

Peterborough Historical Society



Annual Report 2021

Prepared for the Annual General Meeting Tuesday, April 19, 2022

Board of Directors, 2021

Bob Taylor-Vaisey, President
Lou MacLellan, Treasurer
Dale Standen, Secretary
Jodi Aoki, Recording Secretary
Linda Chandler
Deborah Key
James Cullingham
Peter Eatson
Michael Peterman
Erin Panepinto, ex officio

Hutchison House Operating Committee 2020

Michael Peterman, Chair
Erin Panepinto, Curator/Manager (ex officio)
Paul Lumsden, Property Management
Edith Betty Hinton, Gardens
Bill Corbett, Member at Large
Linda Chandler, Acquisitions/Conservation
Dale Standen, PHS Past- President

Trust Fund Trustees

Peter Darling, Chair
Marilyn McNaughton, Treasurer
Dennis Carter-Edwards
Dale Standen
(Financial Advisor: Susan Young)

President's Report

I don't know about you, the members, but I have faced lots of challenges in my life. And most of the time, I wonder, "how did I get through that?" We tend to forget about the trials and tribulations of the past.

And so it is with the Peterborough Historical Society. The Society has faced challenges, probably from the very beginning, and it has emerged as a strong association, with dedicated volunteers, with a commitment to the power of history and heritage.

The year 2021 was one of those years. COVID stuck around. And it forced us to rethink what we do and how best to improve. It showed us the power of social media, especially the efficiency of a well-run Zoom meeting. It challenged us to pay attention to items that often sit on the back burner, like succession planning. It made us reassess how we operate – What worked? What did not work? What do we do about it?

It was important to secure capable and professional resources at Hutchison House and it happened. It was important to think of the past as the status quo and to chart a future.

The speaker series, under Dennis Carter-Edwards' leadership, provided us again with a range of educational speaker sessions. Linda Lumsden kept the High School award program intact and Dale Standen ensured that the heritage awards program went off without a problem. Jodi Aoki and Marilyn MacNaughton provided us with a *Bulletin* full of details of interest to a wide range of members. Debbie Keay maintained a strong liaison with PACAC. Linda Chandler kept control at the helm of our volunteers. Erin Panepinto kept the Hutchison House Museum ship afloat with creative and educational programs. Dale Standen, among so many other achievements, helped navigate a better way to manage our investments. Michael Peterman steered the efforts of the Hutchison House Operations Committee and our Publications Committee, James Cullingham is leading an effort to form a PHS Advisory Council and our Treasurer, Lou McLellan keeps us fiscally responsible. Kudos to our bookkeeper, Diane Ostrom who is a font of knowledge on complex matters.

The year 2022 will be similar. How do we leverage social media? How do we increase our membership base, particularly for youth and the diverse cultures that are the Peterborough of today? How do we ensure financial sustainability? The simple answer is that we will, and we will with a strong Board of Directors, and with your feedback, ideas, critiques and recommendations.

Two individuals are not renewing their position on the Board: Jodi Aoki and Peter Eatson. Both have provided exceptional counsel and Jodi in particular as Editor of the *Bulletin*. Peter Eatson's background was significant as we wrestled with governance issues. Thanks to both of them.

So, what is next? Well, as I have said in my column before, it is time not to think about sustaining the past but about a transformation into the future, to keep pace with changes in our community, reflect the diversity of cultural heritage and increase an awareness of from where we have come, and where we can expect to go.

It's exciting. Let's work together!!!

Bob Taylor-Vaisey,
President

Financial Report

Again in 2021, reduced revenues due to the effects of COVID-19 restrictions were more than offset by special federal and provincial government grants and the federal government wage-subsidy. The Peterborough Historical Society and Hutchison House experienced a combined surplus for the year ended December 31, 2021. This allowed the undertaking of maintenance projects, replacement of equipment and computer and software upgrades that had been deferred from 2020.

The Peterborough Historical Society experienced a slight deficit, mostly from lower income from donations. Hutchison House experienced a surplus as the beneficiary of the targeted government pandemic relief grants. Because of this extraordinary support, again no funds were needed from the Maintenance Trust.

To review the exact details of the PHS financial position please see the **Peterborough Historical Society Unaudited Financial Results at December 31, 2021** prepared by Tim J. F. Nicholls, Chartered Accountant.

Lou McClellan,
Treasurer

Program Committee Report

The COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and health advisories continued to impact the monthly Lecture program of the Society. While there may be no substitute for the face-to-face talks, lively exchange of questions and answers and the socializing afterwards, the virtual meetings have enabled the PHS to reach out to a broader audience beyond the confines of Peterborough. The Society is fortunate to be able to attract engaging speakers with interesting topics that relate to a various aspects of our community's past.

With the new year beginning still under COVID restrictions and the threat of new variants on the horizon, only partly mitigated by the development and application of effective vaccines, Robert Clarke's talk on the glorious era of movie going offered a ray of sunshine amidst the gloom. Robert shared virtually his passion and extensive research on early movie theatres in Peterborough in a talk titled, "Packed to the Doors: The Electric City Goes to the Movies". His engaging presentation on the early movie theatres in Peterborough and the whole experience of this form of entertainment resonated with his audience who could share in the memories of the excitement of an evening out to watch a movie or a Saturday matinee for a younger audience once created.

Erin Panepinto, Curator of Hutchison House Museum, took a page from the Sound of Music for the February PHS Talk and spoke of a few of her favourite things – the things being selected artifacts from the collection of the museum. With amusing anecdotes she highlighted a few of the unique artifacts directly associated with the two prominent individuals associated with the museum, Dr. John Hutchison and engineer Sir Sandford Fleming. From ceramics uncovered through an archaeological investigation to the extensive original medical records kept by Dr. Hutchison, Erin brought to life these tangible reminders of a past era.

For the March presentation I spoke on the building and operation of the Peterborough County House of Refuge. This institutional facility, built in Lakefield in 1906 for the care of elderly vulnerable residents of Peterborough County, was a timely reminder of the challenges society faces in providing adequate level of care for this vulnerable segment of the population.

Using original archival records from registers of the “inmates” to medical reports and newspaper accounts, I discovered a rare look into the residents and life inside this Edwardian institution for the care of the elderly.

Again in 2021 the AGM, which traditionally features a meal, general meeting and keynote address, required a virtual meeting. The keynote address was presented by the Honourable Jeff Leal, former City Councillor, member of the Provincial Parliament and Minister of Agriculture and Small Business. In a wide-ranging reflection on his career in politics, the Hon. Jeff Leal highlighted some of the more challenging issues he dealt with, especially the fractious negotiations on the new NAFTA agreement. He also offered his thoughts on the current state of politics – prophetic as events were to show, as the increasingly partisan and misinformed state of political discourse undermined efforts to address pressing social and economic challenges our society faces.

Ken Brown, noted local historian, spoke about prominent businessman Robert Romaine for the May lecture. Best known for his work in producing the Romaine map of Peterborough – a standard reference work for anyone interested in Peterborough’s history – Romaine had a varied career as newspaper publisher, mechanical inventor, business leader in the gas works and brick industry, finishing his career as the Chief of the federally owned Bureau of Public Printing. Ken’s talk was a timely reminder that Peterborough figures often excelled in a variety of careers at the local as well as provincial and national level.

The fall lecture series commenced with a recorded guided tour of the Hutchison House herbal garden by Kelly McDowell, a registered Clinical Herbalist. Pointing out the various plants and their medicinal properties, Kelly presented members with a readily accessible and simple means to better health and well-being.

In October, James Conolly and Kate Dougherty from Trent University spoke about the archaeological dig at the entrance to the University’s Symons Campus as part of a mitigation strategy for a new pathway. Employing standard archaeological techniques to uncover and record features in the various stratigraphic layers, combined with historical research, they explained the evolution of this particular landscape. The diversity of artifacts discovered during the dig also helped to document the site, its occupants and the activities that took place here.

The final lecture for the year was a presentation by Janette Higgins on her father, Jim Higgins, who fought in Spain during the civil war against the Fascist forces. Drawing on his memoirs, which Janette recently published as a book, she spoke about her father’s developing social activism during the Depression years and his decision to join some 1700 Canadians who fought in Spain. Her talk was a timely reminder that Canadians have a history of fighting in foreign conflicts when principles of justice, humanity and civil rights are at stake. With the evolving crisis in Ukraine and Canada’s support for the resistance to Russian military aggression, it is a reminder of our nation’s support for the goals of the United Nations.

The Program Committee continues to seek out relevant speakers and topics that bring a diversity of backgrounds, expertise and approaches of interest to our membership. As Chair, I welcome suggestions for both topics and speakers. My thanks to President Dale Standen for his continued support, especially with the delivery of the monthly lectures virtually.

Dennis Carter-Edwards,
Chair, Program Committee

Trustees Report

In view of the continuing pandemic restrictions the Trustees conducted their meetings by Zoom in 2021, with additional email consultations. There were two meetings, on 25 June and 21 October.

As reported last year, in 2020 the Board of Directors struck a Trust Review Committee to explore alternate ways of managing and investing the Hutchison House Trust Funds in view of regulatory changes governing charitable trusts, and to improve the Funds' performance. The members of the Committee were Dale Standen (Chair), Peter Darling and Lou MacClellan. At the meeting of 25 June Dale Standen reported to the Trustees on research and consultations, including with Lockington Lawless LLF on the legalities of changing current Trust arrangements. The Trustees, on the basis of an encouraging report, approved the continued pursuit of changes to the Trust Deed.

At its meeting of 21 October, the Trustees approved the Review Committee's recommendation to negotiate the transfer and management of the Hutchison House Endowed Fund and a portion of the Hutchison House Maintenance Fund to the Community Foundation of Greater Peterborough, as being in the best interests of Hutchison House Museum. At its meeting of 9 November, the Board of Directors approved the recommendation of the Trustees. The approval will be presented for ratification by the membership at the AGM in April 2022.

Following current policy, the Trustees reinvested the principal of two GICs that matured in 2021, both for five years: one of \$40,000 in July at 2.3% and the other of \$7,000 in October at 2.14%.

Peter Darling
Chair of the Trustees

Membership Report

Membership for 2021 in the Peterborough Historical Society was 123.

- 17 lifetime members (no longer an option)
- 101 individual and family members
- 4 institutional members

Membership renewal letters are sent out at the end of September, with reminders in the *Bulletin* in October and November. In December personal reminders are sent, again at the end of January and again in February.

We understand how easy it is to set aside renewal reminders and then forget to renew. The new PHS website launched last November now allows members to renew online and we hope that this will make renewing easier. Nevertheless, we will continue to follow up with reminders when necessary.

Publications Committee Report

This year the Publications Committee produced Occasional Paper # 41 in March. Its author Don Willcock wrote “Peterborough Remembers Its Fallen: The City and County Citizens’ War Memorial” as a record and tribute to the statues commissioned by the city and county, and created by Walter Seymour Allward in the 1920s. The Paper is distributed to all PHS members as part of their membership. For 41 consecutive years the PHS has published quality essays on various aspects of local history; Don’s paper continues that valuable tradition. Elwood Jones did the spadework in preparing the paper for publication.

The Publications Committee has been undergoing some changes in membership this year. Dale Standen stepped down to see to other PHS needs and Jean Cole who was our longest-serving member has retired. Continuing members are Michael Peterman (Chair), Elwood Jones and Bill Corbett. Jodi Aoki is joining the team this year. Another member is being sought.

Michael Peterman, Chair

Library and Archives

There is little to report on the Archives for 2021. The office and reading room were closed during much of the pandemic and for safety reasons access was otherwise limited.

The Library benefited greatly from the work of Erin Murphy, a student in the Library Services Program at Centennial College, who for her course placement undertook the creation of a digital database for the library collection. Working on site in a vacant building and at home on a computer, Erin entered almost 600 titles in a database, currently accessible only by staff, that is easily searchable and user-friendly.

The Library also received a large, generous donation of books from a long-time volunteer and supporter, Bill VanNest. Half will be added to the library collection and the other half will be sold in the bookshop’s used book section.

Heritage Awards Report

As anticipated, COVID-19 continued to play havoc with arts, culture and heritage in 2021. In our annual report last year on Heritage Awards for 2019 we explained that because the pandemic disruptions in 2020 interrupted the nomination process for the awards, we extended the call for nominations in the fall. Effectively, this adjustment in schedule has compressed three years of awards into two, 2019-2020 (results announced in May 2021 and included in the PHS Annual Report presented to the AGM in June 2021), and 2020-2021 (results to be announced this spring, 2022).

For this Annual Report, then, there are no further awards to be announced. Next year we plan to return to the regular schedule for Heritage Awards.

High School History Awards

Since the 1990s, PHS has been presenting High School students with the highest mark in History a certificate and a gift.

Sadly today, not all schools offer History courses, and some only every other year. Winners in 2021 are:

Erin Davis - Adam Scott Collegiate
Saoirse Aherne - Kenner Collegiate
William Conrad - Crestwood Secondary School
Samuel Brzorowski - St. Peter Secondary School
Chloe Cooper - Norwood District High School

Linda Lumsden, Coordinator

PHS Bulletin Report

In 2021, Peterborough Historical Society published ten issues of the *Bulletin*. Produced by Marilyn MacNaughton and edited by Jodi Aoki, the *Bulletin* reached the membership mostly through email, with a few copies sent out in print format. The issues included insightful President's reports, always-inspiring overviews of the monthly goings-on at Hutchison House Museum and notices of history-related community events. Included, too, were write-ups of the ongoing monthly virtual [PHS Talks](#) instituted in 2020 in response to the pandemic.

The *Bulletin* column, "Voices from Peterborough's Past", was published in most issues; articles of local historical interest were submitted by various contributors:

- February 2021: "The Greatest Exhibition Ever Brought to Canada" / Ken Brown
- March 2021: "Cottage Season is not Far Away!" / Ken Brown
- April 2021: "The Great Corner Gas Controversy" / Robert Ganton Clarke
- June 2021: "On the Intricacies of Surveying the Nation" / Jodi Aoki
- September 2021: "An Historic Historical Trip on the Maggie" / Don Willcock
- October 2021: "Land for Sale on the Outskirts: McDonnell and Monaghan, 1912" / Robert Ganton Clarke
- November 2021: "Ackerman, Benjamin Franklin" / Don Willcock
- December 2021: "Richard Birdsall Rogers: A Man of Many Parts" / Dennis Carter-Edwards

Jodi Aoki, Editor

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