

# YESTERDAY

News from the Tavistock and District Historical Society

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## A HISTORY OF SCOUTING/GUIDING

Five of the seven Tavistock Scouts who attended the 8th World Scout Jamboree at Niagara-on-the-Lake in August 1955 are seen here with their camping equipment a few minutes after they left the train at Woodstock on returning from the event. From the left are James Sommers, George Appel, Gerald Seltzer, Gordon Fisher, and Terrence Brown.

*Photo courtesy of the Stratford-Perth Archives*

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# Beer, bonnets and boxcars

*Tavistock in 1914 was a bustling hub of commerce*

It was 1914. Crossword puzzles were the new “in thing” and catching on fast. Packaged cigarettes were appearing on store shelves, a big change from rolling your own. Housewives were making the very foreign sounding noodle recipe called fettucini alfredo. In this community dinner was invariably the



## **They had their beer**

*Patrons toast a wedding couple outside the Bauer Hotel. Bartender is Henry Feick, and clockwise, from the left are: Henry Kalbfleisch, Wm. Schaefer, Eckhardt Kalbfleisch, Fred Kalbfleisch, John Olies, Conrad Wilker, John Issler, and Conrad Grein.*

old reliable sauerkraut and sausage and schnitz pie. And, for the men in the house, beer.

Tavistock has always liked its beer.

In 1914 our village boasted slightly over 1,000 people and 4 hotels. The most prominent was the Commercial Hotel,

standing proudly on the five corners where Macs and the Esso station are today. The Commercial was more than just a place to enjoy a brew or two. There were 43 bedrooms for available for rent, a dining room that sat 50 guests and the services of Dr. Beatty, a dentist who set up shop every Wednesday.

Not to be outdone by the dentist at the Commercial Hotel, the Arlington Hotel, just up the street to the north, had a visiting doctor every Tuesday. The Arlington had just renovated the mens' beverage room which now featured a solid oak 24-foot long counter and ice boxes for keeping your beer well chilled. The dining room offered specials such as squirrel dinner, sure to draw a big crowd. In 1914 they arranged for Miss McCormack from the Spirella Corsetiere company to spend a week at the hotel just before Easter fitting out the local women for new bonnets, think again.

Nestled between the Commercial and the Arlington was the Bauer Hotel, a smaller establishment that featured a lunch room and ice

cream parlour along with the usual hotel amenities and rooms for rent.

The one hotel that has truly stood the test of time is the Oxford. The Oxford Hotel (now our Public Library) was built in 1906. The total cost of construction was \$14,000. That's a whopping big amount when you consider that rooms rented for a dollar a day and \$11 a month for regular boarders. In 1914 a schuper of beer cost 5 cents. Whiskey had just doubled in price from 5 cents a glass to 10 cents.

But Tavistock was so much more than simply hotels.

At the end of 1913 the first of many public meetings was held to discuss bringing electricity to the village. A few businesses had their own electric power generators. The issue was whether Tavistock should establish, own and operate its own municipal electric light plant or purchase power from Mr. Field at the Woollen Mill. Some ratepayers questioned whether electricity was even needed. The debate raged on for months and, when finally resolved, took 2 more years to implement.

Much bigger news and generating far more interest in 1914 was the Tavistock Poultry Show. Exhibitors claimed they had never seen such keen competition in every class .... and there were 161 different classes of poultry.

Hot on the heels of the Poultry Show was news of a monthly livestock market sponsored by the Board of Trade. Buyers came from as far away as Montreal. Surprised? Tavistock had quite a reach in 1914. Local horses were eagerly sought after by buyers in Toronto and Montreal. Cattle were regularly shipped by train to Buffalo and Baltimore. Products from the woollen mill could be purchased from Halifax to Vancouver. The Tavistock Flour Mill shipped coast to coast in Canada and operated their own export business to Scotland. Wood from the local forests was shipped to England to build ships and docks.

One hundred years ago, in 1914, you could purchase everything you needed and secure every service you required right here in the village.



*The Poultry Show at the 1914 Tavistock Fall Fair had 161 different classes.*

## **Tavistock & District Historical Society**

37 Maria Street,  
Box 280, Tavistock,  
Ontario, Canada  
N0B 2R0

### **Executive:**

Chair - Brian Bennett  
Secretary - Mary Nicklas  
Treasurer - Bob Rudy

**Membership: \$10/year**

### **Directors:**

Paul Bartlett  
Sherrill Calder  
Bill Gladding  
Harry Lawry  
Barb Matthies

Denise McLachlin  
Ed Pellow

Tim Mosher

### **MUSEUM HOURS:**

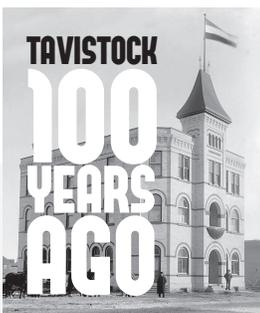
Now Open third Saturday of the month 1-4 p.m. Closed months of January & February  
*Other times by appointment:  
call 519-655-9915 or 519-655-3342*

# TROPHIES OF 1914

It's not often that a significant historic artifact finds its way into the Tavistock Museum and Archives, but in 2013, two former Tavistock silver cups came into their possession. Bob Rudy presented the group with a silver-plated cup that reads, "Tavistock School Hockey Club 1914". The Historical Society also came into possession of another cup, this one found by Glenn Trachsel of Shakespeare. It reads, "Tavistock Poultry Show"



*Bonnets with feathers and lace were all the rage in this Tavistock store.*



*The latest in vehicles line the sports' field at Queen's Park as enthusiasts watch a competitive game of football (soccer).*

Prime business real estate was at the five corners. Valentine Stock's General Store had place of prominence on the southwest spoke where the Post Office is located today. You could buy everything from sugar to shotgun shells under one roof. Offering the same wide selection was The Glasgow Warehouse, which is now Home Hardware.

Hugh Hotson's Shoe Store sold shoes and boots and even club bags. Think about that term "club bag". Does anyone under the age of 40 even know what a club bag is anymore?

Looking for a new car? Check out the models at Jicklings and his competitor, Zimmerman Brothers. In 1914 22 people in Tavistock owned a car. Buggies were more popular and available at either the Farmers' Supply House or from the Matthies Buggy Shop.

John Kalbfleisch offered cradle to grave service.

His furniture store sold cradles and his funeral business carried you to your grave. Both of John Lemp's businesses were going gangbusters in 1914. The pharmacy shop sold everything from medicine to greeting cards. Lemp's photo shop in the same building was perhaps even busier. July 1914 was opening week of the new photo studio, complete with a skylight measuring 12 feet x 12 feet incorporating 60 panes of glass.

Almost every business relied on the railroad. Mail came on the rails and news came to the railway station on the telegraph. People travelled by train with the annual excursion train to Niagara Falls being the highlight of the year.

In 1914, as now, sports were popular. The Tavistock Marlboro Football Club games drew big crowds. The Bowling Club played locally and as far away as Embro. Fishing was a favourite pastime and often provided the evening's supper. Hunters

travelled north for the annual deer and moose hunt and shipped what they shot home by train.

And, of course, there was hockey.

In 1914 a new Hockey Club was formed to support 3 teams ... the Standard Bank Team, Zimmermans, and the Marlboro team. In 1914 in Tavistock the teams played only 6 men to a side because of the small size of the rink. The rest of the country was still playing 7- man hockey and would do so for another 4 years.

While there was always a wide range of community events for people to attend, social life for most folks revolved around their church. There were 4 churches located within the village boundaries and another nine churches within a 5-mile radius. Sunday morning found just about everyone sitting in their pew.

On August 5, 1914, Great Britain declared war on Germany. Canada, as a member of the Commonwealth, made the same declaration. In many Canadian cities young men rushed to enlist. It was a bit of a different story in rural Canada and especially in communities like Tavistock where most people were of German descent.

For the most part life in Tavistock continued on largely unchanged in 1914 in the months after war was declared. The cheese factory built a large addition to the south end to be used entirely for the Butter Department. Concerts were held in Opera Hall although now the proceeds invariably went to war relief efforts. Merchants geared up for Christmas sales.

When the holidays arrived it was obvious that the slogan of the first recruits .... "Home for Christmas" ... wouldn't be coming true. In churches and in homes throughout the community a prayer was said for the boys on the front. More often than not in this community, that prayer was said in German.

It was Tavistock - 1914.

## SPECIAL PRESENTATION

ILLUSTRATED TALK:

**"Tavistock - It was 1914"**

**Wednesday, September 17 at 7:00 p.m.**

Life in our community in the early 1900's at the Tavistock Legion Hall, 223 Hope St. W.

**EXHIBIT ONLY - Admission is Free!**

**Saturday, September 20 ~ 11am-4pm**

**Sunday, September 21 ~ 12-5pm**

# Scouting in Tavistock

Scouting began in 1907 when Lt. Gen. Robert Baden-Powell took a group of youth to a camp on Brownsea Island in the United Kingdom. Ten years later, Boy Scout books and books for young girls were being advertised for 25 cents at Lemp's Pharmacy in Tavistock.

It wasn't until February of 1921, however, that the Tavistock Patriotic Society gathered in the Library Hall to promote the Boy Scouts by holding a Minstrel Show. Hockey and football

(soccer) teams were formed and weekly meetings were held in Russell's Hall. The troop was under the leadership of Scout Master Walter H. Gibson until 1923.

Scouting does not return to the

news until 1940 when, sponsored by the Tavistock Men's Club, the boys held a camp on Lake Huron, south of Bayfield.

In 1955, Gerald Seltzer, Gordon Fisher and Terrence Brown became Tavistock's first Queen's Scouts. That same year, in August, seven young men attended the 8th World Scout Jamboree in Niagara-on-the-Lake. The 10-day event had some 10,000 Scouts from 60

countries. George Appel also received his Queen's Scout that year.

In 1958, more Queen's Scouts were presented including Harold Mallon and Peter Erb. Then in 1959, Scoutmaster Ronald Wiffen presented the honour to Jack Appel, Gary Burton, John Faber, and Robert Rudy at a program in Harriston. Jim Sommers is another Queen's Scout, the highest youth award achievable in the Scouting movement.

The Troop was busy into the 1960's and 1970's when they held annual paper drives, camporees, Poppy canvassing and Apple Days under the Perth District. Cubs had been a big part of the Scouting movement since 1931 and Scouting had a revival in the early 1980's with Kub Kar Rallies a favourite event. A Beaver Colony was established in 1981 to introduce young boys to the Troop.

On March 1, 1989, Scouting celebrated 50 years in Tavistock. To commemorate, Beavers, Cubs and Brownies planted a white oak tree on the grounds of the Tavistock Medical Group.

Then in March of 2000, National Scout-Guide Week was chosen to celebrate 60 years of Scouting in Tavistock.

As leaders became more difficult to find, first Scouts no longer met in the village. Then Beavers ceased to meet with a year-end banquet held in 2006. Cubs continued to meet until 2009.

## 50 YEARS OF SCOUTING (1989)



Above, from the left, seated: leaders Brad Card, Marg Sullivan, Peter Dufton; standing: District Commissioner Brian Anderson, Anne Gregory, Doug Sparling, Sylvia Sparling and Cal Dolson.

## Girl Scouts or Guides?

The Tavistock Girl Guides first met in 1924 with support from the Women's Institute. Meetings continued through 1928, but no reports exist again until 1955 when 14 girls met at the Library Hall.

At the Annual Mother-Daughter Banquet in June, 1972, Cindy Gimbel was presented with the All-Round Cord, the highest honour in Guiding.

### CANADA CORD

At left, Cindy Gimbel, with her Canada Cord (red & white) presented in June, 1972. The Gold Cord was discontinued in 1971. The All-Round Cord (blue & white) was part of the final 3 stages of Guiding.

Then in 1974, Debbie Schumm and Debbie Seyler also received their All-Round Cords.

Guides ceased after 1976 and was resurrected in 1984 continuing to meet until the end of 1995.

News of the formation of a Brownie Pack was noted in 1946 and the group continued to meet regularly up until Christmas 2010.

Pathfinders was first organized in 1986 with four young girls invested.

Sparks, the youngest group in Guiding, began in 1992 and has been an integral part of the movement to Brownies and Guides.



**WE NEED YOUR HELP WITH OUR TAVISTOCK SCOUTING PROJECT!**



The Tavistock and District Historical Society is currently researching the Scouting movement in Tavistock which began in the 1920's.

Anyone with photos, minutes, or other information from any era is asked to contact Mary Nicklas at 519-655-9915.