

LIMELIGHT

Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society
Kingston Ontario Canada

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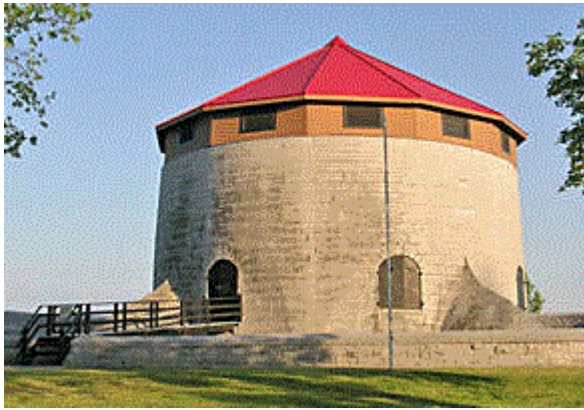


Photo: Eva Barnes

Constructed in 1846, the Murney Tower was part of the British naval defence system for Kingston. In August 1925, in a partnership between the Department of the Interior (Parks Canada) and the Kingston Historical Society, the site officially opened as a museum.

Watch [The Local View with Ted Hsu at the Murney Tower](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDiCLGrDIDg)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDiCLGrDIDg>

MAY MEETING

Historical Surveying and Aerial Photographs of Kingston and Area

by Nigel Day and Graeme Watson

Wednesday, May 20th, 2015 at 7:30 pm

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
(see further details in President's Message)

Murney Tower Museum 90th Anniversary Official Opening

Thursday, May 21, 2015 — 10:00 am

Please join Mayor Bryan Paterson, the Liberal MP for Kingston and the Islands Ted Hsu, and the Murney Tower staff for the Official Opening of the 2015 season. Festivities begin at 10:00 am with a reception to follow inside the Tower, catered by one of our sponsors Pan Chanco. The Grade Seven class of Calvin Park LEAP will be in attendance to meet the Mayor and be piped across the bridge into the Tower to begin the day's tours. Local students are employed each summer as interpreters under the guidance of Murney Tower Director, Graeme Watson.

The museum is open every day from Thursday, May 21st until Labour Day. Hours 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. Admission is free for KHS Members; Seniors, Military, Children \$4; Families with children \$12; Group rates available. The Tower is located at the corner of Barrie and King streets.

murneytower@gmail.com

(613) 572-5181

Kingston Historical Society 2015 Executive Council

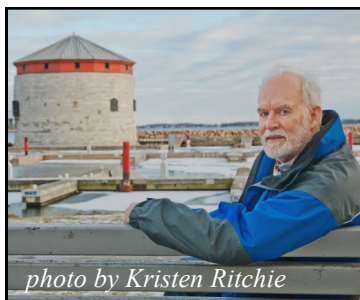


Top Row: Peter Gower, Don Richardson, Gordon Sinclair, Betty Andrews, John Whiteley, Paul Van Nest;

Front Row: Graeme Watson, Peter Ginn, Anne Richardson, Corinne Harrison
Photo: Alan MacLachlan

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And so another year of the Society's activities is coming to an end. We look back at many successful meetings, and that wonderful dinner to celebrate Sir John A. Macdonald's 200th birthday. But still to come is this month's meeting on the 20th at 7:30pm at **St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church**. Please use the Clergy Street entrance, going up the stairs. There is an accessible entrance available, but you will need to let a KHS representative (who will be waiting at the bottom of the Clergy Street stairs) know that you want to use the accessible entrance on Princess St. Since we lose the use of the Wilson Room for the next few months as it is being renovated, we may well be meeting at St. Andrew's through the fall and

appreciate your comments

ont as a meeting place. Free street parking is available after 6pm; there is no church parking lot.

We say goodbye and thank you to one of our long-term sponsors, **Larry Brennan**, who has retired from Royal LePage and we thank him and his business for supporting us over the years. Larry will continue to support the Society as a member. Good luck Larry; we all hope you will enjoy your retirement.

Council has voted to conduct a strategic plan over the coming months to look at the Society with Marcus Letourneau as committee chair. Your input will be vital so please read further details inside; I encourage your participation.

There are two Society events following our final meeting. On Thursday, May 21st (a day earlier than previously announced) Mayor Paterson will open the Murney Tower for its 90th year under the auspices of the Society. All KHS members have free admission and we hope you will take all of your visitors to see the changes that Graeme Watson and his committee have made. We will be featured in MP Ted Hsu's Cogeco programme. And on June 6th, we will again commemorate the death of Sir John A. Macdonald with our graveside ceremony at 1:30 pm. The Honourable Bob Rae will be the guest speaker; we hope to see you all there.



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, Corinne Harrison corinneharrison111@gmail.com

Printing 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.

KHS MEETINGS are held usually at 7:30 pm on the third Wednesday of the month, September to May. For the foreseeable future, we are meeting at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church on Clergy Street. Refreshments are served; a small donation is appreciated. Annual events include a formal fine dining experience with a special presentation honouring the birthday of Sir John A. Macdonald, on the Saturday closest to 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 always 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; 5 issues of *Limelight*, our newsletter; and a copy of *Historic Kingston*, the annual journal published by the KHS.

MAILING ADDRESS:

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www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca

KHS May Meeting, Wednesday the 20th

7:30 pm at **St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church**

Enter via Clergy Street entrance

130 Clergy Street East

Historical Surveying and Aerial Photographs of Kingston and Area

By Nigel Day and Graeme Watson

Source: City of Kingston/explore



Photo: Graeme Watson

Official Opening of Murney Tower

90th Anniversary

Thursday, May 21st, 2015

Ceremony begins at 10:00 am

Tours and Reception after ribbon-cutting

Refreshments presented by Pan Chancho

The Kingston Historical Society cordially invites you to the

Commemoration Service for Sir John A. Macdonald

*at his gravesite
in the Cataraqui Cemetery National Historic Site*

Friday, June 6th at 1:30 pm

Guest Speaker: The Honourable Robert (Bob) Rae, PC OC O.Ont QC

"Sir John A: Warts and All"



Photo: Peter Ginn



I confess I needed a sharp awakening to the founding story of Canada, as did many others, as those surveys revealed in the 1960s that asked “Who was our first Prime Minister?,” and that got a “uh, er...I don’t know, who was he?” We were a people that mostly let history happen but not in our heads. In 1967, the Centennial of Canada sparked historical awareness as never before. I went aboard the Confederation Railway Museum when it pulled into Kingston. The Quebec Conference The British North America Act cobbled together in Charlottetown and the proclamation of the new nation July 1, 1967, with John A. Macdonald as first Prime Minister—it was all there in the railway museum. What was an intellectual void started to be an expo of real events creating and forever recreating a great nation with an ever-thriving populace forging economic might and political equilibrium that are admired, and envied by the rest of the world. Canada is a never-ending historical enrichment of my being.

Dropping in for coffee and toast at The Right Spot Restaurant on Wellington Street, I would give the little plaque about Macdonald on the wall a passing glance. I took the history on a plaque for granted, as if it were a niche interest; okay as a wall decoration. That it mentioned these premises were where Sir John A. Macdonald had opened his law practice in 1835 seemed a thumbnail of history, compared to the big-font name of the restaurant. But the impending bicentennial of Macdonald’s birth, and a developer that intimated demolition was the next step for The Right Spot, quickly made the low-impact message into an urgent heritage conservation concern. The start-up office for lawyer Macdonald, who became the most important name in the making of this country, would become rubble? The developer had told the City Planning Committee and Municipal Heritage Committee there was very little of the original interior left, so what’s to be restored?

Thanks to the Kingston Historical Society who donated the small plaque in 1954, for without it the historic building might already have been demolished. Why is it historic? During the years, 1887-1892, three prominent politicians exercised power in different roles of senior Canadian leadership in the same five-year period—Sir John A. Macdonald as the first prime minister, Oliver Mowat as Premier of Ontario, and Alexander Campbell, Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario. The three had worked together, starting their law careers in 1835, in “The Right Spot” space, 169—171 Wellington Street.

Lena Newman in her John A. Macdonald Album, in 1974, states “...between the ages of 16 and 20 he passed all the examinations which qualified him to become a barrister and he was fully prepared for his profession before he could legally practice it, not having reached his majority. Although he was not eligible for admission to the bar, his professional card appeared in the Kingston Chronicle & Gazette on August 24, 1835. It said “John A. Macdonald, attorney and cc, has opened his office, in the brick building belonging to Mr. Collar, opposite the shop of D. Preston Esq. Quarry Street, where he will attend to all the duties of the profession.” In 1836 at Osgood Hall, now age 21, he was “called to the degree of barrister of law.” Oliver Mowat was his first law clerk, Alexander Campbell his second. Macdonald was a Kingston Alderman in Ward 4 then elected Kingston’s Member of Parliament; Mowat, was Ontario’s third premier and Campbell was a federal cabinet member for 15 years and, along with Macdonald, a father of confederation.

The City Council and the developer, through the due diligence of the city staff, Municipal Heritage Committee and consultants Carl Bray and Jennifer McKendry, and architects, Schultz and Zaback, moved bland modernism to start at the third level; the Macdonald/Mowat/Campbell place will be restored at street level—put back will be the mansard roof with three dormer windows, corbels and brackets, the curved rafters, the brick façade, the repaired wood-framed windows and so on. The moral message here is the heritage legacy of Kingston is not being denied at this site, and the cultural history of 169-171 is highlighted.

President of the Kingston Historical Society, Peter Gower, speaking about the site to the Municipal Heritage Committee “...the soul of the building, is former occupants, their struggles, their accomplishments, intellectual work to make a living, their origins and beliefs and leadership roles in the community, the province, the country are remembered in an artful restoration that recaptures both the architecture and the culture of an earlier time.” These efforts boost our economy and support Kingston’s fame for having the most historic places of any municipality its size in Canada. Kingston is one of a half dozen first-settled communities in the country, and its post-indigenous history, has been reaching out to us for more than 340 years. This history is all around us in buildings, monuments, conserved fortifications and canal works, and in the cultural chapters of our people. If we had not looked after this restoration properly at 169—171 Wellington Street, we could be the brunt of carping about turning to dust the place where the first Prime Minister’s career, and that of two other famous founders began.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

of historical interest



THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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*www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca
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Celebrating the 90th Anniversary of Kingston's Oldest Museum

Official Opening of the Murney Tower Museum for the 2015 season

21 May 2015

In attendance and available for Photo Ops/Interviews: Mayor Bryan Paterson; Ted Hsu, Liberal MP for Kingston and the Islands, Murney Tower staff.

SCHEDULE

- 10:00 Arrival of Calvin Park LEAP Grade Seven class, and guests.
- 10:10 Arrival of Mayor.
- 10:10 – 10:30 Mayor meets Grade Seven class, staff of Tower, and members of Kingston Historical Society.
- 10:30 Mayor addresses assembled guests.

On completion of the address, the Town Crier formally announces the opening of the 90th season.
- 10:40 Mayor cuts the ribbon, officially opening the Tower for the season.
- 10:45 Piper leads Mayor, officials, and Grade Seven class across the bridge into the Tower for tours.
- 10:50 Reception inside the Tower for media and assembled guests; Ted Hsu to cut anniversary cake.

In case of inclement weather all activities to take place on main floor.

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

calendar

- May 16, 2015** Location change beginning May 16th; the Kingston Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society will meet at 10:00 am at the Seniors Centre on Frances Street. Information: at www.ogs.on.ca/kingston
- May 19, 2015** Hastings County Historical Society — James Kennelly, "History of Tyendinaga Township" — 7:30 pm 100 College Street, Belleville
- May 24, 2015** 1812 Glengarry / UEL Monument Rededication 2:00 pm, Adolphustown
- May 29-31, 2015** Ontario Genealogical Society Conference 2015 "Tracks through Time" Barrie, Ontario

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

STRATEGIC PLANNING for the KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Discussion surrounding a strategic plan came up at the January council meeting and was approved at the April 9th council meeting. This strategic planning exercise will provide an opportunity to take stock of the Society, to survey our members and stakeholders, and to strategize a vision with set objectives and timeline. We are fortunate to have volunteers who are experienced in such planning and so there will be no cash outlay necessary to do this valuable work. Membership on this *ad hoc* committee is:

- Marcus Letourneau, Committee Chair, and KHS Councillor
- Peter Gower, President, KHS
- Corinne Harrison, Vice-President, KHS
- Anne Richardson, KHS Councillor
- Caroline Petznick, Managing Director, Kingston Association of Museums, Art Galleries & Historic Sites
- Paul Robertson, City Curator, City of Kingston

The committee will soon have its inaugural meeting wherein specific timelines can be determined. We intend to present the plan to the KHS membership at the AGM (February 2016). Subsequent communications will share the committee's plan with you, and seek your input. We hope you'll participate in planning the future of the Society.

MEMORIAL



Patsy Fleming, a long-time member of the Kingston Historical Society, passed away at the age of 91, on April 19, 2015. Many may remember her as a prolific writer for the Whig-Standard and a collector of wooden decoy ducks. We are sad to lose one of Kingston's biggest fans and lovers of Kingston's history.

James "Jim" Pritchard, Professor Emeritus, Queen's University, passed on April 14, 2015 at the age of 76. Jim, a long-time member of the Kingston Historical Society, is survived by his wife Suzanne.



Photos: Kingston Whig-Standard

SPEAKER'S CORNER



“The Result of Rebellion: North American Political Prisoners in Van Dieman’s Land”

by John Carter

At our April 15th meeting, Ron Ridley introduced Dr. John Carter who talked on “The Result of Rebellion: North American Political Prisoners in Van Dieman’s Land”.

Following the unsuccessful Rebellions of 1837, Americans living near the border decided to help the cause with a series of 13 invasions by the Patriots in 1838. These were more serious than the rebellions had been. There were actions at a number of places, including Fort Malden, Amherstberg, Hickory Island, near Gananoque, Pelee Island (and on the surrounding ice, meaning that at least one fight was fought on the American side of the border), raids across the St. Clair river and the Battle of the Windmill.

And while these ‘battles’ were far from exemplary military actions, they led to deaths, and they led to the capture of 130 men, after the first five Patriots were shot. Lieutenant-General Sir George Arthur, was Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada and had been Lieutenant-Governor of **Van Diemen’s Land** (now the State of Tasmania, part of Australia) from 1823–1837. He was the father of the penal system in Van Diemen’s Land, and so thought it appropriate that the prisoners should be sent there. They were transported from London, to Kingston, to Quebec City and then 92 were sent on the 137-day sea voyage to Van Dieman’s Land, where Sir John Franklin was then Lieutenant-Governor.

They landed at Hobart, but Franklin sent them inland to a quarry to build roads, bridges and culverts. Dr. Carter showed photos of many of these projects, and of the places where they lived. Tasmanians today are not particularly aware of this part of their history, and there are few interpretative signs, and many buildings have been allowed to deteriorate. Amazingly all of the prisoners survived. They were given a ticket of leave if they behaved, and then a pardon. Some stayed in Australia, many returned to North America, and one Canadian returned to Canada.

After a question and answer period, Dr. Carter was thanked by Council member Anne Richardson for his most interesting presentation.



Photos by Peter Ginn



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