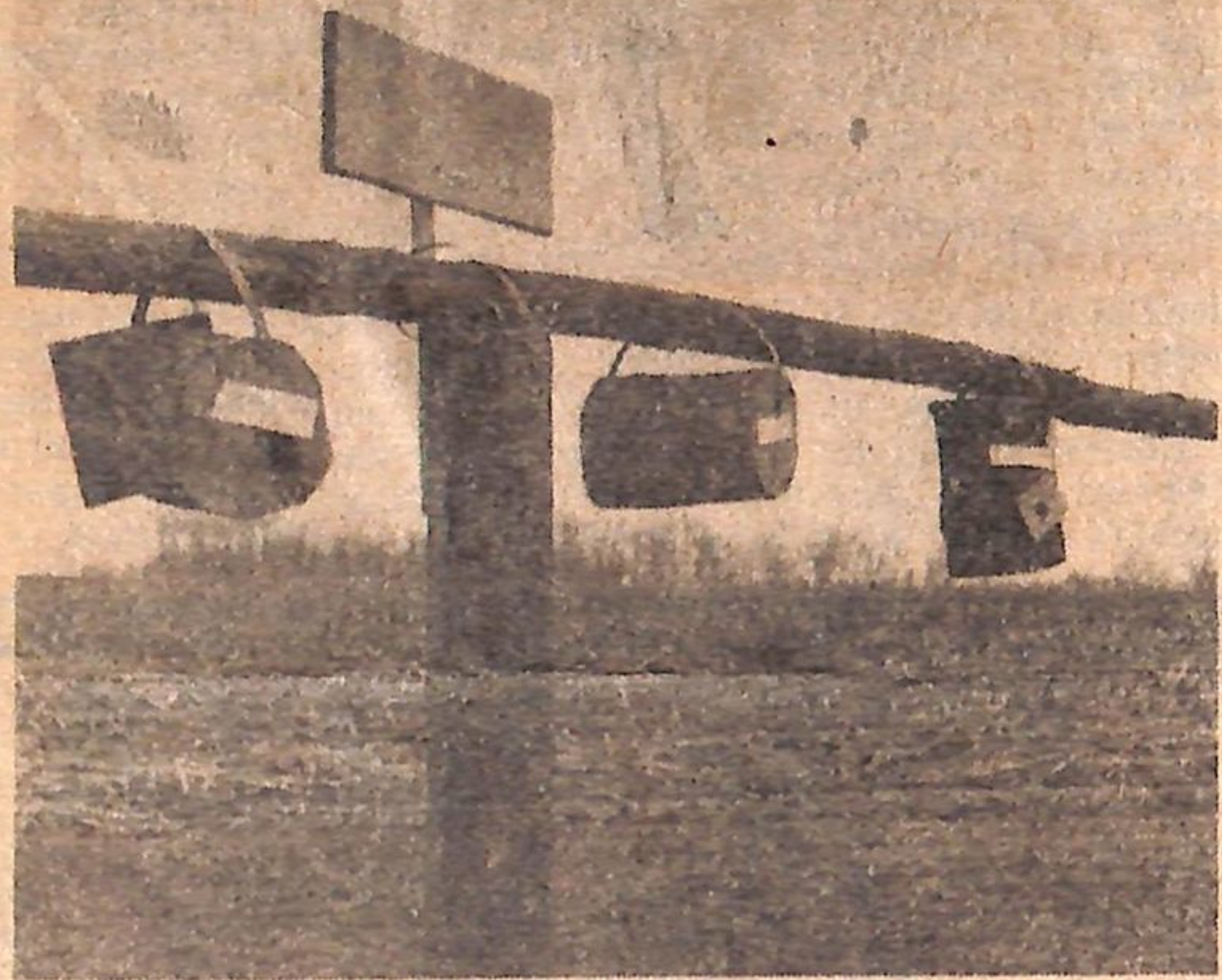




Beacon Herald On Thurs. Apr 14/83

# My Mind

By Helen Barker



A hobby strictly for the birds.

Driving home from London, I noticed a row of bird houses on a fence in front of a home on the outskirts of Kintore.

The sight of the rustic houses intrigued me so I turned the car into the driveway, told the Chief to cool his heels, and went up to the door.

I was greeted by a very pleasant Ruth Calder. In answer to my questions about the bird houses, she told me they are made by her husband Ross, who displays them at the front of their home in the hope that men in their senior years, retired and without a hobby, will consider taking up the making of bird houses.

Ross was away when I called, but evidence of his interest in bird-watching was in the yard where a bird house sits on every post and a large feeder stands outside the livingroom window.

Ross and a friend have placed bluebird houses on the concession roads in the hope of encouraging a colony of bluebirds to nest in the area. Bluebirds are very rare in Ontario since their nesting places were removed to "improve" farming.

Ross has also placed bird houses on the fence posts along the highway leading into Kintore. It is quite apparent he gives the birds a great welcome back with his rent-free homes in which they are invited to nest.

Three years ago Ross suffered a heart attack which forced him to give up his job as first tree commissioner for Oxford County. In this job he advised people on tree lots and other means of conservation. A retired farmer, he has lived all his life in the Kintore area, and while he has had to curtail some of his activities, he has maintained his keen interest in conservation.

Ruth says her husband finds the making of bird houses a relatively simple hobby and recommends it for retired men who want a new interest but have only limited space in which to work. The bird houses can be made with minimum equipment, and a shop can be set up in a corner of the basement or garage.

Ruth enjoys her husband's enthusiasm, stating she takes great pleasure in seeing him happy.

"Ross can work at his hobby anytime he feels like it," she says. "He thinks many men who retire without an interest simply die of boredom."

Ruth refers to her home as "the house of chips" but says as long as woodworking keeps Ross enjoying life, she doesn't mind a little sweeping up.

Along with the houses for birds ranging from swallows to wild ducks, Ross has a unique martin house, simply made from rounded blocks of wood still covered with the bark.

The doorways to the different apartments are now plugged with paper to discourage sparrows from taking up residence before the Martins return.

If you are interested in developing a hobby that will enhance your spare time and help conservation, why not do as Ross Calder has done and take up a pastime strictly for the birds.



The Grade 3, 4 and 5 class of Dianne Mann, at A.J. Baker Public School in Embro, has been studying medieval England for the past few weeks. Part of their work was to construct medieval castles, which this group did quite aptly... They are from left to right, Brian Gregory, Jayson Whittaker, Laura

Taylor, Jason Uren, Richard McLeod, Donna Ell and Laura Lynn Hopson. The students are hoping to travel to Woodstock May 18 and 19 when a Board of Education medieval festival will be held at Souths Park.



This group of students also participated in a class-room study of medieval England, by building a castle. They are, from left to right, Teresa Scott,

Trisha Rea, Paul Cooper, Tina Sim, Cheryl Stee, Andrea Bolton, Kent Wood, Jeff Barnett and T Wall.