

CONNECTIONS

Millbrook-Cavan Historical Society Spring Newsletter, 2025



Rachel is back to host Trivia Night! All are welcome at the Millbrook Legion Hall, Friday March 28, 7 pm (doors open 6:45) for a jam-packed two hours of fun and laughter, and, of course, fierce competition, as teams battle it out for fleeting fame and highly coveted prizes. Pay what you can. Cash bar. Come as a team or just come and we'll team you up.

In Memoriam

It is with deep sadness, but also with profound gratitude for a life so well lived, that we mark the passing of our friend, our colleague, and former president of our Historical Society, **Peter Ramsav**. Tribute. page 2.

Rob Winslow teams up with local sage, George Sheppard

No doubt George himself would scoff at the word “sage” to describe him, but there is no denying that he has a treasure trove of local memories, information and stories to share. Playwright, actor and founder of 4th Line Theatre, Robert Winslow knows just how to mine that treasure. Join George and Robert in conversation at the Millbrook branch of Cavan Monaghan Libraries on Wednesday, March 26, 1:00-2:30 pm, 1 Dufferin Street (Old Millbrook School), Millbrook.

Anticipating Wild Irish Geese

April Event Highlights Peter Robinson Irish Emigration

On Friday, April 11, we look forward to welcoming members of the Board organizing the Bicentennial of the Peter Robinson Emigration Project that brought over 2,000 Irish men, women and children on nine ships to “the place at the end of the rapids” which the local First Nations called Nogojiwanong. We now know it as Peterborough.

To mark this Bicentennial, the not-for-profit organization called **Nine Ships 1825 Inc.** has been formed to honour this chapter in Canadian history. Members of the Board will talk about the significance of this emigration, describe the journey, and highlight coming events planned for this summer. Join us April 11, 7:00 pm at the Legion Hall in Millbrook. More: see page 3.

Remembering our Heritage Champion Peter Ramsay

Peter Ramsay made his mark here in so many ways. Known for his passion for our local built heritage, as manifested in the pictorial book *Significant Architecture of Millbrook* which he edited, he fiercely championed heritage designation as a way to safeguard the integrity of our local architectural legacy.

Peter delighted in the excellence of fine craftsmanship. His eyes lit up at the prospect of a winning bid on a finely wrought tool that he could add to his collection. His eyes also lit up as he greeted you at the door, or on a walk in the village, or on the Millbrook Valley Trails.



Peter and his wife Anne arrived in Millbrook in 2001. Originally both from Toronto, Peter moved his family to Peterborough in 1975, and established his own graphic design studio. His skill in applied art, innovation and creativity took him well beyond his successful business, out of the office and into the garden where his artistry extended to the landscape. Here he worked contours and colours into a living tapestry that was further enhanced by examples of his other inspired pastime as a stain glass artist. Whimsical corners of his garden featured intriguing doorways and panels of beautiful stain glass. Some of Peter's creations can also be found in a number of heritage homes in Millbrook and the surrounding area.



Peter loved this community and was an active member and sometime leader of the area Garden Club, the Municipal Revitalization and Heritage Advisory Committee, and our own Historical Society. He was also a devoted dog-lover, and enjoyed the walks and companionship that he shared with his Golden Retrievers, Sophie and Emma.

Most precious of all to Peter was his family; his wife and life partner Anne whom he adored, and his beloved daughters Cris and Jenny who were by his side at all times in his last weeks with us. We will all miss him.

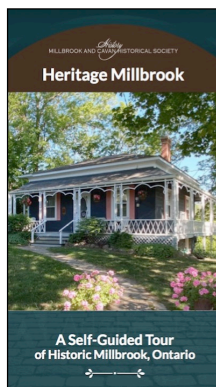
New Walking Tour Guide to honour Peter Ramsay

This spring, your Historical Society will begin work on a revised **Heritage Millbrook** Self-Guided Tour booklet, dedicated to the memory of Peter Ramsay who championed heritage designation and preservation.

Every last copy of our first edition, produced in 2021, has gone. That means 3,000 households, not just locally but across Ontario and beyond, know something of Millbrook's rich architectural heritage and also a little about our community; the shops and services that help us thrive.

With colour images by professional photographer Marjorie McDonald, the guide will be a valuable resource that will highlight our heritage properties and invite residents and tourists alike to spend some quality time here in our community.

If you would like to have your Millbrook property included, please let us know. There is no requirement that your home be officially designated. We just ask that it be of historic interest. Contact us at millbrookcavanhs@gmail.com.



Exploring Irish Emigration

On Friday, April 11, 7:00 pm, at the Millbrook Legion Hall, we will have an opportunity to learn about the Irish families who made the five week voyage to an unknown land in 1825.

- Why did as many as 50,000 people sign up for this project?
- What was going on in Ireland?
- Who was Peter Robinson?
- How did his first emigration project influence this, his second venture?

All these questions and more will be answered by our guest presenters as they describe the conditions, the records kept and the outcomes of this endeavor.

Join us for an evening of discovery and examination, as we explore this historic undertaking, the subject of **4th Line Theatre's** August play this summer, **Wild Irish Geese**, by playwright and actor Megan Murphy. All welcome!



Marking Heritage Week ...



Friday, February 21 at the Millbrook Legion Hall we celebrated Heritage Week together with special guests Robert Winslow (top left) and George Sheppard, and (below) JoEllen Brydon and Joanne Rowland.

Joanne and JoEllen took us back to the days of peaceful demonstrations and petitions protesting nuclear weapons proliferation, as well as environmental awareness initiatives that prompted the Give-a-Hoot Café and Earth Day programs.

Through a series of questions, Rob drew out from George detailed memories of his early years at Needler's Mill and growing up in the village, training for service as a volunteer firefighter and training officer, and his years at Millbrook's LCBO outlet.

George brought with him an enormous collection of photographs, clippings and other memorabilia, but time ran out before we all had a chance to visit with him and view what he had brought.

All is not lost! **George and Robert** will be at the Millbrook branch of CM Libraries, Old Millbrook School, on **Wednesday, March 26**, 1:00-2:30 pm. All welcome.

What's in the works ...

George Sheppard, with Rob Winslow at Millbrook Library branch, March 26, 1:00-2:30 pm.

Trivia Night! With emcee Rachel Finnie and an all-Canadian quiz, Friday, March 28, 7 pm, Millbrook Legion Hall. An evening of laughs and a battle of wits. Prizes. Cash Bar. Pay what you can.

Nine Ships 1825 – the Peter Robinson Irish Emigration project, Friday, April 11, 7 pm, Millbrook Legion Hall. Presentation and conversation with the Bicentennial organizing team.

Ancestry at the CM Libraries – 4th Wednesday each month at Millbrook branch, 1:00-2:30 pm.

Annual General Meeting – mid-May. Details to be announced – stand by! This is your big chance to **sign on** as either a Board member (help steer this ship!) or a volunteer who would like to help with:

- * **Heritage Millbrook** tour guide revision and reprint;
- * **Cavan Monaghan Farm and Barn Inventory** – to compile a visual record of heritage barns and farms;
- * **Oral Histories**, engaging in and recording conversations with area residents to capture memories.
- * **Visual exhibits curator** – to source materials and manage exhibits that highlight our local and regional heritage.

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