

# Historically Speaking

The Newsletter of the Cobourg and District  
Historical Society

October 2024 — Issue 350

## **Agriculture in Northumberland: A History of the Family Farm**

At our October meeting Paul Burnham will explore the history and the importance of the family farm in Northumberland.

Anne and Paul Burnham opened the Burnham Family Farm Market in 1994 and have been supplying the Cobourg area with local vegetables and produce ever since. Much of their seasonable fruits and vegetables are grown on their sixth-generation family farm, located between Cobourg and Port Hope on County Road 2.

The Burnham family were among the first farmers in the Cobourg area. Their family has been influential in Northumberland farming, industry and politics for over two centuries.

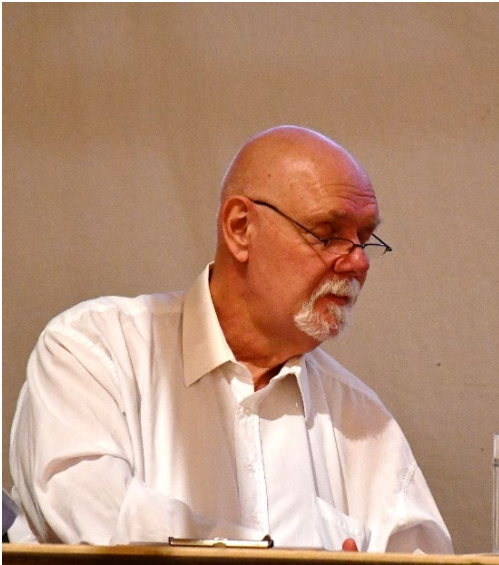


The history of farming by the Burnhams mirrors, to some extent, the history of farming in Northumberland County. Paul will draw on the Burnham experience to illustrate how agriculture has changed from a subsistence level in the 1700s to a technology centered operation involving multiple generations in the 2000s. And where do we go from here?

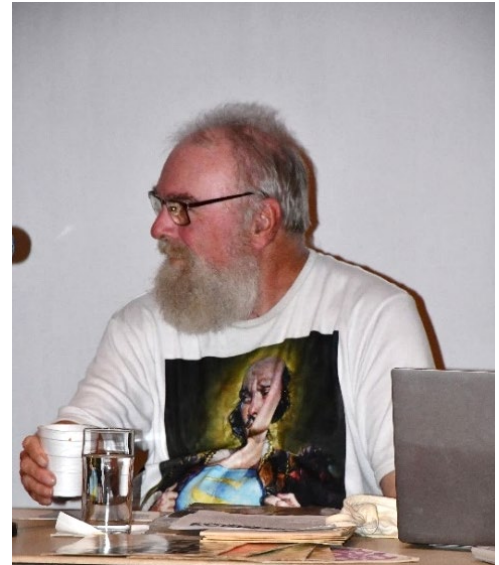
Join us on Tuesday, October 22, 2024 for an informative presentation in Cobourg's Victoria Hall. Doors open at 7:00 pm and the meeting starts at 7:30 pm. All are welcome. There will be coffee/tea and the usual cookies so bring a friend or two! Members free and guests are \$5.00.

## Our Previous Meeting

# The Role of Cobourg Newspapers in Creating Community



Our September meeting explored the importance of newspapers in Cobourg from the perspective of two local former reporters: Robert Washburn and Wally Keeler.



Robert Washburn is

an award-winning educator in the Journalism Program at Loyalist College where he teaches new and emerging technologies in journalism. A practicing journalist for 40+ years, he is well known locally for his weekly current affairs radio show *Consider This Northumberland*. Robert worked full-time at the *Cobourg Star* from 1988 to 1997. He continues to work in the community as a columnist, part-time reporter, and advocate for local news.

Wally Keeler, in the 1960s and 1970s, had a regular beat at the *Cobourg Sentinel Star* as a court reporter in the Old Bailey in Victoria Hall. Tuesdays were Cobourg Police Day and Thursdays OPP Day. Wally also covered the culture beat, coffee houses, folk music and poetry in the basement of the Anglican Church and has been a long time poetician in Cobourg's poetry scene.

Washburn discussed Cobourg's early newspapers – *Cobourg Star* (1831), the *Cobourg Sentinel* (1861) and the *Cobourg World* (1864) – from the perspective of how their editorial content reflected the changing concerns of residents. For example, early copies of the *Cobourg Star* emphasized happenings in England while the *Cobourg World* was more concerned with events in the US and Ontario.

Keeler recounted many anecdotes relating to Cobourg events in the 1960s including dance parties, marijuana and efforts to keep the names of the sons of prominent Cobourgians out of the newspaper reports.

## Future Events of Our 2024/2025 Programme

<p><i>Agriculture in Northumberland: A History of the Family Farm:</i> Paul Burnham will use the Burnham family's experience to illustrate the history of agriculture in Northumberland. The Burnhams arrived with the earliest European settlers to the area and have since been very much involved in farming as a way of life in Northumberland.</p>	<p>Tuesday, October 22, 2024</p>
<p><i>Celebrating Colonel John Weir Foote:</i> Foote was a Canadian military chaplain and politician who received the Victoria Cross for his actions during the 1942 Dieppe Raid. Born in Madoc, he eventually made his home in Cobourg. Presented by Rob Mikel and Virginia McLaughlin</p>	<p>Tuesday, November 19, 2024*</p>
<p><i>The Story of Our Garden Club:</i> The Cobourg and District Horticultural Society was founded in 1859 and has been in operation ever since. The club even continued to hold virtual monthly meetings with speakers during the pandemic. Let's learn more and dream about summer in January by celebrating the club's 160+ years in operation with presenter Sarah Holland.</p>	<p>Tuesday, January 28, 2025</p>
<p><i>Crime and Punishment in Northumberland County: A Historical Perspective.</i> At one time, the county had four correctional centres but only one remains. Presenter John L. Hill, retired criminal lawyer and author, will share anecdotes about his experiences that shed light on their operations.</p>	<p>Tuesday, February 25, 2025</p>
<p><i>What are Rebellion Boxes?</i> to be presented by Darryl Withrow. Rebellion boxes are some of the most prized artifacts in the Sharon Temple's collection. These small wooden boxes were handcrafted by prisoners from the Rebellion of 1837 as they waited in jail for their trials.</p>	<p>Tuesday, March 18, 2025*</p>
<p><i>CDHS Annual General Meeting</i> followed by <i>British Home Children</i>. Marg Graham and Dianne Conway will tell the home children's stories, dreams, nightmares and their contributions to life in Canada.</p>	<p>Tuesday, April 22, 2025</p>
<p>Dinner and presentation of the unsolved murder in Madoc <i>Who Killed Charles St. Charles</i> by author Gord Pitts. Further details will be available nearer to the meeting date.</p>	<p>Tuesday, May 27, 2025</p>

**\*Several of our meetings have been rescheduled from the usual fourth Tuesday to accommodate usage of Victoria Hall by the Northumberland Players.**

## Member Matters

### *New Members*

Please welcome our newest CDHS members: Erik Kvernstad, Heather and Rob Luxton, Rose Mansell and Rita Zeran

### *Another Birthday!*

Ken Willcocks, a long time member of the Cobourg and District Historical Society, celebrated



his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday on Thursday September 12, 2024. Over 230 people attended the birthday event at the Best Western Plus hotel including a number of CDHS members. In keeping with a family tradition, Ken used his father's sword to cut the cake!

Ken has been a CDHS member since 2010 and has organized many projects which further our society's goals. For more on a few of Ken's projects see:

<https://cdhs.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/NewsletterOct13.pdf>

<https://cdhs.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/NewsletterOct16.pdf>

<https://cdhs.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/NewsletterNov18.pdf>

### **Member at Large**

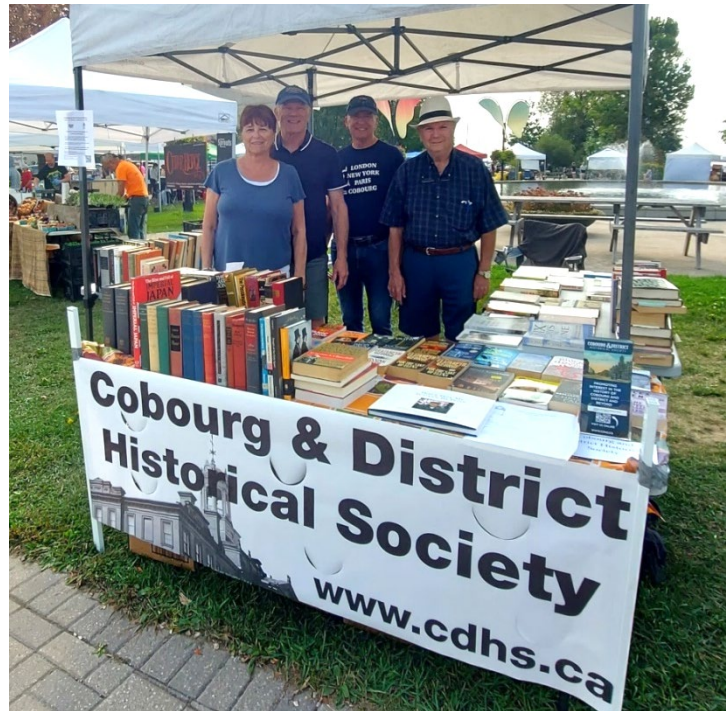
Chantal Diotte has joined the CDHS executive as a Member at Large. Chantal's contact information is on the last page of this newsletter.

### **September Meeting Video**

If you missed our September meeting you can watch the video at:  
<https://youtu.be/2rYVUJdlENw>

### **Farmer's Market**

CDHS had a booth at the September 21 Cobourg Farmer's Market. This both serves to raise awareness of our group and raise money from the sales of donated books. Our booth was front and centre at the market and the weather was perfect for selling books and telling people all about the Cobourg and District Historical Society. At a \$1-\$5 price range for the books we added \$118 to the CDHS coffers.



### **Renew your membership for 2024-2025**

Thank you for your past membership



with the CDHS. Your membership is very important to us, and now it's time to renew for the 2024-2025 season.

In addition to our face-to-face meetings each month, we provide our informative *Historically Speaking* newsletter and continue to keep our Facebook and

our <https://cdhs.ca/> website updated.

We incur costs that include audio/visual equipment for the meetings; preparation and production of promotional materials (pamphlets, banner); honoraria to the speakers who will be preparing their talks and contributions to permanent historical features in Cobourg.

We have kept the membership fees the same as last season:

Individual Membership: \$30 Family Membership: \$50

# Jack Calder: Navigator

Patricia Calder

Imagine you are a mother or father in 1939 in Ontario. Your three sons sign up to go to war in Europe against the tyrant/dictator Hitler of Germany. In one stunning short year Hitler has taken control of western Europe and is threatening Great Britain. Your three sons depart overseas ready to fight, two in the army, a third in the air force.

Patricia Calder tells the story of Jack Calder -- navigator in the RCAF/RAF. Before the war, Jack had been a popular sports journalist with Canadian Press. His story-telling chops earned him a place in the history of the battle of the air.

Jack created word pictures of how the people of Britain endured the bombings. He led a group of star-struck airmen to meet the Royal Family for tea. He was the first to describe life aboard a bomber as it attacked an enemy harbour.


PAGE TWELVE

## BOMBING RA

### Jack Calder Writes About Flight Over Nazi-Occupied Land

Rode Big Bomber Through Dangerous Skies Toward Important Enemy Target

**Bomb-Aimer**



(Editor's note: How does it feel to be sitting in a heavy bomber winging through dangerous skies toward an important enemy target, risking anti-aircraft fire and attack by enemy fighter aircraft? Pilot Officer Jack Calder, of Goderich, Ont., a former staff writer of The Canadian Press, now an observer in the Royal Canadian Air Force, answers the question in the following article, describing his first operational flight over German-occupied territory as navigator and bomb-aimer.)

BY JACK CALDER  
(Copyright, 1941)

LONDON, August 12 — (CP)— Slapsy Maxie looked at the oil pressure again and then he looked at me.

"I think we might just make it," he said.

Then it was time to dash out to sea, if we were to be at the target at the zero hour. The formation tightened behind us and we climb-

JACK CALDER

## NINE CANADIAN AIRMEN INTERNED IN NEUTRAL EIRE

OTTAWA, April 29 — (CP) — Nine Canadian airmen are interned in Eire, Premier Mackenzie King said in the House of Commons today. Mr. King, replying to questions by T. L. Church (Cons., Toronto-Broadview), declined to reveal what representations, if any, have been made regarding the use of bases in Eire by Canada or her Allies.

The Government of Eire, in accordance with a policy of neutrality, had followed the practice of interning any members of the armed forces on either side who landed in Eire while engaged in operations, Mr. King said.

Mr. King said it was not considered advisable to make any further statement concerning the

airmen, seven of whom are members of the Royal Canadian Air Force and two members of the Royal Air Force.

Mr. Church had asked particularly what action was proposed regarding PO. Jack Calder, son of Rev. and Mrs. A. C. Calder, of Owen Sound, who was forced down in Eire last October.

He asked whether any representations had been made with reference to the use of Eire bases by the Government or her Allies on behalf of Canada.

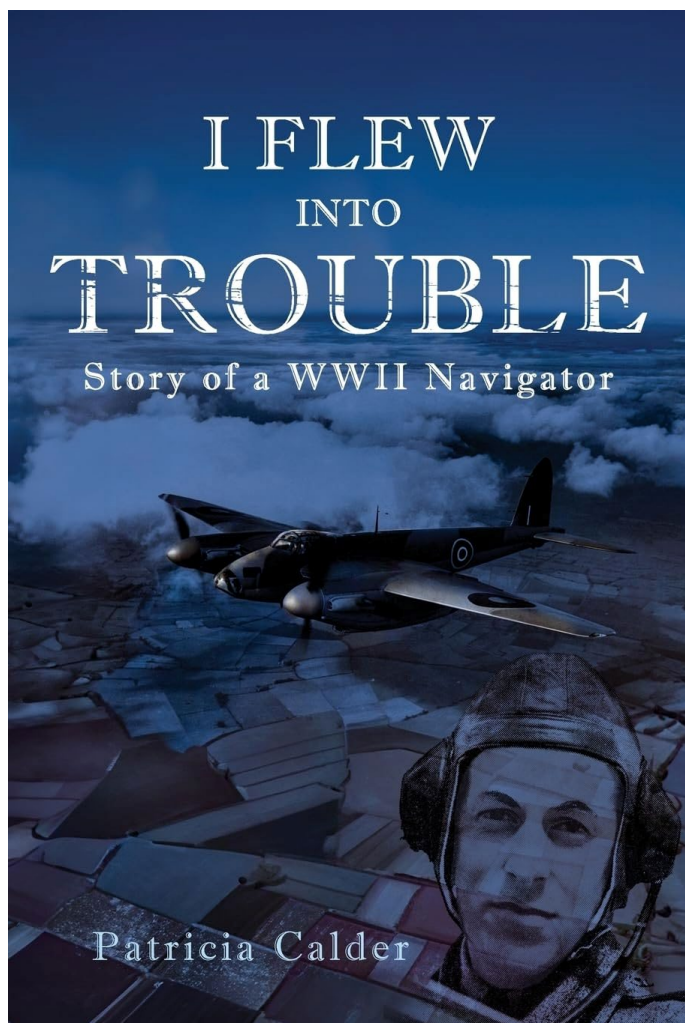
Mr. King replied: "It is not deemed in the public interest to give any information at the present time with respect to representations made or not made on behalf of Canada concerning bases in Eire."

Eventually a plane he was navigating was blown off course and ran out of fuel over Republican Ireland. The crew of seven exited the plane by parachute, were captured and taken to prison in the Curragh, guarded by IRA.

Months later, two airmen escaped, but Jack was left behind. It was 20 months before he was able to escape to Britain by faking an illness.

Once he was deemed fit for service again, he had to retrain to learn the new navigational tools. One night his plane crashed into a mountain, and he was the lone survivor. A nurse hiked 10 miles to the smoking ruin to rescue him. He remained in hospital for 8 months enduring multiple surgeries for burns and broken bones, his only nutrition sipping beer through a straw.

When he finally returned to active service, he was promoted to the elite Pathfinder group as a Flight Lieutenant.



What did they endure while their three sons were fighting? How did they keep going, not knowing whether their sons were alive or dead, rotting in some miserable prison or foreign hospital? How did life at home change during those 5 years? How did the airmen deal with the empty chairs in the mess after a mission?

Patricia Calder's book, *I Flew into Trouble, the Story of a WWII Navigator*, is based on her grandmother's scrapbook from WWII which now resides in the Canadian War Museum.

Calder and the University of Windsor collaborated on creating the website <https://collections.uwindsor.ca/omeka-s/jack-calder-at-war/> which contains a digital version of the scrapbook and fleshes

out the details of Jack Calder's life as an airman and the lives of his parents at home in Ontario.

For more on these stories you are invited to attend the book launch on November 2 at the Grafton Legion. Doors open at 1:30, show starts at 2 pm. Parking is free and the bar will be open!

You can purchase Calder's book online at

<https://www.amazon.ca/Flew-Into-Trouble-Story-Navigator/dp/1771806990/>

# Announcements

## ***Kawathra Dairy***

Kawathra Dairy has recently opened a shop in Cobourg near the Cobourg Mall on Elgin. For a history of Kawathra Dairy see [https://www.blogto.com/eat\\_drink/2024/09/kawartha-dairy-ontario](https://www.blogto.com/eat_drink/2024/09/kawartha-dairy-ontario).

## ***Algonquin College Bachelor Applied Science in Building Conservation***

Algonquin College is offering a new degree program in Perth for those interested in heritage restoration and conservation. For details visit

<https://www.algonquincollege.com/news/2023/10/23/algonquin-colleges-new-building-conservation-degree-program-will-develop-the-tradespeople-of-tomorrow-while-fighting-climate-change/>

<https://obj.ca/algonquin-college-building-conservation-program-perth/>  
and

<https://www.algonquincollege.com/perth/program/bachelor-of-applied-science-building-conservation/#overview>

## ***Lakeshore Genealogical Society***

On November 13, 2024 Janet Few will present: **Sons of the Soil**

Every family has ancestors who worked on the land. How can we find out more about them, the farms where they worked and the lives that they led? This session covers a range of sources, many of them under-used, which help to shed light on the working lives of our rural British ancestors.

Janet is an experienced family, social and community historian who lectures regularly on historical records, immigration records, methodology and skills, one-place studies, and places and ethnicities throughout the UK. She has been involved in surname research since 1982. Janet completed her doctorate at the University of Exeter, researching migration patterns in nineteenth century North Devon. In her quest to track down those who left North Devon for their new homes she has worked with many records for countries across the English-speaking world.

This meeting is a Zoom only event. Email [LGSregister@gmail.com](mailto:LGSregister@gmail.com) to register.

## ***Hastings County Historical Society***

There will be a presentation by Dan Maloney on the history of the Belleville Sports Hall of Fame, with a close look at the 1958-1959 Allan Cup win by the Belleville McFarlands on October 15 at 7pm at the Maranatha Church Auditorium, 100 College Street West, Belleville. Visit <https://hastingshistory.ca/event/free-public-presentation-dan-maloney/> for further details of the event.

**Peter Robinson**

As the bicentennial of the 1825 Peter Robinson Upper Canada emigration scheme approaches, Rosemary Ann McConkey has published some of the immigrant's stories in a new book, *Green Routes*. The stories span some 200 years and showcase the impressive legacy of the Peter Robinson Settlers and their descendants from before, during and after their transatlantic voyage. Order from <https://trentvalleyarchives.com/shop/green-routes-experiencing-the-peter-robinson-emigration-1825/>

# Emigration to C A N A D A.

Visit <https://nineships1825.com/> for a fascinating summary of the selection and arrival of almost 2000 Irish immigrants in 1825. Throughout 2025 there will be many events celebrating

the immigrants. You can sign up for the free Nine Ship's newsletter to be notified of what is planned.

PHPL Friends of the Library Present

## Period Costume Display

During library hours at the Mary J. Benson Branch on  
**Saturday & Sunday | October 19 & 20**

View items on loan from

Lang & Pickering Pioneer Villages, re-enactment and theatrical productions, private collections of families of prominent Port Hope citizens of the mid 1800s.

Costumes are a mix of reproductions and originals from the early 1800s to the 1970s, including two 1850s wedding dresses, and include everyday & formal attire for men women and children.

Donations will be gratefully accepted, and will give the opportunity to win a \$500 Shopper's Drug Mart Gift Basket, or Capitol Theatre tickets and more.


For info: 905-885-4712 or visit [www.porthopepubliclibrary.ca](http://www.porthopepubliclibrary.ca)

## Rack Cards

To raise awareness of the Cobourg and District Historical Society, Membership Chair Brian Murphy has produced a “rack card”. These will be displayed at various businesses around town, at the library and at Victoria Hall. If you would like some to distribute to friends, neighbours and other potential members, contact Brian at [brianincobourg@gmail.com](mailto:brianincobourg@gmail.com) or (289) 634 2727

**COBOURG & DISTRICT**  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PROMOTING  
INTEREST IN THE  
HISTORY OF  
COBOURG AND  
DISTRICT AND  
BEYOND



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Cobourg, ON



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HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

## Remembrance Day Banners

The Cobourg Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion and the Town of Cobourg have partnered to honour our veterans with banners along King Street.

The Cobourg and District Historical Society is sponsoring a banner honouring Canada's military medical workers.

The image was taken by Lieutenant H. Gordon Aikman, a Canadian Army photographer and is reproduced by permission.

Our banner pictures Major John W. Forth (the man on the right) who was the Chaplain of the Cameron Highlanders of Ottawa. He is helping the unit's Regimental Aid Party to treat a wounded soldier near Caen, France, 15 July 1944. The chaplain is technically not medical personnel but chaplains often did this sort of work at the Regimental Aid Post (RAP). The younger soldier leaning over the wounded man is an unidentified Stretcher Bearer with the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps.

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## CDHS Executive for 2024 – 2025

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