

# THE BLUE MOUNTAINS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Looking Back at 2025

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Lots to share about BMHS in 2025!

## Membership News

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Read about how to join or renew and why!

## Robert's Rambles

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Board member Dr. Robert MacDairmid shares his recollections of The Beaver Valley Creamery in Clarksburg

## Upcoming Events

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Learn about the upcoming series Small Town Stories!

## The Last Word

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Poetic inspiration!

## Welcome to our First Newsletter!

We are very pleased to offer this newsletter to our members and community. Thank you for being here. The Blue Mountains Historical Society is a not-for-profit group with a 9-person board. Our mission at BMHS is simple: We exist "to identify, promote, and assist in the preservation of unique cultural, historical, natural and manmade features within and related to The Town of the Blue Mountains, Ontario Canada." We are passionate about our area and the stories of who came before us.



**BLUE MOUNTAINS  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

# Looking Back at 2025

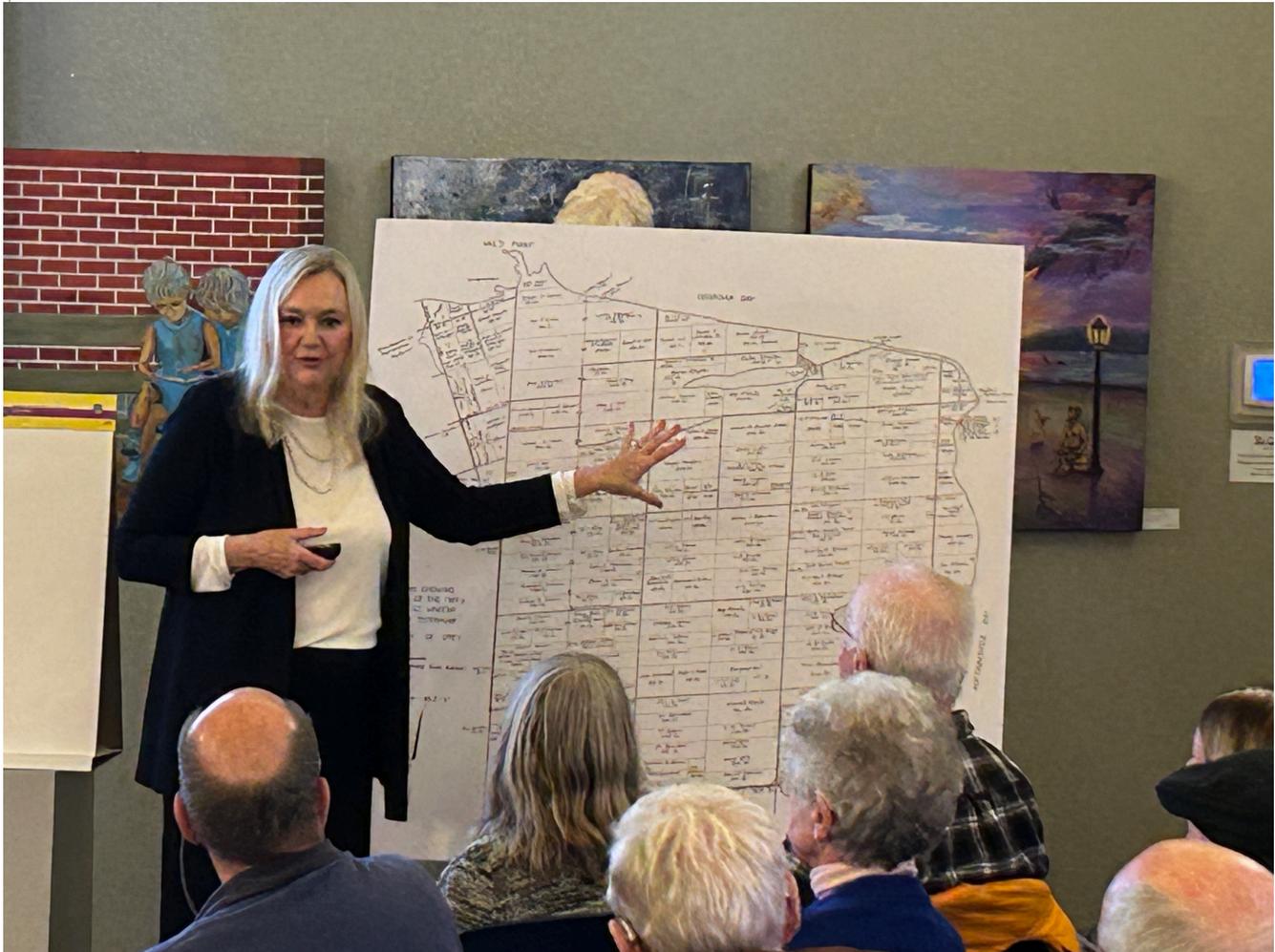


photo provided by written permission received from Paula Hope

## Things BMHS accomplished in 2025....

- collaborated with The Blue Mountain Public Library to host author Paula Hope where she talked about her book "Paradise Lost: An Untold Story of WWII"
- collaborated with The Lions Club to host a local history trivia night
- completed a successful membership drive
- started to engage on Facebook and Instagram
- hung banners to honour local heroes who served our country

# Membership News

## How to Join or Renew

Our membership fee is only \$10 yearly. Your membership is crucial as we endeavour to bring programs relevant to our goals as well as support the community to discover more about our history. We are so pleased that our membership is growing and we would be thrilled to have you join us.

To join, please go to [www.historicbluemountains.ca](http://www.historicbluemountains.ca) and look under Get Involved Today.

**Annual membership renewal:** If you joined in 2025 during the months of October, November or December, you do not have to renew. However, if you joined in the first 9 months, please renew to keep your membership active. This is important as it gives you the right to vote at our AGM, shows your support for our goals and it provides necessary funds so we can pay for operations.

If your contact information hasn't changed, all renewals can be made by e-transfer to [membership.tbmhistorical@gmail.com](mailto:membership.tbmhistorical@gmail.com) or mail a cheque to Blue Mountains Historical Society, P.O. Box 722, Thornbury, ON N0H 2P0.

To update your contact information, please email Joanne Fallowfield, Membership Coordinator, at [membership.tbmhistorical@gmail.com](mailto:membership.tbmhistorical@gmail.com) with any details or download the membership form from the website, scan and send it back to [membership.tbmhistorical@gmail.com](mailto:membership.tbmhistorical@gmail.com) or mail to the PO Box above.

## Social Media Links

We are on Facebook and Instagram. These platforms allow us to broaden our audience to create more interest in our history, strength the ties that bind us together and learn from each other. Please follow along with us as we share stories and photos of our past.

INSTAGRAM: [bluemountainshistoricalsociety](https://www.instagram.com/bluemountainshistoricalsociety)

FACEBOOK: [TBMHistoricalSociety](https://www.facebook.com/TBMHistoricalSociety)

## Robert's Rambles - Beaver Valley Creamery

Recently Board member Joanne Fallowfield had the pleasure of sitting down for a coffee at the Thornbury Bakery with board member Dr. Robert MacDairmid. Robert has lived his entire life in Clarksburg, and he has stories for days. To illustrate just how deep his memory bank goes, he shared this little gem:

After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Robert and a team of good folks drove from Kitchener, Ontario to Biloxi, Mississippi to help with the clean-up. At the end of the trip, the driver of the van turned to him and said, "Robert, you talked from the beginning of the trip to the end, but I have to hand it to you, you never told the same story twice!"

This is the first of Robert's Rambles, and we started close to home with his recollections of the Beaver Valley Creamery in Clarksburg. The building still stands (tucked behind the corner of Clark St. and Marsh St.), though the Creamery itself shut down in the late 1960s.

### **On the Farm**

Robert still lives on the farm his parents took over from his maternal grandfather in 1949. He was six when they moved in. Mom and Dad MacDairmid milked up to eight cows twice a day. (The one time 12-year-old Robert tried to help, the cow promptly went dry, and his father vowed Robert would never milk a cow again.)

The milk was poured into a hand-powered cream separator, and it was Robert's job to turn the handle, separate the cream, and pour it into the cream can. It took real skill to find the perfect speed—too fast or too slow and you didn't get the best yield. Much of the milk went to the animals and some was used in the house, but it was the cream that was sold to bring in essential income. The can was stored somewhere cool (often the basement) until the next milking. By the end of the week, the cream can was full (over 50 pounds) and ready to be brought to market.

### **A Chore Worth Remembering**

A side note about that cream separator: inside were up to 21 metal cones layered on top of one another. This machine was used twice daily and hand-washed after every use. The family farm didn't get hydro until 1953, and the only well was in the barn. Think about that for a moment - gathering the water from the barn, heating it, taking apart the separator, washing it, putting it back together... twice a day ...every day.

### At the Creamery

Each week, Robert and his Mom would bring the full cream can to the side door of the Creamery, where it was weighed and tested for butterfat. The MacDairmids were paid accordingly. Then, to collect the cash payout, they would leave the side door, go around to the front entrance, and climb the stairs to the office area.

Robert remembers that when you left the office, turned right, and went down about eight steps, there was a giant wooden butter churn about 6-8 feet in diameter and around 6 feet high. A motor turned it until butter was made. The staff packed that butter into one-foot square butter boxes. Butter was sold by the pound, and you could buy it right there in the office.

### Cold Storage Lockers

Robert also remembers another turn to the right at the top of those stairs: the refrigerated cold-storage locker area. People, including farmers, would rent lockers, because few had good options for keeping large amounts of food fresh in home ice boxes or barns. Mrs. MacDairmid rented a locker for their chicken business... but that's a story for a future edition of Robert's Rambles.

### Share Your Story Ideas

We hope you enjoyed this look back on life "back in the day." Send us any feedback, questions, and story ideas at [tbmhistorical@gmail.com](mailto:tbmhistorical@gmail.com).

**P.S.** If you'd like to go deeper, there's a good article in *The Meaford Independent* on the demise of the Beaver Valley Creamery:

<https://greyroots.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/0663DD0D-53B9-42D3-BCB0-401249827232>

With permission from the Grey Bruce Museum and Archives, here is a photo of a butter box from Beaver Valley Creamery:



## Upcoming Event - Stay Tuned!

The Town of Blue Mountains is made up of many small towns (Banks, Camperdown, Castle Glen Estates, Christie Beach, Clarksburg, Craigleith, Duncan, Gibraltar, Swiss Meadows, Heathcote, Kolapore, Little Germany, Lora Bay, Loree, Ravenna, Red Wing, Slabtown, and Victoria Corners.)

There is so much history in these places and we can't wait to share their stories. To get started, we are launching our **Small-Town Stories** series. Our first event will be in April and it is called **A Life On Lora Bay - Ken Hoggard**. More details are forthcoming so stay tuned!

With permission from the Hoggard family, here is a picture of the Hoggard Farm, Lora Bay in the 1980's -



## The Last Word...

belongs to American poet James Baldwin. He wrote - History is not the past. It is the present. We carry our history with us. We are our history."

Newsletter written by Joanne Fallowfield and edited by Paul John Reade