



Historically Speaking

The Newsletter of the Cobourg and District
Historical Society

November 2019 — Issue 308

Trench Art: Mementos of War



During leisure hours at the front, skilled soldiers created trench art from the remnants of war such as discarded bullets and shell casings. Producing this “art” was a popular pastime and many examples have survived.

Randy Barber, a recognized expert on trench art, will be displaying and discussing items from his extensive collection at our meeting on November 26.

Randy and his wife Solveig built a new home in Cobourg some 18 months ago after having resided in Markham for over 40 years. In the late 1990s, he served two terms on Markham Council. Since retiring as Chairman of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario in 2005, he has held federal government appointments as an Administration Law Judge for the National Parole Board, CPP Disability and EI appeals. He now consults to the legal cannabis industry relative to compliance and regulation. His passions include trench art, Sir Winston Churchill and the history of barbering.

Doors open at 7:00 PM for coffee and cookies and the meeting begins at 7:30 PM. Admission, including refreshments, is free for members and \$5 for non-members. Guests are always welcome so bring a friend or two! See you on Tuesday, November 26.

Our Previous Meeting

John Murray: Oceanographer



Professor Ronald Roberts Ph.D. has had a distinguished career as a veterinary scientist. Born in Liverpool during the “blitz”, he has resided and worked in many countries including the US, Thailand, Scotland and England. Currently he resides in Scotland. Dr. Ronald Roberts is widely thought to have revolutionized the attitude of the veterinary profession to the significance of fish and shellfish. “By his research, his teaching, his writing and the force of his personality, he built and Institute of world calibre.” He has inspired veterinary scientists to continue his work. He has received many awards including the Queen’s Award for Exports from Her majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Princess Diana also visited the Institute he founded.

What brought this distinguished scholar to Cobourg? Now that Dr. Roberts has retired from this work, he has been studying the work and life of Sir John Murray. John Murray was born in Cobourg in 1841, lived his early years here and graduated from Victoria College. He then moved to Scotland to continue his education while living with a wealthy relative.

Dr. Roberts recounted some of Murray’s amazing achievements. Beginning with his years on the Challenger expedition (1872-1876), Murray first used many of the techniques of modern oceanography. His work as the naturalist on the H.M.S *Challenger* was followed by numerous other scientific achievements including one of the first scientific studies of the structure and origins of coral reefs. He developed techniques for the mapping and classification of the sediments on the ocean bottom that are still used. Sir John expedited Britain’s annexation of Christmas Island 1888 and later became very wealthy from developing the phosphate of lime resources that he had discovered on the island.

The story of Murray’s journey from a student in an insignificant small town in the colonies to a world renowned scientist and successful businessman would be inspirational for today’s students in Cobourg. It is unfortunate that few in Cobourg have ever heard of him. I cannot imagine a Cobourg native more deserving of a local commemorative statue.

Cobourg Historical Society Program: 2019 — 2020

Date	Speaker	Topic
January 28, 2020	Rob Washburn	James Cockburn
February 25, 2020	Michael Peterman	Delicious Mirth: The Life and Times of James McCarroll
March 24, 2020	Leigh Barnum	The Barnum Family History
April 28, 2020	Dave Patterson	The Extraordinary Number of Indian Gifts to the World
May 26, 2020	Randy Barber	Wine and Cheese social at the Loft Discussion of Churchill followed by screening of <i>The Darkest Hour</i>

Cobourg's Harbour

Many newcomers to Cobourg are unaware of the importance of our harbour to our town's economic past. Visiting the waterfront today they see a trailer park and attractive pleasure boats owned by well-to-do locals and visitors. For Cobourg's first 150 years things were very different. The harbour was a driver of economic activity in the town. With daily docking of ships there were excellent employment opportunities for our men in the harbour, on ships and in local industry. From 1907 to 1950 there were several trips each week of Ontario I and Ontario II – ferries which carried iron ore, coal, industrial goods and passengers between Cobourg and Rochester, NY. Even 50 years ago frequent ocean going freighters brought the raw materials needed for our thriving local industries. The now seriously decrepit East Pier allowed for easy unloading of shipments of coal, oil and even huge spools of steel wire from Germany as shown in the photo below.



Member Matters

New Members

Please join me in welcoming our newest member: Doug Weldon.



Announcements

Lakeshore Genealogical Society

Lakeshore Genealogical Society meetings are on the second Thursday of the month from 6:30pm to 9:00pm in the HTM Building, 1185 Elgin St. West, Cobourg:

Thursday, February 13, 2020: Three-part meeting: a) Members will discuss their pre-submitted brick walls to find solutions b) Samples of *GREAT* resource finds c) Drouin Records- finding records.

Thursday, April 9, 2020: Speaker: Linda Corupe – Making Her Presence Known – It is often “a man’s world” when it comes to researching ancestors in Upper Canada. This talk will guide you through the records in archives & libraries that researchers can use to gain knowledge of female ancestors.

Saturday, April 18, 2020: Open House in the Rotary Room of the Cobourg Library. The open house portion will enable the public to meet with LGS members to get answers to research questions. In the afternoon Leanne Cooper will present *The Wonders of WikiTree* including an overview of WikiTree, its key features and how the program supports finding and collaborating with distant cousins and other genealogists. The presentation will be open to the public. For further information see <https://leannecoopergenealogy.ca/> and <https://www.wikitree.com/>

Enjoy
Barnum House
at
Christmastide

SUNDAY 1 DECEMBER
1:00 - 4:00 pm

The Arcadian Duo
The C Sharp Singers
Christmas music and carols
Seasonal Refreshments



TICKETS \$20 single, \$35 x 2, STUDENT: \$5
CHILDREN: FREE
ADVANCE TICKETS FROM
jackietinson@gmail.com or
call 905-885-1768

LOCATION: 10568 County 2 Rd, Grafton. Park behind the house or on Barnum House Road.

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