

MAIGazine

A Newsletter of the AAO's Municipal Archives Interest Group

Issue 18

September 2022



Photograph is from the Henry Roe Photograph Album, Don Cosens Collection, Elgin County Archives.

What's Inside:

- 2 Message from the Chair
- 3 Meet the MAIG Executive
- 4 News Corner
 - MAIG Survey Results: Ontario Archives & Pandemic Recovery
 - Donation from Clan McEachern, MCA
 - New Database Launch at Elgin County Archives
 - Reach New Audiences with Archeion
- 8 An Accumulation of Culls by Veronika Mikolajewski
- 9 Oxford's Untold Stories by Megan Lockhart
- 13 A Busy Year for the Bayfield Historical Society by Julia Armstrong
- 15 MAIG Open House Update
- 17 Meeting Minutes from the 2022 Virtual AGM
- 27 MAIG Financial Statement

Message from the Chair

The MAIG Executive is pleased to present the 18th edition of the *MAIGazine*. After living through a series of “historical events” over the past few years, it’s safe to say that many municipal archives have gone through exceptional transformations. In this edition, we have several exciting updates from our municipal archive colleagues and thought-provoking articles for readers that touch on a range of topics from re-imagining archival policies and practices, reaching new audiences, and growing an online presence in innovative ways. Please enjoy the fantastic submissions this year!

At the 2022 virtual AGM, we had important and supportive discussion take place between colleagues regarding the impact the pandemic has had on municipal archives. These impacts are reflected in the results of the second part of the MAIG Industry Survey focusing on pandemic recovery, which was developed in the spring of 2022 by the MAIG Executive in collaboration with the AAO’s Institutional Development Committee. Lasting changes have occurred at municipal archives, whether it was loss of staff and volunteers, budget cuts, or shifting focus to digitization and online engagement, many archives are simply different now. More information on the survey can be found in this issue on page 4 and on our [website](#).

I am excited to announce that this year’s Open House event will be held in person in October! This will be a great opportunity to connect with our archival colleagues and get a peek behind the scenes at the Dufferin County Archives. I’m looking forward to seeing all of you this fall; further details can be found in this *MAIGazine* issue.

For the 2022-2023 Term, the Executive aims to find ways to further support municipal archives as we look forward to working in a post-pandemic world. We will be looking for feedback from our colleagues at future MAIG meetings on the ways in which MAIG can grow and transform to support the needs of municipal archives. Our first step will be to begin drafting a Terms of Reference for the MAIG Executive.

As always, please feel free to [contact me](#) with comments, questions, or updates.

Warm Regards,

Megan Lockhart

MAIG Executive, 2022-2023

Megan Lockhart, Chair
mlockhart@oxfordcounty.ca

Amber Mandich, Vice Chair
amandich@elgin.ca

**Gina Dewaele,
Secretary/Treasurer**
gdewaele@elgin.ca

The *MAIGazine* is published annually and distributed as a membership benefit by the AAO.

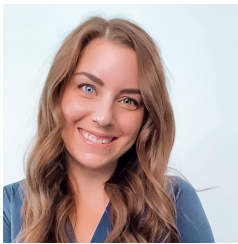
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If you have any questions about MAIG or would like to get involved, please feel free to contact our executive.

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 is the current Vice Chair of MAIG for the 2021-2024 term. She holds a Master's Degree in Library and Information Science with a specialization in Archives and Records Management, a postgraduate certificate in Museum Management and Curatorship, and a BA in Bioarchaeological Anthropology. 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.

News Corner

Part Two of the MAIG and AAO Institutional Development Committee's COVID-19 Survey: Pandemic Recovery for Ontario Archives

Submitted by: MAIG Executive

In 2020, a survey was developed and conducted by the MAIG Executive and the Institutional Development Committee (IDC) which collected information from institutional members across Ontario regarding the early impacts the COVID-19 pandemic had on archives. This survey was developed in response to an overwhelming request for comparative information during the early stages of the pandemic. The responses to the initial survey provided invaluable information to MAIG and the IDC and led to a better understanding of the challenges archives were facing in Ontario, and how they could be best supported at the time. The results of the survey were published in the [2020 edition](#) of the *MAIGazine*.

This year, as a follow up to the first survey, the MAIG Executive and the IDC developed a second survey to gauge how Ontario archives are recovering in a “post-pandemic” world and the ongoing effects of the pandemic on archives. The survey data will help determine the needs of archives during this period and ways in which MAIG and the AAO can best support members. Eleven archives throughout Ontario responded to the survey including nine municipal and/or government archives. While many archives have reopened their doors to the public, it is not necessarily “business as usual”. Archives in Ontario have seen changes to their day-to-day operations and are facing lasting impacts of the pandemic, working to recover their operations and service delivery with many challenges to overcome. Some institutions are still facing reduced staffing and budgets, and a reduction in volunteer assistance. Goals and projects have also shifted as a result of the pandemic, with many archives focusing on digitization and growing digital access to their holdings.

Municipal and government archive responses from the 2022 COVID-19 pandemic recovery survey are available to view via the AAO's website: <https://www.aao-archivists.ca/maig>. We hope that this survey will provide institutional members with valuable comparative data to justify the need for ongoing support of Ontario's archival institutions.



[Click here to view the Ontario Municipal/Government Archive Pandemic Recovery Survey results](#)

Donation from Clan McEachern, Middlesex Centre Archives

Submitted by: Krista Taylor, Archivist, Middlesex Centre Archives

On June 26, the Middlesex Centre Archives was honoured to receive a donation from Clan McEachern. MCA Chair, Carol Small accepted the donation from Sheila (Strachan) Lacroix on behalf of Clan McEachern.

For several generations, the McEachern family met in Port Glasgow for a family reunion. It has been four years since the last reunion, and it was agreed the remaining funds would be divided between Elgin County Archives and Middlesex Centre Archives.

A presentation was hosted at the Elgin County Heritage Centre, where members of the Clan assembled for a short presentation, along with volunteers and staff of both MCA and Elgin County Archives. The short program was followed by a tour of the Elgin County Archives. Elgin County Archives will also be the recipient of the Clan McEachern documents when they are ready for donation.

The Middlesex Centre Archives gratefully accepts their generous donation, with great thanks.



New Database Launch at Elgin County Archives

Submitted by: Gina Dewaele, Assistant Archivist, Elgin County Archives

In 2022, we have made several improvements to our online database. Our online database <https://heritagecollections.elgin.ca/> now includes a flipbook–style viewer for PDFs that is particularly useful for browsing scrapbooks, newspapers, and our Women’s Institute Tweedsmuir Histories. The intention of this feature is to recreate the experience of paging

through material as you would with the physical item. An example (from the Crinan Women's Institute Tweedsmuir History Volume Four) can be seen here:

<https://heritagecollections.elgin.ca/link/archives163851>.

Another recent improvement is a newspaper finding aid, available here:

<https://heritagecollections.elgin.ca/findingaid/newspapers>, which can be easily found from our main search screen. This page allows the user to search the newspapers by keyword, and also assists with browsing by presenting the newspaper name, year and issue in a list. As new newspapers are added to the database, they automatically become available in this interface. A screenshot from the newspaper finding aid can be seen below.

The screenshot shows the 'Newspaper Finding Aids' page. At the top, there are logos for 'Elgin County Archives' and 'Elgin County Museum', and the title 'Heritage Collections Elgin-St. Thomas'. A search bar is visible on the right. The main heading is 'Newspaper Finding Aids'. Below this, there are several paragraphs of text: 'This list is a compilation of all newspapers that have been digitized to date...', 'The Elgin County Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society has worked to index a number of the issues that are on our finding aid...', 'Issues beyond the digitized dates are likely available to view at the Archives on microfilm.', 'To find a person by their name try using quotes and the proximity operator...', and 'If you don't find what you are looking for...'. At the bottom, there is a 'Search Newspapers' section with a search bar and a 'Browse Newspapers' section with a list of newspaper titles: 'Aylmer Enterprise', 'Aylmer Express', 'Aylmer Paper', and 'Aylmer Saturday Night'.

In partnership with the Elgin County branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society, we have been digitizing our newspapers in various stages since 2019. We have completed the digitization of Elgin County newspapers, and have started digitizing St. Thomas newspapers. The Estate of Donna Vera Evans Bushell and the Blidner Family Foundation have also contributed to this project. We also want to mention the assistance of the Aylmer-Malahide Museum and Archives,

who allowed us to digitize and copy early issues of the Aylmer Sun. So far, we have digitized over 500 years of newspapers.

With over 250,000 records in our online database, we have also developed a guide on how to search our online database. It includes: 10 tips to help you conduct a more effective search, and 10 common database searches! You can view this guide here: <https://bit.ly/3SXGhkm>.

Reach New Audiences with Archeion

Submitted by: Jazmine Aldrich, Archeion Coordinator, Archives Association of Ontario



Hello MAIG colleagues! In case you missed my introduction at the May 2022 virtual AGM, my name is Jazmine Aldrich and I took on the role of Archeion Coordinator in April 2022. It was a pleasure to meet a number of you — if only by Zoom — and to listen in on your discussions.

Municipal archives in Ontario are doing incredible work despite the constraints placed on them through the pandemic. I hope to work with many of you to build on what you have done and make the product of your hard work more accessible to the public.

As I am sure many of you know, Archeion is the AAO's archival information system built on Access to Memory (AtoM) software. AAO institutional members contribute archival descriptions, authority records and institutional descriptions to Archeion to increase their online presence. Institutions using Archeion benefit from greater discoverability and contribute to a better researcher experience by making connections across institutions. Archeion is a powerful tool for Ontario's archives.

If you are a non-member interested in learning more about Archeion, feel free to reach out to me by email to set up a free consultation (no commitment necessary). I am also happy to chat with institutions already using Archeion who would like to learn how to optimize their use of the database.

My email address is archeion@aao-archivists.ca. I would be happy to hear from each and every one of you!

An Accumulation of Culls

Submitted by: Veronika Mikolajewski

Donations can bring all manner of surprises. Whether there be promotional swag, locks of hair, or even mouse droppings, the archivist is prepared to encounter just about anything. But what happens to the fantastic objects that are deemed to have no archival value? Be it framed artistic prints, or old film canisters, these items are not so easily shredded and disposed of. These culls often have the curious fates of either gathering dust in forgotten corners, becoming items of public display or even serve to decorate offices. Looking around archival spaces, it is easy to see how these items gather around us. Rather than shoving them aside, it is important to consider how we deal with these objects and find appropriate methods to declutter.

Culled objects prove a unique problem in that they are stripped from their context and are often left without much documentation. While the processing archivist may still retain knowledge of an object's origin, this information that exists solely within the archival institution's culture, can easily be forgotten in the event of job changes and retirement. As a result, the archive's collection of abandoned items become permanently shrouded in mystery.

The general reaction to these unknown artifacts has been a simple one: to gather them together in a corner where they are forgotten and collect dust. Another approach has been to reappropriate curiosities for display in the Reading Room. This creates a welcoming space for researchers and provides opportunity for conversation. A third place that these items find a home is the archivist's office. Here magnets, ashtrays and other miscellaneous paperweights adorn the space. While this may work as a temporary solution, it becomes problematic when the archivist leaves their post. Archivists have been known to accidentally claim these items as their own, or to leave behind a treasure trove of clutter for their successor.

These culled items have outlived their purpose and worn out their welcome in archival contexts. So why are we keeping them? A donor who refuses to reclaim culled material can leave the archivist in an awkward position. While textual records can easily be shredded it is not so with commemorative china and other trinkets. Disposing of items in the garbage is often undesirable as this discovery can lead to donor and public mistrust. Archival professionals have expressed that the destruction of these items can cause them hesitation while others have suggested that their destruction, simply because they don't align with archival standards, is distasteful and unnecessarily extreme.

This is a call to rethink our habits and begin to find practical solutions. Having this discussion with archivists from varied archival institutions has brought to light that abandoning culls in this way is a common behaviour. I have begun brainstorming ways to address this problem by exploring solutions that seek to make disposal easier both physically and mentally. Whether this means updating policy and procedures, finding ways to exchange items, or to destroy them, we need to ensure that we respect donor agreements, institutional policy and various ethical concerns.

We need to change this pattern and begin to reclaim the spaces around us with intentionality. I am excited to have the opportunity to begin this conversation **and would be excited to hear from you** as I continue to investigate. We need to address the skeletons in our closets by finding fair and honourable fates for them.

Reach out! veronikamikski@gmail.com

Oxford's Untold Stories

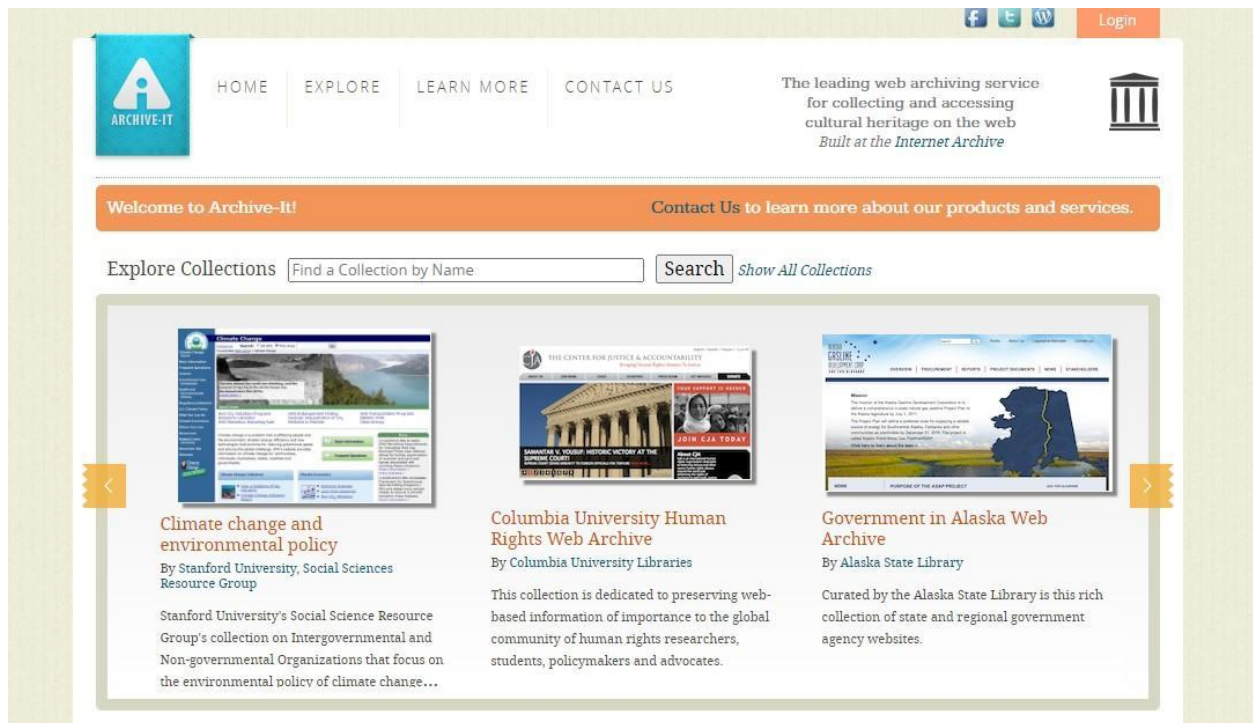
Submitted by: Megan Lockhart, Oxford County Archives

When faced with a glaring insufficiency of archival records relating to the history and culture of local minority populations and underrepresented communities, what do you do? This was the question, or perhaps more accurately the dilemma, we were faced with over the past several years at the Oxford County Archives. As we are largely reliant on the donation and transfer of records to our holdings from external sources interested in working with us (the local community, cultural heritage institutions and other archives/libraries, area municipalities, etc.), and internal sources (Oxford County departments), our holdings have mainly been representative of specific communities and populations within the county. This means that certain populations are greatly underrepresented in the archival records we maintain; this includes visible minority groups, people and families living in poverty or experiencing homelessness, people living with disabilities, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, women, and other equity-seeking groups. Oxford County's heritage and culture in totality is not just comprised of the Euro-centric stories and histories we so commonly hear, but taking a look through our records, you would come to this misconceived conclusion. After reviewing the scope of our collections, we knew we had work to do.

We quickly realized that we could not simply reach out to these underrepresented communities and say "hey, we want your records", without firstly coming off as being very pushy, but also without having an established relationship, making new connections, having conversations, and establishing trust. This is something we are still working towards, and will be ongoing for the foreseeable future. As a starting point, we began brainstorming ways in which we could connect with local community groups, organizations, and associations related to Oxford's underrepresented populations, in a way that was also convenient and safe for them. We began our research into what community groups were out there, and quickly found that not only were there many, but most of these groups had a massive amount of online content on websites and social media pages. These websites contain event updates, local stories, photographs, videos, interviews, and much more – records that are invaluable to telling these communities' stories. We then had a light-bulb moment, and after discovering a web archiving opportunity through the [Community Webs](#) program, we developed a new web archiving initiative to capture the online content and stories connected to these community groups. We've called it "Untold

Stories”. We also recognize that web content is fleeting, which is another factor that influenced our decision to focus on web archiving for the time being.

We began the project by establishing a list of websites and social media pages that we thought should be prioritized for archiving. Once we had our list compiled, we began reaching out to the community groups and organizations to establish contact, explain the project, discuss why we wanted to capture their online content, and to answer any questions or concerns they had. Ultimately, we reached out to ask permission to archive their websites, and to take a collaborative approach to the project. If any group was uncomfortable with their content being archived, we wanted to know and accepted their wishes to not be included in the project. Utilizing the “[Archive-It](#)” web archiving service, we began archiving! Thus far, the community partners we are working with include the [Muslim Association of Woodstock](#), the [Oxford Caribbean Canadian Association](#), the [Oxford Local Immigration Partnership](#), [Oxford County Pride](#), the [Oxford Housing Action Collaborative](#), [Social Planning Council Oxford](#), and local Black history historian, blogger, and author [Heather Rennalls](#). The web archiving software “crawls” through these sites, capturing their content at a specific point in time. We schedule these crawls regularly for each site depending on how often the sites are updated or changed. This captured content is then made publicly available to view on a [database](#). We’ve also been utilizing “Archive-It” to capture the county’s COVID-19 web updates and online content.



The “Archive-It” home page



Newcomer Stories

The best way to learn about Oxford County is to hear it from newcomers themselves!

Listening & reading to the stories of newcomers who moved to Oxford County is the best way to find out what living in our community is truly like! We're proud to be a region with diversity and look forward to having you become part of our growing family here!

Maria Odumodu's Story

Nigerian-born Maria Odumodu and her husband Joe were living in London, England where they had both attended school, when she heard former Prime Minister Pearson's "Four Faces of Peace" Nobel Prize acceptance speech. She knew that if the country represented by this man was anything like the ideals outlined in his speech, then Canada would be the ideal place for the couple and their future family.

In 1971 Joe was able to find a job in Woodstock, Ontario before even leaving Britain. Maria would follow him one month later, and they have never left.

When she first arrived, the most striking thing for Maria at first was the size of the town:

"It was so small. Living and working in London it would take an hour to get to work. Coming here, everything is right there. You get used to it though and Woodstock is very centrally located."

Maria and Joe opened their own pharmacy in 1976, which they still run as the Dispensary Pharmasave Woodstock Inc.. While she never got a job in her profession because of lack of Canadian experience, she has taken advantage of the proximity to the University of Western Ontario in London, to earn two degrees. Maria is currently writing her PhD dissertation in Public Policy and Administration.

HAVE A QUESTION? ASK US!

The newcomer stories page we've captured on the "Welcome to Oxford" website



Oxford County Pride's Twitter feed



A screenshot of Heather Rennall's Black history blog/website from our database.



Just a few of the photos from the Woodstock Muslim Association's website which we've captured and preserved through web archiving.

Through our correspondence with various community organizations, we've begun the work of expanding our services to a larger audience and establishing important and necessary relationships to move forward and expand the historical narratives and records that we preserve. Beyond preserving online content, there have been discussions of physical record donations to the archives, loans for scanning, and opportunities for archives staff to speak at and attend events. We aim to expand our partnerships to include more community groups, and find ways to collaborate beyond web archiving, perhaps with exhibit development, record interpretation, events, and an exchange of knowledge and culture. Check out what we've archived so far at <https://archive-it.org/home/oxfordcountyarchives>.

A Busy Year for the Bayfield Historical Society

Submitted by: Julia Armstrong, Volunteer Archivist, Bayfield Historical Society

Bayfield is a heritage village on the shore of Lake Huron in the Municipality of Bluewater, Huron County. The volunteer board (including the archivist) of the Bayfield Historical Society (BHS) and one paid part-time assistant maintain the Archives & Heritage Centre in a historic building on Main Street. For BHS, 2022 has been eventful: we marked the completion and official launch of three major projects.

The Legacy of Admiral Bayfield

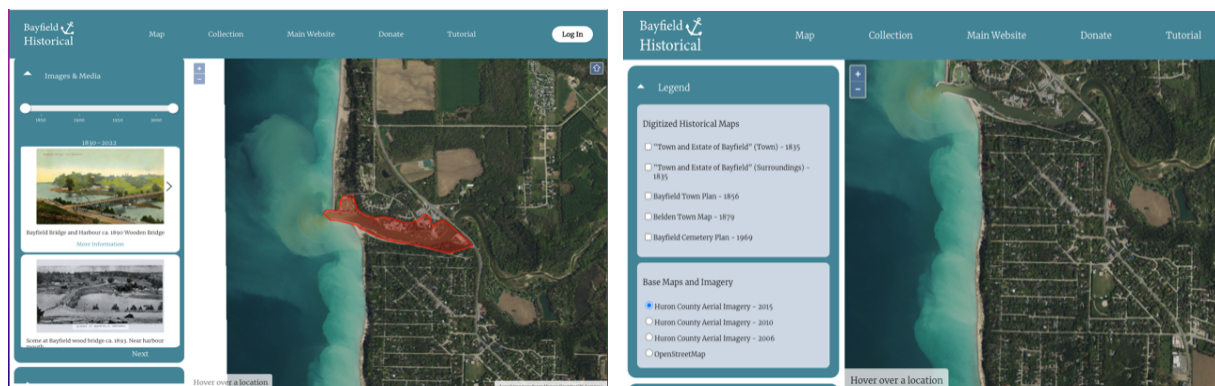
In early July, BHS celebrated two initiatives to raise awareness of the legacy of the Royal Navy surveyor after whom the village is named: Admiral Henry Wolsey Bayfield (1795-1885). It was finally possible to host a celebration and author talk for [our book about Admiral Bayfield](#) (released in late 2021) and to gather for a public dedication of the Admiral Bayfield Square, a small landscaped area with a plaque, sculpture, and information panels. Members of the community and visitors have been surprised and fascinated to learn about the master hydrographer, who charted the Great Lakes, and the St. Lawrence River and Gulf.

Putting Archival Records on the Map – Literally!

This year we also launched a special online project, the culmination of work begun last summer by University of Waterloo co-op student Ben Woodward. Ben, who studies Geography and Earth Sciences, had returned to us after a grant program the previous summer through which he digitized the contents of our 23 photos albums and our historic postcard collection, entering the details into PastPerfect. Partly in an attempt to provide him with some variety, and because I was interested in his skills in GIS (Geographic Information Systems), I suggested he think about developing a GIS using the scanned images. I was wondering whether we might be able to create an online platform for the community to explore, which would also provide collection access to cottagers who live elsewhere part of the year and to those whose ancestors were from the area.

Ben and I discussed possibilities, and he learned about archival metadata standards and researched controlled vocabularies. I loved the interdisciplinary nature of this project: he was being introduced to the archival field, and I was learning a bit about GIS and puzzling through matters of user experience with him. At the same time, the BHS board was discussing its desire to share our PastPerfect database publicly, but Ben and I worried that its interface wouldn't be intuitive for general users. Images are our most requested items and we wanted to present them in a format larger than in a PastPerfect record as well as make searching easy. Since BHS has early maps of the village (some of which Ben had scanned) and a great selection of images related to the harbour, beach, Main Street, homes and cottages, businesses, and site-specific events, we explained to the board that it would be possible for Ben to present them by location in a custom public platform that drew on the records in PastPerfect. He started on his project near the end of that summer and then devoted many volunteer hours (beyond the grant funding) to georeferencing and creating the website using open-source software. The BHS board agreed that this would be a wonderful project for him to continue, which is how his co-op term with us came about in the summer of 2021 – the proposed project was directly related to his studies.

The result is the [Bayfield Historical Web Map](#), whose functionality Ben beta-tested and refined before his summer co-op was up. Behind the scenes we continued to populate it into the spring of 2022, transferring selected images, descriptions, and metadata from PastPerfect. We launched the map at our spring AGM, with Ben demonstrating its features and receiving enthusiastic response. To date, there are 400 images to explore by subject, street, and more. One can turn on and off historic maps layered over the current aerial view. Ben even created YouTube tutorials to encourage engagement. Volunteers continue to add records from PastPerfect, and the next goal is to invite community members to upload their historic images to further enrich the BHS collection.



The Local History Atlas

It has been such a pleasure to collaborate with Ben, and he has become interested in helping other historical societies, and community and county archives, present their area's history through the lenses of location and time. To that end, he has built and launched an entrepreneurial project called the [Local History Atlas](#). The dynamic platform, which can host

content from around the province, displays maps and the locations of items (photographs, postcards, objects, video, audio), buildings, plaques, and historical events. Users navigate to a town or county, for example, to return all content associated with that place. They can scroll across the map, zoom in or out, and click on other nearby points for associated items. The platform encourages a two-way flow of information: users can comment (e.g., if they know the history of a building or the identity of an unnamed person) and upload scans from their personal collection (there is a vetting function).

Ben can import records from Flickr albums, Excel sheets, and Omeka. I look forward to assisting him with aspects of the project as it's a chance to continue collaborating and encouraging him in the museum and archives fields. For a demonstration of the Local History Atlas platform, [watch the video here](#). For more information: <https://atlas.digitalhistory.ca/>.

Save the Date - 2022 MAIG Open House

The MAIG Executive is pleased to announce that the MAIG Open House will be returning as an in-person event on October 14, 2022. This year, the Open House will be hosted by the Dufferin County Archives! Please join us and our gracious host Laura Camilleri as we explore the archives and its collections, and the exhibits, galleries, and grounds at the Museum of Dufferin. Attendees will also be provided with the opportunity to sit in on seminars by guest speakers Sahana Puvirajasingam (Museum of Dufferin and City of Toronto Museums & Heritage Services), who will be providing a video presentation about the "Collecting the Community" project; and a live virtual presentation by Alex Avdichuk and Gabrielle Major both with the City of Toronto Museums. "Collecting the Community" is an initiative by the Museum of Dufferin to engage with, collect, preserve, and interpret the past, present, and future history of historically marginalized communities in Dufferin County. Alex Avdichuk will be speaking on contemporary collecting policy and the sensitivity around collecting oral histories, and Gabrielle Major will be discussing collecting sensitive items.

Lunch will be provided at the event. We hope you join us for a day of fun, learning, and connecting with our archival colleagues. Space is limited this year so please send your RSVP as soon as possible if you plan on attending in person.

For those who cannot attend in person, there will be an opportunity to attend the live virtual session with Alex Avdichuk and Gabrielle Major and the MAIG meeting virtually through Zoom. 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 portions of the Open House.

Please RSVP by Friday, September 30th to: Gina Dewaele, MAIG Secretary-Treasurer: gdewaele@elgin.ca or call 519-631-1460 ext. 154.

When: Friday October 14th, 2022 - 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Where: Dufferin County Archives at the [Museum of Dufferin](#)
(936029 Airport Road, Mulmur, ON L9V 0L3)
Parking Information and Directions available at:
<https://www.dufferinmuseum.com/plan-your-visit/>

Agenda: 10:00am-12:00pm • Welcome and Tour of Museum of Dufferin County Archives, [Exhibits & Galleries](#)

12:00pm-1:00pm • Lunch followed by an opportunity to explore the exterior walking trail and the Indigenous and dyeing gardens (weather permitting), and the Corbetton Church on the grounds.

1:00pm-2:30pm • Guest Speakers' Presentations

2:30pm-4:00pm • MAIG Meeting (option for virtual attendance)

Speaker Biographies:

Sahana Puvirajasingam is a Tamil-Canadian emerging museum professional. She is the Community Collections Curator at the Museum of Dufferin, where she is leading the *Collecting the Community* project, and is also a Museum Collections Assistant with City of Toronto Museums & Heritage Services.

Alex Avdichuk's museum career spans thirty years in private and public institutions. She holds a Master of Museum Studies degree from the University of Toronto, and a Diploma in Cultural Resource Management from the University of Victoria. Alex has been the Supervisor of Collections and Conservation for the City of Toronto Museums and Heritage Services since 2006, and she also teaches Care of Collections for the Centennial College Museum and Cultural Management Program. Her interests lie in making museum collections more accessible to the public, and she shamelessly knits in meetings.

Gabrielle Major is currently Registrar with City of Toronto Museums & Heritage Services, where she manages the information and documentation of artifacts in storage and on display at the City's ten museum sites. She has been involved with museums and collections management since 2006, when she began her career with the Community Museums Association of PEI.

Meeting Minutes from the 2022 AGM

Municipal Archives Interest Group

Annual General Meeting Minutes

May 25, 2022

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Executive Present:

- Megan Lockhart, Oxford County Archives, Chair
- Amber Mandich, Elgin County Archives, Vice-Chair
- Gina Dewaele, Elgin County Archives, Secretary-Treasurer

Present:

- Ellen Millar, Simcoe County Archives
- Jamie Levy, Simcoe County Archives
- Olivia White, Simcoe County Archives
- Nick Moreau, Region of Peel Archives
- Samantha Thompson, Region of Peel Archives
- Alesha Grummett-Roesch, Region of Peel Archives
- Abigail Kohut, Region of Peel Archives
- Arthur McClelland, London Room at London Public Library
- Sarah Ferencz, Whitby Public Library
- Karin Noble, Grey Roots Museum & Archives
- Kate Jackson, Grey Roots Museum & Archives
- Fianna McKnight, Grey Roots Museum & Archives
- Betty Jo Belton, Stratford-Perth Archives
- Liz Dommasch, Oxford County Archives
- Angela Fornelli, City of Kawartha Lakes Archives
- Christina Wakefield, City of Thunder Bay Archives
- Richard Mastrangelo, City of Thunder Bay Archives
- Deb Sturdevant, Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre Archives
- Laura Camilleri, Museum of Dufferin Archives
- Eva Lee, York Region Archives
- Kevin Meraglia, Sault Ste. Marie Public Library
- Michael Molnar, Huron County Archives
- Jazmine Aldrich, Archeion Coordinator

1. Call to Order

Megan Lockhart called the meeting to order at 12:17 p.m. and welcomed everyone attending.

2. Approval of the Agenda

The Agenda for the morning was presented.

Motion to approve the Agenda: Ellen Millar

Seconded by: Arthur McClelland

Carried.

3. Approval of the 2021 AGM Minutes

There were no omissions in the 2021 AGM Minutes.

Motion to approve the Report: Liz Dommasch

Seconded by: Amber Mandich

Carried.

4. Report of the Chair

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

MAIG's annual newsletter, the *MAIGazine*, was published in September, 2021. "Resilience, optimism, and obstacles" was the theme for this edition, highlighting the inspiring projects and developments municipal archives have accomplished, even with pandemic obstacles. Updates and news from four municipal archives were shared, including submissions to the new "Brag Board" section added to this year's edition for the first time which includes institutional achievements such as grants and awards, exhibitions, special projects, and other significant developments and milestones. As always, the Executive would like to extend thanks to our colleagues who contributed to the newsletter and hope to receive more submissions this year.

In response to the pandemic, the MAIG Executive hosted the Open House virtually in October, 2021, as an alternative to the annual in-person event. The Virtual Open House took place on October 22 and featured guest speakers Karin Noble (Grey Roots Museum & Archives),Carolynn Bart-Riedstra and Carol Small (Middlesex Centre Archives), and Liz Dommasch and Megan Lockhart (Oxford County Archives) who provided behind the scenes tours of their institutions' facilities and updates on exciting new projects. The Executive would like to thank our guest speakers for providing interesting and insightful presentations. The Open House meeting followed with 20 members attending.

Last year, the Municipal Archives Interest Group's Annual General Meeting was conducted virtually via Zoom on May 5, 2021. A total of 16 MAIG members, including the Executive, participated. Five motions were passed during the AGM, which approved the 2020-2021 Annual Report, the 2020 Virtual AGM Report, the Adoption of the 2021-2022 Financials and Budget, as well as elected Megan Lockhart as MAIG's Chair and Amber Mandich as MAIG's Vice-Chair for the 2021-2024 term.

This year, the MAIG Executive will be conducting the AGM virtually again for its members during the AAO Conference on May 25. Members will be asked to take part in the approval of the 2021 AGM Minutes, the 2021-2022 Annual Report, and the Adoption of the 2022-2023 Financials and Budget.

5. Financial Reports

- a. Financial Report, 2021-2022
- b. Approval of the Budget, 2022-2023

Megan provided an overview of the 2021-2022 Financial Report which was provided in the most recent edition of the *MAIGazine*. No comments were made.

Motion to approve the 2021-2022 Financial Report and 2022-2023 Budget: Karin Noble
Seconded by: Christina Wakefield
Carried.

6. Future Open Houses

As other Special Interest Groups and Chapters have begun holding in-person events again this year, the plan for MAIG's Open House event is to return to being held in-person this coming fall. Megan announced that the Museum of Dufferin Archives has graciously offered to host the Open House this year. The Executive will be working with Laura Camilleri to plan the event, which will be advertised later this summer and in the upcoming edition of the *MAIGazine*. Megan noted that spaces for the event will be limited this year so anyone interested should RSVP as soon as possible.

Deb Sturdevant offered the Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre Archives as a host for the Open House the following year (2023).

7. Other Business

Megan discussed part two of the MAIG Industry Survey. This second part will focus on the pandemic recovery stage for municipal archives, and the challenges that archives continue to face as services have resumed and facilities reopen. Megan has reached out to the IDC about collaborating on the survey, they are interested in collaboration and will hopefully be able to send along a list of questions to include in the survey by early June. The Executive is hoping to have the survey published online for members to fill out by mid-summer, with the results published in the *MAIGazine* in the early fall. Any suggestions for questions to be included in the survey can be forwarded to the Executive.

Samantha Thompson suggested that something be developed with the survey data, like a statement of concern or something similar to communicate how municipal archives have been affected by the pandemic with budget cuts, loss of staff, etc. She was also wondering if there would be a way to compare with federal archives, and how they've been affected. Once the survey data is collected, the Executive will look into ways to use the data in support of municipal archives, perhaps in collaboration with members of the AAO Board.

8. Roundtable

Deb Sturdevant, Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre Archives:

Concerning services during the pandemic this year, the BCM&CC was closed in January, with the Archival Assistants working in the building. The building opened to the public in February with some hour and capacity restrictions. As of May 2022, the Bruce County Archives (in the BCM&CC) has returned to its regular operating hours, with no pandemic restrictions, Monday to Saturday.

We are still working on a major newspaper digitization project, and hope to have at least some newspapers uploaded to a new site by the end of August 2022. Andornot Consulting is the vendor chosen to create and host the website which will give access to the newspapers for searching and browsing content. Bruce County had an active Archives Awareness Week.

Apart from our social media campaign, we offered exclusive tours to the council members / committee members / records management & clerk's office staff of the County's eight municipalities, as well as the leaders of the two First Nation communities and the Historic Saugeen Metis. The intent was to ensure that leaders in the communities have a good understanding of the services we provide, both to the general public and to the municipalities, to enable them to refer community members to us confidently. Representatives from six of the groups attended. Due to the pandemic we offered each group/municipality their own timeslot. Although it made for a busy week, sometimes with two tours in one day, the smaller groups enabled meaningful conversations specific to that municipality's specific questions. The tours featured a 20 minute powerpoint presentation focused on the work related to accepting donations and making them accessible to the public, followed by a tour of the Research Room and archival storage area. This was followed by a tour of the Museum Collections storage and a tour of the Museum exhibits. We intend to keep offering these exclusive tours about once every four years to ensure new council members and staff are always offered an opportunity to learn more about our services. Concerning the planned expansion, we are hoping that the associated legal issues will be resolved by the end of the year.

Laura Camilleri, Museum of Dufferin Archives:

Since last fall we've been in and out of the archives, doing distance research requests and hosting appointments onsite when we could. Looking to transition back to drop-in at the archives now that restrictions have lifted, and we now have a new elevator.

Several staffing changes here at the MoD in the last year. In June 2021, the part-time position in the archives was pulled leaving just the f/t archivist position. This will be re-evaluated after our strategic planning process is complete, hopefully in July this year. We have also recently lost our Visitor Services Co-ordinator and the MoD Manager so I am helping to fill in with those roles when I can. Hopefully these positions will be filled by August.

Last fall the MoD Archives received funding from YCW-BCH for two Interns who created two virtual exhibits for our researchers. They created the Heritage Landmarks map using the ArcGIS Storymaps

platform that is hosted on our website and the “Did You Know” virtual exhibit using Google Sites platform that is launching on May 27th (this Friday). They also started the process of creating digitization standards for the archives and the MoD.

I completed the Anti-Oppressive Description and Re-Description working document for the MoD Archives which outlines the steps and process we are taking to review the archival and photograph collections.

Gina Dewaele & Amber Mandich, Elgin County Archives:

Last year, we updated our online database to include the Elgin County Museum as well as partner museums in Elgin County and St. Thomas, 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.

With financial assistance from the Elgin OGS, we recently digitized our Elgin County directories and some of our earliest tax assessment rolls.

We have recently acquired records and photographs relating to the tenure of former Member of Provincial Parliament Jeff Yurek. Once fully processed, these records will be a valuable addition to the collection.

We have begun to preserve the County’s social media accounts and webpages as archival records. This is being facilitated through a service called “Archive-It” through the Internet Archive. The archives has been deemed eligible for a complimentary subscription to this service through the Community Webs program. We just started mining pages in the past two months, and so far the results look good.

To date in 2022, content was created for 344 posts on three digital platforms, including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. These posts had a reach of over 780,000 and have an engagement rate of 13%.

The archives was open at 50 percent capacity in December, it was closed in January, and was re-opened again at 50 percent capacity in February, in accordance with the province’s COVID-19 re-opening framework. Since March, we have been open at full capacity, and have no restrictions, although we still ask that visitors make appointments and first check-in at the front doors of the Elgin County Administration Building.

While we are now back in the office full-time, for most of the pandemic, we have had a hybrid arrangement of working from home and working in the office, which allowed one staff member to be present in our physical space at all times. This allowed us to continue processing and digitization,

maintain an online presence for virtual outreach, and continue providing access to our collection, largely by shifting to virtual reference.

In terms of outreach, our in-person programs such as our green screen program, and our property history and genealogy workshops were on hold since the beginning of the pandemic, but we have started to book in-person programs again, and we're excited to get back into the community. While these in-person outreach programs were on hold, we focused heavily on creating content for our social media platforms. This was done in an attempt to continue our public outreach as much as possible, and as a way to continue sharing our holdings with the community.

In addition to posting images from our collection daily on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, we participated in outreach campaigns such as the ArchivesAtoZ awareness campaign, and the monthly Hashtag parties organized by the U.S. National archives, as a few examples. We run photograph series with changing themes, Mystery Mondays, participate in community-run Facebook pages and groups, and we have recently delved into the world of Instagram reels, experimenting with video content on that platform. These activities resulted in a 55% increase in reach on our social media platforms in 2021, so we were pleased that we were able to continue connecting with the public and still be "social" when we couldn't always be together physically.

Finally, we have also been contributing articles to a local newspaper, with topics such as conducting property history and genealogy research. We plan to continue this as a means of promoting our resources and collection in the future.

Karin Noble, Grey Roots Museum & Archives (Grey County Archives):

Our last day being open in 2021 was Thursday, December 28. Due to an anticipated facility closure the first week of January and following Provincial closure orders in January, we opened again on February 1, 2022. Our expanded summer hours of operation began this week, following the May long weekend, and we are now open Saturday afternoons (except Saturdays of long weekends) and Mondays (Monday – Friday, morning and afternoon). Appointments are not formally required, but we still offer bookings through Shopify online to encourage advance booking and to give researchers an opportunity to express the context of their visit which we've found helps us provide better service.

Grey County was fortunate to receive Municipal Modernization Program (Third Intake) funding from the Province via the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to digitize Grey County minutes, by-laws and published proceedings of council c. 1854-1994 and this scanning work is currently underway.

We're pleased to be able to welcome a summer student to the Archives in 2022. We recently received a large donation of photographic material, the Grey Bruce Image Archives. Our spring 2022 lecture series was again hosted digitally. Backlog processing work continues.

Angela Fornelli, City of Kawartha Lakes Archives:

The City of Kawartha Lakes has been looking at expanding our available space to be able to accommodate preservation and conservation work, scanning stations, research, and researchers. We recently completed the set-up for Access to Memory to be able to build the CKL archival descriptions and accessions. We have been working closely with the newly hired Curatorial Collections Officer within our Economic Development Department to identify where city artifacts and archives are potentially located and to connect with local cultural heritage institutions and speak to our programs. We have also begun a replevin/repatriation project for City of Kawartha Lakes and predecessor municipalities records and archives.

Arthur McClelland, Ivey Family London Room:

Since May 4, 2022, the London Room has not required appointments. The Ivey Family London Room will soon have a new presence on the library's new website with updated information. London Room staff have been very busy answering email research requests and indexing local historical materials on VITA. London Room librarian, Arthur McClelland, attended the SWOC AGM on April 22, 2022 where a presentation was given on Archive-It. The London Room staff are also conducting an inventory of the archival materials. The Seaborn Collection of more than 40 scrapbooks of historical documents and newspaper articles which were sent to the Western Archives to be scanned have now been returned to the London Room. We hope to have online access to them soon. The London Room has also received several collections of scrapbooks of family photographs. The cataloguer who processed the London Room materials has left the library and we hope the position will soon be filled. As with most archives, we have a large backlog of materials waiting to be processed.

Liz Dommasch & Megan Lockhart, Oxford County Archives:

The Oxford County Archives is currently open by appointment only, but we have still been receiving many research requests remotely which has continued as a result of being closed during the first half of the COVID-19 pandemic. Megan returned to being full-time at the Archives in January, 2022, after being partially redeployed for a year to provide support to the Corporate Communications Department in 2021. We are now working on our acquisitions backlog.

We're in the early stages of a web archiving project using "Archive-It" which we're taking part in through the Community Webs archiving program. The focus of our web archiving initiative is to capture the online content (both website and social media pages) of various community associations, organizations, and groups related to the underrepresented and equity-seeking communities in Oxford County. We're calling the project "Untold Stories". Thus far we've partnered with Muslim Association of Woodstock, the Oxford Caribbean Canadian Association, the Oxford Local Immigration Partnership, Oxford County Pride, the Oxford Housing Action Collaborative, and local Black history historian Heather Rennalls.

Our archivist Liz Dommasch is currently working through processing a large collection of negatives from the local "Woodstock Sentinel-Review" newspaper. The negatives are a treasure trove of images related to local news stories, local people, events, places, and more. However, the negatives came to us unorganized, often loose in boxes, and with little identifying information. Liz is arranging and describing

the negatives, which number in the tens of thousands, while also working to find contextual information for the images where possible and digitizing them during the process. We hope to make these publicly available online through a database one day.

This year we received funds through the Ontario Municipal Modernization Grant for a new microfilm reader/scanner, which replaced our old (and barely working) machine. Part of the funds were allotted to outsourcing the digitization of the Area Municipality By-laws we have in our collection, and a number of county council composite portraits. This work is in the process of being completed by Polar Imaging in London, Ontario. We plan on making these digitized records available on our website in the fall. County archivist Liz is also scanning our postcard collection.

Many of our in-person programs in schools and long-term care homes went on hiatus during the pandemic. We've been finding ways to interact with our programming audiences virtually and remotely, including adding archival records and research resources on our website for local educators to access for their classrooms. We are also developing a "memory booklet" to share with local long-term care residences. The memory booklet will basically be a family history book that can be filled out by residents and their visiting family members, and will contain a variety of genealogical questions, and additional sections such as a family history recipe section. If the booklets are a success we aim to produce more which we will have available for the general public to purchase in our giftshop.

Ellen Millar, Simcoe County Archives:

The Simcoe County Archives remained closed to the public throughout 2021 and into 2022, but will be reopening to the public June 6, 2022. At that time we will also resume accepting private donations. In what is a new procedure for us, appointments will be required for researchers and donors alike and can be booked via an online booking app that will go live next week. The Archives re-opened the loading dock for municipal transfers in January 2022. We created a twenty-two month schedule to work through the backlog and to date we have received four transfers, totalling 123 linear metres of records.

Throughout the pandemic we have continued to add reference and outreach content to our website as well as contributing content to the County's Social Media accounts. I have been working through the file titles lists for past municipal transfers and adding them to a new Backlog database, which has made it much easier to find and retrieve files requested from the municipal offices. Jamie Levy created access copies of digitized microfilm files, reducing them to more manageable file sizes for public access and sharing. One great project that arose from the pandemic has been the transcription of our legacy index-card catalogues by our students. Most of the transcription work has been completed, and they are now adding subject and geographic headings. Once that has been completed we will export them from Excel spreadsheets and into the public-facing (DBTextWorks) Descriptions Database. During Archives Awareness Week in April we hosted virtual Open Houses for our RIM partners at the municipalities and in corporate departments. Attendance was poor, but lessons were learned for next year's activities.

In terms of staffing, our Digital Preservation Archivist position remained vacant in 2021, and long-time Archives' employee, Chris MacBain, retired at the beginning of January 2022. Recruitment took place in the late winter and we were thrilled to fill both positions. Jenna Kondo, who had worked for us as a student in 2021-2022, started as Reference Services Coordinator on May 4th, and Olivia White began as Digital Preservation Archivist on May 24th. Staff are back to working at the Archives at least 3-4 days per week and it is expected that variations on a hybrid model will continue for the foreseeable future.

Betty Jo Belton, Stratford-Perth Archives:

As with everyone here, I suspect, the pandemic continued to have a profound affect on our operations last year. Perth County announced that we were moving to a recovery phase in July 2020 and I don't think we are quite there yet! After a series of shutdown orders at the beginning of 2021, Stratford-Perth Archives re-opened for in-person researchers on July 5. We shut down again as of January 5 this year and re-opened the Reading Room by appointment on weekday mornings on February 21. I am pleased to report that as of June 7, with the assistance of two summer students, access to the Reading Room will expand. Appointments to access records and books that have to be retrieved ahead of time from the Collections Room and drop-in access to microfilms and ready reference books will be available from Tuesday to Saturday from 10 am to 3 pm.

The summer students are also working with Jenn Georgiou, the Archives Technician for Cataloguing and Digitization, to add digital copies of local newspapers to our website. They are piloting with two papers – scanning the Atwood Bee from microfilm and the Stratford Mirror from originals as it has never been microfilmed. More newspapers will be done once these pilot projects have been completed and evaluated. It is expected that this initiative will continue over several summers. In the meantime, Cindy Sinko, Archives Technician for Collections Management and Development, is working with Stratford Public Library to have records for all of our newspaper microfilms added to the Perth County Information Network catalogue (our version of a union catalogue since we don't have a County library system). Eventually, these library catalogue records will be linked to digital copies of the newspapers themselves on our website.

Other than that, we are celebrating our 50th anniversary this year with a series of newspaper articles highlighting 50 treasures from our collections. Things like Jim Anderson's centennial year drawing of the Fryfogel Inn. Jim was the first County archivist and a graduate of the Ontario College of Art. And, in August we will dedicate a Roots and Reflections indigenous plant garden next to our building. It was actually established in 2017 and our public works folks have won the battle with the clay and general swampiness of the site and the garden, like the Archives, is thriving. Hence, a dedication event, not a ribbon cutting.

Christina Wakefield, City of Thunder Bay Archives:

- May 24 is first week with all staff back in the office, researchers by appointment started in April.
- Ran a scanning project to prove we do need a building expansion. Oct-Dec 2021, 2 employees got through 8 boxes of records.

- As part of the scanning project, we have been approved to implement a new database, so have started to work with ArchivEra to move our data.
- Final part of the project is a digital repository.
- Our Archivist, Matt Szybalski, is retiring at the end of June.
- We are installing a land recognition mural in our reading room.

Eva Lee, York Region Archives:

- Last year celebrated our 50th anniversary. Campaign ran from July to December using hashtag #YRturns50 on various social media channels to promote our history and webpage www.york.ca/YRturns50.
- Regional buildings have remained closed since the pandemic began, but we have continued with answering research requests remotely with delayed response for those requests that required access to the collection as access was limited. Buildings are reopening this summer on a hybrid work model and we will be taking in donations again.
- Recently began processing and chipping away at our backlog as we now have access to the collection once a week.
- Storage space under renovations and we will have a new processing and reference space later this year. In-person visits will be by appointment only once space is ready.

9. Motion to adjourn by Megan Lockhart at 2:09 pm.
Seconded by: Ellen Millar.
Carried.

Financial Report and Budget

Financial Report 2021-2022

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

Budget 2022-2023

REVENUE	
Amount previously in bank	\$875.96
Grant from AAO	\$100.00 (to be requested)
TOTAL	\$975.96
EXPENSES	
2022-2023 Meetings	\$0.00 (in kind)
2022 Open House	\$400.00 (catering)
TOTAL	\$400.00
FINAL BANK BALANCE	\$575.96