

CHAIR'S REPORT

Autumn already and change is in the air. The birds know it and so do the trees and we all can feel it coming. There's a lot to anticipate this fall but first, let's look back over a very busy summer season.

We held a well attended **Annual Meeting** on May 7th at the Sculthorpe Room in the Capitol Theatre. We introduced new members to our board, recapped the past year and reviewed our finances, explained the upcoming changes in ACO structure and gave out the following awards: **The Bluestone Award to Blaise Gaetz and Laura Antonik** for their invaluable contributions to our organization and **The Marion Garland award to Dave Watson** for his careful restoration of 99 Walton Street. Congratulations!

May (31) also saw a very successful auction held at the Port Hope Community Recreation Centre. It was attended by a very large crowd and a record amount of money was raised for heritage conservation. Thanks to **Blaise Gaetz, David Simmons** and his team, and the many, many other volunteers who worked together to make the event so enjoyable.

Also in May, our walking tour series started up again offering several new tours. After a summer break, the tours have resumed and will continue until the end of September. They are well attended but there are still tickets available. Visit our website for details.

Thursday, August 6th was a big night in the social calendar. ACO Port Hope held its annual **Summer Social at Dunain**, the lovely heritage home of **Frank and Dianne Steblaj**. Approximately 175 guests enjoyed a perfect summer evening with lots of good food, wine and conversation to go around. The event was organized by **Darlene King** and **Shirley Richardson** and was supported by many volunteers. It was great to see so many members come out to help, support our organization and just enjoy each other's company.

This brings us back to where I started, the fall. There is much to look forward to, as I already mentioned, the walking tours continue throughout the month of September. Also, the annual house tour which is run by our friends at Port Hope Heritage Foundation, returns on October 3rd. I know that many of our members volunteer on this tour and many of you will attend. Be sure to get your tickets soon if you haven't already because more than 75% of them have already sold.

As I mentioned earlier, change is in the air but there is a lot to look forward to. Our organization is in the process of change too (please watch for and read upcoming e-blast for important member information) but we will move forward together and continue to offer the same programs and member experience as we always have. We remain committed to protecting and preserving Port Hope's heritage. Thank you for being a part of this.

– **Brian Buttery, Chair, ACO Port Hope Branch**

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More than 60 Years of Opening Doors: THE PORT HOPE HOUSE TOUR

SATURDAY OCTOBER 3, 2026 | 10am – 4pm

On October 17, 1964, the first Port Hope House Tour welcomed visitors into eight heritage homes and buildings for a ticket price of just \$2. The inaugural tour included **Idalia on Victoria Street; Hillcrest on Dorset Street West; Dunain and Wildwood on Lakeshore Road; The Bluestone on Dorset Street East; St. Mark's Church on King Street; Hill and Dale on Pine Street South; and Durham House in Canton.**

Seven additional properties were included for exterior viewing, among them: **Port Hope Town Hall, Barrett's Terrace, the Port Hope City Dairy (now The Carlyle), and the gardens at Batterwood in Canton.**

It was an ambitious beginning to what has become one of Port Hope's most cherished traditions.

House Tour, continued on page 2



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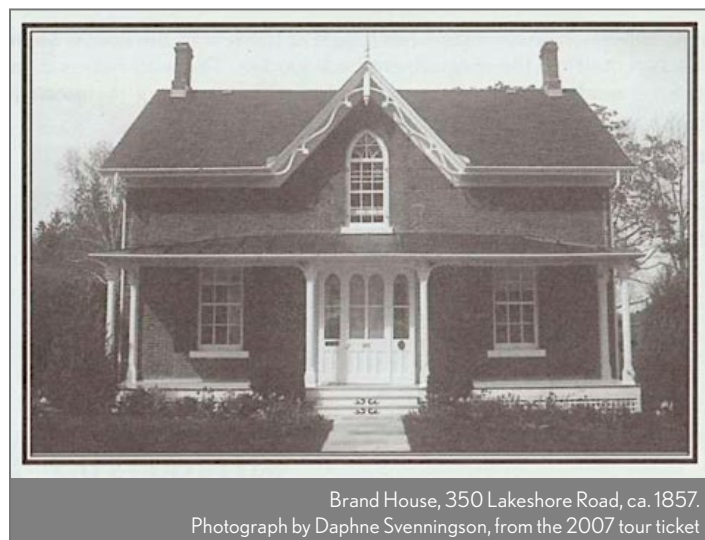
Denise Johnson, Peter McLaughlin

House Tour, continued from page 1



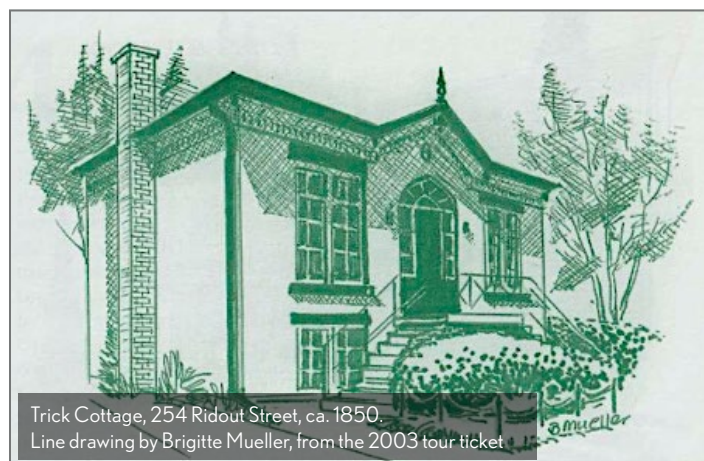
By 1978, the tour had become an annual event. Spring and fall tours were offered in 1980, and daytime and evening tours followed in 1982 and 1983. Since 1984, the tour has taken place on the Saturday before the Thanksgiving weekend. A special two-day event marked the tour's 50th anniversary.

Today, visitors travel from across Ontario—from Windsor to Ottawa—and beyond to experience Port



Hope's distinctive architecture. For many, the tour is an annual family tradition. This year, a ticket was purchased by a visitor from Minnesota whose grandfather once lived in Port Hope. Last year, another enthusiastic guest bought eight tickets to share the experience with family and friends.

In its early years, the tour ticket was a single, folded monochrome sheet featuring descriptions of each property and a map. Sponsors and the acknowledgement of their support first appeared in 2000, followed by line drawings of featured homes in 2003, photographs of homes in 2006, and a colour cover in 2009.



Several original sponsors continue to support the tour today, including **G. Facey Clothing**, **Herma's Fine Foods and Gifts**, **Holton Flowers**, **Lee Caswell**, and **Smith's Creek Antiques**. For more than 20 years, local architect **Phil Carter** has described the architectural details for the home descriptions. The tour ticket booklet has become a keepsake souvenir for many visitors.

The House Tour offers much more than an opportunity to look inside heritage homes, public buildings and churches. Visitors can enjoy lunches prepared by **St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church** and **St. Paul's Presbyterian Church**, or enjoy lunch at several downtown restaurants. Local florists—**Holton Flowers**, **Stems & Moss Flower Co.**, and **Kathryn McHolm**—donate floral arrangements that enhance each home, while **Queenie's Bake Shop** provides box lunches for participating homeowners.

Established as a fundraiser, the House Tour has made a meaningful contribution to Port Hope's built heritage. In the past three years alone, it has raised \$140,000. Funds support restoration and preservation projects in the downtown conservation districts and at privately owned heritage residences. Grants help property owners undertake work such as brickwork and chimney repairs, and the restoration or replacement of windows. Tour funds also contribute to an annual scholarship

House Tour, continued on page 2



House Tour, continued from page 2



awarded to a local student who is studying the heritage trades at a post-secondary institution.

The continued success of the House Tour rests on the generosity of property owners who welcome the public into their homes and buildings. Since 1964, visitors have toured approximately 545 properties, with some returning to the tour many times. **St. Mark's Church** has appeared 14 times, **The Bluestone** and **Town Hall** each 10 times, **Penryn Park Estate** and its outbuildings 9 times,

and **Mill House** in Canton 8 times. Other frequently featured properties include **Dunain** and **Brand House** on Lakeshore Road; **Penryn Homestead** and **Idalia** on Victoria Street; and **Crysler Cottage** on Sullivan Street, each of which has appeared five or six times. Six of the 11 properties on this year's tour have never previously been on the tour.

It is understandable that homeowners may initially hesitate to welcome hundreds of visitors. However, after spending a day sharing their properties with appreciative guests, they find the experience deeply rewarding and take pride in contributing to a tradition that celebrates Port Hope's rich architectural heritage.

The committee selects homes with the visitor experience in mind. Since the town is best experienced on foot, they seek clusters of properties that allow visitors to park once or a few times and explore several nearby locations. Each tour includes a varied mix of architecture—from cottages to grand homes to notable newer homes—with an emphasis on properties that have not been featured recently. The committee also considers distinctive architectural details, interior design, and safe, efficient visitor flow. In most years, the tour also features a church or public building.

This year's tour is walkable and features 11 properties, with homes on **Ridout**, **Charles**, **Walton**, **Pine North**, **North Street**, **Bedford**, and **St. Paul's Church** on Walton.

The tour celebrates the heritage and architecture beyond the town itself. Over the years, tour properties have included homes and buildings in **Campbellcroft**, **Canton**, **Garden Hill**, **Perrytown**, **Welcome**, and **Wesleyville**. More than 40 country properties—from modest farmhouses to grand homes—have been featured, offering visitors a chance to discover the rural character found throughout our community.



The House Tour depends on the support of property owners, local sponsors, ticket sellers, and up to 150 volunteers each year. Volunteers play an essential role on tour day, welcoming visitors and helping each tour stop run smoothly. The generous financial support of 45 sponsors this year will contribute significantly to the funds raised by the tour.

Tickets are \$45 (includes HST) and can be purchased from **Atelier on John**, **Bibelot**, **Ganaraska Financial Credit Union**, **Gilmer's Home Hardware**, **Holton Flowers**, **Stems & Moss Flower Co.**, and online at porthousehousetour.com.

The 2026 House Tour Committee includes **Brian Buttery**, marketing; **Judith Hewlett Gladstone**, treasurer; **Corey Goldman**, chair; **Kate Kostandoff** and **Trish Doney**, volunteers; **Heather Reed**, sponsors; and **Lee Yaroschak**, ticket sales. The committee coordinates the many details behind the scenes so property owners can enjoy the day and share the pride of participating.

Tickets have sold out by mid-September in each of the past three years, and more than 70% of tickets for this year's tour, on Saturday, October 3, sold within the first three weeks. If any tickets are still available near tour day, they will be sold at tour headquarters located at **Stems & Moss Flower Co.**, 74 Walton Street.

For more than six decades, the Port Hope House Tour has opened doors to the community's architectural treasures while helping protect them for the future. To open your home for the

2027 tour or a future year, or to volunteer on tour day, please contact the committee at info@porthousehousetour.com.

Designating Lakeshore Road as a Cultural Heritage Landscape by Susan Layard

The Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACO), Port Hope Branch is recommending that the Municipality designate the western portion of Lakeshore Road within the Town's jurisdiction as a Cultural Heritage Landscape. There is no question that the area meets the criteria for this recognition.

In Ontario, a Cultural Heritage Landscape is defined as a geographically delineated area that has been modified by human activity and is important to the local community. The beautiful agrarian landscape embracing Lakeshore Road, deserves acknowledgment as a Cultural Heritage Landscape because it has developed organically over time from its beginnings as an area of Indigenous travel routes and villages to reflect an ongoing process of human interaction with a natural environment that features lake views, rich soil and provincially significant ravines, marshes and forested lands.

Archaeological evidence demonstrates that Lakeshore Road was originally part of an Indigenous trail corridor and that the area was located within the Anishinaabe territory. There are also indications of ancient Indigenous villages in the region. The connections in this area to the history of Ontario's Indigenous peoples contribute markedly to the historical and contextual value of this landscape.

Also of historical significance is the fact that the Indigenous travel corridor became the site of one of the first through roads in Upper Canada. Constructed around 1800, the new road became part of the military and supply route between York (Toronto) and Kingston that proved vital in the defence of Upper Canada during the War of 1812.

While through traffic eventually shifted north with the construction of Highway 2, Lakeshore Road remained an important transportation byway for the 19th century settlements that grew up around it. Many of the farmsteads and local villages built during this time still exist today and contribute to the architectural value of this landscape. Heritage attributes include the charming and already designated Wesleyville Village, and many heritage properties and structures that display a variety of architectural styles such as Regency, Neoclassical, Italianate, Gothic Revival and Ontario Cottage that make them worthy of designation in their own right under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The villages of Wesleyville and Port Britain also display historical value as representatives of the early industrial and maritime activity that shaped the regional economy. For example, Port Britain was a mid-19th-century harbour and shipbuilding site that also served as a station stop where the first Grand Trunk Railway locomotives were landed and distributed.

Indeed, the set of narrow railway viaducts known collectively as the Hole in the Wall is a particularly prominent industrial heritage landmark found within this landscape. Originally required in the 1850's as part of the Grand Trunk Railroad, this popular feature, still in use today, is low and narrow, giving drivers an excuse to slow down and admire the striking views of the area.

The landscape surrounding Lakeshore Road has been greatly valued by generations of Ontario inhabitants. It has long been a western entryway to Port Hope, for both residents and visitors alike, and people today frequently come off Highway 401 at Newtonville, well before the Port Hope exits, just to drive along this beautiful stretch of road. The views of the lake and

farmland are spectacular, and, according to one observer, "the road remains a narrow, winding, low-speed route that preserves a character and experience that is little changed since the 19th century."

It is important that Port Hope safeguards every aspect of this cultural heritage landscape. Its striking beauty, its significant heritage features and its place within the context of both local and provincial history are unparalleled. Yet, without the protection of designation, ongoing growth and development, particularly in the face of the plans for a nuclear power plant near Wesleyville Village, could easily destroy the iconic attributes of this historic area.

Moreover, the Municipality of Port Hope is a well-respected heritage town with over 200 designated properties and two existing Heritage Conservation Districts. Designating the western portion of Lakeshore Road as a cultural heritage landscape would further enhance Port Hope's heritage status and commitment to its historic roots.

The process of designating this landscape could begin right away with the protection of the Hole in the Wall as well as the other unprotected heritage properties nearby. All of these heritage resources, for which considerable research has already been completed, could be listed immediately and investigated further for designation by Port Hope's Heritage Advisory Committee during the year ahead. At the same time, the Municipality could engage a heritage consultant to complete the professional Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report required for a designation of this complexity.

The cultural heritage landscape that surrounds the western portion of Lakeshore Road has been described as "magical and character defining." ACO Port Hope strongly encourages the Municipality to give this remarkable setting the recognition and protection it deserves.





PROFILE OF LOCAL TRADESPERSON

Chris Boot

by Tom Cruickshank

A few weeks go, the scaffolding came down on yet another restoration project on Walton Street. This time, the makeover was applied to a narrow, c.1854 four-storey commercial facade, which has long been upstaged by its across-the-street neighbour, the St. Lawrence Hotel. (If you've lived here long enough, you may remember it as home to the Port Hope Hydro Commission until 1975.) When stripped of its scaffold, the big reveal showed that this is definitely a building worth a second look, a significant component of the downtown streetscape. Even more notable is the quality of the brickwork, which has been repointed and refreshed to look as good as new. Kudos to owners Jasmine and Scott Blaier for recognizing the necessity of reviving their tired building, which they bought in 2021 to serve as home to their new Dane & Jute home accessories and flooring business. And most of all, hats off to Chris Boot, brick mason and local small-business owner, for his expertise in restoring the long-neglected masonry.

Chris, now 33, is a local son who grew up in the Schickedanz subdivision. Coming of age in Port Hope, he couldn't help but clue into the importance of heritage preservation in our town, but it was only by accident that he fell into the restoration trade. "Fresh out of school, I was working at the printing shop that was in the basement of the post office," Chris recalls. There, he had a chance meeting with a customer named Rob Green, a building contractor familiar in local heritage circles. "I'm not sure what he saw in me, but he saw something." As they chatted, Rob offered him a job on the spot with his construction firm. "I had no particular skills, and for the first few years, I worked as a labourer." But Chris was a quick study. He found his niche in masonry upkeep specific to historic restoration: replacing spalled brick, repairing chimneys, mixing mortar and repointing mortar joints. "I was mostly self-taught and learned a lot by trial and error." Today an accomplished mason, "there are fewer of both," he smiles.

As his proficiency grew, Chris saw his new profession as more of a craft than simply his bread and butter. "Unlike, say, plumbing, there's an artistry in a trade like bricklaying," he says, thinking perhaps of the dogtooth pattern and inset panels that decorate the cornice of the Blaiers' building. These ornamental

accents are perhaps the most remarkable aspect of Victorian-era masonry and for Chris, the best satisfaction has come from learning to replicate and maintain these creative elements. "Look up to the rooflines in downtown Port Hope, and you'll see all kinds of neat patterns and ornamental brickwork."

Since Chris hung out his own shingle as the Historic Brick Co. in 2016, the point has been driven home on any number of heritage buildings. "It's fascinating to compare size, texture, colour... every building is different," he says, adding that he and his crew of three have worked on the renowned Trafalgar Castle in Whitby and here in town, spent several weeks touching up and repairing various buildings at Trinity College School. Meanwhile, the Blaiers' commercial façade posed some interesting challenges of its own. "A rather sloppy overcoat of yellow paint had to be cleaned off to reveal the true brick colour," Chris recalls, but more pressing were the upper-storey window sills. They had sagged over the decades and had to be righted. "The hard part was aligning the sills to match up with the adjacent bricks." To that end, some of the brick courses were purposely repaired to a slightly narrower width, but you have to look closely to tell and in fact, a casual observer would never notice. "That's where the artistry comes in."

Concurrent with the renewal of the Blaiers' building, Chris also found work across the street as the first phase of the restoration of Port Hope's venerable Music Hall began under the watch of entrepreneur Albert Schultz. There, he was consultant in masonry repair and, based on historical photos, Chris designed replicas of lost decorative cornices and other architectural accoutrements.



This photo, about 25 years old, shows the building as part of a larger grouping of commercial buildings on the north side of Walton Street, just below Cavan Street



Jasmine and Scott Blaier get full marks for taking on this commercial building, which houses their upscale flooring business. Praise also goes to Chris Boot, whose Historic Brick Co. did the painstaking masonry restoration.



Compare the façade as found with the results of the recent makeover. It's a pretty dramatic improvement.



Les Petits Cousins du Québec

Many of you have heard the short version of how we ended in Domme, France.

I won't go into this at the moment though I'll speak of it on our evening this November 28, 2026 at the **Beamish House** in Port Hope. Stephanus and I (Dan) will be visiting Port Hope and presenting our project and the all inclusive visits we offer to you.

To give you a quick highlight Stephanus and I would like to invite you to explore our home in Domme, France. The region is rich in history, from prehistoric to medieval times. There are castles, caves, prehistoric sites, rivers, outdoor activities for all ages and more.

On the 28th we would like to invite you to our presentation and we can go into details of who we are and what we do. We'll talk about Domme and give you an overall example of what the week with us could look like.



Stephanus Widjaja et Daniel Mayer
Les Petits Cousins du Québec



You might have visited us already, so why not come and see us, and bring your friends and family to Beamish House in Port Hope. We don't have a time as yet but we are wondering who would be interested. It all depends on the interest; we might do two presentations on the same day. Refreshments will be provided by us and some door prizes.

– **Stephanus Widjaja et Daniel Mayer**
Les Petits Cousins du Québec
B&B/Chambres D'hôtes à Domme, France
16 Grand'rue 24250, Domme France
lespetitscousinsduquebec.com

Walking Tours: A Brief Update by Katherine McHarg

It has been a great spring season, featuring six different walking tours, with some very well attended offerings. We are pleased to have had different organizations reach out to us to provide tours for their members, such as the Pine Ridge Walking Group, in addition to our scheduled walks.



Don't miss out on one of our new tours this year, entitled *Union Cemetery – A Living Past*, which includes a stroll through the impressive Port Hope cemetery.

Remaining Tours: Tickets available at www.porthope.ca

- September 12: *Union Cemetery – A Living Past*
- September 19: *Memories of King Street*
- September 26: *Welcome to Englishtown*

As always, tours meet at 11:00 at a location specified on eventbrite when you order your ticket, and tours run for approximately 90 minutes rain or shine. Watch for further information in the weeks to come.

Huge thanks to **Marnie Bickle** and **Brian Buttery**, who wrote and researched our two new tours this season (*Saints and Sinners* and *Union Cemetery – A Living Past*). Thanks also to our intrepid tour guides **Bill and Marnie Bickle**, **Brian Buttery**, **Peter Bolton**, **Tom Cruickshank**, and **Helen and Paul Evans**. And finally, huge thanks to **Jenny Wadds** for setting up the tickets through the Eventbrite system.

Boot, continued from page 5

Crucial to the restored look was a new venture for Chris' company: the design of authentic replacement windows, lavishing executed with an Italianate flourish, some 18 feet tall.

Meanwhile, back at their newly repointed building, Jasmine and Scott aren't finished yet. Already they have renovated their top two floors as Air BnBs and are about to embark on an ambitious plan to upgrade the second floor to function as their own personal apartment. There's a lesson here: See what happens when enthusiastic owners find a skilled artisan and put their heads together to transform a tired downtown building.



Glorious Summer Social at Dunain

August 6 was the perfect day for our branch's Summer Social members' get together last month. Hosted by **Dianne and Frank Steblaj** in their magnificent gardens at **Dunain**, the event was packed with our members enjoying conversation and friendship. The party was co-chaired by **Darlene King and Shirley Richardson**, topped off by a great speech from our branch chair, **Brian Buttery**. As you can see, a great time was had by all!

by Katherine McHarg, photos by Greg McHarg





Major Upcoming Events

House Tour October 3

WHERE I LIVE IS MY BUSINESS - I KNOW NORTHUMBERLAND

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As a lifetime Northumberland County resident and an established real estate sales leader, my team and I pride ourselves on creating a supportive environment where our clients feel confident and guided through every step of the buying and selling process.

Always putting our clients' needs first, I am committed to exceeding expectations through professionalism, integrity, and patience.

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