

LIMELIGHT

Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society
Kingston Ontario Canada

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September 2016

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Leo Grimshaw



We are now thoroughly into the new season. Council is busy, committees are meeting and we had a well-attended general meeting on 21 September to hear a paper presented by Marcus Letourneau.

Our next monthly general meeting will be on Wednesday 19 October. Our speaker will be Lt Col Arthur Jordan who will discuss the Hill 70 Memorial Project. Although national in scope, the organization of this project is centred in Kingston and several members of the KHS are involved.

The Battle of Hill 70 saw an outnumbered Canadian Army Corps seize a critical point on the German defensive line in August of 1917. The Corps captured the ridge and succeeded in defending it against a series of enemy counter-attacks. There were over 8,000 Canadian casualties. Six Victoria Crosses were awarded. Although on a par with the earlier action at Vimy Ridge, the battle of Hill 70, conducted primarily by Canadian troops and under sole Canadian command, is not recognized formally as a significant event in Canadian history. The purpose of the Project is to recognize the accomplish-

ment and the national significance of the Canadian victory at Hill 70 on the occasion of the 100th anniversary in August 2017.

You won't want to miss this one, so come out come out to the Seniors Centre on 19 October.

Next KHS Meeting
Wednesday, October 19, 2016 7:30 pm
Seniors Centre 56 Francis St
Lt Col Arthur Jordan - Hill 70 Memorial Project

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Community Announcements of historical interest

On **Monday, October 17, 2016** The Frontenac Heritage Foundation is holding its annual AWARDS CEREMONY at the Renaissance Centre, 285 Queen Street. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. with presentations at 7 p.m.

The Frontenac Heritage Foundation was erroneously referred to as the Frontenac Heritage Society in the September issue of Limelight, for which we apologize. *Editor*

The Kingston Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society will meet at the Kingston Seniors Centre, 56 Francis St., **Saturday, October 15** 10 a.m. - Deb McAuslan, their Secretary, will speak on "Palatines - Refugees From Another Time". Visitors welcome. Further details at www.ogs.on.ca/kingston

THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Please forward submissions to the Editor Betty Andrews. betty.andrews@gmail.com Reprinting of articles from the Limelight 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 .



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KHS MEETINGS take place at 7:30 pm on the third Wednesday of the month, September to May, except in December, when the meeting takes the form of an awards ceremony and gala, and is held at a different time and location. Until further notice, meetings will be at the Seniors Centre, 56 Francis Street.

At regular meetings refreshments are available; a small donation is appreciated.

Two annual events are held celebrating Canada's First Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald (1815—1891): a formal dinner on the Saturday closest to January 11th honouring his birth, and a service on June 6th at the Catarqui Cemetery National Historic Site commemorating his death.

NEW MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

Membership includes an invitation to attend monthly meetings; nine issues of *Limelight*, delivered electronically or in hardcopy; and a copy of *Historic Kingston*, the KHS annual journal containing the substance of the papers delivered at the monthly meetings.

Membership also includes free admission to the Murney Tower, Kingston's oldest museum, and a discount at some of our sponsors' places of business.

Sponsors receive monthly advertising in *Limelight* and, it is hoped, the patronage of KHS members.

If you are interested in the advantages of being a sponsor, please speak to the president or to the membership chair.

MEMBERSHIP RATES

- \$50 Individual
- \$60 Institutional
- \$300 Sponsor
- \$60 Family
- \$25 Student

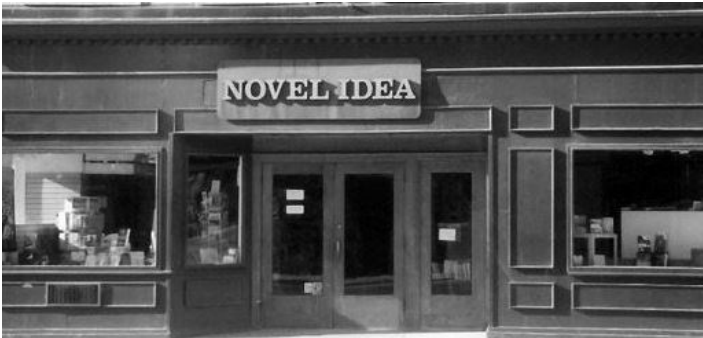
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STILL STANDING: Looking at Regional Architecture with Jennifer McKendry
Arising out of the ashes, surviving two fires and still standing proud:
Kingston City Hall National Historic Site

The first fire of 17 April 1840 was the result of the spread of a fire starting on the waterfront south of Clarence Street. Due to the storage of gunpowder in that area and its explosion during the fire, sparks flew violently over a wide distance and wiped out the market, commercial and residential buildings on the market square. The site needed to be filled and levelled in preparation for the erection of a new stone city hall and market or shambles. This was accomplished in 1843-44, and the shambles wing ran almost to King Street. It terminated in a large square end building surmounted by a belfry and clock.

For those Kingstonians who had watched the great fire of 1840, fear must have struck hard when fire broke out in the city hall itself on a cold Tuesday evening, 10 January 1865, at 8:30. While an audience attended a Shakespearian play in the main part of City Hall, someone slipped into the attached square building fronting King Street, and climbed up the dusty stairs in the darkened Printing Office to reach the unused upper room. There he started a fire. Flames were seen coming out of the windows and, suddenly, the fire's glare could be seen from much of the town. A crowd quickly gathered on Market Square and King Street.

The fire bell, located in the cupola at the apex of the square building, fell silent, as its rope quickly burnt through — it was located near the source of the fire. The No. 1 Engine Company responded and attached hoses to the nearby hydrants but the firemen were hampered by the fire concentrating in the upper area and spreading quickly.

Now the flames were spreading to the butchers' shambles — the connecting wing between the square building and the main building, which now looked threatened. In response to this danger, citizens rushed in and carried out furniture, records and books from the City Clerk's office, the City Council Chamber and other civic offices.

During the spread of the fire to the connecting wing, the heat was so intense that it cracked and broke the stone walls and, of course, destroyed all the contents such as the auctioneers' stock, the butchers' winter supply of salted pork and beef, and the hucksters' vegetables stored in the cellar. Many workers suffered not only great losses in such possessions but also the place where they worked. On the next day after the fire, there was nothing but the charred bare walls standing.

An investigation concluded that the fire was the work of an unknown incendiary. By the end of 1865, a new market wing was built more or less on the footprint of the original wing, which had connected the main city hall and end square building. The latter was not rebuilt, however, and is now the site of today's skating rink.

The last fire (*left*) was on 24 July 1908, when the dome clock was being repaired and a worker's solder set some wood shavings ablaze. Crowds gathered to watch "the magnificent sight" from the Market Square 120 feet below the top of the dome. Hoses were quickly connected to the building's fire service but the flames were below the clock works and inaccessible — especially at that height. At 3:30, the clock tolled out its own requiem with its last ring. The wood cupola fell 50 minutes later and the bell crashed down through the dome's centre. The market wing and main building survived, although the latter suffered considerable water damage. But, like a phoenix from the ashes, the city hall rose again with a new dome, cupola, bell and clock faces.



Five years ago, I saw an advertisement in *Kingston This Week* asking for people to volunteer as tour guides at City Hall. For the past five summers, every Wednesday afternoon, I have had the distinct pleasure of taking visitors from around the world on what amounts to a trip back in time while visiting Kingston's gem.

I begin the tour by introducing myself and welcoming guests in the three languages of the cultures chiefly responsible for the creation of the city of Kingston... Mohawk, French and English. We then begin the tour at the new Heritage Resource Centre, and it is there that we initiate our travel back in time to a geological era many thousands of years in the past. Moving ahead, we see the area as it existed when First Peoples came here, followed by the French in the 1600s, the British in the 1700s, and on up to more recent times when excavations revealed a plethora of items from the nineteenth century. I point out the arrival of the first Loyalists who established King's Town, and who went on to build a thriving community and who, in 1801, established the market. Time moves on as we learn about the disastrous fire which, in fact, led to the creation of the new Town Hall and the market.

I invite visitors to imagine peering through the windows in both the John Counter and Sir John A. Macdonald rooms in 1844 as they watch people walking a gravel path (on the same level as Ontario Street) to the market, and I explain that the entrance which we use today did not exist in 1844. Indeed, these "rooms" were the site of the actual entrances in 1844.

We progress up the stairs and enter Town Hall (1844) but which we now call Memorial Hall (1921). Time travellers can jump back and forth at will, you know!!!! The stunning stained glass windows parachute visitors back to the First World War, at a time when Canada was moving from being a dominion to a fully independent country.

Crossing the bridge which connects Memorial Hall to Ontario Hall, we move forward in time to the mid-nineteenth century when this part of the building was used to train women to become doctors, the first such college in Canada.

At the end of Ontario Hall are the Council chambers, moved there in 1973, a part of much work done at City Hall for Kingston's tercentenary. It is here that Chinese visitors voice their disbelief that Council meetings are not carried out behind closed doors, and that the general public is able to see and hear our elected representatives. It is here, too, that a brief lesson in Canadian history transports us first to 1812, and then to the 1830's to explain the significance of the Rideau Canal and Fort Henry. Often, some of our American neighbours express that they did not know that they had invaded Canada. Others are adamant that the US won the war and are dismayed to hear otherwise. The Shoal Tower moves us to 1845 and the Oregon Crisis, and the intention of the US to invade Canada once again. Again, news to some Americans. Our European visitors are intrigued by this part of Canadian and American history.

Ascending to the other floors, we move back to 1844 and then gaze out at the new skating rink constructed in the 21st century. However, I encourage visitors to imagine looking out these same windows in the mid-1800s when they would see many of the stone and brick buildings we see today. I ask them to imagine standing in this area in 1758 when the British gathered here to fire on Fort Frontenac; in 1812 when citizens were warned of an impending American attack; in 1865 when fire destroyed a large portion of the market wing, including the clock tower, and finally in 1867 when Kingstonians celebrated the creation of the Dominion of Canada.

As we move to the new clock tower, we are transported to 1908 when another fire destroyed that clock.

From here we descend by 21st century travel, i.e. the elevator, to the basement where we finish our tour by visiting the Royal Way and then the lock-up area. Here we are greeted first by the exhibit installed in 2015, before entering the holding cells where we jump back to the early days of City Hall.

Visitors never cease to be amazed at the harshness of that time, especially when dealing with children who, like their adult counterparts, could see themselves spending time in one of the dark, dank holding cells.



Don with tour-guides-in-training.

The tour finishes as we travel up in the building to the entrance, and forward in time to present-day Kingston.

While visitors are always treated to a rich history by guides, we too benefit from their stories and knowledge. One woman who worked as a textile museum curator gave her explanation as to why Sir John A. Macdonald's desk had synthetic leather for its top, the first such desktop in the world. On another occasion, a military historian from Washington, DC, informed us of the last time the Americans thought of attacking Kingston, and why they decided against such an attack. "There is enough firepower in Kingston to sink the entire US fleet. We will never take Kingston".

Kingston City Hall is an architectural and historic gem of which all Kingstonians should be very proud. I certainly am, and I take great delight in guiding visitors as they move through the building, and back and forth in time. Speaking of time, if you have not already done so, I encourage you to take the time to participate in a guided tour of City Hall. You will not be disappointed.

Don greets visitors from the Philippines and Singapore.



Murney Tower



This year Murney Tower branched out beyond its role as a museum and welcomed other community groups to utilize the tower space, helping to increase visitation and interest in the tower.

Improbable Escapes began running its escape room game at the beginning of the season. In this game players are locked into the bottom floor and must solve clues to get to the top level and defend the tower.

The *Cellar Door* project is a community theatre group that used the tower space for a play this summer. From July 26 to August 13, Murney Tower played host to *Stubborn Stone*, a play written by Kyle Holleran. The piece presents Salem Bland, a minister in Kingston in the nineteenth-century, who used the Tower as a place for reflection and escape. In the play, Rev. Bland explains to two Queen's students the importance of the preservation of history.

The staff have promoted the tower through social media. Facebook and Twitter were the main networks, but Instagram and Snapchat were also used. Partnership with *Improbable Escapes* and *Cellar Door* have helped boost social media coverage. *Cellar Door* mentioned the Tower every day on Twitter when the play was running.

Total attendance this season was 9156. This is an increase from last year of 3638. One reason for this was undoubtedly the K-Pass, an initiative run by the city this year. With this pass came free admission to many attractions in Kingston. It brought people into the Murney Tower who would possibly not have come otherwise. There were visitors from many countries. There were eleven booked group tours from schools and camps.

Murney Tower museum was lucky to have another great team this year. A warm thank you is also owed to volunteers, Robyn Currie and Hannah Watson.



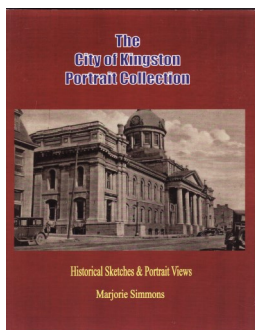
MTM 2016 interpreters Johanna Strong, left, Tim Romyn, 4th, and chief interpreter Sheila Williams, 6th, seen with Paul Mills, 5th, former interpreter and friends.

The KHS was delighted to find out at the end of the season that the newest equine member of the KPD will be named "Murney". In conjunction with the KPD, the museum intends to make Murney our mascot, and plan some events for next year which will illustrate that relationship.



Mounted Unit Cst. Deb Wicklam is pictured on Murney.

Book Sale!



The City of Kingston Portrait Collection by Marjorie Simmons. Published by the Kingston Historical Society, 2006, Paperback, 160 pages.

This publication provides a local history about a unique Canadian art collection which includes framed oil portraits of 65 former Mayors and other officials of the City of Kingston. The book includes photographic portrait-views and historical sketches of the portrait subjects.

Sale price until December 31, 2016: **\$10.00**. Regular price \$30.00. There is no shipping charge (\$8.00) if the book is picked up at the October 2016, November 2016, or January 2017 meetings of the Society.

Orders can be sent by mail to the Kingston Historical Society, P.O. Box 54, Kingston ON K7L 4V6 or e-mail: kingstonhs@gmail.com.

Speaker's Corner
By Lou Grimshaw



Interpreters wore period dress on June 15th when the City of Kingston celebrated First Capital Day and on June 18th, when the Murney Tower Museum participated in *Doors Open Kingston* (with 560 visitors attending) and again on Canada Day, this year celebrating the 149th anniversary of Confederation.



Johanna Strong and Sheila Williams

Murney Tower is very grateful to Eva Barns for making two wonderful new costumes. One will be available for guests to try on. The second will be worn by an interpreter. A jacket has also been acquired from Fort Henry for a male interpreter.

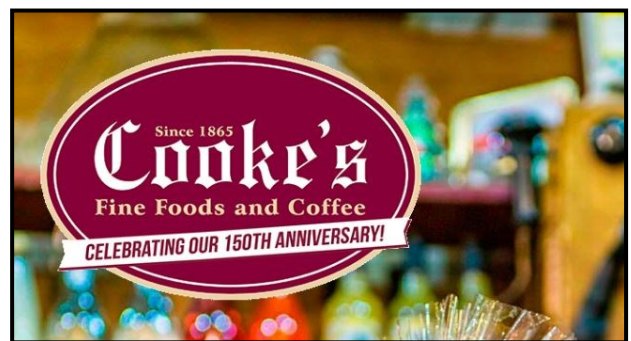
The General Meeting of the KHS on 21 September was again well-attended with many members and guests turning out to listen to Dr Marcus Letourneau, the KHS Vice-President, discussing *The Conservation Legacy of Ronald Way*. Drawing from the documentary sources across the country, Marcus emphasized the need to understand and appreciate the documentary record and his essay on Way was his contribution. Way became one of the few Canadian experts in his day on the restoration of historic sites and living history. Marcus traced his life and work from the 1930s through the 1940s and 1950s from his early association with the KHS and Murney Tower through the restoration of Fort Henry, creation of the Fort Henry Guard, the development of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission, and Upper Canada Village, through the restoration of Fortress Louisbourg. Marcus argued that Way's contributions were profound and that he was indeed "the father of historical restoration in Canada".

We are still looking for interesting speakers and papers for the spring 2017 season. Anyone with a suggestion please speak to the President with full contact details for the prospective speaker.

Upcoming Papers:

19 October: Lt Col Arthur Jordan - "The Hill 70 Memorial Project"

16 November: Thomas Sylvester - "My Perspective on the Oldest Kingston House"



A week after I left the Penitentiary Service I had applied and was accepted for a position with the Ontario Division of the National Parole Board, and was involved in getting a new office up and running.

When an inmate reaches his or her Statutory Release date, then release is Mandatory and not a Board decision. The NPB's role is defined by the Parole Act which lays out the regulations regarding decisions about other types of release.

Under the new system, with an office of the NPB in every province in Canada, it became possible for every inmate wishing to apply for some form of release to have an interview with Board Members - the number varying with respect to the type and seriousness of the offence. The inmate and his or her lawyer, if a lawyer is requested, would be given a package with all of the information the Board would be reviewing.

The Penitentiary provides the room in which the hearings are held, and a secretary if required, although most of the time there would be adequate NPB staff in attendance.

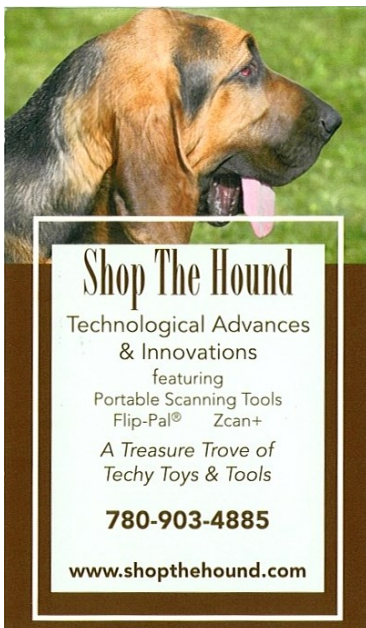
Each inmate has a Classification Officer who, when a release application is to be made, reviews all the file information and works to create a programme that will fit the inmate to be successful should release be granted. A programme would most likely involve reports from the psychologist if there are signs of an inability to control anger, a psychiatrist if there are mental issues, and would certainly include input from the inmate's work supervisor, and from the school department should the inmate be hoping to obtain high school equivalence. As well as collecting these reports the Classification Officer would write a personal report and make a recommendation of a supportive nature, or otherwise. A plan is made by the classification officer along with the prison staff, identifying a suitable place for the parolee to live (in many cases a half-way house) and the parole officer to be assigned. Of course there is liaison with the parole service as they will be receiving the parolee, but the majority of the programme planning is done in house. The main objective is to assist the inmate to live an offence-free future.

During the interview the Board Members are assessing the inmate as well as the records.

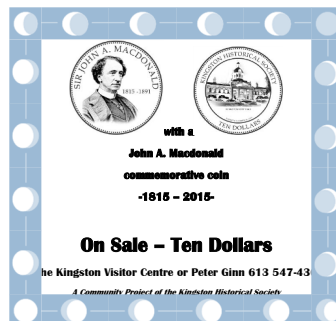
At the end of the review the applicant receives, in writing, the recommendation of the Board to allow or deny parole, and the reasons supporting its decision. The applicant is free to make public the results of the review, through his advocate or on his own.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the efforts by many people that resulted in the amending of the Privacy Act allowing Victims and/or their families to attend hearings and provide a Victim Impact Statement - written or spoken, whichever they preferred. That VIS would then become part of the documentation reviewed at the hearing. A member of the Parole Board Staff would meet with the Victim and/or their family prior to the hearing and outline the process. It was often the case that a post-hearing meeting would be needed for purposes of clarification, as there is often so much emotion involved.

I hope that this article has provided the reader with some clarification with respect to the CJS from the perspective of a person who lived it for thirty-four years and who would not, incidentally, have spent her time anywhere else.



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Sir John A. Macdonald 17th Annual Birthday Celebration



The guest speaker for this year's SJA Birthday Dinner is our Mayor, Mr. Bryan Paterson. Our event will be held on Saturday, January 14, 2017. Mayor Paterson will be speaking about SJA's early years..."Sir John A. as an alderman and local politician before he became Prime Minister."

The dinner will take place at the Senior Staff Mess at the Royal Military College. We would ask that you gather in the mess at 6:00 pm with the dinner commencing at 7:00 pm.

Please share this date with KHS members and friends.

The registration form will be in next month's edition of Limelight. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact Anne Richardson at: richanne@hotmail.ca