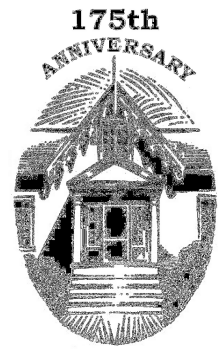




# *Peterborough Historical Society*

## *390<sup>th</sup> Bulletin*

*October 2012*



Honourary President T.H.B. Symons

Past Honourary President Catharine Parr Traill

HUTCHISON HOUSE  
THE PETERBOROUGH  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



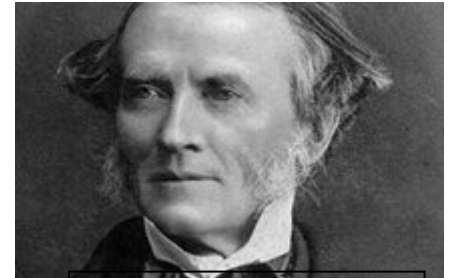
**PHS Meeting,  
Tuesday October 16, at 7:30 pm  
Peterborough Public Library  
Aylmer Street, Peterborough**

***Honouring Ontario's Premiers: Dimensions of the Premiers' Gravesites Program*  
Presented by Kathryn McLeod**

In 2007, at the behest of then MPP Jim Brownell, the Government of Ontario created the Premiers' Gravesites Program to honour Ontario's former premiers by marking their gravesites.

The Ontario Heritage Trust was chosen to design and implement this special new program as an extension of its role in commemorating significant events, people and places in Ontario's history. Premiers' Gravesites Program Coordinator, Kathryn McLeod will speak about the dynamics of the Program and its contributions to the field of Public History in Ontario.

Kathryn is a graduate of the Master of Arts program at the Frost Centre for Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies at Trent University. She also serves as Research and Administrative Assistant to Professor Thomas H.B. Symons, chair of the Ontario Heritage Trust.



J S MacDonald

**Stone House Tour  
September 15, 2012**

The PHS would like to extend a thank you to the organizing committee of PACAC for the Stone House tour. The tour was a great success and will generate additional revenue for the Hutchison House roof replacement project. Equally important, it gave the community an opportunity to see first hand some beautiful heritage homes. As one participant remarked, "it was a privilege to visit inside these historic properties." Thanks to all those who generously opened their homes for us.

### **Mark Your Calendars**

#### **PHS General Meetings**

**Tuesday, November 20, 2012** Don Willcock will talk about the Canadian Siberian Expeditionary Force

#### **Hutchison House Museum**

**Garden Committee workday Wednesday October 5 10am to 12 - bring perennials**

**Haunted Halloween Saturday October 27 from 1 – 3 pm**

**Heritage Luncheons: Wednesday November 7, 2012 - Wednesday December 5, 2012**

### ... from the President

Congratulations to Florence Skelhorn winner of the painting of Hutchison House that was donated by Peer Christensen. All told, the raffle generated nearly \$5,000 which will go toward the new historic roof for the Museum that will be installed this fall. Thanks to all who supported this fund raising initiative. The Society will also receive the proceeds from the very successful Stone House tour which took place Saturday 15 September. Thanks to those participants who generously opened their historic homes to our many visitors and the volunteers who helped with the tours. I was fortunate to be stationed at the “Smithtown Hill House”, 269 Edinburgh Street. I learned that the building was owned at one point in the 1850s by Mossom Boyd, the lumber king of the Kawarthas and a leading figure in the Trent Valley Canal Association that lobbied the government for completion of the canal. Later, Boyd’s niece and her husband, John Belcher acquired the house. Belcher was the city architect/engineer who left an impressive legacy of buildings, including some Charles Eastlake inspired renovations to the interior of their home. John Belcher was related to Thomas Belcher, the engineer on the Trent Canal in the 1880s. Both of these two fund raising initiatives have helped with urgently needed work at the Museum and provided an opportunity for all of us to learn more about the rich heritage we have in Peterborough. I would also draw your attention to a new feature in the Bulletin, **“Remember When”**, reminiscences based on interviews with older residents.

**Dennis Carter-Edwards**



Gale Fewings receiving the painting  
on behalf of her mother Florence  
Skelhorn

### The Artist as “Accidental” Historian

Members and guests of the Society were treated to a thoughtful and engaging presentation by local artist Peer Christensen. Using a selection from some of his paintings, Peer talked about his career as a budding art student that matured through training and practice into a highly successful professional artist. Using some of his early Peterborough paintings, Peer described the creative process that inspired his works. Daily walks around town armed with his trusty camera, led him to what he felt to be striking or evocative scenes or landscapes that were later transferred to canvas. Many of the images are of simple, often gritty industrial landscapes that he has managed to infuse with a distinctive charm and beauty. Many of these scenes are now obsolete or obscure because of demolition or changes to the streetscape. Peer referred to himself as an “accidental historian” capturing in oils a significant piece of Peterborough’s built past. His unique style of luminous paintings, achieved through careful build up of layers of paint, have become a signature for a Christensen piece of art. The Society is grateful for Peer’s striking painting of Hutchison House which he generously donated for our raffle and for his delightful presentation at our September meeting.

Another painting by Peer Christensen - Bethune Street – circa 1985



### Remember When

The Bulletin Committee is introducing a new feature “Remember When” based on interviews with senior citizens living in Peterborough. This article is based on an interview with Shirley Moncreif, the wife of John Moncrief, who with his brothers Gordon and Harold, owned and operated Moncrief’s Dairy.

Born in Peterborough in 1928, Shirley (nee Shelton) was raised by her relatives, the Youngs of Youngs Point, when her parents died. Shirley attended the one room school there and recalled having a very good education. Living near the lock was dangerous and she was warned about swimming near the dam. One day she was caught diving off the bridge and as punishment couldn’t swim the rest of the summer. After working in the Young’s store for a few years, she moved into Peterborough. After a short stint at Zellers, Shirley got a position at Canadian General Electric in the 1950s in the switch gear department. As she described it, friends set her up on a blind date on a Zeller’s sleighing party with John Moncrief. It was a long courtship and it was five years before they were married. John worked with his brothers Harold and Gordon in the dairy. Gordon worked in the plant and John and Harold delivered milk to the south and west end. Moncrief’s was the first dairy to introduce pasteurization and the last to keep the glass bottles. Though not involved in the business, Shirley remembered that it was hard work but they were successful. Their daughters had summer jobs working in the dairy bar. However, the switch to metric, proved costly and the brothers decided to sell the business. Shirley stayed at home after her second daughter was born but went back to work at Sears when the girls were in school. As she said, it “got her out of the house” and she enjoyed working. She couldn’t recall any stigma or discrimination about going to work while having a family. As newly weds, they lived in the Moncrief cottage on Chemong Lake but come October moved into town. They eventually built a home on the Dobbin property where her mother-in-law Claire (nee Dobbin) had grown up. Shirley noted that the hired hand, Harold Knight, was a Barnardo boy but was looked upon as a member of the family – not always the case for Barnardo children. The property is now part of the Sir Sanford Fleming campus which Shirley suggested could be named the “Dobbin Campus”. Shirley is now living at Jackson Creek’s Retirement Residence.

**Dennis Carter-Edwards**

**Letter to the Honourable Peter Kent, Minister of the Environment.**

As discussed at the September Board meeting, I sent a letter to the Minister responsible for the Trent-Severn Waterway, the Honourable Peter Kent, expressing concern over the proposed reductions in service and staff at the Waterway. These actions put a significant range of nationally significant cultural resources at risk and will compromise the Waterway's ability to deliver key messages to residents and visitors alike. The PHS will publish the minister's reply when it is received.

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The Honourable Peter Kent  
Minister of the Environment  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario

August 2012

Dear Minister Kent

On behalf of the Peterborough Historical Society, I am writing to express our concern over recent announcements about reductions – both in terms of operations and staffing – at the Trent Severn Waterway National Historic Site of Canada. The Peterborough Lift Lock is a world class piece of engineering and one of the pre-eminent cultural attractions in Peterborough. The reduction in hours of operation for the Lift Lock Visitor Centre will negatively impact the ability of staff to convey the historic significance of this site and compromise one of the city's important tourist attractions. The reduction in Visitor Service staff will inhibit the Waterway's ability to create and deliver interpretive programs, partner with other heritage agencies and work with youth, First Nations and New Canadians in delivering Parks Canada messages.

The Waterway contains a variety of nationally significant cultural resources, including artifacts, archival material and engineering works. The Society is concerned that without adequate professional care, these collections may be in jeopardy.

The recent report by the special panel appointed by your government to examine the future of the Trent Severn Waterway made several recommendations for more effectively commemorating the natural and cultural resources on the Waterway. Your government has committed to strengthening the heritage network and working with other heritage agencies for the presentation and protection of the Waterway's heritage assets. In light of the recent staff cuts at the Trent-Severn Waterway, how will your government fulfill the commitments made and ensure this unique national historic site will continue to live up to Parks Canada's mandate?

Yours truly

Dennis Carter-Edwards  
President, Peterborough Historical Society

cc. Dean Del Mastro, MP  
Jeff Leal, MP  
Mayor Daryl Bennett  
Dr. T.H.B. Symons, Honorary President PHS

### **Hutchison House Report**

It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of our dear friend and loyal volunteer, Barbara Earle. She was one of the stalwarts of the organization, with an uncompromising dedication to the historic era the museum represents. Throughout her many years at the House, Barbara made a significant difference. As we strive to come to terms with the magnitude of our loss, her presence will long be missed by all who knew her.

Time marches on at the museum and as the leaves turn and the cold winds begin to blow, we ready ourselves for another fall season. Sometime after Thanksgiving the house will be closed to the public for several days while tradesmen undertake the task of replacing our cedar shake roof. Unfortunately, at the time of this report I do not have an exact start date for the work, however, we are hoping to have it completed by the end of October.

I've been assured that the roofing will not interfere with any evening or weekend events, therefore, our annual Haunted Halloween for Kids should not be affected. Look out for young ghostly ghouls and goblins on Saturday, October 27<sup>th</sup> from 1 - 3 p.m. when Hutchison House Museum will host an afternoon of children's activities at the museum. Tradition is the order of the day with bat crafts, apple games, fortune telling, tricks and treats. Admission for the Haunted Halloween 'spooktacular' event is \$3 per person. Costumes are encouraged and an adult must accompany young children. While we do make the upper levels of the house a little spooky, it is not our intention to scare anyone to death.

Three fall Heritage Luncheons will also be offered again this year. If anyone is interested in buying tickets we are taking reservations. Luncheons will be served on Wednesday, October 3; Wednesday, November 7; and Wednesday, December 5. Each luncheon will consist of two sittings with the first sitting at 12:00pm and the second beginning at 1:30pm. Tickets are \$12 each and must be purchased in advance. For more details please call the museum office.

The annual Hutchison House Festive Sale is also fast approaching. The sale will take place on Saturday, 24 November from 10:00am till 12:00pm. This is an important fundraiser for the museum. The volunteers and staff will be getting together in the coming weeks to finalize plans for the event. Please read our insert in this, the October, issue. Fresh greenery wreaths and Empire cheese may be ordered in advance for pick-up at the sale at the end of November.

The next time you're at the House plan to take a few minutes to check out our most recent exhibit titled "Hidden Treasures". In celebration of the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the house our exhibit features some of the artifacts that were found during the restoration of the building in the 1970s as well as a few samples of the buried treasures that were unearthed when we installed the accessible ramp in 2010. We've even included a few petrified mice!

**Cheers, Gale Fewings**

### **In Memoriam Barbara Irene Earle 1928-2012**

There have been more than a few tears shed since, on September 5, we learned that Barbara Earle had succumbed to the illness, the outcome of which she accepted with grace and dignity.

Those of us who knew her as a good friend, acquaintance or associate remember her as a cheerful, positive person; someone who willingly volunteered for any task that was asked of her.

We will miss her talents at Hutchison House Museum. We will remember her love of gardening; she astounded us with her vast knowledge of flowers, including the Latin names! She



gently but firmly reminded us that the plants and flowers must accurately portray the 1860s period gardens. She was our plant consultant for our annual plant sales. The physical challenges of gardening never daunted her – she could be found digging and transplanting even in the pouring rain!

We remember her skill as a seamstress; she designed and sewed innumerable costumes and men's frock coats, insisting that all details and accessories represented accurately the 1830s and 1840s period. Barbara also served for many years on the Acquisitions Committee helping to research the

history of any furnishings that were donated or purchased. Barbara helped to decorate the House at Christmas with greenery, berries and bows. Luncheons and the bake table at the Festive Sale were the recipient of her delicious culinary creations.

Barbara also served the Peterborough community. As a graduate physiotherapist she worked at both the Peterborough Clinic and the Civic Hospital. For many years she helped organize Garden Tours for the Art Gallery of Peterborough, a major fundraiser.

Quietly offering her time and talent over the years in these many endeavours, Barbara never sought recognition for herself.

Barbara, her husband Don and their children enjoyed many happy summers at their island cottage on Stony Lake.

We offer our condolences at this sad time to Don, Jamie, Susan, Peter and their families.

**Betty Hinton**



**Memberships:** If you haven't done so, please renew your PHS memberships.

*Bulletin* submissions for the September issue due by Wednesday, October 17, 2012. We welcome articles of historical interest Bulletin( ISSN 1484-5983)

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**WEBSITES:**

[www.hutchisonhouse.ca](http://www.hutchisonhouse.ca)

[www.peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca](http://www.peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca)

**1812**  
*...and all that!*

Saturday November 17th at 6pm \$45 & \$25 tax receipt

**Mess Dinner and show**

Sunday November 18th at 1pm \$25

**Laura Secord Luncheon & show**

Food, drink, songs and stories from and about the early 1800's.  
Trinity United Church Reid ST Peterborough tickets 705-743-3301