

Chair's Report

Hello, I am writing this report on September 17th, just before Port Hope's Civic Awards virtual ceremony will be broadcast on Cogeco tonight. Not being a subscriber, I will have to wait to see it and the presentation's supporting photos posted on the Civic Awards Committee's webpage. So, join me, there. I want to begin this note with a shout-out for **Jeannie Maidens** of the town's staff for her coordination of this event, and her supportive pursuit of tardy nominators such as myself. One of this spring's fun in-person events was touring the Opera House with **Phil Carter** wearing his fedora, and a small group of ACO "Next Gen" supporters that often paused for Jeannie's camera.

When you view the broadcast, you will see several friends; I will cite a few:

Patsy Beeson for her educational leadership of our chapter, especially through this newsletter.

The team that created the Barn Quilt Trail: **Kathryn McHolm, Moya McPhail, Lois Richardson** and **Pamela Tate**. (We have recently received a request to support financially and to organize zoom footage of these quilts on their barns to be part of a Barn Quilt Trail web display that includes those created in Huron and Prince Edward counties. Ours would be an interesting contrast to the others.)

Mary Lou Fallis and **Ian Montagnes**. Mary Lou for her concert that she so strongly supported for the maintenance of the Opera House, as well as for her performance in the Oriana Singers' Christmas concerts at St. Paul's Presbyterian church. Ian, for his researched "continuo" role based on the times of the musical selections, and for what had previously been overlooked, his book, Port Hope, a History. Who of us has not relied upon this work?

Finally, others were kind enough to select our ACO chapter and the Port Hope Heritage Foundation jointly for our work in the community. And indeed, there have been five interventions to note in the past year: ownership of the Opera House by ACO Ontario, our intervention to stall the demolition of Rose's Cottage and its salvaging by **Stephen Henderson** with its move to a new life on Pine Street; the placement of Little Station on Lent's Lane and its lease to Critical Mass; financial support by the Foundation of the restoration of the gates to the Fairgrounds; our insistence that the Victoria Street Woods, so important within the natural heritage of our town, is integrally linked to its cultural heritage components of Penryn Park and Penryn Homestead. (**Chris Wallace** and **Susan Layard** have been persistent and knowledgeable contributors to this conversation.)

Upcoming: watch for the next issue of Acorn. It will feature all of the nominees for ACO Ontario awards, province-wide.

There, you will read about the heritage contributions of **Patsy Beeson, Jim Sculthorpe, Stephen Henderson**, our ACO chapter's work to preserve O'Neill's Opera House, and most especially, the architectural legacy created by **Phil Carter** who has been nominated for the organization's Lifetime Achievement Award, named after ACO's founder, Eric Arthur.

Organizationally, ACO Ontario is reviewing several policies, including its Membership categories, and will be drafting a province-wide approach to Heritage Grants. Until the latter is developed, our chapter has suspended its own program of Heritage Grants.

Last night, the second successful on-line auction was completed. We are very grateful to the determined work of **Sharon Hancock** and **Peter Duck** with their team, especially as the other fund-raising activities that we all support remain on-hold.

— **Bruce Bowden**
Chair, ACO Port Hope

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Why not place an advertisement in the pages of ACO Matters? Our readership is interested in buildings and their preservation, furnishing, gardens, and everything else connected with them.

Contact Patricia Beeson at pbeeson@eagle.ca.



Update on ACO's Marketing

A small working group has been reviewing ACO Port Hope's strategic approach to marketing for the past few months. The group has three marketing practitioners and five members of the Executive. The pandemic has given us a brief time to stop and reflect on where we're headed, how marketing communications can support the work of the chapter, and most fundamentally, inspire people to engage in the preservation of historical properties.

We have undertaken some of the activities of a standard strategic exercise: reviewed the mission, vision and values; identified our core strengths and weaknesses; and the use of marketing-communications to optimally and efficiently communicate the core messages to stakeholders like members, donors, volunteers, sponsors, partners, residents and government representatives. Some of these segments overlap, that is, a person might be in more than one group, but it's always important to have consistent messaging, even if it's tweaked somewhat for the specific audience.

We've presented the Marketing Strategy to the executive and will move forward as follows:

Vision: a Port Hope whose future is enriched by its past

Mission: to inspire a passion for the conservation and celebration of Port Hope's heritage

In short, we plan to build on the great leadership ACO provides to the Municipality in many ways. We plan to do this through, and with, story-telling, education, advocacy, expertise, stewardship and passion. You will be seeing more of these aspects of our approach to marketing in the coming months, some of which will be behind the scenes, and others will be more direct and up front.

Our Working Group is keen to hear your thoughts and feedback on this direction. Feel free to connect with any member of the Executive, or contact me directly.

Here are two graphics showing some of our current and future communications: the ACO Port Hope banners on the Opera Hall to identify our involvement with, and commitment to, that project; and a poster that will be stationed inside the front door of the Opera Hall explaining our role.

— **Bill Bickle, Marketing Working Group Chair**
bill@fordelm.com



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PORT HOPE

The Port Hope chapter of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO) transferred ownership of this building from Royal Bank of Canada in 2019 and is caring for it while undertaking due diligence.

It was built in 1871 by the O'Neill brothers, merchants of food and clothing, to provide commercial space and a music hall on the second floor. For more about this project, please visit <https://acoporthope.ca/operahall>

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Penryn Park

Even More Significant
Than We Realized **By Susan Layard**



We have known for quite some time that there are three buildings at Penryn Park that have been designated for their heritage importance. We have also known that there have been residents of Penryn Park whose historical significance has been such that they have been written about in history books. What we may not have known is that it is Penryn's landscape in which the buildings have been carefully situated that is by far the most noteworthy aspect of this beautiful heritage property.

According to recent research donated to the Port Hope Archives, Penryn Park, which was owned by the Williams family from 1823-1889 and then the King family from 1894-1989, is one of the most outstanding examples in Canada of Picturesque Eclecticism. What is appealing today about picturesque theory, particularly given our current environmental concerns, is that it began with nature.

The ideas emerged in England in the mid-18th century, and were an attempt to explain why natural scenery that was neither classically beautiful nor sublime was still aesthetically pleasing. A landscape that was considered picturesque would

not be symmetrical or well groomed; it would also not be awe-inspiring. Instead, it would be irregular, varied and intricate, perhaps with an uneven silhouette of trees against the sky, a windswept path, or waves dashing against rocks. A landscape that manifested these qualities would be interesting enough for an artist to paint, hence the term 'picturesque.'

Proponents of the picturesque point of view believed that landscape design should be brought closer to nature in all its tangled diversity, and that the natural beauty of gnarled old trees, for example, with their ever-changing effects on light and shadow, or a textured slope should be preserved, not swept away. The Picturesque Movement very quickly broadened to include not only landscape design but how one viewed architecture within that landscape.

Gothic architecture — and the 'big house' at Penryn Park is designated as Gothic Revival — was considered by the theory's advocates to be the most appropriate style to use within a

Penryn Park, continued on page 5 →



Penryn Park, continued from page 4 →

picturesque landscape, According to one proponent, the Gothic “turrets and pinnacles” silhouetted against the sky as well as the lack of symmetry in the openings created a “splendid picture of confusion and irregularity”¹ that fit in perfectly with the picturesque sensibility.

English architect **John Nash** may have been one of the most successful in incorporating picturesque principles with Gothic architecture, and he designed many famous picturesque castles and country houses in England.

One of these, named **Caerhays**, was built in Cornwall around 1810 and acquired by the Williams family in 1853. The Williams had lived at nearby **Burncoose House** where they established, in the picturesque style, the still famous **Burncoose Gardens**. Caerhays Castle and the Burncoose House and Gardens remain in the hands of the Williams family to this day and are open to the public.

John Tucker Williams, a member of the Williams family of Caerhays and Burncoose, was a British naval officer who came to Canada during the War of 1812, settled eventually in Port Hope and married **Sarah Ward**, the daughter of another early Port Hope settler. In 1823, Williams bought the Penryn lands, then a tract of 24 acres, and in 1829, he built the Penryn Homestead, one of the oldest dwellings in Port Hope.

In 1859, John Tucker Williams’ son, **Arthur Trefusis Heneage Williams**, married **Emily Seymour** and set about building their home on a parcel of the Penryn lands provided to them by his parents. These lands, with their old trees, sweeping lake views, and striking natural landforms would provide the ideal setting for a picturesque design, and one would think that, with their family connections, the Williams would have already been familiar with picturesque ideals. By this time, too, the picturesque point of view had become widespread.

Pattern books, a type of book in which architectural designs were printed, had become invaluable sources of architectural information for the building of houses both large and small and were instrumental in disseminating picturesque ideals throughout both England and North America. In fact, one architectural historian, **Jessica Mace**, believes that the pattern books by Andrew Jackson Downing, an American writer, landscape designer and horticulturalist, were very influential in the design of several houses in Port Hope, including Pinehurst, The Cone and Penryn Park.²

The Williams chose **Edward Haycock** to be their architect, and he would have been well qualified to design a house in the Gothic Revival style for this picturesque property. Haycock was a partner with Thomas Clarke and Ralph Jones in the firm which had won the contract to work on the East and West Blocks of the High Gothic Parliament buildings in Ottawa, and he would have been aware that Clarke had built his own home, The Cone, in the Gothic Revival style, perhaps, according to Mace, referencing a design from Downing’s pattern book.



The grounds of Penryn Park

Mace suggests that Haycock, too, may have been inspired by one of Downing’s pattern book designs, “A Lake or River Villa for a Picturesque Site,” for the Williams’ new home. Haycock’s design certainly contained many of the Gothic elements appropriate for the picturesque — a tower, a jagged silhouette, an asymmetrical elevational treatment — and much consideration was given to the design of the surrounding landscape and the way the building rested upon it.

It is noted in the research donated to the Archives that the ‘big house’ at Penryn is “probably one of the best examples of its kind of High Victorian Tudor Gothic Revival buildings in Ontario.” It is also noted that the other buildings, whether designated or not, added by the King family were “appropriate” to picturesque design and even “more significant” due to the care taken in their placement on the property.

Port Hope is very fortunate to have such an important heritage property as Penryn Park within its jurisdiction. It is also fortunate that Penryn, as a golf course and wedding venue, has been open to the public for quite some time. This has meant that, unlike many heritage properties, scores of people, whether through playing golf, attending a wedding or simply walking around Penryn during the off-season have been able to enjoy the spectacular picturesque property.

Many have been able to see for themselves how Penryn Park “reflects the valuing of the integration of architecture and landscape, the concern for how a building sits on its site, and the delight in romantic settings for buildings and natural landscapes improved by design.” Many have been able to enjoy the beautiful old trees on the property and walk through the lovely woodlot.

The research donated to the Port Hope Archives contained a recommendation that consideration should be given to designating Penryn Park and the Penryn Homestead as a cultural heritage landscape because the placement of the buildings within that landscape is so important. Unfortunately, a great deal of that landscape has already given way to much needed housing. Please let that be enough. What remains of Penryn’s picturesque setting with its significant heritage buildings, beautiful old trees and magnificent lake views, must not be swept away.

¹ Uvedale Price, *Essay on the Picturesque*, Lancaster University, Online Philosophy Resources

² Jessica Mace, *Nation Building: Gothic Revival Houses in Upper Canada and Canada West, c.1830-1867*, Dissertation, York University, March 2015
All other quotations are taken from the research on Penryn Park recently donated to the Port Hope Archives.



High Old Times at the Penryn Cricket Pitch

by Patsy Beeson

Would a change of clothes do it for that soldier, Colonel Arthur Williams, on top of his pedestal outside the Town Hall, whom some would like to see pulled down or placed elsewhere?

Would people like him better epitomizing the country farmer he liked to call himself, relaxing in cricket whites instead of uniform, sword replaced by upflung bat, leading his team onto the cricket pitch?

As it happened, Williams was a very keen cricketer, keen enough to lay out in the grounds of his home, **Penryn Park**, a cricket pitch which came to be recognized as “one of the best in the country” and the setting for the highly successful Port Hope Cricket Club. Back then the game was extremely popular in both Canada and the United States* which sent cricket teams up to play north of the border. But for a time, in enthusiasm for the game, nowhere outdid little Port Hope.

According to **Arnot Craik** in his *Little Tales of Old Port Hope*, the Club had a slow start and went into abeyance for a period of time, but the arrival in Port Hope of young **John Nesbitt Kirchoffer** from England to join his uncle’s prosperous law firm was a very happy day for cricket in Port Hope**. Young Kirchoffer was a fine athlete and had played cricket for his school, Marlborough. His enthusiasm for the game soon infected the locals, and in no time the team had a sizable following of keen supporters who greatly enjoyed attending the matches. In 1872, by which time he was 23, the Port Hope Cricket Club sprang back to life, and fixtures were soon being played with teams in Peterborough, Orillia, Kingston, Belleville, Toronto and Hamilton — as far off even as Ottawa and Montreal — and from time to time over the lake would sail an invading force from Rochester to take its chances. The Port Hope Cricket Club quickly developed a name among rival teams for the success of its eleven and as a hospitable venue.

In 1875 young Kirchoffer was the captain of the team, and the club’s Vice-President was **Baron Adolph Von Hugel***** owner of a large red brick house at 77 Augusta Street. That year, Von Hugel joined with the urbane **Frederic Cumberland**, president of the Toronto Cricket Club, to donate a cup to be presented to whichever of the two clubs won the best of three matches. It might very well have been jokingly called the Railway Cup as both men were presidents of railway lines, Cumberland of the Northern Railway with its terminus in Toronto and Von Hugel of the Midland Railway with its Port Hope terminus. As it happened, the gang constructing the last stretch of Von Hugel’s railroad to Midland had intersected with Cumberland’s railroad at Orillia just two years previously. So it made eminent sense that the first two games played in 1875 and 1876 took place in Orillia, allowing special trains to transport the teams and supporters from Toronto

and Port Hope for the occasion. Toronto won the first match and Port Hope the second. Then for some reason it was decided to play the last match in Port Hope.

It was August 13th, 1877, a Civic Holiday, in Port Hope. The whole town was in holiday high spirits. The atmosphere must have been electric, and nowhere more so than around the cricket grounds in Penryn Park. On their most recent visit the Montreal team had been treated like royalty, the grounds thronged with spectators, many of them ladies, with the band of the 46th Battalion providing music at intervals throughout the event. So certainly nothing less would have done for the visiting Torontonians. Port Hope would have wanted to knock their eye out in every way possible.

Strangely the popular Arthur Williams seems to have been absent on this occasion. Probably he was up in Ottawa. He was, after all, the local M.P. for Durham. If he had been present he might well have played a decisive role in preventing what ensued.

Unsurprisingly there was a huge turnout by a “very large and deeply interested crowd” as Kirchoffer put it. The sun shone, the match began, and on the sidelines, no doubt fueled by something stronger than raspberry cordial, was a sizeable group of the not-so-golden youth of Port Hope. There are few beasts, and man not one of them, who do not relish barking, biting and fighting, and here was a golden opportunity to exercise at least some of these predilections against the opposing team.

Outraged letters from spectators which subsequently appeared in the *Port Hope Guide* spoke of “disgraceful and uncricketlike” behaviour on the part of this section of the crowd.

The *Toronto Mail* hotly echoed the refrain. According to the reporter “it would appear very doubtful if any respectable club in Canada will play in [Port Hope] again to be hissed and hooted at by a lot of boors. It was next to impossible to receive fair play as the crowd tried in every way to intimidate the umpires to give their decision in favour of Port Hope”. He allowed that there was no doubt the Port Hope Club was not to blame for the actions of the crowd, “but the rabble should not have been permitted on the ground.” (As probably much the same ‘rabble’ created a riot



Cricket, continued on page 7 →



Cricket, continued from page 6 →

two years later when threatened with exclusion from the Opera House, one dreads to think what might have transpired if they had been refused entry to a cricket match).

“The Toronto team” the *Mail* concluded indignantly “has come home fully determined ... that this is the last match they will play on the Port Hope cricket grounds after the treatment they received from the rowdy element.”

Kirchoffer, in a letter written in rebuttal, described this as cheering the home team — the applause of an excited crowd. “For my part, I like to hear the spectators taking an interest in the proceedings, whether the cheering is for us or against us.” But the *Mail* reporter was having none of it and pointed out that at one point things had got so out of hand that Kirchoffer himself had been obliged to step in to quell the disturbance.

So with all this sturm und drang, the elephant on the cricket pitch is, which side actually won the match?

It ended in a draw, as there was not enough time to see it finished. But Von Hugel, no doubt utterly mortified by the turn of events in his home town, subsequently sent the cup to Cumberland saying he would have nothing more to do with it, and suggesting Cumberland do with it as he saw fit.

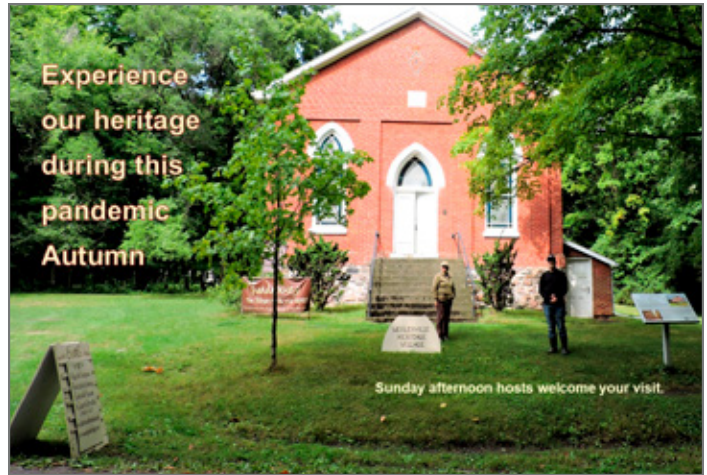
There seems never to have been a repeat of this unfortunate behaviour at a match in Port Hope. Over the next four years many teams visited and had a thoroughly enjoyable experience. Port Hope in fact won the Ontario championship in 1881 and Kirchoffer himself was selected for the national team which played the United States, even captaining it one year.

But in 1883 he left Port Hope for Manitoba where he had a successful career as a lawyer and politician and was later appointed Senator Kirchoffer. His loss unfortunately coincided with the departure from town of several others of the team’s leading lights. And with them the spirit which had animated these glory years and given rise to Port Hope as a star in the constellation of Canadian cricket faded and went out.

* Baseball appeared in 1872.

** From uncle Nesbitt Kirchoffer’s large and handsome ‘Pinehurst’ on Pine Street his newly arrived nephew must have watched St. John’s church across the road rise from its foundations in 1865.

*** Name notwithstanding, Von Hugel was actually born in the border town of Strasbourg, France.



Wesleyville Heritage Village Update

It’s officially fall and cooling down. *Step Inside Sundays* have been very successful in August and September, so we’re extending these open afternoons until October 25th. All are welcome to step inside the Church and the schoolhouse to enjoy displays about our cultural heritage and natural heritage conservation efforts. Covid-19 precautions apply (Masks, physical distancing, cleaning etc.).

Because restrictions on gatherings are tightening again we’ve reluctantly had to cancel the October 24th Ghostly Visit but we’re planning some Halloween fun on Sunday afternoon — October 25th.

Work in the Oughtred or “Y” house to create the caretaker residence and public washroom is progressing well. We’re hoping to install our superintendent couple in the residence portion this fall. Volunteers are helping maintain the property and host visitors.

Fund-raising has to continue in this pandemic especially because almost all our events have had to be cancelled. We’re applying for as many grants as possible but your help is still needed.

Our anonymous donors have offered to match your contributions up to a total of \$15,000 by December 31st. So far we’ve received about \$4,000.00 (to be matched). New donations by Interac transfer can be made directly to this e-mail address or by cheque to **The Friends of Wesleyville Village, PO Box 215 c/o Petra Becker, Port Hope ON. L1A 3W3.**

The Donate Now button on our website wesleyvillevillage.com leads you to Canada Helps where we will also gratefully receive your donation and you’ll also get a receipt. This is great but it means that the Canada Helps fee is deducted from your donation to the Village.

If you renew your membership for 2021 before December 31st your contribution will also be matched. Single membership is \$20, Family is \$35 and Life membership is \$1,000. Call Sue Stickley at 905 885-1344 or friendsofwesleyvillevillage@gmail.com. We have a new Life member and a previous life member family donated a second life membership!



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