



Outlook

Volume 17 Number 9

www.hastingshistory.ca

Issue Number 275

November 2012

Banquet Draws Cast of Characters



The boys from the “Hastings County Historical Syndicate” were in Belleville recently for their annual fall banquet celebrating another successful year of business. Revealed here at the Travelodge Hotel, they are, (L to R) The Enforcer, Bell Ringer, The Big O and The Boss. See page 3 for their noms de plume. *Photo: Bill Kennedy*

St. Theresa Commemorates War of 1812

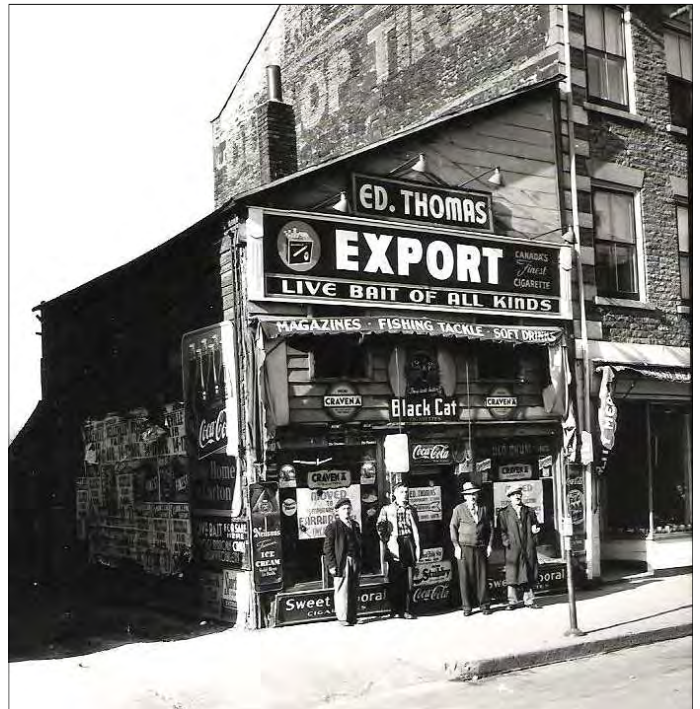


St. Theresa Catholic High School students (from left) Anthony Maracle, Austin Hayes, Jennifer Leigh and Emma Garrow salute the photographer in this picture taken at the school’s October history event, which was Organized by the school’s *Renaissance Society*. The theme was the “War of 1812.” *Photo: Bill Kennedy*

The Eddie Thomas Story *or* Fine Dining in a Very Shady Place Part 1

By C.W. (Bill) Hunt

Want to eat in a restaurant where an earlier proprietor went to prison for operating an illegal gambling establishment? Or how about one where hard-eyed men from Montreal came most weekends to bet huge sums of money illegally? Or maybe one where a respected bank manager lost his house, savings



The Eddie Thomas store and unidentified citizens at 182 Front Street, Belleville, circa 1940s. “Black Cat cigarettes, magazines and live bait of all kinds.” *Photo: The Intelligencer*

and clients’ deposits betting against men who drove trains or punched a time clock at Canada Cement. All that took place in a shabby building at 182 Front

(Cont’d. on page 7)

HCHS 2012 Banquet Table Sponsors

The Society would like to thank the following table sponsors for their generous support toward the preservation of Hastings County history:

Allan Woodley

Allan's Auto Repair
112 Station Street, Belleville, ON, K8N 2S5

Tom Gunsinger & Mrs. Michelle Stephens

Bel-Con Design Builders Ltd.
10 Dundas Street West, Belleville, ON, K9P 1A1

Bev & Gerry Boyce

173 Bridge Street East, Belleville, ON, K8N 1N3

Eric Thompson

Burke Funeral Home
150 Church Street, Belleville, ON, K8N 3B9

Brian Cooney

Cooney Auto Sales Inc.
101 Front Street, Belleville, ON, K8N 2Y6

Drs. Sean and Michelle Girduckis

Bridge Street Chiropractic & Massage Therapy
156 Bridge Street East, Unit 1, Belleville, ON, K8M 1M9

The Intelligencer

199 Front Street
Belleville, ON, K8N 5H5

Joan and John Guthrie

Guthrie Engineering Ltd.
12 North Front Street, Belleville, ON, K8N 1B3

Dr. William J. Hern

Dentist
146 St. Paul Street, Belleville, ON, K8P 3C3

Mark & Mary Hanley Corporation

289 Front Street, Belleville, ON, K8P 3C3

Eric DenOuden

Hilden Homes Ltd.
393 Sidney Street, Belleville, ON, K8P 3Z9

Bill & Milli Hunt

64 Plaza Square, Belleville, ON, K8N 4J3

Jim Langille

Industrial Alliance
65 Station Street, Belleville, ON, K8N 2S6

John Thomas

Commercial Accounts Manager
Jones Deslauriers Insurance Management Inc.
888 Sidney Street North, Box 754, Belleville, ON, K8N 5B5

Alan Kelly

Kelly's Pharmacy
411 Bridge Street East, Belleville, ON, K8N 1P7

Ross McDougall

McDougall Insurance & Financial
199 Front Street, Belleville, ON, K8N 5H5

Peter McCabe

Barrister & Solicitor
251 John Street, Belleville, ON, K8N 3G2

Bruce Mackay

Mackay Insurance Brokers Inc.
211 Dundas Street East, Belleville, ON, K8N 1E2

John O'Connor

O'Connor Jewel Box Inc.
212 Front Street, Belleville, ON, K8N 2Z2

William P. Procter

Procter Professional Corp.
365 North Front Street, Suite 204, P.O. Drawer 700
Belleville, ON, K8N 5B3

David Denison

Remax Realty
106 North Front Street, Belleville, ON, K8P 5Y6

Robert Reynolds

Reynolds O'Brien LLB
183 Front Street, Belleville, ON, K8N 2Y9

Maurice Rollins

Rollins Investments Inc.
199 Front Street, Belleville, ON, K8N 5H5

John Stockton

CIBC Wood Gundy
123-199 Front Street, Belleville ON, K8N 5H5

Ian Sullivan

Templeman, Meninga LLP
205 Dundas Street East
Belleville, ON, K8N 5A2

To Bill Hunt, our thanks once again for all his work in signing up our table sponsors. It is truly appreciated.

Historical Society's Mystery Dinner Theatre Uproarious Success!



Cast of Characters: Page 1, John Lowry (winner for best outfit), Bruce Bedell, Orland French and Richard Hughes. Page 3, L to R, in roughly three horizontal columns: John Lowry, [Theatre Cast - Harry, Edy, Lieutenant Caramba, Big Al, Geralda and Jake], Suzanne Kennedy, Orland French, Dan Bone on the Saxophone, Kelly Reid and Anne Rector, Judy and Al Cleary, Richard Hughes, Mary Jane Throop, Donna Fano. At the conclusion of the evening's ribaldry everyone was asked to write down who they thought was the murderer. On reviewing the pitiable answers, Lieutenant Caramba announced to loud cheering from the banquet audience that they were by far the dumbest audience he had ever addressed!

Belleville and the Battle of Britain

RCAF Commandeers School for the Deaf

By Donna Fano

The 72nd anniversary of the Battle of Britain is celebrated this year. Belleville played an important role in its success.

Three years ago, on September 16, 2009, the Honourable Greg Thompson, Minister of Veterans' Affairs, issued the following statement during the Battle of Britain's 69th anniversary:

"Between July and October 1940, a battle raged in the skies over Britain that has come to be regarded as one of the turning points of the Second World War. With the enemy set to invade, all of Britain looked to the skies for support. Among those who answered the call for help were brave Canadians serving with the Royal Air Force and the Royal Canadian Air Force ... The significance of the Battle of Britain is more than just a military victory. It was the first time air power saved a nation. Canadians, along with Allied Forces, saved Britain from invasion and paved the way for the Liberation of Europe."



The above photograph from John Doran, a long time Bellevilleian, was donated to the Community Archives of Belleville and Hasting County archives. It shows his father John Harold Doran, circled in the above photograph, at No. 5 ITS where he attended in 1942. John Harold Doran graduated from the three month class to go on for further training in another location. The white type at the bottom of the photo reads "M" Flight, Course 63, No. 5 ITS, Belleville, Ont. 5-12-42.

Canada contributed to the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan (BCATP), which provided training for many Commonwealth airmen. Seven RCAF training schools were set

up in Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina, Toronto (2), Belleville, and Victoriaville. In Belleville, the No. 5 Initial Training school was held at the Ontario School for the Deaf (now Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf) from 1941 - 1944.

At the start of World War II, the Canadian and Ontario governments announced that the OSD would become one of Canada's seven Initial Training Schools for the duration of the war. The staff and students had to move out as quickly as possible before the official turnover took place on July 9, 1941. The school was relocated to downtown Belleville in thirteen buildings in a central location. St. Thomas Parish Hall and the 34th Battery building became the hub of the school. Only students up to the age of sixteen were accommodated as there was not enough accommodation or school space for the older students. Older students who were not permitted to complete their education had to either attend the day schools in the large cities or seek jobs. In the three years of the relocation students and staff sacrificed the excellent space and facilities that they had been accustomed to.

The training program screened those cadets who would be successful in flight duties. The Link trainers now on display at the RCAF museum in Trenton were used first to test the cadets for mental and physical suitability to be pilots. Those who didn't make the grade were trained for other aircrew trades. Intensive screening streamed the cadets according to aptitude as pilots, navigators, air bombers, wireless operators, mid upper air gunner, rear gunner, observers and flight engineers. The initial training schools were similar as they all had the same purpose - to screen suitable aircrew for further training.

The three month air force training course was a basic course for all aircrew before they were posted to other places for advanced training. Thousands of young trainees underwent special instruction and testing in mathematics, airmanship, meteorology, navigation, the link trainer, engines, communications, discipline and other related subjects. In the first year men came from the United States to train along with the Canadians. In a very short time one hundred-sixty aircrew were being trained in Belleville every 12 weeks. From the second training period to the last period, men also came from various commonwealth countries to be included in the program.

Fifty years later, on September 17, 1994, the airmen reunited in a commemorative service to pay tribute to those who had graduated from No. 5 ITS. The service began

with fifty-five graduates wearing their original uniforms or newer legion jackets, marching to the front of the school and meeting with the dignitaries and air cadets from Trenton and Belleville.



This photograph of the Commemorative Service was taken by Alicia Chambers in 1994. Colonel Cy Yarnell, Ret'd., stands at the lectern in front of the main school building of Sir James Whitney School, Belleville.

A plaque titled "RCAF No. 5 Initial Training School (5 ITS) Belleville" is mounted on the southeast exterior corner of the main school. It reads in part as follows: "In World War II, the RCAF No. 5 ITS occupied this facility from 1941 to 1944 under an agreement between the federal and Ontario governments. It was one of the seven such units that operated under the RCAF- directed Commonwealth Air Training Plan in Canada ... Of 131,500 airmen trained in Canada during the war, nearly 70,000 were Canadians and, of that magnificent number, 6664 received their initial training here. This commemorative plaque is dedicated to all who served here at No. 5 ITS and especially to those who gave their lives in their air force service to their country."

Bus Tour, Saturday, May 4, 2013
Tickets \$65 Gift Certificates Available

"Ghost Towns and Pioneer Villages in Our Backyard." Come away for the day and be transported back in time as you explore the mysterious disappearance of many of the thriving villages of Hastings County. For tickets and gift certificates call **Mary-Lynne Morgan at 613-961-7091**. These HCHS bus tours are always popular events, so don't delay — get your ticket today!

Royal Anecdotes & Memorabilia



breach the barrier, snatch it up and stuff it under her coat. When questioned by the RCMP if it was her job to do this she replied in the affirmative. She was told to carry on. She considers the ensign one of her prized possessions.

Thimble-sized replicas of the crown jewels were among the memorabilia that Society speaker Jane Ann Thompson McCaw had on hand during her presentation to the Society at its October meeting (seen here with Denis Curtis, centre, and Mike Shaw).

Elizabeth R

Renowned Royalist, Jane Ann Thompson McCaw has been chair of the local Monarchist League for thirty years. As the speaker at the Society's October meeting she told anecdotes she has heard over her lifetime and recounted some of her personal experiences relating to the royal family.

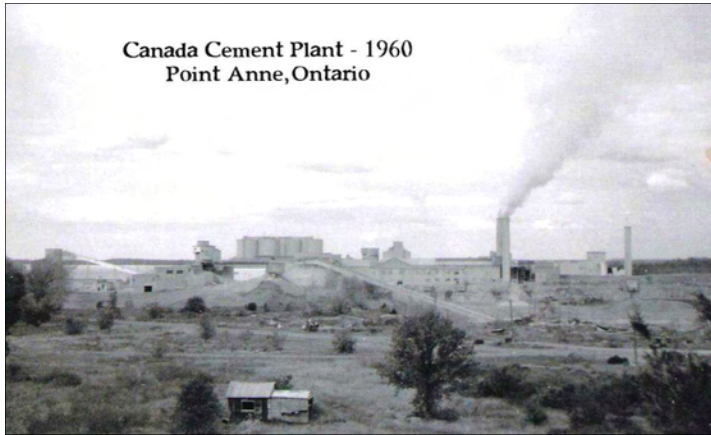
For example, the day the Queen's Canadian Ensign fell off the back of the landau in which she and Prince Philip were riding, Ann was on hand to

The Queen's chef of 29 years, Michael Dunn, tells the story of a seaside picnic for the Queen and the Duke. The Duke told Dunn he need not provide any water. But the Queen wanted spaghetti! How to boil it? No problem. Not long after arriving seaside the Duke approached Dunn and said they were going home. Could he (the Duke) sit with the driver while Dunn sat in the back with the Queen? Apparently the Queen was not happy with spaghetti cooked in seawater.

Death of a Village Part 1

By Vern Whalen

In life, death of any kind can rip a hole in your heart and leave a large void. This is exactly what happened for many of us when our village of Point Anne (on Belleville's eastern perimeter) became a virtual ghost town.



Most could not comprehend the full effect it would have on us when Canada Cement Lafarge announced that the cement factory in Point Anne would be closing, with many employees being transferred to a modern facility in Bath, near Kingston. In June of 1973, the last of the puffy white smoke billowed from the stacks, signalling the beginning of the end.

For almost 75 years, bolstered by an abundance of essential limestone, cement had been produced in the tiny hamlet strategically located on the shores of the Bay of Quinte. In the early 1900s, there were initially two companies: the Belleville Portland Cement Company and the Lehigh Portland Cement Company employing up to 1,000 workers. The former was located in the west end of town, referred to as "Ox-Point" or "the Upper End." The latter was in the east end and was referred to as "Lehigh" or "the Lower End." Villagers often made these distinctions known by referring to someone being from "the Upper End" or "the Lower End." In 1909, Canada Cement purchased both and established one major facility at the Lehigh site. In the post-WWII "boom years," the plant was the largest producer of cement in Canada, producing up to 16 million bags annually.

For almost 40 years, the ship "Cementkarrier" was part of the operations and a frequent sight on the Bay of Quinte. It was built in England in 1930 and lengthened in 1960. Loaded with bulk cement in Point

Anne, it took its cargo to destinations up and down the St. Lawrence and various ports on the Great Lakes. It was self-unloading with hoppers blowing cement from the hold into silos. The ship's first captain was Rolf Knudsen, the grandfather of prominent Belleville citizen, Brian Knudsen.

During this span of years, most families would have had up to three generations of men working at the plant. It would have been very common for both father and son to be employed at the same time. During WWII, women also worked there, filling in for those sent overseas. In my family, both of my grandfathers, my father and eldest brother worked for Canada Cement. I myself even worked there as a summer student.

Point Anne was known as a "company town." The cement company built and owned most of the houses which were rented by the employees for a very minimal cost, which included water, sewage and hydro. The homes were mostly cement stucco and duplexes. Many had large wooden verandas and seemed so solidly built that they would last forever. All the roads were maintained by the company including bulldozers for snowplows when needed. Recreational facilities supplied included open-air skating rinks, tennis courts, softball field, the beach and playground equipment. Hockey, tennis and ball teams were funded. Company-sponsored field days



"Cementkarrier"

and motorboat races were held on Dominion Day as well as one of the Quinte area's first fireworks displays on Victoria Day.

Watch for Part 2 of "Death of a Village" in the next issue of "Outlook."

The Eddie Thomas Story *(Cont'd. from page 1)*

Street, Belleville. That's right, the location is now Earl & Angelo's, one of the city's finer culinary establishments.



C.W. "Willie" Hunt, allegedly a 182 Front Street operative, is said to have twisted arms on behalf of the Syndicate (see page 1, top photo) in his pursuit of banquet table sponsors.

In those days, it was known as the Ed Thomas Cigar Store and many a young boy was taken there by his dad to be treated by the proprietor to a giant ice cream cone or a glass of his famous buttermilk. For more than half a century, Eddie Thomas and his son, Don, did a roaring business selling newspapers, magazines, cigars, cigarettes, ice cream cones, bait, soft drinks and sundries.

But the really big money was in the back room where high-stakes gambling took place.

It's difficult to know exactly just when Eddie Thomas decided to add an illegal gambling emporium to a family business which went back to 1822. Ed and his sister, Jessie, took over the business in 1909 after their parents died within a year of each other. Jessie took over the grocery end of the business, while Ed handled newspapers, magazines, tobacco and sporting goods. A year later, Ed, now in his early twenties, married Lillian Ruttan; within a few years they had two children. Perhaps the financial burden of raising a family led him to go into the risky business of running illegal card games. What is clear is that the games were being held by the early 1920s.*

At that time, Belleville's largest and best paying employer was the railroad. Conductors and engineers were earning twice as much per year as high school teachers and many of them were regulars in the smoky back room of Thomas's Cigar Store.

There were two tables in the back room, one which seated about twelve players for the usual punters; the other much smaller was used only for the big

money players. Many of the latter drove their big sedans across the border from the States or made the three-hour drive from Toronto, while a few came all the way from Montreal. In those days of poor roads and maximum speed limits of 80 km per hour, the drive from Montreal might take six or eight hours. These high rollers would arrive on Friday afternoon, look over the layout, go out for a nice dinner and start playing about 8:00 PM. They played straight through until Sunday night, leaving at suppertime for the return trip.

In the early 1950s, while attending B.C.I., Don McInroy worked six days a week, twelve hours a day at Thomas's cigar store for twenty-five dollars a week. Ed used to slip him his pay as though it was all faintly illegal; there were no deductions for E.I. or anything else. But the real money was made when the bell rang summoning Don to get one of the gamblers a sandwich from the restaurant across the street. The punter invariably handed him a two-dollar bill for a sandwich that cost fifty or sixty cents, telling him, "Keep the change, kid." Don McInroy averaged about fifty dollars a week in tips. The store was open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and was always busy.

In 1955, the old building was torn down and a new two-story structure was erected at the same location. The new building still stands and is now home to Earl and Angelo's restaurant. But in 1955, the new quarters enabled Ed and his son, Don, to expand their gambling den into a much larger operation. That was when events got really interesting.

**My late father-in-law came to Belleville from Nova Scotia about 1920 and was married at Bridge Street United in 1925. He recalled that the games were being held prior to his marriage.*


Part 2 of the Eddie Thomas Story, titled "The Raid and the Fall Guy," will appear in the next issue of "Outlook."

Photo Credits: The Outlook Editor would like to thank Donna Fano, Dick Hughes and Anne Rector for the Mystery Dinner Theatre photographs they provided for this issue of the newsletter.



(1) Society Treasurer, Mike Shaw, left, is refused entrance to the banquet hall by Syndicate kingpin Diane Sule and her entourage for keeping only one set of books. (2) Some of the banquet guests. (3) "Big Al." (4) "Jake." (5) Donna Fano &

Elizabeth Mitchell. (6) "Harry." (7) Marney Black, centre, and Adele Dibben, right, in conversation with Mystery Theatre moll "Edy." (8) "Géralda Lightfingers." As it has been for years the banquet was a sell-out, and this time a side-splitting one to boot!



Hastings County Historical Society Presentation

Special Guest Speaker:

Mr. Roger Litwiller
Author of *Warships of the Bay of Quinte*

Topic:

The Story of Six of Canada's Warships That formed The Backbone of The Royal Canadian Navy During WW II and Beyond.

Date: Tuesday, November 20th, 2012
Time: 7:30 p m

Location: Quinte Living Centre Auditorium
(North Corner Door)

370 Front Street, Belleville

Everyone Welcome, Bring a Friend
Visit Our Website: www.hastingshistory.ca

HASTINGS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY DIRECTORS

President	Richard Hughes
Vice-President	Anne Rector
Past President	Orland French
Treasurer	Mike Shaw
Secretary	Vern Whalen
Exhibits & Displays	Mary Jane Throop
Information Technology	John Lowry
Program Director	Anne Rector
Publicity	Bruce Bedell
Director	Diane Sule
<i>Outlook</i> Editor	Bill Kennedy
HCHS Website	www.hastingshistory.ca
Heritage Centre Phone No.	613-962-1110

Hastings County Historical Society is based at the old township office in Cannifton. Please address mail to General Delivery, Cannifton, ON, K0K 2K0. *Outlook* is published eight months of the year for members and friends of the Society. The editor, Bill Kennedy, can be reached at email <kennedycounty@gmail.com>

MEMBER ADDRESS