

Newsletter

Spring 2015
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Cobourg Museum Foundation

Sifton-Cook Heritage Centre draws over 6,500 visitors during first three seasons.

With its policy of displaying new exhibits every year, the 2014 season saw the Heritage Centre present exhibits and artifacts related to the First World War and local participation. From the brutality depicted by a reconstructed machine gun nest to the poignancy of the pennants families hung in their windows to tell how many were serving and how many had been killed, the results were widely appreciated according to entries in the guest book. 14 volunteers created the exhibits. George Parker continued to expand and improve the 200 foot long operating model railroad, which tells the story of the ill-fated Cobourg to Peterborough railway, so typical of similar enterprises

Over the 76 days the Centre was open 15 individuals, including secondary school students, acted as guides; The Happy Gang Fiddlers staged 12 Sunday concerts; several tour busses as well as groups from seniors homes were welcomed. Two heritage panels were installed at the Via Rail station and relations were established with nine heritage centres from Toronto to Peterborough.

Special May 17th event celebrates opening of our fourth season!

At 2:00 pm on Sunday, May 17th of our opening weekend, George Parker will provide an update on his research into the history of the Cobourg to Peterborough Railway. George will present new and compelling evidence as to why the Rice Lake Bridge failed. The result was a financial catastrophe for Cobourg whose citizens lost 80% of their investment and their belief in a bright future. Why was the best reporting only found in the Port Hope newspaper?

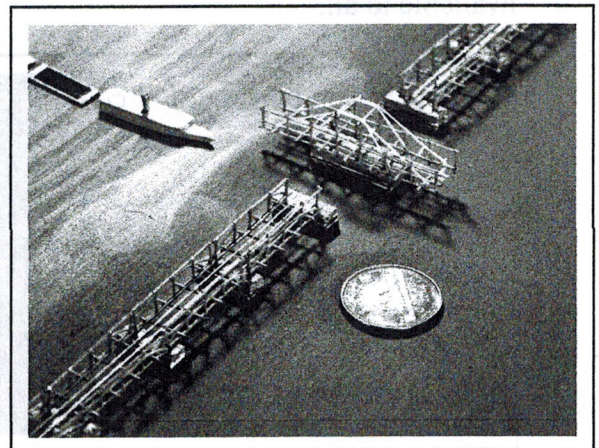
Titled “**Why Did It Fail?**” and using drawings and a new 16 foot long model of the 2.6 mile Rice Lake wooden bridge, George will explain why this ambitious project was effectively doomed from the start. Was it bad engineering? faulty construction? or poor planning? Did the optimism about the future of Cobourg, as expressed by the construction of Victoria Hall in the same decade, over come reason? Was this project with it’s decision to cross Rice Lake, just too much for a town of 5,500 souls to take on?

14th Annual General Meeting April 9th, Citizen’s Forum, Victoria Hall

6:30 pm doors open ... 7:00 pm AGM business
... 7:45 Chris Robins will present
“Bringing Back the Brew, Old and New”
a history of local brewing, and
introduce two new local brewery owners.

All are welcome! Please join us!

Memberships may be renewed at the meeting.



SCHC opens Saturday May 16th with new exhibits, expanded model railway.

As in the past the SCHC will open its fourth annual 76 day long season on Saturday of the Victoria Day weekend, and close on Monday of the Thanksgiving Day weekend. As always there is no charge for admission or special events ... while donations are always welcome!

Hours and days of operation vary over the summer. For information call the SCHC at 905-373-7222 or visit www.cobourgmuseum.ca.

CMF Board looks to the future with new planning and policies


The SCHC is the first project of the Cobourg Museum Foundation. At present the CMF raises funds to operate the Centre, sets the policy and budgets the Centre must follow, oversees its operation and, when appropriate, speaks publically for the Centre. The CMF Board is working to refine its governance structure so that in the future, should the opportunity arise, the CMF will be in a position to take on other heritage related projects. The CMF, with its out-reach programme and its ability to present new exhibits each year describing different episodes in our unique history, is the only heritage-focused not-for-profit organization of its kind in the area.

With three years of experience in operating the Heritage Centre the Foundation is now working to refine an Operation and Development Plan (ODP) that will cover the next four years in detail and the years beyond that in general terms. The plan is a guide that helps set objectives to be achieved in an orderly manner, and can be revised at any time by the Board.

While annual fund raising has been increasing thanks to more volunteers being involved, annual income still barely covers annual expenses. Items in the draft ODP plan identify 24 separate projects from limestone wall repairs, to a new notice board at the Heritage Centre entrance, to the development of the Exhibit Hall loft into a permanent exhibit space. The plan includes the creation of a reserve fund that will finance such future expenses as repairs to the heavily used cottage and replacement of the two cedar shingle roofs. In early 2015 the CMF appealed to Town Council for an annual grant of \$10,000 over the next four years.

Text of SCHC 2015 exhibits now available in French

Starting with the 2015 exhibit season, the text of the exhibits will be available to those who are more conversant in French. The need for this is a result of our experience with French speaking visitors over the last two years, both from Quebec and France, who wanted to learn about our history. Two French speaking members of our community have volunteered their services. The translation will be printed on standard paper, keyed by number to each display panel and made available to all.

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Industry and Commerce the focus of Heritage Centre 2015 exhibits

While commerce has always been a part of human activity, the industrialization of labour and production which began in earnest in the West in the early 1800s, was something new to human experience. Our early history was often influence by events taking place elsewhere. War, revolution, famine, and in this case the development of technologies, all had a direct influence on our growing economy as early settlement spread from east to west along the north shore of Lake Ontario.

At first villages were self-sufficient with small farms and cottage-based manufacturing being the basic means of production. Then, an increase in agricultural efficiency combined with the power of the steam engine, and everything changed. New circumstances required large investments of capital and production became controlled by the few while the many sought employment away from the village or land. The history of our area is a text-book example of this kind of change.

With 14 individuals working the exhibits, and with so much to choose from in the telling of our story, each has followed their individual interest. In some cases a particular focus has been dropped because of a lack of historical information. As a result exhibits will range from the story of our local agriculture to the manufacturing of food; from light to heavy industry; and to the development of the banks.

Full size replica of a Crossen Ore Car nearing completion

At the March 24th meeting of the Cobourg and District Historical Society, CMF Board member Ken Willcocks presented an update on his initiative to recreate an ore car built by the Crossen Car Company of Cobourg during the last half of the 19th century. Over a 50 year period Crossen produced more than 18,000 railway cars including street cars for Toronto. Crossen's success was a major factor in maintaining the economy of Cobourg after the failure of the Cobourg to Peterborough railway in 1860 and the several "province" wide depressions which followed.

Supported by the carpentry talents of Henry Heideman, Dean Tapscott and others, and using his negotiating skills, Ken persuaded Parks Canada to turn over parts of an original car to the CMF and obtained permission from Brian Kinmond to carry out the reconstruction at the old Kraft plant.

With limited space available at the SCHC, Ken is negotiating with the Town of Cobourg to place the replica at the waterfront. What a fitting introduction to part of Cobourg's unique and important history!

SCHC buildings now recorded in historical Atlas

Several years ago Peter Wilson took on the project of saving the well known "Illustrated Historical Atlas of the Counties of Northumberland and Durham" from the scrap heap. Valuable material was literally pulled out of a dumpster. Incorporating all 125 pages from the first 1878 printing, the 2014 edition was expanded to 215 pages and includes the two heritage buildings on the SCHC site.

For more information contact Fifth Line Press, Stirling, Ontario.

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Important Cobourg history uncovered at Cobourg Public Library

Entitled **Cobourg 1784 -1867** and published in 1949 as a masters thesis submitted by Dora Emily Wattie to Victoria College, University of Toronto, the 400 page tome is thoroughly referenced and can be found on microfiche in the CPL History Room. What may have thrown library patrons off the track is the fact that before the days of copy machines and scanners, Percy Climo produced a type-written copy of part of the thesis, included his comments and filed it in the History Room stacks.

References can be as important as the text they refer to and are often missing from the more popular histories. Examples are **Cobourg 1798-1948** by Edwin Guillet, **Early Cobourg**, **Cobourg 1914-1919** and **Let Us Remember** by Percy Climo, as well as **Cobourg, Early Days and Modern Times, 1798-1981** by the Cobourg Book Committee. An exception is the collection of 13 essays contained in **Victorian Cobourg** which was published in 1976 in celebration of the restoration of Victoria Hall.

All these histories are well worth reading and could be treated as a single history if a comprehensive cross-referencing index was created. **The first task would be to create the outline of an index.**

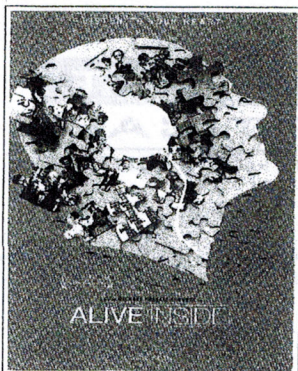
Fund-raising projects increased, with four success stories.

Four fund-raising projects were undertaken in 2014 starting with a bake sale at the Centre which raised over \$700, followed by an annual dinner and auction at the Best Western on October 8th. The evening featured WWII veteran Bruce Cox who described his experience at the Battle of Arnhem, and raised a total of \$2,290. At the same dinner a draw was held to determine the winners of a coupon raffle initiated by Board member Al Matthews and promoted with the generous assistance of the Northumberland News. Finally, in late November, the "Lights On" challenge was initiated with the goal of raising \$6,000 to upgrade the lighting in our Exhibition Hall. Six "Special Friends" offered \$3,000 in matching funds and 14 CMF members responded with donations totalling \$3,795. Any funds left over will be put toward other capital projects. A "cloud-funding" project is being developed by Al that could raise the \$25,000 needed to develop the second level of the Exhibit Hall into a permanent exhibit space.

Donations

The Canada Revenue Agency now allows individuals to donate investments to not-for-profit charities and receive a tax receipt for 100% of their value, which can then be used as a tax credit to offset capital gains on other parts of their investment portfolio.

To discuss this and other forms of giving please call Joan Chalovich at 905-372-6258.



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Organizational structure to be revised as more volunteers join the CMF.

To this point in time the Foundation Board of Directors has met monthly to set policy, define tasks to be accomplished, establish timetables for their completion and identified individuals or groups responsible for carrying them out. The Board has acted as both a Board of Directors and as an Executive Committee. With the Heritage Centre now operational and with a greater variety of tasks to be carried out, and in some cases coordinated, a decision has been made to redefine the function of the Board and create a separate Executive Committee. The timing of this restructuring is dependant on more volunteers becoming involved

Under the new governance structure the Board will meet four times a year, represent as many diverse interests in the Community as possible, review and set policies, establish broad goals and approve budgets. The Executive Committee will meet monthly, break the goals into measurable tasks, assign responsibility for their execution to Working Individuals or Working Groups, and receive timely reports back from those individuals or groups on the progress being made. The Executive Committee will report every three months to the Board of Directors. The Board reports once a year to the AGM.

Cobourg Museum Foundation

"... bringing our story back to life"

Mission Statement ... *"The Cobourg Museum Foundation works to increase the knowledge of the unique local history of this area on the part of residents and visitors alike, and to collaborate with other organizations and individuals having complimentary objectives."*

The following is a list of tasks for which an individual or a working group can take responsibility. Circle the ones that appeal to you the most ... then talk to us!

- | | |
|--|--|
| Newsletter and SCHC publications. | Relationship with local heritage interests |
| Media relations, publicity and promotion. | Relationship with other heritage centres and provincial and federal associations. |
| Fund-raising and grant application. | Writing the history of the CMF and SCHC. |
| Operating expenses and maintenance. | Membership, relations and development. |
| Gift shop supply, development and operation. | Relationship with the Town and County and their offices of Tourism and Economic Development. |
| Library development and operation. | HRD; training guides, trailer-park receptionists, community-service students, etc. |
| Relations with the Kawartha Pine Ridge Schools. | Exhibit development, Outreach Programme. |
| Web-site maintenance, other electronic means of communication, e-mail Newsletter | Articles for the media, speaker programme |
| Events; Waterfront Festival, First Night, parades. | |

Cobourg Museum Foundation 2014 Board Members:

Joan Chalovich (*President and Board Chair*), Stanley Isherwood (*Treasurer*),
Al Matthews, Al Rose, Ken Willcocks, (*Pat Weller, Secretary*)

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Supply; Lazertech Footings; McCulloch Building Movers; Northeastern Archaeological Associates; Northumberland
United Way; Quench Design and Communications; Skratt's Tree Service; Stalwood Homes; Wakely Disposal.

Government and NGO Funding Sources:

Federal Government of Canada; Province of Ontario; Town of Cobourg; Ontario Trillium Foundation;
Norhumberland Film Sundays; Architectural Conservancy, Cobourg Chapter; MusicMakers (2006).

Thanks to the following special supporters:

To "Smith's Creek Antiques" of Port Hope for the loan of early Canadian furniture found in the Visitor's Centre

... and lastly a very special thanks to our Members, who over the 15 years since our incorporation as a not-for-profit charity have provided us with over \$80,000 in fees, donations and bequests. Your constant support has been greatly appreciated!

For more information about the Cobourg Museum Foundation:

... visit us at www.cobourgmuseum.ca or google "Cobourg Museum Foundation",
or contact the newsletter editor, Keith Oliver at oliver.symons@sympatico.ca, or 905-377-0107.

Cobourg Museum Foundation

Victoria Hall, 55 King Street West, Cobourg, Ontario, K9A-2M2

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I would like to support the work of the Cobourg Museum Foundation!

I understand that the number of Memberships is the most accurate demonstration of the extent of community support for the CMF and helps the Foundation establish its credibility when applying for funds from large corporate donors.

Whether becoming a new Member, or renewing, or changing your Membership category, please circle one of the following categories. Send a check made out to the **Coburg Museum Foundation** to the address below.

Student	\$5.00	Individual	\$20.00	Individual Life Member	\$500.00
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The Cobourg Museum Foundation

Victoria Hall, 55 King Street West, Cobourg, Ontario, K9A-3X1, Canada

Please Note: An **Individual Life Member** is a one-time payment. The title **Founding Member** is reserved for those who became Members during our first year. **Sustaining** is a higher level of annual membership.

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