

2019 OIL HERITAGE VISITORS' GUIDE

PETROLIA
OIL SPRINGS
AND
WYOMING



PUBLISHED BY: THE INDEPENDENT OF PETROLIA AND CENTRAL LAMBTON ©



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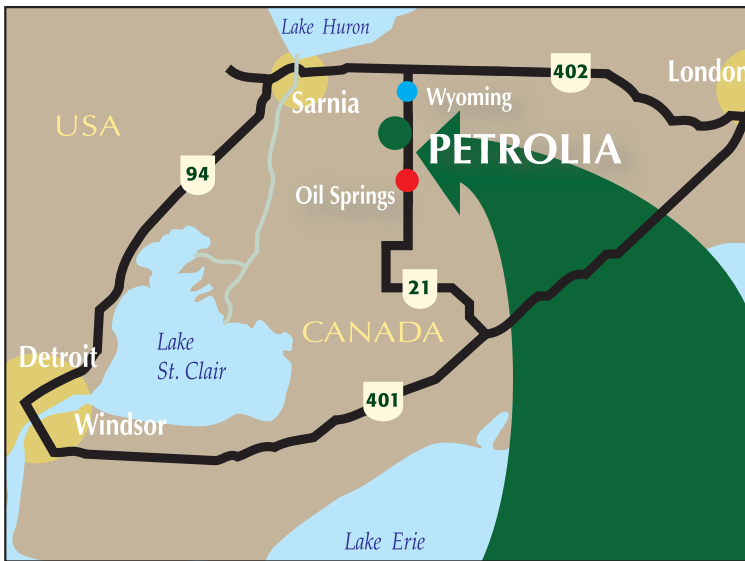


you'll be surprised!



519-882-2350 | www.town.petrolia.on.ca

Photos by Carol Graham



Petrolia and Central Lambton is a short drive from most major centers in south-western Ontario - just a half hour from Sarnia, an hour from London and an hour and a half from Windsor - less by way of the Bluewater Bridge or the ferry crossings on the St. Clair River.

Welcome to the Oil Heritage District

Welcome to one of the most historic and most picturesque parts of Ontario – The Oil Heritage District.

You may have come for the world-class theatre or a sporting event but we're sure you find lots of other things to charm you.

Whether it is spring, summer, winter or fall, there is lots to do in Petrolia and Central Lambton.

And then, there is the history which surrounds you. Enjoy the walking tour of Petrolia found in the pages of this guide and then head to Oil Springs to see where the oil industry began.

Enjoy discovering the beautiful place we call home!

Heather Wright
Publisher

The
Independent
Serving Petrolia and Central Lambton

This guide is also on line at www.petrolialambtonindependent.ca

OIL MUSEUM OF CANADA National Historic Site

The Oil Museum of Canada, in the Village of Oil Springs, preserves the site of the first commercial oil well in North America. Visitors from around the world come to learn the story of Canada's Oil Pioneers – a unique and captivating era of history!

www.oilmuseum.ca

oil.museum@county-lambton.on.ca

519-834-2840



It all begins in Oil Springs

This is where everything began.

When the oil sprung from the heavy clay in Oil Springs and the commercial oil industry began.

Today, the Oil Museum of Canada helps visitors uncover the birth and growth stories of a new industry, as well as the social aspect of life in the early oil boom town of Oil Springs. Imagine the strange sights and sounds and the smell! Archival photographs, artifacts, documented stories, and

working exhibits show and tell how history happened here and how it evolved in the Oil Heritage District of Oil Springs, Petrolia and Wyoming.

In late 1873, the people who pioneered the oil industry fanned out around the world, opening oil fields as far away as Russia, Africa, Persia, Trinidad and South America and many more, taking with them tools, technology, and most importantly their prized expertise - all gained or developed in the early oil fields of Oil Springs, Petrolia, and Bothwell.

Visitors to the museum can see the permanent collection of intriguing photographs taken by the drillers, and hear their stories to get a glimpse of what these men - and sometimes their accompanying families - encountered while working and travelling.

Be sure to see the museum's exhibit of odd and unique mementos the drillers brought home,

to the surprise of their families - bead work, head hunter's knife, anaconda snake skin, brass vases, machetes, beautiful mounted butterflies, large bugs, pottery urns and more.

This was at a time when few people travelled great distances - especially perhaps not to such far off exotic places. The stories and artifacts about the 'foreign drillers' and their quest for black gold are captivating.

For more information, call the Oil Museum at 519-834-2840 or go online to www.oilmuseum.ca.



OIL TERRITORY, OIL SPRINGS, ONT.



WILLIAMS WELL –
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IN NORTH AMERICA

Where History was made – Oil Springs, a driving tour

Publisher's notes: *Driving instructions for the tour are in italics. The Oil Springs area is authentic in every way. Please use caution and keep children away from machinery that could harm them and stain their clothes!*

Oil is an enormous industry spanning the globe. The modern oil industry began with a spark in the 1850s and it took off like a wild fire – the fire ignited right here in Oil Springs. This incredible tale is told in a whole new way in the Oil Springs Circle Tour. Here you not only see living history, you breathe it too.

The Oil Museum of Canada is the first stop and it gives a good overview of how the quest for lamp oil kick-started an oil boom and instantly created a new era, the petroleum era. The museum is a National Historic Site located at the intersection of Gum Bed Line and Kelly Road.

Admission to the Oil Museum includes an audio driving tour. The tour route then travels east along Gum Bed Line and north on Gypsie Flats Road, passing several groupings of metal sculptures on Fairbank Oil Properties, also a National Historic Site. John Henry Fairbank began this oil field in 1861 and the family has operated it continuously since then. His great

Continued on page 6

Greetings from the County of Lambton

Welcome to the County of Lambton. I encourage visitors and residents alike to explore Lambton's many cultural and natural assets, in particular the oil heritage of Central Lambton of which we are all so proud.



-Lambton County Warden Bill Weber



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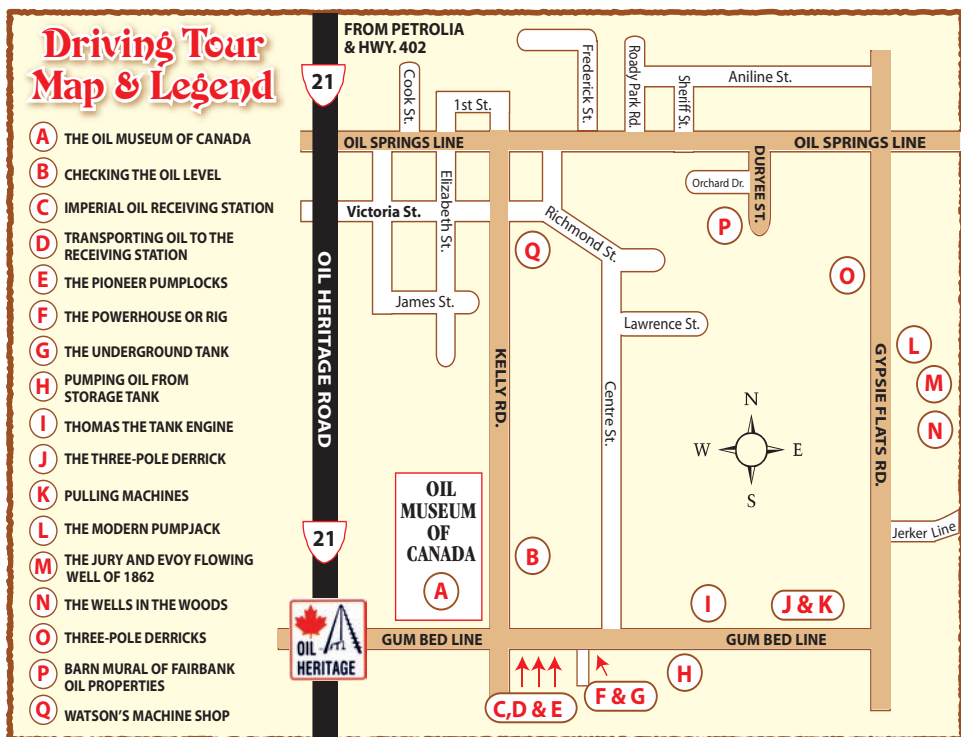


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Oil Springs - A Driving Tour, Continued from page 5

grandson, Charlie Fairbank, took ownership in 1973. The sculptures, by Murray Watson, depict real people and the setting is the authentic oil field that still uses the technology of the 1800s.

A – The Oil Museum of Canada National Historic Site ...at the intersection of Gum Bed Line and Kelly Road. - This is the home of the well that changed the world. Here, James Miller Williams dug an oil well. In 1858, he created North America's first commercial oil business and a new global oil industry burst into being. Take Gum Bed Line to Kelly Road, stop and look north

B – Checking the Oil Level - When crude is pumped from Oil Springs' wells it has 20 times more water than oil, and it must be separated. In the white separating tank, the oil floats to the top and is piped into the black tank. The green tank holds the water which will drain into a disposal well.

Lloyd Woods, who operated this piece of land for many years, checks the level of his oil. Once a week, this oil is piped to a central shipping tank. From there it's trucked to Imperial Oil for refining.

C – The Imperial Oil Receiving Station on Fairbank Oil Properties ...Intersection of Gum Bed Line and Kelly Road - A team of horses waits while crude oil is unloaded from an eight-barrel wooden tank to an 100 barrel underground tank. The man in white supervising the operation is Sam Donald, a Foreign Driller who returned to Oil Springs. Also monitoring the shipment is Garnet Byers, an oil producer, shown standing on the wagon. The receiving station was always an easy distance for horses to draw the heavy load. Sam checks the

purity of the oil by taking a sample in a graduated cylinder. Sometimes, not all of the water has been separated from the oil.

Inside the receiving station office, Tom Evoy stands to greet the oil producers, as he was the receiving station operator, just like his father had been. Sitting at the desk is Henry Wheeler, giving the oil producers a receipt for their oil. Henry started as an oilman at Fairbank Oil in 1917 and continued up until 1970. Behind the office, the receiving station also has a five-horsepower motor pump for transferring crude oil to the railway cars. A tank car sits on the former railway right-of-way just west of the museum. The cars would be loaded and shipped to the station on the 12th Line of Enniskillen Township, called LaSalle Road. Although the railway to Oil Springs closed in 1960, the receiving station continued to be used by Harold Marcus Ltd., which trucked the crude to Imperial Oil in Sarnia for refining.

In 1974, the receiving station closed, marking the end of an era. This is the only remaining Imperial Oil receiving station.

D – Transporting Oil to the Receiving Station *...further along the road on your right* - Irv Henderson guides a team of horses and an eight-barrel load of oil. He worked for Fairbank Oil from the 1960s through to the mid-1990s. These tanks were used until about 1975 but by that time, they were pulled by tractors, not horses. The tanks came in various sizes and each one bears a stamp with its capacity. When fully loaded, they would carry about 2,273 kilograms of oil.

E – The Pioneer Pumpblocks *...seen on the right side and throughout the tour* - An oil well is much like a water well; they both need a pump to get the liquid to surface. The water pump idea was easily adapted by our oil pioneers to create the pumpblock, later known as the pumpjack in this area. The wooden horizontal walking beam sits atop the wooden Samson post and the two pieces work together like a teeter-totter. As the walking beam nods up and down, it lifts and lowers a valve assembly 350 feet below. Oil enters the valve and gets pushed up to the wellhead. From here, it flows into a pipe and is collected in a tank. Power for the pumpblock comes from the engine in the powerhouse, and numerous pumpblocks can share one engine. The pumpblocks, like the modern pumpjacks, operate day in and day out.

Continued on page 8

Wishing you a warm welcome to

Petrolia!

*Enjoy your stay and
come visit us again!*

MARILYN GLADU MP Sarnia-Lambton
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Oil Springs - A Driving Tour, Continued from page 7

F – The Powerhouse or Rig ...on the right, at first turn-off is a small concrete building called the James Rig. Originally, the pump in each oil well was powered by an individual steam engine. In 1863, John Henry Fairbank devised the jerker line system in Oil Springs. It connects several wells and allowed them to share one central steam engine. When electricity arrived here in 1918, a five-horsepower motor in the rig replaced steam. This is The James Rig, one of six powerhouses on the property that runs continuously. Inside the rig, there is a 12-metre belt that loops like a giant rubber band around a bull wheel, which is six feet across, and the pulley with its motor, to create the power which moves outside to a field wheel, where it is shifted horizontally through the jerker line system.

G – The Underground Storage Tank - Visible if you are on foot when facing the rig door, turn left, and walk to the far side of the building. The underground oil storage tank just east of the James Rig dates back to the 1880s and is still used today. These deep wooden tanks are made waterproof by packing the outer walls with blue clay. Every month, a big oil tanker operated by Harold Marcus Limited removes the load of 210 barrels by attaching a suction hose to the pump on the tanker.

Pumping Oil from Storage Tank Right Raymond “Bucky” Mitchell is loading oil from a day tank, where the wells daily production of oil and water is separated; the water drains through a syphon and the oil is stored underground. From here, the oil is transported to the receiving station. Bucky worked at Fairbank Oil from the 1970s to the early 1990s.

I – Thomas the Tank Engine ...on the left side - To amuse his young sons, Charlie Fairbank decided to transform an oil tank into Thomas the Tank Engine. Renée Ethier, formerly of Oil Springs, painted it. Another project was to hire Sue Whiting of Oil Springs to paint a number of modern pumpjacks to look like dinosaurs.

J – The Three-Pole Derrick ...left - The three-pole derrick required horses to service the oil wells. Every 18 months, the rods and the pump in the well - some as long as 21 feet - need to be hauled out, checked and repaired. Here you see Alex Fairbank, the younger son of Charlie Fairbank, sitting on the pumpkit wagon with the family dog, Mozart. The pumpkit has all the pulleys, cables and equipment needed to service the well. Albert Baines, of Baines Machine and Repair in Petrolia, climbs the derrick. It is his job to take the pulley and cable to the top of the derrick and hook the pulley into a clevis. Charlie Fairbank Jr. in the yellow shirt is the elder son of Charlie Fairbank and is shown here as the assistant. In the white shirt holding a wrench is Bob Cochrane, of Cairnlin Resources, who has the job of screwing and unscrewing the pipes and rods as they are removed from the well. The teamster directing the horses is David Taylor, a carpenter and former manager of VanTuyl and Fairbank Hardware in Petrolia. At the west end of this display is Dan Whiting, the foreman of Fairbank Oil, standing on top of an underground storage tank. He is checking to see how much oil it contains by “floating the tank”. He takes a tin can with a string attached, fills the can with oil and lets it sink until it stops at water level. Each inch (2.5 cm.) of oil is five barrels.

K – Pulling Machines ...left - The portable pulling machines stored at this site began to service the wells in the 1950s after a disastrous wind storm blew down many of the three-pole derricks in Oil Springs. The blue machine was manufactured by Murray Bradley of Oil Well Supply in Petrolia. It is powered by a “one-lunger”, a single cylinder gas engine. As you drive through the tour of the oil field, you may see other service rigs operating.

At Gypsie Flats Road, turn left to continue the tour - For the next exhibit, you may drive by or turn right to enter the parking lot

L – The Modern Pumpjack ...right - This modern pumpjack, of the 1940s, is entirely made of metal, unlike the wooden pumpblocks built by the pioneers - The man checking the well is Elwood Ayrheart who worked at Fairbank Oil during the 1930s and '40s. He also owned an oil property on the opposite side of Gypsie Flats Road.

M – The Jury and Evoy Flowing Well of 1862 ...Park in the lot on the right side of the road and travel on foot, following the signs down the stairs - This well was dug by hand to the bedrock at 60 feet and then lined or “cribbed” with wood to prevent the walls from collapsing. Oil would seep into the well through the crib. The early pioneers dug their way to the oil and drilling of wells did not begin until later.

Continued on page 10

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Oil Springs - A Driving Tour, Continued from page 9

Sir Sandford Fleming reported in 1863 that this was one of the 33 amazing flowing wells that required no pump to bring the oil to surface. Each would produce hundreds or thousands of barrels of oil daily. Only when it stopped flowing did it become necessary to use pumps to bring oil to the surface. This well produced 300 barrels, was bored deeper, and then produced 2,000 barrels daily. The flowing wells of 1862 petered out within the year.

N – The Wells in the Woods ...*Return to the top of the stairs and follow the signs for the path. Return to suspension bridge and parking lot to continue the tour*

O – A Trio of Three-Pole Derricks ...*right on Gypsie Flats Road, down the hill entering the floodplain of Black Creek* - In the fall of 2007, Charlie Fairbank added three, three-pole derricks to the flats where penniless Hugh Nixon Shaw hit Canada's first gusher in 1862. Shaw dug his well to 50 feet then, with a spring pole, he bored another 158 feet. The gusher astonished everyone and a vast quantity of oil flowed down Black Creek for days before the well was brought under control.

This was no ordinary well; it was a flowing well. It produced an astonishing 35,000 barrels in 10 months. Shaw was offered \$10,000 for his well and he refused to sell. Within the year, however, Shaw was overcome by fumes when repairing his well, fell into it and died. Atop one of the derricks is Charlie's brother-in-law, Phil Hein, a mountain climbing guide who also photographed the cover of *The Story of Fairbank Oil*.

Turn left at Oil Springs Line to continue the tour. Turn left again at Duryee Street

P – Barn Mural of Fairbank Oil Properties (2558 Duryee Street) - On the barn in front of you is the frequently photographed mural of an early logo of VanTuyl and Fairbank Hardware.

The store opened in 1865 in Petrolia and had a branch in Oil Springs. It is still in business in Petrolia. Inspired by the Joyce Carey novel, *The Horse's Mouth*, Charlie Fairbank threw a painting party in 1981.

Artist Ann Evans converted the logo into a graph of one-foot squares and created a "paint by number" wall on the barn. The scaffolding went up and everyone at the party painted one square. The mural depicts a man driving a team of horses pulling an oil wagon.

Turn around and return to Oil Springs Line. Turn left onto Oil Springs Line and turn left again on Kelly Road to Victoria

Q – Watson's Machine Shop - Constructed in 1880 by Anderson and Murray, this yellow brick building was originally known as Oil Well Supply.

It was here in the late 19th century that they developed a gas-powered engine using natural gas from local oil wells. The engines were phenomenally popular and were used as far away as Borneo.

In 1946, George Watson and his father took ownership and carried hardware. Later in 1998, George's son, Murray, took the helm and has specialized in blacksmithing and metal sculptures. Murray has created more than two dozen metal sculptures of real people for Charlie Fairbank, as well as six life-sized horses and one dog. Watson closed the business several years ago, but Murray continues to create metal art sculptures at his home.

*This walking tour was compiled by Pat McGee and the Oil Museum of Canada.
An audio version of this tour can be found at the museum.*

Food, glorious food

There is always a community meal cooking somewhere in Petrolia and Central Lambton.

Pizza-lovers crowd Petrolia's Victoria Park June 1 for a few of the best slices around with live music and activities for the kids. The action starts at noon.

And the local beef producers fire up the ovens for their annual Beef Barbecue held in Brooke-Alvinston in the first week of August. The event draws more than 1,000 people for the all-you-can-eat event with the best beef around.



Watford celebrates everyone's favourite summer vegetable - sweet corn - with Cornfest Aug 9 - 11.

Come September, when all the good things are coming out of the gardens, The Town of Petrolia host Farm to Table Harvestfest, an outdoor meal for 300 people at the Farmers' Market building. Don't miss this special event with Lambton sourced food on Sept. 14.



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An artful weekend in Petrolia



Under a canopy of trees, in the heart of Petrolia's downtown, artists from across Ontario gather for Art In The Park.

The beauty, quality and diversity of the art displayed under the canopies is eye-popping. Visitors are also treated to music under the Rotary Band Shell. The event

features a wide variety of artists offering water colours, oil and acrylic painting, jewelry, pottery, stained glass creations, photography, woodworking, fabric art, bead work purses, hand drums and much more. There is literally something to interest everyone.

In addition to the juried art show the weekend also features live music and other live performers throughout the entire two-day event, most of whom are local talent.

This year's event is July 12 and 13, with events, artists, artisans and musicians on hand throughout the day.

For more information go to artintheparkpetrolia.ca



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Fun at the fair...

in Petrolia and Central Lambton



The local fairs are the highlight of the fall season and give local food producers a chance to show off how well their crops and animals fared over the year.

Each local fair has 4-H competitions for the young farmers, baking competitions, entertainment and of course, lots of fun things for the kids to do.

The Petrolia and Enniskillen Fall Fair kicks the fall fair season off in the first weekend after Labour Day, followed by the Plympton-Wyoming Fall Fair the next weekend.

The Brooke-Alvinston-Watford Fall Fair is the last weekend in September and "the Grand Daddy of them all" the Brigen Fall Fair is Thanksgiving weekend.

Over 50,000 people pack the grounds in the heart of Central Lambton for the event.



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The Hard Oilers:

Tales of Lambton's world travellers

It's not a secret, yet visitors to the Oil Heritage District are often surprised to learn how Lambton oil men became famous world travellers beginning in 1873.

It was 145 years ago that Lambton County's first international drillers set off for the jungles of Indonesia to open new oil fields with their expertise and tools. In 1873, these travels were gutsy and exotic.

The entire world was waking to the new energy of petroleum and eager to find it with the help of the Lambton drillers. Lambton would send more than 850 men to 87 countries until 1945.

They made their mark in all continents but Antarctica. Fred Webb drilled Colombia's first oil well in 1905. In 1908, six worked the first oil well of the Middle East in Iran. Charles McAlpine drilled the first oil well in Malaysia on the island of Borneo in 1910, a spot known to this day as Canada Hill. Petrolia's former mayor, William McGarvey revolutionized the oil industry during the 1880s in what is now Poland, and his daughter married into Austrian royalty.

It's an astounding history with hundreds of stories and they can be found at the Oil Museum of Canada in Oil Springs. Step into its International Drillers' Tent, press any button on the world map, and the stories spring to life as short films appear.

Peer into the display cases on the main floor and downstairs to see the exotic items the drillers brought or sent home: quivers for poison dart arrows, teeth of a hippopotamus and tiger, a Malaysian phrase book and so much more.

Take time to browse through the collections of letters, diaries and amazing photos. It is in these stories the ingenuity of the men shines through.

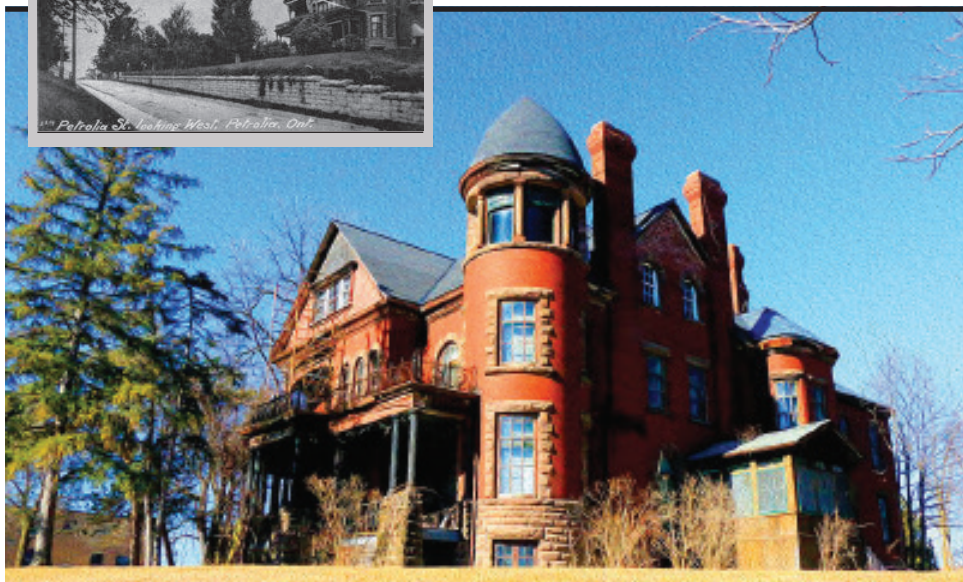
During the seven decades of Lambton's international drillers, the county's greatest export was its experienced drillers, the finest to be found in the world.

- by Pat McGee





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'Good Friends Gather Here'

2019 Summer Season

The people at Victoria Playhouse Petrolia's want the world to know "you've got a friend" in Ontario's "oil town".

That's why, says David Hogan, this year's theme is 'Good Friends Gather Here' and the first show of the year features the music of Carole King and James Taylor.

They are the pair who made the wildly popular song "You've Got a Friend" a hit in 1971.

Written by King and recorded on her hit album Tapestry, the song was also recorded by Taylor, a fellow musician and dear friend.

The song earned a Grammy for both musicians, with King getting the nod for Song of the Year. The Grammy for Best Male Vocal Performance went to Taylor.

Hogan, who shares VPP's co-artistic director duties with David Rogers, says the theme is appropriate considering the camaraderie theatregoers experience when they visit Petrolia.

"Every year we look forward to see people return to the theatre," Hogan says. "There's a familiarity and people love and respect the company."

New friends are welcome, he explains, adding

"We make old friends fast."

That sense of friendship has fuelled VPP's growing popularity and has led to the

extension of the season.

It's now six months with six shows —double the three summer shows VPP originally started with.

Hogan says growth has been steady over the years; adding VPP has truly evolved from its summer only beginnings.

"It's grown in a very healthy and manageable way," he explains.

Hogan credits both undying fan support and expert marketing by the town of Petrolia's Director of Marketing, Arts and Communications Laurissa Ellsworth for success.

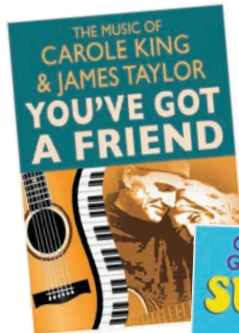
"Laurissa is a true ambassador for Petrolia," he adds.

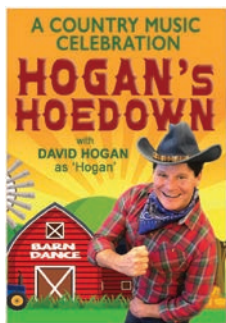
Not only did the summer programs draw an estimated 40,000 visitors, Hogan say, VPP's Christmas programs drew thousands more.

"You've Got a Friend" will be followed by the timely "Summer of 69." The show's "good times and groovy tunes" will mark the 50th year of the Woodstock-era 'Summer of Love.' It runs from June 4 to 23.

"We've had the show here before and people are dancing in the aisles," Hogan says. Rogers conceived the idea for the show, with musical arrangements undertaken by Mark Payne.

The season's third show is a musical comedy 'whodunit' to "die for" called Murder for Two. It runs from July 2 to 21. Featuring VPP favorites Mark Payne and Alex Baerg, the





show takes the audience on a humorous quest to find out who murdered a famous novelist.

Next up is a new quintessentially Canadian comedy called "The New Canadian Curling Club." A hit at the Blythe Festival, Hogan says it highlights the "new ethnicity" of Canada when brand-new Canadians come together to learn the game.

The show runs from Aug. 6 to 25.

There's something for everyone this year at VPP and from Sept. 3 to 22, the twang of country music will ring out from the stage.

"Hogan's Hoedown" will feature David Hogan who is taking the VPP stage for the first time. He'll anchor a hilarious down home show featuring comedy and a unique Petrolia interpretation of many country classics.

The season will wrap up with the thrilling *Dracula: A Chamber Musical* starring VPP's own David Rogers.

The popular musical, which premiered at the Stratford Festival, has gone on to international fame. Rogers, who was cast by the original composer, will take on the role of the world's most famous vampire. The show runs from Oct. 15 to 27, leading up to Halloween and the harvest moon.

Tickets and season's passes can be purchased online or at the box office.

By Pam Wright

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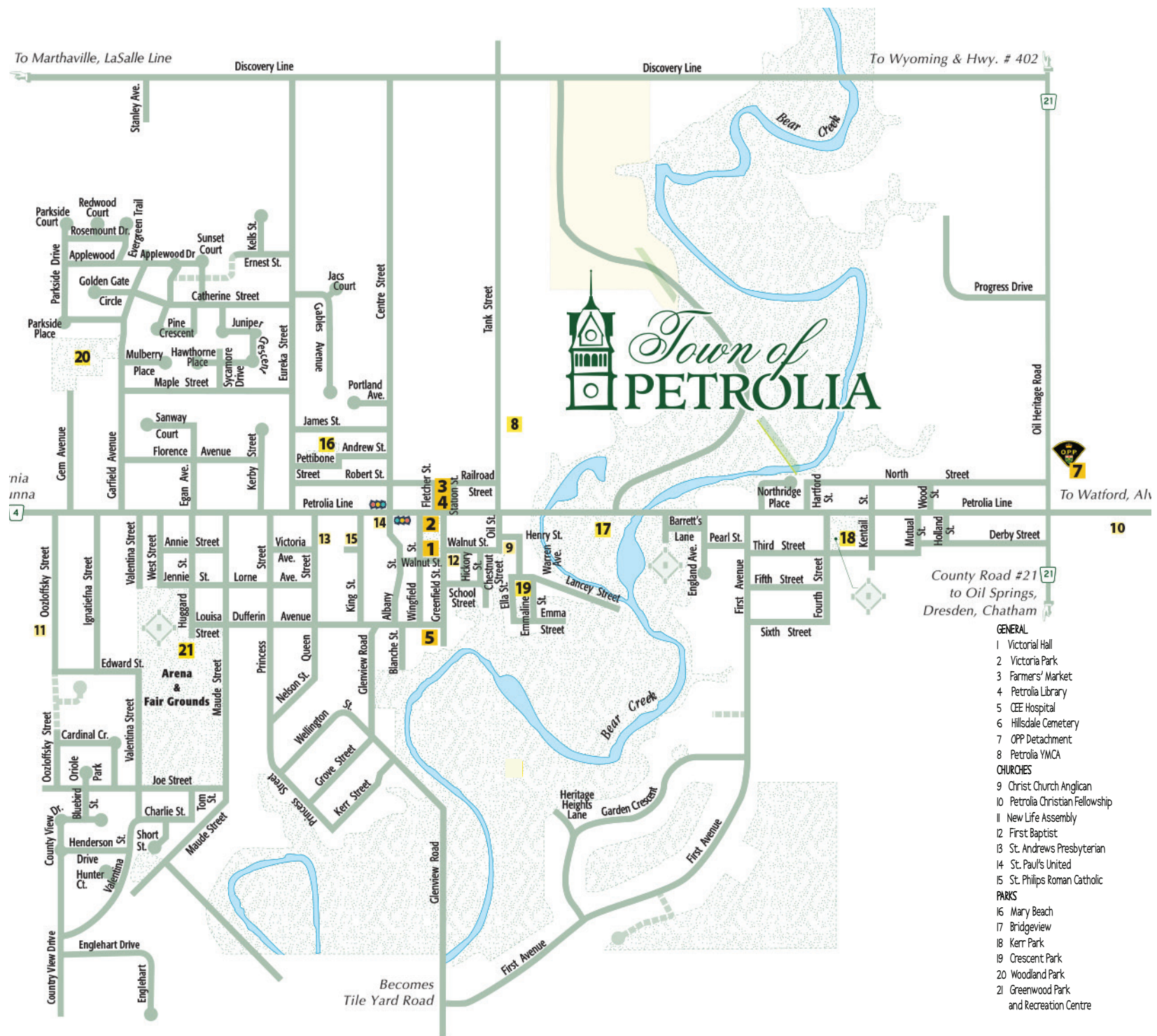
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Discovering Petrolia's history on foot

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: This walking tour was written by Mark Moran, publisher of *Daytripper*, using a number of sources. The addresses, which you will find on the walking tour map on pages 20 and 21, are in *italics*. Begin at Victoria Hall, located in the centre of town and use the map on the centre pages as a guide.

Victoria Hall was designed in the Queen Anne style in 1889 by Ontario's foremost architect, George Durand. Described by John Kerr at the time of its completion as being "the most



imposing public building in the County of Lambton and the finest and most complete structure of its kind in the province," the cost for this multipurpose building was \$35,000. Originally housed in Victoria Hall were police, fire, court and municipal functions as well as an impressive opera house that seated 1,100 patrons. On January 25th, 1989, an early morning blaze gutted Victoria Hall. The citizens of the Petrolia area rallied to the cause and Victoria Hall was

restored. Victoria Hall resumed its duties to Petrolia with municipal government on the lower level, committee rooms, council chambers, and theatre lobby on the first floor. The theatre on the top floor, is the year-round host to theatre, musical performances, and now films. The stained glass windows in the entrance are the work of famous artist Christopher Wallis and were commissioned to mark the 150th anniversary of Fairbank Oil in 2011.

Victoria Park ...Petrolia Line - As you leave Victoria Hall, take a walk through the park on the north side. The property which constitutes Victoria Park was originally purchased by J.H. Fairbank for \$8,200. He later sold it for the same amount to the town fathers, to be used as a market square.

The Old Post Office ...on the west side of the park, at the corner of Petrolia Line and Wingfield St. is an imposing red building. - When it was built, the Petrolia Advertiser of Dec. 4, 1891 announced "another important link in the chain of our continual progress is being

forged by the building of a magnificent government structure in the form of a new Post Office... we shall soon be the possessors of a post office worthy of the town and its acknowledged wealth."

In 1892 postal services moved into the first floor of this Romanesque Revival Style building. The second floor housed customs offices and the third floor was a spacious apartment for the caretaker.

A massive renovation was completed in 2010 to serve several functions for the Lambton County Developmental Services. The Olde Post Office Gift Shoppe has found a home here.



Crown Savings and Loan Company (Royal Bank) ...4186 Petrolia Line - This private bank was established in the 1890's by some of Petrolia's leading oilmen; their names can be read on the cornerstone. The founders of Crown Savings and Loan Co. believed a strong agriculture industry would complement the booming oil industry. As a result, they directed some of the surplus oil profits into sound farm mortgage investments.

Continued on page 24

**396 Fletcher St.,
Petrolia
(behind the Library)
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Get Real, Get Fresh, Get Local
at the Petrolia Farmers' Market
Saturday mornings 7:30am - 12noon
May 18 to October 12, 2019

Brooke Telecom - Victorian Country Flowers & Gifts ...4172-4174 Petrolia Line - This address was part of an entire block of buildings constructed for Andre Elliot, a court clerk. Along with two other businessmen, J.M. Williams and W.E. Sanborn they formed the Black Creek Plank Road Company in 1861. The survival of the oil industry required an all weather road from Black Creek to the Wyoming railhead. By late 1862 the Black Creek Plank Road Co. had gravelled Black Creek Road, now Oil Heritage Road, three miles south of Wyoming with the balance covered with wooden planks by 1863.

At the nearby intersection of Petrolia Line and Centre St (Hogan's Guardian Drug Store) was once the site of the Iroquois Hotel. A Michigan Central spur line ran through their parking lot, north to Lasalle Line and south to the main rail line near Oil City. Over Christmas, the Iroquois was a hot spot for oilmen returning from foreign lands such as Saudi Arabia and Burma. They would spend much of their vacation at the Iroquois swapping stories about their adventures abroad.



Nemo Hall ...419 King St. - The residence of John Kerr was built in 1878. The original lot was three acres and included the house, a coach house, orchard, exotic gardens and five oil wells (now St. Philips School and yard).

Nemo Hall has three floors, twenty rooms and five fireplaces. The front room marble fireplace won first prize at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. Ornate oak woodwork can be found throughout Nemo Hall. This home is the only remaining building of Second Empire Style left in Petrolia.

The Petrolia Library ...4021 Petrolia Line - Take a stroll to the east to find a superb example of early railway architecture. The Queen Anne style structure was built in 1903 by the Grand Trunk Railway.

The town had financed its own spur line to bring oil to the railway in Wyoming. The line was so successful that the Great Western Railway bought and operated it until amalgamation with the Grand Trunk Railway in 1882. It was used as a station until 1930.

LAMBTON HERITAGE MUSEUM

Lambton Heritage Museum celebrates the history and heritage of the communities that make up Lambton County.

www.heritagemuseum.ca
heritage.museum@county-lambton.on.ca
519-243-2600





In 1937, the building was opened as the Petrolia Library. The interior of the building has been well preserved and visitors are always welcome to come inside and look around. Don't forget to look for the original baggage car at the exterior rear exit.



J & J Kerr Co. Office - Farmers Market site, behind the library and to the west. - A building that stood here was the home of Lakeside Grain & Feed until 2009, when it was demolished to make room for the

Continued on page 24

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Petrolia - History on Foot, Continued from page 25

Farmers Market; the small building on the site is a replica of the office on Fletcher St. The J & J Kerr Co. is responsible for a large number of architecturally significant buildings in Petrolia. In addition to John Kerr's own home, Nemo Hall, the company built the Vantuyl and Fairbank block at the corner of Station St. and Petrolia Line, the section of buildings between the old Post Office and the current Hogan Pharmacy, the Masonic Temple, and numerous homes and schools.

Oil Well Supply Company ...walk down Fletcher Street then left on Robert on the right - The firm was started in 1866 by Hector McKenzie, a machinist. He later joined forces with James Joyce, a blacksmith, and the business prospered. The company manufactured drill rigs, special tools for the oil industry, as well as pumps, valves, and many other quality industrial products. The largest drill bit ever produced by Oil Well Supply was 30 inches in diameter, 14 feet long and weighed 5,000 pounds! Tools built by Oil Well Supply accompanied the foreign drillers around the world. Oil Well Supply Company still provides service to local oil producers.



Van Tuyl and Fairbank ...to the east of the library is the corner of Petrolia Line and Station Street - Van Tuyl and Fairbank Hardware opened in 1865. Originally a grocery and liquor store, it soon expanded into hardware and oil supplies. In the early 1870's it was the largest hardware store west of Toronto. After the stock market crash in 1929, the Fairbank family sold the storefront on Petrolia Street, but has remained in business until the present day - 154 years later.

Petrolia Line ...walking east on the most historical portion of Petrolia's main street, you'll notice names gracing the brick of many buildings; the Bank of Toronto, the Vaughn Block, and the Masonic Hall. You will begin to see evidence of the wealth that oil created. To cater to the well-off residents, merchants stocked gourmet foods from Paris and the latest fashions from London and Rome. Grocery bills of \$600 per month were not unusual for a Petrolia family then.

The McKay Block ...4211-4213 Petrolia Line - The McKay Block was built by Donald McKay in July 1887. Construction costs for the two storey stretcher brick bond, row, Italianate Building was \$3,000. Minor modifications to the door and window areas at the street level have been made without defacing the original image. The recessed panels, decorative brick, pediment and date stone of the second story facade are all original.



1111. Petrolia Street, looking East, Petrolia, Canada.



Grandis Jewellers...4230 Petrolia Line - The Oddfellows Hall, constructed in Italianate Commercial Style, was completed in 1889 at a cost of \$12,000. The most appealing features are the repetition of the floral keystone pattern, recessed entry and expanses of coloured glass.

Owners Reg and Maureen Grandis have retained the high ceilings and historic feeling inside the store.

Continued on page 28

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The Orange Hall ...4224 Petrolia Line - Local rumour says this building, built in 1881, was the site of a nitroglycerin explosion early in its history. Apparently a second-storey tenant was attempting to manufacture the volatile substance when it exploded, doing considerable damage to the back of the building. No evidence could be found to substantiate this story until badly charred timbers were discovered during a restoration.

The building had been wonderfully restored to house Grandis Jewellers, but was partially destroyed by fire in 2004. It's been reconstructed as a single floor structure and is now the home of Manulife Securities.

Tank Street ...turn left on Tank Street - Tank Street was named for the oil tank-waggon that lined the road, waiting to be unloaded at the refineries. The nodding heads of beam pumps on oil wells can be seen on both sides of the road.

Sunnyside-Fairbank House ...4248 Petrolia Line Past Tank St. on the left, before walking down into the park that we call "the flats" is a mansion - "Sunnyside" was built in 1890 for John Henry Fairbank, an oilman, banker politician and entrepreneur. No expense was spared to make this elegant Victorian Queen Anne mansion one of the largest and finest in Ontario. The wood used in construction was cut from Fairbank farms and dried for one year prior to use.

The exterior was built from rare Ohio red clay bricks, which were each individually wrapped in wax paper before shipment to Petrolia. Sunnyside boasts 22 rooms, including a third-floor ballroom which hosted high-society galas featuring orchestras such as Guy Lombardo. (see photos on page 17).

Lancey House - The lovely, white frame house on the other side of the street was built by Henry Lancey for his daughter in the 1870's. The home, an example of Georgian symmetry, was originally larger by ten rooms.

The coat of arms of the U. S. Confederacy crowns the marble fireplace. It's another reminder of the influence and contribution of American pioneers and businessmen who flocked to Lambton County to take part in the oil boom. Many remained to develop the industry and build local communities alongside the Canadians.

The Little Red Bank ...4245 Petrolia Line - At the corner of Oil Street and Petrolia Line you will see a beige stucco building on the right that was previously the "Little Red Bank". This private bank was owned by John H. Fairbank and Leonard Vaughn, both outstanding citizens with oil and other commercial interests.

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The bank opened on this site in 1869 after the building was purchased for \$70 and moved from Oil Springs. Fairbank and Vaughn virtually financed the local oil business on their own. When the bank closed in 1924, it was recognized as one of the most successful and longest-running private banks in Canada. The original teller's wicket and safe remain intact.

Christ Anglican Church ...walk down Oil St. to the intersection of Henry St. - The first Anglican church was built on this site in 1882. In 1910, a chime of eleven bells was donated by J.L. Englehart, one of the town's most prominent oilmen, and installed in the tower. The original church burned in 1957 but the tower and bells survived. The present church was built around the tower in 1959.

Christ Church contains an entire collection of stained glass windows by Christopher Wallis. The 13 windows were added over a period of 27 years. His Memorial window there was given Ontario Heritage designation because of the unique way it incorporates the oil history of the region.

Crescent Park ...turn left on Henry to wander around and into Crescent Park, Petrolia's hidden gem - Some of Petrolia's most beautiful and stately homes are located here. Henry Warren Lancey, a developer from Maine, was one of Petrolia's most exuberant and far-sighted pioneers. While others were throwing up wooden shanties in the creek flats, Lancey purchased the land between Oil and Greenfield streets from the crescent Petroleum Company. In 1872 he laid out subdivision plans for "Crescent Park", Lancey modelled Crescent Park's layout after the New Englanders concept of a village street pattern with the large common in the centre.

Union Firehall ...4343 Petrolia Line - Oil field fires destroyed many early wood buildings so firehalls became as important to Petrolia as the oil derricks. Union Firehall was built in 1889. There was an ongoing competition between Union Station at the east end and the fire station at Victoria Hall to reach and extinguish fires because only the first crew on the scene was paid. The fire hall has been designated as a heritage site and is presently a private residence.



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The Rodeo Returns to Alvinston

Father's Day weekend has become Rodeo Weekend in Alvinston.

The Brooke-Alvinston-Watford Fair Board is gearing up for its second Alvinston Pro Rodeo June 14, 15 and 16.

The fair board came up with the idea last year, after two local men became world champions. Tyler Foster recently won the title of International Professional Rodeo Association (IPRA) World Champion Steer Wrestler and Rod Weese won the title of International Finals Rodeo champion Steer Wrestler. The Alvinston Pro Rodeo will again team up with Rawhide Rodeo Company to play host to over 200 professional cowboys and cowgirls from the International

Professional Rodeo Association. They will be representing many different countries including Canada, the United States, Brazil and Australia and will be competing for top prize in events such as Bareback Bronc Riding, Saddle Bronc Riding, Steer Wrestling, Team Roping, Breakaway Roping, Tie-Down Roping, Barrel Racing, Pole Bending, Jr. Steer Riding, Jr. Barrel Racing and Bull Riding. Dan Cumming, vice president of the fair board, says the International Professional Rodeo Association sanctioned event will feature three shows this year instead of two because of the popularity of the first event. Thousands of people came to Alvinston for the two-day event last year. "This year, Friday gates open at 5 pm with the show at 7 pm - it will be the same on Saturday. Sunday the gates are expected to open at noon for the



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2 pm show," says Cumming. The Alvinston organizers are also making it easier for visitors to attend. Cumming says a rough campground with 120 sites will be available for tenters or RVs. A weekend of camping and two passes to the rodeo will cost \$140. Aside from the thrill of the rodeo, you'll hear some great music and be well fed.

Cumming says Friday's Rockin' Rodeo Night will feature local favourites Rumblefish. Saturday, Scott Manery and the Barnburners will host the "Kickin' it Country Night." And the Alvinston Optimists will feed all the hungry rodeo lovers at its annual Fathers' Day Brunch. To reserve a campsite or buy tickets visit www.alvinstonprorodeo.com

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Sun, December 8

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APRIL 2019

- Victoria Hall Art Committee Art Show** – LCCVI Art Classes
- 26-27 Townwide Garage Sales** – Yard & Garage Sales throughout the town
- 27 Lions Wing Night** – Petrolia Lions Hall
- 30-May18 You've Got a Friend** – Victoria Hall
presented by the Victoria Playhouse Petrolia

MAY 2019

- Victoria Hall Art Committee Art Show** – Norman Barney and Jane Austin
- 4 Super Saturday** – Passport Savings Event, Petrolia Merchant event
- 12 Petrolia Lions Club – LEO's Mother's Day Breakfast** - Lions Hall, 8:30am-12:30pm
- 25 Petrolia Farmers' Market – Season Grand Opening** - 7:30am-12pm

JUNE 2019

- Victoria Hall Art Committee Art Show** – Justin Clark and Jale Fancey
- 1 Pizzafest** in Victoria Park - 11am-7pm
- 4-23 Summer of '69** - Good Times & Groovy Tunes – Victoria Hall presented by the Victoria Playhouse Petrolia
- 8 Porches & Verandas Luncheon** - 12noon-2pm, throughout Petrolia
- 8 Fire Dept Association – Fish Fry** at the Fire Hall - 6:30pm
- 9 CEE Auxiliary – Annual Strawberry Social** at the Farmers' Market
- 16 Petrolia Lions – Father's Day Breakfast** at the Lions Hall - 8:30am-12:30pm
- 16 Petrolia Discovery – Car Show** at Greenwood Park - 10am-3pm
- 22-23 Petrolia Fair Board - Ontario Vintage Tractor Pullers – Tractor Pull** at the Arena
- 30 Town of Petrolia – Fishing Derby** at Bridgeview Park

JULY 2019

- Victoria Hall Art Committee Art Show** – Community Concerns for the Medically Fragile
- 1 Canada Day Celebrations** - all day
- 2-21 Murder for Two** – Victoria Hall presented by the Victoria Playhouse Petrolia
- 6 Guided Tours** – Petrolia Discovery
- 11-13 Sidewalk Sales**
- 12-13 Art in the Park** - Victoria Park, downtown Petrolia
- 13 Super Saturday** – Passport Savings Event, Petrolia Merchant event
- 13 Petrolia Lions – Fish Fry** - Lions Hall
- 13 Town of Petrolia - 6:30-11pm – Barn Dance** at the Farmers' Market
- 27 Fire Dept Association – Car Wash & BBQ** at the Fire Hall - 9am-2pm

AUGUST 2019

- 6-25 The New Canadian Curling Club** – Victoria Hall presented by the Victoria Playhouse Petrolia

SEPTEMBER 2019

- 3-22 Hogan's Hoedown** – Victoria Hall presented by the Victoria Playhouse Petrolia
- 6-8 Petrolia and Enniskillen Ag Society – Petrolia Fall Fair** at the Fair Grounds
- 14 Super Saturday** – Passport Savings Event, Petrolia Merchant event
- 14 Town of Petrolia – Farm to Table Harvestfest Supper** at the Farmers' Market - 5-9pm
- 27 Shop Like Charlotte** (ticketed event), Victoria Hall and Downtown Petrolia - 5pm

SEPTEMBER 2019, continued

28 Doors Open - various locations

28 Guided Tours – Petrolia Discovery - 10am-4pm

OCTOBER 2019

15-27 Dracula, A Chamber Musical – Victoria Hall presented by the Victoria Playhouse Petrolia

26 Fire Dept Association – Halloween Dance at the Fire Hall

NOVEMBER 2019

2 Lambton Central Petrolia Optimist – Craft & Gift Show - 6-7:30pm

3 Petrolia Legion – Remembrance Parade & Laying of Wreaths – Victoria Park / Cenotaph

11 Petrolia Legion – Remembrance Day Service – Cenotaph - 11am

11 Petrolia Legion – Remembrance Parade Dinner – Petrolia Legion

16 Super Saturday – Passport Savings Event, Petrolia Merchant event

30 Petrolia Lions – Breakfast with Santa

DECEMBER 2019

6 Town of Petrolia – Christmas in the Park in Victoria Park - 6-8pm

6 Lambton Central Petrolia Optimist – Chili Cook-off / Angel Tree in Victoria Park

7 Lambton Central Petrolia Optimist – Santa at the YMCA

7 Town of Petrolia – Santa Claus Parade - downtown Petrolia - 2pm

regular events

Petrolia Farmers' Market -

Saturdays, 7:30 am - 12 noon, May to October,
downtown Petrolia

Petrolia Lions' Meat Raffle -

Thursdays, 5:30-7:30 pm, Helen's Hideaway

Lambton Central Optimist Meat Raffles -

Thursdays 6-7:30 pm Crabby Joes, Petrolia

Petrolia Legion Meat Raffle -

Saturdays, 3pm, Petrolia Legion

Petrolia Legion Open Euchre -

Wednesdays, 7pm, September to May, Petrolia Legion

Petrolia Legion Fun Darts -

Thursdays, 7pm, September to May, Petrolia Legion

Legion Breakfast -

9am - 1pm, 3rd Sunday of the month, Petrolia Legion

Puzzlemania and Games Galore -

7pm, 2nd Monday of the month, First Baptist Church

Lions' Meat Bingo -

7pm, 3rd Tuesday of the month, Sept to May,
Petrolia Lions Hall



Petrolia businesses / services

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RBC Royal Bank

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TD Financial Group

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Churches

Christ Anglican Church

414 Oil Street • 519-882-1430

First Baptist Church

418 Greenfield Street • 519-882-2480

Jehovah's Witness

519 882 1250

New Life Assembly

421 Oozloffsky Street • 519-882-1600

Petrolia Christian Fellowship

4521 Petrolia Line • ptfellowship.org

St Andrew Presbyterian Church

416 Queen Street • 519-882-2400

St Paul's United Church

4169 Petrolia Line • 519-882-1390

St Philips Catholic Church

4142 Victoria Street • 519-882-2057

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Dr. Lisa Thompson

Dr. Amanda Core

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Central Lambton Family Health Team

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Museum

Petrolia Discovery

4381 Discovery Line • 519-882-0897

• Please call for an appointment

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4130 Glenview Road • 519-882-0650

Hogan Pharmacy

4177 Petrolia Line • 519- 882-1840

Quilt Shop

Stitcharie

4247 Oil Heritage Road • 519-882-3454

Restaurants

Actor's Casual Dining

4211 Petrolia Line • 519-882-0400

Bud's Family Pizza

436 Albany Street • 519-882-0000

Coffee Lodge

4119 Petrolia Line • 519-882-0633

The Cottage

4190 Petrolia Line • 226-738-0881

Crabby Joes

4236 Petrolia Line • 519-882-4848

Godfathers Pizza and Subs

4204 Petrolia Line • 519-882-0550

Greco Pizza (Heritage Esso)

4495 Petrolia Line • 519-882-0150

Helen's Hideaway Restaurant & Pizzeria /

Haywood's Tap & Grill

4196 Petrolia Line • 519-882-0300

Heng's Chinese Restaurant

4150 Petrolia Line • 519-882-1050

Johnny G's Premium Pizza Plus

4108 Petrolia Line • 519-882-2000

Munchies

4259 Oil Heritage Road • 519-882-1000

Petrolia Pizza & Subs

4170 Petrolia Line • 519-882-1886

Stafford Brothers Meats /

Staffys' Sandwich Shop

4159 Petrolia Line • 519-381-9046

Streets Eatery & Pub

4124 Petrolia Line • 519-882-1761

Subway

4111 Petrolia Line • 519-882-4215

Tim Hortons

4161 Petrolia Line • 519-882-4774

Wise Guys Inc

2-4108 Petrolia Line • 519-882-7499

Spirits

Brewers Retail - The Beer Store

4355 Petrolia Line • 519-882-1920

LCBO

4353 Petrolia Line • 519-882-2010

X-Cel Wines

4373 Petrolia Line • 519-882-1121

Tattoo & Piercing

Behind the Grin Tattoos and Piercings

4208 Oil Heritage Road • 519-331-4893

Black Room Tattoo

4239A Petrolia Line • 416-993-1451

Theatre

Victoria Playhouse Petrolia

411 Greenfield Street • 519-882-1221

Western Boots

Western Boot Corral

4207 Petrolia Line • 519-882-4609

for up-to-date listings check out
town.petrolia.on.ca/visitors/business-directory



Peering into Our Oil Heritage

If you want to take a look ‘behind the curtain’ of Central Lambton’s rich oil history, Doors Open 2019 is for you

Officially titled “The Legacy of Oil Innovation in Lambton County” the one-day event will be held Sept. 28.



The self-guided tour allows you to stop at sites that were part of the area’s “black gold rush” that drew thousands to the area to seek their fortune.

The discovery of oil in Oil Springs — with the first commercial well dug in 1858 — created a boom that

led to the creation of multinational giant Imperial Oil and the founding of Canada’s petrochemical industry.

Laurie Webb, Manager of Museums and Archives for Lambton County, says the oil heritage theme was chosen as a run-up to the 60th anniversary of the Oil Museum of Canada to be held in 2020.

The Museum holds the designation of Canadian National Historic Site.

“It’s an important part of our history,” Webb explains.

“Lambton County is a vast space.

“We chose our Doors Open theme in order to focus on a more compact area.”

According to Webb, 10 sites have been finalized for this year's tour, but organizers are working on more and they hope to offer between 15 and 20 locations.

In Petrolia, the Robert M. Nicol Library will be featured, along with Baines Machine and Repair Works, and Nemo Hall, a perennial favourite for historians of all stripes.

There's plenty going on behind the scenes in Petrolia. The library, a well-preserved example of Queen Anne architecture, was originally a Grand Trunk Railway station built in 1903.

It became a library in 1937 and has been maintained thanks in part to a generous donation Nichol made on behalf of his mother.

The Baines shop remains as a testament to the machinery of yesteryear. The vintage business was started in 1914 and remains a working machine shop, with the original pulley, shaft and drive-belt system running overhead.

Down the road in Wyoming is another boon for aspiring historians. The Lambton County Archives in will be open to the public.

Webb says visitors will get a chance to see how information and records are stored and have access to historical data.

This is the fourth Doors Open that's been held in Lambton County since 2012.

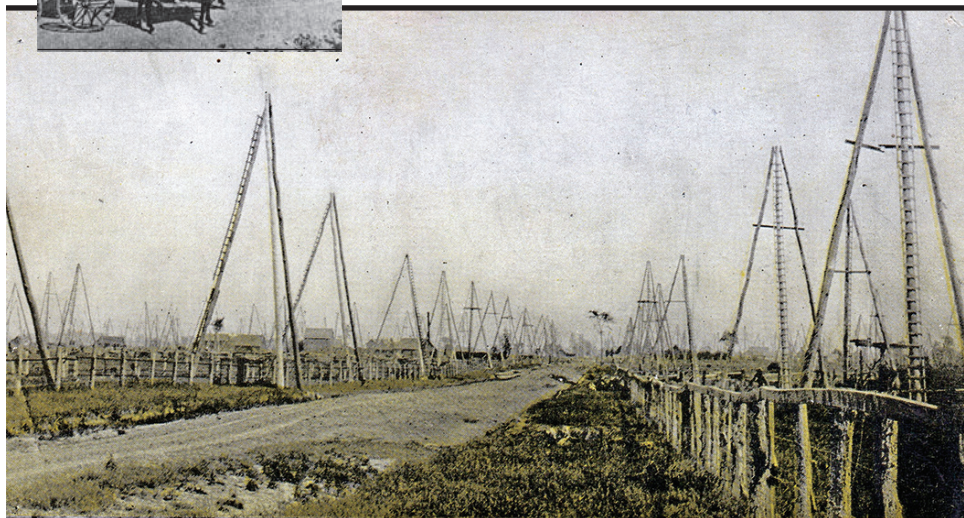
Admission to all of the Doors Open locations is free including entry to the Oil Museum of Canada.

"It's a great opportunity not just for tourists but for local people," Webb notes, adding the history uniquely interesting.

"The real purpose is to get people behind the scenes and give them a peek into what they normally wouldn't have access to.

"All it costs is your time and a little bit of gas," she adds.

By Pam Wright

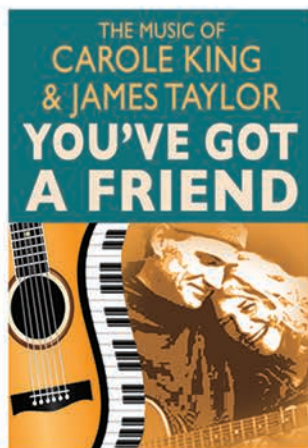


victoria playhouse

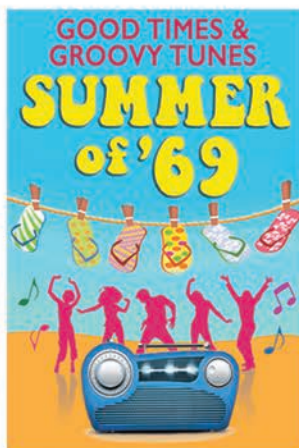
PETROLIA



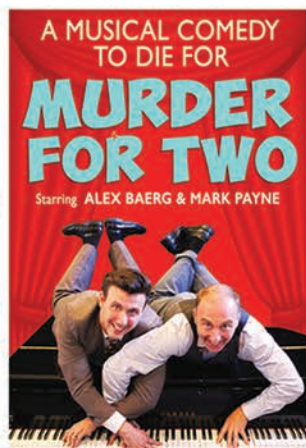
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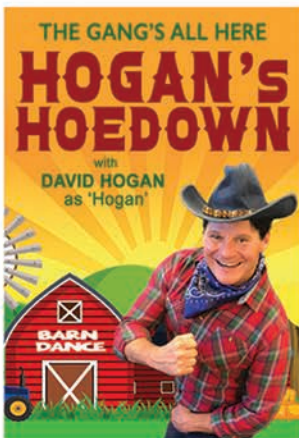
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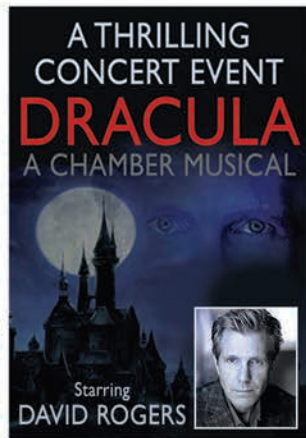
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