**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**October 4, 2013**

**POOR HOUSE SPIRIT WALKS, meet real characters from the past!**

**ABOYNE –** The Wellington County Museum and Archives will host its second annual Spirit Walks on October 24, 25 and 27. Lit by lamplight and steeped in local history, this event will feature five distinct local personalities. Approximately 2,000 residents lived in the Wellington County House of Industry and Refuge during its operation (1877 – 1947).

There are many local characters from our past to choose from, so for our second season, we will highlight several fascinating, diverse individuals:

* Mrs George Beatty, matron of the Beatty family and local social activist. David Boyle and Dr. C.K. Clarke will be on hand to reminisce about their lives; one the first Provincial Archaeologist and the other a leader in the mental health field, for whom the former Clarke Institute of Psychology was named.
* Dr. Jean Dow, a young woman born and raised in Fergus who went on to become a beloved physician in China, working there as a missionary for over 30 years, saving the lives of thousands of women and children.
* Poor House resident Jane Lewis will share her life story of crime, hard living and perhaps regrets. Jane Lewis (Ward) was a known member of the Toronto Brooks gang; spent time at the Kingston Penitentiary in the 1850’s, was tried for murder and eventually made her way to Guelph and then the poor house as a destitute older woman. Jane’s remains are buried in the Poor House Cemetery.

An evening tour of the cemetery is happening Tuesday, October 29; it will leave the back doors of the Museum complex at 7:00 pm, going to and from the cemetery by lantern light. Al Koop of Older Voices will be leading this tour.

**Registration for the Spirit Walks and the Cemetery Tour is required; no tickets will be sold at the door.** Admission is $5.00 per person. October 24, and 25, the walks will start at 7:00 pm or 8:00 pm, and on October 27, the walks will start at 1:00 pm, 2:00 pm and 3:00 pm. Space is limited! To register, call 519.846.0916 x 5221.The Wellington County Museum and Archives is located on Wellington Road 18, between Fergus and Elora. For details call 519.846.0916 x 5221.

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**For more information please contact:**

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