

# Historically Speaking

The Newsletter of the Cobourg and District

Historical Society

April 2023 — Issue 339

## HMCS Cobourg

Our distinguished speaker, Roger Litwiller, is a Canadian author, historian and lecturer. He has written two books, *White Ensign Flying* and *Warships of the Bay of Quinte* as well as numerous articles for magazines and newspapers. HMCS Cobourg was a modified Flower-class corvette that served with the Royal Canadian Navy during the Second World War. She fought primarily in the Battle of the Atlantic as a convoy escort and was named for Cobourg, Ontario.

Roger served in the Canadian Armed Forces Reserve, working with cadets and his civilian career was as a Paramedic for 37 years. Following his retirement from Paramedicine, the Canadian Coast Guard employed Roger under contract as their historian. Roger's research has contributed to documentaries and several Canadian and International museums, providing information for exhibits and repatriating recovered historical artifacts. When Roger is on a lecture tour, he is often introduced as, "the storyteller, who can save your life."



Officers and Skeena Cadets have been invited to attend. We look forward to welcoming them!

Join us on **Tuesday, April 18** for an informative presentation. Doors open at 7:00 pm. Note that this is the third Tuesday rather than the usual fourth Tuesday of the month. All are welcome. Bring a friend or two! Members free - Guests \$5.00.

### *Our Previous Meeting*

## **More than a Footnote: Canadian Women You Should Know About**

Our presenter on March 28 was Karin Wells. She, is best known as a CBC radio documentary maker and author. Her work has been heard on radio networks around the world and has been recognized by the United Nations. She is a three-time recipient of the Canadian Association of Journalist documentary award. Wells worked – briefly – as a line worker in a pea factory, a school teacher and as an actress. She has a graduate degree in law and in 2011 was inducted into the University of Ottawa’s Common Law Honour Society.

Wells highlighted several women who have greatly contributed to Canada. These included a doctor who discovered a treatment for Hodgkin’s Lymphoma. Wells recounted how Mildred Vera Lobb (née Peters) conducted groundbreaking research on Hodgkin’s lymphoma, and breast cancer.



Her work led to changes in the way these diseases are treated. Lobb was also a pioneer of patient-centered care, which prioritizes patients in the decision-making process for medical treatment, and which is now the standard model in health care.

Wells recounted important achievements of Allie Vibert Douglas. Dr. Douglas was a Canadian astronomer and pioneer in the teaching of astrophysics. Douglas came to Queen’s University in 1939 and was the university’s Dean of Women for the next 20 years while also teaching physics. Following Dr. Douglas’s death in 1988, Asteroid 3269 was renamed Vibert-Douglas. In 2003, a crater, on the planet Venus was also named after her.

Karin also presented new details of Mina Benson Hubbard whose story she recounted at a CDHS meeting last year. Her new information included a previously unknown diary that included details of the Hubbard expedition’s exploratory trek across the back-country of Labrador

[Wells’ latest book](#), *More Than a Footnote: Canadian Women You Should Know*, was available for purchase at the meeting and many members were delighted to obtain autographed copies.

# Remaining Event of the CDHS 2023 Program

*FRIDAY, May 26, 2023*

## Social and Trivia Night

Mark your calendar to join us for our end of season get-together and first post-COVID in-person Trivia Night and Social. Sit with members and friends and enjoy trivia covering all categories from local to world questions while enjoying a drink and treats.

Join us on **Friday, May 26, 2023 at the Legion Village Pub**, 11 Hibernia Street, Cobourg. Come early for the best selection of used books. Doors open at 6:30pm with questions, answers, nibbles and cash bar from 7pm to 10pm. Tickets will be available for \$10 at the April meeting.

You can order tickets in advance by email to [cgrucelajones@gmail.com](mailto:cgrucelajones@gmail.com) or by calling Carla at 289-252-1684.



**TRIVIA NIGHT & SOCIAL**  
**FRIDAY MAY 26, 2023**

**LEGION VILLAGE PUB, 111 HIBERNIA STREET**  
**7 P.M TO 10 P.M. - DOORS OPEN 6:30 P.M.**

**CASH BAR**  
**COFFEE, TEA, SNACKS**  
**\$10 PER PERSON**

**GIFT CERTIFICATES, DOOR PRIZES, 50/50 DRAW**  
**USED BOOK SALE**

**SOCIALIZE AND ENJOY THE COMPANY OF MEMBERS**  
**AND FRIENDS**

**TRIVIA IN MANY CATEGORIES**  
**ENTERTAINMENT, SPORTS, LOCAL & WORLD HISTORY,**  
**FUN & SILLY**

## Member Matters

### **AGM**

The April meeting will begin with our Annual General Meeting (AGM). If you would like to volunteer for any position on our Executive please contact any of the current members (see last page of this newsletter) to discuss the opportunities. You will receive all AGM materials by email prior to the meeting.

## Announcements

### ***Cobourg Museum***

The Cobourg Museum's website has been updated to include "Harbour Story" with two pages on the ferries. It includes a first-person story of a young boy's trip across the lake. Visit their website at [https://www.communitystories.ca/v2/cobourg-harbour\\_port-de-cobourg](https://www.communitystories.ca/v2/cobourg-harbour_port-de-cobourg).

The Cobourg Museum's YouTube channel now includes a short video showing one of the ferries docking in Cobourg. To view this and more than a dozen other Cobourg related videos visit [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdTovcVcpHN\\_Wgc-WMuDRBQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdTovcVcpHN_Wgc-WMuDRBQ).

### ***Lakeshore Genealogical Society***

**Saturday, April 15, 2023**

#### ***Researching Families Using Community Resources***

Learn what's available; participants will include: Cobourg Library, Port Hope Library, Lakeshore Genealogical Society, Northumberland County Archives, Cobourg and District Historical Society, Cramahe Township History and Sifton-Cook Heritage Centre/Cobourg Museum.

**Cobourg Public Library - Rotary Room 11am – 4pm**

**Wednesday, May 10, 2023**

#### ***The Architectural Heritage of Hamilton Township***

**Tom Cruikshank** will talk about the diversity of the buildings in the rural area around Cobourg including information on early families. Tom promises a few Surprises! Join us in person and by Zoom

**Cobourg Public Library - Rotary Room – 7pm** for Zoom access email

[LGSregister@gmail.com](mailto:LGSregister@gmail.com).

# Cobourg Rochester Ferry Mural



In November of 2021, CDHS first brought your attention to the poor state of the mural and how it was a very sad reflection on our town and history. We have great news! Thanks to Keith Herring (owner of the building) and his continued support for refurbishing the mural, the Downtown Business Improvement Association (DBIA) for approving and funding the work and Deputy

Mayor Beatty for helping us bring this forward to the various parties involved. The mural will be restored by the talented muralist Allen Bender. You can read more about Bender in the current issue of *Watershed Magazine* page 42 in the printed copy or online at <https://watershedmagazine.com/features/larger-than-life/>

We must await permits and also address safety issues while the mural is being restored but we hope that the work can be completed in the near future.

Cecilia Nasmith of *Today's Northumberland* provided a history of the mural. Her full article is available at: <http://todaysnorthumberland.ca/2019/05/12/cobourg-loses-stellar-citizen/>

This excerpt from Cecilia's article is based on the comments by former Mayor Delanty:

He (Mr. Bill Patchett) was an active figure in the Downtown Vitalization campaign but, years before that, provided the example himself by pooling funds with Dr. Thomas Hawke to completely redo the former Allen's Hardware building on King Street. Along with ground floor renovations, he installed second and third-floor lofts and commissioned a mural on the building's east side honouring the car ferries that connected Cobourg with Rochester, NY, for almost half a century. Delanty was also impressed with the time and money Patchett invested in restoring the Introibo Ad Altare Dei statue from chronic vandalism and installing it outside the building where it is now a mecca for art lovers and selfie snappers.

VICTORIA HALL VOLUNTEERS  
PRESENT

# A HALL SO GRAND

A CELEBRATION OF 160 YEARS OF VICTORIA HALL  
IN WORDS, IMAGES, AND SONG

SATURDAY, MAY 13th, 2023 at 7:30pm



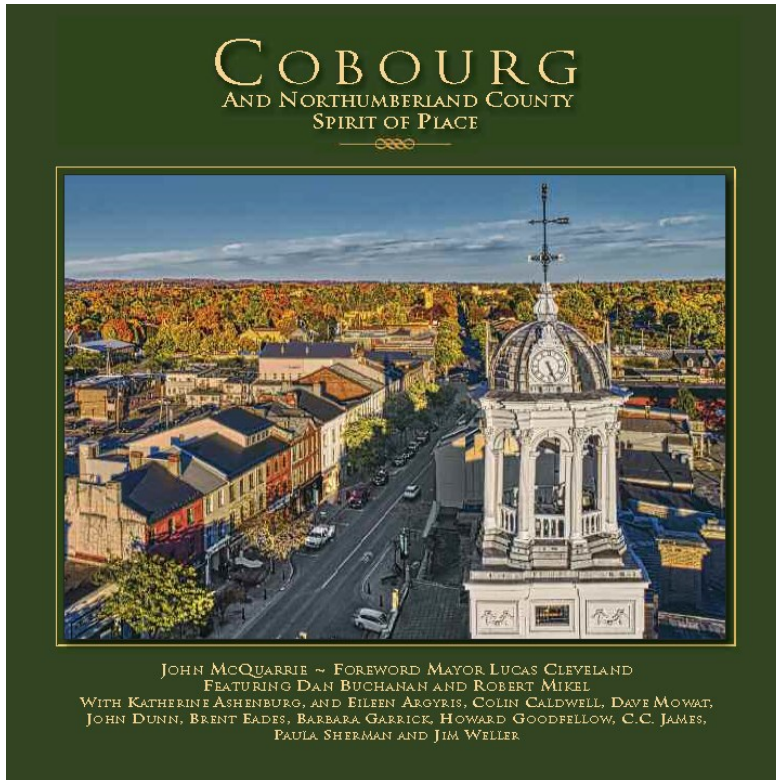
CREATED BY HUGH BREWSTER  
WITH BRIGITTE ROBINSON, THE ORIANA SINGERS,  
AND GUEST SOLOISTS, ACCOMPANIED BY JAMES BOURNE

TICKETS \$50  
light refreshments

call 905-372-2210  
[www.concerthallatvictoriahall.com](http://www.concerthallatvictoriahall.com)  
A service charge will apply



## Coming Soon to Nearby Bookshops



From the early morning warm glow of Victoria Hall’s clock tower, where a fortunate few have stood, you can see for literally hundreds of miles. That very same view rounding the nineteenth century would have revealed a bustling industrial harbour, where those who believed in Cobourg and its riches, looked to the Town’s future and potential. That unwavering and tenacious spirit remains to this day. As a newcomer to Cobourg on my journey looking for “home”, without knowing the fine details of its illustrious history, I sensed that Cobourg was that place.

Cobourg has always been a town that has dreamt big dreams – from the erection of

our magnificent Victoria Hall in 1860 – our Town’s crown jewel in our heritage downtown, now home to our local government, the Art Gallery of Northumberland, and resplendent Concert Hall, to the transformation of our waterfront to a vibrant place where festivals abound. Cobourg is a place that attracts visitors from near and far. We stand humbly on this ground, which has been home to the Mississauga Anishinabeg of the Ojibway Nation since the sixteen hundreds. Called the Anishinaabe, they were the “first men” and the caretakers of this land for thousands of years. We pay homage to the seven First Nations signatories to the 1923 Williams Treaties which include the Mississauga of Scugog Island, Alderville, Hiawatha, and Curve Lake, and the Chippewas of Rama-Mnjikaning, Georgina Island, and Beau soleil First Nations.

The history recounted, mostly by local writers, in John McQuarrie’s book brings Cobourg’s past to life so much so that it opens up your senses, and his pictures define the very saying “that a picture is worth a thousand words”. If you look long enough at them, you can see them come to life.

Cobourg, surrounded by Northumberland county and its rolling countryside and quaint small towns, boasts beautiful vistas, rolling hills and bountiful farmlands that speak to what environmental stewardship really means.

Charles Dickens noted in 1842 that Cobourg is a “cheerful thriving little town”. While I would agree with Dickens that Cobourg is still cheerful and thriving, as we continue to unlock Cobourg’s potential, our small Town and County is transforming.

I hope that you enjoy John McQuarrie’s book as much as I have. Understanding where we have come from provides greater meaning to where we are going.

Sincerely,

Mayor Lucas Cleveland

## CDHS Executive for 2022 – 2023

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