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*Preserving Oakville's  
Historical Heritage  
Since 1953*  
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A.D.Hitchcox

**THE OAKVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER**

JUNE 2013



Volume 47 Number 2

SPECIAL EVENTS

Sunday June 9 Mayor's Picnic hosted by the Society, Lakeside
Noon - 4:30 pm Park, Front Street

Sunday June 23 TriDelta Alzheimer's Gathering. The Oakville
9:30 am - 1 pm Historical Society and Thomas House are open.

PUBLIC SPEAKERS & PRESENTATIONS

Monday Speaker: Mr. Don Smith. "Mississauga Portraits", a
June 24 history of the Mississauga people in Oakville. This is a
sequel to "Sacred Feathers". Also speaking will be Dr.
Allan Sherwin, on Herbal Medicines of Indigenous
Peoples. 7:00 pm at the Oakville Central Library.

Wednesday Speaker: Mr. John McKenty, author of Canada Cycle
October 16 & Motor: The CCM Story. Bikes in summer, skates in
winter! 7:30 pm at St. John's United Church

Wednesday Speaker: Messrs. Tom Bochsler & Bob Chambers. The
November 20 presentation will describe the visual impact of two
experienced photographers and covers the gamut from
equipment of the 50s to digital photography of today.
7:30 pm at St. John's United Church

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

AS I write this many of us are looking forward to the Speaker's Night set for next Wednesday, 15 May when **Maureen Jennings**, creator of The Murdoch Mysteries will speak to what will most likely be a full house. Organizing our Speaker's Nights is not an easy task and I would like to publicly thank **Mary Davidson** for all the hard work she does to arrange these events. Also deserving of our thanks is **Grace Schroeder** who looks after the refreshments served afterwards.

After a long search I am very happy to report that we have finally found a new treasurer, **Christine Fung**. At our May board meeting, Christine was appointed as a member of the board, subject to confirmation at the next General Meeting, and as Treasurer. Also new to the board table is **Averil Janey**. Averil has been making her presence known around the society by supervising some long-needed work in the garden.

Attendance at our Walking Tours has been declining for several years but there has been an increase in the number of requests from organizations wanting one of our walks so we've decided to give our scheduled walks a rest and concentrate more on these special requests. This won't affect our ghost walks which will run as usual in the fall. In addition, we are still working on a guided walk of Oakville and St Mary's Cemeteries. We're also sorry to report that the decision has been made to not run Doors Open this year. A cultural event will take its place.

We've become a popular place for high school students to fulfill their community service hours and most are putting in more than the required 10 hours per year. A group is hard at work scanning the indexes from all our reference works and making them into a searchable index. They seem to be enjoying themselves.

Earlier this week **Harry Barrett**, **Bill Russell** and I represented the Society at the official opening of the new **Garth Webb Secondary School** near Dundas and Bronte Road. The school is named after **Garth Webb** who was responsible for creating the Juno Beach Centre in France. We were all very impressed with the new building.

See you at the picnic!

George Chisholm President, Oakville Historical Society



Albert Douglas Hitchcox: Oakville and Juno Beach

AT your Oakville Historical Society we receive many requests for help with research. Some callers' requests are real puzzles and some callers' requests makes us tingle, like the one we received from the southern US. The woman explained that she had a relative who moved to Oakville in the mid-1800s whose name was Duncan. "Duncan!," I exclaimed, "The ancestor of Alvin Duncan, who volunteered at the OHS and donated to our archives?" We also recently had a request to find the date of death of a man called Hillmer. The Hillmer name is well-known in Oakville because the family owned businesses, including ones for coal and transport.

Then a few months ago a resident contacted us because she knew one of our volunteers, and she sought information about a person with that same surname. What followed involves a Grade 7 student, Oakville's pioneers, WWII and your OHS.

École Forest Trail Public School student Olivia McKeown, as part of a school project, was searching for an Oakville resident to honour at the Juno Beach Centre Veteran and Donor Brick Program. She choose Oakville-born WWII Veteran Mr. Hitchcox and then heard there was a woman of that name who volunteers at OHS. Contact was made with our volunteer June Hitchcox who is a sister-in-law of the late Albert Douglas Hitchcox and she provided Ms. McKeown with information required for the Juno Beach Centre.

The Juno Beach Centre was conceived by Burlington resident and WWII Veteran Garth Webb (d. 2013). While attending the 50th anniversary of D-Day in 1994 he saw there was no lasting memorial to the thousand Canadians who lost their lives in that battle. After tireless fundraising by Webb and others, the Juno Beach Centre opened in Courseulles-sur-Mer in 2003. In 2012, Oakville's Garth Webb Secondary School was named in his honour.

Olivia Mckeown writes:

Not long before Remembrance Day 2012, I saw a newspaper article about a project in Halton that commemorates Canadian veterans of World War II. It's called the Juno Beach Memorial Brick Project. This Project offers the opportunity for anyone to purchase a brick, which has on it an engraving showing a veteran's name, rank, and what he or she did in the war. These bricks are placed on the columns at the Juno Beach Memorial Center in Courseulles-sur-Mer, France, a place I visited with my family when I was in Grade 2.

When I read this newspaper article about the Juno Beach Memorial Brick Project, I decided to take this project on because every Remembrance Day I think of all of the brave soldiers who fought for our country. Not all of them are recognized and they all need to be remembered! I thought it would be a great way for my school, École Forest Trail Public School, to honour a veteran from Oakville who fought in World War II. I did some research and found Albert Douglas Hitchcox, a courageous young Navigator who fought for our country. Mr. Hitchcox passed away a few years after serving in the war. By cross-referencing veteran names with veterans on the Memorial Brick Project website, I determined that there was no brick commemorating Mr. Hitchcox and his contribution as a navigator on a Lancaster bomber even though he flew on 41 bombing missions over France and Germany, including one on D-Day, June 6th 1944, the day the allies landed on the beaches, the pivotal battle in the defeat of Germany. Mr. Hitchcox grew up in Oakville and his family's farmhouse is across the street from T.A. Blakelock High School, which many of École Forest Trail's Grade 8 students are soon to attend. I thought my school's Remembrance Day ceremony would have even more meaning to the students if they could think about an actual veteran, especially one from Oakville whose family home is located so near the French Immersion high school and on Rebecca St., a well-known Oakville street. When I told my fellow students about Mr Hitchcox, our Student Council bought a memorial brick to commemorate Mr. Hitchcox.



A.D. Hitchcox's grandfather and grandmother, Albert and Olivia, arrived to Oakville from England in 1912 with 10 children and built a house at what is now 1107 Rebecca St. The house to the west at 1119 Rebecca was built by A.D. Hitchcox's father, Dudley Hitchcox in the early 1920s.

Doug, as he was known, was born 28 September 1923, and grew up around Oakville including Bond Street, played hockey as a goalie and was attending 4th Form (Gr. 12) at Oakville Trafalgar High School when he joined the RCAF July 7, 1942. He was 18. Because of his young age, to join he needed letters of recommendation which were written by the school principal, the mayor and his parents.

In England Mr. Hitchcox trained in a twin-engine Anson training plane which flies at 100 - 120 mph. He qualified as a Flying Officer, Air Navigator and while the normal number of sorties was 40, Doug was asked to step in when another navigator was ill and thus flew 41. When the crew would return successfully from a



raid they all received a fresh egg for their efforts. The navigator's work was to guide the aircraft to its target and to tell the bombardier when to drop the bombs. The plane he flew for the missions was a 4-engine British make and his captain requested a new plane saying that the one they were flying was not safe. The request was denied. On one trip the engine blew up. They got a new plane.

After the war, he returned to Oakville, finished high school and trained as an actuary. He met his wife Della in Toronto and they moved to Portland, Maine where he became Vice-President at Union Mutual, an insurance company. When Doug died at the age of 52 he left his widow with four young children. Doug is described by his family as a wonderful, caring man.

Written by Susan Wells with research by Della Hitchcox, June Hitchcox, Bill Hitchcox, Olivia McKeown and the Veteran and Donor Brick Program.



(L) O. McKeown, J. Hitchcox

A. Douglas Hitchcox
F/O Nav. 158 Squadron - RCAF
July 7, 1942 to March 3, 1945
Bomber Command (D-Day)

Inscription on the Hitchcox brick.

The donation is \$250 CDN, payable to:
Juno Beach Centre
828 Legion Road
Burlington, ON
L7S 1T5

Please take the time to look our advertisers' insert. Their sponsorship has been the reason we have a COLOUR December edition. It would be appreciated if you were to stop by and thank them.

OHS Members Recognized



(L) W. Belcher, D. Fassler, P. Mack and H. Davis

Ontario Volunteer Service Awards were presented recently to four of our members; long time volunteers **Wendy Belcher, Heather Davis and Pat Mack**, together with our youngest volunteer, **Daniel Fassler** were recognized during an awards ceremony hosted by The Ontario Honours and Awards Secretariat of The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

Heather and Pat have, among other activities, contributed to the staffing and interpretation of The Thomas House. Wendy and Daniel have added much colour and interest to the ghost walks.



(L) Jamie Macrae and Mayor Rob Burton

Member, **Jamie Macrae** was honoured recently with the **Ontario Heritage Trust Award** for his contribution to the preservation of Oakville's Built Heritage. For more than thirty years he has been a passionate advocate for Oakville's heritage and architecture, providing expertise in the identification and preservation of Oakville houses and buildings. His work with Oakville Historical Society has involved the restoration of The Thomas House as well as the building and maintenance of the volunteers' fountain at our front door. Over the years he has helped owners of historically significant buildings in Oakville to research the provenance of their properties and to install plaques to recognize their historical significance (this work is now the function of a committee). In addition, each year during Doors Open, he generously invites the public aboard his historical yacht, the Anitra. A big thank you and congratulations to Jamie.

Andrea Stewart

The Thomas House

The Thomas House opened for the 2013 season on the 19th of May.

We are in need of a few more volunteers this year and if you can help out with a day or days, please call me, Mary Davidson, at 905-842-6935. We have two new school volunteers joining us this year. Welcome to **Brayden Ross** and **Clare Fiala** and graduate student **Katelynd Chojnacki!**

Grateful thanks to those who have interpreted for us in the past: **Phil Brimacombe**, **Pat Mack**, **Dave Hutchison** - we understand you will be helping out with other projects for the Society! This is a very enjoyable part of our year, when the doors open, the fire is on, the sun shines (mostly!) and our visitors are so appreciative of this permanent reminder of pioneer days and what life was like in the early days of Oakville. *Mary Davidson*



(L) Madlyn Kayer (OHS), Hilary Speed

Opening Times: 1:30 to 4:00 pm.

May 25 - June 30 Sat and Sun

July 1 - September 2 Sat, Sun, Tue, Wed, Thur
and Holiday Mondays

September 8 - 29 Sun

Harvest Festival Bake Table September 28
11 am to 4:00 pm. Donations of baked goods and preserves are welcome.

From the Archives Recent Acquisition

THE OHS is fortunate in that Oakville residents remember us when they are looking for a home for valuable photographs, deeds and other family papers. This photo and others is from Mr. & Mrs. P. Wakely.



1890 Unidentified woman and dog with dog-operated butter churn.

Around the Society



J. Pugsley and H. Barrett showcase donated treasures at the OHS offices in preparation for the annual Yard Sale, May 11th.



The OHS Garden, like all gardens, requires a great deal of work in the spring. The Garden Committee would love some help, if only for the next few weeks. We garden on Friday mornings, starting at 9 a.m., but not in the rain. If interested, call Averil Jany at 905-845-7472.

Averil Jany

Solution to “The Way Things Were” - March 2013

ON the last page of the March 2013 Newsletter is a picture of the Aberdeen Bridge over Sixteen Mile Creek at Colborne St. (now Lakeshore Dr.) taken in 1894. In the background to the left can be seen Oakville Public School.

Keep a Look-out



For over 90 years, there has been and still is, a Winzer family member living on Kerr St. Mr. Jack Winzer (shown at left), who was brought up at 371, recently showed us original furniture, trunks his grandmother brought from England and features of the house such as this light switch. Kerr Street history will be detailed in our next issue.



DID Oakville have street names attached to the corner building? Are there any left, like the Toronto one illustrated here? Let us know if you find any.

WHAT would you like to see in your OHS Newsletter? Suggestions welcome. Call me at 905-844-4474 or email at swells@cogeco.ca

I wish to thank Lance Naismith for providing me with many hours of assistance with this, my first edition of the OHS newsletter. He and others before him have set a very high standard. I will say to Lance what he has said to me countless times, "Much appreciated."

Susan Wells, Editor

THE WAY THINGS WERE



1. Who is the woman?
2. Where is the building?
3. What is the building now?

Oakville Historical Society

110 King Street, Oakville

Archive Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 1:00 to 4:30 pm

Third Sunday of the month 12:30 to 4:00 pm

(905) 844-2695 www.oakvillehistory.org

**Postal Address: P.O. Box 69501, 109 Thomas Street,
Oakville, Ontario L6J 7R4**

