



# *Peterborough Historical Society*

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

*April 2013*



HUTCHISON HOUSE  
35 Years of  
Living History

Honorary President T.H.B. Symons     Past Honorary President Catharine Parr Traill

**PHS Monthly Public Meeting**  
**Tuesday 16 April 2013**  
**Peterborough Public Library**  
**7:30 p.m.**  
**Lower Level Auditorium**  
**“The CCM Story”**  
**Presented by John McKenty**

Even the most non athletic of PHS members are likely to have grown up with a CCM bike or a pair of CCM skates.

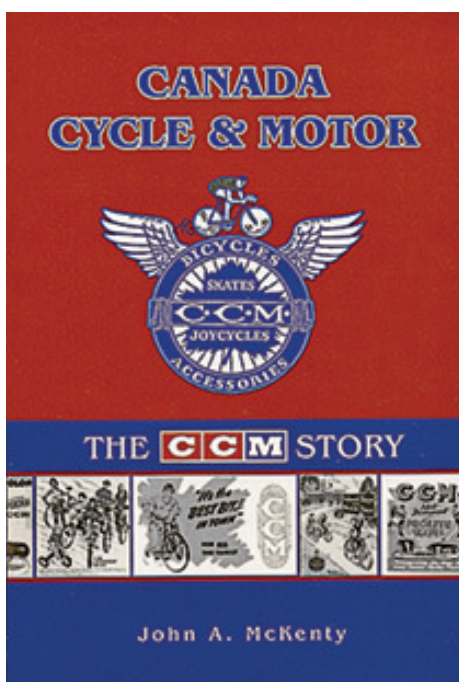
Built on hours of extensive research and personal interviews, author John McKenty takes a nostalgic look at one of Canada’s best-known cultural icons and the colourful figures and legendary sports heroes that made up its history. *The CCM Story* traces the fortunes of the Canadian Cycle and Motor Company from its founding in 1899 to its eventual demise in 1983.

In his presentation, McKenty will look at the company’s role in shaping the Canadian psyche, the individuals who brought

the company to the forefront of Canadian society, and the factors that eventually led to its downfall.

Copies of *The CCM Story* will be available for sale at \$20.00 each.

McKenty was born in Peterborough is now a retired high school principal and local history writer in Perth.



**Plan to attend:**  
**PHS Heritage Awards Ceremony**  
**Wednesday, April 17 at 7:30 p.m.**  
**Keeping Room**

## from the President

By the end of March I usually succumb to dark cranky mood swings. Although winter is officially over, the weather sometimes remains decidedly winter-like and I get highly impatient for spring.

At times like this, I find it therapeutic to re-read sections of *The Backwoods of Canada* by Catharine Parr Traill.

In a letter to her mother in England, dated March 14, 1834, she states “You say you fear the rigours of the Canadian winter will kill me. I never enjoyed better health, nor so good, as since it commenced. There is a degree of spirit and vigour infused into one’s blood by the purity of the air that is quite exhilarating. The very snow seems whiter and more beautiful than it does in your vapoury climate. During a keen bright winter’s day you will often perceive the air filled with minute frozen particles, which are quite dry, and slightly prick your face like needle-points, while the sky is blue and bright above you.”

It’s very hard to remain glum in the face of such effusive thoughts, especially when you realize that Catharine was probably writing this by candle light in a freezing cold room in the middle of the woods. Thank you Catharine.

**Barb McIntosh**

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### Rae Fleming “What makes him write?”



Peter Darling and Rae Fleming

Rae’s topic this evening was to tell how he gets inspired to write. It was his own life experiences that provided the many different topics of his books. As a child, he spent much of his time in his parent’s general store which inspired his book, “General Stores of Canada”. Stories he heard hiding behind the counter at the store, provided many ideas for his books. Stories from customers about their grandparents arriving in Canada, stories of the lumber camps, and stories from his mother about a wealthy Mackenzie family in Kirkfield peaked his curiosity and inspired his interest in history and people for his books “Eldon Connections”, “Boswell Children” and “The Railway King in Canada”. He told a delightful tale about customers who had placed pennies and nickels on the railway track just before the train carrying the Royal Couple passed. These crushed coins inspired his book “The Royal Visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.”

However Rae had a warning about being inspired by romantic stories and nostalgia. He remembers the comforting voice over the radio of Peter Gzowski. He found many letters written from fans about how Peter had helped them through day while they looked after young children, or recuperated from serious illnesses or, like Rae, looked after an ailing parent. He was surprised to find in further research that Peter Gzowski had a dark side like any other “human being.”

Life experiences, curiosity, imagination, stories from others and research skills are the tools of a successful author.

**Marilyn MacNaughton**

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### Remember When

The year 2013 marks the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the official opening of Hutchison House which had been acquired by the Peterborough Historical Society in 1969 as a bequest from Jeanette Connal Brown (the

great granddaughter of James Harvey who bought the house from the Hutchison estate). The circumstances around this unusual development have been briefly covered in Jean Murray Cole's Occasional Paper #2 Hutchison House. Jean's experience with the Museum goes beyond just an academic exercise. Jean and her husband Alf moved to Peterborough in 1966 when he took on the position as Registrar for the newly established Trent University and also as professor in the History Department. Jean recalled those early days when the university faculty played a key role in the cultural life of Peterborough. "[President T.H.B. Symons] encouraged members of the university to play active roles in community affairs ...there were frequent public lectures at Queen Mary School . . . People from the university got involved in all sorts of things, the symphony, the theatre guild, the art gallery and the historical society." While raising six children, Jean maintained an interest in writing and was then working on a biography of Catharine Parr Traill and thus had an interest in local history. In 1967 she was asked to join the Peterborough Historical Society and became secretary. She was on the Board when the Society received a letter from the lawyer for Jeanette's estate. Jeanette was suddenly and tragically killed in a car accident and had bequeathed Hutchison House to the Society. As Jean observed, "No one knew about this [provision in Jeanette's will] except Ralph Honey who was a Board member and whose wife was a close friend of Jeanette." So, it came as quite a surprise to the Board but as Jean stated, "People discussed it but you can't say no to something like that unless you are completely helpless. At the time the total budget of the Historical Society was \$590 a year." Charlie Huffman, the PHS vice president (Jean was president), spearheaded the fund raising committee. "He was a terrific man and so easy to get along with and [having someone who was] recently retired from his own construction company and knew all about buildings was fantastic. . . . Charlie enjoyed the work and would phone me every morning. He always told me what he was going to do that day and asked me what I was doing." The Society contacted Peter Stokes, the well known restoration architect, who prepared a preliminary plan with some idea of the work involved. There was a stretch of time between Peter's proposal and the actual start of work while the Society raised the necessary funds to carry out the restoration. In the meantime, Martha Kidd and her volunteers were busy working in the house, stripping wall paper and preparing for the work in the building. The Society hosted a wine and cheese party at the house as work was underway. "It brought in a lot of people who hadn't been members of the Society. . . . and helped with setting up various committees, such as the Garden Committee, Acquisition Committee, etc." It was an interesting time for the Society as they prepared the museum for the official opening. The Peterborough Historical Society owes a debt to all those who helped make the Hutchison House Living History Museum a reality.

**Dennis Carter-Edwards**

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**from the Bulletin May 1974**

***Hutchison House News***

*Architectural archaeology has begun at the Hutchison House. Mrs. Kidd spent an entire afternoon photographing rooms, windows, fireplaces etc., keeping detailed records of the locations. The following week at 10 A.M. five members of the committee arrived suitably garbed and armed with the necessary equipment somewhat ahead of Mr. Peter Stokes. This gave time for a steady trek from the living room to the front door, around the outside to the basement entrance and across to the west storage where a variety of mouldings scrounged for future use was safely tucked away. Removing hall wall paper might have satisfied our burning curiosity about the original staircase, but we were*

*directed upstairs by Mr. Stokes. Meekly we complied but were amply rewarded none the less. Once the last layer of paper was off the east bedroom chimney, joy knew no bounds! Cracks in the plaster indicate an early fireplace. Pieced floorboards attest to removal of the hearth. Close by under the floor is a brick chimney thimble to safely bring a stove pipe upstairs to a round hole high in the chimney face – a later improvement*

*Throughout the day Mr. Stokes and Mr. Lane made detailed measurements and Mrs. Kidd took photographs recording details as the work progressed. Clean up time arrived late afternoon when a mountain of water-soaked paper faced us.*

*During the next week wallpaper came off a second bedroom. Once the paper is removed, paint stripped, modern floors lifted and fireplaces opened, the consulting architect will be able to estimate restoration costs. Taking up flooring will require additional hammer wielding volunteers. Please help us some rainy evening before cottages beckon. Let me know when you can give a couple of hours work.*

**Miss Anne Heideman**

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### **Hutchison House Report**

The March Break programs we offered this year at the House were very well received and exceptionally well attended. The kids kept us on our toes and a great time was had by all. One thing we've discovered over the years is that no matter how often they've played it, children never seem to tire of the game "hide the thimble".

Hide the thimble is one of the simplest, yet endlessly entertaining pastimes. The rules are simple. One person is 'it' and hides the thimble somewhere in the keeping room while the others wait outside the closed door. The thimble cannot be hidden behind or inside another object. In other words, it must be placed in plain sight.

The aim of the game is to spot the thimble without alerting the others to its location. On seeing the thimble a player immediately sits down on the floor in the middle of the room. Each player in turn upon spying the hidden object sits down with the others until all, or most of, the participants have found it. The first one to find the thimble is the next to hide it.

I'm certain that many adults reading the description of this popular game will remember playing something similar as a child. The really interesting thing is that once they've discovered the game, the children constantly ask if they can play it again. It's really amazing that we can hold their interest for so long in the age of TV and video games. Awesome!

We've been very fortunate throughout the school year to have student volunteers from the Sir Sandford Fleming Museum Management and Curatorship program. A bevy of newly trained museum workers have given up their precious spare time to help document the condition of artifacts from the museum's collection. To-date, the students have prepared over 70 condition reports for Hutchison House. Condition reports are invaluable records of the physical condition of an object at a specific time and are most useful in determining if the condition of an artifact is deteriorating, damaged or changing. We are sincerely grateful to all of the students for their dedication and commitment, and wish them well in their future careers.

The HH staff and volunteers are looking forward to participating in the Peterborough Historical Society's strategic planning workshop on Saturday, 13 April. Don't miss this great opportunity to help build excitement and anticipation of a promising future for the organization.

I'd like to remind everyone that May is Museum Month and Hutchison House is offering a host of events in coming weeks. The month begins with a Heritage Luncheon on Wednesday, 1 May. Our spring Plant Sale & Breakfast takes place on Saturday, 11 May from 9 'til noon; followed by our fourth annual Rhubarb Spring Fling on Wednesday, 22 May. To top it all off, Hutchison House Museum is celebrating its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary with an Open House on Sunday, 26 May from 1-3 pm.



Once we catch our collected breath at the end of May we begin summer hours, when the museum opens Tuesday through Sunday. Stay tuned for some special programming scheduled to take place in June. For more information on special events or programs offered at Hutchison House please contact the museum office or visit our website at [www.hutchisonhouse.ca](http://www.hutchisonhouse.ca).

**Cheers Gale and Erin**



Megan and Caylanne working on the condition reports

Abigail, Ana, & Taylor  
at March Break Programs



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### **Canadian Forestry Corps, 1916-1919**

With 2014 being the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of World War I, it is likely there will be publications and media projects produced over the next few years to mark that conflict. The names of battles – Ypres, the Somme, Passchendaele, and Vimy, among others – will, no doubt, be prominently mentioned. Individual soldiers will be remembered, and the Canadian units such as the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, the 93<sup>rd</sup> Overseas Battalion, and the Newfoundland Regiment will all be discussed.

There are some Canadian units that served important support roles in the Great War, without whom the fighting regiments and divisions would not have been able to do their jobs as well as they did, but who are all but forgotten because they served behind the scenes – and generally did not make the front page news. One such group of Canadians was the Canadian Forestry Corps. They were professional foresters, lumbermen, sawyers, teamsters, etc., who provided millions of feet of all types of lumber for military usages from the forests of Britain and France. Their jobs even included the creation of airfields for the Royal Flying Corps (later the Royal Air Force) – some of these fields, Biggin Hill for example, would become famous names during the Battle of Britain and the air campaign over Europe during World War II.

I have begun to research the history of the Canadian Forestry Corps in World War I, and would be very interested to learn of any Peterborough and area men who served with this group during this

time. My initial interest in this subject came about because of the service of the Reverend James Rollins, then minister of St Andrew's Presbyterian (now United) Church in Peterborough, who was a military chaplain to the Forestry Corps units based in the royal estate forests around Windsor Castle. If anyone wishes to share information about local men who served with the Canadian Forestry Corps, either in Britain or in France, please contact me by e-mail at [donwillcock@hotmail.com](mailto:donwillcock@hotmail.com) or by phone at 705-768-6602.

**Thank you Don Willcock**

From the Editor

We will be changing the format of the PHS Bulletin and would welcome any new ideas or suggestions. Please send your responses to [info@peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca](mailto:info@peterboroughhistoricalsociety.ca) attention The Bulletin.

Upcoming Events

**Saturday April 13** PHS Strategic Planning Workshop at St John's Anglican Church  
9:30 to 4:00

**Wednesday May 1** Heritage Luncheon  
**Saturday May 11** Spring Plant Sale & Breakfast from 9 'til noon

**Wednesday May 22** Rhubarb Spring Fling  
**Sunday May 26** 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Open House 1-3 pm.

Other Events

**Tuesday April 23** Peterborough Chapter of the Ontario Archaeological Society at Bagnani Hall (Traill College) Trent University. Speaker is Dr. Ron Williamson, Title: "Looking Eastward from the Mantle Site: Foreign Affairs in the 16<sup>th</sup> century". Contact POAS President, Tom Mohr at 1-705-344-0455, [mohr@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:mohr@utsc.utoronto.ca) for more details and time

**Saturday May 4** Doors Open

"Hands On Nature" (from the ROM ) at Peterborough Museum **from April 6 until June 16, 2013**

*Bulletin* submissions for the May issue due by Wednesday, April 17, 2013. We welcome articles of historical interest.

*The Bulletin*

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