



# PETERBOROUGH

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY | EST. 1897

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Peterborough Historical  
Society

Monthly Meetings  
at 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, 17 January  
Speaker Bruce Gravel  
Tuesday, 21 February  
Speaker Don Barry  
Tuesday, 21 March  
Speaker Armand LaBarge

Hutchison House  
Museum

Heritage Luncheons  
Wednesday, 7 December  
12 noon or 1:00 p.m. sitting

Fireside Stories  
Charles Dickens  
*A Christmas Carol*  
the 1939 Campbell Soup  
radio show  
Keeping Room by firelight  
Sunday, 11 December  
2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Victorian Christmas for kids  
Saturday, 17 December

Hogmanay Meal-to-go  
pre-order 28 December

Issue 491

Nogjiwanong — Peterborough

December 2022

### PETERBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY WINTER/SPRING SPEAKER SCHEDULE

**NOTE:** The format of PHS speaker meetings in the new year, whether on Zoom or in person, will be announced in the publicity for each meeting. The location of in-person meetings also will be included in the notice. The schedule remains the **third Tuesday of the month: January, February, March, and May** at 7:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, 17 January: Bruce Gravel**, “100 Years of Rotary in Peterborough.”

**Tuesday, 21 February: Don Barry**, “The History of Lacrosse in Peterborough.”

**Tuesday, 21 March: Armand Labarge**, “Police Response to First Nation Occupations and Protests: An Ontario Perspective.”

**Tuesday, 18 April: Peterborough Historical Society AGM**, guest speaker TBA

**Tuesday, 16 May:** A panel discussion on **urban heritage preservation**, participants TBA

“Ways To Give”

<https://phs-hutchisonhouse.ca/support/donate/>

Peterborough Historical Society and Hutchison House Museum, like all heritage organizations, depend upon donations to meet operating expenses in providing all their programs and events. Thank you for your generous support!

The Peterborough Historical Society acknowledges with thanks our partners and supporters



Community  
Foundation  
of Greater Peterborough



## PHS Previous Month's Meeting

### "Playing with Fire: The 1918 Explosion at the British Chemical Company, Trenton"

One of the pleasures of attending the monthly lectures of the PHS is the opportunity to learn something new. This was certainly the case for the November meeting when Sean Scally, a documentary filmmaker, presented his story of the Trenton Explosion. The film *Playing with Fire* told the story of explosions that rocked the British Chemical Company's plant in Trenton on Thanksgiving weekend in 1918. The plant had been built in Canada at the instigation of the Imperial Munitions Board by the British Chemical Company to ensure a steady supply of ammunition for the war effort. Employing some 3,000 workers, the operation involved mixing highly toxic and dangerous materials – acids, oleum, gun cotton and nitrate to produce the propellant for the millions of shells fired at the Front.

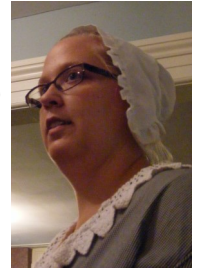
With only a skeleton crew working on the Thanksgiving weekend, an error in mixing the components accelerated the temperature, and fire broke out that threatened to engulf the whole plant. Desperate efforts to put out the fire were fruitless, and only the heroic action of three staff to move box cars loaded with TNT prevented a graver outcome. A series of eight massive explosions shook the town and sent residents scrambling to flee the potential inferno. By morning the plant was in ruins, and damage to buildings in town was extensive. Fortunately, no lives were lost, and a catastrophe was averted. The story is not without its intrigue and whiff of conspiracy. With the war ending and the British government deeply in debt, the plant and its stockpile of explosives were a liability. Barclay's Bank quickly paid the insurance to the amount of \$4,000,000. Mr. Scally hinted at the possibility of sabotage by a mysterious Dr. Miller, who appeared within the records for the plant that weekend. Still, there was insufficient material to confirm his suspicions. Mr. Scally acknowledges the work of local author John Milady whose book on the explosion inspired his film.

Dennis Carter-Edwards



## Hutchison House Museum Report

Erin Panepinto



“May your troubles be less and your blessings be more, and nothing but happiness come through your door. A wee message to say: Happy Hogmanay. Lang May Yer Lum Reek.”

-Traditional Hogmanay blessing

As the snow begins to fall here in Peterborough, thoughts turn to the upcoming holiday season. A busy November turns into an energetic December with four popular forthcoming events.

December begins with our last Heritage Luncheon of the year on Wednesday, December 7th, at 1 pm. Reservations are still available.

Mark your calendars for Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* in the Keeping Room by firelight on Sunday, December 11th, from 2-4 pm. We will be listening to a recording of the 1939 Campbell Soup radio show presented by Orson Welles and starring Lionel Barrymore as Ebenezer Scrooge. A choice of dessert, tea and coffee will be served. The cost for the event is \$15.00 per person prepaid. Seating is limited. To book tickets, please call the museum office.

Enjoy a seasonal tour of the museum decorated for the Christmas season. Learn how the Hutchison family would have celebrated this time of year as part of our annual Victorian Christmas for kids on Saturday, December 17th. Children can make a holiday craft, enjoy festive treats, and participate in activities throughout the museum. Masks are required while touring the museum, and high-touch surfaces are cleaned between groups. Admission is \$5 per person, and children 5 years of age and under are free. This will be a timed entry for this event so register in advance to ensure your spot.

Once again, due to a variety of factors, Hogmanay will be a take-home meal with a similar menu to what is served in person on New Year's Day. You **must** pre-order your meals by December 28th, 2022. Meals will be available for curbside pick-up between 12 and 2 pm on January 1st, 2023. Meals are \$20 and include a Scotch egg, tatters and neeps, oatcakes, cheese, and samplings of potted salmon, shortbread, and cloutie dumpling. Haggis is also available for an extra \$5. For more information or to order a Hogmanay meal, please get in touch with the museum at 705-743-9710 or email [info@hutchisonhouse.ca](mailto:info@hutchisonhouse.ca).

The museum will be closed from Friday, December 23rd, to Tuesday, December 27th, for the holidays. The museum will also be closed for the month of January. Staff and volunteers will use that time for some much-needed building maintenance. Staff will still be onsite to answer any inquiries by phone or email.



Hutchison House Museum  
Heritage Luncheon  
November 2, 2022





**PETERBOROUGH  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

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Museum**

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**Hutchison House Museum  
Haunted Halloween  
October 29, 2022**



Spooky Cobwebs



Fortune Telling with Catharine



Craft Time with Rachel