

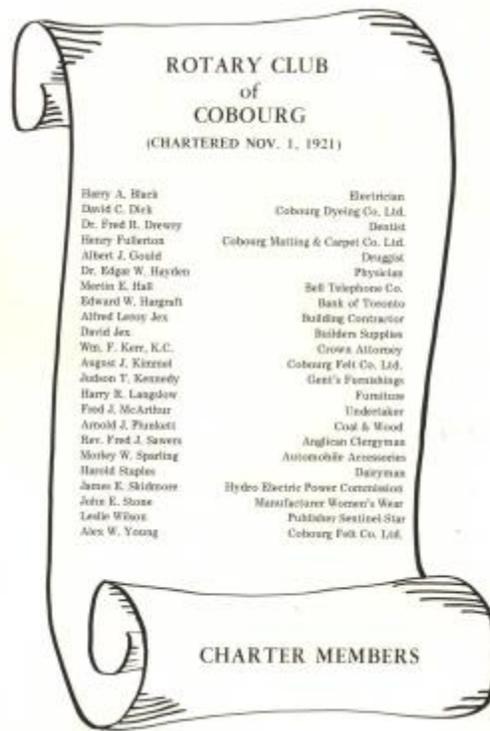
# ROTARY CLUB of COBOURG

## A History 1921 - 2001

The Rotary Club of Cobourg held its first meeting on Friday night August 12, 1921 at the Arlington Hotel. A large number of Rotarians from Toronto, Montreal, Belleville, Peterborough and other places gathered to initiate a number of local men into the Rotary Club of Cobourg. The Club was sponsored by the Rotary Club of Montreal under the guidance of Montreal Rotarian Ernest Latter.

The first regular meeting of the Club was held on Friday at 12:30 noon August 23, 1921 at the British Hotel.

On Tuesday November 29, 1921 District Governor Hart Irving Seeley of Waverly New York presented the Official Charter - number 997 to the membership .There was 23 members on the charter and they represented a fair cross section of the town (see below). The officers were President J.E. Stone, Secretary A.W. Young and Treasurer A.J. Plunkett. The 125 guests at this meeting were from cities and towns in Ontario, Quebec and the USA. At this to time 16 years after Rotary was founded by Paul Harris in 1905 there were 997 clubs.



CHARTER MEMBERS 1921

Up until 1935, there were no written records kept and then only spotty until the early 1940,s. Miscellaneous newspaper and newsletters gives us a glimpse of activities in these early days.

The Club started off in 1921 with 23 members. In the 1930'3 this grew to 35, 67 in 1961, 71 in 1965, 74 in 1971 , 119 in 1997 and 141 in 2001

## Fellowship

Fellowship and inter club activities were very prominent in the Cobourg Rotary scene over the years.

A number of early fellowship activities stood out with a very active Rural-Urban Gatherings and participation in Rotary District and International Conferences.

The first Inter Club activity occurred 8 months after the Cobourg Club was formed. On March 15<sup>th</sup> 1922, along with other Rotarians from Oshawa , Belleville, Peterborough, Lindsay, Toronto, and Montreal, Cobourg took part in the formation of the new Club in Port Hope.

In July of the same year, Cobourg hosted a picnic in Victoria park where 403 Rotarians from eight Clubs attended.

Many inter club activities are recorded where Cobourg hosted one or more Clubs at Parish Halls, the British Hotel and the Orange Hall. At all of these events, special guest speakers and entertainment was present.



CLUB CHARTER

## Service

The First Service Activity that the Club performed was in January 1922 in the form of a bean supper at the Armoury for boys between the ages of 15 and 21. A wireless receiver was given to a young shut in boy so that he could receive broadcasts from the entertainment world. Camping for boys at Richardson

point (1923), playground for youngster on the Covert Property at the base of the West pier(1926) were another of the two early service activities.

As the years went on donations were made to the Cobourg Hospital, the Orphanage, the Children's Aid Society, the Community Chess, Leys Rink, the Red Cross The Navy League, Milk for Britain, the Ladies Auxiliary to the batteries overseas, the Legion, the Hospital for Sick Children, the Boy Scouts , the Church Hockey Leagues, the areas rugby and other sports activities, swimming Instruction and awards for students. A report in 1940 showed that the Club had spent \$4000 on service work in the previous 8 years.

In succeeding years, highlights from the records showed that donations were made to the following - Cobourg Memorial Rink Centre, School Playground Equipment, Recreation Committee, Cobourg District Hospital and equipment- 1951/\$1000 - by 1960/ \$19000 for building Fund, 1968-70/ \$5000, Opera House, High School Bursaries and Scholarships and Student Achievement Awards, Library - 1963/\$1000, Student Loan Fund, Big Brother Association dinners, United Counties Symphony Orchestra, Rotary Park- The Honourable James Cockburn Centennial Gardens - 1966-70/ \$18,000, Centennial Pool - 1966/\$5000, Parks, Town Hall Improvements, Victoria Park - fountain/floral clock/board walk/Xmas lights , Senior Citizen Assistance for personal and facilities, Victoria Hall, Cobourg Y , Soccer-Baseball-Hockey and other sports activities, boy scouts, Historical Artifacts renewal, Habitat for Humanity/2 homes, fire rescue boat, Baltimore hockey arena, Northumberland Health Care Corp/new Hospital and the list goes on.



Centennial Pool

### **Easter Seals**

In 1944, the Cobourg Club became involved with the Crippled Children's Society and took on the task of raising money for crippled children . The name was changed in the late 1940's to the Easter Seal Committee in the Club . Some of the highlights from this committee are - in 1946 raised \$7000, 1947- \$3773.55 spent on Crippled children's Work - \$1011.58 in Cobourg, 1959 a Crippled Children's Clinic was held at the Cobourg Hospital where 80 children were examined and treated by 5 specialists, 1966 - \$500 to Camp Merriwood, 1992-1996/ \$96,000 to Camp Merriwood.

### **Air Cadets**

In the early spring of 1942 the Rotary Club of Cobourg applied for a Charter to form an Air Cadet Squadron. This was in response from Air Minister Power in 1940 request to the public to set up a country wide volunteer organization to sponsor and develop an Air Cadet Training Program as an aid to the war effort. On April 9, 1941, the Air Cadet League of Canada was granted a Dominion Charter Authorizing it to operate a non-profit organization.

This charter was granted and the 138<sup>th</sup> Squadron, Royal Canadian Air Cadets was formed. Leadership came from within the Rotary Club as A.R. Willmott became the first Commanding Officer.

Up to the end of the war in 1945, seventy five cadets had gone through the squadron and many had joined the RCAF afterwards. At wars end, there was a natural lessening of interest and the 138<sup>th</sup> Squadron which had been set up "for Duration" was disbanded.

In 1954, the Rotary Club of Cobourg again became involved as the sponsoring body for a new 598<sup>th</sup> Sabre Squadron. The training program for the cadets took a different emphasis than it had during the war with optional courses on Band Instruction, hunter safety, St John's Ambulance, Aero engines and rifle range training.

Since its beginning, the Cobourg Rotary Club has fully financially supported the squadron and its many activities



## [Fund Raising](#)

Early Fund Raising activities included canvassing for the Red Cross, the CNIB and other Organizations. During the war years they held weekly draws for Saving Bonds, canvassed for saving bonds and even invested \$800 of its own money in bonds.

In 1925 , Rotary commenced sponsoring Fairs and Carnivals, These continued until 1951 and records indicated the following revenues - 1929/\$2000, 1946/\$2000, 1947/\$4700 and 1948/\$3000 .

Carnivals were replaced by Trade Fairs in 1952 and remained as the main fund raiser until 1960.

BBC (Build a Better Cobourg) draws were started in 1965.

Over the years many fund raising activities were employed - car/boat/cottage raffles, canvassing, yard sales, golf tournaments, auctions, suppers, competitions-hockey/curling/car rallies/walking-racing-etc, Sportsman's Night Auction and Supper and many others .

The most major fund raising activity- The Rotary Arts and Craft Show was commenced in 1990 when Rotary joined forces with the Lions Club of Cobourg and the Town of Cobourg in putting on the Cobourg Waterfront Festival held each year on the Canada Day weekend. The Rotary commitment grew adding a carnival, food, entertainment, beer tent, boat rides, races. By 1999 it grew to such a size and notoriety that it was touted as the third best show in Canada on this weekend. Exhibitors and visitors came from across Canada and the USA. Revenues exceeded \$100,000 per year and was put to good use for many projects in the community.



**THE HISTORY OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF COBOURG**

**SERVICE ABOVE SELF FOR OVER 80 YEARS**