

?Our Canada? celebrates our country

By Tabitha Wells - The Dufferin County Museum and Archives knows the importance of preserving Canadian History and celebrating the parts of our history that helped us become the country we are today.

This Canada Day, the museum celebrated with a free event called 'Our Canada', which included the official opening of a new Canada showcase, activities for the family and more.

'Our collection started with a donation of items from the Laurier family, so the former Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier's family,' said Sarah Robinson, the new curator for the Dufferin County Museum and Archives. 'His descendants donated items that he once had in his home, and we thought what was more Canadian than that?'

The donation led to the idea of hosting a Canadian exhibit, and onto the thought of launching it for Canada Day. While the objects in the exhibit may not reflect strictly Dufferin County's history, they do reflect the core of Canada, and in turn, partially how the county we love came to be.

'Rarely do you get to see artifacts of such calibre in a museum not surrounded by city noise and traffic,' the museum wrote in their event guide for 2014. 'This exhibit has quality and is as quirky and as Canadian as it gets. This case will be an exciting component of your DCMA visit.'

The Canada Day event included open access to the museum, food, and activities for kids, which included the opportunity to create a Canadian Superhero mask, as well as a prize for the best Canada-themed outfit. The Our Canada exhibit was also open for display, and featured an official grand opening for those in attendance.

'Everything started stemming from the exhibit and we wanted to try and throw some events around it as well,' said Ms. Robinson.

'Different patrons of the museum started donating things that could be added to the Canada case. From there we chose from our own collection things that represent Canada pretty well.'

Some items in the display include the original 'Grey Cup', which was a silver loving cup presented to Sir Wilfred Laurier by Governor General Earl Grey in 1911 after Sir Laurier's electoral defeat, when Grey was recalled to London.

Another unique item in the exhibit is a prisoner's box made by Job McNulty, who was arrested for partaking in the rebellion of 1837. Canadians who wanted to see a responsible government, which would include today's infrastructure of electing representatives, caused the rebellions. These rebels were arrested and eventually executed as traitors in Canada.

'It's a fantastic exhibition of artifacts with national significance,' said Ms. Robinson. 'And we wanted to tie it in by providing great activities for families and kids of all ages, like the maple leaf mask craft, that allowed kids to become a Canadian superhero, which is pretty cool.'

The official grand opening of the exhibit included a ribbon cutting by local World War II Veteran Ken Wallace, who was also responsible for assisting with the creation of the Dufferin Museum's online veteran archives.