



Newcastle Village and District Historical Society

20 King Avenue West • Newcastle • Ontario • L1B 1H7



The Newcastle Community Hall 100th anniversary celebrations kicked off on July 1, 2022 with the laying of the cornerstone event. Special guests included four descendants of Newcastle residents who were involved in the creation of the community hall in 1922; Brian Jose, grandson of Harry Jose (village councillor), Don Colwill, grandson of Albert Amos (A.A.) Colwill, (former Reeve of Newcastle), Lynda MacGregor, great granddaughter of George Eilbeck, (furniture maker, Board of Education member, municipal tax collector), and Jean Rickard, daughter of Harvey Bonathan (Newcastle Village Clerk for several decades) who celebrated her own 100th birthday in August.

President's Message

Dear Members and Friends,

Happy Autumn - my favourite time of year. The 2022 Orono Fair had record-breaking crowds, and Bill Lake, a great friend of the Society, won the tractor pull at the Fair. The NVDHS had a booth at the Fair focused on the 100th anniversary of the Community Hall and it was fantastic. Thank you to Leslie Wilson, Erla Jose, Sher Leetooze and many others who were instrumental in making this event a huge success.



The NVDHS is now open to the Public every Tuesday morning and Saturday morning from 9:30 a.m. to noon. We are proud to be accessible to the public through our Instagram, Facebook, email, and website and know that you enjoy our posts and updates. We research family history, house history, business history and any other local history that may be of interest to you or your organization.

We are fortunate to receive donations that are relevant to Newcastle history and provide a safe and secure location for artifacts and documents that tell the story of our village and surrounding area. Thank you for all donations. Our curators have been particularly busy during the past 6 months as we have received an amazing collection of artifacts and articles that are of great value to our history from the estate of the late Jack Gordon. A heartfelt thank you to the Gordon family.

Our digitization project continues and we are grateful to have received many generous donations from our business community, government and individuals. Thank you. As a registered charity we issue charitable receipts for all donations. You can donate online through our website. (newcastlehistorical.ca). All monies received will be used in continuing our digitization project. Our goal is to digitize all documents and artifacts under the stewardship of our Society and to allow access to our historical information to everyone.

So far in 2022, your NVDHS has participated in the July 1 "Cornerstone" celebration (100th anniversary of the Community Hall), the Victorian tea party event in August, and the Orono Fair, and we are looking forward to the Newcastle Harvest Festival on October 1. Thank you to everyone who has aided in our successes at these events.

Remembrance Day is always an event that the NVDHS supports and includes special tributes to our local Veterans. We are honoured to sponsor a banner this year for Ken Stephenson, a lifelong Newcastle resident and a Veteran of WWII. Please take a moment to walk along King Ave. during October and November and view the banners and honour our Veterans.

A huge thank you to our Board, volunteers and stakeholders. You are terrific.

Thomas Wallace

Carveth Motors and the Old Fire Hall

By Myno Van Dyke

Recently, our former Newcastle Fire Hall on King Avenue East was demolished. The building became the local firehall just after the establishment of the Region of Durham in 1974. The Village needed a new firehall and of course, the usual issue was coming up with enough money to build one.

A local real estate agent, Patsy Reid, had listed the former Carveth Motors building and made a sales pitch to what was then the "Town of Newcastle" (later called the Municipality of Clarington). The Carveth Motors location was perfect, and the former Ford/Mercury dealership was in relatively good condition, so a deal was made and it became the new Newcastle Fire Hall.

Upcoming Events

Community Hall 100th Anniversary Celebrations

Come celebrate the 100th birthday of the Newcastle Community Hall. Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more info.

December 31, 2022

New Year's Dance - complete with band, dinner, and lots of fun.

July 29, 2023

Main celebration of 100th anniversary including street festival, art, music and much more.

Newcastle Harvest Festival

October 1, 2022

Join us at the Harvest Festival to 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for a day of family fun. King Ave., downtown Newcastle.

Remembrance Day 2022

November 11, 2022

Remembrance Day ceremonies 10:30 - 11:30 a.m., 20 King Ave. W. The Historical Room will have a special display for the entire month of November - and we will be open on November 11 from 10 a.m. to noon.

Santa Parade

November 20, 2022

5:30-7:30 p.m.

Newcastle's Santa downtown Santa Parade returns!

In 1948, Rodney Carveth, formerly of MacSwain Motors in Acton, Ontario, purchased the BA gas station on the north side of King from Mr. Harold Carr. Around 1953 Carveth had a “dispute” with the BA company and sold the garage (I believe it was to Eastman Steeves). He moved across the road, where he took over a small garage, expanded it with extra bays and also included an apartment upstairs for himself and his family. This became Carveth Motors, with a Ford/Mercury franchise. Mr. Carveth retired around 1974 and eventually moved to the Peterborough area.



Carveth Motors

When the Town of Newcastle purchased the property in 1974, it was refitted for a “volunteer” fire hall. Eventually the fire trucks got almost too large to fit in the doors with only an inch or two of clearance. In 2014, a new replacement fire hall was built on the south side of King, just east of Cobbledick Road.



Former Newcastle Fire Hall (1974-2014)

The Municipality of Clarington utilized the old building for storage, and the parking area in front was also used for a number of years as a turnaround for the GO bus. In 2021 the building was demolished.

Keeping Newcastle neat for over 100 years

By Crystal Yaki & Paddy Duncan

One of Newcastle’s longest-running community organizations, the Newcastle Horticultural Society was created and joined the Ontario Horticultural Association in 1914. Adopting the smooth wild rose as their emblem and “Newcastle the Neat” as their slogan, horticultural society members have shared their love of gardening and made a significant contribution to various gardens across Newcastle for over 100 years.



The NHS operates as an all-volunteer, registered charity. The first president was Newcastle doctor Dr. John A. Butler, who also chaired the Building Committee for the new Community Hall (celebrating its 100th birthday this year and next) and served as village Reeve in the 1920s.

The society’s activities have long been intertwined with the Newcastle Community Hall, from early planting efforts to major capital projects. In 2011, the society partnered with the Newcastle Community Hall Board and Clarington to create a Heritage Garden at the hall.

They applied for government funding and received a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation for \$123,400, with the agreement that an additional \$75,000 had to come from the community to complete the project. Fundraising events were held, and other volunteer community groups assisted in raising the additional funds. Along with planting and enlarging the hall gardens, the fountain that was previously donated by the Rickard family was moved to the southeast corner of the building, an irrigation system, and a patio and a new main walkway into the hall were installed. These are just some of the highlights of the Heritage Garden. The society members' commitment, dedication and passion made the project a true success.



Gardens at Newcastle Community Hall

The Heritage Garden may have been the horticultural society's largest endeavour in the past century, but their efforts to beautify Newcastle began soon after they were established. In 1919, shrubs and annual flowers were planted at four churches and the village school, and window boxes and planting were provided to the post office on the East corner of King and Mill Street. Two flower beds were planted at the Grand Trunk Railroad (now CN), and members raked and burned brush along the lakeshore and arranged for bath houses to be built in 1920.

MARCH 23, 1922

NEWCASTLE FLOWER SHOW

The third Annual Flower Show of the Newcastle Horticultural Society was held on Friday, March 17th in the Methodist S. S. Hall, and was generally conceded to be the "best yet". The number of entries were equal to former years, and the quality of the exhibits was a big improvement on former years.

The attendance was larger than former shows, and the "Tea", well, it is an old saying that if you want a good supper go to Newcastle and the ladies sure lived up to their reputation. The quantity and quality of pies, tarts, cakes, sandwich, salads and all the rest of the bill of fare left nothing to be desired.

Judge Baldwin of Toronto placed the awards and gave general satisfaction. Not a single complaint was registered against his decisions.

After supper Mr. Baldwin gave an illustrated talk on back yard vegetable gardening and the arranging of the flower garden so as to secure a continuity of bloom from early spring to the late autumn. Mr. Baldwin's talk was much enjoyed and no doubt the results will be apparent in Newcastle gardens this coming season.

Also in 1919, 269 society members received plants and spring bulbs which were delivered by Reverend Fennin in his pony cart and Mr. T. Moffat on his horse. The Newcastle Village Council started giving the Society an annual grant – the first grant was \$10.

The first annual show and tea was held in the Methodist Sunday School, on March 26, 1919, with a silver cup donated by President Dr. J.A. Butler, awarded for the best specimen in the show. In a just a few years, the horticultural society's shows and social events became extremely popular, with hundreds of attendees.

In April, 1920, 150 hardwood and nut trees (chestnut and walnut) were planted throughout the area and in September, 20 hemlock and 20 spruce were planted in the village park. Picnic tables were built with lumber from the village, and they and a park fence were installed at the lake park.

The Annual show in August 1921 offered classes in baking, preserving, and canning vegetables. The baking class had a fee to help the Society with show expenses. Show ribbons with the society's wild rose emblem were given as prizes to the first six winners in each class. A Grand Challenge cup was purchased and given for the most points won in the show. The Bond Head flower beds were first planted in 1921.

The Society built a pergola at the entrance to the village park in 1923 and planted climbing roses and clematis at the posts. The first Spring Flower Show was held on June 1, and a peony and lily show on July 6. A silver Chester Massey cup was donated and used

as the prize for the second highest points won in the show. An "At Home" with cards and dancing was held in October and a Masquerade Ball on New Year's night.

To commemorate the coronation of King George VI on May 12, 1937, the society received a gift of royal oak seedlings from The Men of the Trees society in the UK, which were planted in several locations in the village. One was planted at the old Newcastle Public School in a well-attended ceremony celebrating the coronation. That oak is no longer standing. In another ceremony attended by the horticultural society on the evening before, a royal oak seedling and a 12-foot Schwedler Purple Maple were planted at the park between the Community Hall and what is now the CIBC. The oak tree is now gone, but the maple is still there. Two other royal oaks survive from 1937: one on the north side of Wilmot St. and the other on Edward St., just west of the Anglican church.



One of the meeting speakers in 1939 was Dr. A.H. Richardson, a forester from Toronto, who spoke to the Society about the reforestation work being done on the Squair farm. At the time, Dr. Richardson was the Forester in Charge of Reforestation in Ontario – he would go on to lead the 1944 study of the then-denuded and eroded agricultural land north of Port Hope. The study became a landmark in Conservation literature and resulted in the establishment of the Ganaraska Forest and the beginning of the Green Belt in Ontario.

Dedicated to the encouragement of all horticultural pursuits and to the protection of the natural environment, several current Newcastle members have been recognized for important service contributions over the years. In 2002, Jean Rickard received the Queen's Jubilee Recognition for 50 years of service, Theodore Welter received the 2001 Volunteer of the Year award and in 2002, a Queens Jubilee Recognition. Narda Hoogkamp, now 62 years with the Society, received the award for Junior Leader of Ontario from the OHA, and Victoria Lesnick, received an Ontario 50 Year Volunteer service award in 2011. Dorella Forget, who is also very active in other community organizations, has volunteered for over 40 years with Newcastle Horticultural Society.

The Horticultural Society meets four or five times a year in the fully accessible main auditorium at the Newcastle Community Hall. Each meeting features a themed/seasonal flower show, with members exhibiting plants, flowers, and arrangements in different categories, judged by OHA-certified judges, with small prizes awarded. Meetings start with refreshments and feature a speaker; sometimes a Master Gardener or a local nursery owner on subjects ranging from growing herbs to how to get the best from your garden to the "plant of the year." The pre-Christmas dinner is a highlight of the year – for the past several years it has been held at the New Massey House restaurant.



Newcastle Horticultural Society members

The Horticultural Society has made a wonderful contribution to the gardens at the Community Hall and the various gardens within the community over the last century. They continue to share their love for gardening and as many of the members have gotten older, they can no longer care for the gardens the way they used to. As a result, current president Jeany Barrett is looking for individuals who share the same passion and spirit to join the society and continue to grow their legacy forward. Contact Jeany at jeany@rogers.com or call her at 905-987-1746.

Farncomb Le Gresley, 1926-2022

By Myno Van Dyke

It's always a shock when we lose someone like Farncomb "Farny" Le Gresley. He was someone who you thought would be there forever. My involvement with the Newcastle Village & District Historical Society started in 1999 and one of the first people I met was Farny. He could speak on any subject, especially history, politics, sailing, electronics and farming. He had a number of interesting jobs, working at the dairy, farming, Bell Canada technician and Science Teacher.

I once had Farny as a guest speaker for a group I co-ordinate, East Clarington Men's Breakfast. His topic was "Ham Radios". It was fascinating to say the least and he kept everyone enthralled with a topic that I really wondered about. This was classic Farny, infectious smile and laugh, and a born teacher. He would often phone me and suggest topics for speakers. For years, it was to get someone to speak on "hydrogen power," which he believed was a much better alternative fuel for vehicles. He was a great proponent of "green" energy.

Over the years, Farny and his wife Nancy donated many items to our Historical Society, but the one that really intrigued me was the computer that he built back in the early 1980s. This was before most people even knew what a home computer really was. Rumour had it that he had actually phoned Bill Gates and asked him for advice when he was putting it all together.

In our Cecil Carveth movie collection, we have a film of Farny when he was around 12 years of age with a lawnmower that he had built. It was a typical push mower of the day with an engine attached cutting the massive lawn at his family home, Ebor House, on Mill Street South in Bond Head. Also on that video is Farny getting a very overweight dog to jump up on a stool.

Recently, when our member Crystal Yaki posted a wonderful interview with Farny, she received many messages from people who remember him as their fantastic teacher at Bowmanville High School. This teaching never really stopped with Farny as he was always eager to show you something or tell you something that he thought you would enjoy hearing about.

This past summer, Greg St. Amand and I visited Farny to pick up the milk bottle capping machine (story elsewhere in this issue). He wasn't standing around waiting for us, he was out mowing the orchard in this huge mower. Finally, he pulled in wearing his blue jeans, blue jean jacket, Nike runners, Stihl orange hard hat, full goggles, large safety earmuffs and heavy duty gloves. He shut off the mower, gave us a big smile and said, "help me get off this." He immediately gave us a history lesson on the old bottle capper and anything else in the shed that we asked about.



Farny on his garden tractor, 2022.

and said, "help me get off this." He immediately gave us a history lesson on the old bottle capper and anything else in the shed that we asked about.

I think that Farncomb LeGresley made an incredible impact on many people, not only because of his intelligence, but his wonderful personality and his ear-to-ear smile and a laugh that was uniquely his. I know he was thrilled when their daughter Kathy finished her book about her Great Grand Aunt Dora Farncomb. When amateur ham radio operators finish a conversation they say, "over and out." This means that you are finished speaking and that you are handing the conversation over to the other party. I can hear him say it now, "Over and out." We will miss you Farny...

Ken Stephenson Gets a Banner

By Myno Van Dyke

Many of you have probably noticed the beautiful red banners that go up in our community in November. These banners are put up by the Royal Canadian Legion to pay tribute to local veterans and over the past few years have been proudly displayed in communities all over Canada. They are supported financially by the soldier's family and friends. This year, the Newcastle Village & District Historical Society decided to sponsor one of our earliest members, Kenneth Haig Stephenson.

Kenneth Haig Stephenson was born in Toronto on December 5, 1917. His parents chose his middle name "Haig" naming him after Field Marshal Douglas Haig (WW1). In 1927, Ken and his family moved to what is now "Stephenson Road" just east of Newcastle.

At the beginning of World War 2 in 1939, Ken signed up and went to Camp Borden in Ontario for basic training. The following year, he applied to the Royal Canadian Air Force and was stationed at Manning Park in Toronto for training. He did not stay long, as apparently he was deemed "too small" to be a pilot. He was then sent to British Columbia for officer training.

By 1943, he had risen to the rank of 2nd Lieutenant and went to Montreal for wireless training. There he met Kathleen (Kay) Leslie Blott. They were married August 14, 1943, and two days later he was sent to Aldershot, England with the Royal Canadian Armored Corp where he took tank training and then stayed there for the rest of the war as an instructor. He mostly taught how to place and make explosives.



Ken Stephenson at the historical society



He didn't see his wife Kay again until February, 1946 when he finished his service with the rank of Captain. Upon his return from the War, Ken purchased a farm under the Veterans Land Act (V.L.A.) on the south side of the 4th Concession north of Newcastle. They called this farm "Kenkally Farm." He farmed and also worked at General Motors in Oshawa until his retirement. He was active in a number of organizations including the Lion's Club and was an early member of the Newcastle Village & District Historical Society and served as its president. His wife Kay passed away April 29, 1994.

Ken stayed on the farm until September 2007 and then was a resident of the Fosterbrook Long Term Retirement Home in Newcastle. He passed away in Newcastle on June 19, 2008 in his 91st year.

Ken and Kay had one child Leslie Anne (Wilson) who lives in Newcastle and is very active in the Newcastle Village & District Historical Society.

Farny and the bottle capper

By Myno Van Dyke

Recently, our NVDHS member Farncomb "Farny" LeGresley was cleaning out one of the large sheds on his property at Metcalf Street and George Manners in Bond Head. He found an old milk bottle filler and capper from his family's "Newcastle Dairy" business many years ago.

When Farny was about 10 years old (1936), he would use this machine to fill and then cap the milk bottles at the dairy. He said that he would probably do about 300 bottles a day and it was tiring work for a young fellow.

He wondered if NVDHS would be interested in having the item so gave me a call. I went down with my friend, Greg St. Amand and we decided that it was a large, heavy item and not suited for display at our Historical Room in Newcastle. Greg and I are also both members of the Hope Agricultural Heritage Club in Canton and after checking with Earl Ashby, it turns out they did not have one of those at their museum. They were glad to receive it and also indicated that if NVDHS ever wants it for a display, they would be pleased to loan it to us at any time.



In 1928, several companies merged to create the Cherry-Burrell Corporation. At the onset of World War II, four out of every five milk bottles in the country were filled by Cherry-Burrell equipment. After the war, the company expanded its dairy product line to include homogenizers, freezers, and other equipment, along with its filler machines. Since then, Cherry-Burrell equipment has been placed in factories in more than 70 countries

This antique milk bottle filler & capper was made by the Cherry Burrell Dairy Corporation, who patented the first the first centrifugal cream separator in the United States in 1881. The machine was used to bottle and cap quart and pint bottles of milk and milk products, with the capping mechanism using the last patent date of November 30, 1920, and the filler using the last patent date of June 11, 1929.



This appears to be a smaller Model "BB" machine serial number "5938". This particular unit would only fill and cap 2 bottles at a time. The larger units could fill up to 30 bottles a minute. I am sure Farny would have preferred the larger model.

Membership Info

Single Membership

(1 vote):

\$10 - digital newsletter (email)

\$15 - print newsletter

Family Membership

(2 votes):

\$15 - digital newsletter

\$20 - print newsletter

Corporate Membership

(1 vote):

\$25 - digital & print newsletter

Notes:

Memberships are for one year from the date of payment.

Corporate sponsors will be recognized on the NVDHS website, with a link to their website.

Newsletters are published quarterly. Print newsletters will be delivered by mail, or by hand. Those with print memberships can also opt for a digital copy to be emailed.

Memberships can be purchased or renewed online at newcastlehistorical.ca OR by cheque mailed to:
Newcastle Village and District Historical Society
20 King Ave. W., Unit #3
Newcastle, ON L1B 1H7 OR
can be paid in person* at the Historical Room
Newcastle Community Hall
20 King Ave. W.
Newcastle, ON, on Saturday mornings from 9:30 a.m. to 12 noon. (*Tuesday morning openings TBA)

Questions? Email us at info@newcastlehistorical.ca or via our website, newcastlehistorical.ca.