

# ACO MATTERS



Architectural Conservancy Ontario – Port Hope Branch

Newsletter – June 2024

## Chairs' Report

Welcome to ACO Port Hope's 60th Anniversary Year! The Annual Meeting in February, which marked the beginning of this milestone year, was a great success. We had a packed house, Ian MacKay chaired the event with his usual skill, and the Speaker, **Marc Halle**, was outstanding. We congratulate **Trish Doney**, who received a Bluestone Award for her continued support of heritage especially during her years as Chair of the ACO Port Hope Executive that facilitated the Downtown Task Force; **Roger Bernard**, who received a Marion Garland Award for the restoration of the Dreamer's Cafe windows; and **Lyndsey Sneddon** and **Steven Rennie** who received a Marion Garland Award for the restoration of their heritage home. If you missed the annual meeting, you can watch the video of Marc Halle's speech on our website at [acoporthope.ca](http://acoporthope.ca).

A Port Hope Special Council Meeting was called in March to vote on a heritage demolition permit application for a portion of the File Factory for which there had been structural integrity concerns. The Council Chamber was filled with ACO members, our deputations were well-received and there was good communication with Council and Municipal Staff leading to a positive outcome at the end of the meeting. Many thanks to the ACO members who came to the meeting that evening. Such strong support from our membership made all the difference. There is more about this site in the feature article on the File Factory later in this issue. Please note that there is still no information regarding the divisional court case regarding the heritage demolition permit for 65 Ward Street.

April proved to be a very busy month for ACO Port Hope. Many thanks to **Anna Gray** for organizing our annual fundraising ACO trip to Abruzzo in Italy during the first week of April. By all accounts, the tour was the best ever with excellent food, accommodation and adventures.

ACO Cobourg and East Northumberland is to be congratulated for their fine organization of the annual Coach Tour this year, which took us to Deseronto and Belleville. Highlights included a delightful tearoom in Deseronto, the beautifully renovated Chapel Royal of the Mohawk, located along the shores of the Bay of Quinte, and a wonderful afternoon at Belleville's Historic Glanmore House.

April was Auction Month, with both a virtual auction managed through MaxSold, and a Live Auction at the Town Park Recreation Centre. At the Live Auction we launched our 60th anniversary celebration with a beautiful cake displaying our new 60th anniversary logo. This was enjoyed by guests, as was our own "Antiques Road Show" run by **Lee Caswell**

with the assistance of **Tom Cruickshank**. The two April auctions combined raised over \$20,000 for our branch. Congratulations to each of the teams, especially to the chairs (Virtual Team: **Sharon Hancock** and **Peter Duck**, Live Team: **Blaise Gaetz** and **Brian Buttery**). Many thanks to all those who contributed to our auctions by donating items, purchasing items or volunteering on the day!

The Education Committee Walking Tours are underway. The first tours were well attended, and we look forward to seeing ACO tour groups strolling through our neighbourhoods this spring, summer and fall. The inspiring work of volunteer tour guides (**Lois Brown**, **Jane Watanabe**, **Brian Buttery**, and **Bruce Bowden**) is appreciated.

The new Port Hope ACO Heritage Colouring Book, published in honour of our 60th anniversary, is now for sale at Furby House Books for a suggested donation of \$10. It is a compilation of previously published educational material from our branch, including the two Marion Garland booklets (*Check the Style of Ontario Architecture* and *Architectural Terms*), updated and revised Port Hope sections of the *Town and Country Colouring Book* from 1984, as well as stunning measured drawings of Port Hope buildings by Chris Wallace's classmates from his architectural studies. Copies were given to our municipal council, and sets of six books were donated to each school in Port Hope, as well as to the Public Library. Its official launch was organized by **Lisa O'Leary** of the Public Library and took place at the Mary J. Benson Branch on Thursday, May 16 at 6:30 p.m.

The next celebration coming up is the summer BBQ, which is the Branch Executive's thank you to ACO Port Hope members and volunteers. We are happy to announce that **Marina Smirnova** and **Marie Lalonde** will be co-chairing this event. It will be held on **Phil Carter** and **Sheilagh Fletcher's** beautiful shady lawn, at 200 Bruton Street, on Thursday, July 25th at 5:30 p.m.

– **Susan Layard & Katherine McHarg**  
Co-Chairs, ACO Port Hope



This is the only pic we have of our wonderful award recipients, but it's such a Lovely one, with Roger Bernard holding his Marion Garland Award between our two fabulous co-chairs, that we had to include it.



# Executive

## Executive Committee

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**Newsletter & Bus Tour**

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## ACO Summer BBQ

Thursday July 25, 2024 from 5:30pm (rain or shine).

On the shady lawns of **Phil Carter** and **Sheilagh Fletcher**, at 200 Bruton Street (just west of Toronto Road) in Port Hope. Current Members only Event



The BBQ is open to all up-to-date members and is hosted by the ACO Port Hope Executive — our way of thanking our amazing volunteers and supporters. There is no charge for the event but a donation for beverages at the bar is much appreciated. Please RSVP by June 30 to [tickets@acoporthope.ca](mailto:tickets@acoporthope.ca) so we can plan food and libations.

This is an outdoor event so please bring a hat and wear suitable shoes. There is very limited seating so please bring chairs if you wish to sit. ACO signs will mark the entrance to the driveway for parking, or you may wish to park on Bruton or Shortt Streets and enjoy the stroll up the winding driveway. Carpooling is appreciated. Membership Inquiries contact **Lydia Bell-Gradon** at 905-885-7929 or [membership@acoporthope.ca](mailto:membership@acoporthope.ca).

BBQ Chairs are **Marina Smirnova** and **Marie Lalonde**.



## Amazing Abruzzo from Anna Gray

All 13 of the participants would agree that our week in Torre de' Passeri, Italy, at a beautiful villa, was beyond our expectations.

We had a choice of about 20 different excursions which ranged from visiting a 12th Century monastery carved into a hillside, to a tour of part of the Adriatic Coast (some by van, some by e-bike), with a delicious lunch on a fishing platform and a visit to the Canadian cemetery in Ortona, and for me the most impressive tour of a kilometre long underground cave with a raging river with its two waterfalls that had carved out two canyons in the cave.

The food was exceptional, truly delicious, every day with too many courses at each meal at the villa and several exceptional lunches within the tours.

One other thing that I must mention and that is the owners (expat Canadians) and the staff. They were very accommodating, friendly, and helpful. They made us all feel that we were one big happy family.

All of us then included a few days elsewhere after visiting Abruzzo: some to Rome and Florence, some to visit relatives, five of us to see Palladian highlights in Vicenza. The contrasts only made the first week of the ACO excursion seem more intriguing.





# The File Factory

## A Unique Heritage Industrial Site In Port Hope

### An Encumbered Past; a Dramatic Future

An adaptation of Bruce Bowden's deputation on behalf of ACO Port Hope to the March 19, 2024 Special Meeting of Council

compiled by Susan Layard

The Globe File Manufacturing Co. circa 1899.  
Credit to the Port Hope Archives.



**A**s **Phil Goldsmith** told a large audience during his presentation last Fall at the Capitol Theatre, “the building complex, known as the File Factory, has a long history.” It began as one of many mills that were built along the river to take advantage of the water power of the Ganaraska and has been expanded many times since. It was established as a flour mill by Francis Beamish in 1853, and then a plaster mill was added in 1855. In 1888, when mills were disappearing, Frederick Outram from Montreal adapted the Beamish Mill site as the Globe File Manufacturing Co., choosing the property for its water power, and its access to the railway and the harbour. In 1899, Building 1 was constructed in an east-west orientation, incorporating parts of the Beamish mill complex and including a wing to the north. In 1901, the site was purchased by the Nicholson File Company of Providence, Rhode Island, USA which made a substantial addition to the south of the building in 1901, followed by further expansion in 1935. In 1972, Nicholson was taken over by Copper Industries, but by 1994, it was time for the File Factory to close its doors.

Since then, the File Factory has troubled Port Hope. Its rundown condition has deteriorated into the appearance of a semi-ruin. It is a brick factory, and no-one built such factories

to be beautiful. People still think of it as a single building, presenting an image along Cavan Street of one long continuous structure in two obvious sections. Only if one risks turning one's ankles on a slippery trail across the river can one easily discern that the building is not a single entity. Yet, until Phil Goldsmith made his presentation for the Library, who knew that there are actually 20 attached sections that began with the Beamish Mill? How ironic would it be for this town to preserve the Beamish House, but then discard the Beamish Mill which began this factory site.

At least the façades of this mill, with its original extension to Cavan Street, merit an effort to seek their retention. Port Hope's industrial past was one that had major exports to New York State, and through Montreal to England and Europe. This is our only remaining large factory. Files and rasps were a specialized market, but this building was the largest producer of them in the entire world, according to Phil's presentation. Who today can imagine the largest anything coming from Port Hope, other than a crazy spring river festival, Float Your Fanny Down the Ganny? These buildings are the last physical reminder of this town's industrial energy.

**Factory, continued on page 4**

### Factory, continued from page 3

The File Factory buildings also live on in a time when elsewhere, all across the eastern continent, the beauty of industrial buildings has been recognized - the textile Mill factories of New England, the garment factories of New York, the Brickworks of the Don Valley, the Sugar silos of Toronto. Many have been re-occupied by colleges, by an Architecture Faculty in Cambridge, Ontario, by readapting discarded arenas and armouries, by opening their spaces into combined indoor-outdoor public attractions. Repeated studies have shown that the combination of relaxed sightseeing amid old sites creates repeated visits, daily local use, and energized events.

Like such industrial sites throughout North America, the File Factory too presents opportunities for re-use. Indeed, the integration of new building design into the old could be a spectacular centre in this town, and the combination of indoor institutional or commercial space with outdoor relaxation space along the river would certainly be a highlight of the Town's riverwalk.

With public-private sector joint planning, the File Factory in Port Hope could have a dramatic future. Let's seize the necessities of this moment to re-adapt this unique heritage site.

### Demolition by Neglect

The phrase "demolition by neglect" refers to the practice of permitting a property to fall into such a state of disrepair that demolition of the buildings on the site becomes the only option. It is a strategy often used by developers to allow them to justify the destruction of a heritage building.



Chris Wallace noted in his communications with Council that owners of the File Factory over the last 20 years have been guilty of demolition by neglect and that anyone who had been inside the buildings during that time knew that this property was at risk and should have been dealt with long ago. While some of the buildings were stable and reusable, others were deteriorating to the point where considerable repair, restoration or reconstruction were necessary.

During this past winter, the roof of Block 2 and the floor behind it collapsed, leaving the exterior west wall virtually without support. An emergency demolition of at least some portions of that block became essential in order to address public safety.

Much could have been done years ago to prevent this from happening. Port Hope does have a Property Standards By-Law to ensure that owners address the condition and structural soundness of their buildings. Unfortunately, as one can see throughout Port Hope, this has rarely been enforced. The File Factory was further protected by a Part IV designation under the Ontario Heritage Act, but Port Hope had not passed the by-laws required by the Act to enforce that protection. Fortunately, the Municipality is now considering enacting a stronger Property Standards By-Law which will also include Ontario Heritage Act provisions for designated properties. Needless to say, this will be too late for Block 2, but one might hope not too late for the other buildings on the File Factory site. Vigilance of enforcement will nevertheless still be the key.

In the meantime, contending with a File Factory Block that exhibited a substantial risk of collapse had become an urgent necessity for the Municipality. On Tuesday, March 19th, 2024, a Special Meeting of Council was held to deliberate approving a demolition permit for Block 2 of the industrial site.

Phil Goldsmith and Chris Wallace, along with Bruce Bowden, made deputations to the Special Meeting that night, arguing for a more limited demolition. Phil Goldsmith gave an abridged version of his Fall presentation at the Capitol Theatre and was also very specific in delineating what of Block 2 could be saved. Chris Wallace commented that he had no doubt that the professional engineers who were consulted about the condition of Block 2 responded diligently to the question they were asked. But what question were they asked? Were they asked to take down everything that was not structurally perfect at this time, on the grounds that it's of little value? Or were they asked to take down only those elements that are a clear, current danger to the public, and preserve the rest, on the grounds that this is a designated heritage structure which, by law, must be preserved? Given the engineers' recommendation, one suspected the former.

In the end, all three deputations seemed to have a strong impact and while Council approved a Heritage Permit allowing the demolition of Block 2, they directed staff to authorize a municipally contracted engineer to oversee the demolition process. This oversight was meant to ensure compliance with the heritage permit but also to prevent the demolition of areas deemed non-threatening to public safety.

### Phil Goldsmith's Reimagining of the File Factory

As Chris Wallace noted in his comments, the entire File Factory "is not falling down." No matter what happens in the near term, there is still a future for this striking complex of buildings.

There have been many recent projects that have brought heritage industrial buildings back to life, and Phil Goldsmith has been involved with several of them, including the Evergreen Brickworks in Toronto. In fact, the Brickworks has many parallel characteristics to our File Factory. It was abandoned for 20 years, it is a site with many buildings of various sizes, and the

**Factory, continued on page 5**



**Factory, continued from page 4**

buildings' condition varied from good to near collapse. The Brickworks are also in a flood plain, which made them, like the File Factory, unsuitable for housing. Yet, with financial backing from three levels of government, the Brickworks have been transformed into a world-class city park in which the buildings have been restored and opened by Evergreen as an education centre that focuses on the environment, culture and community.

Phil Goldsmith believes that the Evergreen Brickworks demonstrate the possibilities that exist for the File Factory if a similar private-public partnership were to be formed, and he is proposing a new concept for the File Factory heritage industrial site. He is suggesting that the complex be re-purposed as a creative centre such as an arts-and-crafts-based facility, an incubation hub or an educational institution combined with a public riverwalk component in the form of a landscaped passage through the restored buildings which would contain interpretive signage about the river's history and ecology, along with cafes, restaurants, an indoor market and a market garden.



A computer generated image of how a redeveloped File Factory might look.

Repurposing this interesting space on the Ganaraska River, as a mixed-use complex for recreational, commercial, and institutional purposes would be of enormous benefit not only for the Municipality's residents but also for visitors from far and wide. It would most certainly become the centrepiece of Port Hope's riverwalk enhancements. Phil Goldsmith strongly believes that the Municipality needs to provide leadership in realizing the potential of this opportunity. Otherwise, Port Hope will not only lose a significant part of its heritage and character, in particular the original 1853 Beamish Mill, but will also lose an irreplaceable space for learning, creativity, innovation, light small industry, restaurants, markets and many more uses we have seen around the world in reused historic industrial space.

There is no question that this will be a difficult undertaking. There is much to clean up, restore and reconstruct. Yet, the File Factory is a unique heritage industrial site with extraordinary potential. We must work together to resurrect this significant Municipal asset.

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# John Cassie Port Hope's Scottish Pioneer Minister

by Jim Campbell and Peter Bolton



In the wall near the SW corner of the Old St. Peter's Kirkyard in Peterhead, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, there is a large memorial to blacksmith Thomas Cassie (1772-1836) and his family. Thomas, his three wives — Janet Davidson (1778-1811), Jean Evan (1782-1820) and Janet Cordiner (1795-1873)— and several of his sons and daughters are interred there. The memorial also commemorates “the Rev.

John Cassie, D.D., his son, who died at Port-Hop [sic], province Ontario, Canada, in the year 1861.” Nevertheless, it is unlikely that son John actually held the degree of Doctor Divinitatis (D.D.), which requires advanced academic study. Indeed, his gravestone in Port Hope describes him as the Rev. John Cassie A.M.; i.e., with a Master of Arts (Artium Magister) degree.

As a young man the Reverend John came to Canada as a missionary from the United Secession Church of Scotland. In 1835 he was appointed minister of the United Presbyterian Church of Port Hope, a role in which he served until his untimely death in 1861. Services were originally held in a small frame building built around 1831 just south of the Pioneer Presbyterian Cemetery on Bruton Street, but nothing now remains of this original structure. It was replaced by a larger brick building in 1854 on Baldwin Street, which still stands although now converted into two semi-detached private dwellings. (See article by **Jackie Tinson** in ACO Matters, September 2022 for more information.)

In September 1840 John Cassie married Pamela Kidd, born 1820, daughter of George Kidd, a linen manufacturer, and



Margaret McKinstry, originally of Greenmount, Co. Armagh, Ireland. Pamela had emigrated to Canada sometime in the early 1830s, presumably with other members of her family, one

of the many Irish families emigrating to Canada in the mid 19th century. Where the Reverend lived before his marriage, and afterwards until 1850, is unknown, but he appears at some

point to have acquired land at the corner of Julia and Baldwin Streets and, according to tax assessment rolls, 15 Julia Street, the couple's final home, was built there in 1850. Now known as the Cassie Cottage, it still stands, although the eastern half of the property was later severed to permit the construction of 35 Baldwin Street around 1870. Built nearly a decade after the death of the Reverend, the much grander Baldwin Street edifice with its mansard roof is still known as Cassie House.

John and Pamela had one child, a daughter, who died unnamed aged 10 days, August 8, 1842. While there is no existing record of the baby's interment, it is likely that this was in the pioneer cemetery, to be accompanied later by her father.

The passage of time has not been kind to the old cemetery, which has suffered greatly from vandalism and neglect.



Although extensive renovations were carried out by members of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in the 1980s many stones have been displaced and the brickwork is crumbling. Church records

of actual burials there have been lost although it is considered that the first of about 60 took place in the late 1820s with the last around 1873, just before the opening of the Port Hope Union Cemetery at 114 Toronto Road in 1874. But no trace of a Cassie stone now exists there. There is, however, an imposing monument to the Reverend and his family located in the centre of Union Cemetery, shaded by a massive spruce tree. The frontal inscription reads, “In memory of a beloved pastor and husband, born in Peterhead, Aberdeen, Scotland, who, for over 26 years faithfully and affectionately administered the duties of Minister of the United Presbyterian Church of Port Hope, inducted March 1835, suddenly summoned on high June 19 1861.”

The opposing face of the monument commemorates wife Pamela who died on January 18, 1896 in Toronto (although still residing at 15 Julia Street), and a side face is inscribed to Margaret McKinstry, her mother, died February 1840 aged 63 years,



**Cassie, continued on page 7**



**Cassie, continued from page 6**

and Emily Louisa King, died April 1847 aged 18 years. Emily was Pamela’s niece: her mother was Ann King, née Kidd, Pamela’s older sister, who died in 1883. The 1841 Port Hope census lists the Cassie household as consisting of ‘1 man, 2 women, and a girl of less than 16 years’ — presumably John, Pamela, Ann and Emily.



As noted in the Port Hope Guide, the minister’s “failing health rendered it necessary for him to resign his stewardship, to which he reluctantly consented, a few months before his sudden death, in 1861, caused by disease of the heart.” He appears to have been an avid gardener and may even have died while working in his garden. In 1852 the Guide reported that he had delivered a “very delightful lecture” at the

Mechanic’s Institute on the subject of “Botanical Theology” in which he provided “evidences of a Supreme Being as gathered from the vegetable Kingdom.” In life he had declined to have his picture taken because of the cost, but upon his death widow Pamela had him dressed in his gown and bands and had a tintype photograph made of him. But where are he and his baby daughter actually buried? The original Town of Port Hope Burial Record books contain no record of their being reinterred in Union. The monument itself also raises some doubt. The style of writing on three sides commemorating the earlier deaths reflects that seen on stones still standing in the pioneer cemetery. (See ACO article by Jackie Tinson for examples.) This is especially

apparent in the embossed names commemorating Margaret McKinstry and Emily King, while the inscription to wife Pamela on the fourth side is in a much simpler script, indicating that it was added at a different time. Was the stone therefore originally erected in the old cemetery to mark the graves of the Reverend John and his family, with all being moved to Union Cemetery after this opened in 1874? The inscription to wife Pamela might then have been added after her burial there in 1896 (but dated 1897). In the absence of any official documentation, however, this is simply conjecture. While the stone in Union Cemetery provides an appropriate memorial for him we prefer to believe that he still reposes, albeit in a now unmarked grave, in the old cemetery, in the company of members of his congregation and other Port Hope pioneers.



## Walking Tours for 2024

With Walton Street torn up until further notice, our usual roster of guided walking tours has been interrupted somewhat, but we’re still walking! For 2024, the Education Committee of the Port Hope ACO is pleased to announce four tours (which avoid Walton Street), which will offer notes on the history and architecture of our prized streetscapes. These late-summer and autumn strolls take you past some familiar historical landmarks, some of which have been restored with financial assistance from the ACO. A knowledgeable guide will lead the way. Maybe there’s a skeleton or two in the closet to be revealed, too! Attendance is limited, so be sure to book today.

**Four tours are available:**

- King Street: From the Water to Ward Street, Parts 1 & 2. Saturday, August 24 & Saturday, September 21.
- The Secrets of Pine Street – A tour along a quintessential small town street, with commentary on churches, mansions and schools in a lovely, leafy setting. Saturday, August 31.
- Trains, Taverns & Theatres – An in-depth look at some downtown landmarks and the influence of the railway in the development of Port Hope. Saturday, September 14.
- Parade of Stately Homes – It’s a steep climb, but well worth it to see some of Port Hope’s best houses. Saturday, September 7 & Saturday, October 5

Tours start at 11 a.m. sharp and take about 90 minutes. They go rain or shine. Cost is \$20. Wear the right shoes! For more information or to purchase tickets, google “[ACO Port Hope Walking Tours 2024.](#)”

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# Major Upcoming Events

**Walking Tours** Saturdays, May–Oct. 11-12:30 (p. 7)

**August Barbecue** Thursday, July 25, 5:30 (p. 2)

**Port Hope House Tour** Saturday, October 5, 10–4.  
(In town and unaffected by construction)

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**I give permission for ACO to contact me electronically .**

### Payment Options

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**2. Cheque:** Please complete this form and mail it with your cheque payable to **ACO Port Hope at P O Box 563, Port Hope, Ontario L1A 3Z4**

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