

# Presentation details two queens' diamond jubilees

BY ALICE GUTHRIE  
The Sachem

The coach house at Ruthven Park provided a delightful backdrop for an evening devoted to learning about the only two jubilee celebrations of the British monarchy.

Speakers Marty Wood, a history professor at Laurentian University, and Nathan Tidridge, author, history teacher and royalist, entertained the assembled guests on Saturday, November 3 with a compar-

ison of the two events.

The year 1897 was the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, still to date at 64 years, the longest reigning British monarch.

Canadian Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier attended the celebrations in England, and returned home as Sir Wilfred Laurier. He was well treated by the British, and enjoyed the huge celebration and parade on Dominion Day (now Canada Day).

Ruthven's Andrew Thompson, a Liberal mem-

ber (and future MP) represented Canada and Haldimand County as one of 200 members of the 37th Haldimand Rifles at the 1897 Jubilee celebrations.

His frequent letters to his wife, Isabel, written during that time described in detail the sights, sounds and activities surrounding the celebration, really giving the flavour of the events in England.

"Dear old Canada may well feel proud of her sons, who acquitted themselves so well as to draw forth one

prolonged ten mile cheer," he wrote, describing the reaction of the crowd to the Canadian contingent during the parade.

A large part of this celebration was Queen Victoria meeting with officials from various dominions of Britain. Imperialism was very strong in Canada in those days, and the celebrations focused on uniting the empire under the powerful symbol of Queen Victoria.

By contrast, Queen Elizabeth's Jubilee featured 16 separate celebrations, as countries like Canada are no longer dominions, but still retain close ties. Queen Elizabeth has been an active monarch, taking regular part in Canadian events. She was involved in the proclamation of the Canadian flag and of the national anthem.

Canadians have taken Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee to heart. On February 6, 2012, the anniversary of her father King George's death, the Queen's standard flew from all government offices across Canada. A number of Canadians have received the Diamond Jubilee medal.

Much more information was given during the evening and those who attended were well rewarded for coming out.



Sachem photo by Alice Guthrie

(l-r) Nathan Tidridge, author, history teacher and royalist; Marilyn Havelka, curator at Ruthven Park; and Marty Wood, a history professor at Laurentian University, stand in front of a photo showing Queen Elizabeth viewing stained glass windows marking the two jubilees, her own and Queen Victoria's.