



UPCOMING EVENTS

Peterborough Historical Society Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, January 15
Hajni Hos,

"The New Canadian Centre
and Diversity
in Peterborough."

Hutchison House Events

Charles Dickens'
"A Christmas Carol"
in the
Keeping Room
Saturday, December 8

Dylan Thomas
recording of
"A Child's
Christmas in Wales"
and
"The Gift of the Magi"
Sunday, December 9

Victorian Christmas
for Kids
Saturday, December 15
1:00 to 3:00 pm

Hogmanay
Tuesday, January 1
1:00 to 4:00 pm

WINTER/SPRING SPEAKER SCHEDULE 2019

IMPORTANT REMINDER: PETERBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY MONTHLY MEETINGS. The monthly meetings and lectures are on the **third Tuesday of the month: January, February, March and May** at 7:30 p.m., Lion's Community Centre, 347 Burnham Street.

Tuesday, 15 January: Hajni Hos, "The New Canadian Centre and Diversity in Peterborough." Hajni Hos is Executive Director, New Canadian Centre in Peterborough.

Tuesday, 19 February: Su Ditta, "Punching Above Our Weight: Contemporary Arts Practice in Peterborough." Su Ditta is Executive Director, Electric City Culture Council, EC3.

Tuesday, 19 March: Ken Brown and Jon Oldham, "Historical Peterborough Businesses Revealed." Ken Brown is a Chartered Accountant, local historian and author. Jon Oldham is Archivist, Peterborough Museum and Archives.

Tuesday, 16 April: Peterborough Historical Society AGM, guest speaker TBA.

Tuesday, 21 May: Bryan Palmer, "1919 and the Labour Revolt: How Workers Fought for a Different Canada 100 Years Ago." Bryan Palmer is Professor Emeritus, Canadian Studies, Trent University, Canada Research Chair, and recipient of the Trent University Distinguished Research Award.

SPECIAL EVENT: Save the Date! Saturday, 9 February 2019, a one-day conference on public health in Peterborough, past and present. The PHS and Peterborough Public Health are partnering to celebrate the 130th anniversary of the founding of Peterborough's Board of Health. A program of the day's events will be published later in the month.

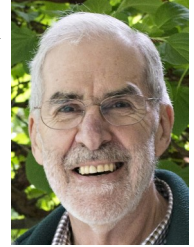


Join us for Scottish
Hogmanay 2019
on January 1

1:00 pm to 4:00 pm
at Hutchison House

From the President ...

Dale Standen



With the arrival of December, many will look forward to a busy season of festivities. Be sure to mark on your calendars the several enjoyable events scheduled at Hutchison House Museum.

December is also a time to look ahead to the Historical Society's schedule of speakers and events in the winter and spring of 2019. The list on the previous page illustrates a variety of themes through which Peterborough's history can be explored. The New Canadian Centre that Hajni Hos will discuss raises the familiar Canadian story of migration, but the origins of migrants have changed over time, contributing to an ever-changing history. The arts, whose influence Su Ditta will examine, have been an essential element of Peterborough's past and we must not overlook how influential they can be in defining community. Business and development are a core preoccupation of every aspiring city: Ken Brown and Jon Oldham will explore records that illuminate in new ways some of the businesses and their proprietors that helped build the city.

Peterborough's history did not evolve in isolation. Ideas, events and developments elsewhere both influenced and reflected Peterborough's experience. The "labour revolt" of 1919 a century ago, that Professor Bryan Palmer will examine in May, epitomized by the great Winnipeg General Strike, was reflected in bitter labour unrest and strikes locally.

The preoccupation with medical science and health care is among the most significant developments of the past century and a half. Peterborough has evolved into a regional health centre, underscoring the importance of health care in our local history. To help celebrate 130 years of public health since the establishment of a permanent Board of Health in 1889, the Peterborough Historical Society is collaborating with Peterborough Public Health in a celebratory one-day conference on 9 February 2019. In a few weeks, we will be publishing information on how to register for the conference.

In addition to these scheduled events, watch for notices of other occasional projects that the Society may initiate or sponsor. In the meantime, join me and others in the enjoyment of some seasonal events ahead that Hutchison House Museum has scheduled.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWED?

If you have renewed your PHS membership for 2019, THANK YOU! If not, please complete and return the enclosed membership form. Memberships and donations are the life blood of the Society: they support the informative monthly *Bulletin*, the speaker series, the publication of an annual historical booklet, and other initiatives that preserve and celebrate the region's history.

November 2018 PHS Public Meeting “Peterborough Remembers Her Fallen: The Citizens' War Memorial.”

In keeping with the theme of Remembrance, the November meeting of the Society featured a presentation by past president Don Willcock who spoke about the history of the Citizens' War Memorial. The initiative to honour Peterborough men and women who gave their lives in World War I was a result of a motion at the 1919 Annual General meeting of the local Red Cross to establish a Citizens Memorial Committee. Judge E.C.S. Huycke, who had four sons who served during the war, was appointed as Chair. In 1920, the Committee agreed to adopt the proposal submitted by Walter Allward and signed a contract with the prominent Canadian sculptor in March 1922 to produce the two 8-foot tall figures - the Knight of Chivalry, who represents the Canadian soldier, and the Defeated Foe. Allward, however, was subsequently selected by the federal government to produce the iconic Vimy National Memorial. The resulting delays in the Peterborough project prompted some testy letters between Allward and the Chair of the Citizens' Committee, which at one point threatened to transfer the project to sculptor Vernon March. Allward finally agreed to hire Gilbert Bayes to assist in completing the work. In 1926, Allward informed the Committee that the bronze figures were finished and would be shipped to Peterborough for installation on the concrete pedestal. Further delays occurred when the company hired to prepare the concrete base went bankrupt. However, all was in readiness for the Remembrance Service on 11 November 1928, although the official unveiling was deferred to June 1929 as part of the Homecoming celebrations.

By the 1970s, the monument was showing signs of wear and deterioration from the elements. Local veterans associations initiated Operation Cenotaph to raise funds and oversee restoration of the monument. Work was completed and a rededication ceremony took place 24 June 1979. Today, the monument receives regular maintenance, primarily a wax coating on the figures to preserve them for posterity. President Dale Standen thanked Don for his timely, well-researched and informative talk.

Dennis Carter-Edwards



War Memorial
by Walter Seymour
Allward
Confederation Park

Hutchison House Report

Gale Fewings



"Time was with most of us, when Christmas Day, encircling all our limited world like a magic ring, left nothing out for us to miss or seek; bound together all our home enjoyments, affections, and hopes; grouped everything and everyone round the Christmas fire, and made the little picture shining in our bright young eyes, complete." Charles Dickens

The Christmas season is always a special time at Hutchison House. Through the popular 19th century Christmas programs, staff and volunteers have the opportunity to guide young children through the traditions of long ago. It may have been a simpler time, but there still must have been an element of anticipation as the settlers prepared the pudding and set about to make the few small gifts they would give one another. Preparations would begin as soon as the harvest was over in the fall and the merchant's Christmas supplies began to arrive. Precious ingredients such as raisins and sugar often had to be hoarded for weeks in order to produce a special dish for the Christmas table.

In honour of the season, we are organizing a new Christmas event for young families. Our Victorian Christmas for Kids will take place on Saturday, December 15, from 1-3 p.m. It will feature tours of the museum, gingerbread cookies baking on the hearth, a Christmas craft for children to make and take home, as well as a Christmas story corner. This is a drop-in event and costs \$5.00 per person. Erin and I hope this traditional Christmas event will prove as popular as our recent Haunted Halloween for Kids. In October, we had over 220 visitors over the course of two hours.

Charles Dickens' *"A Christmas Carol"* in the Keeping Room by firelight is returning by popular demand on December 8. If you crave other Christmas-themed stories mark your calendar for Sunday, December 9, for the Dylan Thomas recording of *"A Child's Christmas in Wales"* in addition to a recording of *"The Gift of the Magi"* and a reading from Louisa May Alcott's *"Little Women"*. Carol singing, hot apple cider, a choice of a delicious dessert, tea and coffee will be served both days with different desserts offered each afternoon. The cost is \$20.00 per person prepaid or \$30 for the weekend. Seating is limited, so to avoid disappointment, book well in advance. More information is available on our website at www.hutchisonhouse.ca.

Special thanks to everyone who helped this year. We had a successful Christmas Market; many attended and we made over \$2,500.

We at the House owe a special thank you to Paul Lumsden for arranging a group of 10 young volunteers from Lakefield College School to help with the fall garden clean-up. They came out and worked shoulder-to-shoulder with Betty and Bob Hinton, Juli Hiller, Lois Scott and Paul on a beautiful autumn afternoon (one of only two that we had in November). On the first nice day that week, Betty, Juli, Lois, Bob and Susan Jewell got the grounds prepared and in shape for the students. We hope to have them back in the spring!

Plans and preparations are also underway for our Hogmanay celebration on January 1, 2019. Our first-footer will be "piped in" at precisely 1 p.m., January 1, with a rousing rendition of 'Burns' Address to a Haggis' to follow shortly thereafter. Visitors will enjoy tours of the museum as well as samples of the taste of Scotland throughout the afternoon. Highland dancing and the skirl of the bagpipe and drum will round out the day. Plan to drop in to wish new friends and old neighbours the best for the coming year. Admission prices: adults \$7.00; children \$4.00; family rate \$18.00 (2 adults/2+ children). The event runs from 1 to 3 pm.

I will leave you now with one of my favourite quotes from *"The Grinch Who Stole Christmas"*

"And the Grinch, with his Grinch-feet ice cold in the snow, stood puzzling and puzzling, how could it be so? It came without ribbons. It came without tags. It came without packages, boxes or bags. And he puzzled and puzzled 'till his puzzler was sore. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before. What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store? What if Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more?" Dr. Seuss

Voices from Peterborough's Past - Wonderland, the Coliseum, and the Marx Brothers

Floor Covered With Sawdust Seats Were Planks In City's First Play House

It is a far cry from the new Centre Theatre with its air-conditioning, its luxurious chairs and its modern appointments to Peterborough's first moving picture house.

Only the old-timers will remember that first "palace of the silver screen, located on George street north of Brock street where Coleman's paint shop is now situated.

It was run by a man named Hannah, the admission price was five cents and the fittings, decorating and program, were on the same scale as the box office levy. Sawdust covered the floor, the seats were boards stretched between kitchen chairs and the moving picture machine was a primitive affair that never seemed able to grasp the idea that a theatre program should be presented with a minimum of interruption. It had an annoying habit of breaking down at the most thrilling moment in the screen drama. Just when the heroine was being shoved off the cliff by the villain and the handsome hero was coming to the rescue there would be a gurgle or two from the machine, the picture would flicker two or three times and then black out. Followed a printed announcement on the screen, "One moment, please, while film is being repaired" and the audience would sit back and wait in patient resignation for the necessary adjustments to be made.

The First Comedy

Incidentally, old patrons of the screen will recall the first comedy that was shown in "Wonderland" as Peterborough's first picture show

money the patrons paid in and the result was that some fifteen reels of motion picture entertainment were offered at five cents a customer. Interesting to note too is the fact that back in those early days of the Royal there was a fair-haired young Irish lad with a silvery ten voice who sang illustrated songs for Royal patrons. Today that pleasing singer is head of one of Canada's greatest baking concerns. He is Victor Loftus, of the Canada Bread Company.

On Charlotte street there was the Empire Theatre, given up to screen fare and situated on the north side near Aymer street. Later the Grand Opera House, built originally for road shows came into the field with moving pictures so that at one time there was plenty of competition in the local amusement field.

Road Show Films

Before Peterborough had a picture show at all the few films that had been shown here were "road shows" and the most memorable of these was a film called "Our Navy" shown at the old Bradburn Opera House.

Heralds of the moving picture era were two well known citizens, the late R. M. Roy and James Stubbs, each of which had a very fine stereopticon lantern and used to show still pictures in churches and halls all over the district. These limelight views as shown by Mr. Roy were a feature of some of the band concerts in Victoria Park in the days before animated pictures came into existence.

As to the legitimate theatre it

Sometimes, as I'm sure many of us know, newspaper accounts can lead us astray. In 2013, when I was a member of a committee for the ReFrame film festival doing research for an exhibit on Peterborough's past movie-going experiences, I found a 1950 *Examiner* article headlined "Opera, Marx Bros., Circuses, Noted Actors, Came to Town." Being a big Groucho Marx fan, I got quite excited knowing that these guys had performed in our city. I imagined Groucho, with his long, bent-over stride, fake moustache, eyebrows twitching, cigar in mouth, jauntily bounding around the corner of George and Charlotte, under the Clock Tower, maybe bumping blindly into Chico.

In the following years, as I continued to research the city's movie-going history, I found that, in fact, the Marx Brothers had never made an appearance in town. They seem to have been confused with the travelling Marks Brothers troupe, from nearby Perth, which came here on frequent occasions (a very young Julius, not yet known as Groucho, did come through on his own in November 1906, but that's a different story).

In the original ReFrame research, I also found a gem of an article in the *Examiner* from 1939. It was part of a lavish set of coverage of the opening of the new Centre Theatre. How great! I was looking for evidence of the first moving picture theatre to have been established in Peterborough – and here it was, described in great detail as "the first palace of the silver screen." Based on that article, the ReFrame exhibit cited Wonderland as the "first" moving picture theatre established in town.

Wrong again. As it turned out, it was not the first. Wonderland opened on the west side of George Street, just north of Brock, in mid-summer 1907. But I've now found that another storefront theatre, "Scott's

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Coliseum," had appeared a few months earlier, at the beginning of April. It was born out of a penny arcade established the previous year.

The Coliseum, located at 432 George Street North (a space recently vacated by Christensen Fine Arts and Framing), lasted only a relatively short time before apparently riding off, without ceremony and no kiss goodbye, into the sunset.

Wonderland, faced with competition from an even newer nickelodeon, the Crystal, at 408 George North, had a similarly short lifespan. It would be only a few months before Wonderland's flimsy curtain/screen was taken down and the sawdust swept from its floor.

All we can say, for now, is that these three theatres of 1907 – the Coliseum, Wonderland, and the Crystal – were early pioneers in the city's long-lasting business of movie exhibition.

Robert Clarke



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Hutchison House Haunted Halloween October 27



Ava and Loretta
serving treats

Foreground:
Tilly and
Poppy

Background:
Rachel and
Martina



Skylar
on the craft table

Gabby and Dana
at the
Monster Mash



Hutchison House—decorating for Christmas

Betty Hinton



Lois Scott

