

# Yesteryears

The Newsletter of The Burk's Falls and District Historical Society



VOLUME 1

Fall 2017

NUMBER 1



## Watt Century Farm House Heritage Centre's 150<sup>th</sup> Canada celebration.

Early this summer we held the Canada 150 celebration at the Watt Century Farm House located at 827 Chetwynd Road in Burks Falls, and it was a huge success. After a week of no sun, we finally had a beautiful sunny day to hold our celebration for Canada. The historical society was fortunate enough to host about 300 visitors and have around 13 exhibits to attend. This event featured the touch-a-truck, wagon rides by Hammonds and various refreshments, also a free barbeque paid for by the Township of Armour hosted by the Girl Guides. Each of our vendors brought their smiling faces, and some advice to share with each and every person who came out to our event. We also had inflatable games and a bouncy barn for the kids. Throughout the day almost every child had been down at the bouncy barn at one point or another. CN Railway also joined our fun with a booth, showcasing their programs and giving out train safety books, and train blow whistles' to the kids. We were also happily joined by the reptile adventure camp who brought their many friends, including a bearded dragon, a python, an albino snake, snapping turtle, and a baby alligator. Everyone was happy to see the smiles on the children's faces when they felt the smoothness of the snake. We happily welcomed the Trans Canada pipelines, and Arnold Hall who brought many furs and pelts for everyone to see, and feel. The Township of Armour handed out tree saplings to everyone who walked past. The MNR and the Fire Department discussed safety with their displays. We all had the time of our lives at the Canada 150<sup>th</sup> event. Every child joined into the fun at our celebration along with their parents, and grandparents. The members, and volunteers had a blast as well. They all joined in on the bouncy barn fun, as if there were all children again. Everyone enjoyed the day. The historical society would like to thank everyone who came out for the family festivities and helped support the heritage centre at this awesome event. We couldn't have put on this event without the support of our community, our members and volunteers of the heritage society and the Township of Armour. Without you, our 150<sup>th</sup> celebration would not be as successful as it was.



## Thank you

A huge thank you to Linda for her years of dedication to the historical society, we thank her for everything that she has done over the last sixteen years. We all hope you have a wonderful time moving on to the next stage of your life.

## Bike rack donated from Home Building Centre

We would like to thank Home Building Centre in Burks Falls for donating us a bike stand for our heritage centre. We are now able to have more people on their bikes stop by. We are able to hold six bikes at a time. So thank you for your support to our heritage centre at the Watt Farm House.



## Have you heard?

Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a few days. Someone walking along could mistake them as dead and prepare them for burial. They would be laid out on the kitchen table for a few days, the family would gather around, eat and drink and wait and see if the body would wake up. Hence the custom holding a wake.

In England they started to run out of space to bury people. So to avoid running out of space they dug the coffins up from past deaths and moved the bones to a bone house, and reused the grave. When they opened the coffins 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside, at this point they realised they were burying people alive. They began to tie a string around the wrist of the corpse, that would lead through a hole in the coffin and up through a hole in the ground, the string was attached to a bell. Someone would sit in the grave yard at night (the grave yard shift). They would listen for the bell. Thus someone could be

“Saved by the bell”.

## Kid's Day Program 2017

As summer began so did the kid's day program for 2017. With the help of Diane Brandt and Jessica Fraser we made a great impression on the kids of Burks Falls. We often have the same kids come back week after week to experience more fun games and history of the area. Every week we have a new child or two joining our program. We have done so many cool activities and games like drop the hanky, doll making, obstacle courses, tie dye, candle making and so much more. Each child leaves the Watt Farm House Heritage Centre with a smile on their face and even a new friend or two. We have been fortunate enough to have beautiful weather for the last several weeks and we hope that Mother Nature will keep up with this nice weather for us. Starting on the 12 of July and ending on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August we hope that our kid's program will keep doing well and we can proceed with it in the years to come. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of August we held the first ever tie dye day at the Watt Farm House, over twenty children attended and participated. Parents, children, and our staff all had a great day.



### Did You Know

There is a new business in town known as the "Landmark Pub and Eatery". What a wonderful name. It is located in the basement level of the old hotel central. This iconic building has gone through a lot of changes over the years but presently stands empty proudly overlooking the center of our village. It has also gone through many name changes over the years, such as the Dominion Hotel, Hotel Central and others. It had a beautiful lobby with a polished wooden staircase to the upper floors. The large newels that were at the bottom of the stairs are now in storage at the Wiseman's Corner Schoolhouse.

I remember when the hotel was the center of activity on a Saturday night, when men would sit and talk of the week's work and the women and children shopped and talked to all the store owners on the main street. They would all meet later in the hotel lobby for the trip home. This was when beverage rooms were only for men. How things have changed! Wouldn't it be lovely if the new owners had the Canadian flag flying once again from the top of the hotel to show there is new life in our old village, and if they could find a way to resurrect the upper floors to make an old building proud to thrive again. This could be a main attraction once again. If you happen to have any old stories about the hotels please send them to me and we will print them in our upcoming newsletter.

Lorne main P.O. Box 595, Burks Falls,  
Ontario P0A1C0

### Mission

The mission of the Burk's Falls and District Historical Society is to restore, preserve and maintain the historic and cultural sites and buildings dedicated to the history of Burk's Falls and surrounding areas. To educate the public about the history of Burk's Falls by restoring historical buildings and to exhibit artifacts, publications, photographs and documents of historical significance to Burk's Falls and surrounding areas.

### Become a Member or Volunteer

The Historical Society was established in 1994 and now has two heritage sites: Wiseman's Corner Schoolhouse and the Watt Century Farm House. The Burk's Falls and District Historical Society relies on a group of dedicated volunteers to operate the two Heritage Centres.

New members are always welcome or you may only want to volunteer at one of our events. Students are also welcome to volunteer at our events for their student hours.

**For more information to become a member or to volunteer email us at [info@burksfallsdistricthistoricalsociety.com](mailto:info@burksfallsdistricthistoricalsociety.com)**

**You can also visit our website at [www.burksfallsdistricthistoricalsociety.com](http://www.burksfallsdistricthistoricalsociety.com)**

A membership form is also attached to this newsletter.

### Upcoming events

Watch for our upcoming events, such as our cookies with Mrs. Claus in December and our Halloween event, in October. Dates to be announced.

# Membership Form



Year: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please complete the form below to enroll as a member of the  
Burk's Falls and District Historical Society.**

A Membership is good for one (1) calendar year and is renewed each March 1st.  
Fees are subject to change.

**Please check (✓) desired category for membership**

	Individual Annual	\$ 10		Students Annual	\$ 7
	Family Annual	\$ 20			

**Please include your email address.**

**If an email address is not provided, correspondence will occur by regular mail.**

Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Methods: Cash, Cheques (payable to Burk's Falls and District Historical Society)

Please drop off form and payment to either museum or mail to the address above.

Thank-you!

----- **Office Use Only:** -----

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Cash: \_\_\_\_\_ Cheque #: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



Burk's Falls and District Historical Society · P.O. Box 463 · Burk's Falls, ON · POA 1C0  
Telephone: 705-571-3308 · Email: info@burksfallsdistricthistoricalsociety.com