

PETERBOROUGH
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY



Peterborough Historical Society
Bulletin

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Hogmanay Wednesday,
January 1, 2014
- Snofest Fireside Tea &
Dessert, Wednesday,
January 8, 2014
- Public Meeting January
21, 2014 7:30 p.m.
Speaker Michael
Peterman on author
John Craig
- Annual General Meeting
Tuesday, February 25,
2014 The Atrium at
Princess Gardens Guest
speaker: John Wadland,
Professor Emeritus
Trent University
- Peterborough Museum
and Archives—Portraits
of the North, December
15, 2013 to March 23,
2014

**Please note
the new date
for the PHS
AGM and
Dinner of
Tuesday,
February 25,
2014**

Issue 402nd

December 2013

**Looking forward to Hogmanay
January 1, 2014**



From the President

Year-end is traditionally a time for reflection.

A major highlight for PHS was the Strategic Directions Workshop in May. Close to 50 members and volunteers participated in this all-day series of discussions. I was personally impressed by the commitment to strengthening our primary role in the community – that of promoting awareness and appreciation of Peterborough's unique history. Drawing on the notes from the workshop, our next five-year strategic plan to begin in 2014, will identify priorities for PHS as an organization, along with specific priorities and plans for Hutchison House Museum.

Another highlight was the Open House on May 26th, celebrating the 35th Anniversary of Hutchison House as a public museum. Many old friends showed up, including Peter Stokes, the heritage architect who directed the restoration of the house in the 1970s. During the event, a plaque was unveiled, commemorating the gift of Hutchison House to the Peterborough Historical Society by Jeanette (nee Connal) Brown in 1969.

Throughout the past year, our monthly public meetings have presented excellent speakers on a wide range of topics; our heritage awards program honoured seven members of the community for their contributions to heritage preservation; three more PHS plaques were installed, and PHS member Alan Brunger, is the author of *Warships on the Waterway*, our 34th Occasional Paper. This is an impressive list of accomplishments for an organization of our size that relies almost entirely on volunteers.

And finally, a special thank you to Gale and Erin. Again this year, their creativity and tireless work have consistently delivered a broad range of high quality programs and special events at Hutchison House Museum.

My best wishes for a joyous holiday season and all good things in the new year.

Barb McIntosh

CHRISTMAS AT MERINO, PETERBOROUGH, 1886

From the autobiography of Katherine Wallis edited by Gail Corbett

The Christmas dance at Merino was one of the great events of the season. Squire James Wallis and Mrs. Louise Wallis, their sons and daughters and the intimate house party guests awaited the long expected guests. First came the familiar jingle of the sleigh-bells, dim at first, but growing nearer, louder and fuller, until the last sleigh had arrived with its merry passengers.

Before entering Merino's main door, the guests passed through a well lit room, commonly known as the Beast Hall. The walls were lined with glass cases testifying to the taxidermist's art. Upon entering the hall the guests were met with the fragrance of pine and balsam. Wreaths and festoons of orange bittersweet equaled that of Old World holly and mistletoe. With dance partners young and old, tails flew and frock coats waved in the air. At last the music ceased and the guests entered the billiard room where the table was spread with priceless Irish linen and a banquet was set for a King. A turkey of noble proportions, boned, jellied and garnished faced a boar's head with the traditional lemon and spring of juniper in its jaws. A glistening block of hollowed out ice, held a tempting supply of claret-cup. Flowers and fruit, shining silver and polished glass gave grace and colour to the festive scene. After full justice had been done to the feast toasts were in order and everyone joined in 'auld lang syne' and "God Save the Queen."

All made a joyful noise and the picture of Queen Victoria in her royal robes and the top hatted Eton cricketers, whose pictures hung on Merino's walls, seemed to add their voices with equal enthusiasm. Finally good-byes were said and the last jingle bells left Merino and died away in the distance.

Remember When

Interview with Bruce Hodgins

In 2014 Trent University will be celebrating its 50th anniversary. I attended Trent from 1967-1971 and have fond memories of this new, liberal arts university with small tutorial groups and regular contact with the professors. I wondered what it was like for the professors who were part of this new university, crafted in the vision of its founding president Professor Tom Symons. Professor Bruce Hodgins has been a long standing member of the Peterborough Historical Society and was a distinguished member of the History Department at Trent. After teaching at Western and receiving doctorate at Duke, he joined the Trent History Department in 1965, the second year the university was in existence. As he fondly recalled, “*I reveled in the Trent system of seminars and tutorials . . . and the interplay [with the students].*” As he recalled, the faculty who joined in these early years, bought into Symons’s *commitment to small group teaching, tutorials most important, seminars the second most important, the lectures just a bit of gravy on the food.*” The focus on teaching and the work involved in preparing meant there was less time for research. “*The down side,*” he noted “*which I didn’t even recognize till 15 years later, was the fact that they weren’t publishing and researching as much.*” There was also an understanding, either consciously or unconsciously, of the contributions the faculty and their spouses could make to the cultural life of the community and according to Professor Hodgins, they “*considered it very positive.*” Professor Hodgins was active in community politics and ran for the NDP in the 1968 federal election. He considered “*politics was part of teaching university*” and faced no opposition to his decision and even President Symons thought “*it was a good thing.*” Being on the receiving end of the Trent System of small class teaching has been the most influential factor in my success as an historian with Parks Canada and continues to inspire me.

Dennis Carter-Edwards

Rare Canadian Atlas Available for Sale

Due to a generous donation from one of its members, the Peterborough Historical Society has come into possession of a very good copy of the 1881, First Edition of the *Illustrated Atlas of the County of Victoria*. (bound with) the *Illustrated Atlas of the Dominion of Canada*, with authentic and complete maps of all the Provinces, the North-West territories and the Island of Newfoundland. There are also maps of Europe, Asia, North and South America, United States. There are 103 full and double page maps in colour and a few more in black and white.

PHS is now offering this attractive antiquarian atlas for sale with proceeds going toward the work of the Society.

The atlas was published in 1881 by H. Belden & Company of Toronto, engraved and lithographed by Rolph, Smith & Company. It contains several hundred cameo portraits of national figures, such as Sir John A. Macdonald, and locally prominent people, as well as views of country properties, town layouts and street plans. The book was prepared under the direction of author D. MacDonald. The large folio (46cm x 38cm) is in black, half morocco over complimentary pebbled cloth, with gilt titles on the front cover and spine. Some minor repairs to the binding including the spine have been skillfully and attractively done.

The sale of this rare atlas is being handled through Trillium Antiquarian Books of Peterborough. Full details are outlined on their website www.trilliumbooks.ca. The site also has several photographs of the atlas that are indicative of the contents and condition of the book.

RESEARCHING THE OCCASIONAL PAPER

“Warships on the Waterway”

I came across the subject of the Royal Canadian Navy warships on the Trent Canal serendipitously. In the early 1990s, I spotted a photo in the newly opened Trent Canal Interpretation Centre, a largish boat with a mounted gun in the Lift locks. I thought this strange—a lost patrol, perhaps? Eventually, Katherine Hooke enlightened me with her recollection of a school trip to see two such vessels, called Fairmiles, locking through Lakefield. She kindly allowed me to include her uncle, G.M. Douglas', photos in my paper. A few years later, I attended the unveiling of an eight-foot long model of the first Fairmile built in Canada. It was made by Don Houghton (ex-RCN) and is on permanent display in Georgian Shopping Mall in Barrie. He introduced me to Donald Hunter, whose father's company, Hunter Boats Ltd. in Orillia, built the seven warships during WW2.

Don Hunter granted me an interview in mid-1998. He finished writing the *History of Hunter Boats*, which was published posthumously in 2000. Several more years passed before I finished a paper by the fall of 2011, which I presented to the PHS public meeting in November.

Amazingly, about one week before my talk, I received a phone call from Albert Brooks (ex-RCNVR- Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve), who lives on Television Road, Peterborough. He had served for about eight months on the second Hunter Fairmile, Q 061, in Nova Scotia waters and kindly allowed me to include some of his photographs.

The response to the research has been gratifying and many seem to share my interest and curiosity about the “warships in the waterway”. I have been asked to present the topic four times since 2011. In terms of the significance of the “waterway warships” I think that they reflected the widespread involvement of Canadians in the universal effort during WW2.

Alan Brunger

Canadian Forestry Corps, 1916-1919

With 2014 being the 100th 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 93rd 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.

Canadian Forestry Corps, 1916-1919 continued

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 or by phone at 705-768-6602.

Don Willcock

From the Curator

In early November, Erin and I were pleased to attend the Ontario Museum Association Conference in Markham. It was a valuable staff development opportunity to meet and network with museum colleagues from across the province. Thank you very much to the Hutchison House Management Committee for sending us to the conference and for granting us permission to close the museum for two days in order to attend.



With the help of volunteers, Erin and I also attended a pre-conference workshop that happened to coincide with a Heritage Luncheon at the house on Wednesday, November 6. We owe a debt of gratitude to Bob Laing, Doreen Jones, Loretta Terry, Catharine Forde, and Don Willcock, for not only 'holding the fort' in our absence, they also fed fifty visitors lunch! All the reports I've received are favourable and nothing seems to have overwhelmed the team. Thank you so very much to all of you.

Now plans are well underway for the upcoming season. Betty Hinton and Edith Butler are set to decorate the House for Christmas, schools are booking for the popular 19th century Christmas programs, the Volunteer's Festive Sale is only a few days away (as I write this report), and Hogmanay is just around the corner. As we make our way to the end of another year Erin and I wish to thank all of the dedicated volunteers who help out in so many ways. We really could not get very far without you!

Please mark your calendars for the following events. Our Hogmanay celebration is on January 1, 2014. We will be ringing in the New Year with lots of traditional fun and food beginning with our First Footer at 1:00 pm New Year's Day and continuing throughout the afternoon. On January 8th we will host a Fireside Tea & Dessert in the keeping room as part of Snofest. We are now taking reservations for this event. The cost is \$5 per person, with 2 sitting times. The sittings will take place at 1pm. and 2pm. Advance tickets are required.

Please note: Hutchison House will be closed from December 19 until December 30.

Wishing everyone a very happy and safe holiday season.

Merry Christmas from Gale Fewings and Erin Panepinto



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Submissions for the December issue due by Wednesday, December 18, 2013. We welcome articles of historical interest.

The Bulletin

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PHS Memberships:
Individual: \$35.00
Family: \$45.00
Student: \$15.00

PHS Previous Month's Meeting Canadian Participation in the American Civil War

John Boyko talked about several individuals living at the time of the American Civil War and their effect on Canadian politics.

John Anderson was a slave from Missouri. He escaped and came to Canada and he became a successful business man. But he was arrested. During the trial, US officials with the support the Britain argued to have John returned to the United States. The Attorney General of Canada, John MacDonald argued that the United States and Britain had no right to tell us (Canada) what to do. What did the judge decide? (read the book)

William Henry Seward was the second most powerful man in the United States when Abraham Lincoln appointed him Secretary of State. Seward had always wanted Canada as part of the United States. And so when the South threatened separation, Seward presented a plan to Lincoln. He suggested an attack on Canada because by attacking Canada, Britain would come to defend their territory. Consequently the North and South would be united in their battle against Britain, a common enemy. What did Lincoln think? (read the book)

Sara Emma Edwards was representative of Canadians who joined the Civil War. There were about 40,000 Canadians in the war - most for the north. Many were volunteers but some were forced to join through bribery and kidnapping. In order to join, Sara disguised herself as man. As a male nurse, she was present at many battles. She then became a spy. To obtain information she disguised herself in many different ways-even one time as a woman.... Was she successful? (read the book)

After the war, Abraham Lincoln met with British representatives about the amount of war reparation due to the United States. Because the amount owed, Lincoln suggested that Britain could give Canada to the Americans as settlement of the debt. What did Britain think? (read the book)

George Brown, as editor of the Globe, wrote extensively about the war. After meeting Lincoln, he feared that the United States would attack Canada. He formed the committee which would become the Fathers of Confederation. He set up a meeting in Quebec where no one could leave until there was agreement on the Confederation of Canada. How did the American Civil War affect Canada?. (read the book)

Marilyn MacNaughton

