



LIMELIGHT

The Kingston Historical Society

Kingston, Ontario

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March 2014



Eva Barnes photo

*Heavy snow this past winter has created picturesque scenes around the enduring architectural landmarks in Kingston's historical precinct. The stately **Customs House** was built in 1856-58 at the corner of King and Clarence Streets in the Renaissance Revival style. **St. George's Cathedral**, a prominent part of Kingston's past since 1825, beckons from the background and captures the popular building styles of many eras.*

MARCH MEETING

**Kingston's Bell Telephone Co.:
New Technology, New Building**

John Grenville

**Wednesday, March 19th, 2014
Kingston Frontenac Public Library
Wilson Room
7:30 pm**

New KHS Executive Council Announced at AGM for 2014

Peter Gower, KHS President, and Chair of the well attended AGM on February 19th, reviewed reports from eleven committees, as well as from the Treasurer and Secretary. The new KHS Executive Council was announced for the coming term. The Society had a very successful year meeting objectives, financially and strategically.

Of particular note is the increase in assets in the General Fund, as well as the increase in assets for the Murney Tower Museum. The KHS has been in stewardship of this special military museum since 1925. Three grants helped to sustain the summer internship program at the site.

Mention was made of plans taking shape around the celebration of Sir John A. Macdonald's 200th birthday in 2015, and commemorations for the 100th anniversary of the beginning of World War I.

An invitation was presented to the membership to consider the key role of KHS Vice President, which is currently vacant.

The coming year will to be an active one.

Executive

*President: Peter Gower
Vice President: vacant
Secretary: Don Richardson
Treasurer: Randall Levi
Past President: Gordon Sinclair*

Councillors

*Nancy Day
Warren Everett
Peter Ginn
Ben Holthof
Alan MacLachlan
Ron Ridley
Paul Van Nest
John Whitely*

Appointed

*Historic Kingston:
Duncan McDowall (2014)
Marcus Letourneau (2015)
Limelight: Eva Barnes Murney Tower: Graeme Watson*

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT ...

Looking Back and Forward

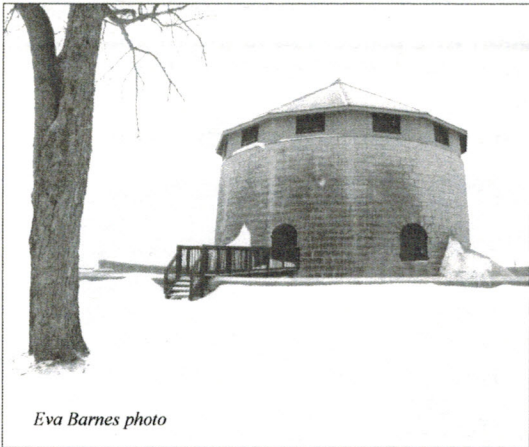
Thank you to all who gave up the Olympics to come to our Annual General Meeting, a necessary meeting which was greatly enlivened by the presentations of John Fielding, Bill Fittell and Lou Grimshaw, and by the silent auction organised by Warren Everett and Doug Petty. I hope you all found treasures at reasonable prices.

We said thank you and goodbye to a number of valued Council members who have moved on to other phases of their lives. John Fielding has been *Limelight* editor for ten years, and Hazel Fotheringham has edited the past four issues of *Historic Kingston*. Alicia Boutilier capably looked after Programme and Publicity while on Council, and Anne Richardson has been an active and supportive Vice President. They will all be missed. We welcome back Marcus Letourneau who will edit *Historic Kingston* for 2015 (Duncan McDowall's 2014 edition will be published before the summer) and Eva Barnes takes over *Limelight*. Nancy Day and Ben Holthof will also join your Council.

Still missing is a Vice President and, as Lou Grimshaw said at the AGM, this is a serious gap which Council needs to explore. Any member interested in the position is asked to contact a Council member. We are also seeking a volunteer to update some of the information on the website, especially to bring Kingston's history up to date.

Among the announcements at the meeting: there will not be a *Limelight* in April, as Eva settles in; we hope to take the lead in opening the bicentennial celebrations of Sir John A's birth by holding a larger and more public dinner; and the Murney Tower will be opened this season by Mayor Mark Gerretsen at 10 am on Friday, May 16th. All are welcome – remember that your membership gives you free admission.

I look forward to seeing you on Wednesday March 19th to hear John Grenville talk about Bell Telephone in Kingston.



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. 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 Public Library on Johnson Street at Bagot. Refreshments are served. Special annual events include a formal fine-dining experience with a special presentation honouring the birthday of Sir John A. Macdonald on January 11th, and a commemoration marking his death at the Cataraqui Cemetery National Historic Site on June 6th. Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's first Prime Minister, 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 receiving *Limelight*, our newsletter, and *Historic Kingston*, the journal published annually by the KHS.

MAILING ADDRESS

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March Meeting, Wednesday the 19th,
7:30 pm in the upstairs Wilson Room,
Kingston Frontenac Public Library
130 Johnson Street at Bagot

***Kingston's Bell Telephone Co.:
New Technology, New Building***

John Grenville, respected Kingston historian and former historic site superintendent, presents an overview of his intensive research into a building at 450 Princess Street that has intrigued him for many years.

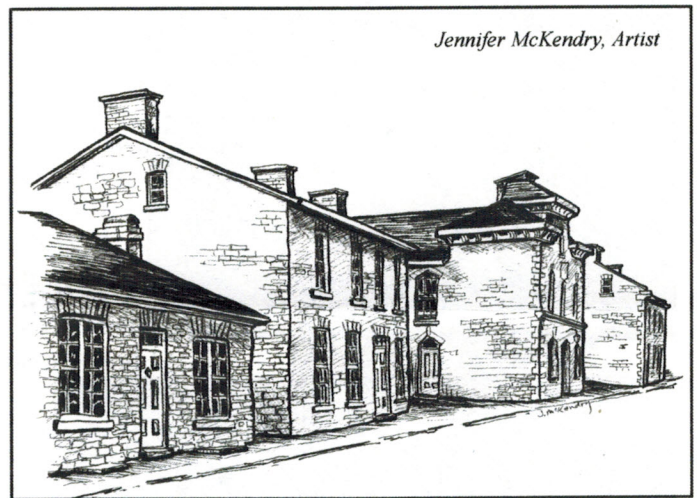
Photo by permission: Bell Telephone Company of Canada, Kingston, 1941 Bell Archives, Montreal

April Meeting, Wednesday the 16th,
7:30 pm in the Wilson room, KFPL,
main library, Johnson at Bagot

***Before Annexation:
Portsmouth Village
1859 to 1951***

The Reverend Bruce Cossar speaks about the history of the charming village he calls home.

Graphic by permission: original sketch of Portsmouth Village by Jennifer McKendry



Jennifer McKendry, Artist

MACDONALD BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS:

Mark your calendars for our annual KHS memorial service at the Cataraqi Cemetery National Historic Site on the afternoon of June 6th, 2014 at 1:30 pm. A special guest speaker will honour Sir John A's contributions to the creation of Canada. Solemn pageantry will be presented by the scarlet-coated Fort Henry guard. Bellevue House interpreters wearing period clothing will greet guests upon arrival. Refreshments will be served. This is a special and unique Kingston event.

*Suggestions for speakers and Society activities are always welcome...
Councillor Ron Ridley is the Chair of Programming*

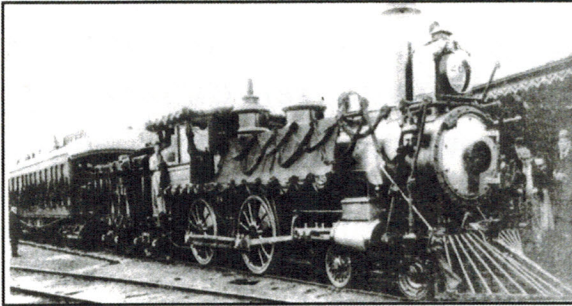
OUR EXECUTIVE COUNCIL FOR 2014

President: Peter Gower
Vice President: to be filled
Secretary: Don Richardson
Treasurer: Randall Levi
Past President: Gordon Sinclair

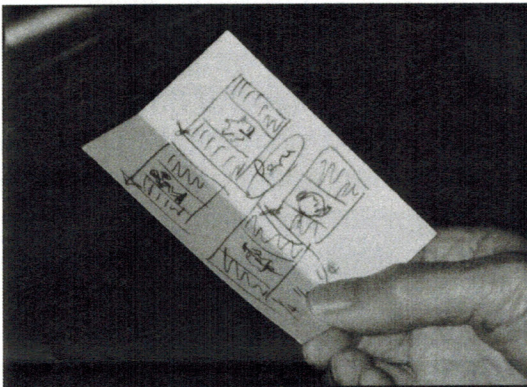
Councillors:
Nancy Day, Warren Everett, Peter Ginn,
Ben Holthof, Alan MacLachlan, Ron Ridley,
Paul Van Nest, John Whitely

By Appointment:
Historic Kingston: Duncan McDowall (2014) Marcus Letourneau (2015)
Limelight: Eva Barnes **Murney Tower:** Graeme Watson

After the formal order of business has been completed at our AGM, a post-agenda tradition is the popular silent auction of historical treasures. Mini-talks about personal items of sentimental and historical interest are also a highlight. This year John Fielding, Bill Fitsell and Lou Grimshaw engaged an attentive audience through an enjoyable "show and tell".



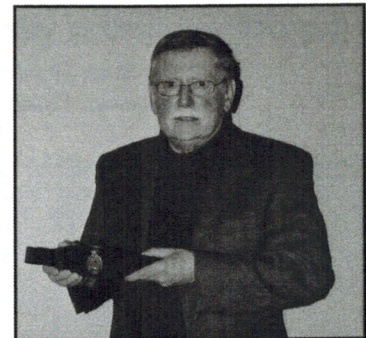
The photo of the funeral locomotive that brought the casket of Sir John A. Macdonald home to Kingston in June of 1891 includes the solemn engineer at the window, P.J. "Paddy" McFall from Ireland. He was the grandfather extraordinaire of Dianne Fielding, KHS member.



Bill Fitsell carried a "little piece of cardboard" to the AGM in his pocket. After sharing his fond memories about meeting the Honourable John Matheson while he was a young reporter, Bill showed a place card from a Remembrance Day event in 1964 onto which John had scribbled the first design of a possible new Canadian flag. The rest is history.



Lou Grimshaw showed an RMC blue leather arm band with insignia, from the late 1800s, in remarkably fine condition. The significance of it remains a mystery, though. Any ideas?



Jim Warren

The Kingston Historical Society members who passed away this last year were remembered in a moment of silence at the Annual General Meeting:

Robert Andrews
Robert Crawford
Elizabeth Dalton
Sister Loretta Gaffney
The Hon. John Matheson
Marjorie Simmons

THE PLEASURES of HISTORICAL ONTARIO TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

KHS members **Alison and Peter Ginn** had a special opportunity to travel to the Chatham/Kent/London area last year to attend the *Battle of the Thames* commemoration (1813) and to enjoy a gala ball to celebrate two centuries of peace.

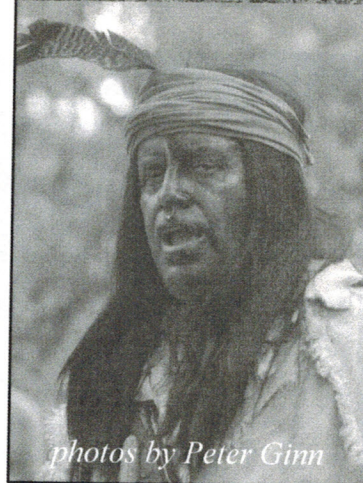
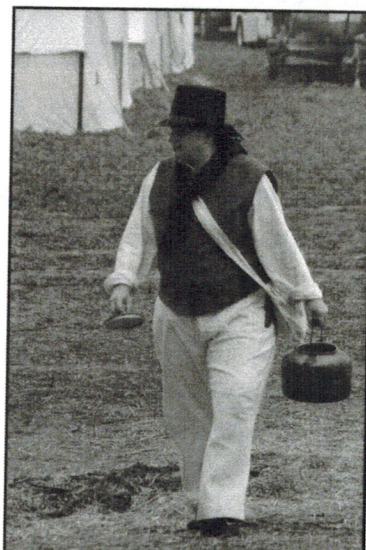
Such interactive events are gaining popularity here in Ontario, especially with many anniversaries of key historic events happening during the next five years.

The battle re-enactment event included public visits to the large military camp site, British Army drill practices, talks by Tecumseh, music by a fife and drum corps, horse riding demonstrations, and an impressive artillery display. Merchants were situated on the periphery of the camps and battle-field.

Regency era dance classes were held in preparation for the evening's *Ball at the Forkes*. Over 250 people were seated for the splendid dinner and historical entertainment, which included colourfully festive native aboriginal performances in ceremonial regalia.

The enticing autumn supper menu was representative of the era, including cornbread, butternut squash soup, Cornish hens, root vegetables and a traditional bread pudding with a liqueur and blueberry reduction. A commemorative wine had been created by Wilson Estate Wines. Table service was conducted with grand precision, much to everyone's pleasure.

The dancing proved to be very popular: many were enthusiastic about trying out their newly learned steps and formations.



photos by Peter Ginn

**TIME TO THINK
ABOUT SUMMER
AND HISTORY,
a special blend
of enjoyment?**



Sense and Sensibility presents ...

The Elegant Lady's Closet



This lovely classic gown was inspired by the Regency era, and made by Alison from burgundy silk. The pattern was loaned from the Heritage Ambassadors' 1812 collection.

It was purchased at the Fort George gift shop in Niagara on the Lake.

c: Sense and Sensibility Clothing

One of the useful tools in determining the building date of, and changes to, a heritage building is studying relevant photographs. Generally speaking, there was no reason to alter early images and so “what you see is what you get” – in fact, occasionally, it can be a shock to find aspects you had not thought existed.

Queen’s University Archives has a large collection of regional images and one can begin the search at home by consulting <http://archives.queensu.ca> (click on databases), but asking for help in person from their staff at Kathleen Ryan Hall may be necessary. Also, there are few images displayed on the archives website and, consequently, you need to go there to actually view those that sound promising. Obtaining images from a previous owner or a descendant of a person once connected with the property can be even more helpful.

Photographs in seemingly poor condition may be improved by scanning and working with the digital results for enhancing contrast and lighting. Try to scan at a high resolution (minimally 600 dpi), so that you can view details enlarged on the computer screen. Behind those persons posing stiffly in the foreground of family portraits may be glimpses of buildings relevant to your project. It is rare to find buildings – unless they are landmark ones -- as the main subject matter before the mid 1870s.

Dating an undated photograph brings up its own set of problems. The type of photograph and the clothing of sitters can sometimes help. Although not specifically written for architectural history purposes, Jennifer McKendry’s new book, *Early Photography in Kingston from the Daguerreotype to the Postcard*, contains dating and technical information and some images not previously published.



1. (Left) There is no verandah, and the windows have 12 panes each and a heavy moulding over top. The doorway has a straight entablature with dentils, c1900. Private Photo Collection



2. (Right) A verandah has been added, c1920s. Collection of D. Banks.

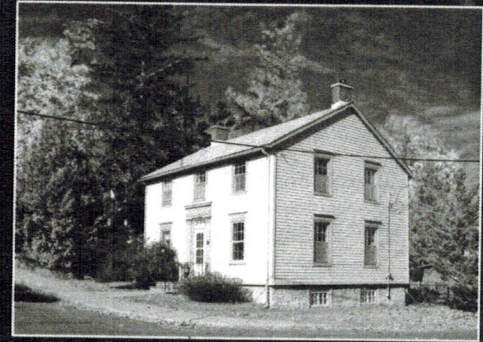
Images showing the changing face of 1 Baiden Street, built in 1860 in Portsmouth Village by John and Mary Pugh, aided in its restoration. An Irish emigrant, John was a cordwainer who taught shoe-making at the penitentiary. The house – which survived a lightning strike in 1878 -- passed in 1889 to his son Thomas, a guard, but he defaulted on the mortgage in 1901 and it went out of the Pugh family's ownership.



3. The verandah has been removed, the lower sashes have a single pane and a pediment has been placed over the doorway. c1940. Collection J. McKendry.



4. Stucco now covers the stone foundation, and the pronounced mouldings over the windows covered over when new siding was applied. 1993. Photo J. McKendry.



5. The mouldings over the windows and doorway are restored, the lower sashes re-glazed and the stone foundation exposed. 2009. Photo J. McKendry.

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

HISTORIC KINGSTON

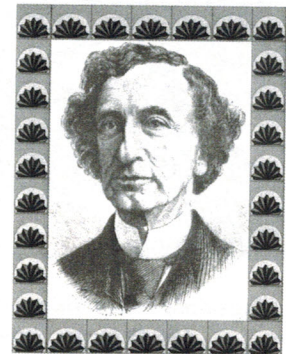
*Printed by permission from HISTORIC KINGSTON
No. 17 Seventy-fifth Anniversary Number, January, 1969*

EVAN MacCOLL—KINGSTON'S GAELIC POET 1808 -1898
by George F. G. Stanley

“The Conservatives won the General Election of 1878. But Sir John, for the one time in his career, was beaten in his home town of Kingston. It was only a narrow victory for Alex Gunn, but it was sufficient. Defeat struck deep into Macdonald’s pride. Macdonald never forgave MacColl. It was widely believed that the poem printed in the *Whig* the day before the election turned voter sentiment to favour Gunn.”

Men of Kingston, Celt or Saxon
Now's the time for honest action,
Lo, the high point of corruption
Once more seeking your seduction.
Every patriot looketh on you,
Ready to cry out, well done you;
Up then, sternly, swear it, shout it —
John A.'s people must be routed;
Well their hearts may quail and quiver
Men of Kingston, now or never.

*Printed anonymously in 1878 in the
Kingston Whig in support of Liberal
Alexander Gunn. Macdonald lost.*



***Did Sir John A. Macdonald
lose the election of 1878
because of a poem written
by Evan MacColl,
Kingston's Gaelic poet,
orator, activist
and ardent Liberal?***

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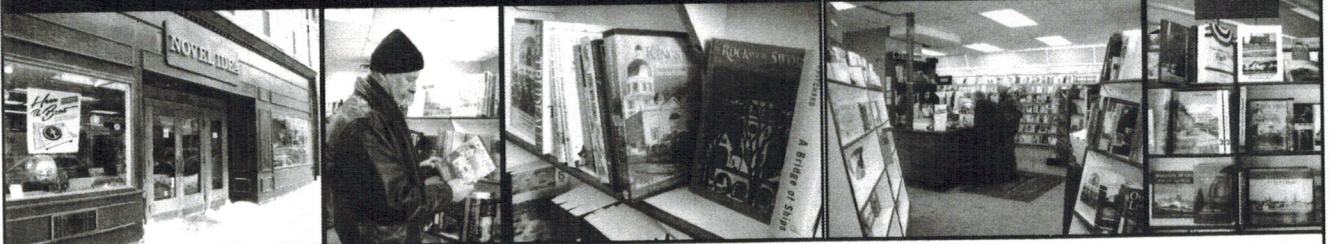
Dining Room / Bar
Courtyard Terrace



The Kingston Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Ministry of Culture of the Government of Ontario

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for March and April 2014



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 Oscar Malan, bookseller

THIS MONTH'S SPECIALLY FEATURED PUBLICATIONS AUTHORED BY MEMBERS OF THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY:

The Canadian Militia in Photographs 1860 -1910
 by Major (ret'd) Warren Everett and Mark Cain

Kingston, Building on the Past for the Future
 by Brian S. Osborne and Donald Swainson

Sir John A. Macdonald Music Book
 by Donna Ivey and Norma Kelly

