



PETERBOROUGH  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
NOGOJIWANONG EST. 1897

## Annual Report 2024

Prepared for the Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, April 15th, 2025  
at 6:30 PM, Lions Community Centre, Ashburnham

### **Peterborough Historical Society Board Executive:**

<b>President:</b>	James Forrester (January-April) Don Willcock (April-Present)
<b>Vice-President:</b>	Don Willcock (January-April) Amber Johnson (April-October)
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Paul Lumsden
<b>Secretary:</b>	Susan Mathews (January-October)
<b>Bulletin Chair:</b>	Ian Ellis (January-April) Marilyn MacNaughton (April-Present)
<b>Membership Chair:</b>	Amber Johnson (January-October)
<b>PACAC Representative:</b>	Susan Matthews (January-October)
<b>Members at Large:</b>	Michael Peterman, Linda Chandler (HHMC Chair) David Wesley (April-Present)

### **Trust Funds Trustees:**

<b>Chairperson:</b>	Peter Darling
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Marilyn MacNaughton
<b>Members at Large:</b>	Dennis Carter-Edwards, Doug Lavery

### **Hutchison House Management Committee:**

<b>Chair:</b>	Linda Chandler
<b>Property:</b>	Don Willcock
<b>Friends:</b>	Michael Peterman
<b>Financial:</b>	Paul Lumsden
<b>Acquisitions:</b>	Loretta Terry
<b>Gardens:</b>	Diane Card
<b>Members at large:</b>	Bill Corbett, Susan Matthews (January-October)
<b>Recording Secretary:</b>	Hailey Lansley

### **Staff Members:**

<b>Administrator/Curator:</b>	Erin Panepinto
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**Museum Assistant:** Hailey Lansley

**Summer Staff:**

**Scottish Tea Coordinator:** Zaynah Godin-Lusier

**Museum Programming Assistant:** Caroline Priddle

### **President's Report**

While the COVID-19 pandemic may have been declared “over”, its aftermath is still problematic. Hutchison House and the Peterborough Historical Society faced some difficulties in 2024 – a drop in volunteers organizing and assisting with programming and fundraising events, a lack of bus groups booking teas and tours, shrinking memberships, etc. – both are soldiering on thanks to the resilient House staff and volunteers and to the dedicated PHS Board members. We are not alone, however, in the local, provincial, national, and international heritage/museum communities; those colleagues are very willing to share ideas, solutions, and support with us when asked – as are we.

The main issue with PHS at this time is a lack of growth in our membership. I ask current members to encourage friends, family, colleagues, and anyone else they may know who might be interested to join the PHS. A strong membership will ensure the future existence of the Society – and Hutchison House Museum.

2024 saw the introduction of a couple of new fundraising events for the PHS, which we hope will prove to be ongoing successes. The Board is brainstorming some more ideas, so keep an eye out for notices. Anyone who has a PHS fundraising idea that they wish to propose, please contact myself, any Board member, or Hutchison House staff (who will pass it along to the Board).

I wish to thank my current PHS Board members – Linda Chandler, Paul Lumsden, Dave Wesley, Marilyn McNaughton, and Michael Peterman – for their work and support of the PHS and Hutchison. Also, thanks to Hutchison House Curator Erin Panepinto and

Assistant Curator/PHS Staff Hailey Lansley for their hard work on behalf of both the site and the organization. Lastly, thanks to retired PHS Board members Susan Matthews, Amber Johnson, and Debbie Johnson for their efforts on behalf of the Society.

Maintaining a heritage organization and a historic building that is nearly 190 years old are not easy tasks in these troubled times is not easy, but I have confidence that both can be done – as long as they have active and growing participation from supporters, governments, and the Peterborough community at large. Let's make that happen!

Donald Willcock

Peterborough Historical Society President

### **Financial Report**

The Peterborough Historical Society is the owner of the historically-designated, 190-year-old limestone house and operates the Museum as a Committee of the Board of Directors.

For 2024 the Society produced a close-to-breakeven financial result mainly due to member donations/fees and revenue produced by volunteers at its recently introduced "Pairings" events.

Please see the 2024 UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS completed by Gauvreau Associates.

Paul Lumsden

Treasurer

### **Program Committee Report**

#### **January 2024**

"Rehabilitating Grey Owl". Over 70 people turned out for filmmaker Peter Blow's presentation about Grey Owl - very timely, given the current focus on cultural appropriation. Recognizing Grey Owl's 'before his time' concern for environmental protection, an Indigenous community in Temagami is adopting Grey Owl into their

family, despite his English origins. Below are quotes from Arthur's meeting coverage by Amelia Takacs. "Blow's presentation, which spanned just over two hours, included his film preview and a talk filled with investigations of cultural appropriation, nature conservation, and the lasting impression of the work conducted by Grey Owl. "An evening filled with anecdotes and amusing commentary from Peter Blow, this Peterborough Historical Society event appeared highly successful. An engaging and informative presentation, the turnout saw the Lions Club Center auditorium filled with a captivated audience."

## **February 2024**

"Popular Music in Peterborough in the 1950s and early 60s" Geoff Hewitson gave a colourful and knowledgeable presentation about the history of rock 'n roll in the Peterborough area. Flanked by early posters and photos, Geoff traced the origins of rock here from the big band era, which spawned the musicians to the influence of Elvis and rock-a-billy, to the 60s and 70s. Geoff knows more than any other individual about the names of the early bands, their constantly shuffling members (some of whom were in the audience) as they formed, reformed and re-branded, usually wearing white shirts, bow-ties, plaid jackets and well Brylcreamed hair. Geoff framed his talk with references to what Peterborough was like at the time - the venues the musicians played in and the equipment and instruments they used. He also pinned local rock's evolution to trends in North America and the UK, from the crooning Everly Bros. to the Beatles, Vietnam War era protests and beyond - and how many of those big-name stars - Buddy Holly, The Band and others performed here.

## **March 2024**

"Early Folk Ballads" Dr. Al Kirby is the foremost expert in the work of Edith Fowke, a musicologist and social activist who, from the 1930s to the 1970s, dedicated herself to collecting and arranging recordings of the early folk music brought here by 19th immigrants, mostly Irish, Scottish and English. Al follows her lead in claiming the Peterborough area has a music history and legacy as unique and lively as that of Cape Breton or the Ottawa Valley - even though it's more appreciated and studied in the U.S.

than here at home. Al talked about how the working class and agrarian music of the British Isles found its way to Canada and was adapted and transformed to reflect the experiences of early settlers, navvies and loggers, particularly those in this area. Fowke, too, recognized this, and her endeavours caught the attention of musicologists and musicians south of the border. Famous musicologist Charles Louis Seeger Jr, the father of folk legend Pete and musicologist Peggy, took a special interest in her work, as did Folkways, the esteemed New York folk song label.

Al detailed how Fowke, aided by Peggy Seeger, set up a 'pop-up' recording studio in P. G. Towns' General Store in Douro, where they recorded songs performed and remembered by the families of those early settlers, families with names like Leahy, Heffernan and others. All the material was sent back to the U.S. (no interest here at the time). To this day, the largest and most comprehensive collection of materials, reminiscences, and recordings of Peterborough's music history resides not here but in the Smithsonian in Washington. Al delighted Tuesday's audience with his banjo - singing several of those early Peterborough folk songs.

### **April 2024 AGM**

"Last Steps to Freedom: The Evolution of Canadian Racism". After the usual formal business was concluded at the Peterborough Historical Society Annual General Meeting on April 16th, those in attendance were treated to an engaging and informative talk by John Boyko about the historical relationship between Ukraine and Canada and the reception Ukrainian immigrants received here when they arrived. Boyko, an author, teacher, historian and Selwyn councillor, reminded us that the current invasion of Ukraine by Russia is only the latest chapter in a long story of Ukraine being invaded and controlled by outsiders.

The resulting oppression and famines drove many Ukrainians to leave for a better life in other parts of the world, certainly here in Canada. However, when they arrived here, they were often looked down upon by the Canadian elite and referred to by some editorialists and politicians as little better than animals. Boyko said while not excusing

the terrible injustices done to Indigenous people by settlement, he was just concentrating on the Ukrainian experience.

### **May 2024**

“May is Museum Month: A look behind the scenes with Hutchison House Museum Curators” Gale Fewings, Stephanie Ford Forrester, and Erin Panepinto shared many stories, lessons learnt and artifact discoveries. All who attended the meeting laughed and shared their own stories.

### **September 2024**

The Fall lecture series for the Peterborough Historical Society began with a moving presentation by Ken Doherty, former Director of the Peterborough Museum and later Director of Community Services before retiring. Titled, “It’s the Right Thing to Do”, Mr. Doherty described his role in the repatriation of the human remains that were found at what is known as the “Brock Street Burial.” In 1988 he was appointed Director of the Peterborough Museum and shortly after initiated discussions with representatives of Curve Lake on a process to repatriate the remains. It was a long process with many meetings but three years later Chief Mel Jacobs and Mayor Sylvia Sutherland signed a formal Repatriation Agreement. The remains were respectfully transferred to Curve Lake and reburied with traditional rituals. In June of that year, Chief Jacobs and Ken presented their story at the Canadian Museum Association’s Museums and First Peoples Conference. Not everyone in the Museum and Archaeological field was in support of the notation of returning objects, with one person declaring it would be the end of Pre-Contact archaeology. Ken described additional experiences of repatriation and joint exhibit development and the challenges and rewards for what he termed Doing the Right Thing. He concluded by offering challenges to the members of the Society to embrace Reconciliation, whether in large matters like returning aboriginal material when a First Nation is ready to curate it or calling out inappropriate remarks that disparage First Nations.

### **October 2024**

“The Oriental on Hunter Street” Prominent local lawyer Peter Lillico gave the presentation on the history of the Oriental Hotel, Peterborough's largest and most elegant hotel in the late 19th Century and the site of his Hunter St. law office in what remains of the original building. Peter, who grew up and went to school in Peterborough before obtaining his History degree from McMaster University, going on to law school and being called to the bar in 1979, noted the hotel opened in 1875 and was named The Oriental because of the fad for all things from the far East at the time.

The hotel thrived and competed with rival hotels for patrons - sending horse and buggies, then later Model T Ford cabs to the city's two train stations to persuade travellers to stay overnight. Eventually, a new hotel, which would eventually become The Empress (now Empress Gardens) served alcohol when the Oriental remained dry in a time of temperance and understandably drove the Oriental out of business. The western part of the hotel was demolished in the 1970s to make a parking lot for Bell Telephone building next door. For the second part of the presentation, Peter supplied an interesting and often humorous running commentary for a virtual tour of his office's third floor. Filmed by noted local filmmaker Peter Blow, it showed the audience the original wallpaper, door transoms, windows etc. which still survive the one-time hotel rooms above Hunter St.

## **November 2024**

“A Canadian Flyer in the Middle East Arthur Eyquem de Montaigne Jarvis ”

When John and Nicola Jennings met at Trent in the 1970s their shared interest in history led to looking at each other's family photos in the First World War era. To their complete surprise, they found they each had exactly the same copy of a photo taken in the Greek campaign of members of the Royal Flying Corps. John's father, and Nicola's grandfather were both in the photo.

In a fascinating November presentation in the Peterborough Historical Society Speakers Series, Nicola used documents and photos to illustrate details of their ancestors' personal war stories, and John used his perspective as a retired history professor to put



the story in context - why the war began, and the strategic importance of the Greek/Balkan/Turkish front, often overlooked in popular histories of the war. 18 November 2024.

## **Pairings**

The Peterborough Historical Society began a new series of exclusive evenings with local businesses and local bakeries, all held in the Keeping Room at Hutchison House Museum. This included a series of four pairings in April and one in October. Visitors learned about various exciting topics, such as local businesses, and sampled some of Peterborough's finest treats and sweets from local bakeries! Pairings was organized and run by Susan Matthews with help from her dedicated group of volunteers.

The first 'Pairing' was Cahill Furs and Black Honey Bakery on Wednesday, April 3rd. Guests were encouraged to bring their heirloom or vintage furs and learn how Cahill is changing the way you see your furs and how you can further the life of your items. Rob Cahill also shared the store's history and the fur industry's inner workings.

On Wednesday, April 10th, 2024 Restwell Upholstery paired with the Butterscotch Factory. Visitors learned about custom upholstery and the steps in the process, with a focus on antiques. They learned about the methods, tools, and supplies necessary for the craft and looked at some of the samples Restwell has to offer.

On Wednesday, April 17th, 2024 Basia Baklinski from The Conservation Clinic paired with Tragically Dipped Donuts. Visitors learned how to restore and conserve their old photos, paper items, pictures, drawings, etc. and how to preserve their family's documents. Visitors were invited to bring some of their family documents and see what Basia recommended.

On Wednesday, April 24th, 2024, Kelly McDowell, Master Gardener, from Peterborough Medicine Gardeners, paired with The Chocolate Rabbit. Kelly discussed plantings for the spring garden, plants that are native to the area, and some herbs that visitors may wish to include in their spring gardens. Kelly is responsible for the Medicine Garden at Hutchison House and was very knowledgeable about answering questions.

The last pairing of 2024 was on Wednesday, October 2nd, 2024 with Johnston's Greenhouse and The Chocolate Rabbit. Visitors learned how to properly prepare their gardens for winter with the experts from Johnston's Greenhouse.

David Wesley is the Programming Chair.

### **Trustees Report**

The trustees did not meet this year.

Marilyn MacNaughton

HH Trust Treasurer.

### **Membership Report**

Membership during 2023 for the Peterborough Historical Society was 117, a decrease from last year's 135.

- 19 lifetime members (no longer an option)
- 89 individual and family members
- 9 institutional members

Membership is for the calendar year, January to December, which provides a seasonal cycle for renewals. After receiving a notice to renew in September, many of us still forget and require a gentle reminder in the following month or so. The PHS website allows members to renew online which makes renewal easier.

Hailey Lansley

Membership Coordinator

### **Publications Committee Report**

The Publications Committee of the Peterborough Historical Society produced its 46th consecutive Occasional Paper this year. This year's paper is quite a path-breaker—Robert Ganton Clarke's "Moonlight, Music and Motion Pictures under the Pines: Jackson Park, 1905-08." PHS members received a copy of the paper as part of their annual dues. Occasional Paper 47 for 2025 will be Dennis Carter Edwards' "From Tap to Toilet: The Introduction of Water Works and Sewers to Peterborough".

Michael Peterman, Professor Emeritus, Trent University

Chair of Publications Committee

## **Heritage Awards Report**

Due to a variety of factors, there were no heritage awards handed out in 2024.

## **High School History Awards**

Every year PHS provides a certificate and prize to each secondary school to the graduating student who receives the highest mark in history. (Sadly today, not all secondary schools offer courses in history each year.)

This year's winners were:

**Adam Scott Collegiate Vocational Institute:** Sophia Prokopenko

**Crestwood Secondary School:** Kate Owen

**Kenner Collegiate Vocational Institute:** Lilly Fenton

**St. Peter Catholic Secondary School:** Alessia Colucci

**Thomas A. Stewart Secondary School:** Avery Larmer

**Norwood District High School:** Travis Stapleton

Hailey Lansley, Coordinator

## **PHS Bulletin Report**

The Peterborough Historical Society continued publishing its flagship Bulletin throughout 2024, publishing ten issues over the year. Marilyn MacNaughton produced the series, which was edited by Ian Ellis, until the fall when Donald Willcock took over as editor. The Bulletin continued to provide monthly reports on the PHS Talks series, a mainstay since 2020, the Hutchison House Museum Report written by Erin Panepinto, President's Reports, with occasional book reviews, Voices from Peterborough's Past, and local history vignettes.

For those unable to attend the monthly PHS Talks series, each Bulletin provided a wonderful summary of the previous month's meeting. The talks included:

- January: Rehabilitating Grey Owl by Peter Blow

- February: Popular Music in Peterborough in the 1950s and early 60s by Geoff Hewitson
- March: Early Folk Ballads by Dr. Al Kirby
- April: Last Steps to Freedom: The Evolution of Canadian Racism by John Boyko
- May: May is Museum Month: A look behind the scenes with Hutchison House Museum Curators Panel discussion moderated by Michael Peterman. Panelists Gale Fewings, Stephanie Ford Forrester, and Erin Panepinto.
- September: It's the Right Thing to Do by Ken Doherty
- October: "The Oriental on Hunter Street" by Peter Lillico
- November: A Canadian Flyer in the Middle East The First War Letters and Diaries of Arthur Eyquem de Montaigne Jarvis by John and Nicola Jennings

Thank you to all readers who continue to support PHS and the Bulletin. Because of you, the Bulletin has continued strongly into 2025.

#### 2024 Annual Report

Peterborough Historical Society

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