

HERITAGE CONSERVATION AWARD 2009
JOYCE JOHNSTON, CHAIR
MUNICIPAL HERITAGE COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Award is to present a Heritage Conservation Award to recognize an individual or Group's contribution to the promotion of architectural heritage in the Town of Saugeen Shores.

The ongoing dedication of the Dunblane Church Committees has kept and will continue to keep this piece of heritage alive in Saugeen Shores.

This Award is dedicated to the past, present and future Committee Members of the Church from the Saugeen Shores Municipal Heritage Committee, 2009.

Church History

The early settlers along the Saugeen River first met for worship at "Cedar Hall", a barn on the Gowanlock homestead. The original log church as was built on the Scott farm, Lot 26, Concession 7, Saugeen Township in 1859 by the people of the neighbourhood. It was constructed from cut cedar taken from the banks of the river. According to the records, Mr. Archie Pollock was in charge of "building the corner". The original seats were made of split basswood logs with four split and whittled legs. The present pulpit and pews were made by hand by the Rev. Peter Scott. The boards were split and then smoothed with a draw knife.

Access to the Church was provided by the river using canoes in summer and good sleighing in winter. This meant walking through the fields and crossing in boats. When the weather was good, five paddle boats were used on Sundays to take folks across from the south side of the river. One boat was equipped with four seats and several paddles. Later a road was built past the Church property.

The log structure still remains, but has been covered with board and batten on the outside and plaster on the inside. At the annual meeting of 1876, a vote of thanks was tendered to Mr. Thos. Bryce Sr., for doing the plastering free of charge. More recently the outside walls were painted white as they now appear.

The first session was composed of John McKechnie, Robert Bell, Peter Scott and John Hardy. Members of the Board of Management were John Hardy, John McKechnie, Robert Bell, William Gowanlock and William Scott. Robert B. Fleming was the first secretary.

Among the families who joined for worship as early as 1855 were the following: Kennedy, Laurance, Rowand, Stirton, Bell, Gowanlock, Wallace, Bryce, Adams, Schoffield, Pollock, McKechnie, Christie, Richardson, Mrs. Roy Burns, Smith, Murkar, Shill, Fraser, Telfer, Sibbals and Scott.

The Dunblane congregation was associated with several adjacent Presbyterian Churches throughout the years. At a congregational meeting held at "Cedar Hall" in February 1859, it was decided to negotiate a union with Paisley. In 1860 a union with Southampton was formed which lasted until 1873. Rev. Dr. Waters was the minister for two years. Then for several years, when there was not a Minister, services were conducted by Mr. John Eckford and elders from the congregation. The next union was with Port Elgin, beginning in 1874. Arrangements were made at a meeting at which Mr. James Muir of Port Elgin acted as secretary and James Rowand and Robert B. Fleming arranged the basis of union. This arrangement lasted until 1892 at which time the congregation formed a union with Burgoyne which lasted until the Dunblane congregation was dissolved in 1968.

The first mention of prayer meeting and Sunday school occurs in the records of 1862. The Book of Praise and organ were first used in January 1910. The first organists were Mrs. Donald Lamont, (formerly Florence Webster) and Mrs. James A. Smith (formerly Ethel Christie).

The first documented wedding in the church was that of Margaret Alice Bryce, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. David W. Bryce, to Mr. T. Edward Dahms on August 21, 1948.

Worship services were held continuously from the opening of the Church until 1968. In 1909 a special Jubilee celebration was held to commemorate 50 years of worship. Rev. S.D. Jamieson, a former pastor, preached morning and evening services. On the Monday evening a congregational reunion was held, with a musical program and many talks about the early days. Rev. Kenneth G. McMillan was guest speaker at morning and afternoon centennial services on August 30th, 1959. Present on that occasion were Mrs. Wm. McNeill (formerly Jennie Hardy), who was believed to be the first child baptized in the church; and Dr. William B. McKechnie of Armstrong B.C., who had been baptized there 91 years previously.

Since the closing of the Church for regular service in 1968, there has been a Committee that maintains and repairs the Church and property, and arranges for an anniversary service to be held each year on the first Sunday in August. The Church is open to the public from late May to Thanksgiving.

The current members of the Committee are: Kent Lamont, Elda Grieve, Margery Campbell, Janet Gowanlock, Marilyn Scott, Rev. Harvey Osborne and Rev. Chuck Moon.

It is the hope of the Committee that this building will long remain as a reminder of the faith of the Pioneers who built so well in this Community.



50th Anniversary Celebrations 1909

