

THE WINDERMERE GAZETTE

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE VILLAGE?

- **Windermere House** - Lots of things happening at WH. Stop in for a drink or meal at one of their lovely dining options.
 - **Windermere Pub & Patio** - Lunch & Dinner - patio open weather permitting. Reservations on Open Table
 - Until June 15th - 12pm - 10pm, weekdays
 - Weekends - 12pm - 11pm
 - After June 15th - 12pm - 11pm weekdays, Weekends 12pm - midnight
 - Live music - Fri.&Sat. 7-10pm
 - **The Rosseau** , upscale dining in a beautiful setting.
 - Beginning June 5th - 7 days/week - 5-9pm. As of June 26th - 7 days/week - 12 - 9pm
 - **High Tea** returns June 28th - a timeless tradition
 - **The Trading Post** - Artisanal goods & produce, charcuterie, souvenirs and more.
 - **The Spa at Windermere** - Daily 9am - 6pm
- **Windermere Marina** -Thur, Fri, Sat. 9am - 5pm.
- **Windermere Golf Club** - Open to the public until June 25th. Open to all for lunch and dinner throughout the season at **Iron and Strings Restaurant**. - **"Wing Night"** -every Thursday with live entertainment.
- **Windermere Garden Centre** Mon.-Fri. - 8 - 5, Sat - 9 - 5, Sun 10 - 4
- **Taylor Farms** - Mon - Fri, 7am - 6pm. Sat. 9am - 5pm. Closed Sun. Great Cappuccino and Lattes at the cafe!
More details at taylorfarms.ca/market. Or email strawberries@taylorfarms.ca

Windermere Lions Club is offering a bottle drop off for your recyclables - this is part of their fundraising for all the great things they do for the community and beyond. Drop off at Taylor Farms.

Ice Cream Scoopers WANTED @ the Windermere Marina!

A summer of fun!! Must be 16 years old. E-mail Sherry @ windermere@muskokamarinas.ca

- **Christ Church Windermere** - services Sunday at 10:30am. Welcome all. Strawberry Social - June 27th - 1 - 4pm
- **Windermere United Church** -services Sunday at 10:30am. Check out "Upcoming Events" for Taize & meditation schedule.

Some history on Windermere within the "old" Watt Township

There is often reference (albeit somewhat confusing), to "Watt Township".

We thought it would be interesting to give you an overview of its history and how Windermere fits into it all.

It is now part of the greater Township of Muskoka Lakes

(This article written with the help of AI)

Watt Township is located in Muskoka District in Ontario and was first opened for settlement in 1868. It was named after James Watt, the inventor of the steam engine and a native of Greenock, Scotland. Some sources suggest the township was surveyed and partially opened as early as 1865, with the main settlement wave following after 1868 when the Ontario government offered free land grants to draw homesteaders northward.

At a sawmill built by Archibald Taylor near the mouth of the Dee River, a post office named Windermere opened in 1868. Shortly afterwards it moved to the Aitken home, in Windermere. At this time, the post-Confederation government of Ontario passed the Free Grant and Homesteads Act of 1868, and Watt Township — which included the site of Windermere — formally opened for settlement.

Watt Township, 1879



UPCOMING EVENTS

If you have a community event to announce, let us know!

Muskoka Arts and Crafts at the Village Hall!

Open Weekends until the end of June, 10am - 4pm and then 6 days a week for July and August.

June 4th - Wing Night (every Thursday) - WG&CC

June 27th - "Strawberry Social" at Christ Church Windermere, 1-4pm at the church

June 10th @ 7:30pm @ Windermere United Church - *Zen Buddhist Meditation* group, led by Scott Morris, following the traditions of Thich Nhat Hanh (**also July 9th & August 6th**)

July 13th - "Grand opening" of the Village Playground - All are welcome!! **Name the Bear contest...** more details coming soon!

July 15th @ 6:30pm @ Windermere United Church "Peace and Presence in Taizé Tradition" - (**also August 12th**)

August 7 - 16

The Muskoka Chautauqua Festival A great line up of music, art, literary and kids events - watch for their flyers. Stay tuned for additional details here....(a few of the events...)

August 8th - CHOIR! CHOIR! CHOIR! **August 9th** - Caroline Marie Brooks

August 10 - Toronto All-Star Big Band

August 11 - Maggie's Wake

August 12 - Candlelit Taizé

August 13 - The Muskoka Philharmonic Orchestra

August 14 - Beverly, Charlie & Friends

August 15th - Northern Lights Steel Orchestra

June 21st and once per month for the summer, our two churches will be holding joint worship services - to be held @ Christ Church.

July 26th - The churches are holding a joint outdoor worship service at the Wharf.

Submissions, content, or to subscribe
windermeregazette@icloud.com

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Police - Non-Emergency 705-645-2211

Fire Department 705-765-3156

District of Muskoka Office 705-645-2100

By-Law Office Township 705-765-3156

Wharf Master 705-769-3611

Windermere Golf Club 705-769-3381

Windermere Marina 705-769-3661

Windermere House 705-769-3611

Taylor Farms 705-769-2368

Windermere Garden Centre 705-769-3238

Archives windermereandareaarchives@gmail.com

Lions Club windermere@ar2lions.ca

Ufford is said to be among the *earliest* settled spots in all of Watt Township. The Shea family emigrated from Kerry, Ireland, and arrived in Ufford in 1863, establishing their cabin, clearing their farm, and transporting their seed, pigs, supplies, and a yoke of oxen from Washago. This puts Ufford's first settlers right at the beginning of European settlement in the township — notably earlier than the formal opening under the Free Grants and Homesteads Act in 1868, and likely similar to those of the earliest Windermere-area settlers, *Forge, Fife and Aiken*. A memorial plaque in the Ufford churchyard commemorates the first church built there as well as the pioneers who first settled the area in the mid-19th century. Ufford's location around Three Mile Lake, inland from the lake corridors, meant it was an agricultural and farming settlement rather than a mill or steamship hub.

Windermere, another of the earliest settlements was the heart of the township's story — it was one of the very first settled spots when Watt opened for homesteading, and its transformation from a lakeside farm into a resort village is much like much of the early evolution of Muskoka - settlers arriving, and finding rough bush lots, struggling to farm the rocky Canadian Shield, and then pivoting to tourism as wealthy visitors from Toronto and even the United States discovered the region's lakes and scenery. Windermere House stood as a symbol of that transition for nearly 150 years. The post office name came into being on January 1, 1868, as was mentioned earlier, opened by Archibald Taylor at his sawmill near the Dee River, and was moved to the current site of Windermere and taken over by Thomas Aitken in 1870.

Dee Bank, while it grew into the more substantial inland community for a time, developed somewhat later. For a while it was the largest village in Watt Township, with two hotels, a store and post office run by John Barber, a tannery, blacksmith, church, school, and a population of 75 — but it was ultimately hurt by two major blows: being inland, the new steamships bypassed it in favour of Windermere, and the railway also passed it by. Windermere became main place for freight and passenger connections to and from inland farms and settlements like Dee Bank. The two communities were closely linked, with Windermere serving as the lake-access hub for the more industrially active Dee Bank inland.

Ullswater is less documented and harder to pin down precisely. It sits in the northern part of Watt Township and has a documented cemetery, which suggests an established community by the early post-1868 settlement surge, but specific founding dates aren't surfacing in accessible records. Its location away from the main lake and steamship routes put it in a similar position to Ufford and Dee Bank — an inland farming hamlet that grew with the free land grants but didn't benefit from tourist traffic or steamship commerce.

Brackenrig, like Raymond & Ullswater, developed somewhat later and more quietly, without the same anchor institution (Windermere House), or early prominence and historical record.

Rosseau is older, but it wasn't part of Watt Township — it belongs to what is now Seguin Township in Parry Sound District.