

## HERITAGE CORNER

### Early pioneers of Froomefield honoured with memorial stone

By Bonnie Stevenson

Members of Heritage St. Clair, the Abandoned Cemetery Committee, and several other talented volunteers knowledgeable in the history of the Moore/Sombra area, now St. Clair Township, have been working hard to honour the memories of early local pioneers.

Abandoned cemeteries, where tombstones have been left to crumble and those who lie beneath have long been forgotten, are being tidied and their residents are being identified thanks to this determined group.

The Froomefield Pioneer Cemetery at the corner of Church Street and the St. Clair Parkway in Froomefield has been cleared of the few remaining toppled, illegible stones, which now lay to the side of the yard in a neat pile. Many hours of research by volunteers Glenda Young and Catherine Bouman were required to reveal the names of the people buried there, and those names are now etched into the back of a new memorial stone.

According to Ian Mason, one of the researchers on the project, there are several abandoned cemeteries in the township and the committee had to make a choice as to which one would be worked on first. "We picked the one at Froomefield because of its high visibility and potential viewership once it was enhanced," he said. "The old stones suffered from time and the new stone will maintain the list of names for the future."

Along with the memorial stone, the talents of Jan and Paul Smith were called upon to create a story board outlining the history the pioneer cemetery, once the churchyard of St. Mary's Church.

The Smith's also created the *Kate Bully* story board, which is shown on page 1 during its own dedication event.

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#### Corunna-built ship story board

The new Heritage St. Clair story board at the south end of Guthrie Park tells the tale of the only commercial vessel ever built in Corunna. The *Kate Bully*, a 144-foot long two-masted schooner, was built just south of Guthrie Park at a dock and stocks built specifically for the construction. The schooner's story is one of St. Clair Township's best kept secrets.

It was known to be a fast ship but in 1869, it couldn't outrun a vicious Lake Michigan gale. What happened next? The story board holds the answers.



**Above:** The new Memorial Stone erected in the former St. Mary's Church grounds in Froomefield carries the names of all of the souls who were buried there. Attending the recent dedication of this stone were members of Heritage St. Clair and the Abandoned Cemetery Committee, volunteers, and township representatives. They included, from left: HSC President Dave Patten; Doug White; Dave Taylor; Bob Goodearle; Bob Nicol; Councillor Rose Atkins; Jan Smith; Deputy Mayor Steve Miller; Paul Smith; and Mayor Steve Arnold.

**Below:** During the dedication of the memorial stone, a story board, which describes the building and history of St. Mary's Church and its associated churchyard, was also dedicated. The church was built in 1840 with funds raised by Col. Froome Talfourd, who also donated the land. The cemetery is thought to have been in use from 1839 to 1878.

Stevenson photos



#### Heritage St. Clair page features map showing historic plaques and storyboards throughout the township

Heritage St. Clair has updated its page on the St. Clair Township website, and one of the features now on view St. Clair Township's Historic Points of Interest map. This interactive map points out the locations of these colourful and educational installations and includes photographs of them so you'll be sure not to miss them. Here's a link you can use to go directly to St. Clair Township's Historical Points of Interest page:

<http://stclairtownship.ca/st-clair-township-historical-points-of-interest/>

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## MORE HERITAGE CORNER

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### Moore Museum volunteer dinner resumes

Another happy annual event, the Moore Museum volunteer appreciation dinner, resumed on July 12. About 65 volunteers, staff, and township council members gathered at the Corunna United Church to enjoy a scrumptious meal catered by members of the church.

Bottom right: After many months of absence, the volunteers were welcomed back by Museum Curator Fiona Doherty and updated by Dave Taylor on work being done at the museum site. Mayor Steve Arnold thanked the volunteers and staff for preserving local heritage for future generations. A moment of remembrance was observed for six volunteers who had passed away during the pandemic shutdown, including: Eva Dalrymple; June Maginn; Arnold Pole; Reta Wilson; Bryce MacPherson; and Edith Bailey.

Top Right: Museum volunteer Dennis Dudley was one of several appreciative volunteers who returned for seconds.

### New museum members are always welcome!

New members are always welcome at both St. Clair Township museums. For more information email: Sombra Museum, [sombramuseum@gmail.com](mailto:sombramuseum@gmail.com) or Moore Museum, [mooremuseum@stclairtownship.ca](mailto:mooremuseum@stclairtownship.ca).

Stevenson photos



## Train event at Moore Museum- from dinos to Arrows

When the Moore Museum train room caretakers reimagined the 2022 Train Room event, they decided to think outside the box. From a dinosaur park to the future of aviation, this year's event boasted two ambitious new train layouts. The kids got a kick out of the dinosaur park, where a cranky dinosaur roared and glowed red each time a train went by. For the adults, an aviation layout featured a tiny airborne Avro Canada CF-105 Arrow and a glimpse into the future of Canadian space exploration. About 200 people attended the event.



Above: Leon Snider, 7, watches the Dinosaur Park Express evade the attentions of a giant tyrannosaurus-rex.

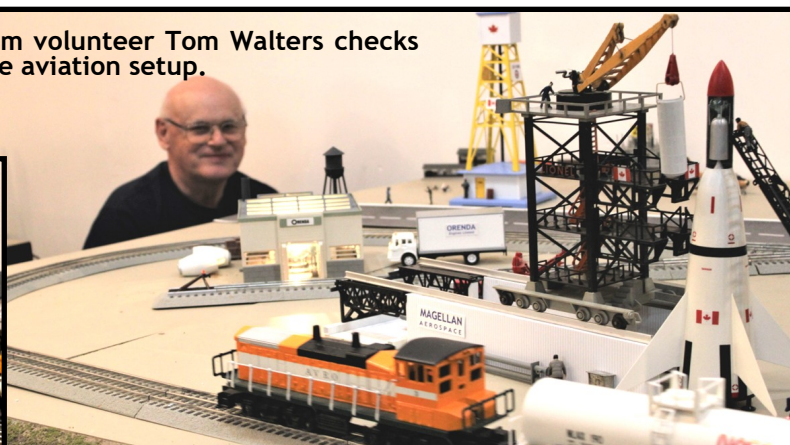


Dinosaur Park Express

An Avro Canada CF-100 Canuck, the interceptor/fighter chase plane for Avro Canada's CF-105 Arrow test flights, is rolled onto the runway.



Museum volunteer Tom Walters checks out the aviation setup.



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## EVEN MORE HERITAGE CORNER

From page 12

### Plaque has meaning for best friends from Port Lambton

Childhood best friends Ben Randell and Mike Brown of Port Lambton went their separate ways as adults, but they both joined the Canadian Coast Guard with different roles to play.

One day, an old nameboard from the Canadian Government lighthouse tender *C.G.S. Lambton*, installed in the lobby of the Parry Sound Coast Guard Base, was recognized as one of the last remaining artifacts from a Canadian Coast Guard ship that met a tragic end in the line of duty.

A large memorial plaque was created to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the loss of the lighthouse supply ship which foundered in Lake Superior during a strong gale near Caribou Island on April 19, 1922. The doomed ship was delivering supplies and personnel to light stations along the lake when it sank with all 22 souls aboard.



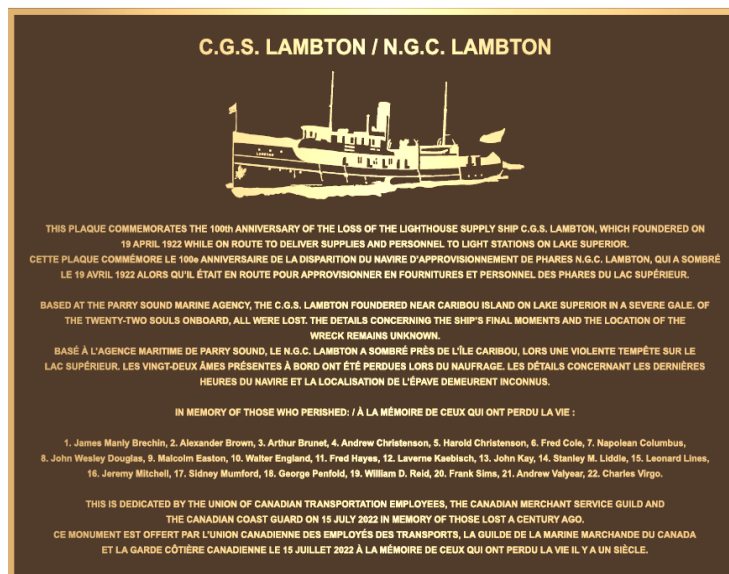
Best friends Ben Randell, Canadian Coast Guard Facility Manager, Real Property, Safety and Security and Mike Brown, Canadian Coast Guard Fleet Safety Officer, Great Lakes Sector, with the commemorative plaque.

*Submitted photo*

On July 15, 2022, the plaque was dedicated by the Union of Canadian Transport Employees, the Canadian Merchant Service Guild, and the Canadian Coast Guard to the memory of those lost a century ago.

In a chilling excerpt from a detailed story about *C.C.S. Lambton*, Mike Brown wrote, "She was last seen by the steamship *Midland Prince* somewhere off Caribou Island. The captain and crew reportedly watched the lighthouse tender battle with giant waves but were unable to render any assistance and, suddenly, the ship disappeared."

According to a map of western Lake Superior that has been marked with the approximate location where the *Lambton* "disappeared", it was found that the ship perished in a sector of the lake where, 53 years later, the *Edmund Fitzgerald* would suffer the same fate.



### *Sombra Museum Blueberry Social - a sweet way to pass a summer day*

The museum's 20th annual Blueberry Social on July 9 was a great success, the first major event the museum has held since the pandemic shutdown. About 65 people attended, enjoying desserts like cheesecake, coffee cake, tarts, bars, blondies and muffins, as well as the traditional social punch. A special treat came from Crystal's Ice Cream Shack of Sombra; super scooper Dave dished out delicious blueberry cheesecake ice cream. In the meeting room, visitors also enjoyed a slideshow highlighting photos from the Social's first 19 years.

This year, the social was held partially outdoors where visitors sat comfortably under shade tents on the Cultural Centre lawn to enjoy a concert by the *Bluewater Chordsmen*. Many visitors also wandered over to visit the Friends of the St. Clair information display

where items such as water bottles, fish lures and reusable straws were being given away, and they could learn more about the St. Clair River.

The museum would like to thank the St. Clair River Trail Committee for the use of their shade tents, as well as the volunteers who came to help out in the morning and afternoon, and to help put up and pack up the tents.

Photo left: Volunteer Shelley Lucier-Lord helped served up an impressive variety of luscious blueberry treats.

Right: The Bluewater Chordsmen entertain an appreciative audience during their lawn concert.

