

# Historian



Essex-Kent Mennonite Historical Association

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Hours are 9:00 a.m. until 12 noon, Monday to Friday, holidays excluded

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Edited by Jill Nicholson

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## Memories of Queen Elizabeth II

Edited by Jill Nicholson

Queen Elizabeth's passing at the age of 96 following 70 years on the throne brought back many memories for the Mennonite community in Essex-Kent. Queen Elizabeth visited the Windsor-Essex area several times before she was crowned and when she was Monarch. Some had the opportunity to meet or see her.



(Town & Country Magazine)

We have included some reminiscences from the last as well as brief history of Her Majesty's visits to the Windsor.

I clearly remember the rainy day in April 1982 when I travelled to Parliament Hill in Ottawa to witness the signing of the Constitution by the Queen, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and other dignitaries. I was close to the area where the Queen's carriage stopped and saw her disembark to go to the stage just in front of the Parliament Buildings. It was a historic day for Canada and a memorable one for me.

The death of Queen Elizabeth II brought back memories of local residents who had an opportunity to

see or speak with Queen Elizabeth. We have gathered some to share with you.

*I was seven years old at the time of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation. It was a very big deal at our house. First of all, my mother was a big "Royal watcher" and, secondly, we were one of the few households in our neighbourhood that had a television. So it quickly became a gathering place to watch the big event. Even then, I could sense the excitement of that day. I thought that Queen Elizabeth would always be my queen. But now she's gone and we must all adapt to having a king. It will be strange, after 70 years, to say King Charles and sing God Save the King.*

*Personally, I have fond memories of Queen Elizabeth, always enjoyed pictures of her family when her children were young, or photos of her with her corgis, who she obviously adored. Also, she showed grace and dignity throughout her years as queen. My hope is that King Charles will follow in her footsteps with the same qualities that endeared her to so many people.*

*God save the King!*

Submitted by Rita Enns

### 1951 Visit to Windsor

The first visit took place on October 15 1951 on a beautiful sunny day with the then Princess Elizabeth taking the place of her Father, King George VI along with her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh. The Ford Graphic of October 21, 1951 provides extensive coverage of the visit. During this coast-to-coast tour,

the Princess visited Windsor and toured the Ford plant. She was welcomed to Windsor by a large honour guard. She travelled from her Royal train to the Ford Oval Track in a glamorous Lincoln Cosmopolitan to the cheers of thousands of local residents, including school children. At the track, the royal couple viewed various Ford and Mercury vehicles. Miniature Ford cars emblazoned with the crest of the City of Windsor were presented to the royal couple to take back to their children, Prince Charles and Princess Anne. The Duke of Edinburgh had a special interest in cars and asked to tour the facility. Leamington had a prominent role to play at the Oval. A presentation called "Leamington on Parade", directed by J. G. Lougheed, included a colour party from the Canadian Legion Branch 84, the majorettes of the Leamington Boys Band, the Leamington High School bugle band and the Leamington High School majorettes.



The 1951 The 1951 Royal motorcade turning north onto Ouellette Avenue from Wyandotte Street (SWODA)

### 1959 Visit to Windsor

Queen Elizabeth visited Windsor the first time as monarch on July 3, 1959. She and Prince Philip travelled by train from Chatham. The Queen wore a beautiful pink ensemble. A motorcade travelled down Ouellette Avenue going past Jackson Park to the waterfront. Thousands lined the route. Once at Dieppe Park, the royal couple boarded the Royal Yacht Britannia to travel to their next stop.



Harry Enns meeting Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip in Dieppe Park, Windsor Ontario on July, 1959. (Harry Enns)

In early July 1959, Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip visited Canada to open the St. Lawrence Seaway. Harry Enns was chosen by the Leamington High School to represent the school and the Town at an event at Jackson Park in Windsor. Harry would be a member of the welcoming party which included Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, American President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Premier Leslie Frost and Windsor Mayor Michael Patrick. Harry arrived early so that he could be instructed on how to bow and speak to the royal couple. When it was time to speak to the Queen, she asked Harry questions about where he was from, what school he attended, the grade he was in and his future plans. Prince Philip was very humourous and asked about the liquor laws in Ontario that would soon be changing to allow liquor to be served in restaurants. Harry responded that he was too young to know about liquor laws!

Harry and his wife also saw the Queen a second time when they were visiting England in 1992 during a European tour to celebrate their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They arrived in London in the morning and could not check into their hotel until the afternoon. The hotel was across from Westminster Abbey. The clerk suggested

*that they stand in front of the hotel because the Queen and other royals were going to attend a ceremony to mark the Battle of Britain. The couple were in the front to see the Royals arrive in their Rolls Royce cars and enter the cathedral. This second encounter was very meaningful to Harry because he had already met the Queen in person.*

Submitted by Harry Enns

*In her later years, my Aunt Annie recalled how she and my uncle had driven from Wheatley to Windsor for the special occasion of seeing her beloved Queen Elizabeth on her visit here. Aunt Annie shared how as they entered the city, they discovered that parking places were few. They drove up and down the streets looking for one so they could join the hundreds of people lining the streets, but suddenly realized they were alone driving along Ouellette Avenue. Oh, no, somehow they had gotten by security and found themselves driving along the route that the Queen would be using shortly. My aunt, who had a great sense of humour, decided to make this her moment too! She graciously smiled at the crowds on the side of the street as she imitated the queen's royal wave.*

*What fun! I'm sure it was a very short time before they were ushered off that street! They did eventually find a place to park and joined the crowd of onlookers. But for Aunt Annie, her moment of being 'the queen' was probably the highlight of that day!*

Submitted by Mary Lou Enns

### **1984 Visit to Windsor**

The Queen and Prince Philip visited Windsor on September 29, 1984. They flew into the Windsor airport and immediately embarked on a motorcade to Dieppe Park. Thousands had lined the parade route for hours. Local politicians and officials greeted the royal couple with warm wishes. The Queen planted a silver maple tree in Dieppe Park, had lunch at the Cleary Auditorium and was then whisked back the airport



Queen Elizabeth II with Windsor Mayor Elizabeth Kishkon during her visit in September 1984. (Windsor Star)

*When the Queen came to Windsor with Prince Philip in 1984, my roommate and I skipped our class at University of Windsor to see them at Riverside Drive. I learned later the Queen as she was heading north toward Riverside on Ouellette Ave. exclaimed in her limousine "how Windsor had grown since I was last here in the 1950s." One of occupants of the car said, "Madam, you are looking at Detroit, Michigan."*

Submitted by Marena Woodsit



BBC

# Update on the Mennonite Centre in Ukraine

*By Jill Nicholson*

As the battles continues to wage in Ukraine, we are praying for the safety of the Ukraine residents in the war zones.

Despite the challenges of war, the Mennonite Centre Ukraine continued to provide food and support to residents. The former girl's school was donated to the Friends of the Mennonite Centre Ukraine in 2000 by the city of Molochansk. Renovations were completed on the building at a cost of \$100,000.

To support the life-saving activities of the Mennonite Centre in Molochansk, EKMHA sponsored a very moving program created and conducted by Elaine Penner on her ancestors' lives in Ukraine under Stalin. Approximately \$15,000 was raised from the event

another former Mennonite settlement, Chortitza, part of the current Ukrainian city, Zaporizhzhia, two hours north of the Molochansk. The Centre is now based in a group of former Mennonite buildings including the home of the Industrialist Peter Andreas Wallman.



*Former Wallman Home in Chortitza (FOMCU)*



*Mennonite Centre in Molochansk with Russian flags.  
(Winnipeg Free Press)*

Early on in the war, the eastern section of the country where the Centre is located was invaded by the Russians. Days before the event, we learned the Mennonite Centre would be taken over by the Russians on September 1. The services provided by the Mennonite Centre have moved for the time being to

Every day one could hear and see the trek wagons on the road close to our farm. This road was the only way to cross the Wistola River on the way to the west. Thousands of people from East Prussia were on the move. On our farm, we worked the land, took care of the animals and did all the things that were involved in a farming operation. That was during the week. On the weekends all the people that were able had to help dig deep ditches that were supposed to keep the Russian tanks away.

In the middle of December, I was drafted to be trained as a soldier. During that time volunteers were needed to help move German children out of the area, back to their homes. These children had been sent into the country to avoid the bombs falling in the bigger cities. Partisans were very active in the area where these children stayed. I volunteered and arrived at a home for boys in the afternoon of December 23. I was 16 years old and entrusted to be a group leader of 17 eleven-year-old boys.

Everywhere I looked I saw boxes and suitcases, awaiting the evacuation order that should come today, at the latest on the 25<sup>th</sup>. A mood of depression fills the air. The boys open their Christmas parcels that had arrived from home and divide the contents among themselves. Stories about the awful murders by the partisans surface. Everyone was more frightened of these gangs than of the Russian Army or future life in bomb shelters.

The administrator has spent the whole day on the phone trying to arrange transportation home for the boys. But there is nothing available. She tries again all day long on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Again without success, Many of the people in charge of the evacuation have left. It is very quiet at supper time. We eat our fried potatoes in silence. After supper one of the helpers shuts off the dining room light and pulls the curtain aside.

Outside in the snowed-in backyard stands a small fir tree. Someone has put four little 'Hindenburg' candles on it and lit them. A Christmas tree! We walk outside, stand in the cold night and admire this beautiful tree. Back inside the warm dining hall, we sit in a half circle, so that everyone can see and sing Christmas songs. It

is Heilig Abend! (Christmas Eve) Our cook serves a few Christmas cookies, a special treat. Later, in their beds, many of the boys cry.

On December 26<sup>th</sup> not one of the workers shows up. We do not ask any questions. In the afternoon of December 27<sup>th</sup>, the telephone does not work. Our administrator decides we should leave the next day. The horse and wagon that belong to the home is packed with food, blankets and a few personal belongings. Off we go – 17 boys, 1 administrator, 2 helpers, the cook and 2 group leaders.

The cook and some of the boys will take turns riding on the top of the wagon. The 2 group leaders are supposed to take care of the horse and wagon. All the others have to walk. There are no other people on the road. It is between -20 and -24 degrees as we walk through a beautiful pine forest. The trees are loaded down with snow. But who can appreciate all this beauty in our haste to get away? We manage to walk 18 km on that first day and reach a little village. For the night we can stay in the now empty school house and the reeve divides us up to be fed in different households.

As the next day dawns we travel in a southwest direction. That road is filled with refugees. Again everyone hurries on, but our boys find people who have room on their wagons and let them ride with them and also share their food. Thin slices of frozen sausage are a welcome treat. In the evenings we try to find our group again.

On the fifth day we lose the horse and wagon with the other group leader and the cook. But the boys are all with us. In every village the administrator tries to find transportation, but cars and trucks are not available and the trains are overcrowded. We do not want to stay in a railway station because of the air raids and also the Russian Army is getting closer and closer. With thousands of other people we are walking through the cold towards the west. Finally on the first week of February we reach the town of Pasewalk and find room for all 17 boys on a freight train. All have made it safely and are in good health.

*Nich dit...Nich daut*

Enjoying this newsletter? Help make the next one even better! Send submissions to [info@ekmha.ca](mailto:info@ekmha.ca)

**Upcoming activities at the Heritage Centre**

- African Safari, Egypt & Dubai – Nov. 4
- MEDA Trip to Ukraine – Nov. 18
- Super Soup Night – Jan. 21 2023-UMEI
- Call 519-326-0456 or email [info@ekmha.ca](mailto:info@ekmha.ca) for updates

**Support Essex-Kent Mennonite history! Become a member of EKMHA or renew today Visit [www.ekmha.ca/membership](http://www.ekmha.ca/membership) to join online or fill out and return the form below.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Fee (\$15 per person/group) \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Donation to Heritage Centre (Optional) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to receive email about EKMHA news and events?  Yes please  No thank you

Are you interested in volunteering 1 hour/month or more?  Yes, send me info  No thank you

*Please make cheques payable to EKMHA and deliver or mail to:*

EKMHA  
31 Pickwick Dr.  
Leamington, ON N8H 4T5

Memberships valid from January 1<sup>st</sup> to Dec 31<sup>st</sup>  
Tax receipts will be issued for memberships and donations.  
[www.ekmha.ca](http://www.ekmha.ca) | [info@ekmha.ca](mailto:info@ekmha.ca)

Your support helps EKMHA continue its mission of preserving the histories of the Mennonites of Essex and Kent Counties. Membership costs only **\$15/year** for an individual, church, organization, or business.



*Children Playing in the Snow on Pelee Island circa 1930 (EKMHA)*