

ACO Matters

Architectural Conservancy of Ontario - Port Hope Branch

Newsletter

July 2008

From the President

ACO Port Hope has contributed much to the life of this municipality in the past few months. Congratulations and thanks to everyone involved. *Doors Open* was a tremendous success and the ACO picnic and tour at Wesleyville a wonderful follow up. Leadership for these events was provided by Mary Trevor and by the team of Kathryn McHolm and Blake Holton – both supported by good committees.

Speaking of committees, I have recently attended the meetings of all the ACO committees and am impressed with their ability and dedication. The last such meeting was that of the House Tour Committee. Why not consider volunteering as a house volunteer?

At the June 17th Port Hope Council meeting, the Port Hope Accessibility Awareness Committee awarded Anne and Mike Irwin and their tenant, Mad Monkey, a plaque to recognize the effort they made to make their store accessible. The Irwins gave credit to the ACO for its contribution to the project.

The rejuvenation of the south side of Walton Street is truly exciting. The new Furby's bookstore is outstanding. Full marks to the Edwards and Furby's Books!

On June 18th at Victoria Hall our own Peter Stokes gave a history of Victoria Hall from its inception, through its period of neglect and finally to its restoration. Gabrielle Blackstock, an archivist, gave a history of Cobourg and area. This joint presentation was presented by the Cobourg ACO, the Victoria Hall Volunteers and the Cobourg Historical Society.

Now I will bring up a note of concern. The town is selling off the old Hydro building at the foot of the main street at 5 Mill Street South. ACO's concern is that the property will be sold with no design criteria. Phil Carter, on behalf of the ACO,



wrote to the Municipality months ago with regard to this matter and as yet has not had the courtesy of a reply.

A second concern is the Municipality's desire to demolish the Pier buildings. A Pier Committee exists as a separate entity from the ACO. The Pier Committee and the ACO have asked for a thorough investigation of the state of the Pier buildings and the ACO has offered to fund such a study. Cameco has agreed to clean up the buildings whatever the outcome. Should you wish to be part of the Pier Committee please contact Mel Chapple at mc@eagle.ca or at 905 885 6125.

Hope you are enjoying the summer. See you at the picnic on August 14th.

Will Ryan

ACO Port Hope - Mark your calendar!

August 8th 8pm for our Jazz evening with Sam Murado in Wesleyville. Don't miss this one!

August 14th 5pm for the Annual BBQ at Charles Wickett's house, 350 Lakeshore Road.

Remember the ACO Annual House Tour on October 4th. Tickets are now available at \$25, including on line at "ACOPortHope.ca"

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The ACO was incorporated in 1933 for the preservation of the best examples of architecture in the province and for the protection of its places of natural beauty.

Doors Open Port Hope - a BIG Success!

Despite the unpredictable weather that day, *Doors Open Port Hope*



Strategists in the Chapel

welcomed over 700 visitors. The Port Hope Opera House and the Wesleyville buildings drew the most attention, but all sites had good traffic. Predicting the Opera House would be popular, we did the visitor count there. The final tally was 404 local and 264 from out of town — some as far away as Windsor and a few visitors from overseas. We took the initiative to have a sign-up sheet at the Opera House to gauge interest in the Hall being restored. Over 280 signatures were gathered, offering to get involved if the project ever went ahead, certainly a good indication of public support. Visitors to Wesleyville also expressed renewed interest in preserving those buildings and Kathryn McHolm is proceeding to form a Friends of Wesleyville group. We were pleased to have Trinity College open the doors to four of their buildings, recruiting their own students as guides. In all, we had over 75 friendly folk greeting visitors, guiding them through and answering questions at the various sites. St. Mark’s Church put on an excellent light lunch for only \$5 which many people enjoyed. There were many visitors to the Port Hope Town Hall. It was interesting to note that there is no publication about the building or the history of governance in Port Hope. Joan Tooke came to the rescue and provided the research and valuable information for the guides stationed there. Patsy



Reception Committee at the Town Hall ➔



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Beeson and Heather MacKinnon gave informative walking tours of the downtown Heritage District and many people took advantage of the tour.



Pioneer seen in a pioneer log cabin

Thanks to the Port Hope *Doors Open* Committee: Mary Trevor (chair), Colleen Bulger, Ken Burgin, Steve Leach, Andrea Patterson, and Sue West, plus the over 75 volunteers who graciously donated their time that day. We also wish to thank the building owners ...we could not have done this without your wonderful co-operation!

Kingston Bustrip, April 30th, 2008

The combined Cobourg and Port Hope ACO's annual bus trip took place on Wednesday, April 30th - the last day of the cheap rate, and as near as we could get to what we fondly regarded as more reliable weather.

In line with our policy to try to show participants buildings not normally open to the public, our first stop was at Rockwood House, a handsome Palladian villa about 5 kilometres west of downtown Kingston, once the summer home of the distinguished Sir Richard Cartwright, Minister of Trade and Commerce. It is now used by the Provincial Government for the Department of Municipal Affairs, who had very kindly given us permission to bring in our group. We were, however, somewhat horrified to find that in the main room we wanted to see, a large group was holding a conference call - but very affably invited us in nonetheless! After that we headed eastwards, through the attractive old village of Portsmouth, and then, once in Kingston, visited two more handsome private houses. One, the townhome of the aforementioned Cartwright, is now a doctor's home, and the other, a handsome B & B, had originally been a branch of the Bank of Montreal before becoming the Frontenac Men's Club, boasting its own bowling alley.

Terry Foord, B. Arch, OAA, MRAIC

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We then drove to lunch at the former Officers' Mess at Fort Henry, situated in rooms opening off the inside of the fort's drill



yard. The bus had to park outside the yard as the entrance was too low, requiring us to walk a short distance to the Mess. This was the moment at which the heavens opened, and down poured the rain, which turned to sleet, and then into hard snow pellets. To say we arrived in the mess in a great hurry is an understatement!

Lunch in the Mess at long tables was entertaining and noisy, the food tasty if hardly gourmet, but fun. We were served by young men dressed as 19th century soldiers, and lectured on the table manners becoming an officer.

After lunch most of us were dropped off for a tour of the Royal Military College, at the end of which the Commandant, General Tom Lawson, very kindly addressed us. Meantime, about 14 intrepid souls had been deposited in downtown Kingston for a Walking Tour. But again the heavens opened, and gale force winds and rain forced the walkers to take shelter in a hotel and the guide to depart for home. The bus arrived, picked up the walkers, returned to the RMC, picked up that group too, and off we went. En route to the 401 we ambled gently through the attractive village of Barriefield and were nearly at the Highway when we heard every tour organizers' nightmare words: "We're missing two people!" As it happened, they were two of the walkers - and they'd been left at the downtown hotel. Very luckily we found them quite easily, on the main street walking quietly in the direction of the RMC.

After that, it was plain sailing, and we served our travellers our usual wine and nibbles on the way home, with extra large servings to calm the shattered nerves of the two nearly left behind. Amazingly, the feedback we've received has been extremely positive, even from the abandonees! Perhaps there's something about shared adversity that sharpens enjoyment! We'll certainly make sure we never leave anyone behind again!

Patsy Beeson



THE GREAT PORT HOPE ARCHITECTURAL CHALLENGE

How observant are you?

Just how much do you notice our town? Do you really look at it and take in its handsome buildings and their details? Or do you walk around like so many of us, with your eyes on the sidewalk in a state of unawareness?

To get you looking at our buildings, we're starting a series on Architectural Features, and they'll be drawn from buildings easily found around Port Hope. In each issue of *ACOMatters* we'll provide an example of an architectural feature and give some background information on it. Then we challenge our readers to provide further examples they've noticed in town or the general area and if they have any additional interesting information on the subject we'd be delighted to receive that too. In the following issue, we'll list the best examples and most interesting information we've received from our readers, with their names, and provide a fresh architectural challenge.

We'll start off easily and by degrees get tougher. And soon you'll be looking at our buildings with a quizzical and, we hope, well-informed eye!

This time our feature is: 'cobblestone architecture'. The example is 40 Pine Street South. We suspect there are no houses entirely covered in cobblestones in Port Hope; only, like this one, partly covered.

This is a yellow brick house (described by the owner as 'clinker brick'), and the variegated cobbles are confined to the south and east walls which are more visible from the street. They cover the chimney breast, the pillar supports of the front verandah, the wall below the verandah, and the lower part of the south wall.

The 'cobblestone' technique could have originated in Norfolk, in eastern England, where pebbles have been used for building since Saxon times. Perhaps Norfolk stonemasons carried it over to the New World. At any rate, the skill re-appeared near Rochester, in upstate New York, between 1825-1860, just after masons had finished building the Erie Canal, and, we conjecture, unearthed many riverstones in the process. In fact, of the



South Side, 40 Pine Street South

approximately 1000 cobblestone structures in Western New York, Wisconsin and Canada, 90% are within a 75-mile radius of Rochester.

Paris, Ontario has 12 examples, the skill brought there in the 1830s by a Levi Boughton, a native of Albany, N.Y., who learned his trade in Rochester before moving to Paris.

Cobblestones were rounded and ground fine by glaciers during the ice age and were found along the shores of Lake Ontario, in riverbeds, or in fields. The size of the stones is defined as follows: a pebble is a stone that can be held between two fingers, a cobblestone fits neatly in one hand, and a boulder requires two hands. The containing walls of the Ganaraska River here in Port Hope are made of randomly selected small boulders of different colours that perhaps came from the river bed. But for the best work, the stones are gathered and sorted by size and hue, a design is created, and the stones set into a limestone mortar laid as a veneer over a weight-bearing rubble wall of rows of rough uncut rocks.

Patsy Beeson



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SPEAKING OF ROCKS AND CHAPELS...

The chapel is being improved by some serious parging work on the foundation rocks and boulders. The mortar has been worn and washed away allowing moisture into the basement of the chapel. The formation of the rocks and stones is interesting in its pattern of larger rocks below, building to quite small above. Here is a photo showing the work being done on the chapel



foundations. To the left is the cleaned area of foundation awaiting the parging which can be seen completed on the right hand side of the photo.

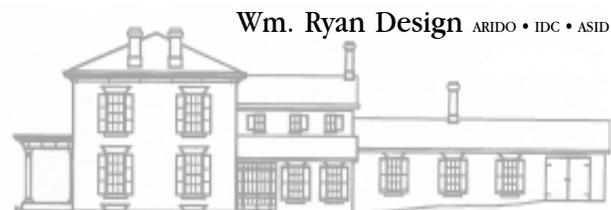
Some very tedious but satisfying work has also been in process for some little while on the maple leaved wire fencing at the South end of the cemetery. Patient Ed Pamerter is the major participant with some worthy helpers. This is being done to replace and mend damaged wire fencing with the original cast iron maple

Special Notice

The ACO has been offered a metal spiral staircase - 12 feet high! Normally we would take similar objects to the ACO auction, next April. However, we thought it should be offered to members through the Newsletter. If you have any interest call Ed at 905 885 2737



leaves and a heavy duty wire which held the decorative pieces. Not a simple job. After the broken wires are mended and the maple leaves replaced in position the whole structure is stretched make it both more attractive and stronger. It is then painted. Ed could do with more help if you have time?



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An Evening of Jazz at the Historic Wesleyville Church

Back on June 1st of this year, fifty enthusiastic people got together to enjoy a relaxing pot luck barbeque on the sunny lawns of historic Wesleyville United Church. Hosted by the Education Committee of the Port Hope A.C.O., the purpose of the get-together was much more than social. Committee members



Kathryn McHolm, Blake Holton, Sue Stickle, Paul Bridges, Roz Farber and Mary Jane Preston saw this event as a perfect opportunity to re-aquaint guests with this very special place. After an incredible lunch of salads, casseroles and barbecued

foot longs, guests were treated to a guided tour of the church, school house and cemetery. For many it was a repeat visit but for several it was a first time experience of a place oozing with local history. One guest described the churchyard as an important page from our past. Cemetery stones in the Wesleyville cemetery bring the history of original local settlers to life, depicting the trials and tribulations they were met with in their quest to create a thriving community out of nothing but wilderness.



Today the Wesleyville church is one of a dwindling number of 19th century church buildings still intact but time and the elements are certainly taking their toll. The Education Committee, inspired by the Wesleyville Study of several years ago, is taking the initiative in finding new uses for this very important piece of local architecture. Key to its re-birth is the restoration of the church's interior ceiling. A water leak in the

past undermined the lathe and plaster on the north east corner of the ceiling. The damage must be repaired before future plans for the building can move forward and that takes money !!!!!



Fear not for behold we have the "Friends of Wesleyville Village" who shall help us in performing a miracle! A jazz miracle. Live on the lawns of the charming Wesleyville

Church 'it's the jazz renditions of the San Murata Trio, Friday August 8th from 8 p.m. until the wee hours. Tickets are twenty dollars per person and include an inspired selection of assorted wines and cheeses. Bring your lawn chair and if you like, your favourite wine glass, then settle in for an evening under the stars with one of Northumberland's most celebrated musical talents. Proceeds go to the restoration of the Wesleyville church ceiling. How could donating to a wonderful cause be any more tasteful ?

Tickets are available on a cash/ cheque only basis at Holton Flowers, 62 Walton Street, Acanthus Interiors, 25 John Street or by calling 905-885-7439. Tickets are limited so avoid disappointment by reserving your tickets today. With limited on-site parking and as a treat to the environment, car pooling to the event with a neighbour or friend is an inspired option.

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Consider the Fate of Central Pier Buildings

It's time the old buildings on Port Hope's Central Pier received their due. Too many of these early-1900s lakefront factories and office buildings have outlived their usefulness, but a newly formed citizens' committee thinks they deserve a second chance. The Pier Group hopes to convince Council that the venerable old structures can be rehabilitated and put to good use.

Currently, the town is debating how best to put Port Hope's waterfront to future use. With talk of a marina, a lakeside



trail and acres of green space, the plan is looking pretty good. The rehabilitation of the Central Pier will give residents better access to the lake and much-needed parkland. The one hitch is the fate of three industrial buildings. Council's assumption is that the site should be cleared and the buildings demolished. The Pier Group suggests there are plenty of good reasons to rethink this.

The Central Pier is a good example of what urban theorists call a "brownfield site," places that were once the hub of industry but now lie abandoned their future uncertain. Many brownfield sites have been shining examples of "green" rehabilitation - old buildings recycled thoughtfully. Toronto's Distillery District is a 19th century industrial site that has been rehabilitated into a major tourist draw with its buildings intact. The old cutlery-box factory in Newcastle and the Weave Shed Buildings in Cornwall are former industrial sites now put to imaginative new uses.

Unlike some other brownfield sites, the Central Pier has an ace up its sleeve. In fact, it has two. Not only does it lie on the waterfront, but it also boasts some great buildings that appear to be in reasonable condition. They are amazing structures - huge, cavernous warehouses flooded with sunlight all day. Think of the possibilities: a new location for the farmer's market, an events centre, a sports facility, a new location for the Firefighter's Museum,

a conference site... all within a newly landscaped park setting. It's exciting to think of the potential. That's why the Pier Group hopes Council will think twice before declaring that the buildings have to come down.

There may be a good reason to favour demolition, but Council has not revealed what this is. For now, the Pier Group assumes the decision was made in haste and that as the public becomes better aware of the possibilities, Council will change its mind. The Pier Group urges everyone in the ACO to take notice.

The ACO Board has provided working funds for the committee. Take a drive down to the harbour and look around. Imagine how the Central Pier could look with its buildings rehabilitated and put to new use within Port Hope's new park system.

We, the Pier Committee, urge ACO members to support the cause and participate in the debate.

Tom Cruickshank

STUNNING LOCATION FOR THE ANNUAL BBQ

This year Charles Wickett is opening the garden of his elegant 1860s house at 350 Lakeshore Road for us on Wednesday August 14th for the ACO annual BBQ. This house, known to some of you as the Brand Farmhouse, can be seen in all its splendour on pages 130-133 of Tom Cruickshank's *Port Hope: A Treasury of Early Homes*. How lucky we are!

We have hamburgers ("veg and non-veg", as my Indian driver used to say, although he wasn't always talking about food), salads, corn and goodies on the menu. And there will, of course, be a bar serving wine, beer, and soft drinks. Apart from the bar, for which we ask a donation, the BBQ is free to all members and lovingly catered by the Board.

Last year we asked that you let us know if you were planning to attend. We had 39 responses and 95 people showed up. Very understandable. Who wants to be tied to a schedule in the short Canadian summer? This year we aren't asking for numbers. We are catering for 100 - so, please come! And if we have more than 100, we shall cope.

A special welcome to all our new members. The weather will be glorious (that's a promise). The party starts at 5.00 p.m. and will run till dusk. Bring a lawn chair and enjoy!

Jackie Tinson

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name(s): _____

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Annual memberships in the ACO, Port Hope Branch are due each January 1st. Membership cut-off is July each year. The Port Hope branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario is financed through membership fees and voluntary contributions, which are tax deductible. Additional funds are raised through the Annual House Tour, Biennial Garden Tour, Antique & Artifacts Auction and other fund raising initiatives. Educational programmes including bus/walking tours of Port Hope and other learning forums are part of our yearly program. Each member is invited to participate in branch and provincial activities. Membership also includes a subscription to ACORN, the provincial publication, and to ACO MATTERS, our Port Hope publication. Please send your cheque to:

- ⊗ Individual membership: \$30.00
- ⊗ Family membership: \$35.00
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