

Historically Speaking

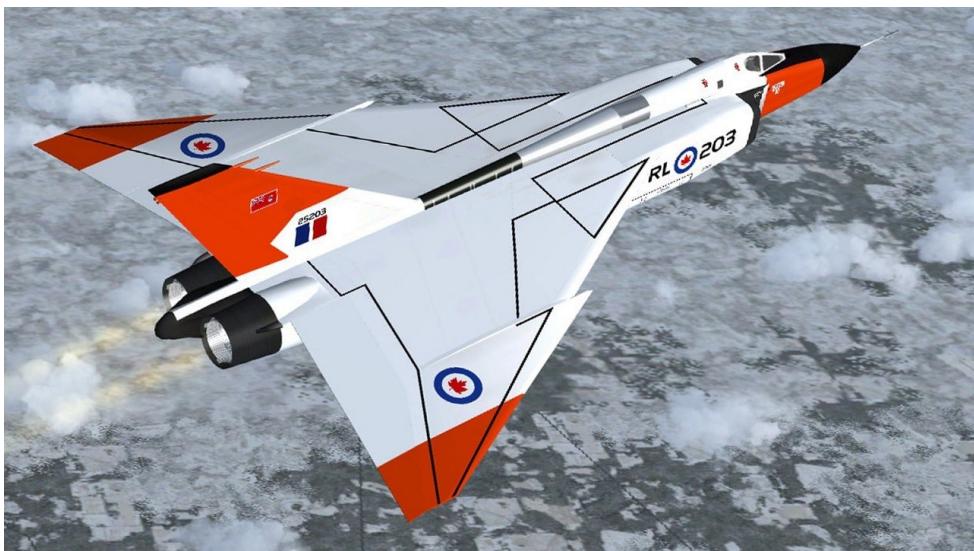
The Newsletter of the Cobourg and District
Historical Society

September 2025 — Issue 357

AVRO ARROW: The Right Decision?

On Friday, February 20, 1959, 14,000 employees were immediately fired and sent home, after a project they had been working on since 1953, was abruptly cancelled. That project was the military, supersonic, advanced interceptor, the Avro Arrow.

Our speaker, Palmiro Campagna, is a retired professional engineer and author of four books. Palmiro has had thousands of records declassified including many that are Secret and Top Secret. Palmiro's presentation will



discuss some of the myths and misconceptions that the documents have clarified.

Join us on **Tuesday, Sept. 23, 2025**, for an informative presentation in Cobourg's Victoria Hall. Doors open at 7:00 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

Tammy Tells Tales

Our May meeting featured dinner for a capacity crowd at the Legion Village Pub followed by a presentation of tales of Cobourg by Tammy Robinson, CEO of the Cobourg Public Library. Tammy recounted tales of historic Cobourg that are true, tales that may be true and others that are decidedly questionable. We learned more about the only hanging in Cobourg (Dr. King of Brighton), the murder of a local lawyer, John Cruikshank, by his client, “bad vibes” from the solitary confinement room of Cobourg’s jail, mysterious bagpipe music, the Green Ghost of Victoria Hall (she is unlikely to be that of Lena Field Fisher since the ghost does not wear a hat).



The time before dinner was served allowed the attendees time to have enjoyable conversations with other CDHS members.



Events of Our 2025/2026 Programme

Date	Presenter	Description
Meeting September 23, 2025	Palmiro Campagna	The Avro Arrow: The Right Decision? The cancellation of the Arrow marked one of the most significant industrial collapses in Canadian history and is still remembered as a pivotal moment in the nation's aerospace and political landscape.
Meeting October 28, 2025	Dr. Christopher Dummitt	The Strange De-commemorating Moment Dr. Dummitt, Professor of Canadian Studies at Trent University, will speak about the current controversial practice of de-commemorating significant figures in Canadian history by removing statues and signage, changing street names, and rewriting texts. He will also introduce his new YouTube channel designed to make Canadian History come alive.
Meeting November 18, 2025*	Dr. David Wilson	<i>A Canadian Spy and the Secret Police behind the Fenian Raids</i> Professor David Wilson (U of T) will share the little known story of the Canadian spies and secret police who engaged the Irish revolutionaries during the Fenian raids of 1866, when the Americans turned their eyes north and invaded Canada.
Meeting January 27, 2026	George Parker	John Rae's Search for the Franklin Expedition In 1845, the Franklin expedition vanished in the Canadian High Arctic while searching for the Northwest Passage. After years of failed rescue attempts, the Hudson's Bay Company turned to their most skilled explorer, John Rae. This presentation follows Rae's journey—what he uncovered in the Arctic, and how his shocking account of the expedition's fate was received in Victorian England.

Meeting February 24, 2026	CDHS members	Homes with a Story to Tell The stories of area homes — Dumble House, The Breakers, St. Anne's Spa, Barnum House and Lakehurst — that have impacted Cobourg's and even Canada's history.
March 24, 2026	Gordon Pitts	Scary Harry, The Northumberland County Cheesemaker Who Blew Up the Old West Albert Edward Horsley, a Northumberland County cheesemaker, became infamous for his role in one of the most explosive political crimes of the early 20th century.
Meeting April 28, 2026	Dennis Carter- Edwards	Nine Ships: The Peter Robinson Immigration In 1825, nine ships carried over 2,000 Irish emigrants to what is now Ontario, as part of the Peter Robinson Emigration Scheme—a government scheme to aid families facing hardship in Ireland. Traveling via Kingston and Cobourg, the settlers established new communities in present-day Peterborough County and the City of Kawartha Lakes. Their arrival helped shape the region's cultural and historical landscape for generations.
May Social	Trip	Complete details will be provided closer to the actual event.

***Due to a conflict with another user of Victoria Hall, this meeting will be on the third Tuesday rather than the usual fourth Tuesday.**

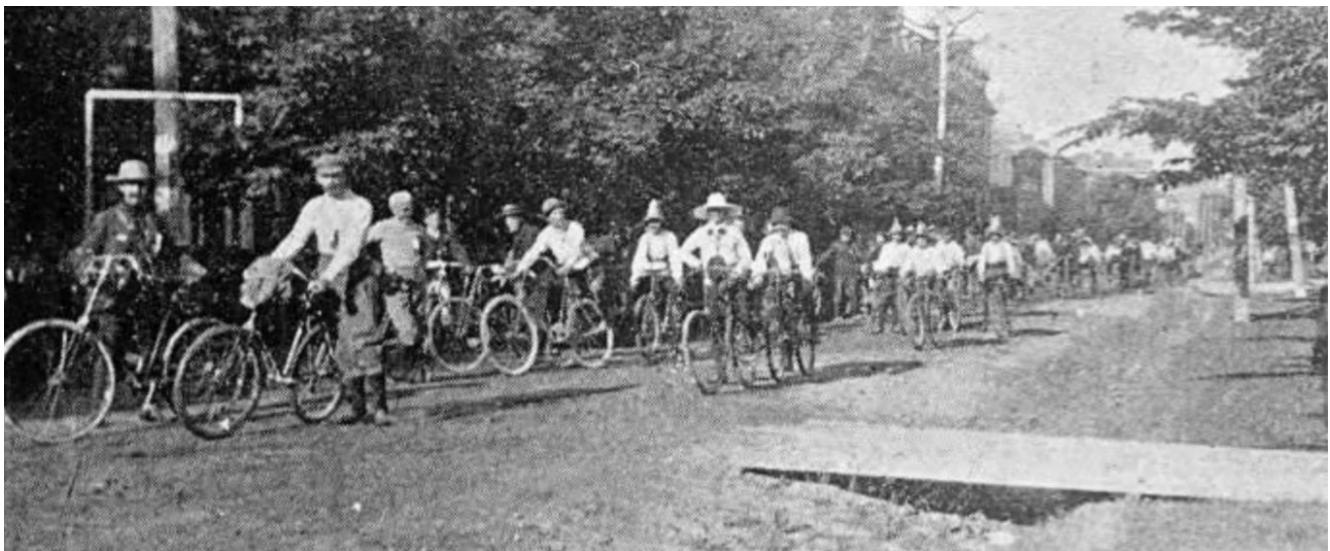
Recent CDHS Meetings

For those who were unable to attend, videos of our recent meetings are available online:

Meeting Date	Link to Meeting Video
January 2025	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7baHeZTTHtw
February 2025	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIgXDHab9io
March 2025	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YitEaDWpO0U
2025 AGM	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-PrJsD0nLS4
April 2025	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIgp4xTHuXg

Cobourg Bicycle Club

Start of the race-meet 1908. This race-meet started on King at College Street. Behind the trees at the left is Lakeview House, farther west is the Arlington Hotel.



<https://vitacollections.ca/cobourgdigitalcollections/19213/image/45335>

Summer Cool

It has been hot but most in Cobourg have survived with air conditioning and the ready availability of iced beverages. It was not always this way!

Frederic Tudor (1783–1864), famously known as the “Ice King,” was an American entrepreneur who transformed ice from a local, seasonal luxury into a global commodity. In 1806, he harvested 130 tons of ice from a frozen pond near Boston and attempted to ship it to Martinique. The entire cargo of ice melted before it arrived! Undeterred, Tudor spent the next two decades refining insulation techniques and perfecting logistics. By the 1830s, ice was being shipped successfully to destinations in the Caribbean, South America, and even India. The frozen water trade involved workers using saws to cut large blocks of ice from frozen lakes and ponds in Quebec, Nova Scotia and New England. The ice was stored in warehouses insulated with sawdust and later loaded onto specially constructed and heavily insulated ships for transport to tropical and subtropical regions around the world.

At its peak, the ice trade was one of the most profitable industries in Eastern Canada. By the end of the 19th century mechanical refrigeration had become common and doomed the annual ice harvest.

See <https://blog.newspapers.com/extr-ice-please-a-cool-history-of-the-19th-century-ice-trade/> for more on frozen water.

What a Difference!

Ken Strauss

Over the past two centuries, Canada has completed numerous major infrastructure projects. In the early days, construction relied on wagons, gunpowder and animal power—horses, mules, oxen and even men. Surveyors plotted routes using only basic tools like compasses and measuring chains. Modern projects benefit from powerful diesel-powered earth movers, advanced explosives, helicopters for remote access, and precise planning aided by satellite imagery and GPS technology.

It is amazing how timelines have lengthened! Canadians once completed monumental feats of engineering with a much smaller population in just a few years despite their lack of modern tools. Today, far less ambitious projects can take decades to complete due to complex regulatory processes, environmental assessments, public consultations and special interest groups who claim a veto power over economic development and are allowed to engage in civil disobedience.

Recent court cases such as *Haida Nation v. British Columbia (Minister of Forests)*, 2004 SCC 73 created the duty to consult and accommodate Indigenous Peoples in certain situations. *Mikisew Cree First Nation v. Canada (Minister of Canadian Heritage)*, 2005 SCC 69 extended this new impediment to projects. *Coldwater First Nation v. Canada (Attorney General)*, 2020 FCA 34 clarified that a requirement to consult is not a right to veto.

Rideau Canal

- Spring 1826: Lieutenant Colonel John By of the Royal Engineers is appointed to oversee the project. Upper Canada's population was about 150,000 at the time.
- September 29, 1826: The first sod is turned at the site of the Ottawa locks to mark the ceremonial start of construction.
- Major construction proceeds along the full route, involving thousands of mostly Irish immigrant labourers working in harsh and often dangerous conditions. Construction continues along the 202 km canal which includes 47 masonry locks, 52 dams including weirs and berms.
- November 1831: Work is essentially **completed after five years of construction**.
- May 24–29, 1832: Colonel By and his team make the first full navigation of the canal from Kingston to Bytown (now Ottawa), officially opening the waterway.

Welland Canal

- November 1824: Construction by the private Welland Canal Company begins. Upper Canada's population was about 150,000 at the time.

- The canal connects Port Weller, on the southern shore of Lake Ontario (near St. Catharines) with Port Colborne, on the northern shore of Lake Erie. The length is 43.5 km and includes 8 locks to accommodate a height difference of about 99 meters between the two lakes.
- November 30, 1829: Canal officially opened to navigation **after 5 years of construction.**

Transcontinental Railroad

- February 16, 1881: The Canadian Pacific Railway Company was officially incorporated. Canada's population was about 4,300,000 at the time.
- Construction begins in earnest under the leadership of William Van Horne.
- November 7, 1885: The Last Spike is driven at Craigellachie, British Columbia, **completing the main line after less than 5 years of construction.**
- July 4, 1886: First transcontinental passenger train completed the journey from Montreal to Port Moody, BC.

Original Trans Mountain Pipeline

- March 21, 1951: The Parliament of Canada grants a charter to establish the Trans Mountain Pipeline Company. Canada's population was about 14,000,000 at the time.
- Construction of the 1,150 km pipeline from Edmonton, Alberta to Burnaby, British Columbia (Westridge Marine Terminal) proceeds across the rugged and difficult terrain of the Canadian Rockies
- October 17, 1953: The pipeline became operational with the first shipment of oil reaching the Burnaby Terminal in British Columbia **after less than 3 years of construction work.**

St. Lawrence Seaway

- May 13, 1954: U.S. President Eisenhower signs the Wiley-Dondero Seaway Act, authorizing joint construction with Canada.
- June 1954: Canada passes the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority Act, allowing work to begin on the Canadian side. Canada's population was about 14,000,000 at the time.
- Work proceeded on various aspects including building 15 locks, several dams and the relocation of roads, railways and even entire communities. Over 20,000 workers and 500 engineers were involved in the 3,700 km long project between the Atlantic Ocean and the western end of Lake Superior. Over 160 million cubic meters of earth and rock was moved.
- April 25, 1959: First commercial ship transits the Seaway **after 5 years of construction.**

- June 26, 1959: Official opening ceremony held by Queen Elizabeth II and President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Transcanada Energy's Pipeline from Alberta to Ontario

- Between 1956 and 1958 construction workers installed over 3,500 kilometres of pipe from the Alberta–Saskatchewan border to Toronto and on to Montréal. Canada's population was about 16,000,000 at this time.
- Building the Canadian Shield leg required extensive blasting. For one stretch, the construction crew drilled 8-foot deep holes into the rock, three abreast, at 2-foot intervals. Dynamite broke up other stretches, 1,000 feet at a time.
- A final weld completed the pipeline on October 10 1959 and by the end of the month the first Alberta gas entered Toronto **after 3 years of construction**. For more than two decades, this pipeline was the longest in the world.

Coastal GasLink Pipeline

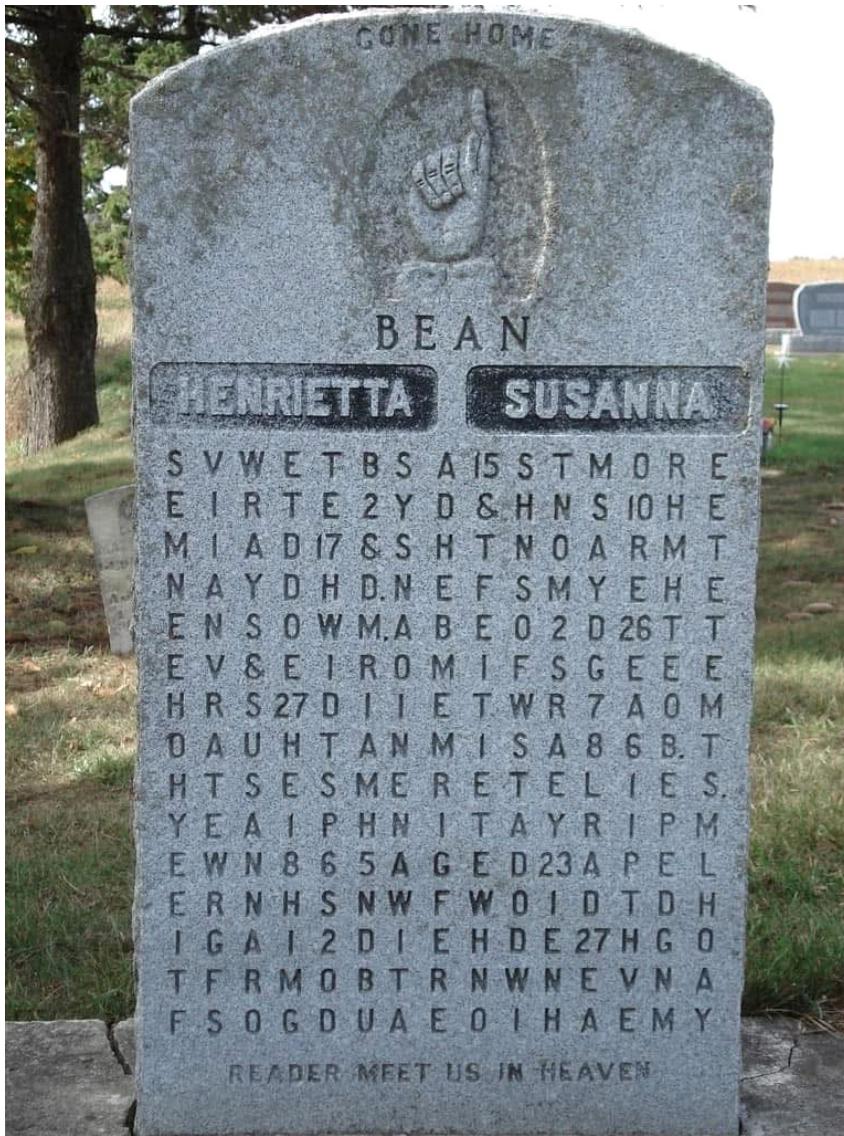
- June 5, 2012: TransCanada Corporation announces plans to build a 670km long pipeline between Dawson Creek, BC and Kitimat, BC. Canada's population was about 35,000,000 at the time.
- October 2014: Environmental Assessment Certificate issued approving construction
- Pipeline construction finally begins but progress is delayed by court challenges, assertions that hereditary chiefs could override the decisions of elected chiefs, protests and blockades that eventually escalated to include national rail disruptions.
- November 2024: The pipeline officially entered commercial service, delivering natural gas to the LNG Canada facility in Kitimat **after more than 10 years of construction**.

Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion (TMX)

- February 2012: Kinder Morgan announces plans to expand the Trans Mountain pipeline. Canada's population was almost 35,000,000 at the time.
- May 2016: The National Energy Board (NEB) approves the project subject to 157 conditions
- Construction proceeded amid numerous court challenges, blockades by various tribes and other issues. There are huge cost overruns. Except in now densely populated areas, the upgraded pipeline largely runs parallel to the original Trans Mountain pipeline which was completed 65 years earlier in **only three years**.
- May 1, 2024: TMX officially began operations
- It is hoped that final work will be completed by the end of 2025. If successful, Canada's population will be about 41,500,000 when the project is **finally completed after 13 years of construction**.

Canada's Most Curious Tombstone

For more than 100 years, visitors who see the shared headstone of Henrietta and Susanna Bean in Rushes Cemetery in Wellesley (near to Kitchner), Ontario remained stumped as to



what the enigmatic crossword code engraved on the stone might say. They took grave rubbings and attempted to decipher the message only to come up blank. What was known was that in 1867, a man named Dr. Samuel Bean had erected the stone in secret for his two wives who had both died within a few years of one another. Bean had the two women buried side-by-side beneath the mysterious stone and, before he could share its meaning with anyone, met his own untimely end when he drowned after falling overboard from his sailboat.

It wasn't until a 94-year-old woman living in a nearby retirement home figured it out in the 1970s that anyone knew the answer to Dr. Bean's puzzle. While we'll never know what inspired Dr. Bean to create such

a perplexing engraving for his two brides, at least the mystery of the epitaph has now been solved. The answer is below but first attempt to decipher the code yourself!

https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1118266697009801&id=100064794426399&post_id=100064794426399_1118266697009801&rdid=G7pRD3lurrd5cwLr#

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/129674485/susanna-bean>

Spoiler Alert!

Beginning on the seventh character of the seventh row down and reading in a spiral or sometimes diagonal fashion, the inscription reads: "In memoriam Henrietta, 1st wife of S. Bean, M.D. who died 27th Sep. 1865, aged 23 years, 2 months and 17 days and Susanna his 2nd wife who died 27th April, 1867, aged 26 years, 10 months and 15 days, 2 better wives 1 man never had, they were gifts from God but are now in Heaven. May God help me, S.B., to meet them there."

Fairbridge Farm School: British Home Children

Judith Blakeston

The Historical Society's recent presentation on the British Home Children sparked my interest in Fairbridge, the former Home Farm School in the Cowichan Valley where I have lived for much of the last fifty plus years. I had seen the 2010 film *Oranges and Sunshine* about the living conditions of children shipped off to Australia in similar circumstances, another heart rending story of the grievously harmful and indeed arrogant 19th and 20th century policies of the British and Commonwealth countries. The removal of orphans and young children from impoverished homes under the purpose/guise of offering them better opportunities abroad in fact relieved the British government of some of its social responsibilities at home and provided Canada and Australia with a cheap labour force. Indeed, in 2018 the Canadian government declared September 28 British Home Child Day to acknowledge "the hardships and stigma that many of them endured." The Forward to the book that I have been reading about the conditions there is by Gordon Brown who, as Britain's Prime Minister, in 2010 also apologized to survivors for their suffering.

Fairbridge is about five miles from Duncan where I live. Now Fairbridge is a picturesque, charming, rural mini suburb, a sort of gated community, with stone gates announcing its



name and a sign outlining its history, but no barriers or gate minders. When I first moved to the Cowichan Valley (Cowichan means "The Warm Land" in native dialect), I was driven around Fairbridge, only to admire it because I certainly couldn't afford the price of homes there, not that there were any for sale. The original shingle cottages that housed the children and their house "mothers" still stand, and the newer houses have been designed to blend in with them. The single road that meanders through is paved but there are no sidewalks. Discreet signs announce children playing, and faded shingles swing outside some driveways naming the original names of the cottages.

Lush gardens and tall fir trees add to the sense of tranquility and wellbeing that completes the peaceful few minutes that it takes to drive through the property. My phone, the rainy day, and my photographic skills do not do justice to the place as it is now, but I have included several...the chapel, one of the original houses, and the sign outlining the history.

The only book available when I went to my local library to search for information was "Marjorie, Her War Years: A British Home Child in Canada." The author, Patricia Skidmore, uses an extensive bibliography, and the memories of her mother, Marjorie, and other members of the family to recreate the story of 10 year old Marjorie's life after she, with a brother and two sisters, were approved as emigrants to Canada, her father, struggling to find work away from home to support his large family, having given his permission, all that was required for their removal from the family. The book focuses on the hardships and loneliness of the forced separation, the callousness and misery meted out by abusive housemothers who

referred to their charges as “guttersnipes”, the harsh work schedules of the children whose prospects were as domesticated servants for the girls, farm labourers for the boys. Siblings were not encouraged to spend any time with each other so Marjorie was powerless to help her younger brother Kenny. When the children turned 16, work placements were found in the community, on farms or in Victoria as servants.

In her introduction, Ms. Skidmore writes, “It is impossible to know the full extent of the abuse faced by the inmates of the Prince of Wales Fairbridge Farm School. Some former Fairbridgians remain



vehement that no abuse ever happened anywhere on the farm school at any time and do not want to hear the stories of abuse and

cruelty....Only glowing reports of happy, healthy, stable children were allowed to reach the public.” (p.34 “Marjorie, her War Years”) I did have colleagues in the BC education world who had been Fairbridge children. There were no glowing reports in their few references to their childhood, but there were no complaints either, just silence. Their placements after leaving the institution obviously made it possible for them to attend the local high school in Duncan and to go on to university. In one case, reference to Fairbridge

was in terms almost of an alumni association. A friend told me that when the Fairbridge community closed in the 40’s, the community of Duncan stepped up to take the young people into their homes and that she had never heard of the hardships suffered by the children, that indeed their being able to come to Canada saved them from poverty and suffering in their homeland.

It is impossible for me to think of the Fairbridge as I see it now without thinking about the book I just read and the presentation of the guest speakers in Cobourg .Their accounts emphasized the acute loneliness and confusion which dominated the lives of the children in the Farm’s cottages == where the children performed endless tasks of floor scrubbing, laundry detail, weed picking and wood chopping in the guise of preparation for the adult world.

Member Matters

New Members

Please join me in welcoming our newest CDHS members:

Ed and Natasha Quinlan

Kim Norton.

CDHS Treasurer

Ed Quinlan has agreed to serve as the CDHS Treasurer. He is the current President of HQ Enterprise, Senior Helpers, and Baseball Ontario. With over 30 years of leadership experience, Ed previously held the role of Vice-President of Operations at H&R Block, where he built a reputation for operational excellence and strategic growth.

Beyond his professional achievements, Ed is a proud husband to his beautiful wife Natasha and father to two wonderful children, Kelly and Tyler. He cherishes his role as grandfather to Haiden—the love of his life.

An avid outdoorsman, Ed enjoys fishing, camping, and cheering on the Calgary Stampeders and the Toronto Blue Jays.

Announcements

Well, That Didn't Suck

Dr. Christopher Dummitt presents history like you've never heard it. Wild stories, rebellious wins, and the leaders who probably shouldn't have been in charge. WTDS, a new Canadian history video series for the YouTube age, is created in partnership with the Macdonald Laurier Institute. Using wit, satire, great AI visuals, and solid research, WTDS makes key stories from Canadian history come alive. The four episodes from Season One all tell stories about the origins of Canada's system of responsible government. Episodes include:

- Joseph Howe and the Nova Scotian first of winning responsible government
- Lord Elgin saves Canadian democracy as a mob burns down parliament in 1849
- Explanation of Canada's 'polite' approach to winning its democracy

Visit <https://www.youtube.com/@Wellthatdidntsuck> to enjoy the whole series.

As the title says, trust us, it won't suck!

Cobourg Museum Foundation Needs Volunteers!

We are seeking enthusiastic volunteers to welcome visitors and guide them through our exciting new exhibits. Your commitment of just three hours a week would be greatly appreciated. No prior experience is necessary – just bring your passion for history and community! If you are interested, please email us at info@cobourgmuseum.ca



ART DRAW FOR HISTORY

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

4 pm Concert Hall at Victoria Hall, 55 King Street West, Cobourg



Kelvin Smith, *Winter Study, Julia Street (Port Hope) 2024*



Stephen Della Casa, *Beach Tree*

Enjoy a Saturday afternoon fundraiser with an artistic twist, where every ticket holder **takes home a valuable piece of art**. Own a piece of art by Ron Bolt, Steven Gilberry, Barbara Buntin or any of 45+ other locally acclaimed artists. The event is structured as a draw where every ticket holder will be given a number and be able to select an art piece of their choice when their number is drawn.

And the fun doesn't stop there! There will also be opportunity to:

- participate in a Silent Auction
- enjoy music by local musician Marianne Marusic
- savour a delicious array of hors'd'oeuvres

Buy your ticket today and come away with your choice of a piece of fine art valued at more than the ticket price!

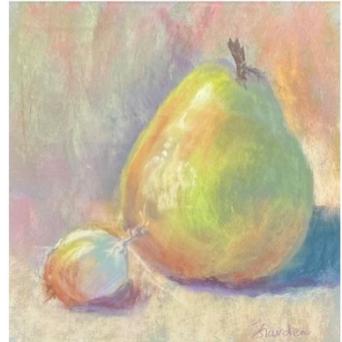
Tickets are \$200. Each ticket admits two people—you and a friend.



Ron Bolt, *Surfdance*



Clare Bonnell, *Lilacs*



Judy Garden, *Still Life - A Pair*

In support of the Cobourg and Area Museum, 50 generous local artists and benefactors have donated their work, each valued between \$250 and \$1,000. Many will be present at the event. Click [here](https://tinyurl.com/ArtDraw2025) (<https://tinyurl.com/ArtDraw2025>) to preview art pieces. More will be added up to the date.

TICKETS ARE LIMITED: GET THEM NOW!

Cobourg & Area Museum/905-373-7222
Victoria Hall Box Office/905-372-2210
Acanthus Interiors/79c King St. W./Cobourg/905-885-8648

Join us Tuesday, September 23, 2025
The Cobourg & District Historical Society presents

The AVRO ARROW: The Right Decision?



On Friday, February 20, 1959, 14,000 employees were immediately fired and sent home after a project they had been working on since 1953 was abruptly cancelled.

That project was the military, supersonic, advanced interceptor, the Avro Arrow.



Our speaker Palmiro Campagna is a retired professional engineer and author of four books and many published articles on the subject. He has had thousands of government records declassified; many previously Secret and Top Secret. His presentation will discuss how these records help clarify some of the myths and misconceptions regarding the story of the Avro Arrow.

Palmiro's book, *The Avro Arrow: For the Record*, will be available for purchase at the meeting

Concert Hall in Victoria Hall

Members free, Guests \$5
ALL ARE WELCOME

⌚ Doors open at 7 PM

⌚ Meeting starts at 7:30 PM

For member information,
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