

PETERBOROUGH  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY



*Peterborough Historical Society*  
*Bulletin*

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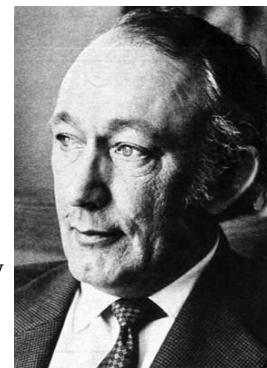
**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- Snofest Fireside Tea & Dessert, Wednesday, January 8, 2014
- Annual General Meeting Tuesday, February 25, 2014 The Atrium at Princess Gardens Guest speaker: John Wadland, Professor Emeritus Trent University
- Public Meeting - March 18 - Dennis Carter-Edwards - Politics, Scandal and the Trent Canal
- Peterborough Museum and Archives—Portraits of the North, December 15, 2013 to March 23, 2014
- Heritage Luncheons: Wednesday February 5, March 5, April 2, May 7 and June 4

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

**PHS Public Meeting January 21st**  
**Author John Craig**

Local writer, John Craig wrote over 20 books during his career as professional writer. His history of steam boating in the Kawarthas, *By the Sound of Her Whistle*, is quite well-known, but no so for his many other successful novels, mostly set around Peterborough and Lakefield. Join Michael Peterman on Tuesday, January 21st for an exploration of Craig's work.



**PHS Annual General Meeting**

Tuesday, February 25, 2014  
Princess Gardens

**Guest Speaker**  
**John Wadland, Professor Emeritus**  
**Canadian Studies Department, Trent University**

Business Meeting 5:30 to 6:00 p.m.

Cash Bar: 6:00 to 6:30 p.m.

Dinner 6:30 p.m.

Tickets will be available in early January  
\$30.00 for Members \$35.00 for non-members



## From the President .....

Beginning a new year is traditionally the time for optimism and renewed commitment. We are encouraged to make New Year's resolutions that will better our lives, like becoming a nicer person, losing weight or paying down that credit card.

New Year's resolutions date back about 4,000 years to the ancient Babylonians who made promises to their gods to return borrowed objects and pay off their debts. The Romans changed the start of the New Year from March to January, named after their god Janus – the two-headed god who looks backward on the old year and forward to the new one. The Romans made similar New Year's promises to Janus to improve their behaviour. When they adapted Christianity in the fourth century, they introduced prayers and fasting at the end of the year, followed by pledges to be more pious in the New Year.

Today, the major emphasis on New Year's resolutions continues to reflect self-improvement. The only thing that has changed is rather than making promises to the gods, we make them to ourselves. And since we don't have the same fear that the gods will rain thunder and lightning down upon us as punishment for not fulfilling our promises, we generally fail.

Research shows that 80 percent of us give up on our goals after two months. However, experts do agree that writing down New Year's resolutions and sharing goals with others can help to achieve success.

Best wishes for the new year.

**Barb McIntosh**

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## Remember When .....

Life in Lakefield in the 1920s and 30s was far different from today. Doris (nee Charlton) Huffman was born at the family home in Lakefield 31 December 1921. Her father owned the Woodside Resort on Clear Lake which he ran in the summer and worked for his brother at the William Charlton steam powered flour mill in Lakefield during the winter. Doris attended school at Lakefield, the junior grades on the lower floor, the senior on the upper. *"We led a quiet life in Lakefield and went to the rink on Saturday night and skated and that was our entertainment."* Radio also played a part in her childhood. *"I can remember as a child coming home and listening to Jack Armstrong the All American Boy and to Orphan Annie."* Entertainment was home focused. Crokinole on the kitchen table and euchre parties organized by the Lakefield firefighters. She decided to become a teacher. As she recalled, *"there weren't many options for girls, you either became a secretary, a teacher or a nurse."* Doris started Normal School in Peterborough at 1939 at the age of only 17. Her father would drive her into town on Sunday night and pick her up on Friday night. During the week, she boarded at a home on George St. North for \$5.00 a week, including breakfast and dinner. She enjoyed school. *"It was fun,"* she recalled, *"you got to meet different people from other areas, such as Apsley and Prince Edward County"* Her first teaching job was at a rural school near Omemee, where she would board during the week and be home in Lakefield on the weekends. *"I earned \$650 my first year and paid \$5 a week to board."* Being a teacher gave her the summers free. She worked at the family resort. As she said, *"there were beds to make, washing to do, cooking to do, tables to wait on and I worked there during the summer."* Doris met her husband Bob at the Badminton Club in Market Hall. She was married in 1946 and quit teaching. *"If you got married you were expected to stay home."* {more on Doris Huffman in the February newsletter }

**Dennis Carter-Edwards**

Occasional Paper # 34, November, 2013

## **WARSHIPS ON THE WATERWAY**

Royal Canadian Navy motor launches on the Trent Canal during World War II

by Alan G. Brunger

Several hundred warships were built on and around the Great Lakes during WWII. Alan Brunger's recent publication provides a glimpse of this remarkable activity through the lens of the work of the Hunter Boats shipyard in Orillia, on Lake Couchiching (off Lake Simcoe). This was the only one of the Great Lakes wartime shipyards that was not actually on the Great Lakes – it depended on the Trent Canal, now the Trent Severn Waterway (TSW), to deliver its craft to the ocean.

Wartime shipbuilding in Canada is an important theme of the book. We learn about this through a detailed account of shipbuilding in Orillia, at Hunter Boats Ltd. which built seven of the 59 motor launches produced as part of the Great Lakes region's war effort. It is difficult to imagine modern-day Orillia as the base for industry on this scale, with the variety of skills and resources that it required. Shipbuilding, then as now, was exacting work. The high risk involved was indicated by the explosion and fire on one boat, involving loss of life and injury, during the wartime years of construction. This account of the work of one small firm also provides a nice perspective on the role of government contracts in channeling Canada's contributions to the War.

The section on Hunter Boats Ltd, a family firm originally in the business of building pleasure craft, is made particularly fascinating through the use of quotations by Donald Hunter, the last president of the company and son of its founder. Hunter granted the author a long interview not long before he died and Brunger uses quotations from this conversation to great effect throughout the book.

The book includes an interesting history of the wooden Fairmile anti-submarine, motor launches that the Great Lakes shipyards delivered to the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN). This history includes the design and construction of the Fairmiles, their wartime exploits and postwar fates.

Although the Fairmiles were designed in Britain, their dimensions were such that, with "the odd bump on the bottom" (p.13), they could just pass through the Trent Canal from Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario and the sea. The 41 locks of the Trent Canal are 120 feet by 32 feet. Fortunately, the Fairmiles were, as the Hunter Boats owners cleverly ascertained, only 115 feet long! On at least one occasion, the shipyard had to race to complete a launch so that it could pass through the Canal before it shut down the locks for the winter, just as some pleasure craft still do today..

For readers in communities along the Waterway, the description of the Fairmiles passing through the Canal, with their crews of 17 RCN sailors and armaments (depth charges, machine gun and a 3 lb gun), has special appeal. Many still remember the warships going by. As Don Hunter told the author, "being war craft, people knew these things were coming, word just travelled. There would be hundreds of people to see them" (p.16). Schools were closed to allow students to view the passings. Brunger uses eye witness and community newspaper accounts (as well as Don Hunter's words) to bring these voyages to life. There is a fine selection of photographs of the ships in the chambers of the Kirkfield and Peterborough lift locks and in the locks at Lakefield and Campbellford.

This is a booklet that will be a delight to anyone interested in the heritage of the TSW and should be good reading for today's boaters.

The author, Alan Brunger, is a member of the board of Trent Valley Archives. He was recently elected a Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society.

**Peter Adams**



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Submissions for the December issue due by Wednesday, January 22, 2014. We welcome articles of historical interest.

**The Bulletin**

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Publisher: **Marilyn MacNaughton**

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

## From the Curator ....

The annual Volunteers' Festive Sale at the end of November was another great success. The volunteers raised almost \$3,800 for Hutchison House through the sale of wreaths, Empire cheese, baked goods, jams, jellies and preserves, pies, and attic treasures. Well done! Thank you everyone who helped with the sale, donated to the cause and/or came out to shop. It takes the whole team to make it happen and we've got one of the best teams in town.

By the time everyone reads this Bulletin we will have already turned the page on a new year. I promise to give a report on the highlights of Hogmanay 2014 in the February edition. However, we do have an event coming up in early January that I would like everyone to know about. For the past several years the museum has taken part in Snofest Peterborough. On January 8<sup>th</sup> Hutchison House will again host a Fireside Tea & Dessert in the keeping room. 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.

The Heritage Luncheons will begin again on Wednesday, 5 February. Our seasonal menu promises to dispel your mid-winter blahs and post-Christmas humdrums. Luncheons will also be held on March 5, April 2, May 7 and June 4. For more information please call the office for details and to book tickets at 743-9710.

We would also like you to mark your calendars for two other special events that we will be offering this year. **Love in the Afternoon** promises to warm the cockles of your heart with music, poetry, stories of love (with a possible 'love triangle' or two thrown in for good measure). Period refreshments will be served as well. The event will take place on Sunday, February 16, 2014 from 1-3 pm. Tickets are on sale now at the museum for \$15 each or \$25 for a couple.

On April 27, 2014 we look forward to celebrating National Poetry Month with an afternoon of poetry. More information to follow on this event in the coming months.

Best wishes for the new year!



**Gale Fewings**