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London Day spells opportunity for local Institute members

London Day at the "Lee" is an opportunity for women in the 10 London Arena districts of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario to visit the home of the co-founder of the first Women's Institute.

It also gives members an opportunity to help in a practical way by providing crafts, jams, jellies and pickles to sell at the Lee Home during the year. Money from the sale of these items will help provide funds to keep the Erland Lee (Museum) Home operating.

In the autumn of 1896, Erland Lee attended a meeting of the Farmer's Experimental Union in Guelph, Ont., where he heard a stirring address given by Mrs. Adelaide Hoodless of Hamilton. Inspired by her enthusiasm and impressed by her ideas, Erland Lee felt there was a need for a women's organization.

Accompanied by wife Janet, Erland Lee travelled the roads of Saltfleet Township, encouraging women to attend a meeting at Stoney Creek, Ont., on Feb. 19, 1897.

Some 10 women turned out to hear Adelaide Hoodless speak and, as a result, the first Women's Institute was organized.

Janet Lee penned the original bylaws and constitution at the walnut diningroom table, which remains in the Lee home and is a focal point for all visitors.

The Women's Institute has spread throughout the world, and about nine million women now belong. These include women on remote islands in the Pacific; to Queen Elizabeth; to Queen Elizabeth II and members of the Royal Family; to women in communities in all parts of Canada; to Senator Martha Belish in Ottawa.

The purchase on June 15, 1972 of the Erland Lee Home was a fitting reminder on June 15, 1972 of

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Lifestyles

the Erland Lee Home was a fitting reminder of the Institute's beginners, and the 75th anniversary of the first Women's Institute.

In 1978, the idea for Area Days started, with Hamilton Area bringing jams, jellies, and pickles to sell. In 1979, Trent Valley Area was requested to make craft items from a yard of material, a hank of yarn, or a ball of cotton.

This year, it is London Area's turn to make jams, jellies or various craft items. Each of the 10 districts in the London Area will be hiring buses on June 3 to take members to view the place

where their great organization was started.

The members will see more than the diningroom table where the original constitution was penned. In the pioneer kitchen, one can observe the large floor-to-ceiling pine cupboard built in 1801 using virgin pine from the property.

Upstairs, there are two

single beds, one three-quarter bed, two chests of drawers, a desk and a large wardrobe, which was brought by Janet Chisholm when she became the bride of Erland Lee. Visitors will also see some changes to the home, which make it suitable for many visitors and structurally safe and secure.