

# HERITAGE HAPPENINGS



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## Membership fees are due.



## September Public Meeting

### Motorcycles in the Provost Corps and Military Police Branch

By ROBERT G. THOMAS

At 15 years of age, this month's speaker, Bob Thomas joined the Militia and served with the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps. In 1960 he joined the regular army, serving with the Canadian Provost Corps. Initially deployed in Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes, in 1964, Bob completed a tour of duty with the United Nations Forces in Cyprus. The following year he returned to the Middle East, serving with the United Nations Emergency Force in Camp Rafah, Egypt, Gaza, Palestine and detached duty in Beirut, Lebanon.

Bob left the armed forces in 1968 and joined the Belleville City Police Force. Along with his regular police duties, he set up an Underwater Search and Recovery Squad.

Join us for Bob's presentation of his book, and his passion, *Motorcycles in the Provost Corp and Military Police Branch*.



\*\*\*Note Change in Venue\*\*\*

### Royal Canadian Legion

79 Hamilton St. N.

Friday, September 28, 2018

8 PM

Free admission All are welcome!

BRING A FRIEND!!! Cash Bar

## FLAMBOROUGH FUN FACTS

Long time residents of Waterdown will know Rosemary Mills, and her quirky sense of humour. But did you know she was renowned for her "Down With Winter" Parties during the '70's?

At one party, Rosie's guests were teamed up and then sent on a Scavenger Hunt through the village. Out go the guests, chattering through the streets. Hither and yon, the teams split up to cover more area.

An item on the list was to find the name commemorated on the fountain in front of Memorial Hall. Off scurries a party-goer to get to the fountain before his opponents.

"F.W. Crooker, it's F.W. Crooker" shouted the hunter in glee! Imagine his surprise when complete strangers turned and said "We are quite happy to meet you, Mr. Crooker!"



## The Telephone in Waterdown

Heritage Paper #275

Six years and fifty kilometers from where the world's first long distance phone call from Brantford, Ontario to Paris, Ontario was made by Alexander Graham Bell, the village of Waterdown, Ontario received its first telephone installation. In the year 1881, a temporary office of the Hamilton and Toronto Telephone Co. was established at Michael Doyle's Hotel (now the American House). One year later, the first telephone in Waterdown was installed in J.T. Stock's store at Mill and Dundas Streets on May 8<sup>th</sup> 1882.



A  
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was installed, meaning that two Hamilton-Toronto lines were looped in and out of the store. This way station was used for testing, but was also available to the public as a pay telephone service, with rates as of July 1883, 15 cents for the surrounding areas of Dundas, Hamilton, Palermo, and Springfield, and higher charges – quoted at approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  cents per mile – were given for calls placed to more distant places. On top of this, there was a message charge of one cent per word, which increased to two cents per word in November that same year.

In 1898, Stock closed his business, leaving only the telephone toll office in the building. His son managed the office until 1900, when Mr. G. Reid took over the shop for his harness business, and therefore inherited the toll office as well.

In 1905, an additional line was extended from Hamilton to Waterdown, and in 1908 expansion began with permission secured to use the roads, the territory was canvassed, lines built, and telephones and switchboards installed. The main switchboard was placed upstairs over Harry

Hore's confectionary store, on the corner of Dundas St. and Franklin St., but the number of North Wentworth Telephone (N.W.T.) Company subscribers increased so rapidly that the telephone business quickly interfered with Mr. Hore's business. Charles S. Burns was hired to manage the exchange. Charlie Burns was the Agent, officially, but also acted as the operator, bookkeeper, cashier, auditor, salesman, collector, janitor, and messenger – meaning that he frequently had to drive out into the country to notify persons without telephones that a long-distance call was awaiting them at the office. Utilizing the operator in 1910 was infinitely more personal and informal than it is today. Both the subscribers and operator would call each other by their first name, and no one but strangers would ask for the faded, worn, nearly indistinct telephone numbers printed on the drops, as the operator was much more accustomed to names over numbers. The operator, often with hours of spare time, watched the village activities through the office windows and became quite accustomed to the habits of the subscribers. As a result, responses such as "You'll not get Bill now, he's at the barber shop" or "George must be sick today; I didn't see him take his morning walk" became commonplace.

One of the big moments in Waterdown telephone history was when the local Member of Parliament called Ottawa. Neither Burns nor the operator, nor Hamilton – which was the primary source of all telephone knowledge for Waterdown – were sure that a call at that distance could be done. With the understanding that success was not certain, the call was attempted. Operators in Hamilton, Toronto, and Kingston remained on the line to relay the weak signals in loud voices, and in 1910 the call was a success – and one that didn't require too much yelling – and became the highlight of all local conversation for quite some time. Because of business differences, the owners of the N.W.T. Company dissolved partnership, with Mr. Reinke taking over the Ancaster exchange, and Mr. Shaver retaining the Waterdown and Freelon offices. On August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1912, Mr. Shaver sold his 352 telephones and one hundred miles of line to the Bell Telephone Company, who have

owned and operated the plant ever since. The Waterdown office remained, with its 45 lines, in the same location until 1921 when it moved across the road to the northeast corner of Dundas St. and Main St. A three-year lease was signed for the premises, but within the first year, disaster struck. On April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1922, a storm broke down nearly all of the Waterdown rural lines, and within two months of this happening, the office was burned down.

On May 23<sup>rd</sup>, Foreman Hout and his line gang of the Eastern Division were working on storm



repairs near the village when they spotted the smoke. They rushed back into the village to find most of the business section burning, and Charlie Burns – who had rushed out of the barber shop mid-haircut when the alarm was given – and his two nieces trying to maintain order at the telephone office. Dorothy and Hazel Burns remained at their posts, relaying calls for assistance. They waited there until the telephone building itself began to burn, and only when it was certain that the building could not be saved,

they left, carrying with them their operator's sets, chairs, and toll tickets. Bell Telephone Company presented each of them with a gold watch, commemorating them for their bravery and coolness in the midst of the tense situation.

Charlie Burns made arrangements for storage space in the American Hotel stables while Foreman Hout chopped the switchboard cables and carried the board down the stairs and stored it in the stables, out of the range of the fire. Two telephones were commandeered, mounted, and connected to the two Hamilton toll lines within three hours of cutting off the switchboard.

Damage was surveyed and arrangements for temporary quarters in the Kirk house were made, and reconstruction began. Within 3 days, the burned poles and cables were replaced, the switchboard was reconnected, and full time service was restored.

The "temporary quarters" in the Kirk House remained until 1929, when Charlie Burns built a combined Post Office and Telephone Office on the west side of Main St. just north of the Kirk House. The building still remains there this day (2018), better known as the Village Fish and Chips.

Dial service was introduced on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1955 – the switching procedure taking no longer than two minutes total – and Direct Distance Dialing (DDD) in 1961.

by Shauna Deathe  
Student Archivist

*The Society lost a lifelong friend and Charter Member on 15 July 2018.*

**Margaret Vance** passed peacefully in her 87th year.

Margaret was a proud product of the east end of Hamilton (Garside Avenue), and a graduate of Delta High School. She was an enthusiastic member of the Class of '55 at McMaster University; in 2015 Margaret and Peter were honoured with the Distinguished Service Award from the McMaster Alumni Association. Margaret worked as a title searcher after completing her BA, but soon began a fifty-year career as a full-time volunteer. She was one of a group of remarkable Waterdown women who made things happen in the village – the Canadian Red Cross Society, Arts Flamborough, Animal Aid, the Waterdown-East Flamborough Heritage Society, the Waterdown Centennial, strawberry socials, walkathons, fashion shows, and a host of activities through Grace Anglican Church. She was also active in the Anglican Diocese of Niagara, and was a past chair of the Wentworth Library Board. Margaret was a passionate knitter, a life-long cat lover, a discerning art collector, an avid spectator of curling, and a patient fan of the Toronto Blue Jays.





# THREADS THROUGH THE PAST

By Lyn Lunsted,

## Waterdown Bowling Club

Long before internet, television and video games, recreation tended to be more physical. People interacted with each other and played a lot of team sports.

The Waterdown Lawn Bowling Club called itself the “Recreational Centre of Waterdown”. In 1929 the business men of Waterdown decided to get together and form a lawn bowling club. On July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1929, a meeting was held and a committee appointed to acquire a suitable location for a bowling green. The Village of Waterdown had purchased the old school grounds on Main Street South with the stipulation that a portion of this land be used as a bowling green, with the grounds to be put in shape by the Bowling Club. The land was later purchased by Mr. Oscar Sealey and donated to the village for a park (Sealey Park). The minutes of April 29, 1930 contain a motion “that a letter of appreciation be sent to Mr. Sealey thanking him for his arrangement in having part of the property purchased for a park set aside for a bowling green”.

The first bowling enjoyed by the members was in August 1930. The August 1930 minutes contain a motion “that the Clergy, School Teachers and Motor Officer be allowed to bowl for the balance of the season on payment of a five dollar fee”. In 1931 the green was lengthened on the East and West side to bring it to 110 feet.

A ladies club was formed about the same time and they worked with the men’s club, promoting social events and tournaments.

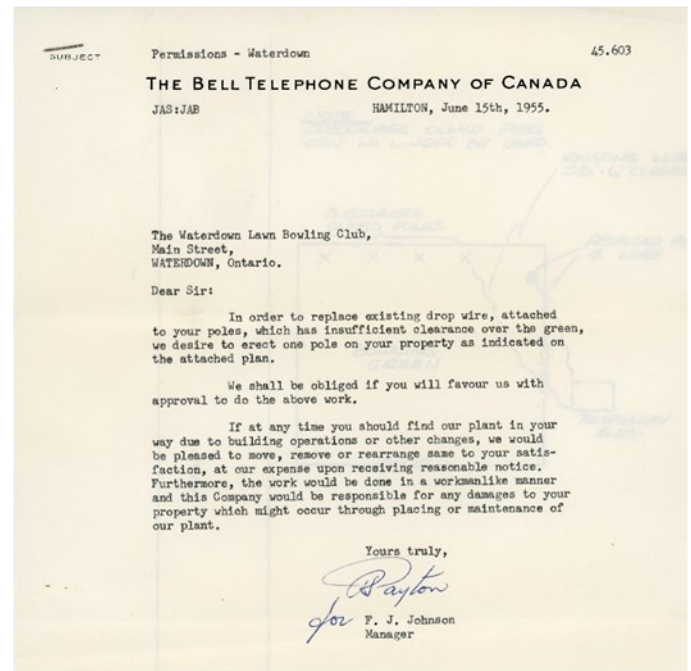


Early Lawn bowling club—location unknown

During the 1940’s there are numerous mentions in the minutes of holding meetings in various places, including the Nicholson & Stetler Jam factory in hopes of recruiting new members. In 1953 it was voted to have a lady representative on the Greens Committee.

In 1955 a motion was passed at the annual meeting that every businessman in Waterdown be approached in regards to becoming a member, as membership was very low.

Members were responsible for the upkeep of the grounds and they took their jobs very seriously. An invoice from 1952 from R. Hibberd shows a charge for gasoline and oil, and 36 ½ hours of labour at .80 per hour to cut the grass for a total of \$31.90. However he also indicated that he would “cut the grass at no charge for the balance of the season as a duty of a Member in Good Standing”.



Although there are still active lawn bowling clubs in Canada, the sport invokes impressions of a simpler time and a gentler, more polite way of life. An example of this is a letter from Bell Telephone in 1955 indicating that they needed to replace a pole on the property and wanted approval to do the work. They also promised that “If at any time you should find our plant in your way due to building operations or other changes, we would be pleased to move, remove or rearrange same to your satisfaction, at our expense upon receiving reasonable notice. Furthermore, the work would be done in a workmanlike manner and this Company would be responsible for any damages to your property which might occur”.

Our records for this club end in 1958 and we do not know how much longer it was in existence. Some of the invoices from 1958 are for lawn seed and other services so presumably it continued on for at least that season. It seems unlikely that it will be resurrected—the bowling green is now a children’s playground.

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## TREASURES FROM THE ARCHIVES



The Archives is very pleased to be the recipient of two beautiful prints by area artist, Brian Darcy. Life member Dana Purvis brought these lovely pictures into the Archives and they are now on display. Make a point of visiting us soon.

Thank you Dana for your generosity, and continued support of the Society.



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### Land Measurement Guidelines (for Ontario)

The basis of these guidelines is the Gunther chain, which was invented by Edmund Gunther in 1620. Reference: Family Tree Magazine June/July 1994 and other sources.

1 chain=66 feet=4 rods=10 links

A rod is also known as a pole.

10 chains=1 furlong=40 rods=660 feet

80 chains= 8 furlongs= 1 mile=5280 feet

1 acre = 10 square chains=43560 square feet

Streets were laid out one (1) chain wide

25 links= 1 pole=1 rod

1 link =  $79 \frac{2}{10}$  inches

Concessions were laid out 100 chains wide: 100 chains=10 furlongs=6600 feet=1 1/4 miles

Lots were usually 20 chains wide (some only 19 chains) 20 chains=2 furlongs=1320 feet=1/4 mile

Each lot was 20x100 chains or 1/4x 1 1/4 miles or 1320x6600 feet=871200 square feet=200 acres

**The Waterdown-East Flamborough  
Heritage Society**

P.O.Box 1044  
163 Dundas Street E.  
Waterdown, ON L0R 2H0

Phone: 905-540-5161

**Society E-mail:**

society@FlamboroughHistory.com

**Archives E-mail:**

archives@FlamboroughHistory.com

**Website:** FlamboroughHistory.com

**Officers 2018–2019**

President: Chris Rivait

1st Vice President:

Corrie Giles

2nd Vice President:

Carol Snell

Secretary: Sue McNally

Treasurer: Lyn Lunsted

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Nathan Tidridge

**Board Members**

Bailey Cripps

Danielle HerrNSTein

Brenda Jefferies

Mary Beth Kennedy

Keri Raphael

Kim Hirst, Newsletter



## NEWS FROM THE SOCIETY

We are looking forward to another great line up of speakers scheduled for this new season. We have moved our Book Fair up two weeks to Saturday October 20<sup>th</sup>, so we will not have a speaker in October. We will instead have one in November on the 30<sup>th</sup>. So mark those dates on your calendars!

If you are able to help out with the book fair, we would love to have you! We need people to help serve and prepare lunches in the kitchen, as well as to help setup and take down. And of course, as always, the donation of home baked pies and baked goods would be very much appreciated, so we can have our café going throughout the day.

We cannot wait for the season to start and look forward to seeing you!

Chris Rivait

President

**We have changed our email addresses!**

**Society E-mail:** society@FlamboroughHistory.com

**Archives E-mail:** archives@FlamboroughHistory.com

These line up with our new website (FlamboroughHistory.com) so it should make it easier to remember.

### AREA SOCIETY WEBSITES

The **Ancaster Township Historical Society** -

[www.ancasterhistory.ca](http://www.ancasterhistory.ca)

The **Burlington Historical Society** -

[www.burlingtonhistorical.ca](http://www.burlingtonhistorical.ca).

The **Dundas Valley Historical Society** -

[Www.dundashistory.ca](http://Www.dundashistory.ca)

The **Grimsby Historical Society** -

[Grimsby Historical Society](http://Grimsby Historical Society).

The **Hamilton Historical Board** -

[www.hamiltonhistoricalboard.ca](http://www.hamiltonhistoricalboard.ca)

The **Head-of-the-Lake Historical Society** -

[Head of the Lake Historical Society](http://Head of the Lake Historical Society)

The **United Empire Loyalists' Association of**