

MAIGazine

A Newsletter of the AAO's Municipal Archives Interest Group

Issue 17

September 2021



Resilience, Optimism & Obstacles

What's Inside:

Message from the Chair	pg. 2
Meet the MAIG Executive	pg. 3
Brag Board	pg. 4
Arnprior & McNab/Braeside Archives	pg. 4
Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre	pg. 4
Community Museum of Belleville and Hastings County	pg. 5
Elgin County Archives	pg. 5
Developing a Stroll of Discovery in Belleville	pg. 6
Elgin County Historical Newspapers and the Stollery Studio fonds	pg. 7
MAIG Open House	pg. 13
Meeting Minutes from the 2020 Virtual AGM	pg. 14
MAIG Financial Statement	pg. 24

On behalf of the MAIG Executive, I am pleased to present the 17th edition of the *MAIGazine*. There have been a few changes to the MAIG Executive in 2021. I am delighted to be assuming the role of MAIG Chair for the 2021-2024 term and am very grateful to my predecessor Gillian Shaw for her years of leadership, and support and guidance during my transition into this new role. I want to extend a warm welcome to our new Vice-Chair Amber Mandich and look forward to her contributions to our Executive team! Elected last year, Gina Dewaele will continue in her role as MAIG's Secretary-Treasurer.

We all face daily challenges in keeping archives operational at pre-pandemic capacities. Despite the struggles many of us have grappled with, I have witnessed exceptional optimism and resilience from my peers. This year's theme for the *MAIGazine* was inspired by the progress and positive development we've witnessed despite pandemic challenges. As always, I have greatly enjoyed reading about what you have all been accomplishing.

Throughout 2021, I have seen an increase in communication through the MAIG Listserv which has allowed our municipal archival colleagues to connect and support one another in a variety of ways. More information on how to subscribe to the MAIG Listserv is available on the [AAO website](#). Wonderfully supportive discussion took place during our 2021 AGM as members discussed the challenges we've faced and our achievements. I hope to see more of this conversation during our virtual Open House meeting in October this year; more details can be found in this *MAIGazine* issue. Be sure to save the date!

For the 2021-2022 Term, the Executive aims to develop and finalize the MAIG Industry Survey as a follow-up to the first COVID-19 Survey which ran in May of 2020 and gauged the early impacts of the pandemic on our industry. The goal of holding a second part to this survey is to gauge the ongoing effects of the pandemic with a focus on recovery efforts. As always, our Executive will continue to connect with our colleagues to provide support in any way we can.

I hope that we can all meet together as colleagues in person in the near future, but until then I am looking forward to connecting with you all virtually. Please feel free to [contact me](#) with comments, questions, or updates.

All the best,

~ Megan

MAIG Executive, 2021-2022

Megan Lockhart, Chair

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Amber Mandich, Vice Chair

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**Gina Dewaele,
Secretary/Treasurer**

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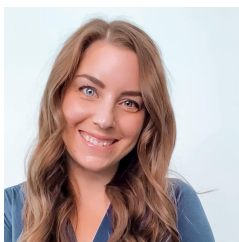
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If you have any questions about MAIG or would like to get involved, please feel free to contact our executive.

Meet the MAIG Executive



Megan Lockhart is the current Chair of MAIG for the 2021-2024 term. She has occupied a role within the MAIG Executive since 2018, previously sitting as Vice-Chair from 2018-2021. She holds a BA in History from Western University (2015), a Fine Arts Diploma in Cultural Resource Management, and a Professional Specialization Certificate in Collections Management from the University of Victoria (2018). Since March 2018, Megan has worked as the Archives Technician at the Oxford County Archives. Prior to her current position, she occupied various roles at the St. Marys Museum & Archives including Curatorial Assistant, Archives Assistant, and Digitization Project Coordinator. Megan also has professional experience in communications and social media coordination. Megan can be contacted at mlockhart@oxfordcounty.ca or by phone at 519-539-9800 ext. 3070.



Amber Mandich was elected to the MAIG Executive in 2021, and will serve as Vice Chair for the 2021-2024 term. She holds a Master's Degree in Library and Information Science with a specialization in Archives and Records Management, as well as a postgraduate certificate in Museum Management and Curatorship. Since April 2017, Amber has worked as the Archivist Assistant at Elgin County Archives. Prior to her current position, she worked in various roles at The Royal Canadian Regiment Museum, Fanshawe Pioneer Village, the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame, and Museum London. Amber can be contacted at amandich@elgin.ca or by phone at 519-631-1460 ext. 127.



Gina Dewaele has been the Secretary-Treasurer of MAIG since 2014, and will continue to be the Secretary-Treasurer for the 2020-2023 term. She holds a Masters of Library and Information Science degree from the University of Western Ontario (2002) and has been the Archivist Assistant at the Elgin County Archives since October 2002. In addition to her Secretary-Treasurer position with MAIG, she has been the Treasurer for the Southwestern Ontario Chapter since 2010, and has served on the ARCHEION Committee of the AAO. Gina can be contacted by email at gdewaele@elgin.ca or by phone at 519-631-1460 ext. 154.

Brag Board - Updates From the Archival Community

Welcome to the NEW Brag Board column! We are excited to use this column to acknowledge and celebrate accomplishments and milestones achieved by individuals and institutions in our professional community. This may include project updates, retirements, receiving a grant, or simply shouting out a colleague for their work. We look forward to celebrating our community using this new column moving forward!

Arnprior & McNab/Braeside Archives

Submitted by: Kristen Mercier, Archivist

I started as the new archivist for the Arnprior & McNab/Braeside Archives in June 2021, and so I would first like to start off by saying a big hello to everyone!

At the Archives Association of Ontario conference in May 2021, AMBA was awarded the AAO's Institutional Award. They recognized the work completed by my very dedicated predecessors and our team of committed volunteers to keep open the Archives for the community, as well as AMBA's consistent efforts to seek out funding for new projects with the goal of improving accessibility to the Archives. Recent grants have assisted in the upgrade and redesign of the website with an electronic database of our collections, including digitized historic local newspapers. To be completed this autumn, is the digitization and uploading of newspapers up to the 1970s, thanks to funding from New Horizons for Seniors Program. Another recent grant by the Documentary Heritage Communities Program offered by Library and Archives Canada allowed for the preparation (including the digitization of records), design and launch of a digital exhibit: "Daniel McLachlin's Legacy: Exploring the Lumber Era of the Ottawa Valley." This digital exhibit, along with several others, can be found on our website: <https://www.adarchives.org/>

Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre

Submitted by: Deb Sturdevant, Archivist

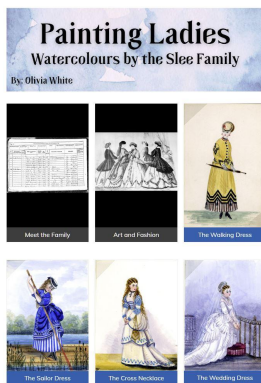
A "Marine History and Underwater Archaeology Research Centre" is being developed at the Bruce County Archives. As of April 2021, our collecting mandate was expanded to accept research collections related to shipwrecks and underwater archaeology across Ontario. This was initiated by members of the Ontario Marine Heritage Committee who assisted in the acquisition of the Arthur Amos Shipwreck Research Collection received in August 2021. An inventory is available at collections.brucemuseum.ca.

The Bruce County Archives recently received funding through an Ontario Municipal Modernization Grant for the digitization of newspapers. We are in the early stages of a project that will result in the digitization and online hosting of twelve Bruce County newspapers for years ranging up to 1929 by September 2022.

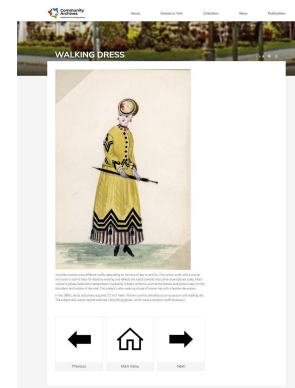
Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings County

Submitted by: Olivia White, Archives Assistant

The Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings County released its first virtual exhibition in July 2021 entitled [Painting Ladies: Watercolours by the Slee Family](#). The concept emerged from the desire to translate the Archives' monthly physical displays in the Reading Room into a long-lasting digital experience hosted on the CABHC's website.



I decided to research the Archives' collection of colourful watercolour paintings in the Terry Forin Collection by a family of female painters from the nineteenth century. I chose 9 paintings to highlight for the exhibition which depicted female subjects engaging in a variety of activities, such as ballet, croquet, and swimming. I performed genealogical research on the family while also studying fashion trends, art history and gender roles in Victorian society to provide additional context for the paintings.



Using the website building software iCreate, I divided my research into 12 sections. Amanda Hill suggested including interactive buttons at the bottom of each section for users to easily navigate the exhibition. The development of the exhibit has laid the foundation for future virtual displays from the CABHC, which will allow the Archives' holdings to reach a wider audience.

Elgin County Archives

Submitted by: Gina Dewaele, Assistant Archivist

Throughout the pandemic, we have remained committed to ensuring our records are still accessible. Staff alternated being in the office and working at home, so we could safely continue our reference services, answering as much as we could virtually. We are happy to announce that we have re-opened for on-site public services effective July 19th, 2021 (by appointment, and subject to COVID-19 safety protocols).

The last year or so has been a busy one. Here are some of the highlights of some projects that we have been working on:

Online database upgrades: with the help of our database consultants Andornot, we have upgraded our online database to include the Elgin County Museum as well as the partner museums, as a single search interface. Other improved features include: enhanced and intuitive

search functions, better ability to comment on records, ability to index and search pdf documents, zooming in fire insurance plans, and improved streaming of video and audio files. The new online database was launched in May 2021. Check it out here: <https://heritagecollections.elgin.ca/>.

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar with links for Archives Home, Museum Home, Search, and Search Help. Below the navigation bar are the logos for Elgin County Archives and Elgin County Museum. The main heading reads "Archives and Museum Collections". A large aerial photograph of a large industrial or institutional building complex is displayed. Below the photo is a search bar with the text "Search Our Collections" and a "Search" button. At the bottom of the search bar area are three options: "Limit to records with online photographs", "View Recently Added Records", and "Advanced Search and Browse".

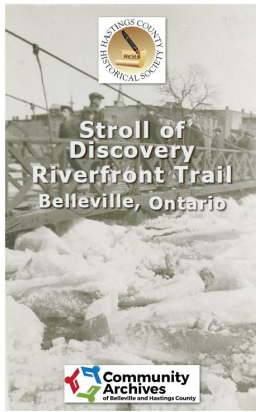
Don Cosens Collection: We have recently completed the collection of the former Elgin County Registrar and local historian. His collection includes photographs, postcards, scrapbooks, land records, directories, fire insurance plans and business records. It comprised approximately 50 boxes of material.

Outreach: Until it is safe to resume our in-person outreach programs, we are engaging with our community and sharing our collection virtually through social media. We have found that social media has been an important way to engage with the public during the pandemic, in a number of ways. Through direct messages and comments, we have been able to provide reference services, advertise our new online database interface, identify photographs and solicit donations of material.

Developing a Stroll of Discovery in Belleville

Amanda Hill - Archivist, Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings

Self-guided historical walking tours cannot be described as a new thing, but the widespread use of smartphones has allowed them to expand into a new realm with the use of location-aware apps. In the context of a pandemic where many regular outreach activities were curtailed, it



seemed worthwhile to encourage people to explore the history of their local area in a socially-distant manner, while getting some fresh air and exercise.

The Community Archives of Belleville and Hastings County partnered with the Hastings County Historical Society to develop both a booklet and an online tour of the riverfront area of Belleville. The content for the tour had been developed by John Lowry, a member of the Society and a keen walker. The tour covers a five-kilometre route, highlighting some 40 buildings and structures along the way.

Using Mr. Lowry's text, it took less than a month to convert it into a finished tour, ready for the summer months. We illustrated the text with a mixture of contemporary and historical photographs for the various locations.

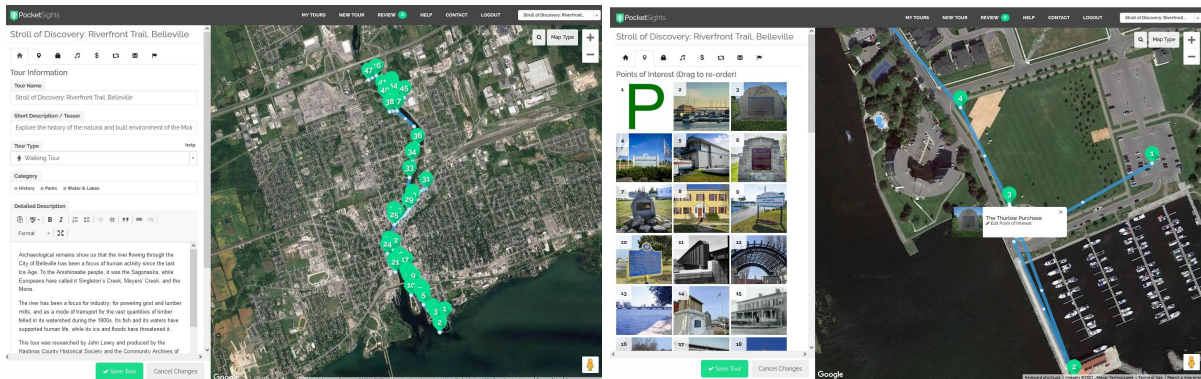


The Thurlow Purchase

Continue Tour

In 1816 the Mississauga First Nation surrendered a 428-acre parcel of land. The area had originally been set aside as a native burial ground in 1783. Compensation was agreed in 2010 with the Alderville First Nation in relation to this purchase.

The app we used was PocketSights (based in Ithaca, New York), which is free to use for a basic tour. The interface is simple to use and, once loaded, the app uses GPS to guide people to each point of interest. When they get there, it pops up the photo and information about the location. The booklet presents the same information as the app (although in a less interactive manner!). We hope to use this project as a template for future tours on a variety of themes.



Digitizing the News: Elgin County Historical Newspapers and the Stollery Studio fonds

Graham Burt - Digitization Assistant, Elgin County Archives

Over the past year and a half, amidst the pandemic and all of its related challenges for heritage institutions, the Elgin County Archives has been working hard to digitize, preserve, and make

accessible two important collections: Elgin County historical newspapers and the Stollery Studio fonds.

Elgin County Archives houses microfilmed and original newspaper issues from over a dozen communities around Elgin County, including St. Thomas, Aylmer, Springfield, Port Stanley, Dutton, West Lorne, and Rodney. These issues cover the period from the 1850s until the 2000s and contain content related to local, national, and international events, birth, marriage, and death notices, advertisements, and much more.



In partnership with the Elgin County branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society, Elgin County Archives began scanning these newspapers in 2019. The project began with community newspapers that were published weekly, including the *Aylmer Express* (1881-1974), *Dutton Advance* (1889-2001), *Rodney Mercury* (1887-1995), *West Lorne Sun* (1902-1996), *Springfield Echo* (1896-1962), and the *St. Thomas Weekly Dispatch* (1853-1876), among many others. The staff hired for this project were funded by the generous support of the County of Elgin and the Donna Vera Evans Bushell Estate (our thanks also to the Aylmer-Malahide Museum and Archives for providing some early copies of Aylmer newspapers).

These county newspapers, which when added together cover more than 500 total years, will prove to be an invaluable resource for genealogists, historians, and the general public interested in Elgin's history. Though not without their limitations, newspapers can be important primary sources. Not only do they describe what happened at any given time, they provide a glimpse into how people viewed and interpreted local, national, and international events at the time and help to illustrate the evolution of morals, social norms, politics, and journalism over time.

With the scanning of weekly newspapers coming to an end, the next phase of the project will include the scanning of St. Thomas daily newspapers, including the *St. Thomas Daily Times*, *St. Thomas Evening Journal*, and *St. Thomas Times-Journal*, starting with the earliest issues. Elgin County Archives holds original issues of these papers.

Another major digitization project that the Elgin County Archives has been busy with over the past year and a half has been the Stollery Studio fonds, a collection of tens of thousands of photographic negatives taken mostly in St. Thomas and Elgin County between the 1940s and the 1970s.

Brothers William “Bill” Stollery (1909-1990) and Jack Arnold Stollery (1917-1974), both veterans of the Second World War, opened their photography business in St. Thomas in March 1946. Jack was a Sergeant with the Canadian Army Film Unit during the war and served in France, Belgium, Sicily, and Italy. He was awarded the Military Medal for “gallant conduct and devotion to duty” at Ortona, where, according to official despatches, “his appearance with the forward troops in moments of great danger armed only with a camera was commented upon and was in no small way responsible for bolstering the morale of the fighting troops.”[1]



12-year-old Joe Riddick and his car, 'Chad', taken by Stollery Studio in October 1949 [ECA, M7 S1 Sh2 B2 2_2513].

After the war, Jack worked with the National Film Board in Ottawa for a year before moving back to St. Thomas to open the studio with his older brother. For a time, Jack was also the vice-president of the Western Ontario branch of the Commercial and Press Photographers Association.

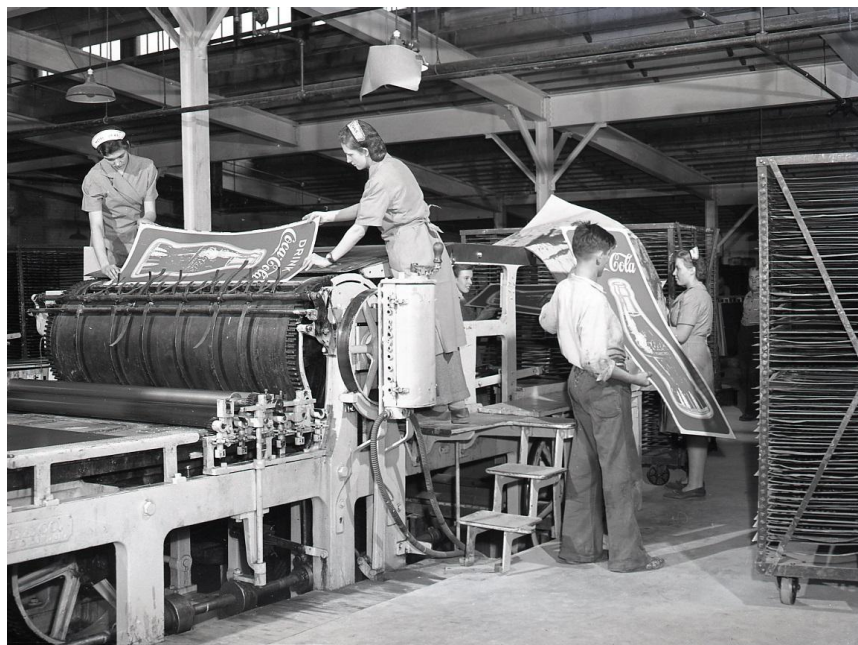
In 1957, Bill and Jack were joined by John Smallman of Port Stanley and London, and the firm became known as Stollery Smallman Limited, with Jack and John in London and Bill remaining in St. Thomas. Jack stepped away from the photography industry in 1965 and worked as a car salesman before rejoining his brother Bill in the studio in St. Thomas in 1970. Stollery Studio ceased operations after Jack’s untimely death in 1974.

For almost 30 years, the Stollery brothers were responsible for capturing thousands of wedding and family portrait photographs in St. Thomas and throughout Elgin County. Stollery Studio was also employed by the *St. Thomas Times-Journal* as one of the newspaper’s official photographers, and was responsible for taking photos of newsworthy events in the region, including business openings, graduations, well-known retirements in the community, fall fairs,

parades, clubs, sports games, church events, the weather, and much, much more. Stollery Studio was also one of the most popular places in the area to get driver's licence and passport photos taken.



Talbot Street, St. Thomas, September 1950 [ECA, M7 S1 Sh1 B1 1_676]



Workers inside the St. Thomas Metal Signs Ltd shop, November 1948 [ECA, M7 S1 Sh2 B1 1_3808]



A young girl at the Aylmer Fall Fair, September 1949 [ECA, M7 S1 Sh2 B2 2_2158]

Bill and Jack were also tasked with capturing the more unfortunate and somber events of life. Local emergency services, it seemed, had the Stollery brothers on speed dial, and often called them to come with their cameras – sometimes in the middle of the night – to capture buildings or businesses on fire, serious automobile or train accidents, and even murder scenes. These photos were taken for the newspaper as well as for investigative purposes. The collection contains a number of business cards for insurance claim agents and handwritten notes by the Stollery brothers describing the photos they took at accident scenes.



Stollery Studio photo of a tank car derailment in Port Stanley, February 1949 [ECA, M7 S1 Sh2 B2 2_435]

Processing thousands of negatives, taken by Bill and Jack over a period of thirty years, gives one a very real glimpse into the life of a photographer. Often images of individual events or places are viewed in isolation, but there is something meaningful about seeing all of the photos taken over the course of a day or week in succession of one another. The Stollery brothers captured the good and beautiful, the exciting and mundane, and the bad and the ugly – sometimes all in the span of a few hours. Knowing that the Stollery brothers took portraits of newlyweds on their wedding day or of a mother and her newborn in the morning, and then, later in the same day, was called to a fatal car accident or the scene of a crime, really puts things in perspective. Capturing a moment in time, whether joyful or devastating, was undoubtedly emotional work, and illustrates the often-tumultuous lives of photographers and journalists, even in the small city of St. Thomas.

The negatives in the Stollery Studio fonds give a rare and dynamic glimpse into the everyday life of the residents of St. Thomas and Elgin County in the 1940s, 50s, 60s, and 70s. This collection, particularly the family portraits, wedding photographs, and photos of local events, is an invaluable resource for those interested in genealogy and local history. For many of the negatives that appeared in the *St. Thomas Times-Journal*, a photo caption, as well as the newspaper issue and page number, are recorded with the respective records in our online database, making the records all the more findable to researchers.



Elgin County Archives acquired the Stollery Studio fonds in 2018. Before being donated, the collection was in the possession of Cliff and Pat Maxwell, who had saved the negatives from being thrown out. Multiple archives interns and summer students have been processing the collection since January 2020, and it remains an ongoing project. As of August 2021, approximately 16,500 negatives have been processed, 4150 of which have been digitized and made available on our online database. The negatives which have been processed thus far cover the years 1946 to 1950, leaving tens of thousands of negatives still to be processed and digitized.

Processing, digitizing, and making accessible hundreds of local newspaper issues and thousands of photographic negatives can, at times, feel like a long and tedious undertaking. But it is also very rewarding. Historians, genealogists, and other members of the public have already used

these resources in their research, which is a great reminder to those of us who work in museums and archives about the importance and significance of the work we do.

To learn more about these projects, and to search our collections, please visit <https://www.elgincounty.ca/archives/>.

[1] Cited in Sarah Klotz, "Shooting the War: The Canadian Army Film Unit in the Second World War," *Canadian Military History* 14(3) (2012): 28. See also Jeff Maguire, "My photographer friend was a WWII hero," *Canadian Film and Photo Unit* (blog), Dale Gervais, 2012, <https://canadianfilmandphotounit.ca/2012/03/03/my-photographer-friend-was-a-ww-ii-hero-by-by-jeff-maguire/>.



Save the Date - 2021 Virtual Open House

After cancelling the 2020 Open House due to the pandemic, the MAIG Executive is happy to share that we will be offering a virtual Open House on October 22, 2021. Join us for presentations by Liz Dommasch and Megan Lockhart from the Oxford County Archives, Karin Noble from the Grey Roots Museum & Archives, andCarolynn Bart-Riedstra and Carol Small from the Middlesex Centre Archives. Presenters will be providing an exclusive look behind the scenes into their institutions' facilities, storage spaces, reading rooms, processing areas, and more.

Following the presentations, join us in the afternoon to connect with other municipal archive colleagues and engage in exciting archival conversations during our MAIG meeting.

When: Friday, October 22, 2021 - 9:30am - 2:30pm

Where: Virtually! The Open House will take place via Zoom this year. Details on how to attend the Zoom session will be posted to the AAO Listserv and blog, and the MAIG Listserv and webpage closer to the event.

- Agenda:**
- 9:30am-9:45am • Welcome and introductions

 - 9:45am-12:00pm • Presentations by:
 - Liz Dommasch and Megan Lockhart, [Oxford County Archives](#)
 - Karin Noble, [Grey Roots Museum & Archives](#)
 - Carolynn Bart-Riedstra and Carol Small, [Middlesex Centre Archives](#)

 - 12:00-1:00pm • Break for lunch

 - 1:00pm-2:30pm • MAIG meeting

Stay tuned to the AAO Listserv and blog, and the MAIG Listserv and webpage at <https://aao-archivists.ca/maig> for more details on how to take part in the virtual Open House. We look forward to seeing you all virtually this October!

Meeting Minutes from the 2021 AGM

Municipal Archives Interest Group

Annual General Meeting Minutes

May 5, 2021

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Executive Present:

- Gillian Shaw, City of Vaughan Archives, Chair
- Megan Lockhart, Oxford County Archives, Vice-Chair
- Gina Dewaele, Elgin County Archives, Secretary-Treasurer

Present:

- Carolynn Bart-Riedstra, Middlesex Centre Archives
- Karin Noble, Grey Roots Museum & Archives
- Kate Jackson, Grey Roots Museum & Archives
- Laurie Dougherty, Arnprior & McNab/Braeside Archives
- Deb Sturdevant, Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre
- Karen Wagner, Wellington County Museum & Archives
- Nick Moreau, Region of Peel Archives
- Samantha Thompson, Region of Peel Archives
- Liz Dommasch, Oxford County Archives
- Laura Camilleri, Dufferin County Museum & Archives

- Angela Fornelli, City of Kawartha Lakes Archives
- Betty Jo Belton, Stratford-Perth Archives
- Arthur McClelland, London Public Library

1. Call to Order

Gillian Shaw called the meeting to order at 10:01 am and welcomed everyone.

2. Approval of the Agenda

The Agenda for the morning was presented.

Motion to approve the Agenda: Megan Lockhart

Seconded by: Liz Dommasch

Carried.

3. Approval of the 2020 Virtual AGM Report

There were no omissions in the 2020 Virtual AGM Report.

Motion to approve the Report: Liz Dommasch

Seconded by: Megan Lockhart

Carried.

4. Report of the Chair

Gillian read the report below to members present. No comments were made.

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, the 2020-2021 Term of the Municipal Archives Interest Group (MAIG), was not as active as the Executive had previously planned. This was largely due to the fact that many MAIG Members spent the past year working from home, reassigned to other municipal departments, and in some unfortunate cases laid off. Subsequently, communication via the AAO and MAIG Listservs significantly reduced over the past year, and previous MAIG initiatives were not able to be conducted due to pandemic restrictions.

MAIG's annual newsletter, the *MAIGazine*, was published at the end of September and featured submissions focusing on the theme of "Staying connected, staying current". Updates from three municipal archives were shared, including challenges and opportunities experienced as a result of the pandemic. The Executive are thankful to those who contributed to the 2020 newsletter and hope to solicit more contributions this year.

Unfortunately due to the pandemic, the MAIG Executive, in consultation with the AAO Board decided to cancel the annual fall MAIG Open House for 2020. Moving forward, the Executive is

hopeful that future Open Houses will be conducted at host archival institutions, but are looking into alternative virtual or hybrid options to allow for members to meet.

Last year, the AAO's AGM, and subsequent Special Interest Group AGMs were conducted virtually. A total of 14 MAIG members participated in the online 2020 MAIG AGM, which was open for online participation between April 22nd through April 29th, 2020. Four Motions were passed during the AGM, which approved the 2019 AGM Minutes, the 2019-2020 Annual Report, the Adoption of the 2020-2021 Financials and Budget, as well as re-elected Gina Dewaele as MAIG's Secretary-Treasurer for the 2020-2023 Term.

This year, the MAIG Executive will once again be conducting a virtual AGM for its members. Members will be asked to take part in the approval of 2020 AGM Minutes, the 2020-2021 Annual Report, the Adoption of the 2021-2022 Financials and Budget, as well as elect a Vice-Chair and Chair for the 2021-2024 Term. Invitations to this AGM are forthcoming, as well as the nomination procedures for the two available positions.

5. Financial Reports

- a. Financial Report, 2020-2021
- b. Approval of the Budget, 2021-2022

Jill provided an overview of the 2020-2021 Financial Report which was provided in the most recent edition of the *MAIGazine*. No comments were made.

Motion to approve the 2020-2021 Financial Report and 2021-2022 Budget: Megan Lockhart
Seconded by: Laura Camilleri
Carried.

6. Future Open Houses

Seeing that the 2020 Open House was cancelled, the MAIG Executive are unsure if an in-person Open House will be feasible for 2021. Jill asked if members would be interested in doing a virtual Open House and providing tours, or "sneak peeks" into a few archival collections. The group showed enthusiasm for a virtual Open House and suggested having virtual tours, sharing photos of collections, and showing how space is used in various institutions (i.e. reading rooms, conservation areas, etc.).

7. Call for Nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair

Jill advised only one nomination had been received for Chair and Vice-Chair – Megan

Lockhart and Amber Mandich. Asked for a call from the “floor” for other nominees. No other nominations were brought forward from the “floor”.

8. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Seeing no additional nominations, Jill brought forward the motion to appoint Megan Lockhart as Chair – seconded by Liz Mayville and Carried. Jill then brought forward the motion to appoint Amber Mandich as Vice Chair – seconded by Megan Lockhart, and Carried.

9. Other Business

Samantha Thompson brought up discussions that she and Nick Moreau had recently met/discussed with Simcoe County Archives to ask the AAO Board to write a letter in support of Municipal Archives, seeing that many institutions have been shut down and/or staff redeployed and not receiving the same funding as before the pandemic. MAIG Executive offered to help in any way they can with this project.

10. Roundtable

Gillian Shaw, City of Vaughan Archives: Jill advised that The City Archives have been closed to the public since last March, but research requests were still being conducted virtually (through both Microsoft Teams and emails). As a result of the pandemic, the Archives and Records Management Services Department have pivoted more to the development of an Enterprise Content Management system and are currently working on a RFP for such a system. Staff have also been more involved in getting the database cleaned up, exhibits migrated to Flickr and standardizing existing Finding Aids while working from home and have started to update and revamp some internal policies and procedures to include “emergency protocols”, inspired by the pandemic.

Megan Lockhart, Oxford County Archives: The Oxford County Archives has been closed to the public since March, 2020. Megan Lockhart, Archives Technician, was redeployed to work part-time for Corporate Communications since January, 2021 and the redeployment will likely continue until the end of 2021. The Archives has been conducting reference services remotely and working on collections processing when possible, but it has been a challenge with working from home. Oxford County Archives staff have been focusing on outreach and online engagement during the closure, including regularly updating and interacting with the community through social media, and posting videos to YouTube. They started a new blog in 2020 to further develop their online presence and have created a number of new online exhibits on their website – one popular exhibit was “The History of

Facial Hair” which was published online in November, 2020. The exhibit was a collaborative project with the Norwich District Museum & Archives, and the Beachville District Museum. In-person educational programming for schools has been put on hold, but the Archives have created new online lesson kits for educators including the “Black History of Oxford County” and an archival record resource kit with primary sources related to the Second World War in the County.

The Archives also developed a take-home pioneer life in Oxford kit for families during the spring break, the kits included a pioneer recipe book, crafts, and a variety of activity sheets; they sold 46 kits. Moving forward, the Archives will be focusing on recovery efforts later this year once they are able to reopen.

Gina Dewaele, Elgin County Archives: Extensive remote and on-line research assistance on behalf of members of the public, County departments and local municipal partners. A major project was the provision of pre-amalgamation minutes and by-laws to the Municipality of Central Elgin. Staff also researched, compiled, re-scanned and provided captions for 25 images for murals on the walls of the Department of Engineering Services’ main foyer and boardroom. Staff have responded to 81 email, 48 social media, 15 telephone and 11 in-person inquiries so far this year.

Acquisition of new collections, including the following: early Springfield letters from 1848-1851; Rodney Legion records in response to the branch’s closure; and McAlpine family records (the McAlpines emigrated to Dunwich Township in the 1840s). 12 previously acquired accessions have also been processed and linked to the research database. Online database upgrades to include the Elgin County Museum as well as the partner museums, as a single search interface. Other improved features include: enhanced and intuitive search functions, better ability to comment on records, ability to index and search PDF documents, zooming capability on fire insurance plans, and improved streaming of video and audio files. The new online database will likely be launched by mid-May.

In partnership with the Elgin County branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society, the Elgin County Archives scanned and digitized over 150 years of microfilm newspaper issues in 2019-2020. Work has continued on this project into 2021. 33 years of newspapers were scanned in April. Further digitization of original fire insurance plans which are an invaluable resource for property research and environmental site assessments.

Further processing of the Don Cosens Collection which includes photographs, postcards, scrapbooks, land records, directories, fire insurance plans and business records. To date, staff have processed approximately 45 boxes of material from this major acquisition. In 2021, 500 database records have been created (including 677 photographs and 44 scrapbooks).

Further processing of Stollery Studio photographs. Staff have made good progress on this collection of at least 10,000 negatives from the St. Thomas studio and official photographer for the St. Thomas Times-Journal. In addition to covering St. Thomas, many of the photographs include important people, events and scenes in Elgin County. So far this year, staff have scanned 1,154 negatives and created 863 database records for this collection.

Regular postings to the archives' social media channels. Content was created for 317 posts on three digital platforms, including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. These posts have been engaged by followers at least 70,000 times to date in 2021.

Angela Fornelli, City of Kawartha Lakes Archives: The City of Kawartha Lakes has just begun its archival program. The position of Manager Corporate Records and Archive Services / City Archivist was hired in January of 2020. The task since then has been to build policy and procedures, organize and assess the archival records the City set aside in anticipation of my position starting, build inventories and gather all the necessary information to write up finding aids. As well I have been going through the records within the Records Management program to determine which are archival in nature as well as to identify those records in desperate need of preservation and conservation and ordering all the supplies to set up the archives and its functions. Part of the mandate of this position is to work with those heritage institutions within the City of Kawartha Lakes that also have archival collections to determine what collections they have, to build bridges, and offer any assistance they may need. The municipality is also working on a repatriation project that has come about from the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I am also working on plans for future programs to have available for the public as well as outreach and a business plan which includes room for researchers, working space, offices, etc. We are also working with the Lindsay Collegiate and Vocational School (LCVI) to accept a large collection of records spanning from ca. 1880 to ca. 2010 as they did not want them to leave the municipality.

Arthur McClelland, London Room, London Public Library: Doing a lot of property history research at

the moment. At present, the public is not allowed into the library. Completing an inventory of our catalogued material.

Samantha Thompson, Peel Art Gallery, Museum and Archives (PAMA): Have been closed since March of 2020. Received some federal funding; just found out that they have to move two vaults of records. Property research is booming.

Nicholas Moreau, Peel Art Gallery, Museum and Archives (PAMA): Recently ran into a challenge with donated material for an online exhibit which donors are not necessarily allowing the archives to keep for accessioning.

Laurie Daugherty, Arnprior & McNab/Braeside Archives: Our new Archivist, Kristen Mercier will be starting the first week in June at three days per week. She will need advice from MAIG members in the year ahead. Renfrew County does not have a county level archive for the historical records in the region. The AMBA is a small, community archives, that holds municipal records of the Town of Arnprior and the Township of McNab/Braeside. We have recently received a large transfer of records from the Township as a result of their move to a new office. It has taken many years to negotiate this transfer. The records are almost exclusively in paper format to date. There has been no meaningful consultation with regards to records management with either the Town or the Township in the past but we are hopeful this may improve in the future. The AMBA website has recently been upgraded and contains various virtual exhibits. We use DbTextworks and have a robust search feature which includes material repatriated from the Archives of Ontario. We are closed to the public during the lockdown, but had been offering in-person research by appointment when permitted earlier in the year.

Carolynn Bart-Riedstra, Middlesex Centre Archives: MCA Archives is a non-profit, charitable, volunteer-run Archives. I work up to 30 hours a month as the Archivist. The Municipality of Middlesex Centre has allowed the Archives a room in the Delaware Community Centre which includes the main office/reading room and two small storage areas. The room was formerly the Clerk's Office for Delaware.

The Archives relies on funding donations and grants. We received the Ontario Trillium Foundation Resiliency Grant for \$17,000 to purchase shelving for donations that need to be quarantined during Covid. It also provided money for PPE for volunteers and supplies for new brochures for fundraising

purposes. We just applied for another OTF grant for operating expenses and hope to hear by the fall. An online auction was held in February and the community support was amazing. Over \$7500 was raised for the Archives. We were also the recipient of a \$5000 Federal Covid fund and the Municipality of Middlesex provided us with \$5000 to purchase shelving in the other off-site area we occupy. MCA was closed during the periods mentioned by other archives and remains closed. We are not allowed to go into the Archives office as the municipality has closed the Community Centre and they are strictly controlling who enters and why.

There was a need to rent additional space for collections and a processing area. It is located about a block away from the Archives' office in a building that was sub-divided for commercial use. With the pandemic, it was decided to rent another space to quarantine donations. Our donations continue to come and have kept this room quite full. Reference requests are high and are answered by our Chair, Carol Small, and various volunteers, as required. Carol is also responsible for outreach including a quarterly newsletter that is sent to all members, municipal councilors at the local and county level, and the municipal management. Carol is also responsible for the website, Facebook, and Twitter.

Middlesex County Archives: Carol has resurrected a committee for the creation of a Middlesex County Archives. The Committee includes representatives from County historical societies, libraries, and museums. The Committee is working on a business plan to present to County Council about the need for a County Archives.

Other: I teach Archives and Records Management courses at Mohawk College for the Library Technician diploma. The term project for the Archives course is a site visit which is not possible in Covid times. Another option is an interview with an Archivist. If anyone is interested in talking to one of my students, please contact me at: carolynn.bart-riedstra@mohawkcollege.ca.

Deb Sturdevant, Bruce County Archives: COVID Closures & Impacts: Since March 2020, the Archives has been open from late August 2020 until Christmas 2020, and again in March 2021. During the 2020 closure, the two archival assistants were offered redeployment or leave options, after working for a few weeks remotely with the Archives. To date, during the 2021 closures, staff have been rotating between working in the office and remotely. The number of donations received in 2020 was similar to previous years, so staff were busy processing donations when open. When open, we allowed two researchers in the Research Room at a time, by appointment only, with modified hours to be closed

over lunch for additional cleaning time between researchers. We were moderately busy in late 2020, with researchers visiting in-person every week, but not every day. In March 2021, our Research Room was quite busy with 1 or 2 researchers in almost every day we were open. Other inquiries and paid research request numbers have remained consistent compared to “normal” years. Remote work has included work on Bruce Remembers website with backlog of data and news clippings to add.

Chronicling Community Experiences during the Pandemic: In May 2020, we launched a public initiative to collect materials reflecting the experiences of people, organizations and businesses during the pandemic. We invested a fair amount of marketing approaches to the initiative. It has resulted in submissions from about 25 people to date. <https://www.brucemuseum.ca/shareyourstory/>. The Archivist video interviewed two Mayors in 2020 about the experiences of their communities and themselves as mayors through the pandemic. We hired a videographer to create a retrospective anniversary for the 1-year “anniversary” of Covid closures in March, primarily using submissions received from the public, and reaching out to video interview some of the people who submitted written submissions. The video was complete, but not publicly released due to increasing restrictions and lockdown orders. It was felt that the community did not need a reminder that many restrictions had not changed or were back in place, similar to the previous year. It is expected that the video will be used in future exhibits. In fall 2021, we have an Oral Histories Project planned – we are planning to have a videographer interview eight people from the various municipalities and industries/businesses across Bruce County.

Expansion Plans: We continue to work towards a physical expansion of the Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre, to include new space for the Archives. Expansion plans continue to be delayed due to litigation concerning the property purchased for the expansion. Our projects have been focusing on preparing for a move: YCW Intern catalogued/labelled oversize tax rolls, and un-labelled oversize items. We have been working on optimizing use of current space by reviewing a number of unidentified boxes – and processing as appropriate (cataloguing or deaccessioning).

2021 backlog project: In addition to completing review of unidentified boxes, we hope to catalogue the agricultural records discovered in the Collection to complement a temporary agriculture-related exhibit the Museum is launching in the fall.

Digital Content Strategy: The BCM&CC is in the midst of working with consultants to create a Digital

Content Strategy which is intended to give us a framework from which to work in creating/choosing content for YouTube, social media channels, Online Collections, virtual programming and in-house digital aspects. The amount of work involved in learning broadcasting software and trouble-shooting issues related to our Archives Awareness Week Facebook Live event was much greater than expected, so it is hoped that the digital content consultants will have some useful suggestions in that regard.

Laura Camelleri: Beginning May 2020 MoD staff were either redeployed or furloughed - the Archivist was redeployed to the Climate Change Department with the County of Dufferin. During that time staff worked on social media content and at the end of redeployment period collaborated with Climate Change on a virtual exhibit "Before Your Eyes". Prior to reopening to the public the Shopify online shopping platform was implemented allowing for collecting of research fees and gift shop sales. Worked through the end of the Service Delivery review with the County. Upon return we launched into research by appointments and supporting the other MoD staff with our largest fundraiser - Holiday treasures Craft Show - which was held safely under "Orange level" Public Health restrictions as well as online. Research emails dropped a little at the beginning and are now (2021) starting to increase. Right now we are moving into the strategic planning process as well as working through a full collection inventory and developing a collection plan.

Karen Wagner, Wellington County Archives: Closed from March-July. Started working on a Strategic Plan for Archives. Launching a database in 2022 relating to the House of Industry. Staff are alternating coming in, so that they can socially distance in response to COVID-19 rules and regulations.

Karin Noble: Partial redeployment to Long Term Care/working from home in Spring, early summer 2020. Gradual return to working on site in July. Currently some occasional work supporting Grey Bruce Health Unit Vaccine Hubs. Reopened September – December, 2020 to public by appointment with Covid-19 protocols and capacity limit of 4 in Reading Room, not including staff, but for volunteers, donors and public. A positive of closures has been an opportunity for disruptive upgrades and renovations such as to the main foyer floor last July/August and more recently, painting the Reading Room. Largely worked from home except for time-sensitive municipal requests (by-laws, minutes, material of Grey County Departments, assessment rolls). Offers of donation, requests for information continue, largely by email, some phone calls and social media. Outreach work such as social media posts, web exhibits, virtual lectures and supporting exhibits and educational projects of other staff at Grey Roots Museum & Archives. Working from home has given us the opportunity to focus on a large

digital photograph standardization and dating project for a set of 19,000+ images. A fun development from Grey County Historic Community GIS Mapping Projects has been a lower-tier municipality recently using the data from the project to erect signs for historic communities too small to qualify for blue signs/be on the County's Official Plan.

Betty Jo Belton, Stratford-Perth Archives: Stratford-Perth Archives was closed for in-person research from March to August 2020 due to COVID-19. During this time staff worked from home and on-site in rotation. They provided access to collections by telephone and email, developed a plan to reopen safely when the time was right, digitized most of the Reading Room ready reference library, including local directories for 1860s – 1990s, digitized accession records, worked on an updated Disaster Prevention and Response Plan, reformatted finding aids, attended on-line conferences and indexed local history books. Donations continued to be accepted and it was noted that a number of community organizations like Women's Institute branches and service groups like the Kinsmen have folded operations due to the pandemic and are bringing their records to the archives. Archives staff "helped out" other County departments from time to time but no one was formally redeployed. In-person researchers could visit by appointment from September to December 2020. Since then the reading room has been closed (with a brief exception in early March 2021) due to provincial shut down / stay at home orders. A third Archives Technician will be hired in 2021 to focus on digitizing and cataloguing. Next year is the Archives' 50th anniversary so an exhibition showcasing 50 Treasures from the Collections of Stratford-Perth Archives is in development.

11. Adjournment by Gillian at 11:55 am.

Financial Report and Budget

Financial Report 2020-2021

REVENUE	
Amount previously in bank	\$525.96
Grant from AAO	\$250.00
TOTAL	\$775.96
EXPENSES	

2020-2021 Meetings	\$0.00 (in kind)
Open House (cancelled)	\$0.00
Advertising	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$0.00
FINAL BANK BALANCE	\$775.96

Budget 2021-2022

REVENUE	
Amount previously in bank	\$775.96
Grant from AAO	\$100.00 (requested)
TOTAL	\$875.96
EXPENSES	
2021-2022 Meetings	\$0.00 (in kind)
2021 Open House (cancelled or virtual?)	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$0.00
FINAL BANK BALANCE	\$875.96