



Report to Heritage Wilmot and Castle Kilbride Advisory Committee

Report No: HCAC-02-25

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Curator

Date: March 11, 2025

Subject: Castle Kilbride Year End Activity Report for 2024

Recommendation:

That the Heritage Wilmot and Castle Kilbride Advisory Committee endorse report HCAC 02-25.

Comments: This report is a year end review for the activities carried out by staff of Castle Kilbride National Historic Site.

Days open to public: 232 (Wed- Sun 10-3 plus extended in summer)

Hours open for visitation/programming: 1350

Total patrons: 12,237

Highlights:

- Fabled exhibit- partnership with Stratford Festival Archives
- Ghost Walks increased from 10 in 2023 to 22 nights
- First Juried Art show in partnership with Central Ontario Art Association
- Summer Concerts- 10 evenings
- Tea and Tours – 10 afternoons
- Christmas at the Castle
- Included of a mystery travel program which had approximately 1100 patrons
- New events: Peter Pan Pet Parade, Princess Workshops, Father Christmas and Whimsical Weekends.

2024 Special Exhibits



- **Fabled** March 13, 2024 – January 5, 2025
Once upon a time in a lovely Castle in Baden lived a young girl that loved to read. One hundred years later these timeless tales have become the focus of a special exhibit where fairytales and fables have leapt from the pages and into all the rooms of the museum. In partnership with the Stratford Festival Archives, Castle Kilbride is pleased to host “Fabled” an exhibit that pairs the childhood books of Laura Louise Livingston with costumes from Stratford Festival productions.
- **Perceptions - COAA Juried Art Show**- August 10 – September 7. Central Ontario Art Association. Over 65 works displayed throughout Belvedere Gallery and lower-level hallways.
- **A Year with Fairies**- March to August 9. Illustrations from Laura Louise’s book to compliment the Fabled Exhibit.
- **Cheers to 30 Year**- September 10 to November 9. A photographic exhibition featuring 30 years of Castle Kilbride as a museum.
- **Christmas at the Castle**- Our most popular exhibit ran from November 19, 2024 until January 5, 2025. The interior and exterior of the home are decorated for the season. This year also included Herner’s Victorian Village. The village had kindly been displayed since 2017.

Special Events and Programs



The Castle offered a full slate of events in 2024. New programming included Whimsical Weekends- tour and craft to highlight Fabled costumes, Cinderella’s Halloween Ball, Peter Pan Pet Parade, Story Time with Father Christmas and Christmas with Elsa. The number of “Ghost Walks” increased to 22 evenings. Classic events such as tea and tours, Christmas at the Castle as well as the always popular Castle Concert Series were also offered. We concentrate our main events such as the concerts and tea and tours to the summer months when summer students are present for adequate staffing coverage.

Event	Date	Participation
March Break – Fabled exhibit crafts	March 13-17	223
Ghost Walks (22)	Feb. – Dec.	2200
Mother’s Day	May 12	96
Homeschool Days	May, Jun. & Dec.	191
Twenties Tea & Tour (7)	Jun. – Aug.	119
Quiet Hours	Tuesdays in Jul & Aug	23
Summer Concert Series (10)	Jul & Aug	2461
Whimsical Weekends (16)	Two per month	248
Peter Pan Pet Parade	Oct. 6	50
Cinderella’s Halloween Ball (workshop)	Oct.26	11
Storytime with Father Christmas	Nov. 28	50
Christmas with Elsa (workshop)	Nov.30	15
Christmas at the Castle	Nov. 16 – Jan.7	1716
Castle by Candlelight	Dec.5 & 10	155
Sugarplum Tea & Tour	Dec. 8 & 15	40

General Visitation/Visitor Services

- The museum re-opened to the public on March 13, 2024. The museum was then open continuously until January 5, 2025.
- Regular operating hours for the museum were Wednesday to Sunday 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. The months of July & August had extended hours from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and open for Quiet Hours on Tuesdays in the summer.

Castle Kilbride Visitor Statistics

Month	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
	Patron	Patron	Patron	Patron	Patron	Patron
January	356	197	44	C-19 closure	225	347
February	405	110	0	C-19 closure	126	59
March	363	171	186	C-19 closure	C-19 closure	191
April	325	365	139	C-19 closure	C-19 closure	194
May	879	373	219	C-19 closure	C-19 closure	312
June	1233	547	359	28	C-19 closure	1243
July	2277	1791	3160	86	C-19 closure	2751
August	2776	1913	1589	264	24	3599
September	743	833	332	157	115	762
October	1173	774	319	165	94	488
November	757	541	388	315	149	633
December	1035	1416	1064	830	167	1130
TOTAL	12322	9031	7799	1845	900	11709

*note: 2020 & 2021 were ticketed and guided tours no walk in traffic due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Marketing/Social Media

- **Website-** Maintained hours, committee details, photographs, exhibit, and event listings.
- **Social media-** the museum created engaging posts for Facebook and Instagram posts for the entire year. Museum Assistant participated and collaborated with Waterloo Wellington Social Media group to garish more interest.
- **Special events marketing-** promoted 2024 events. Designed images to support exhibits and events for marketing. Developed brochures with Event Listing
- **Articles-** prepared articles and photographs for, Baden Outlook, New Hamburg Independent, Our Heritage, Our Home publication, and the Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette.
- **Rogers TV** featured Ghost Walks and Christmas at the Castle
- **Castle Kilbride Episode of CBC's Ghosting-** aired online in January and on TV in April of 2024.

Staffing

- Department: Community Services
- Two (2) Full- Time Staff- Curator and Museum Assistant.
- Three (3) Part Time Museum Attendants
- Two (2) Summer Students through Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) 8-week placement and Young Canada Works (YCW) was 16-week placement.
- Two High School Co-op Students. Brent joined us for four weeks in July and Lily's work term was from October to January. It was the first time in a decade that we welcomed co-op students

Curatorial and Collection Management



- **Donations-** the museum accepted approximately 150 items into the collection. Of highlight are the original marble statue, Moorish side tables and baby stroller.
- **Catalogue-** continued to catalogue new or outstanding artifacts according to museum standards.
- **Database-** entered artifacts into the PastPerfect database. Took photos of each new artifact and uploaded.
- **Collection projects-** prepared a schedule and plan for rolled storage project.
- Updated the **Catalogue Procedure Manual** for new staff and intern. Hosted a training session for one new part time staff member, students and volunteers as required.
- **Maintenance-** full cleaning of house while closed to the public. Washed floors, baseboards, fireplaces, glassware, and wood trim. Each artifact was carefully dusted, cleaned, and displayed. Weekly cleaning is conducted throughout the year.
- **Security-** inspected rooms and security of their contents.
- **Environmental control** - conducted routine temperature and humidity readings.

Heritage Wilmot and Castle Kilbride Advisory Committee

- In 2024, the Castle Kilbride Advisory Committee (CKAC) amalgamated with Heritage Wilmot to form Heritage Wilmot and Castle Kilbride Advisory Committee (HCAC). The committee commenced in September with 11 members and two staff liaisons. There were six meetings held by the committee in 2024.