

YESTERDAY

News from the Tavistock and District Historical Society

VOLUME 37

FALL 2024

Tavistock's Champion Orator

If you were asked to say what makes Canada special, what would you say?

That was the question posed to all high school students in Canada in 1927 on the occasion of Canada's 60th birthday, her "Diamond Jubilee." In a contest sponsored by the Toronto Star, students were to give a speech outlining Canada's accomplishments to that date. The prize winner would receive a trip to Europe and a spot in an international competition to be held in Washington.

Tavistock received instant national attention that year when a local boy, Frederick Hotson, won the contest. Fred was the son of Hugh Hotson who ran a shoe store at the time in Tavistock at 10 Hope Street West.

16-year-old Frederick Hotson represented Tavistock's Continuation School in the Toronto Star contest. Continuation Schools were found in towns that did not have a grade 13; Tavistock students who wanted the further education offered by Grade 13 took the train to Stratford. Fred's speech highlighted Canada's transcontinental railroad, the hydro-electric power generated by the Niagara Falls, and the law and order preserved by the North West Mounted Police. He won the regional round in Hamilton, the Ontario championship in Toronto and then the national title in Ottawa before a crowd of 12,000.

"While we rejoice in his success and the prominence given Tavistock in his victory," said the Tavistock Gazette, "yet we feel the entire bulk of the credit goes to Frederick himself and to his mother, his most valuable assistant and advisor." The London Free Press reported that "autograph books were held high above the throng, for his name must adorn numerous albums of the fair sex."



THE LEMP STUDIO COLLECTION

In 1930, Fred Hotson (standing right) and Gordon Maxwell, a fellow student from the University of Toronto, were chosen to tour the mission field of the United Church of Canada in the newly opened Peace River District in Alberta. On their car was a promotion for Tavistock's "Old Boy's Reunion" to be held that year.

Tavistock was proud of its Canadian Champion orator.

Following his prize of a trip to Europe, Frederick participated in the International Oratorical Contest in Washington, D.C. where he finished third behind the Mexican and French speakers.

The Tavistock and District Historical Society has started a project called Quick

Reminiscences where one can scan with their phone the QR code of a building in town and be taken to a history of that building. With our focus this year on the student history of Tavistock, what better building to be our next project than the one associated with Tavistock's most famous student?

Frederick Hotson was the eldest son of

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**Tavistock & District
Historical Society**

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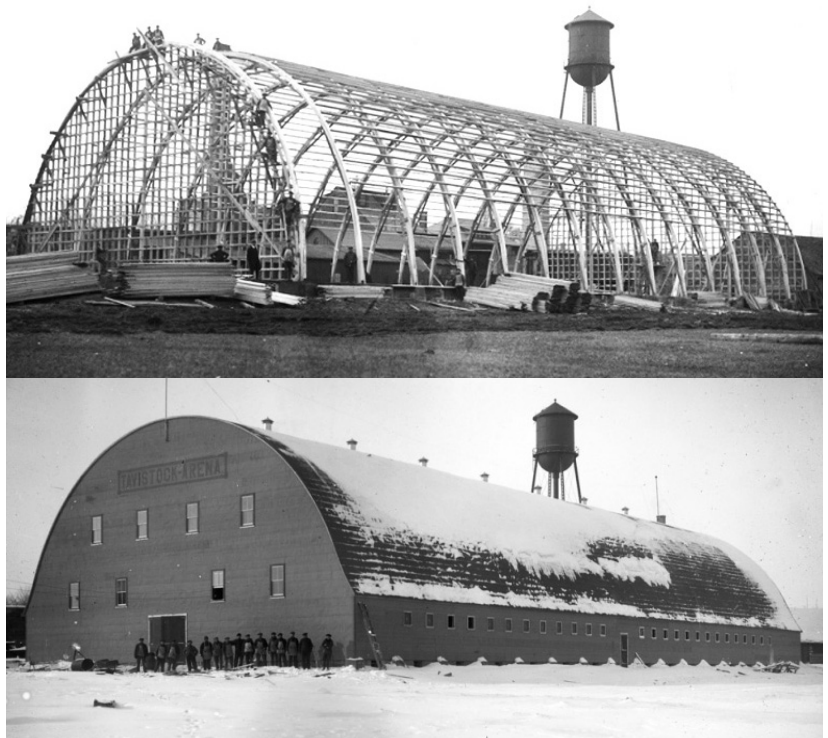
100 Years Ago in Tavistock

FROM THE PAGES OF
THE TAVISTOCK GAZETTE

January 17th, 1924:

Arena Completed

Now that the new rink is completed, we might say that everyone is gratified with the splendid new building erected and should prove a decided asset to our village. The general contractors Messrs. Zimmerman Bros. Ltd are to be commended for their work. The ice surface measures 175 ft by 75 ft. Two rows of seats occupy the entire length of both sides with the rear row being elevated in order that no matter where one sits he has a clear view of the entire ice surface. The entire seating capacity can accommodate approximately one thousand people while standing room for another two hundred is available between the dressing rooms and the ice. In case radio reports wish to be received at any time in the future an aerial has been installed on the roof extending from end to end.



January 24, 1924: Description of Horticultural Society's effect on the town

The Tavistock Horticultural Society held its first annual general meeting on January 17, 1924 and all agreed that the members had done much good work during their first year of existence. That will be quite evident when spring opens up and the flowers are in bloom. Several beds of tulips and borders have been cultivated and planted in different sections of the village. Six hundred red, white and yellow tulips have been planted around the memorial fountain. "Anyone who does not appreciate the beauty of flowers has something seriously the matter with his makeup." At the meeting it was proposed that Tavistock should have a floral emblem for the village (a year later the gladiolus was selected as Tavistock's official flower).

Tavistock & District Historical Society

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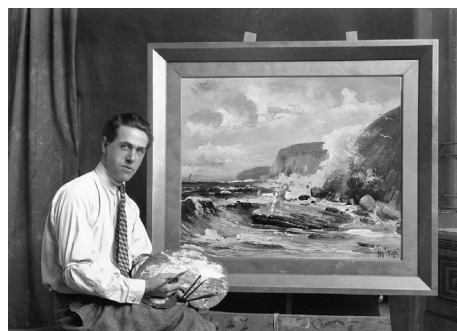
MUSEUM

HOURS:

*Third Saturday of
each month 1-4 p.m.*

*Other times
by appointment*

www.tavistockhistory.ca



February 7, 1924:

Reginald Selfe Opens Tavistock School of Art

An advertisement announces the opening of the Tavistock School of Art in Lemp's studio. "The principal, Mr. Reginald F. Selfe, S.D.A., B.W.S., late of Midhurst, Sussex, England, is an experienced and capable artist and this should prove a grand opportunity for anyone who so desires to secure a splendid instruction in the various lines of art mentioned in his announcement. Mr. J. Lemp will furnish particulars and all information by applying at the drugstore or phoning 42."

September 25: Fall Fair Best Ever

The Tavistock Fair has had many successful annual events in the past but the one on Tuesday far eclipsed all others from any angle. The crowd was larger, the exhibits more numerous and the quality better. The splendid weather was a decided factor in the success and this coupled with a new exhibition hall filled to overflowing with exhibits and industrial displays, a crammed livestock building and a newly prepared show ring all did their part in making our fair the biggest success ever. The cattle were pronounced to be of better quality than those of the Toronto Exhibition. It is our pleasant duty to make special mention of the exhibits displayed by our local merchants and manufacturers who occupied the entire south half of the fair building.

TAVISTOCK FALL FAIR
FRI. AND SAT. SEPT. 6 & 7

Students Remember School in the 60's

The Tavistock and District Historical Society (TDHS) held its 20th Annual Meeting on April 20, 2024 in the auditorium of Grace United Church, Tavistock. The theme of the event was "Growing Up in Tavistock in the 1960's" and that theme was chosen because it coincided with the 60th anniversary of the publication of the first comprehensive history of Tavistock compiled by the Grade 7 and 8 students of the Tavistock Public School in 1963-64.

Members of the class of 63/64 were invited to attend the event and share memories of their school days in Tavistock. Among the attendees was Jim Axtmann, school principal at the time, who had encouraged his students to research the history of Tavistock. The resultant booklet has become a valuable resource about Tavistock.

One of the highlights of the meeting was a reading by Tory Ann (Neeb) Reibling about a typical school day at Tavistock Public School. She was in grade 8 in 1964. This is her report.)

"The school day started with the ringing of an actual bell at 9 a.m. Children typically walked or biked to school. Parents were not in the habit of driving their children to school. There were no school buses as the students all came from Tavistock.

Noon hour took place from 12 to 1. Students went home for lunch. Inside the classroom there were rows of established wooden desks. Each desk had space to keep your individual supplies.

Across the front of each classroom was a black chalkboard with the alphabet (upper and lower case) displayed above it. There was also a picture of Queen Elizabeth. We sang "God Save the Queen" every morning and recited "The Lord's Prayer". There were no announcements from a central office. An analog clock hung on the wall. As well, there was a cloakroom where our outdoor clothes were kept.

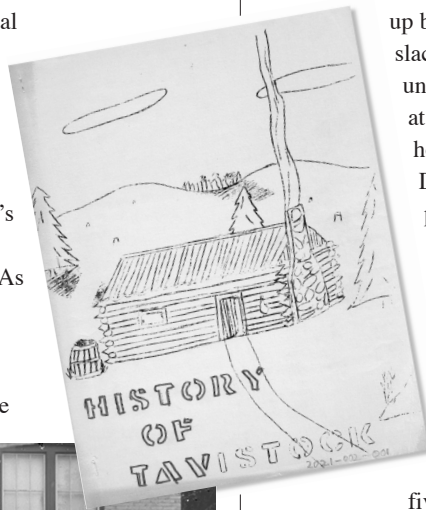
Girls wore skirts or dresses. In the warm weather, ankle or knee socks were worn and in the



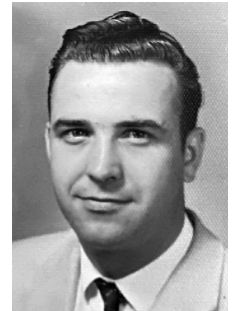
These girls of Tavistock Public School are doing the Ribbon Dance around the Maypole. This event occurred around May 1 and continued until the 1960's.



Grade 7/8 Students of Tavistock Public School in 1964 who attended the TDHS 2024 Annual Meeting: standing left to right: Michael Eckstein, Bob Gladding, Joni Faber, Paul Steinman, Paulette (Morgenroth) Roth, Ron McDermott, Tory Ann (Neeb) Reibling, John Roppel, Mary (Houghton) Getz, Ted Seyler, Klaus Peter Grapp; seated: Keith Woelfle, Karen (Seltzer) Peat, Principal Jim Axtmann, Bob Routly, Darlene (Ducklow) Hardy.



winter tan-coloured stockings held up by a garter belt. A pair of slacks was allowed to be worn under your skirt for outdoor play at recess. We played baseball, hopscotch, and skipped Double Dutch. There was no playground equipment. In the winter, an icy slide on the hill provided much fun (No helmets were worn).



Principal Jim Axtmann

In Grade 7 and 8 you could become a "Safety Patrol". This involved wearing a white over-the-chest belt for identification to supervise fellow students across the road. My corner was Hope Street East and Woodstock Street North (Yes, the five corners!) — a significant responsibility for a twelve- or thirteen-year-old.

My teachers remained constant: Miss Loth Grade 1; Miss Currah Grade 2; Miss Rudy Grade 3 and 4; Miss Marsland Grade 5; Mrs. Bell Grade 6; Mr. Axtmann Grade 7 and 8.

Mr. Axtmann came from Winthrop near Seaforth. He always wore a suit, shirt and tie. Miss Ida Kollman came weekly to teach music. Most classrooms had a piano. We also participated in the Kiwanis Music Festival in Stratford. Mr. Rennie was our school custodian who fed a coal furnace to keep us warm.

Individuals started school the year of their 6th birthday in Grade 1 (no JK/SK). Most moms were stay-at-home mothers so there was no real need for daycare. The school day ended at 4 p.m.

Looking back, I think going to school in the sixties taught us genuine respect for others, good work ethic, and many of life's needed disciplines. I am proud to be a member of this elite group."

At The Museum

WWW.TAVISTOCKHISTORY.CA

A SELECTION OF ARTIFACTS FROM THE MUSEUM

Ruby Quehl: Tavistock area people of a certain age all remember Ruby Quehl and the memories revolve around good smells and good food. For 20 plus years Ruby operated a most successful catering business. From small events to big wedding dinners Ruby and her crew turned out food that was sure to please. Her best advertising was word of mouth. Occasionally one needs promotional items to hand out. Back in the day when many people smoked, an ashtray was a welcome item. Ruby's grandson Bill Quehl acquired her catering business in 1979 and later purchased Joe's Place restaurant which he renamed Quehl's.



Loyal Orange Lodge: The Loyal Orange Lodge first formed in Tavistock in 1924. The Lodge motto was "one church, one school, one God" in the spirit of "true Protestantism with equal rights to all and special privileges to none." Just two years later the Lady Orange Lodge was formed in the village. Time passed and interest waned. In 1945 a newly-formed Loyal Orange Lodge # 3184 came into being with William Schaefer as the Worshipful Master. Popular for a while it, too, disappeared into the history books. The badge in our collection is one of the few reminders of this group.

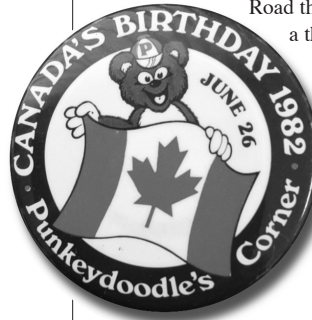
Maple Sugar Candy Mould:

Things aren't always what they seem. Ask 6 people to name what this heavy cast iron pan was used for and 5 will most likely immediately reply "baking fancy muffins". Good guess but wrong. It's a mould for maple sugar candy. This particular mould was used at the Kaufmann Hotel in Sebastopol in the mid to late 1800s.



Punkeydoodle's Celebration:

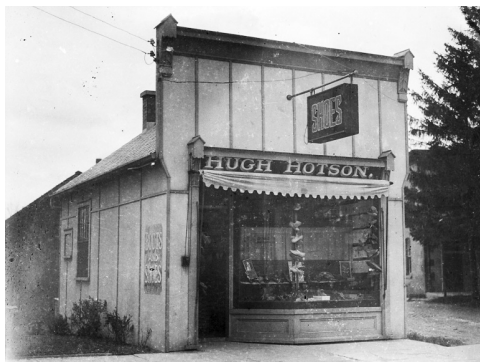
In the pioneer days of the early 1800s, Punkeydoodle's Corner was located on Upper Canada's "main street", the Huron Road that linked Goderich and Hamilton. The hamlet was then a thriving settlement and by the late 1800's had a population of nearly 100 families. It boasted a frame hotel, a livery stable to quarter settler's teams, a blacksmith shop, chopping mill, sawmill for square and round timber, an apple butter and cider mill and a general store. The settlement began to whither when the Grand Trunk Railway passed it by. Punkeydoodle's Corner marked its 100th anniversary in 1982 with Joe Clark, Leader of the Opposition, presiding over the celebration.



10 Hope St. West - Quick Reminiscences

(continued from page 1)

Hugh Hotson, a shoe salesman who had settled in Tavistock in 1905 from England. After a brief return to England for the health of his wife, he returned to Tavistock in 1924 and set up a shoe store at 10 Hope Street West in "Mr. John Lemp's new store adjacent to his drug store." Hugh's shoe store was very small and had boots and shoes, hockey skates and galoshes stacked from floor to ceiling. Between customers, Hugh could be seen sitting on a bench in front of his store, smoking a cigar. At the time of his death in 1961, he was Tavistock's oldest active businessman at age 76.



Hugh Hotson's Shoe Store

Charles Miles had worked for Hugh Hotson and continued a shoe repair business there. After his retirement, a number of other businesses operated out of the building, including a pizza parlour.

In 1977, Nelson Yantzi purchased the lot. Nelson's son Wayne tore down the old wooden building and together he and his father built a larger brick building. This became the home of Tavistock Flooring where all types of flooring and window shades were sold. They even sold products that customers could install themselves. Those customers would soon discover that installing flooring is a grueling business.

Wayne said "they discovered muscles that they never knew they had." After 45 years in the flooring business, Wayne Yantzi decided to retire and he sold the property to a local developer.

Sherry Bell saw the vacant building and inquired about using it to fulfill a long-term dream she had of opening an ice cream shop. On September 1, 2022, Sherry opened "Tavi Chill". She felt the town had a need for a place where kids and families could hang out, meet their



Tavi Chill ice cream shop

friends, play games, eat ice cream and create happy memories--a place where people could come and relax and chill out. Sherry told Jessica Harvey of the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette, "an ice cream shop is a happy place where everyone is

always smiling. Who doesn't love seeing ice cream all over kids' faces?"

When you are in Tavi Chill enjoying your one of 35 flavours of ice cream, scan the QR code there to discover the very rich history of 10 Hope Street West. And then check out the QR code histories of other buildings in town.

