

CURATOR'S REPORT:

June 16, 2022

SUMMARY: The past month has been extremely busy with the last two weeks of Big Cheese Days, the re-dedication of the Sinclair cannon, the construction of a shed to cover the millstones, educational programs, casual visitations and planning for Doors Open Ingersoll in addition to other activities.

Buildings & Grounds: A small shed was erected over top of the two millstones by Harry Murray. Once it weathers a bit, cedar shakes and battens will be added to finish this project. There is space for interpretive panels inside. We have asked Wes Wilson, one of our former summer students to write these panels. He had previously worked at Backus Mill near Port Rowan so is familiar with the operation of water-powered grist mills.

Public Works and the Engineering Department are working with Oxford County staff in an effort to resolve the flooding of our grounds and parking lot caused in part by the pumping station. The broken chain-link fence behind the cheese factory still needs to be repaired. Public Works has recently offered to fix it.

The Sinclair cannon has been restored, set on a cement base next to the Centennial Park cairn and was re-dedicated on May 21, 2022 to mark the 125th anniversary of its creation and to celebrate Victoria Day (for which it was originally cast).

Collections: Artifacts continue to be donated. Most recently there have been additional photographs from the Stone Family, and a WW2 era tank uniform. The oil painting of Mrs. John Sinclair has been professionally restored by an art conservator. The donor of this painting paid for the cost of the restoration.

Anne Miller & volunteer Len Dineen are continuing their work on the Oxford County Museum School collection.

Safe Cycling Committee: We are continuing to attend the Safe Cycling Committee meetings. A bike rack has been ordered for the museum. The temporary exhibition, "Shifting Gears" has will continue until early July.

Big Cheese Days: Some 250 people came to the museum during these four Saturdays in May.

Doors Open Ingersoll: Eighteen different stops throughout town have been lined up for Doors Open Ingersoll. We have been interviewed on Heart-FM, and by the London Free Press. Press releases have been circulated to radio stations throughout the region and daily posts on the museum's Facebook page are being seen by more than 1,000 people each day. We want to attract visitors to the town. We want people to DO INGERSOLL on Saturday June 18th, between 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Ingersoll Kiwanis Harvest Market: The Ingersoll Kiwanis Club is continuing to work with the museum to revitalize Harvest Fest by creating the *Ingersoll Kiwanis Harvest Market* on August 27th. This date also coincides with the museum's 45th anniversary!

Educational Programming & Group Tours: We have been exceptionally busy with school programming, beginning with the 50 home school children, their parents and younger siblings from Otterville followed by classes from the Oxford Reformed Christian School in Mount Elgin, Harrisfield Public School, and a high school in Toronto. We have bookings for 5 classes from St. Jude's School and potentially one or two more home school groups.

We are also booked to return to Woodingford Lodge in Tillsonburg for another outreach program later this month. Bethany Care Nursing Home in Norwich brought a small group for a visit of the museum. They too were informed about our seniors outreach programs.

The family of the late Tom McKee are coming for a family reunion/museum tour/ Hall of Fame tour/ visit to Beachville Museum and environs on July 5th. Meanwhile, Moostash Joe Tours from Nebraska has resumed operations and have booked a visit to Ingersoll for October 1st.

Jon Bowman Celebration of Life: There was a good turnout for the open house for Jon at the held on June 4th. To date, more than \$1200 has been donated to the museum in his memory.

Stone Secrets: We are continuing to work with Fusion Youth Centre staff to film, edit and produce short videos about people buried in the Ingersoll Rural Cemetery. The two most recent ones deal with the death of 5 children in 21 days (the family of Peter Mair), and Canada's oldest and longest serving Methodist preacher, Reverend Alexander Gordon Harris. Museum volunteer Pat Adams continues to provide marvelous insights into the family histories of these and other individuals so there is an unlimited number of videos that can and will be shot.

Research: We have been asked for assistance by the Ingersoll Kiwanis Club in tracking down photos and stories of all their past presidents. We are working with Cliff Martin on this project.

We have also been tasked with trying to find images of all the past Mayors of Ingersoll.

Exhibitions: "A Place to Grow" is the title of the travelling exhibition coming to the museum from the Royal Botanical Gardens. It examines the history and impact of gardening at home and in large fields so this will be a nice addition to the North Barn between July and September. The Ingersoll & District Horticultural Society is co-sponsoring this display. Thanks are extended to Town Council for declaring 2022 as the "Year of the Garden", and for recognizing June 18th as "Garden Day". Both are in response to the centennial of the Canadian horticultural sector.

“Art-facts 2Art” is the joint exhibition we are doing with the Creative Arts Centre between July and September as well. This art show will be primarily set in the main building but will also be featured in some of our outbuildings, in addition to also being on view at the Art Centre.

Miscellaneous:

We have wanted to get the Memorial Park bandshell restored for a number of years. We are working with Community Services and Recreation & Parks to provide photographs and to budget for this project in coming years.

We have been asked by Community Services to plan and conduct a sign unveiling ceremony at the Westfield area tennis courts that have been renamed in honour of the late John Bartram. Date of this event still has to be confirmed.

We were approached by staff of the Rural Cemetery about getting one of the monuments repaired. This is the large stone cairn erected in memory of Charles McCue, the world’s oldest mason. I have reached out to the two local lodges to see if they can make this happen.

IDCI will be borrowing our 6 sections of the Canterbury dance stage, for this year’s Relay for Life event happening this week.

The application forms for our annual CMOG grant have just been revealed so Jordan and I will have to be working on that before the end of June.

Coming Events & Activities

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| June 18 | Doors Open Ingersoll |
| June 20-23 | Class visits from St. Jude School |
| June 21 | Presentation on Life in Ingersoll 70 years ago for Lorne Bowman Night |
| June 22 | Interview with Rogers TV about Arti-facts 2 Art exhibiton |
| June 23 | Woodingford Lodge presentation |
| June 28 | Ingersoll Kiwanis Harvest Market meeting |
| July 5 | McKee Family Reunion |
| July 16 | Artifacts 2 Art show opens |
| July 25 | “A Place to Grow” exhibition opens |
| July 30 | Driftwood Theatre returns to Ingersoll with their production of HENRY V |