

HISTORY OF THE ELGIN HIKING TRAIL

In January of 1975, a local man, Brian Henson who was a member of the Thames Valley Trail Club in London, advertised in the ST. THOMAS TIMES-JOURNAL for people who might be interested in forming a similar trail in Elgin County.

Enough interest was generated that by September of that year, when the first section of the trail was opened, there were 6 km of trail and 30 members in the club.

The trail was officially opened by local M.P. John Wise, who was also a landowner. John Parsons was the first president.

The original club later extended the trail as far south as the arena in Port Stanley and north to Paynes Mills. For various reasons, the first club became dormant for a few years in the 1980's although the trail was probably still used by the public.

In 1989 under the enthusiastic leadership of Loretta Vaughan and Lydia Driscoll, and with help from Dave Gibson, the club was revived.

The landowners were contacted and the Elgin Trail was officially opened again.

Loretta Vaughan was the first president of the revived club, and now in 2015, she is president again on the occasion of our 40th anniversary in 2015.



OFFICIALLY OPENED - John Wise, Elgin MP (centre) officially opened the Elgin Hiking Trail Club's nature trail, north of Elgin County Rd. 45, while William Stewart, (left) vice president of the club and Brian Henson, treasurer looked on.

- ST. THOMAS TIMES JOURNAL, SEPTEMBER 29, 1975



TRAIL CLUB HOLDS ANNUAL MEETING - George Richard, left of London, presented a series of slides on the Bruce Trail at the recent annual meeting of the Elgin Hiking Trail Club. Also pictured from the left, looking over the new map of the St. Thomas-to-Port Stanley trail, are Bas Abbink, sec-treasurer, Brian Henson, vice president and Henry Jeanes, president.

- ST. THOMAS TIMES JOURNAL, November 11, 1977



30 ENJOY HIKING DAY OUTING - Everything from land snails to rare flowers was discovered on Sunday's hike along Dodd's Creek in Elgin. A good turnout participated in the jaunt sponsored by the Elgin Hiking Trail Club, in conjunction with Ontario Hiking Day. - ST. THOMAS TIMES JOURNAL



SPECTACULAR VIEW - Harry Jeanes, right and Ann McNulty look over one of the highlights of the St. Thomas to Port Stanley trail while on a recent work party.



CLEAR THE PATH - The Elgin Hiking Trail Club has been busy this spring clearing up portions of the trail blocked by winter's storms. Charlie Thompson, left and David Clift, right were the men behind the saws. - ST. THOMAS TIMES JOURNAL, May 13, 1976

October of 2015 marks another significant anniversary in the history of the network of Ontario hiking trails.

On October 1, 1995, twenty years ago, the 42 km link, between the Elgin and Thames Valley trails was officially opened.

Thus the Elgin Hiking trail became connected to 2,000 km of official hiking trails in the province, including the Bruce Trail which runs from Niagara Falls to Tobermory.

It was a project lead by local member John Nolan, with a great deal of help from Anne Faubert and Mark Davidson from London.

The Elgin Hiking Trail assumed responsibility for the 11 km from Paynes Mills to the Elgin Middlesex Line (Southdel Drive). The Thames Valley Trail added the additional 31 km to Komoka Provincial Park.

There is a badge available for the completion of the 950 kms from Port Stanley to Tobermory.

Several members of our club have completed the hike over the years.