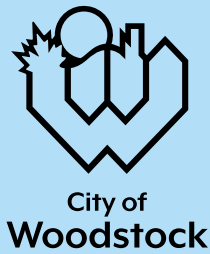


# WOOD STOCK

EST — 125 — 1901



— 125 Years: Connecting Our Past, Building Our Future —

# WOODSTOCK 125

## JOIN THE CELEBRATIONS



**CANADA**  
2026  
**DAY**

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 1**  
**SOUTHSIDE PARK | 2-10 P.M.**  
**FEAT. KIM MITCHELL**  
**— ON STAGE AT 8 P.M. —**

### SUMMER STREETFEST

FRIDAY, JULY 17—SUNDAY, JULY 19  
DOWNTOWN WOODSTOCK  
Featuring the Big Fun Friendly Face-Off  
and 3v3 From Downtown Basketball  
Tournament



### MOVIE IN THE PARK

THURSDAY, JULY 30 | STARTING AT DUSK  
SOUTHSIDE PARK  
Presented by FirstOntario Credit Union  
**FirstOntario**  
CREDIT UNION



### COWAPOLOOZA

FRIDAY, AUG. 14 | 5:30–10 P.M.  
SATURDAY, AUG. 15 | 2–10 P.M.  
SOUTHSIDE PARK  
Featuring Finger Eleven



### MOVIE IN THE SQUARE

THURSDAY, AUG. 27 | STARTING AT DUSK  
MUSEUM SQUARE  
Presented by Downtown Woodstock BIA



### FALL FEST

SATURDAY, OCT. 3 | 12–4 P.M.  
MUSEUM SQUARE



### DOORS OPEN WOODSTOCK

SATURDAY, OCT. 17 | 10 A.M.—4 P.M.



# WOODSTOCK

EST 125 1901

## IN THIS COMMEMORATIVE EDITION

### 4 THE OLD STAGE ROAD

On the grounds of East Oxford Public School, at Stage Road and County Road 14, just southeast of Woodstock, is a plaque commemorating an integral piece of local history.

### 7 LIVING ART IN THE PARK

A sculpture of butterflies alive with seasonal plants is now home at Southside Park. This celebration of Woodstock 125 will grow for years to come.

### 8 CELEBRATE HERITAGE & CULTURE

The Woodstock Museum is inviting visitors to step back in time and experience the defining milestones of the City. You can also step out on a heritage walking tour!

### 10 COMMEMORATIVE COINS

The Woodstock Coin Club has produced Woodstock 125 coins in silver and bronze finishes, and show us the winning designs from their contest held earlier this year.



Photo courtesy of Oxford County Archives



Photo supplied

## Celebrating 125 Years of Community



As we celebrate our city's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we honour the generations who built this community and the spirit that continues to carry us forward. This milestone year is an opportunity to reflect on our shared history, celebrate the people and places that make Woodstock unique, and look ahead to the future with pride and optimism.

On behalf of the City of Woodstock, Council and staff, we are excited to join in the anniversary events and celebrations throughout the year as we come together to recognize 125 years of resilience, connection, and community. We're looking forward to welcoming you and your families at our anniversary-enhanced community events, which will be even bigger and more memorable than ever!

— Mayor Jerry Acchione

# Woodstock 125 & The Old Stage Road: Creating Connections in History

By Spring Carter, Freelance Writer

On the grounds of East Oxford Public School, at Stage Road and County Road 14, just southeast of Woodstock, is a plaque commemorating an integral piece of local history.

Old Stage Road, also known as the Detroit Path, had its beginnings in part as a series of trails formed and used regularly by the Indigenous inhabitants of southwestern Ontario. Known as a trade and travel route for the Neutral, Potawatomi, Huron, Odawa and eventually the Haudenosaunee, Chippewas and Mississaugas among others, it carved the first access stretching from the Grand River through to the Detroit River and laid the groundwork for modern-day transportation in southwestern Ontario.

The City of Woodstock is one of the many settlements this path was foundational in connecting.

## Woodstock's early development

Originally planned for settlement in 1793 by Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe, Woodstock was settled as the "Town Plot" in 1800, first by Zacharias Burtch and Levi Luddington, followed by more United Empire Loyalists. The community went through several iterations before becoming the city that we know today.



The Town Plot map that would become Woodstock, 1800c. Woodstock Museum NHS.

First and foremost, it was a village founded through settlement by farmers, labourers and businesspeople with English, Dutch, Scottish, German and French backgrounds. This area took on the moniker of "Brighton" for a short period and was settled not only by former American colonists who remained loyal to the British crown, but also British military officers.

It was later named Woodstock in 1834 by British Admiral Henry Vansittart, in honour of Woodstock in Oxfordshire, England. By 1851, it was incorporated as a town and following a period dramatic settlement and growth, it was officially incorporated as a city in 1901.

## A vital network of trails

Integral to Woodstock's growth, the Detroit Path or Old Stage Road also went through many changes. Dating back to well before the 1600s and 1700s, the road formed a crucial in-land trade route for trappers to access forts in Niagara and Detroit. Based on the footpath infrastructure that was marked out by former Indigenous hunters and traders, the land route between these two locales first became known as the "Detroit Path." At that time, its extent was approximately 402 km.

The landscape the path traversed looked quite different from what you now see today. A heavily forested Carolinian ecosystem, with species such as maple, walnut, oak, ash, beech and cherry trees, this land was a vast, dense wilderness, dotted throughout with expansive wetlands and rich with wildlife including deer, bear, and even elk. The frontier of settlement in what would become southwestern Ontario was on the cusp of forming, and the Detroit Path would soon become the makings of military and settlement roads.

Into the late 1700s, this vital network of trails permitted original settler access and was formally adopted and opened as a wagon road across East Oxford Township through 1796 and 1797. This was completed under the direction and expense of Major Thomas Ingersoll. It connected another wagon road opened across Burford Township by

local settlers, which in turn served to link the Old Stage Road to nearby Brant's Ford, on the Grand River, and then on to Ancaster via a road from Long Point.

By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Old Stage Road was considered the preferred highway to Sandwich (now a part of Windsor) and Detroit, and during the War of 1812 (from 1812 through 1814), it was used by British and American troops as a significant military transportation route. Fast forward two decades to circa 1826 and this passage became the official stage route from Ancaster to London. It was estimated that as early as 1829, the road saw up to 36 coaches and express riders daily — a considerable amount of traffic for that time.

Progress once again stepped into the area with the construction of the plank road that led from Brantford to Woodstock in 1842 to 1843. On top of that, railroad development that took place between 1853 and 1854 connecting Niagara Falls with Detroit proved to enhance transportation throughout the corridor.

Following this development, the importance of the former Detroit Path/Old Stage Road waned. Although sections of the road remain open to this day between Cathcart and Ingersoll, this former footpath-turned-transportation-artery is now largely reflected upon as historical in relation to modern-day southwestern Ontario development.

## Marking the past

Mapped by the Ontario Heritage Trust, the commemorative plaque that marks this former integral access through Upper Canada isn't the only remembrance of days gone by.

This historic trade and travel route developed by pre-contact and further enhanced by post-contact Indigenous settlement in the area= has left historical traces throughout the region which are still visible today. In 2023, archaeological assessments within Oxford County identified former sites of this pre-colonial settlement and identified the contributions of Indigenous People to the area through trade. The Detroit Path or Old Stage Road was foundational in forming a core artery between these former sites and rivers for water transportation and trade, such as the Detroit River, the Thames River (formerly Antler River), and the Grand River.



The 1895 Tremaine map of East Oxford Township and the Old Stage Road. Oxford County Archives.

More modern-day commemorations of this same transportation route and its beginnings consist of an additional heritage plaque at Sweaburg Central School, as well as Indigenous Awareness crosswalks within the region. Correspondingly, the oral history of Six Nations of the Grand River outlines that many of the major roads throughout southern Ontario are built on ancient pathways created by Indigenous traders, hunters, and diplomats. Similar to Old Stage Road in relation to the City of Woodstock, these corridors connected the former Indigenous settlements to areas of trade, to hunting grounds, and later to forts.

The theme of the City of Woodstock's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations is "Creating Connections." Woodstock has the Old Stage Road to thank for its initial access, settlement and development. And, while no longer an integral modern-day travel route, its pathway together with the highways and roads that now draw parallels to it, have their own beginnings in the footsteps and direction of the Indigenous hunters, traders, and diplomats who once formed the Detroit Path, creating connections in history.

Historical plaque of the Old Stage Road. Oxford County Archives.



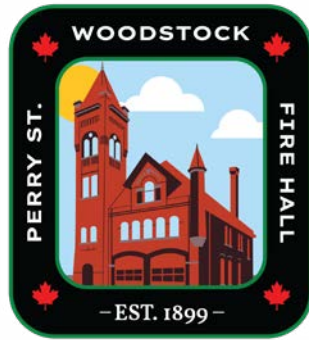
# C.O.W. TALES

CoW Tales is a regular feature in *What's on Woodstock* designed to celebrate the City of Woodstock's rich history. Thanks to the contributions of the Woodstock Museum NHS and local heritage organizations, CoW Tales shares stories that help us understand and connect with our past as our community continues to grow and evolve. This special edition highlights some of the heritage landmarks featured in our Woodstock 125 commemorative designs.



## Museum Square

When the Town of Woodstock was established in 1851, residents immediately petitioned the new council to build a market house. The town purchased the Rising Sun tavern property from Daniel Phelan for a town square. Construction on the town hall was completed in 1853. A market and police building were added next door in 1895. The fountain was purchased with a bequest from local businessman and newspaper owner Andrew Pattullo and unveiled on May 29, 1917.



## Perry Street Fire Hall

Perry Street Fire Hall was built in 1899 by local architect J.E. Tisdale. The building housed the equipment, horses and firefighters who manned the station, with a stable on the ground level and living area on the second floor. The tower bell was used to ring for fires, curfews or other emergencies. The building also featured an electric alarm system. The horse-drawn wagons and carts were retired in 1920 when the city bought two trucks from Bickle Fire Engines. The fire hall remained in use until 1975.



## City Hall

Woodstock's current city hall was originally built in 1901 as a post office and customs office. The building was designed by Ottawa architect Bourgue DesRivieres and based on government standards established by Thomas Fuller. William Hall Burns, a prominent sculptor who worked on the Library of Parliament, was commissioned for the exterior stone carvings. After a new post office was built in 1963, the city purchased the building and converted it into municipal offices in 1968.



## Snow Countess

The Snow Countess was a Holstein-Friesian cow that was bred by Thomas R. Dent and lived on Springbank Farm from 1919 to 1936. During her lifetime, she produced 4,119kg of butterfat from 94,114kg of milk, becoming a world champion lifetime butterfat producer. In 1937 the Holstein-Friesian Association of Canada erected a monument to the Snow Countess on the corner of Dundas Street and Springbank Avenue. World-renowned agricultural artist Ross Butler's portrait of the Snow Countess was used as a model for statue.

# Living Art in Southside Park

Southside Park is one of Woodstock's most vibrant legacies. Established in 1909, the park has grown and evolved alongside the community, becoming a beloved gathering place for residents who continue to enjoy the beautiful gardens, walking trails, sports fields and community events more than a century later.

To celebrate this ongoing transformation and mark the City's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a new sculpture is spreading its wings in Southside Park.

Photos by Duane Kumala-Thomas



Taking the shape of two butterflies, the sculpture is a form of horticultural art called mosaiculture, which combines a metal frame with live plants to create a 3D installation.

Bringing living public art to Woodstock has been a long-time goal of Parks staff.

"I've always been inspired by the mosaiculture displays in other cities and the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary was the perfect opportunity to share this incredible form of art with our community," said Marleen Vanderspek, Assistant Supervisor of Turf and Horticulture.

The sculpture was created by Santoline Mosaiculture, a Canadian company that is world renowned for their horticultural art.

The design is a nod to Woodstock's past, a symbol of the future, and a reflection of the City's commitment to heritage, culture, recreation and the environment.

Butterflies represent hope, change and resilience. As pollinators, they also play an important role in the biodiversity and ecological health of the park.

The metal base recognizes Woodstock's industrial backbone and the skilled trades and businesses that helped the city grow over 125 years.

"Each butterfly includes 2,000 annual plants that have to be carefully grown and maintained every year. We're lucky to have a fantastic horticulture team that is helping to make this project a reality. It will also be a wonderful learning opportunity for our seasonal staff and summer students," added Vanderspek.

The butterflies, which are located in the heart of the park near the gazebo and annual garden beds, will be officially unveiled at the City's Canada Day celebration on July 1.

The Parks Department plans to partner with local artists and horticultural experts to offer ongoing programming, such as annual colour-palette changes, educational workshops and tours.

The sculpture will also tie into the planned expansion of Southside Park to the former golf course lands south of Parkinson Road.

"The expansion is going to double the size of the park and enhance outdoor recreation through the natural environment, wetlands, pollinator habitats and multi-use trails," explained Reta Horan, Supervisor of Parks and Forestry.

"The butterflies are a first step to connecting the existing park space to the new section through public art."



Installation of the first of two butterflies in Southside Park this spring. The sculptures are a form of horticultural art called mosaiculture.

# Celebrating Our Heritage and Culture

Woodstock's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary is an opportunity to discover the people, places and stories that have helped shape the city we know today.



Photo by Dudek Photography

## 125 Years of the City of Woodstock

The Woodstock Museum is inviting visitors to step back in time and experience the defining milestones, moments and achievements that have fuelled the city's growth with a special anniversary exhibit opening July 2.

Tracing Woodstock's history through the decades, the exhibit explores the city's political, economic and cultural development from the 1900s to the early 2020s. It also examines the influence of major societal changes and global events, such as the First and Second World Wars.

The exhibit will be on display until January 2027. You can plan your visit at [www.woodstockmuseum.ca](http://www.woodstockmuseum.ca).

The Museum will also be offering a snapshot of the exhibit with a travelling timeline on display at the Canada Day celebration on July 1 in Southside Park.



Old Boy's Reunion at Central School during the City of Woodstock's inauguration celebrations in 1901. Woodstock Museum NHS.



## Heritage Walking Tours

While Woodstock continues to grow and evolve, some of the oldest buildings dating back to the mid-1800s still stand today as a reminder of our past.

The Heritage Advisory maintains an online database of heritage properties located in the city's older neighbourhoods, including properties with municipal and provincial heritage designations.

For the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the committee worked with GIS staff to create three self-guided walking tours featuring 30 properties. You can explore the areas around Wellington Street, Light Street and Vansittart Avenue with interactive story maps highlighting the architectural features and history behind each property.

Many of these homes and businesses have connections to notable organizations and figures such as the YWCA, the White and Hatch families, former mayors James Hay Jr., Thomas H. Parker and Bernadette Smith, inventor Thomas "Carbide" Wilson, and businessmen John Forbes, Thomas Scott and Kenneth Harvey.

The tours are available online at [www.woodstock125.ca](http://www.woodstock125.ca).



YWCA building at 476 Peel St., 1979. Oxford County Archives

## Great Small Things: 60 Years of Collecting and Your Woodstock

Woodstock has a long and rich artistic history that continues to thrive today at the Woodstock Art Gallery.

The WAG was established by the Oxford County Art Association in 1966 as a Centennial project. The gallery began collecting artwork that same year, and over the decades has built a collection that aims to tell our shared story: one of local art, culture, history and creativity.

*Great Small Things: 60 Years of Collecting* explores the history of the WAG's permanent collection through curator- and community-selected works. The exhibition is currently on view until Jan. 10, 2027.

This fall, the gallery will also be presenting a special exhibition for the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. *Your Woodstock* is an invitation for artists to interpret what Woodstock means to them, from historical reflections and personal connections to future visions and celebrations of community spirit. The exhibition will be presented at the WAG from Oct. 10, 2026 – Feb. 20, 2027.

You can learn more and plan your visit at [www.woodstockartgallery.ca](http://www.woodstockartgallery.ca)



Great Small Things: 60 Years of Collecting. Photo Credit: Joseph Hartman.

# Community coin designs celebrate 125 years of history

Woodstonians have been collecting commemorative memorabilia to mark significant events, people, places and milestones since the city was formed more than a century ago.

In 1957, a group of local coin collectors formed the Woodstock Coin Club. Today the club continues to celebrate the history of Woodstock and Oxford County through numismatics — the study or collection of coins, medals and other forms of currency.

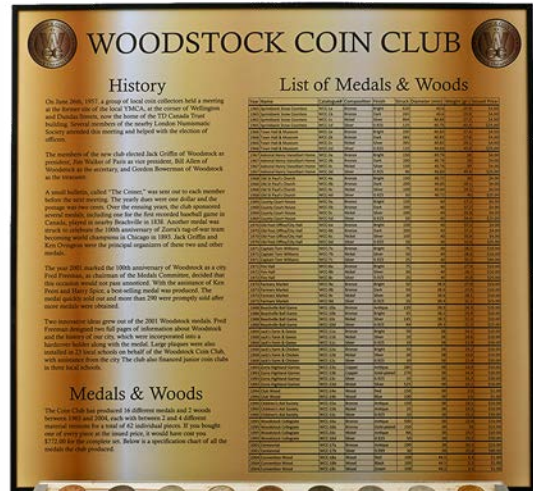
Between 1965 and 2004, the club produced more than 60 collectible medals and woods representing local landmarks such as the Springbank Snow Countess and Old Town Hall, notable people like aviator Captain Tom Williams and Woodstock's centennial anniversary in 2001.

The club's more recent medals feature war hero Joseph Boyle, Rear Admiral Henry Vansittart, Knox Presbyterian Church and the Estelle Streetcar.

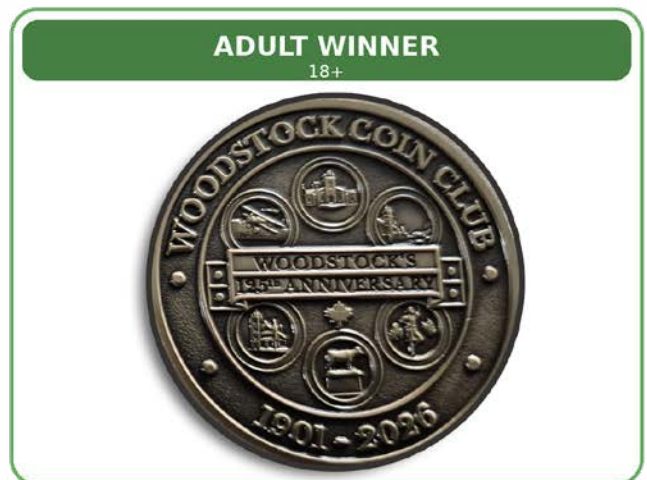
To celebrate the City's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2026, the club invited residents to take part in a special coin design contest inspired by the theme, "What Woodstock means to me."

After receiving more than 50 submissions from the community, members selected one youth and one adult winner.

The club has also produced a third coin featuring the Woodstock 125 logo in silver and bronze finishes. The coin will be available to buy alongside the City's limited edition anniversary merch at the Canada Day celebration on July 1 and Cowapoloosza on August 14–15 in Southside Park.



A display on the history of the Woodstock Coin Club was presented at the Woodstock Museum in 2023.



The youth and adult winning designs from the Woodstock Coin Club contest celebrating the City's 125th Anniversary.

# WOODSTOCK 125 MERCHANDISE

Show your community pride with limited edition anniversary merch featuring the special Woodstock 125 logo and six unique local heritage landmarks.

## HOODIES



## T-SHIRTS



## BASEBALL CAPS



## GLASSWARE



Visit our merch tent during Canada Day and Cowapolooza! Select items will also be for sale at the Woodstock Museum NHS and Woodstock Art Gallery.

[www.woodstock125.ca](http://www.woodstock125.ca)



Host a Neighbourhood

# GATHERING!

Get involved in the **125th anniversary celebrations**, build connections and create community spirit!

**Plan a small community gathering in your neighbourhood:**



**Neighbourhood social**



**Block party on your street**



**Party in a local park**

Check out our **Neighbourhood Gathering Guide** for tools and advice to help you get started!

[www.woodstock125.ca](http://www.woodstock125.ca)