

## **Archivist's Report – Annual General Meeting on April 4, 2024**

I was archivist from January until June, then back in August, finishing in early September.

The day-to-day duties of fielding research requests and working with volunteers was accompanied by lots of great projects, outreach activities and archival donations over the year. It is always hard to distill our activities down to a short presentation, but I will try!

### **Donations**

We had about 11 donations while I was archivist in 2023, many were small but nonetheless important, but there were two in particular that I thought I would highlight:

-A donation of a collection of 100 letters of correspondence, 2 photographs, 2 newspapers and various badges pertaining to the life and service of John Alfred McCallum who served in WW1 and was a prisoner of War in Germany. The letters were written to his mother in Burnstown from the POW camp and many of them mention local events and people.

-The donation of the John Bell fonds. The Bell family owned and operated a store on John Street in the early 1900s. He donated photographs of the store and family. He also added two early newspapers to our digital collection.

### **Projects**

Some projects and activities that we worked on this year were:

-Fire Insurance Map Digitization – I digitized the earliest Arnprior Fire Insurance Plan dating from about 1912 in order to prevent it from being overused and damaged. It is now available online and the original is in new housing.

Backlog highlight – In 2024 I processed a number of fonds from our descriptions backlog and uploaded them to the database. One that was very special was:

The Gail Manson fonds (Box Papers) were processed and the records uploaded to the database. The fonds consists of a valuable collection of digital material that the Box family of White Lake kept pertaining to the life and times of Chief McNab and McNab's family. The material had been digitized at a much earlier date but it had not been described and uploaded to our online database. Included are 102 documents and 37 photographs. While most of the documents are personal letters, there are also examples of business accounts. Some of the letters were transcribed by AMBA volunteers and others were summarized in Hessel's 'McNab: The Township'. These are described at the item level.

We also performed research for the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of McNab Township. I worked with Brian Gilhuly to produce a report on the November 5<sup>th</sup> 1823 decision to grant the Laird McNab the permission to settle McNab Township, and provide what documentation exists to the township.

### **Outreach**

Lots of great outreach and events happened, and the highlights included:

Two blog posts and regular social media posts that raised the archives' online profile - we gained a lot of new followers over the year. My favourite outreach project was the Archives A-Z series in April, for which I decided to showcase some of our amazing photographs.

In May, I presented at the Little Branches, Rural Roots conference for rural librarians. My presentation was on our newspaper digitization project. This was a great success – you would be surprised how many small libraries are also the de facto archives for their local areas, and how many have newspaper collections that haven't yet been digitized. This was accompanied with a tour of the archives. Many contacted us later on with questions about preserving the items in their care.

I also must mention some of the events that we attended, especially Herbfest at Waba Cottage in July and the cultural night market in Arnprior in August that was a huge hit, with Ed's walking tour gathering more than 50 people, and lots of encouraging visits to our booth on John Street.

### **Volunteers**

Our volunteers were as busy as ever. As you can see in Laurie's report from the volunteer meeting, they were involved in many varied and interesting projects over the year. Their dedication never ceased, even as the archives went through lots of changes over the year.

Thank you! I thoroughly enjoyed being the Archivist for the AMBA and I look forward to helping as much as I can to get the new archivist settled.