



# LIMELIGHT

The Kingston Historical Society

Kingston, Ontario

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*Eva Barnes photo*

*An historic 19th century Kingston house is seeking a new generation to call it home. 194 Johnson Street, built in 1842, was the residence of Sir John A. Macdonald's extended family from 1856 to 1860. Isabella, Macdonald's first wife, passed away here on December 28th, 1857. This was Macdonald's legal address when he served as Member of the Legislative Assembly for Kingston.*

## JANUARY MEETING

*Mysteries Revealed:*

*Latin Inscriptions Around Kingston*

**Dr. Bernard Kavanagh**

*Wednesday, January 21st, 2015 at 7:30 pm*

*Kingston-Frontenac Public Library*

*130 Johnson Street at Bagot*

*Wilson Room*

## *Sir John A.'s 200th tickets sold out*

All 113 tickets to the KHS Sir John Alexander Macdonald 200th anniversary banquet on January 10th were reserved six weeks in advance. This much-anticipated winter feast in honour of Canada's first Prime Minister is an annual event for Society members. Brian Osborne and Warren Everett began the tradition 15 years ago. Warren has served as Coordinator since then.

Banquet guests have enjoyed an evening of fine dining in the elegant Senior Staff Mess at the Royal Military College with an invited speaker addressing a theme of interest about Kingston's illustrious Father of Confederation.

To celebrate Sir John A.'s special bicentennial birthday, historical pageantry and music were added to the programme this year. This included a scarlet-coated Fort Henry honour guard to greet guests upon arrival, period music at the grand piano, and ladies-in-waiting to Lady Agnes Macdonald attired in Victorian evening finery. Also featured: a formal procession of dignitaries escorted into dinner by a Scottish piper, and a hearty toast to the Dominion by Sir John A. himself (aka Brian Porter).

Mr. Justice Thomas Cromwell of the Supreme Court of Canada accepted the invitation to be the much-honoured guest dinner speaker.

For the conclusion of the evening, Gordon and Sandra Sinclair from the Kingston Chamber Choir kindly offered to lead in the singing of *O Canada*.

The organizing committee has been surprised and delighted by the enthusiastic response.

## *In this issue...*

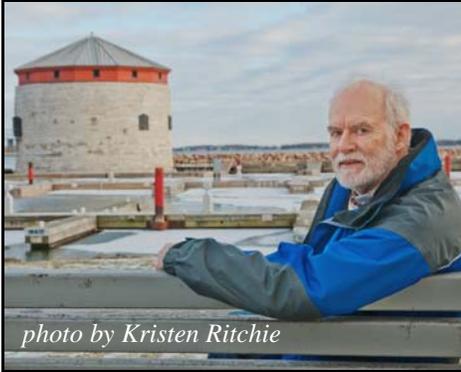
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*Eva Barnes photo*

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

*Peter Gower*



*photo by Kristen Ritchie*

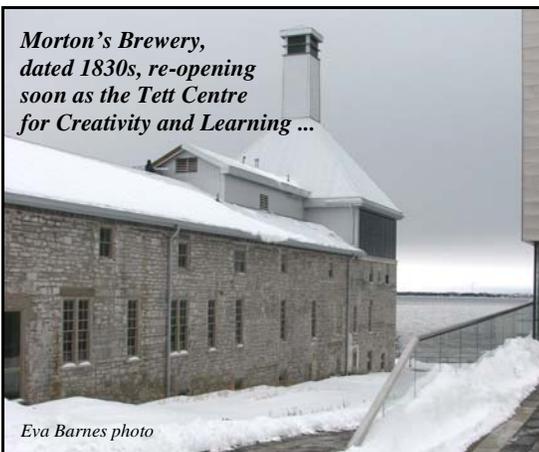
With the **KHS Annual General Meeting slated for Wednesday, February 18th**, it is that time of year again when the Past President has the traditional task of looking for Chairs of the Society's various activities and inviting members to consider serving on Council and its smaller adjunct committees. Gordon Sinclair will be approaching you soon with that welcoming smile and questioning look on his face. Would you be available in the coming year, and would you like to become involved in KHS initiatives behind the scenes? Volunteering can prove to be an energizing, satisfying and interesting experience. And it can be a pleasant way to become involved in the community, if you are new to Kingston.

Everything that the Society has accomplished, going back to 1893, in the service of documenting, preserving and promoting our City's past, has been achieved by engaged and caring volunteers. They have contributed their time, energy and talents to this mission. We can do much when we work together as a team. Some can devote only a small amount of time, others more. All participation is welcomed and greatly valued. If you think you might enjoy becoming more closely involved with the organizational activities of the KHS, please call Gordon at (613) 531-9413 before February 4th. The following positions are open for 2015:

**KHS President, KHS Vice-President, Programme Chair, Awards Committee Chair,  
Sir John A. Birthday Dinner Coordinator, General Members of Council,  
Coordinator for the June 6th Cataraqui Cemetery Commemoration Event (2016),  
Members for the Murney Tower Museum Board, Publicity Chair, Website Coordinator,  
Editor of *Limelight*, Coordinator of Meeting Refreshments**

Gordon is looking forward to hearing from you.

Peter



*Morton's Brewery,  
dated 1830s, re-opening  
soon as the Tett Centre  
for Creativity and Learning ...*

*Eva Barnes photo*

## THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Established in 1893*

**LIMELIGHT is published 5 times a year in January, March, May, September and November. Please forward submissions to the Editor, Eva Barnes, by fax to (613) 546-4308 or via e-mail to [eva\\_barnes@sympatico.ca](mailto:eva_barnes@sympatico.ca). Phone contact: (613) 546-4300. Reprinting of articles must be accompanied by an acknowledgement of the Society, the issue and date. All photo credits and by-lines must be retained. The KHS gratefully acknowledges the support of our sponsors in producing LIMELIGHT.**

**MEETINGS** are held usually at 7:30 pm on the third Wednesday of the month, September to May, in the Wilson Room of the Kingston-Frontenac Public Library on Johnson Street at Bagot. Refreshments are served. Annual events include a formal fine-dining experience with a special presentation honouring the birthday of Sir John A. Macdonald, usually on January 11th, and a commemoration marking his death at the Cataraqui Cemetery National Historic Site on June 6th. Canada's First Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, was born in 1815 and passed away in 1891.

**NEW MEMBERS** are welcome! Membership rates are \$50 per individual, \$60 for families, \$60 for institutions and \$25 for students. Membership includes an invitation to attend our monthly meetings, and receiving *Limelight*, our newsletter, as well as *Historic Kingston*, the journal published annually by the KHS.

### MAILING ADDRESS

Kingston Historical Society  
P.O. Box 54, Kingston ON K7L 4V6

[kingstonhs@gmail.com](mailto:kingstonhs@gmail.com)

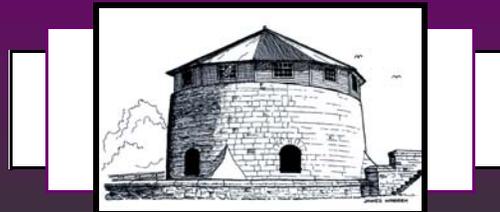
[www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca](http://www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca)

**Wednesday, January 21st, 2015 at 7:30**



Professor Bernard Kavanagh from the Classics Department at Queen’s University takes us on a fascinating tour of Latin inscriptions we often walk past here in Kingston. Where are they? What do they mean?  
**KHS January meeting, upstairs in the Wilson Room Kingston and Frontenac Public Library, Main Branch**

**KHS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**



**Wednesday, February 18th at 7:30 pm  
 Wilson Room, KFPLibrary**

The business meeting is followed by a special programme, TBA and light refreshments

**Nominations  
 for positions on Council close  
 February 4th**

***Please renew your KHS membership before the upcoming AGM on February 18th...***

**KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP  
 APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM**

Membership dues are as follows (please circle one):

\$50 for an individual      \$60 for a family      \$60 for an institution      \$25 for a student  
 \$300 for a sponsor. Please speak to the Treasurer directly at (613) 389-6532

***Please clip this form, and send it together with your cheque,  
 made out to the Kingston Historical Society,  
 to: The Treasurer, c/o Kingston Historical Society, Box 54, Kingston ON K7L 4V6***

Registration can also be done on line from our webpage: [www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca](http://www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca)

Membership includes the opportunity to hear 7 lectures per year, receive the annual journal, *Historic Kingston*, and 5 issues of the KHS newsletter, *Limelight*, as well as discounted fees to selected special events. Some sponsors also offer discounts.

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*Paul Elsley with Peter Ginn*



*John Fielding with Peter*

KHS members enjoyed a special evening of celebration at the Renaissance Event Venue on December 3rd. The Awards Committee annually acknowledges the work of organizations and exceptional individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the community through historical initiatives and projects. Awards Chair Peter Ginn made presentations on behalf of the KHS to John Fielding, a devoted, long-time educator and leader in our Society, and to Paul Elsley, representing the organizing committee formed from the three Rotary Clubs of the Kingston area, chaired by Bill Egnatoff. The Rotarians successfully launched an exciting and ambitious *Adventures in History* experience for 17 students. Four teams each had to propose how \$100,000 might be invested in Kingston in 2015 to promote an awareness of the life and times of Sir John A. Macdonald. Applause was warm and hearty.

KHS members and guests also had the delightful privilege of being welcomed musically into the Christmas season thanks to an ensemble of performers from the acclaimed Kingston Chamber Choir under the direction of Gordon Sinclair. A deliciously enticing small-plate buffet was offered at the end of the evening by Jessup Food and Heritage at the Renaissance. Graeme Watson was the photographer for the celebration.

**NEW BOOKS**

*a review by John F. Fielding*

**The Ashes of War: The Fight for Upper Canada, August 1814 - March 1815**

*by Richard Feltoe, published by Dundurn Press, Toronto, 2014.*

This is Feltoe's final book of a six book series entitled: **Upper Canada Preserved - War of 1812**. Rather than one very large volume with a detailed account of this important event in Canadian history, Feltoe chose to give manageable bite-sized pieces. For most of us who are not dedicated readers of histories of war, this allows us to select from the six titles: *A Call to Arms, the Pendulum of War, The Flames of War, The Tide of War, A Crucible of Fire* and *The Ashes of War*.

In this book, the author's use of original sources, which are often difficult to read, are made understandable by a clear description of his methodology in the preface. Feltoe's use of a timeline in the introduction of each chapter prepares the reader for the detailed account that follows. The abundance of maps, diagrams and photographs also helps to make complex battle plans and scenarios easier to follow, especially for non-military types and the everyday history enthusiast.



**THE KINGSTON  
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**Murney Tower  
Museum  
VOLUNTEERS  
WANTED**

**Help manage Kingston's oldest museum**

Volunteers are being sought to join the Murney Tower Museum Committee. This committee is responsible for all aspects of running the museum, from hiring and supervising staff, to artifact management and grant writing.

If you would like to contribute, and are able to commit for two years, please contact the Director at:  
**murneytower@gmail.com**

Kingston Historical Society membership is required.

***The Sir John A. Macdonald  
Music Book***

The music written to honour Sir John A. Macdonald and Lady Agnes will be heard again in concert in late April 2015! To celebrate the 110th anniversary of the Kingston Historical Society in April 2004, the music was presented in a concert, to be repeated for Sir John A.'s 200th anniversary. Sarah Gibson-Bray and Donna Ivey will produce a third concert which will be held in the venue of Sydenham Street United Church. The Sir John A. Macdonald Music book of 19th century sheet music, enhanced by research about the titles and words, composers, lyricists and publishers is available from Novel Idea book store and Donna Ivey.



*Photo of Lady Agnes Macdonald 1871, PAC*

**Saturday, January 17th  
10:00 am**

The **Kingston Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society** meets in the Wilson Room of the Kingston-Frontenac Public Library, 130 Johnson Street. Joyce Fingland speaks on "The Rathburn Family and the Town of Deseronto". All welcome. [www.ogs.on.ca/kingston](http://www.ogs.on.ca/kingston)

**Friday, January 23rd  
6:00 pm**

Support the historical work of the Fairfield-Gutzeit Society and enjoy a fine Scottish feast of prime rib, tatties, neeps, haggis and trifle to celebrate **Robbie Burns Day**. St. John's Memorial Hall in Bath. Scottish dancing. Tickets are \$50 each. Contact: Sally (613) 352-9911



**Donald Redmond Remembered**

Few people of my acquaintance have so fully met the criteria of “a gentleman and a scholar” as did Donald A. Redmond, who died Oct 22, 2014 in his 93rd year.

Chief Librarian at Queen’s University from 1966 to 1977 and for a dozen years editor of *Historic Kingston*, Don was fastidious in the nicest way in every endeavour, whether using his editorial pencil or fashioning his impeccably trimmed moustache. “He was warm, thoughtful and precise,” recalled Jack

Pike, who paid tribute to Donald’s scholarship in writing his KHS Award citation in 1998.

Well-known as a devotee of the Baker Street Irregulars - Donald wrote two scholarly books on Sherlock Holmes - but few of his friends and colleagues were fully aware of his other diverse interests - hence his death notice not only saluted him as a Librarian but as a “Polymath” - a person of much or varied learning.

American-born, he grew up in Nova Scotia, earned degrees in New Brunswick, Quebec and Illinois, and lived in Ceylon, Turkey and Kansas before coming to Kingston. His interests ranged from mechanics, railways and steam machinery to church history and he was a member of the Chemical Institute of Canada. He also had a flair for dramatic presentations. When KHS celebrated its Centenary in 1991, Donald wrote, directed and led a 13-page re-enactment entitled “The Founding of the Society,” - complete with stage directions - highlighting Kingston’s history that graces Volume 42 of *Historic Kingston*.

After meetings in the 1990s, this Scribbler had the privilege of driving him to his St. Catherine Street home and enjoying his wise counsel and succinct comments on the city and society he loved. Not one to overstay his leave in an avocation, after retirement as journal editor in 1997, he moved on to enjoy other scholarly interests.

He leaves his wife of 66 years, Ruth (White), who also enjoyed KHS, sons Christopher and Derek and daughter Margi, five grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and a host of good memories.

**HISTORICAL RESOURCES**

**UEL book collection**

Photo Nancy Curway



**Chief Librarian Patricia Enright and Peter Milliken, President of the Kingston and District Branch UELAC. The UEL branch’s book collection is now on permanent loan at KFPL .**

**LOYALISTS MAKE COLLECTION AVAILABLE TO PUBLIC**

The Kingston and District Branch of the United Empire Loyalists’ Association of Canada is delighted to announce an agreement to place their collection of about 170 history books on permanent loan at the central branch of the Kingston-Frontenac Public Library.

This fine collection of general and mainly Loyalist histories has been built over the past three decades by purchases and donations under the leadership of long-time branch librarian John Chard (died 2013). John Chard’s passion was for educating all Canadians about the role of the Loyalists in the establishment and growth of this country.

The UEL were generally those who had been settled in the thirteen colonies at the outbreak of the American Revolution, who remained loyal to the Royal Standard, and who settled in what is now Canada at the end of the war. Perhaps one Canadian in ten has at least one Loyalist ancestor. This library collection covers not only the UEL who settled in Eastern Ontario, but also those who went to the Maritimes and other areas.

**For further information about Kingston and District Branch UELAC, please visit the website at [www.uelac.org/Kingston](http://www.uelac.org/Kingston)**

**The books are being catalogued and will appear soon with the identifier “UELAC”.**

The speaker at our November meeting was KHS Council member **Paul Van Nest**, who gave a timely presentation on the **Second Battle of Ypres** and the impression it made upon John McCrae, resulting in his epic poem, *In Flanders Fields*. At the time of the battle, the original German push into France had been stalled and the line of trenches that came to symbolize the First World War ran through Belgium to the English Channel. In order to protect the mediaeval town of Ypres, the Allied armies had to occupy the higher ground to the east, resulting in a bulge in their lines, referred to as the Ypres Salient. This vulnerable sector was attacked by the Germans in the fall of 1914, and the Allies were forced to give up enough ground that the German artillery could reach the town.

In the spring of 1915, the Canadian First Division was moved into the Ypres sector. On the 22nd of April, the Germans launched a massive attack, preceded by the release of 5,700 canisters of chlorine gas. This new form of warfare seared the lungs and blinded anyone in its path. The French Colonial troops to the north of the Canadian line received the brunt of the gas and were decimated, leaving a huge gap. Although the Canadians fought hard on their flank, and in the counterattacks that night and the following day, their line was hit directly on the 24th of April by a second German gas attack, artillery and overwhelming infantry. The Canadians took one-half of their losses in the 2nd Battle of Ypres on that day, over 3,000. The German assaults in this sector continued until May 5th, resulting in 82,000 Allied casualties, almost 6,000 of them Canadians.

One of the medical officers of the 1st Canadian Division was Major John McCrae, chief field surgeon with the 1st Brigade, Canadian Field Artillery. One of his fellow artillery officers and a close friend was Lt. Alexis Helmer. While performing his duties as a Forward Observation Officer, Helmer was killed in an enemy bombardment on May 2nd. McCrae conducted the funeral service that evening. Immediately afterwards, McCrae wrote this poem. It was sent to England, where it was finally published, anonymously, in the December 8th, 1915 edition of *Punch Magazine*. Lt. Col. John McCrae died of pneumonia on the 28th of January, 1918 and was buried in France. His poem has come to symbolize the remembrance of the fallen, not only here in Canada, but throughout the Western world.

Paul ended his presentation with a very moving a cappella solo of John McCrae's evocative lyrics set to music and arranged by Alexander Tilley.



*Peter Ginn photo*

**COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*general historical interest*

**TOUR GROUP TO VIMY RIDGE 2017**

*Dr. Terri-Lynn Brennan of Cultural Services, City of Kingston, invites historians interested in travelling to Vimy Ridge on a 100th anniversary tour, to please contact her. If a group from the KHS would like to participate, a fund-raising option can be developed.*  
**tbrennan@cityof kingston.ca**

**ontarioplaques.com**

Librarian Alan L. Brown has created a site containing 1,458 pages, each with a photo of an Ontario historical plaque, map, text, links of interest and comments from visitors.

**A CONTEST: Do you know your Kingston history?**

**www.kingstonheritage.ca** menu: LOCAL HISTORY

The first person to identify and confirm a factual error in the chronological listing of historical facts about Kingston receives 2 free passes to the *Screening Room* courtesy of the HAOK. Please call your *Limelight* Editor at (613) 546-4300

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