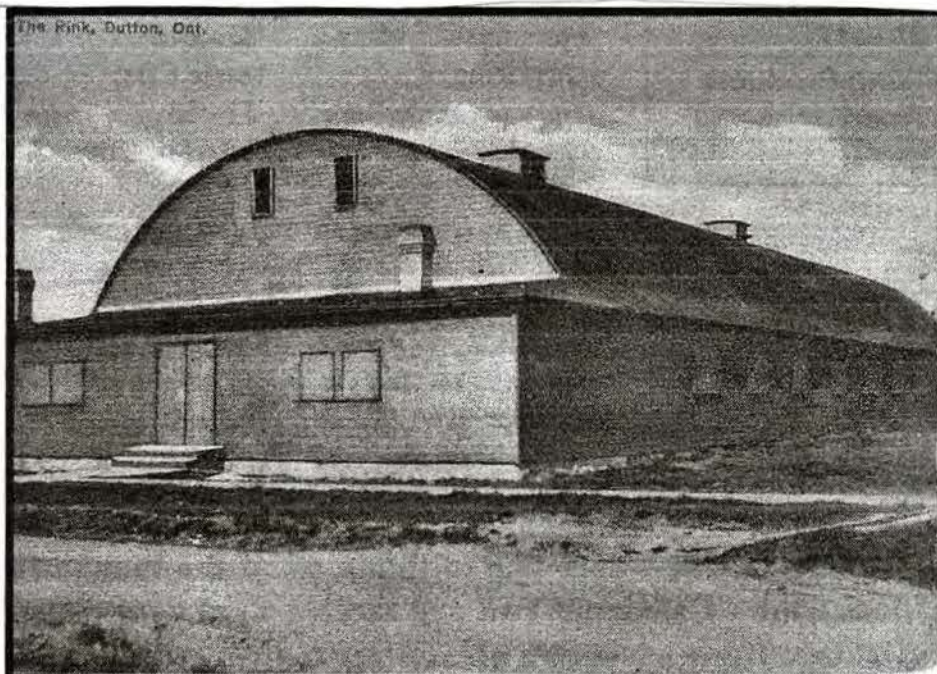
flower, Mrs. Arthur Gammon, Mrs. Neil McEa (Crinan), Lily Reid, Moss, Smoke, third. Clachan - Jessie Colquhoun, Mrs. Wm. Scott, Mrs. J. Johnston, Francis Johnston, Miss Downie.



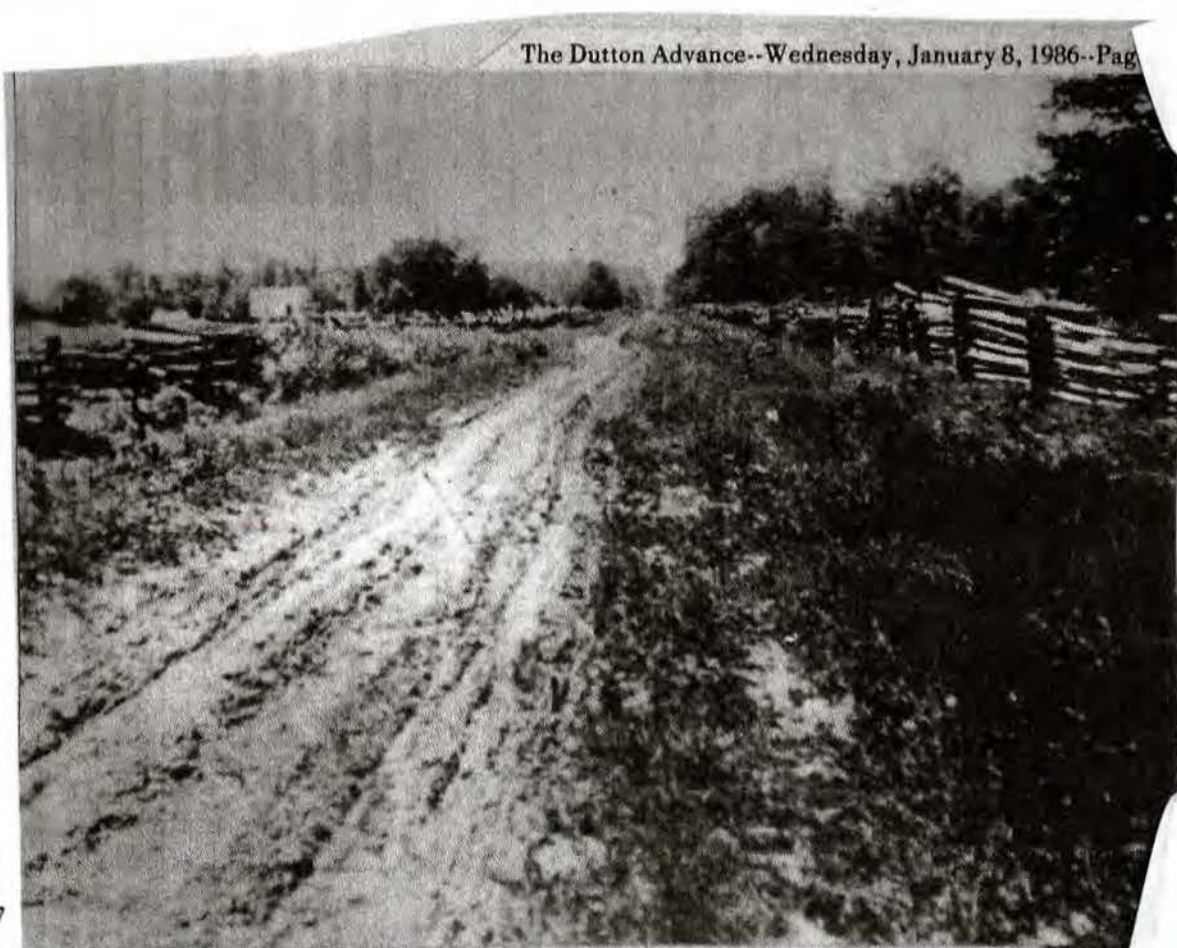
"I have enjoyed your columns in *The Horizon*, and your discussions with the old Duttonites I remember. I have also appreciated the fact that your art has encapsulated so many memories of that place for those wonderful people. You even responded to the wish of

Eli Talman, who appears on the Dutton tape, to view the horses' rears. I must now look for John Bobier.

Have you ever considered a picture of the old Dutton rink? I recall your mentioning the rink in one of your recent columns. As the two attached copies of my postcards (one posted in 1908, the other unused) indicate, it was surely never a glamorous structure. But it was where many of us learned to skate and to play hockey. And I have some recollection that the natural ice surface was saved for curling on occasion, much to the annoyance of us kids. I'm unsure as to when it ceased to function, but undoubtedly it was after the West Lorne artificial ice arena was constructed. I am now 67 years of age, but I am sure that there are other old Duttonites who have very fond memories of the hours spent in our rink. It is just a thought that occurred to me when I read that column." . . .  
"Thanks again for your labour of love with *The Horizon*. Best regards,  
Bill Clark" May 30/2007



**THE OLD DUTTON RINK**  
photo courtesy of Bill & Patti Clark May 30/2007



REMEMBER WHEN? — The above is a picture of Currie Road, believed to have been taken in the early 1900's.



# UEL marker at Fingal

By TIMES-JOURNAL STAFF

FINGAL — A 1985 family reunion in Tillsonburg, Ont., is believed to be responsible for planting the seed that eventually led to the placing of a bronze plaque in the Fingal Cemetery honouring two United Empire Loyalists, James and Hannah Burwell.

James and Hannah are ancestors of Mary Jo Verran of Attic, Mich., and Carol Chitaroni of Cobalt, Ont.

They met at the family reunion in 1985 with Lloyd Burwell of Oakville, Ont., and Bruce Burwell of Springfield, who were both historians and helped the family trace the Burwell family roots in Elgin county.

Verran and Chitaroni, third cousins, met with Pat and Fred Temple in 2004 which led them to the Fingal Cemetery board. It was at this point that Verran and Chitaroni focused their attention on the poor condition of the tombstone of Lewis Burwell and his wife, Levonia, at the Fingal Cemetery.

While the stone was repaired and replaced on a new base in 2004, the continued research in 2005 by Verran and Chitaroni showed there was no evidence of the Burwell private ground.

Helping with the research was Wayne Phillips of St. Thomas, a direct descendant of James and Hannah Burwell who was also researching the Timothy



A brass plaque has been placed on the tombstone of Lewis and Levonia Burwell at the Fingal Cemetery. It honours James and Hannah Burwell, United Empire Loyalists who settled in Southwold township, but whose family burial plot has been forgotten. (T-J photo) Aug 8<sup>th</sup> 2007.

Burwell line.

Also helping was Donald Carroll of Iona Station who met with Verran and Chitaroni in 2005 and helped them plan the memorial plaque for great-great-grandparents, James and Hannah Burwell.

James Burwell was the eldest son of Samuel Burwell who remained loyal to Britain during the American Revolution.

After the war, Burwell moved to Nova Scotia where he was granted 200 acres of land. He later returned to New Jersey where he married Hannah. They moved to Nia-

gara District in Upper Canada where Burwell petitioned for United Empire Loyalist status and a land grant.

In 1810, he was granted land in Southwold township, southwest of Fingal. He built his pioneer home there.

Hannah Burwell died in 1838, and James Burwell in 1853. At that time, the Burwell private burial ground was located on his farm.

James Burwell was a cousin to Adam Burwell, father of Col. Mahlon Burwell who was one of the surveyors for the Talbot Settlement.



# Golden anniversary for Dude Ranch

Horseshoe J Dude Ranch near Iona is celebrating its 50th anniversary of summer camps and trail rides.

Owners Sue Stiles and her partner Kevin Munn have almost completely pur-

chased the ranch from her parents Helen and Dick Steele.

The Steele family has owned the ranch since 1972.

The first summer camp started in 1957 by the Hauka family.

Sue says the same tradition continues of offering "truly memorable experiences for many years to come."

The ranch offers summer horse camps and hourly trail riding on its 100 acre ranch with a rolling landscape and forests.

"I'd come home here on weekends then have to go back to the city. We decided we wanted to raise our children in the country," Sue recalls of when she began buying the ranch.

Her parents still help out around the ranch. Dick has recertified as a life-guard for the pool and Helen can be found grooming horses in the yard.

"The horses are the backbone of the business," said Sue, adding the 37 western horses and ponies are also part of the family.

Residential camps for children range from week-long to overnight.

Children are paired with one horse for the week and learn saddling, grooming and horsemanship.

Children sleep in conestoga covered wagons, which are 45 years old and have been restored.

The owners are continuing to add more cabins to the grounds to give children a choice for sleeping.

Sue said people who went to the camp 25 years ago are now bringing their children back.

Dude ranches are a thing of the past, said Stiles, mostly because of regulations and insurance.

However, keeping small and a family-run business has helped Horseshoe J continue though Stiles said there is not a lot of money in the business, as Kevin holds a full time, off-farm job.

"Kids and horses are a great combination," said Stiles, adding horses are matched to suit the experience of the riders, from very beginner to



JEFF KEMPENAAR/THE CHRONICLE

## 50th anniversary for ranch

Sue Stiles and Kevin Munn, of Circle J Dude Ranch.

advanced.

"The kids come in here, become comfortable with horses and have an experience of a life time," she said.

The ranch has made a partnerships with the YWCA by offering a one week day camps, introduction to horses.

Also, scouting groups and Pearce Williams work with the Dude Ranch.

Sue started as a counselor when her parents operated the ranch as she was growing up.

There she learned to love being with children, along with the horses.

Along with trail riding, children participate in complete camp programs with swimming, movies in the barn and cook outs.

For more information visit [www.duderanchontario.com](http://www.duderanchontario.com) or call 519-762-5402.



# Old farmhouses come under pressure



By PAUL MAHON  
Editor-in-chief of  
**OUT HERE**

[pmahon@bowesnet.com](mailto:pmahon@bowesnet.com)

*Oct-Nov  
2007*

**A decade ago, the old-style barns of Ontario's backroads began to come down in number. Economics was leaving them empty and reality was bringing them down. With most being over a hundred years old, there just wasn't enough there to revive, and no real reason to. A shed was easier and cheaper.**

Some attempts were made to immortalize certain designs, by model or by picture, but the barns have just been dwindling. It is inevitable.

Soon it will be the farmhouses' turn. The noble structures that commanded the farm lots are getting on in age too. Many were built at the time of colonization or in the years shortly thereafter, so a lot are approaching old age. My own house is 125 years old, built the year that Billy the Kid died, and the seasons do take their toll.

The houses that have not been kept up are not worth keeping up now. They will come down this decade in short order. The ones that were kept up may be massaged to last a few more decades, but there are several factors at play here that will spur the option of new building.

The first is rising affluence. People wealthy enough to be a rural landowner, and to have that lifestyle, are more inclined to be picky about a designed house. They will want to start afresh. It is hard to put a wine cellar in an old foundation, and a bay window is hard to build in.

Old houses are too small. They were built for

tough winters and point heating. These houses today almost invariably need an addition that doubles the floor space, but in reality, if you do that, you end up living in the new space and walking through the old. The rooms are too small by our current standards.

(It is like the situation with disabled washroom stalls and showers. They were initially created for wheelchair access and roominess - but many non-disabled people prefer the wider stall).

New houses can incorporate the latest technology, particularly in energy efficiency. It is quite arguable that the energy efficiency of an integrated concrete technology house, for instance, PAYS for the house over a couple of generations. Energy is a much larger cost than it used to be, and materials and interest are lower. It is hard to justify throwing good money at an older house when you can so easily have something new.

The building code has also changed. Houses are built with heavier snow load ratings for instance. The old houses have a risk factor and also can't carry some of the newer roofing technology.

Don't get me started about the mice and cluster flies!

The old farmhouses will be under heavy pressure to survive, but most will not. One trend is to recycle the old yellow brick, so there is some revival there. But mostly, we will just wake up one day and realize they are gone.





South Dunwich Choral Society

**SOUTH DUNWICH CHORAL SOCIETY** — This picture was taken at the home of S.L. Pearce on July 27, 1927. Pictured left to right, front row: Bill Medlyn, Stewart Pearce, Jim Medlyn and Jim Wallace. Second row: Ralph Robinson, Arthur Graham, Mary Farr, Gertrude Campbell, Thelma Braddon, Eva Cusack, (unknown), Orpha Leeming, Mable Sloan, Dorothy Fox, Ann Page, Fred Schindler and Jim Campbell. Third row: Bertha Pratt, Mrs. John Sloan, Maime Smith, Eva Pearce, Frances Pearce, Eleanor Turville, Sadie Graham, Lidia Belle Pollard,

Mrs. Ed Docker and (unknown). Fourth row: Craig Forsyth, Herman Page, Mrs. Glanfield, Rebecca Pearce, Margaret Graham, Grace Farr, Effie McFarlane, Jim McFarlane, Norman Welch, Mrs. Leeming, Flo Duncanson, Mrs. D. H. Graham, Mrs. Douglas, Mrs. Sid Turville and Walter Robson. Fifth row: Dan Clarke, J. S. Pearce, John C. Campbell, Stewart Littlejohn, John Kramer, Arthur Robb, Rev. Mr. Douglas, Bill Galbraith, Harold Ripley, Tom McGuire, Earl Shipley, Jack Ripley, Gordon Raynor and Harold Sloan.

## Local musicians give wealth of talent to area

By HELEN MUNROE

Hello, did you see your shadow today? Do you think winter will last another six weeks? The next few weeks can be exciting as regards the weather, don't you think? — from one extreme to the other.

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Today let's chat about musicians of whom Elgin County should be very proud and especially of one who will bring music to many for years to come.

There have been many outstanding musicians in our area — among them Gertrude Huntley Green (who died recently at the age of 90), June Walsh, a violinist of note, Jim Medlyn and Arnold Bate, singers and choir directors of great skill.

Now the one we are going to chat about today is Elaine Keillor, a musician well-known throughout North America.

Elaine grew up in a huge old house in Wallacetown. The living room was large enough to accommodate two grand pianos! She must have learned to walk and to play the piano about the same time. She was taught by her mother who said, "Music and rhythm are the essence of life and art."

These are some of the achievements of Elaine; — At 4 years of age she passed the Grade 1 pianoforte examination of the Toronto Conservatory of Music (with the theory requirements also).

### Chatting

with  
**HELEN**



— At 8 she obtained the highest mark in Ontario in the Grade 6 examination.

— By the age of 12 she was classed as professional in musical competitions

— By the age of 12 she was a Grade 10 violin student.

\*— All piano theory was completed by the age of 10 and she was awarded the Associate of the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto.

Since Elaine was so busy with her music she never attended a regular school but was tutored at home. She was a charming child radiating pleasure in her music. She and her mother were very close. Her mother stated that, "We had great joy with the music."

During the years Elaine has performed and given recitals from coast to coast in Canada, the United States and Europe.

At the age of 19 she received the Chappell medal — given to the outstanding young pianist in the British Commonwealth.

In 1976 she received the degree of PhD in music at the convocation of the University of Toronto — the first woman to be granted this at the U of T.

Elaine is a lovely lady. She now lives with her husband in Toronto and commutes to Ottawa where she has an apartment. In Ottawa she is with the music department at Carleton University.

Her mother taught music until recently and is now living at a lodge in Toronto. Although her eyesight has gone she must still get a great deal of pleasure from her music. She says, "Music is something for the future."

If anyone knows more about Elaine's activities will you share with the rest of us?

There has been, there is and there will be such a wealth of talent around us in Elgin County.

\*\*\*

Thought for today: Where light and shade repose, where

Music dwells  
Lingering — and wandering on as loth to die;  
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof  
That they were born for immortality (Wordsworth).



# From Malahide Castle to the Township of Malahide

by Scott Hilgendorff

The Township of Malahide in eastern Elgin County stretches from Lake Erie in the south to Belmont in the north. It surrounds the Town of Aylmer but does not include it. The Village of Port Bruce and the Village of Springfield lie within it. It was named after the family seat of Thomas Talbot.

Naming the Township of Malahide was meant to be a *tip of the hat* to the autocrat that had single-handedly settled much of southern Ontario but Colonel Thomas Talbot was not overly impressed. Townships in Ontario had a habit of being named for all sorts of crazy reasons. The townships of Tiny, Tay and Flos in Simcoe County, for instance, were named after the three poodles of Governor John Simcoe's wife. To the high *mucky-mucks* who made such decisions, most townships were simply squares on the map that needed to be given a name. Giving a township the name of Malahide was a cheap and fast way of placating Talbot – a man that even his superiors often found exasperating as he got older.

For almost 800 years, the Talbots lived at Malahide Castle in Ireland, with the castle passing from father to eldest son. But Thomas Talbot was not an eldest son. He had to make his own way in the world. His father helped him by buying him a commission in the army and from there he was on his own.

From all accounts, Talbot showed courage and initiative while serving. Ontario's first Governor, John Graves Simcoe, seemed to like Talbot enough



to give him extensive responsibilities. One of those responsibilities was making sure that Mrs. John Graves Simcoe was well tended to. We have glowing accounts of Thomas Talbot's personality from Mrs. Simcoe's diary. She often mentioned how charming and witty he was.

Yet it is obvious that Talbot would have much preferred being the eldest born son and inheriting Malahide in Ireland. Talbot was an aristocrat and autocrat to the core. He strove to collect land that would rival the family seat back home. In addition to the Township of Malahide in eastern Elgin County, Talbot named his own estate

by Talbot Creek in the west end of Elgin County, Malahide as well. Talbot called the log house he lived in his castle and he was quick to remind everyone in the Talbot settlement of his aristocratic heritage. So even though the Colonel devoted much of his adult life to what is now Elgin County, it is quite clear that his heart remained back in Ireland and the family estate.

Malahide Castle had been in the Talbot family since 1185. The Talbots

received the land when Richard Talbot, who was a knight, accompanied Henry II to Ireland in 1174 and was granted the estate for his efforts in subduing the locals. In 1975, the castle was sold to the Irish government to pay inheritance taxes.

To this day, Ireland's Malahide is an impressive national treasure. The castle and surrounding gardens are now a major tourist draw. The estate encompasses only 100 ha (250 acres) but in years gone by the estate had been much larger. The Talbot Botanical Gardens stretch over 8 ha (20 acres) and are considered one of the finest in the country.

It is often claimed that the old courthouse in London, Ontario bears close resemblance to Malahide Castle. While this may have been true at one time, alterations to both buildings have partially obscured the resemblance.

The Village of Malahide lies in close proximity to the Malahide estate and has a population of about 3500 people. The Village

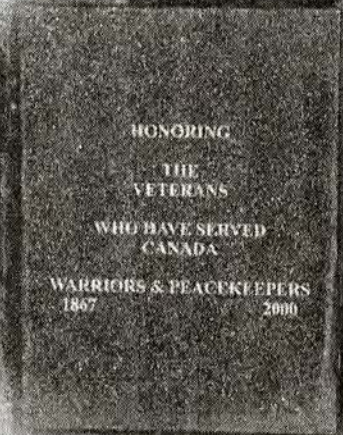
has an extensive beach that is a day destination for Dubliners who live just a few miles to the south. The Village's large marina can accommodate up to 300 boats and is a popular destination of mariners from both England and continental Europe. It is obvious why Colonel Talbot could never forget about his picturesque boyhood home.

*(Al Kirk is a freelance writer and columnist with a particular interest in local history. He resides in the Hamlet of Iona Station just east of Dutton.)*





Lest We Forget



Dutton Cenotaph

A Night of Remembrance ceremony Nov. 9 before 7 p.m. in WEDS Theatre

Nov 8<sup>th</sup> 2007  
The Chronicle



Rodney Memorial Cenotaph

Remembrance Day ceremony Nov. 11 10:40 to 11:30 a.m. at Rodney Library



West Lorne Memorial Cenotaph  
Remembrance Day ceremony Nov. 11 before 11 a.m. at West Elgin Arena

# Journalist Ted Barris shares stories of Vimy Ridge

For the Chronicle

Though the First and Second World Wars that made heroes of many Canadians are generations behind us, it is our duty to remember those who fought for us, a minister told the Southwold Remembrance Service on Sunday.

"As time passes, the reality of war recedes into the past," Pastor Diane Macpherson told a standing-room-only audience at the Keystone Complex.

"The reality of war is that it touches all our families," she said.

"We forget at our own peril," she said. "As long as we have symbols, we will not forget."

Guest speaker for the service was Ted Barris, journalist and military historian.

Barris discussed the history of the Canadians' battle at Vimy Ridge, a subject he recently wrote about in Victory At Vimy: Canada Comes of Age.

Earlier this year in April, Barris went to historic First World War battlefields in Europe, including Vimy Ridge.

"It was a pretty daunting view for Canadians," he said

describing the 1916 battlefield that saw the Canadians dug in at the bottom of a hill, while the Germans looked down over them.

Canadians planned their strategy to take the ridge "in a way history had never seen," Barris said.

The secret was to dig trenches covering an area the size of Vancouver that allowed the Canadians to advance up the hill.

Supporting the infantry were scien-

tists who calibrated artillery guns for a counter assault.

Their calculations allowed the Canadians to knock out 75 per cent of the German guns.

"That's why the Canadian infantry had a leg up," he said.

Canadians trained to share military information, preparing for Vimy, allowing the battle to run like clockwork, Barris said. Sharing information meant everyone knew each other's job, making

it easy to fill in where needed.

Vimy was famous for many things, including a theatre where Canadian aviation ace Billy Bishop shot down many German spy balloons.

Eighteen wreaths were placed at the service, including the first one by Maurice McLellan for the Silver Cross Family.

That family featured two veterans. Ross Campbell McLellan, son of Archibald Duncan

and Floraneal (McVicar) McLellan of Lawrence Station, served in the Royal Canadian Air Force, 420 Squadron and

was reported missing July 22, 1943, after combat following a mission in the Mediterranean Sea off Sicily.

The couple's sec-

ond son, Eugene Wallace McLellan, served in the Lincoln and Welland Regiment, Royal Canadian Intelligence Corps.

He was killed in action July 15, 1944.

The service tured a flyover Harvard aircraft the missing mar mation.





HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY  
MONA BLAIN!

WISHING YOU  
A GREAT DAY  
AND A  
WONDERFUL  
YEAR!

# The Best in the West

Tidbits and Trivia from the  
western end of Elgin County

August 6, 2007

Issue Seven

## ERIE GARDENS

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Port Stanley Festival Theatre

Prior to railway being built through the area, produce was shipped out and goods were imported primarily by water. There was a pier at Tyrconnell and also at Port Glasgow. Along the northern edge of the area, the Thames River was used to transport goods to market or back into the communities. There were few roads that were considered well developed enough to use.

When the railway went through, life changed drastically. The first train crossed the Currie Road Crossing from Amherstburg on Dec. 19, 1872. There had been no allowance for a train station at each stop in the early days. While the train did make several stops to pick up and drop off goods and people, there was no official station. The county provided grant money to help build the needed stations. However, the railway refused to build a station at the Currie Road Crossing unless the township of Dunwich supplemented that county grant, which the township refused to do. All the railway would provide was a mere shanty near the railway.

Local citizens were not to be satisfied with this idea. They gathered and organized fundraising efforts through a canvas of the village and purchased land belonging to Mrs. Margaret Paterson for their station, on the north side of tracks, west of Main Street.

I think it's interesting how that dedicated spirit lives on in our rural communities today. We are blessed to have citizens with that same sense of determination who organize and call us all to action for the greater good of us all. We have only to look to West Lorne where the Heritage Homes project is underway and in our very own village of Dutton, the Lions Club has embarked on Caledonia Two, the expansion for the first phase they had already completed. I think that the early citizens of the area set a fine example for us all and proudly it's one that continues to motivate us tackle the projects that we feel would benefit us most.

### Did You Know. . . .

1. Seaweed is used to thicken ice cream.
2. All humans are 99.9% genetically identical and 98.4% of human genes are the same as the genes of a chimpanzee.
3. A cubic mile of ordinary fog contains less than a gallon of water.

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(corner of Chalmers Line &  
Cowal Road)  
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5 to 6:30 p.m.  
Adults \$12, Children 6-12 \$6  
Under 6 Free



1. Why does the sun lighten our hair, but darken our skin?
2. Why can't women put on mascara with their mouth closed?
3. Why doesn't glue stick to the inside of the bottle?
4. Why is a boxing ring square?

## ERIE GARDENS

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Eliminate ear mites in your cat. All it takes is a few drops of corn oil in your cat's ear. Massage it in, then clean with a cotton ball. Repeat daily for 3 days. The oil soothes the cat's skin, smothers the mites and accelerates healing.

**Thanks for being yourself and sharing your zest for living!**  
**Your generous spirit enriches life for yourself and all of those you come into contact with!**

# The Best in the West

## Tidbits and Trivia from the western end of Elgin County

August 13, 2007

Issue Eight

One of the biggest challenges in early times seems to have been naming our villages. Each of them appears to have had several names in transition to their current ones. The autumn of 1871, after the Canadian Southern Railway went through, Dutton was actually listed as the place where the railway crossed Graham Road. A Mr. Dutton was the name of the survey engineer who was chiefly responsible for the building of the railway in this area. The Railway seemed determined to honour him with a station in his name. This added to the confusion of the naming of West Lorne. It was already known by different folks under different names. Some called it Lorne, some called it Bismarck, and it was known as Dutton to the Railway. Bismarck was in honour of the Chancellor of Germany at the time and Lorne came from the son in law of Queen Victoria who was the Marquis of Lorne in Scotland. In those days, the site of the village was mainly a swamp. It is fitting that the Celtic meaning of the word, Lorne, is low land, because the area was low lying and very swampy. The Railway was not to let Mr. Dutton slip into obscurity. They changed the name of the Currie Road Crossing station to Dutton in 1873 when they officially listed West Lorne as Bismarck. It took a few years for the Railway to catch up with the official naming of the village. July 1st, 1873, the Post Office named the village "West Lorne" and it wasn't until 1907 that the train station was officially changed from Bismarck to West Lorne to match the name of the village.

St. John's United Church  
Pork BBQ Sat. Aug. 18  
5-7 p.m. (Picnic Shelter)  
Sons of Scotland Park  
bbq pork, baked potatoes,  
baked beans, coleslaw,  
rolls, beverage, ice cream

Adults \$12

Children 5-11 yrs. \$5

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\* at church if raining

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## Wellness Tidbits

Wellness should be a family project. Each week you should try to conduct an activity as a family unit. Go for a walk, go bowling, play ping pong, swim, bike or water ski. These types of activities can help with overall health and will tighten the bonds of the family.



**Sharon Jobson**

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY  
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YOUNG!





To prevent the screws in your eyeglasses from loosening, apply a small drop of clear nail polish to the threads of the screws before tightening them.

# The Best in the West

Tidbits and Trivia from the western end of Elgin County

September 3, 2007

Issue Eleven

A CLEAR  
CONSCIENCE  
IS A  
SOFT PILLOW

GERMAN  
PROVERB

## AUDITIONS

for a  
fall production of  
**Remembering  
Stuff**  
by  
Eleanor Harder

We're looking for young people ages 15 to 20 to be on stage and volunteers of all ages for backstage help.

WEDS Performing Arts Centre  
199 Main St., Dutton  
Sept. 12th & 13th  
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.



COWAL IS A CORNER SETTLEMENT IN NORTH DUNWICH TOWNSHIP THAT WAS ORIGINALLY NAMED NEW MONTREAL. THE NAME WAS CHANGED TO COWAL IN 1863, WHEN THE POST OFFICE WAS ESTABLISHED THERE. COWAL, SCOTLAND WAS THE BIRTHPLACE OF MARY CAMPBELL, THE SWEETHEART OF THE FAMED ROBERT BURNS. THE POPULATION GREW IN THE AREA BECAUSE OF THE HEAVY GROWTH OF TIMBER FOUND IN THIS AREA AND ITS GREAT VALUE TO EARLY SETTLERS. UNFORTUNATELY, THIS SAME ABUNDANCE OF TIMBER MADE CLEARING THE LAND FOR FARMING AND BUILDING, VERY DIFFICULT. HUGH MCCALLUM, A SHOEMAKER, OPENED THE VERY FIRST STORE IN THE COWAL SETTLEMENT. IT WAS A TRICKLE DOWN EFFECT AS MORE BUSINESSES OPENED AND MORE PEOPLE CAME AND SETTLED IN THE AREA. JAMES MCDUGALL OPENED A GENERAL STORE AND POST OFFICE. WHEN THE SAWMILL OPENED THINGS REALLY BOOMED. THERE WAS A BLACKSMITH, A BRICK AND TILE BUSINESS, AND EVEN A HOTEL. THE PEAK OF DEVELOPMENT WAS IN THE 1880'S AND COWAL THRIVED AS A RURAL COMMUNITY. THERE WERE EVEN SERVICE GROUPS SUCH AS THE FORESTERS LODGE AND, THE ROYAL TEMPLARS AND PATRONS. THEN CAME THE INEVITABLE CHANGE WITH THE DEPLETION OF THE TIMBER RESOURCES. THE DEAD FALLS HOTEL WAS DESTROYED BY FIRE IN 1886 AND NOT RESTORED. PART OF IT HAD BEEN THE LOCAL GROCERY STORE. NOT MUCH REMAINS TODAY OF THE VILLAGE EXCEPT FOR CHALMERS UNITED CHURCH AND THE COWAL-MCBRIDE CEMETERY. THE MCBRIDE FAMILY HAD PURCHASED THE LAND IN 1832 AND BUILT A LOG CABIN, BARN AND CLEARED THE LAND FOR FARMING. JOHN MCBRIDE WAS KILLED A YEAR LATER WHEN FELLING A TREE AND LEFT BEHIND A WIDOW AND SIX CHILDREN. AS THE FAMILY GREW AND MOVED FROM THE AREA, THE LAND WAS DONATED AS THE CEMETERY.

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There is a word in the English language in which the first two letters signify a man, the first three letters signify a woman, the first four letters signify a great man and the entire word represents a great woman.

What is the word?

answer on back page

## Wellness Tidbits

High blood pressure can be a time bomb. You may have high blood pressure and not even be aware of it. Have your blood pressure checked regularly. If detected it may be treated with simple change in lifestyle or medication. Take the time to monitor your health.

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Now and then we had a hope that if we lived and were good, God would permit us to be pirates.

Mark Twain



# The Best in the West

Tidbits and Trivia from the western end of Elgin County

September 24, 2007 Issue Fourteen

The tradition of the Wallacetown Fair dates back to 1860, when the townships of Southwold, Dunwich and Aldborough decided to form the West Elgin Agricultural Society. The first year, the fair was held in New Glasgow. Eventually, the group chose Wallacetown as the permanent location of the event because of the central location of the village to the three townships. Southwold and Aldborough went on to support their own annual fairs and the Wallacetown Agricultural Society was named on January 1st, 1966.

The site was originally a drill hall and parade grounds on the farm of John Leslie Pearce. The local militia would meet here to train when there was a very real threat during the Fenian raids. Once the threat was gone, 5 acres was purchased for the fair. In 1900, the drill shed was officially purchased from the Federal government. More land was purchased in 1904 and 1937, bringing the total acreage to almost 34 acres.

The Agricultural Society has been busy. They've added the ticket office, the centennial gates, grandstand, dining hall, livestock pens, and junior exhibit hall. This is all in addition to the hours of planning that go into hosting the weekend event.

They are a progressive group. In 1934, the first lady directors of the Fair were appointed. The Society has been a mixed and diverse group ever since.

This year, the Wallacetown Agricultural Society has decided to add a challenge, not only for themselves, but for our community as a whole. To tie in with the theme of Pixies and Pirates, they hope to set a new Guinness World Record for the most pirates in one spot and they need your help to make this happen. Join in the fun and support all of the work they do for our community.

To qualify as a pirate you'll need a costume with at least three pieces of 'pirate garb'. Make yourself a pirate hat, tie on a bandana, make yourself an eye patch, find a toy sword, knife or pistol, make a 'peg leg' or maybe fasten a fake parrot to your shoulder. With Halloween costumes out in full force you should be able to find some of these items reasonably priced or be adventurous and make them. Whatever it takes, show up and be officially counted on Friday, September 28th at 7 pm in front of the Grandstand in Wallacetown. Ahoy mateys!

## ENJOY THE FAIR!

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Saturday..... 9am - 5pm 762-3218  
Sunday..... Closed

## Have fun at the Fair!

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## Ahoy There We Hardcasses!

It's time for the Wallacetown Fair!

### Feature Events:

Friday, September 28th, 2007

7:00pm - Midway Open

Set Guinness World Record™

for "Most Pirates Assembled in One Place" \* Costume must

consist of at least 3 pieces Come Be a Part of History!

Deal "Arr" No Deal Game

each "Pirate" over 18 years will have a chance to play for \$1,000!!!

Saturday, September 29th, 2007

Noon Parade

2:00pm Harness Races

6:45pm Tractor Pull

8:00pm Pay One Price Ride All Night

Sunday, September 30th, 2007

1:30pm Demolition Derby

Pay One Price Ride All Day!!!

Also: 4-H Shows  
Barrel Racing  
Midway Rides  
Exhibition Buildings  
Horseshoes & Antiques  
Livestock & Horse Shows  
Wallacetown Idol Competition





Backus Page House

July 14, 15, 16

Saturday  
Guided walks  
Games & Activities

Sunday  
Pancake Breakfast  
Adults \$6  
Children 5-10 years \$3  
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# The Best in the West

## Tidbits and Trivia from the western end of Elgin County

July 9, 2007

Issue 3

Iona may appear to be a sleepy little village, but there is a rich history in this area. At the time of Confederation this was a thriving village of approximately 600. There was a hardware store, tin shop, restaurant and five general stores. A tailor and two shoe shops served the community and there was a livery stable and four blacksmith and carriage shops. The village boasted three churches and a Masonic hall, a plough factory and even two hotels and a saw and grist mill.

The name Iona comes from a Scottish Isle. St. Columbo landed there to establish Christianity in Scotland.

A Confederation celebration in Iona was an enormous event, even by today's standards. It was estimated that most of the village turned out plus almost another 2,000 people, all eager to celebrate our country's first birthday. The day was filled with various races, games, music and dancing.

Iona started from humble beginnings. In the early 1820's a single blacksmith shop and a small general store marked the future site of a thriving village. A native of New Jersey, William Brooks settled in the area in the early 1800's. He started a general store on his own farm and went on to establish a sawmill. This early foundation paved the way for other businesses and in a few decades the population had grown to almost 600.

The village had an insightful entrepreneur, Mr. Daniel Decow. He owned a department store that sold "ready to wear" clothing, something unheard of in this part of Ontario. He even used peddling wagons to sell his wares from Iona, well into Essex and Kent counties.

Time has marched on. Almost all of those early businesses have closed and gone. The majority of the population has dwindled. A cosy village still exists, a reminder of the past and a peaceful, rural place to call home.

Use peroxide to clean your counters and table tops. It kills germs and leaves a fresh smell. Simply put a little on your dishcloth or spray directly on the surfaces, then wipe.



Happy Birthday  
Pam Silva!

July 13, 196?

See.....  
I didn't give away  
all of your secrets!



love you lots,  
baby sister



Show me a person who has  
never made a mistake and  
I'll show you somebody  
who has never achieved  
much.

Joan Collins

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