

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

of Medicine Hat and District Newsletter

Vet's Guard #28 of Camp 132



No. 28 Active Company, Veterans Guard of Canada.

Interim/Acting President's Message

Next Meeting:

September 29, 2022

@7pm, Esplanade Studio Theatre

Medicine Hat and District Historical Society

Welcome back to a new year for the Society!

I am looking forward to seeing you all again at our General Meeting on **September 29, 2022** – this time in the **Studio Theatre of the Esplanade at 7pm.**

On the programme will be myself presenting a talk on “Photographing the Prairie Grain Elevator”, speaking to the use of unusual (these days) architectural cameras to preserve perspective and focus in this difficult landscape subject, as well as aspects of how to ‘read a photograph’ and create compositions.

Examples of both cameras and photographs will be on display.

We will also be voting on a revised budget for the year, with changes made to additional items moved to the Casino account with AGLC approval, relieving pressure on our operating accounts. Part of the changes will relate to moving our programme meetings back to the Studio Theatre, with its optimal audio-visual equipment, as an inducement to increasing attendance, and hopefully providing an improved social environment.

Of interest to members will be that, with Kris Samraj’s departure from the board due to relocation, we are now without a Secretary. At the last board meeting I became appointed to “Recording Secretary”, which is not a Board position, carries no vote and provides minutes recording only. As you can imagine, taking minutes while running a meeting is somewhat daunting, and *I am hopeful someone will kindly step forward to take this position.*

Please let us know if this is something you would be willing to assist with.

That’s it for now, and I look forward to seeing you on the 29th.

Cheers,

Tom Hamp

Acting/Interim President

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Etzikom Museum Donation

The Medicine Hat and District Historical Society has been proud to present a cheque to the Etzikom Museum & Canadian Historic Windmill Centre for \$10,000.

This donation will help support the Etzikom Museum in completing much-needed renovations to the exterior of the building.

The Executive Committee and Board Members were pleased to spend the day in the area, and toured the fine facility with members from the Etzikom Museum.

The Etzikom Museum is located just off AB-885, about 55 minutes SW of Medicine Hat.



In the photograph below, back row: (L-R, standing) Barbara Watson, Earl Morris, Judy Morris, June Mitzel, Tom Hamp, Lynn Rance, Sheila Tieg.
(seated, front row, L-R) Beth Dixon, Glenda Lee, Gladys Harty.

Regrets: President Barb Traxler, Treasurer Tracy Harty, and Grantsperson Rachael Stromsmoe



Submitted Photograph - Earl Morris

Medicine Hat's Ties to the Monarchy

Royal Visits throughout the Years

by Jenni Barrientos

By now, you may have heard of the recent death of Her Royal Highness, Queen Elizabeth II. The news rippled across the world. Queen Elizabeth II was the longest reigning monarch in history, and for some of us, would be the only monarch we would have known.

Sometimes our connection to the Monarchy seems distant, but much of our identity, institutions, and emotions remain tied to our Royal Family. This is as true in southeast Alberta as in much of Canada. Canada originated as a British colony, and today we remain a member of the Commonwealth.

Our commitment to the Monarchy has been reciprocated by the Royal Family, including visits to our region. Our special guests have visited as Governor General and Her Excellency, as King and Queen, as soldier, and as heir to the throne.

The first royal visit to Medicine Hat came with the visit of the Duke of Connaught. Prince Arthur, known as the Duke of Connaught, was the seventh child of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Following a long military career, he was named Governor General of Canada in 1911. He visited Medicine Hat on October 11, 1912, as part of a cross-Canada tour. Accompanying him was his wife, Princess Louise Margaret of Prussia.

The highlight of the visit, of which a centennial was recently celebrated, was the laying of the cornerstone for Connaught School. Fittingly, children played a primary role in this occasion as a local children's choir sang Rule Britannia, a performance which received the praise of the Duchess. The local Boy Scouts also participated as they stood guard at the base of the platform. The Duke is pictured below, fifth from the left, facing the camera.



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Esplanade Archives Image

Monarchy in the Hat, con't

Royal Visits and Special Occasions

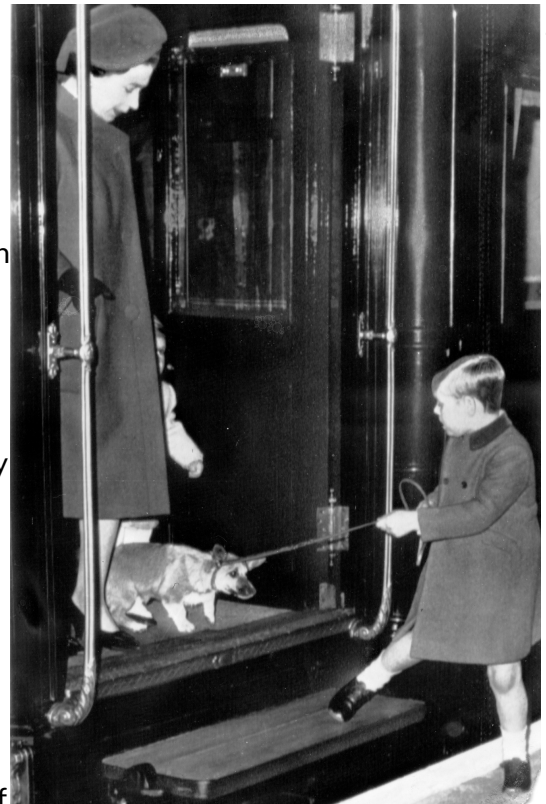
by Jenni Barrientos

Over the years, we also had visits from the Prince of Wales in 1919. During the tour, the Prince visited our Riverside Veterans Memorial Park, as well as Medalta.

Next, Prince George, the Duke of Kent, arrived in town in 1941, where hundreds of Hatters gathered downtown in hopes of sneaking a glimpse of the monarch. He went to visit the S.F.T.S. #34 and was greeted by the Mayor.

The Earl of Athlone (the Uncle of King George VI) and Princess Alice were next to visit Medicine Hat, They arrived in 1944, and also toured S.F.T.S. #34, as well as Dominion Glass in Redcliff.

The next major visit was Queen Elizabeth I and King George, who visited Medicine Hat in 1939 during the cross-country Royal Tour of Canada. The day was so special that it was declared a holiday, and was finished off by a 70 minute pyrotechnic display, and the firing off of two gas wells. The Monarchs viewed town on a specially constructed platform near the CPR station, so the thousands of people would all have an opportunity to see our valued guests.



Esplanade Archives (1966)

0752.0026



0055.0163

Courtesy of Esplanade Archives (1973)

The image above is an amusing image of Queen Elizabeth II and a young Prince Andrew dragging a reluctant Corgi off of the train during a royal visit in Liverpool (1966). While it's not local, it hints at what's to come, as of now Andrew has been designated the caretaker of his late mother's beloved corgis upon her death.

The final images we have of the late Queen are of Helen Beny Gibson receiving the Order of Canada medal from Queen Elizabeth II. This was during 1973, at a royal visit in Calgary. The image to the left shows well-known hatter Helen Beny Gibson shaking the Queen's hand.

An interesting view of the Monarchy and the close ties Medicine Hat and its citizens had, and continue to have, with the late Queen and family. May she rest in peace.

Veteran's Guard Stands Strong

WWI Veterans help in WWII through the Veteran's Guard

by J. Barrientos

0937.0004

Arthur Briggs and James Briggs (1943)



We have quite a bit of history regarding the Prisoner of War (P.O.W) Camp 132 that was here in Medicine Hat during the Second World War. At the height of the P.O.W. Camp, there were more prisoners interred there than there were citizens of the City of Medicine Hat. One of the ways that the looming, large and imposing Camp 132 was kept in check was through the Veteran's Guard program.

The Veteran's Guard were most often men who had served in the First World War, and wanted to assist during the Second World War - but often were not well suited to being deployed overseas. These brave men were put to good use through the Veteran's Guard, where they were given the important job to help run, protect and operate the P.O.W. Camps. There were many companies of Veteran's Guards - one such that we know of that operated here was V.G. #28 - the picture of the group is on the front page of this newsletter.

One such member was James Briggs (1885-1956). Mr. Briggs served in WWI, and was honourably discharged in 1917. When WWII came around, his only son Arthur, joined the RCAF, and Mr. Briggs joined again with the Veteran's Guard.

Sadly, Arthur Briggs was killed in action overseas while serving. James Briggs continued his service and afterwards, was an active member of the Canadian Legion, the Chamber of Commerce, the Oddfellows, and a member of No. 3 Medicine Hat Lodge IOOF.

Recently, a researcher whose father worked as a cook within the P.O.W. Camp came into the Archives to do some research. Her father was in the Veteran's Guard, and was tasked with working at Camp 132. It can be difficult to continue to follow those stories through time, as many of the WWII records are still sealed due to privacy concerns. We are lucky to have donated images of serving members of the Veteran's Guard, though many of our group photographs remain unidentified.

If you have information on any Veteran's Guard members, we would love to hear from you. It's an important part of our past that bridged the gap between WWI and WWII and the brave men who served during both monumental events.

Veteran Guards, 130, Form Association

Twenty-two of 30 local members of the 130th Unit **Veterans Guard** of Canada turned up for the recent smoker and organization meeting called by some of the originals. Held in the Canadian Legion hall the program included a business discussion, moving pictures and a lunch at the conclusion of the smoker.

It was decided to put the association on a permanent basis, and officers were elected for the coming months, as follows: Ed Brown, president; C. J. Vaughan, vice-president; **James Briggs**, secretary-treasurer; Ed Keal and Doug. G. Mitchell, directors.

The next annual meeting will be held in September, with emergent meetings to be at the call of the chair.

Medicine Hat News, April 4, 1950

Membership Dues

Join the Historical Society of Medicine Hat and District

Membership dues for 2022-2023 are now due. Any members who paid for 2021 will have their memberships extended through to the 2022-2023 year, due to our lack of meetings in 2021.

Your \$10 membership to the Historical Society of Medicine Hat and District allows you to cast your vote on deciding factors at our meetings, as well as receive 5 editions of our Smoke Signals Newsletter via email or printed copy.

You can pay your \$10 membership dues by cheque by mail to the address below. Please make cheques payable to:

The Historical Society of Medicine Hat and District

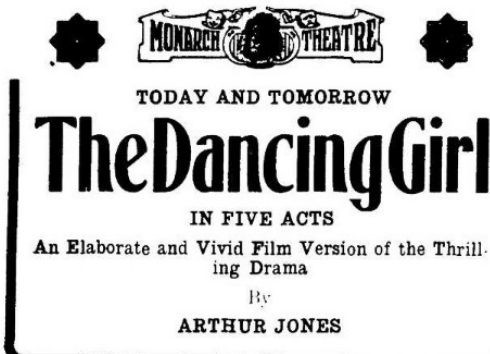
401 1 Street SE
 Medicine Hat, AB
 T1A 8W2

This day in History

September 1, 1915

The Monarch Theatre was recently reopened for a one-time event during Alberta Days. There was a special showing of Alberta-based or Alberta-filmed movies, to celebrate the occasion. Alberta became a province on September 1, 1905.

On September 1, 1915 they were playing "The Dancing Girl" in Five Acts. At the time, live theatre was the pinnacle of fashion at the Monarch. This sharp advertisement ran in the Medicine Hat News for four days.



Word of Thanks

The Historical Society of Medicine Hat and District partners with the Esplanade Archives in preserving and promoting our rich heritage. The Archives are a valuable resource for family research and local historical information. To make an appointment at the Archives, please call 403-502-8582, or email Jennifer Barrientos at jenuatr@medicinehat.ca. The Archives are located at 401 1 Street SE, Medicine Hat, AB T1A 8W2, and as always, are free for you to use.

The Historical Society of Medicine Hat and District website: www.histsocmedhat.ca

Executives

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Tom Hamp | Interim President |
| Wes Krause | Past President |
| Nick Martin | 1st Vice President |
| Earl Morris | 2nd Vice President |
| Vacant | Secretary |
| Judy Morris | Treasurer |

Board of Directors

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Bruce Shepard | Programs |
| Barbara Watson | Publicity |
| Sheila Tiegs | Book Sales |
| Jenni Barrientos | Newsletter Editor |
| Lynn Rance | Membership |
| Don Weiss | Director-At-Large |