

THE WINDERMERE GAZETTE

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE VILLAGE?

- **Windermere celebrates 100 years since incorporation.** It was founded in 1870, but in 1924, under the leadership of Henry Longhurst, the village applied for independent village status with the government of Ontario. Longhurst became the first Reeve (Mayor) of Windermere.
- **Windermere House** - Lots of things happening at WH this summer. Stop in for a drink or meal at one of their lovely dining options.
 - **Windermere Pub & Patio** - Lunch & Dinner served 7 days/wk. Enjoy the entertainment - Fri.&Sat. 7-10pm
 - **The Rosseau** - upscale dining in a beautiful setting. Open 7 days/week - 12 to 9pm
 - **High Tea** - Sundays in summer, 2-4pm
 - **The Trading Post is open!** Artisanal goods and produce, charcuterie, souvenirs and more.
- **Windermere Marina** - open - Sun.-Thur. 9am - 5pm, Fri, Sat. 9am - 6pm.
- **Windermere Golf Club** - private golf club for July & August. Open to all for lunch and dinner throughout the season.
 - **"Wing Night"** - every Thursday with live entertainment.
 - **"Euchre Night"** every Tuesday @ 5:45pm - \$25 includes dinner.
 - **"Brunch"** - every Sunday 10am - 1pm - open to all
- **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!!
 - **Farm to Table Summer Produce Box** - Sign up for one week or all summer - 7-10 items - fruit and veggies - local Ontario. -Small or Large Box. Order by 6pm on a Sunday. Pick up at Taylor Farms on Thursdays, Crossfit in Port Carling on Thursday. or Bracebridge on Wednesday. **More details at taylorfarms.ca/market.** Or email strawberries@taylorfarms.ca
- **Christ Church Windermere** -services Sunday at 10:30am
- **Windermere United Church** -services Sunday at 10:30am

"The Launchmen"

(abridged) - from the original short story

by Ian Turnbull

In the serene setting of Muskoka, at the Wigwassan Lodge on Tobin Island, nestled in Lake Rosseau near Windermere, a song from half a century ago still resonates with the spirit of the place. 'Enchanted Island,' a hit by The Four Lads, captured the essence of the lodge with its lyrics, painting a picture of a magical land where true love flourished.

For Ian Turnbull, the author, Wigwassan Lodge was more than just a summer job; it was a home that hosted six seasons of enchantment during the early 60s. The magic of those days remains as vivid as ever, a neon signpost in his memory. It was a place where the youthful staff and guests mingled, where action was a constant companion, and where summer nights and sunny days stretched endlessly. But the true heartbeat of this enchanted island was its fleet of wooden boats.

These vessels were the lifeline to the mainland, the sturdy link to Windermere, ensuring the smooth transit of guests and the delivery of supplies. They were the chariots that carried the rhythm of life at the lodge, from the mundane to the extraordinary. The launchmen, a crew of four, were the unsung heroes of this aquatic ballet. Living in the boathouse beneath the dance hall, they formed a hierarchy that ranged from the head launchman to the boat boy, each with their own set of responsibilities and adventures. Turnbull's journey began as the boat boy in 1960, tasked with the grunt work of renting canoes, running the freight boat, and sweeping the dance floor after the nightly revelries. With time, he ascended to the role of head launchman, overseeing the operations that kept the lodge's heart beating. The working fleet comprised five vessels, each with its unique character. The freight 'boat' was a modest pontoon craft, powered by a temperamental Buccaneer 25 hp outboard engine, used for hauling everything from gravel to beer. But the crown jewels of the fleet were Wigwassan III and IV, or Wiggy III and IV as they were affectionately known. These 'hotel boats' were the workhorses of the lodge, ferrying up to 19 and 24 passengers, respectively. Complementing them were two Peterborough cedar strip outboards, powered by reliable Johnson and Evinrude engines.



Wigwassan 5, Wigwassan 3 & Wigwassan 4, 1950's

Many thanks to the **Windermere Garden Centre** who have so kindly offered to supply and plant the flowers in the planter on the pier! And also to **Windermere House** for keeping them watered!!

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **July 11th** - Wing night with entertainment @ WGCC.
- **July 12th** - Liam Kearney @ Windermere House
- **July 13th** - John Kennedy @ Windermere House
- **July 16th & every Tuesday @ 5:45pm** - Euchre Night @ WGCC - \$25 - includes dinner
- **July 12th & Every Friday for the summer**, a lunchtime BBQ at the Windermere Wharf - in support of the Windermere and District Lions Club.
- **July 13th - 11 - 2** = BBQ at Taylor Farms
- **August 11th - Christ Church** celebrates 120 years - Anniversary worship service @ **10:30**, followed by lunch & **1pm concert** in the garden- with Neil Barlow & the Orillia Silver Band!

Correction in last week's Gazette. The Archives of the WI informed us that the United church did not in fact, burn down. It was torn down to make way for the building of the stone church in the 1950.

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**
windermereandareaarchive@gmail.com
- **Lions Club**
windermere@ar2lions.ca

Wiggy III, at 31 feet, was more than just a boat; it was a symbol of freedom, a vessel of joy that encapsulated the Muskoka experience. It was here, amidst the tranquil waters, that bonds were forged, and memories were etched into the fabric of time. The launchmen didn't just operate the boats; they lived and loved in them, creating stories that would outlast the summers.

The narrative of Ian Turnbull and his fellow launchmen is a tribute to the enduring charm of Muskoka's lakes and the timeless magic of those sun-soaked summers. It's a story that speaks to the heart of anyone who has ever found a home away from home, in the rhythm of the waves and the camaraderie of shared experiences. As the song goes, true love is indeed an enchanted island, and for those who were part of Wigwassan Lodge, it was a reality crafted on the decks of wooden boats, under the expansive Canadian

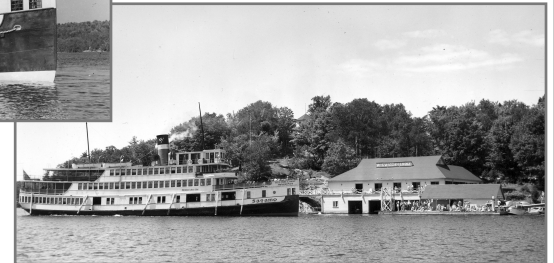
Ian Turnbull was a cottager kid in the 40s, Muskoka summer resort staff in the 60s and District Municipality of Muskoka staff from 1971 to 2004. Ian and his wife Dianne live on the Indian River near Port Carling, adjacent to the family cottage built in 1888.



The "four launchmen" and "two guys from the kitchen" - 1964.
(Author, Ian Turnbull, is kneeling front row, Paul Beeston is second from right)



The Sagamo at Wigwassan Dock, 1950's



Muskoka Chautauqua is looking for volunteers for the Festival - August 2nd - 11th.

Lots of different volunteer spots available - artist's assistants, events, tickets and admission. A fun way to participate in a great community festival.

E-mail - mci@artsinmuskoka.com for more information or questions.

The Anniversary Celebration at Village Hall last Friday was a great success! Much appreciation to the Archives of the Women's Institute for assembling a fascinating display of Windermere History. Thanks to the township and district for their support (especially Allen Edwards, Peter Kelley, Susan Mazan, Gordon Roberts and Graydon Smith). Thanks also to Windermere House, the Lions Club, Chautauqua, Leah Leslie, Kerry Wonch, the Chamber of Commerce, and Muskoka 411 who helped tremendously with logistics of food, music, sound, and all the background support!

It takes a community to create a great village!