

The Burlington Historical Society GAZETTE

In my Grandfathers' Footsteps -

Since the end of the Great War in 1918, Remembrance Day is a time to honour the efforts and sacrifices of Canadian military service.

BHS has hosted many presentations about the wars – especially Canadian involvement.

Our own Alan Harrington wanted to experience these sites first hand: to stand where his Grandfather fought at the WWI Battle of Vimy Ridge, and where his other Grandfather (twenty seven years later), landed at Normandy in WWII.



Plus, Alan wanted to view the other few actual battle sites which still remain.

Please join us to hear his first person account of what it is to walk among those grounds this year.



This month:

Monday, November 11th, 7 pm
Centennial Hall, Central Library

Join us to hear **Alan Harrington**

Everyone is welcome! Bring a friend



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President's Message *Don Thorpe*

What a wonderful presentation by John Jeffkins last month. His story of his father was amazing, and I certainly learned a lot about British Home Children.

Make sure you join us on Monday, November 11th as our own Alan Harrington will be presenting his thoughts and images of Vimy Ridge and Normandy.

We are looking for volunteers to join the executive. Please show your interest by contacting info@burlingtonhistorical.ca

Known for being enthusiastic and cool, babies with a **November birthday** also have some serious star power. If you know a few nonagenarians whose birthdays are in November, it might not be a coincidence. According to research, being born in November may well mean having a longer lifespan, among other unique traits.

November births produce individuals known for their intensity, passion, and adventurous spirit.

November Calendar

November is an annual event that takes place throughout the entire month of November. The event was designed to get people talking about and raising awareness of men's health issues.

All Saints' Day, also known as All Hallows' Day (Hallow is an old English word that means holy or saint) is a Christian observance held on **November 1st** every year, the day after All Hallows' Eve.

Remembrance Day is a day used to honour the sacrifices made by the military servicemen and women in World Wars I and II and the conflicts after that.

Commonwealth member states (around 56 countries, most of which were under British rule previously) such as Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New

Zealand, observe it at the **11th hour on 11th day of November** every year.



Sadie Hawkins Day is a made-up holiday that grew immensely popular in the United States and became a yearly tradition, even spreading across to Canada. It is celebrated on **November 13**

The day is all about women taking charge and asking men out on dates.

On **November 14th** every year, **World Diabetes Day** is observed to raise awareness around the globe about diabetes.

The International Day for Tolerance is a United Nations annual holiday commemorated on **November 16**. It promotes tolerance among people of all backgrounds and beliefs and encourages people to educate themselves on other cultures and perspectives to eradicate intolerance around the world.

Black Friday takes place on the **Friday after the American Thanksgiving**, which falls on the **fourth Thursday in November**. It marks the beginning of the holiday shopping season in the United States, bringing a whirlwind of deals and discounts.

Trivia Question: **How old was Murray Fisher when he produced Farewell to the Garden of Canada?**

Answer to October's trivia question – Burlington Bay was named by Lord John Graves Simcoe in 1792.

Officers (Elected)		Directors (Appointed)		Convenors (Appointed)		Archives Volunteers
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Footloose in Freeman. A Boy's Night to Remember

By George Kush

I will never forget the early morning hours of November 2nd, 1962. I woke from a sound sleep sometime after midnight to the sound of my father rapping hard on my older sister's bedroom door, located directly across the hallway. There was a mysterious, shimmering orange glow that seemed to light up my bedroom and I could see through its open door my father frantically pulling on his work jacket. As I rubbed the sleep from my eyes and started to come to my 12 year old senses, I heard him telling Eleanor that Tip Top Cannery was on fire, that he had to leave immediately, and for her to watch the household, which included myself and three younger siblings, while he was gone.

Why was my father in such a hurry to leave our home on Plains Road in the middle of the night? Quite simple, really. My dad, Poldy Kush, was the plant's production foreman and with the company engulfed in what from my window appeared to be an enormous blaze he felt that it was his duty to be on site to offer any assistance required. My parent's home was located a short distance from the plant so he didn't have far to travel, and as I later learned, he arrived long before the first firetrucks were on the scene. When they did arrive, he was busy rescuing company files and moving furniture from the front office into the street and beyond reach of the encroaching flames. He was also directing local employees and nearby property owners to keep clear.

There were many familiar faces in the growing crowd of onlookers. All dressed in their nightclothes, some wrapped tightly in blankets. Dazed, they huddled together like lost sheep not knowing what to do or where they should be. My father seemed to be everywhere and I could hear his familiar voice rising above the roar of crackling flames and screeching sirens as he shouted at the spectators to stay back. To keep clear. Above it all, with the rapidity of machine guns, the ceaseless popping of hundreds upon hundreds of exploding cans, some hurtling through the night air and raining down on Plains Road where they spilled their sticky, boiling contents onto the pavement. Even now I find it amazing that, beyond some broken windshields, no parties were hit or injured.

How did I manage to witness the events I've described? Well, while my sister was busy checking the rest of our brood, her attention diverted, I skipped out the back door and headed straight for the factory. The scene that unfolded as I approached, is one that I'll never forget. There were scores of cars blocking both lanes of Plains Road with dozens of people standing on the boulevard and sidewalks gaping at the inferno, many loudly offering their own suggestions to the firefighters

as they deployed. Not the least among them, Dave Hyslop, the company vice-president and co-owner, who at one point climbed a fire ladder and while standing on the office rooftop kept screaming at the volunteer firemen. Telling them that they didn't know what they were doing. As if they were no better than a gaggle of Keystone cops. It was all so crazy. But my dad was the master of self-control through it all. And never once, then or afterward, did I hear him criticize the men who worked so hard and tirelessly that night.



Tip Top Cannery – 1926

In the immediate aftermath of the fire, even as smoke still rose from the ruins, people from all over the region, some from as far off as Hamilton and Oakville, came to gawk but more incredibly, to steal whatever they could lay their hands on, primarily exposed canned goods. The western half of the main warehouse had survived though badly damaged and people simply took whatever they wanted. Despite best efforts to prevent theft, they filled car trunks and drove off. In those days there were no local security companies, so the responsibility of protecting company property eventually fell to my father and a handful of trusted employees under his charge. Dad had company trucks parked at each end of the Tip Top alleyway, blocking unauthorized access and then posted employees in the cabs to keep watch over the site, day and night and chase away any intruders. More than once, dad's trusty 12 gauge shotgun barked in the middle of the night and shadowy figures disappeared off into the dark. Those were far different days and police had no issue with my father's warning shots. In fact, they supported and encouraged his efforts.

But it wasn't all doom & gloom in the fire's aftermath. My dad had a wicked sense of humour and was not above using it on his own men. Knowing that the boys were secretly drinking booze while on night shift (those were cold November & December nights) he and Tip Top truck driver Keith McWilliams decided

to give the watchmen a night to remember. Together they acquired some old white bed sheets and had a pair of ghost costumes made up. Donning these makeshift outfits and illuminating them with flashlights, the two pranksters then proceeded to thread carefully through the ruins, wailing and moaning loudly. Well, their mischief bore results, sort of. Both Peter "The Jam Man" Luby and "Smokey Joe" Smith quit their posts in what dad later laughingly described as a spirited gallop and it took considerable persuasion on my father's part to convince the two men to return to their jobs. But, boozing was no longer a problem. Apparently, the night operator at nearby Freeman Station, also witnessed the glowing specters and he refused to spend another night alone. Dad had to go over to the station and explain to the rattled fellow that what he witnessed was just a bit of harmless fun.

From my personal experience I can state that Tip Top certainly presented a ghostly appearance, especially after nightfall. More than once I had to take meals to my father and walking down that alley in the dark took all the nerve my small frame could muster. Charred, crumbling walls, fallen rafters, swaying electrical wires, vacant windows and towering stacks of scorched canned goods were a sight to remember. In a way, it was like a scene out of postwar Berlin or today's Gaza. And strangely it seemed even worse after a heavy snowfall.

The old Tip Top was gone, to be replaced within a year by a new fireproof structure, but for the residents of Freeman, including yours truly, there was a strange period of social adjustment. For more than 40 years local residents had relied upon Tip Top's steam-whistle to determine certain times of day without their need to resort to clocks or watches. It blew every weekday, Sunday's excepted, sharply at 7 a.m, again at noon, then at one o'clock and finally at exactly 5 p.m.

I was attending Mountain Gardens Public school when the fire occurred and I found it strange not to hear the 1 p.m. Tip Top whistle, as it coincided with the ringing of the school buzzer, both announcing the end of noon recess. It was all so long ago and in a strange way it still provokes a degree of sadness. At least that's how I felt back then and still today. Listening to that whistle, was knowing that wherever my father was he too was hearing it. After that November, recess always ended with a rather empty note.



Tip Top Cannery alleyway as it appeared immediately after the fire. It will give you some idea of how eerie it all was for a 12-year old to negotiate in the dark. The man standing in the centre is Bill Wilvert, a long-time employee. Photo courtesy George Kush

Social Media Report *Jennifer Kemp*

In Mid-October, these are our social media numbers:

Facebook- 1463

Instagram- 514

X- 62



Editor's note – look for Jennifer's article on the history of our Cenotaph: <https://www.burlingtontoday.com/local-news/remember-this-the-story-behind-burlingtons-cenotaph-7808256>

While you are on that page, enjoy some of her other articles.

Membership Report *Pat Taylor, Director*



OYEZ OYEZ

Not exactly the quality of **Town Crier, David Vollick**, who recently won a North American Town Crier competition in Provincetown, Massachusetts (so I just had to use this approach again this month). I hope I got your attention just the same.

It is **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME** - We now have a total of 41 paid up members – 23 seniors, 4 adults and 7 families (14 people).

Three ways to renew:

1. Mail in a completed membership form along with a cheque
OR
2. By e-transfer, with an email to “info@burlingtonhistorical.ca with any changes to your contact information or if you are a new member
OR
3. Give it to me at the meeting on Monday Nov. 11, (cash or cheque)
Membership form on the back of this Gazette.

Of course, if you have family members or friends who would like to join, I’ll gladly accept their money too.

And please give some serious thought to using your talents or developing new ones along with the leadership of the BHS

Call for Nominations *Jane Ann Newson, Nominating Chair*

The Burlington Historical Society will hold its Annual Meeting on January 13, 2025.

As per our By-Law No. 2, the following Officers (5) will be “stepping down” from their positions:

President
1st Vice President
2nd Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer

VOTE

Paid up members by December 31, 2024 can stand for election. Each Nomination must be seconded also by a paid-up member.

The Nominating Chair will present the proposed Slate of Nominees at our January 13, 2025 Annual Meeting. If more than five (5) nominees appear on the proposed slate, an election by secret ballot shall be conducted.

If you have an interest in joining our BHS Executive Team or require more information on this process, please email “Attn: 2024 Nominating Chair” at info@burlingtonhistorical.ca

It is important that we move forward into 2025 with a FULL Slate of Officers. Note that these officers may stand for re-election.

From the Archives *Joan Downey*

This article from our Parks file is a great example of how times have changed in the last 50 years.

LaSalle's Glory in ruins

Hamilton Spectator 30 July 1969

A miniature Stonehenge – once a fine Roman-style bathhouse used by scores of Hamiltonians now stands forlorn on the shores of Hamilton Bay in Burlington's LaSalle Park.

The bathhouse is a remnant of bygone days when Hamiltonians could board a ferry at the bottom of James Street and land at Brown's Wharf for a day of swimming and picnicking.

Bathers flocked around the old bathhouse which had a restaurant on its valuted* arches.

The 55-acre park fell into disuse in the late 1930s when flames destroyed the bathhouse. Then health officials said Hamilton Bay was polluted.

"There was just no reason to rebuild the bathhouse after the bay was no longer fit for swimming," explained Hamilton parks board secretary Ernest Seager.

Now the pitted and decaying ruins provide fun for area children. Some of the youngsters have named the ruin "the old castle" and play at olden days when knighthood was in flower.

Since 1912, when the city parks board bought the property and built the bathhouse and pavilion, the acreage has declined to the present ungroomed state.

What's Behind the Number?

Rollo Busby served on council during 1923 and 1924. His focus and accomplishment was to obtain for "ratepayers," a house numbering scheme and street signs.

The numbers were paid for in full by the property owners, at 25 cents for each property, while the estimated cost for about fifty street signs was \$28.50 plus installation.

"A park doesn't need to be groomed to be of use to the neighbourhood" said Mr. Seager. "Kids playing there now can see some of the wild animals normally not present in built-up groomed parks."

In the past few years some controversy has arisen between Burlington and Hamilton over who should run the park. Recently, a suggestion that Hamilton rent the park to Burlington for \$1 per year over five years fizzled out.

Mr. Seager maintains the park is used extensively by Hamilton citizens who would revolt at the thought of giving a \$4,000,000 property to Burlington for a paltry \$1.



"It will cost about \$300,000 to put the park back in shape," he said. "I think Hamilton is better able to pay for this than the town of Burlington,"

Restoration plans for the bathhouse and surrounding park, he indicated, will not come until after the more important projects such as Chedoke Park are completed.

Nelson township put street signs on all road intersections on three highways, Dundas St., Q.E.W. and the Lakeshore during the spring of 1947.

Burlington's current house numbering, designed by the Municipal Services Co. of Oakville, was put into effect in Nelson Township and East Flamborough about 1956 and in the old town of Burlington in 1958. The Burlington Gazette of 23 April 1958 explained the system.

New House Numbering Now in Effect



The new house numbering, which has just been put into effect in the old Town of Burlington, now ties in with the numbering system which existed in the former Township of Nelson and East Flamborough and is part of an overall Numbering Plan which extends from Metro Toronto on the east to Ancaster Township's westerly limits.

The numbering in Town of Burlington is uniform across its entire area. All numbering runs north from- Lake Ontario and is divided east and west at Aldershot – Waterdown Road. Numbering is such that there are 1,000 numbers between concessions and all parallel streets have the same set of numbers in a straight line running parallel to the concession roads. Thus a number on Brant Street is the same as a number on the Waterdown Rd., the Guelph Line or the Town Line if they are equal distance from the Queen Elizabeth Way.

On a North basis, below the QEW all numbers run back from 1000 at the QEW to a point out in Lake Ontario approx. two miles south of the QEW. Above the QEW all numbers start at 1000 and run to about 1550 at Upper Middle Road and then they start again at 2000 and run to 2550 at the Dundas Highway and above the Dundas Highway is 3000 and over. At the moment there is no numbering above the Dundas Highway but as it builds up in this area, this system will carry on right to



History of Daylight Saving Time *Submitted by Don Thorpe*

Canada, as a nation, first began using daylight saving time in 1918 during the First World War. Canada, the United States and much of Europe picked up the practice shortly after the Germans started it.

The German government needed ways to conserve energy for battle and needed its citizens to reduce the use of electric light and conserve fossil fuels, according to [University Canada West](#). The idea was that by pushing clocks forward by an hour in the spring, it gave people more daylight hours during working hours and then people would also use less energy to light their homes.

the northern limits of the Town of Burlington. (confused?) East-West numbering starts at the Aldershot-Waterdown Road and all numbers run from 1 to about 850 at the Hamilton city limits. Eastward numbers run to 700 at the old boundary of East Flamborough and Nelson Townships and start at 1000 and run to 1460 at Brant Street.

East of Brant Street they start at 2000 and run to 2460 at the Guelph Line where they start at 3000. The 3000 numbers run from the Guelph Line to Walker's Line, 4000 from Walker's Line to the Appleby Line and from Appleby Line to the Trafalgar Township limits the numbers are in the 5000's.

All streets running parallel to the concession lines are numbered exactly the same. On streets running in two directions the numbering is done in such a manner that the plan ties in with the predominate direction of the street with off direction being numbered back or ahead of a dead end. (now your head must be spinning)

Covers Whole Town

A number is allocated to every 25 feet of measurement. The entire numbering plan exists for the whole town, no matter where a new subdivision or street is cut in, the numbering plan is there to take care of it.

Once the public familiarize themselves with the system the building numbers will not only tell where the building is on the street but where the street is located in town. Anyone can travel the main arteries until they come to a similar number and then take the first cross street to come out where they want to go. For fire, police and emergency calls the number promptly gives the origin of the call.

In Canada, the idea was that daylight saving time could help increase production during the war.

After the First World War, Canada dropped the practice, but then brought it back during the Second World War.

While Canada as a nation started utilizing daylight saving time in 1918, the first instance of it happening in Canada is said to have happened a decade earlier. According to [timeanddate.com](#), Port Arthur, now Thunder Bay, turned its clocks forward by an hour on July 1, 1908, and turned it back on Sept. 1, 1908, but the community did not continue the practice in successive years.



Burlington Historical Society

Preserving Burlington's History for Today and Tomorrow

Membership - 2025

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Email address: _____

Membership Dues

☐ New Member

☐ Renewal

☐ Family \$40.00

☐ Adult: \$30.00

☐ Senior \$25.00

☐ Yes, as a **new** BHS member I wish to receive the Gazette newsletter and other e-communications and understand I can unsubscribe at any time.

Volunteer

Are you interested in volunteering with the Society? Would you like to help us in preserving the history of our City? Tell us a bit about your talents and interests – info@burlingtonhistorical.ca

Donation

I wish to make a separate donation to the society in the sum of _____

A Tax Receipt will be issued for all donations totalling \$25.00 or more

The Burlington Historical Society is a registered charity # 119217693RR0001

Mail completed form and remittance(s) to:

The Burlington Historical Society
Membership Convenor
PO Box 93164
1450 Headon Road
Burlington, Ontario L7M 4A3

Make cheques payable to The Burlington Historical Society

OR

e-transfer funds to
info@burlingtonhistorical.ca



If you are a new member or there are changes to your contact information, please email the completed form to us at the above email

OR

Leave it at the Membership table at any General Meeting

www.burlingtonhistorical.ca
info@burlingtonhistorical.ca
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