

**The Story  
of**

**DISCOVERY**

**Northwest Territories**

COMPILED BY MEMBERS OF THE DISCOVERY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE



D I S C O V E R Y - Giauque Lake in background



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Discovery Women's Institute  
Geography and Topography of Area  
Indians  
Pioneer Settlements  
Religion  
School  
Library  
Newspapers  
Fraternal Organizations  
Sports  
Discovery Firsts  
Epilogue



### DISCOVERY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

On the tenth of September, 1960, Mrs. Hough visited Discovery to interest the women in forming a Women's Institute. In this she was successful, for early in November, at one of our weekly sewing meetings, we decided to form a W.I. using one of the sewing evenings per month for a regular meeting and programme. The first general meeting was held in December with fifteen members present. Mrs. Gladys Vear became the first president, Mrs. Eve Stedman, vice-president, and Mrs. Helen Falloon, secretary-treasurer.

During Mrs. Hough's stay she was the guest of Miss Helen Magee (now Mrs. Falloon, our secretary-treasurer). On Sunday Miss Magee and some friends took Mrs. Hough fishing and with true northern hospitality allowed her to catch the only two fish caught that day - a pike and a trout.

Here, our activities are very limited, but we do our best to "start where you are with what you have." Due to our unusual set-up we are without many of the usual ways to do community social work. We have no elderly people to help or entertain, no community hall or school for which to buy equipment, no need to equip a playground and no native population to aid. However, in spite of this, we seem to have managed to help in a number of ways.

Soon after our organization was formed, we sponsored a drive to raise funds to help one of our members and her family in time of need. This drive was most successful and enabled her to have medical attention over a long period and meant that her husband could be with her to give much needed moral and physical support.

We have from time to time sent magazines to the Yellowknife Hospital in the hope that these would supplement the meagre supply of reading material there and so help fill some of the lonely hours for the patients.

Several times we collected good used clothing for the Children's Aid Society in Yellowknife. We spent many evenings getting this all mended before shipping. Crib sheets and baby quilts were also made and shipped at the same time. Now that the agency is no longer locally administered there is no further need for such assistance.

The programme for one regular meeting consisted of a sewing bee at which a quantity of babies' nighties were made. A touch of embroidery was added to each so they certainly didn't have a mass-produced institutional appearance. Our thanks to the manager of Discovery Mines, who arranged for the pick-up and return of sewing machines and cutting tables.

A cheque was sent to swell the funds of the Retarded Children's school in Yellowknife. At that time it was just getting established and having difficulties financing this new worthwhile project.

Clean clothing was collected for the Hay River Flood Relief. Again the ladies spent a busy evening at the school making sure all clothing was mended. Clothes were sorted, then carefully packed each box labelled as to contents such as babies' clothes, girls age 4 to 6, boys age 10 to 12 etc. In all, thirty-five boxes were shipped to the clothing depot in Yellowknife.

We received letters of thanks and praise for this generous, most useful donation.

We always send a cheery card to each member or child in the hospital. This is a round-robin type of card on which each member writes a little note.

Each member - and there have been quite a few - who have been unfortunate enough to have to go "outside" to the hospital, has received flowers. This perfect single rose received every second day during the hospital stay, has been a great joy to the patient and a constant reminder that all her fellow W.I. members are thinking of her.

One of the most rewarding projects, in which all members are greatly interested, is our sponsoring a child. We have adopted Po Ching Ho of Hong Kong through the Save The Children. The W.I. have already sent a gift of five dollars for her birthday and plan to send other gifts as well as bundles of used clothing which we hope will contain articles for the whole family. A member is keeping in touch by letter and on occasions such as Valentine's Day, we will all write a little note. The whole camp shows interest in our adoption. This common interest in such a worthwhile project will benefit both the donors and the receiver.

Since all of us are home-makers, anything in the Home Economics line is most interesting to us. Speakers from "outside" are all too few here but we have had two excellent demonstrations. The first was by our general manager's daughter



Home Economist Miss Rayner - Fish demonstration at Kilgour residence



Tea for Mrs. Haggerty at Vear residence.

A

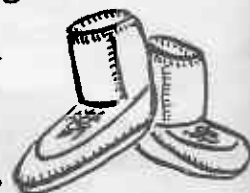
Jocelyne Kilgour. On one of her visits home from her work as Home Economist with the Ontario Department of Agriculture she gave a demonstration and talk on sandwich making.

Miss Rayner of the Fisheries Department, gave us a most informative demonstration on ways to cook and use fish. No subject could have been more apt for Discovery since our lake abounds in fish, and fishing is the main summer recreation. Her visit caused a flurry of coffee parties and teas and the fresh ideas and conversational topics made these especially cheery get-togethers.

Local demonstrations have been most worthwhile too. One was on bun making and one on the cutting and cooking of meats. The November, 1963 meeting was one of our most interesting. Daphne Borden gave us a demonstration on the making of Christmas decorations from tin can lids. Almost unbelievable were the beautiful and varied articles made at no cost at all. Other Christmas articles were shown too - decorations and gifts.

Three of our most successful roll calls have been casserole recipes, salad recipes and household hints. Little booklets were compiled from these and every member received a copy and is a better cook because of these.

Besides the sewing and mending evenings mentioned, our programme for at least two meetings has been the sewing of duffles and mitts. Duffles are a warm slipper to be worn inside mocassins and mukluks. The W.I. purchased this fine material obtainable only in the north. Two expert cutters cut out these articles of all sizes so not a square inch was wasted. The cost per article was carefully worked out and the members paid the W.I. for material used. In order to make these as finished a product as possible, we learned four strand braiding to make the gay ties needed and also learned pom-pom making. Both the braids and the pom-poms go on other articles of clothing as well. Another simple craft we have all participated in has been the making of flower pots from plastic beach bottles.



Mrs. Hagel, a barrister from Yellowknife, gave us a most informative talk on the very important subject of the need for wills and on women's and children's rights. This is a subject we try to stress, feeling that such knowledge will make us better citizens. During her visit there were teas, a coffee party and a curling game. The curling club donated a prize for this game, and our guest of honor was on the prize winning rink.

For one of the whist drives we have the school children make posters. We were amazed and delighted with the response and talent shown. Small prizes were given.

Films are a favourite type of programme. We have had a number of these and would be most happy to obtain more. Two of our members showed their slides and talked on their trip around the world taken before marriage, while both were still nursing.

Other slides and talks have been given by our members on Hawaii and on Mexico. The Fisheries of the Great Slave Lake was of great interest as we saw soon after Miss Rayner's fish demonstration. We have had talks on living in Germany, Scotland and Mexico and on Christmas customs in these and other lands.

Our field of money making projects is necessarily limited because of our small market. To start things off we had a "grab-bag" sale. Each member contributed a useful article she had made herself, and each was sold, sight unseen, for a dollar. This was most interesting and many were the lovely aprons, pot holders, knitted slippers, embroidered tea towels, jars of marmalade, and even a cake or two that changed hands. Everyone was most happy with her surprise!

We have put on a number of whist drives in the Recreation Hall, all of which have drawn good crowds and been most enjoyable. The whist, the prizes, the chance to meet everyone, all bring the "boys" out of the bunkhouses. But the biggest drawing card of all is no doubt the bountiful home made lunch the ladies provide. At our last one, we all proudly wore our new pins.



We have also held two Penny Auctions which provide amusement as well as funds. This is a sort of white-elephant sale - each member donates a number of articles she doesn't want and these are sold by an auctioneer to the highest bidder. This may be a pair of earrings too large for the owner's taste, gloves too small, a scarf the wrong colour, a group of pocket books, a toaster no longer in use or maybe some bit of groceries in too large a supply in your grubstake. Though not useful to one, the article may be just what someone else needs or likes particularly. Often you go home with more than you took - but if it was a bargain, who cares!

The most recent method of money raising, and I may add most profitable, has been the raffle of cakes at the Recreation Club's Social evenings. The men are happy to buy tickets in the hopes of winning a delicious cake and also because they know the money is to be used to help us "adopt" our child.

Our public relations officers, Mrs. Gibson and later Mrs. Macdonald have had letters from all across Canada expressing interest in our North, our life here, and in our Institute. Mrs. Macdonald is in quite regular correspondence with a lady in Aberdeen, Scotland and with one in Tasmania. These two frequently send magazines and papers as well as small gifts such as pictorial calendars and a tea towel with all the Scottish crests. We in turn have sent them such magazines as North, The Beaver and McCall's Needlework and bundles of various farm papers. We also have sent each of them one of our new and very beautiful N.C.W.I. pins. This correspondence brings us closer to people in these places and makes us realize that we are members of a most worthwhile world-wide organization.

But it is not all work and no play for W.I. Each meeting



is a social gathering where the fifteen or more members enjoy the opportunity to chat and exchange news. But in the course of these informal conversations many ideas on child care, health, cooking, books and gardening are exchanged. Here too, we are perhaps most useful to our German members (one-third of our membership). For our December meeting we join in a long established Christmas Party. Our June meeting is always an out-door pot luck supper followed by a brief business meeting before closing for the summer.

An outstanding event in our history was the visit of our National President, Mrs. J. Haggerty on September 8th, 1963. All who heard her inspiring and informative address realized, perhaps for the first time, what a fine organization we belong to. We will long remember her visit. Mrs. Haggerty expressed pleasure at being here and surprise and delight at the flowers. She then presented Mrs. Kilgour with a pin. In her talk she told of work of W.I.'s, suggested various activities for us and told of her trip to the Conference in Australia. It was her first-hand description of conditions in Hong Kong that led to our sponsoring the little girl, Po. At the conclusion of her fine address, Mrs. Nendsa, vice-president presented her with a souvenir spoon. A delicious lunch was served from a table decorated with local flowers, and we enjoyed a pleasant social hour.

Mrs. Haggerty will probably long remember her visit, too, but for quite a different reason. Never before had she flown in "bush" planes, and never before had she been lost in the North West Territories!

We had expected Mrs. Haggerty to arrive on Sunday morning, September 8th, and so were surprised and a bit dismayed to learn Saturday morning that she was about to board the plane leaving Yellowknife at 9:50 a.m. The reason for the dismay was that her hostess, our local president, had planned on spending the day at Snare Falls, a power plant seventy-five miles west. However, Mrs. Haggerty was contacted by phone and invited to go along for the jaunt to which she readily agreed.

Due to fog, aircraft schedules were delayed that day. The plane made one start but had to return to Yellowknife. About noon the weather cleared enough for flying, so she came to Discovery, dropped her bag and boarded the second plane which had arrived about the same time and set off. They arrived at Snare, and here Mrs. Haggerty, Mrs. Kilgour and daughter Alison alighted, while Mr. Kilgour and the chief electrician proceeded to a nearby property on business. The ladies spent a very pleasant afternoon visiting Mrs. Tench, wife of the manager of the power plant. They had tea, visited the spic and span power plant which to everyone's astonishment is decorated with a large mural on the inside wall, had a delicious dinner and boarded the plane about 7:00 p.m. for the return journey.

About five minutes out they ran into a heavy fog bank. The pilot veered sharply hoping to get around this and from that time on, it was quite obvious to all that the pilot didn't know where he was. They flew and flew and flew long after they should have

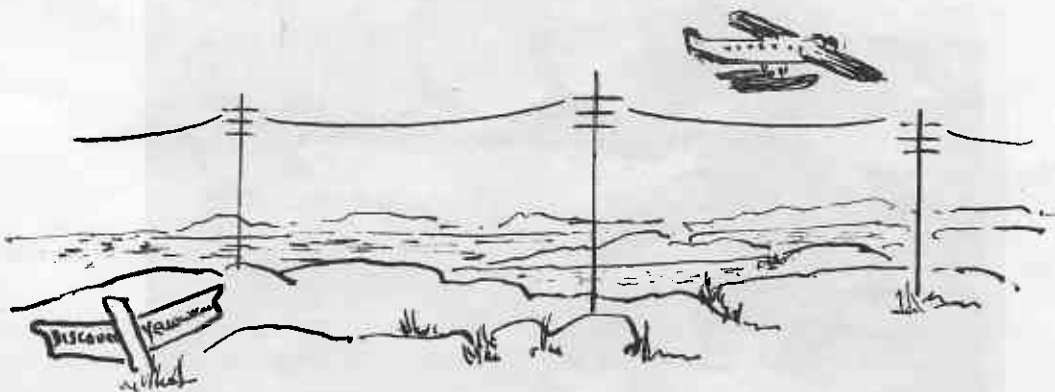
arrived at Discovery. Finally after dark, they flew across a power line which was thankfully followed into Yellowknife, not Discovery. They had all had visions of spending a chilly uncomfortable night "sitting down" on some unknown lake, so the twinkling lights of Yellowknife were a welcome sight.

Miss Eadie was certainly surprised to see Mrs. Haggerty returning again that day but was able to lend her the necessary night apparel. Fortunately accomodation was available for all.

Sunday morning dawned bright and sunny and at 8:30 they once again set off for Discovery and arrived without further incident.

One comic note to the situation was that Alison had taken a book along with her and it was Farley Mowat's "Lost in the Barrens".

These then are the activities of our little organization which has a membership of fifteen to eighteen members. We feel that participation in such a group makes us better and happier members of our community, and trust that the community is better because of it.





Aerial view of Discovery - showing air strip and dock



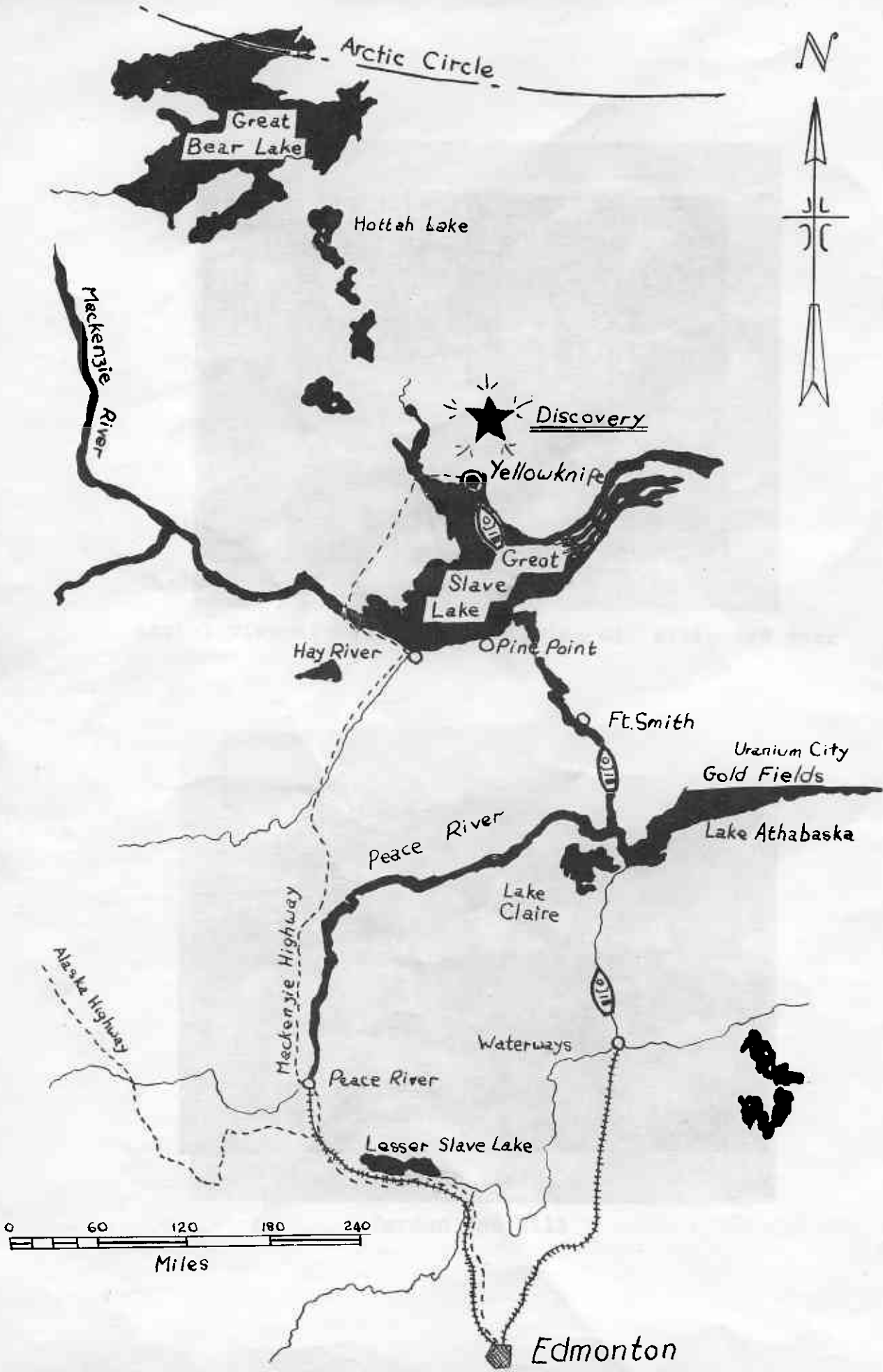
Garden and Mill



Ptarmigan and tracks



Staff House



Arctic Circle

Great Bear Lake

Hottah Lake

Mackenzie River

Discovery

Yellowknife

Great Slave Lake

Hay River

Opina Point

Ft. Smith

Uranium City Gold Fields

Lake Athabaska

Peace River

Lake Claire

Alaska Highway

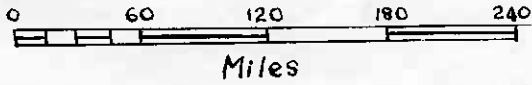
Mackenzie Highway

Peace River

Waterways

Lesser Slave Lake

Edmonton





Discovery, N.W.T.

### GEOGRAPHY AND TOPOGRAPHY OF AREA

The Northwest Territories is that part of Canada which extends from the northern limits of North America south to the 60th parallel of north latitude west of Hudson Bay; farther east the boundary is drawn to include the islands in Hudson Bay, Hudson Strait and Ungava Bay, but to exclude the mainland of Labrador-Ungava. To the west, the boundary with the Yukon territory corresponds roughly with the watershed of the Mackenzie-Yukon rivers; and to the east the boundary is the limit of territorial waters except in the northeast where it lies midway between Canada and Greenland, in the narrow seas extending from Smith Sound to Robeson Channel. This comprises an area of 1,304,903 square miles, divided for administrative purposes into three districts, whose boundaries were drawn so that all the islands except those in Hudson Bay, lay in Franklin; the land tributary to Hudson Bay was included in Keewatin; and the area adjacent to the Mackenzie River formed the district of Mackenzie.

Dominating the geography and forming a fundamental division is the "tree line" which extends from the delta of the Mackenzie to Hudson Bay near Churchill, Manitoba. To the north and east are the treeless barren grounds which constitute the Arctic; to the southwest, and covering less than a quarter of the territories is a section of the Canadian boreal forest. Here we find Discovery, located at 63 degrees 10' 00" N - 113 degrees 50' 02" W, approximately 250 miles south of the Arctic Circle, 675 miles north of Edmonton, Alberta, and 52 miles north-east of Yellowknife, which is situated on the north arm of Great Slave Lake.

### VEGETATION

Vegetation in this region is far from luxurious due mainly to rocky ground and short growing season. Spruce, jackpine and birch are the principal trees, which due to many knots, a short and twisted grain, and stunted growth, are valueless as lumber, but make excellent firewood.



Push up - caused by frost pressure

Aerial view of Discovery



Blueberries and cranberries grow in profusion while wild raspberries, currants and tundra berries are available in limited quantities.

Agricultural attempts are at the hobby level. Certain types of flowers grow profusely due to vigorous cultivation, fertilizing and the long, sunlit days. Soil for these gardens is 'borrowed' from a nearby lake bottom and built up on the rocks to make attractive flower beds. Hardy vegetables are also grown. Tomatoes, with luck, will ripen on the vine and the odd horticulturalist is able to produce strawberries.

#### CLIMATE

The climate might be termed very 'rigorous'. Temperatures range from a cold 55 degrees below zero in winter to as high as 85 degree in summer. Summers, June to September are generally pleasant with limited precipitation and continuous daylight from mid May until the end of July. In contrast the winters are long and cold but are made bearable by the fact that there are bright and sunny days. The shortest day of the year, December 21st, has complete daylight from 10:00 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. Snowfall is normally light and because of this, a very thick ice covers the lakes during this season. Lake ice forms in October or early November and breaks up the first week in June. Wind, in varying intensities, is present throughout the year.

#### ANIMAL LIFE

Herds of caribou pass close by on their trek south each winter and again in the spring going north. Bears, rabbits, and fox are present, but in meagre numbers. A few ducks arrive in May to nest on nearby lakes. Seagulls arrive on May 6th for their annual nesting season and battle until September with permanent guests, the ravens.

The raven is one of the most interesting birds of the north, looking like the common crow but on a much larger scale. They put on their best displays on windy days, soaring, diving and dipping, hardly moving their wings, and sometimes being almost mistaken for small aircraft. They can be a 'tease' - swooping down and inviting the dogs to chase, which they do. They are adept at imitating dogs' barks, to the great annoyance of the dogs and local residents.

In contrast to the raven is the ptarmigan which comes to live in this vicinity during the winter months. It is pure white and but for its black, beady eyes is difficult to discern against the glistening white snow. They can be seen darting about on the snow from low twig to twig eating buds. In summer the ptarmigans migrate further north where they take on the protective colouration of the tundra.

