

Peterborough and the Kawarthas (Third edition) edited by
Peter Adams and Colin Taylor

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Peterborough and the Kawarthas (Third edition)

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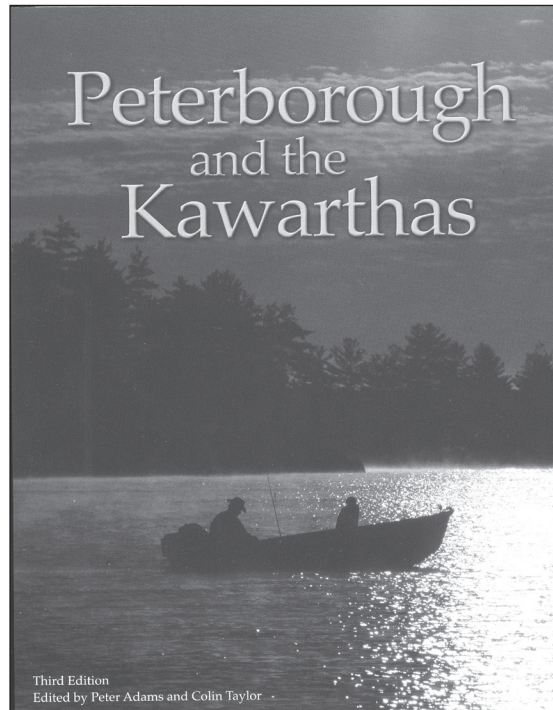
Peterborough: Trent University Geography Department, 2009. 252 pages. \$30.00 softcover. ISBN 978-0-921062-17-2 (geography@trentu.ca)

This much larger third edition of *Peterborough and the Kawarthas* is an impressive, pleasing successor to the modest first edition of 161 pages, published in 1985. It has a larger page size and dozens of colour photographs of half page and larger dimension. The up-dating provides more recent data, both physical and human, and, for the first time, many relevant websites. Although launched in connection with historic milestones for Trent University, and continued with the same intention, this series is essentially a gift to Trent's tributary region from the academic department uniquely qualified to carry out a regional analysis. Adams, Taylor and other members of the Department of Geography, plus four external colleagues, present authoritative chapters on the geomorphology, glacial features (including the famous drumlin field), climate, biotic characteristics and hydrology. On the human side, authors write of 175 years of population change (to

2006), and the singular settlement drama that occupied and shaped the landscape, collaterally giving rise to the influential city of Peterborough on the recreationally important Trent Canal. *Peterborough and the Kawarthas* treats the Kawartha region essentially as an alias for the Otonabee River watershed, and Peterborough as the regional capital. Certainly, in the public mind, Peterborough is the major gateway to the Kawarthas.

One of the most attractive aspects of *Peterborough and the Kawarthas* is that it not only provides the reading public with an authentic scientific depiction of the area but, in many ways, it also serves as a practical guide for exploring it. There is a chapter on recreation and tourism, but more to the point, the one that follows lays

out a dozen detailed field trips anchored by significant points of interest, both natural and cultural. These expeditions take one to the edge of the Canadian Shield, the



various mining areas, the “Holy Land” of Roman Catholic Irish settlement and the neighbouring township of Irish Protestant settlement, the Curve Lake First Nation, an ingenious lift-lock on the Trent canal, and much more. The field trips are specifically related to particular chapters, and an extensive list of related websites and publications is included.

A large number of low-level aerial photographs illustrate various parts of the text. The authors effectively use landscape sketches throughout the sections on the cultural landscape and Peterborough, and they interpret an oblique aerial photograph in colour by way of a line drawing of the scene, with the notable features named. Rural municipalities in many parts of Ontario have been amalgamated or otherwise modified since publication of previous editions, and this one provides a table comparing the new labels with the traditional ones. However, in those parts of the text where the historical townships or places are discussed, a map of the former surveyed units would be helpful.

A number of sidebars are scattered through this volume, offering specialized discussions of currently significant issues or reflecting on extraordinary events. A good example is the explanation of the destructive Peterborough flood of July 2004 when 115 mm of rain fell overnight in the densely built-up central city and resulted in surprisingly extensive flooding. Other inserts discuss the Great Ice Storm of 1998,

forest fires in the early settlement years, representative soil characteristics (contrasting the bare Shield and loamy agricultural soils), acidification of lakes and forests, lake energy balance and seasonal variation, and industry and heritage planning in Peterborough. There are many informative tables, diagrams, and maps, although the diagram (Figure 6.6) purporting to show snowfall for this respectably snowy area—normally some 175 cm per year—does not do justice to that winter phenomenon.

The last chapter provides a thorough survey of the kinds of maps and other representations of the landscape that are available, as well as guidance on where they might be found. There is a demonstration of the interpretive power of the Geographical Information System and satellite photography, and a description of the wide range of materials that apply to the City of Peterborough. *Peterborough and the Kawarthas* closes with a remarkably detailed index; roughly 650 entries range from a long list of local birds to current and former businesses, hamlets, and regional organizations. The proceeds from sales are deposited in a scholarship fund at Trent University. It would be gratifying to see geography departments in other Ontario universities use *Peterborough and the Kawarthas* as a guide, to emulate for their home territories.

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