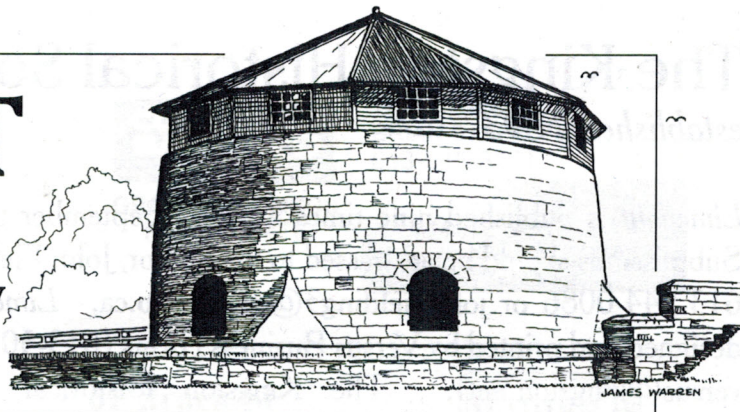


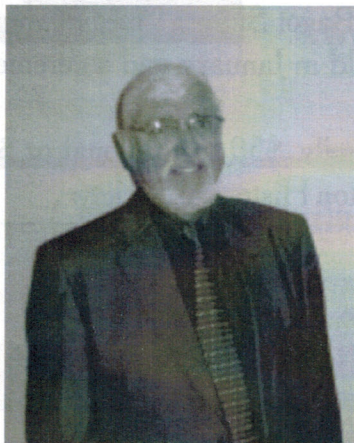
# LIMELIGHT

Newsletter of the  
Kingston Historical Society

vol 13 no 2 February 2011 ISSN 1488-5565



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



January 11, 2011, was a wonderful day for Kingston as many celebrated the 196th anniversary of Sir John A Macdonald's birth in a variety of fashion. First there was the production of two brews by the Kingston Brewing Company: "Sir John 'Eh' Scotch Ale" and "Little Shawinigan Lager". The first for Sir John and the second for Jean Chretien who also was born on January 11. At noon many gathered at the statue of Sir John for toasts, words of praise and thanks to the 'Old Chieftain'. In the afternoon Bellevue House celebrated not only with the cutting of a birthday cake but also a reading by Roderick Benns from his new novel *The Legends of Lake on the Mountain: An Early Adventure of John A Macdonald*. For many of our members the celebration ended at the Senior Officer's Mess of RMC with our traditional banquet, toasts and guest speaker. There is more about this later in the newsletter.

On Wednesday, February 16, our Annual General Meeting will take place where we shall report on our past year's activities and also elect our new Executive and Council.

As in past years we shall also have a silent auction. If you have any items of historic interest, postcards, art work, books or unwanted artefacts and want to donate them, please contact Douglas Petty at 613-546-0422 on or before February 12. Yes, income tax receipts will be provided.

This is my last President's message as my term ends in February. The past two years have been an enjoyable, informative and educational ride. I have had the good fortune to be surrounded by an enthusiastic, committed and knowledgeable group in the KHS Council for the past two years. I thank you, the membership, and them for assisting and guiding me during my tenure. I urge you to give the new Council your full support as you have in the past. Our monthly and annual events will be continued by your new Council as well as entering into organizing a symposium on the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 and preparing to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Sir John. Your support and most definitely your involvement and participation in these endeavours will ensure that the Kingston Historical Society continues to be a vigorous and vibrant organization which you have come to expect.

*Alan MacLachlan*

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### THIS MONTH'S MEETING

**Wednesday, 16 February, 7:30 PM**

### Annual General Meeting

Wilson Room, Kingston Frontenac Public Library  
Johnson St. at Bagot

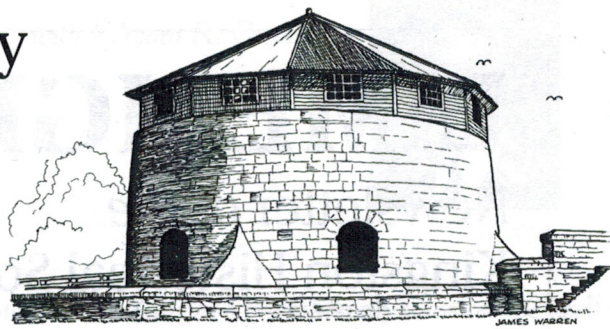
Refreshments

All Welcome

# The Kingston Historical Society

established 1893

*Limelight* is published nine times a year - September to May. Submissions should be addressed to the Editor, John Fielding at 613-544-0086 or john.fielding3@sympatico.ca. *Limelight* is designed and printed by Versus Business Forms (613-507-7667 versus@kingston.net). The Kingston Historical Society



Murney Tower by James Warren

(KHS) gratefully acknowledges the support of our sponsors in the production of *Limelight*.

KHS holds monthly talks or events, usually at 7:30 pm on the third Wednesday of the month, September to May, usually in the Wilson Room of the Kingston Public Library on Johnson Street at Bagot Street. Special annual events include a dinner and talk honouring the birthday of Sir John A. Macdonald in January and a ceremony marking his death in June.

**New members are welcome!** Membership rates are \$40 individual, \$50 family, \$50 institutional or \$25 student. Memberships include *Historic Kingston*, published annually by The Kingston Historical Society.

## Kingston Historical Society

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

## Executive

Alan MacLachlan, *President*

Edward Grenda, *Past President*

Gordon Sinclair, *Vice President*

Ted Huber, *Secretary*

John Whiteley, *Treasurer*

## Councillors

Alicia Boutilier

Cheryl DesRoches

Dorothy Farr

Peter Ginn

Jeremy Heil

Ross McKenzie

Douglas Petty

Hazel Fotheringham, *Editor, Historic Kingston*  
Warren Everett, *Chair, Murney Tower Committee*  
John Fielding, *Editor, Limelight*

## Getting it right!

In my haste to prepare last month's *Limelight* I typed in "Stuart Renfrew" as the author of the delightful story, *Treasure at Collins Bay*, instead of **Stewart Renfrew**. Stewart responded to my apology with, "It doesn't matter as long as the readers enjoyed the article". I was relieved and very appreciative of his understanding. Thanks, Stewart, and we look forward to more stories from you. *The Editor*

## Announcement of Historical Interest

The Kingston Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society will meet in the Wilson Room of Kingston Frontenac Public Library, 130 Johnson St., Saturday, February 19, 2011 at 10 a.m. "Restoring Old Monuments: How Art Conservators Use Reflectance Transformation Imaging to Read Degraded Surfaces". Visitors are welcome. For further info, visit our website [www.ogs.on.ca/kingston](http://www.ogs.on.ca/kingston).

## Trumpour Family Donation To The Society

Following the recent death of former Society President, Isabel Trumpour, the Trumpour family invited Edward Grenda and Bill Fittell to look over the book and journal collection, previously owned by Mrs. Trumpour, with a view to having them donated to the Kingston Historical Society. The books and journals were collected during the Christmas holiday period and delivered them to the Society's room at the Queen's University Archives. The book collection was comparatively small but the collection of Society journals ("Historic Kingston") were quite extensive (from the 1950s to the 2000s). Also, Mr. Mark Trumpour, son of Mrs. Trumpour, sent by mail a file containing newspaper clippings of the 1965 Sir John A. Macdonald Birthday Celebration. These are all valuable additions to the Society's collection of books, journals, and documents. The Society is most grateful for these generous donations and thanks the Trumpour family for them and also for thinking of the Society in this context.

# GREAT CATARAQUI TRAIL UPDATE: JANUARY 2011

Prepared by Mary and Edward Farrar

This trail has been thought about for at least 26 years. Phil Quattrocci dreamed about it 25 years ago but when he died, the vision died with him. Phil saw the trail as a huge asset to the North End, providing North Enders with access to the waterway.

We see the northern portion of our proposed trail (from John Counter Blvd. north to Kingston Mills Road) as important for the following reasons:

- 1) The residents of the North End deserve access to the waterway.
- 2) At or near the Outer Station's Aboriginal archaeological site, we propose some sort of Interpretive Centre to both house the artifacts as well as serve to celebrate Kingston's Native heritage, both past and present..
- 3) A trail along the edge of the wetland would be a wonderful educational opportunity for students and residents of the North End as well as all the residents of Kingston and the tourists.
- 4) A trail here would be of great use to Kingston Fire Fighters who, on occasion, have to deal with fires in the marsh.
- 5) This is a terrific opportunity for seniors, university and college students, Rotary members, 4H members, Guides and Scouts etc. to get involved in the creation of a valued community asset. A price cannot be put on the value of community involvement.
- 6) Although this portion of the trail would be more expensive, the Gananoque Trails group managed to decrease the cost of their trail by 65% through the appropriate application for government funds. We could do the same.

Some of the heritage aspects along the trail include:

- 1) The Fort Frontenac ruins near the K Rock Centre.
- 2) The old Bajus Brewery, now a condominium,
- 3) The old stone Queen City Oil Company, a designated "Heritage" building at the corners of Wellington and what was North Street.
- 4) The location of the old railway and turnabout in Doug Fluhrer Park. Homage to Sir John A. and his vision of Canada!
- 5) The wreck on the shore SE of the Woolen Mill, the only metal wreck of 14 in the Inner Harbour.
- 6) The Woolen Mill/Cotton Mill, a major employer in the 1870s and 1880s, beautifully redone with a cafeteria and an upscale restaurant.
- 7) Molly Brant Point near the Woolen Mill where Molly Brant lived.
- 8) The sites of the old smelting companies: the Buffalo Ontario Smelting Company and the North American Smelting Company with their interesting histories of pollution and clean-up.
- 9) The section of the old railway line parallel to Rideau St. extending from River St. to Belle Park. Again homage to Sir John A!
- 10) The Davis Tannery site with its history of pollution and clean-up.
- 11) Belle Park, its history as a landfill, and the efforts to deal with pollution there.
- 12) Belle Island, with both a Point Peninsula Native site (possibly ca. 1000 B.C.) as well as a Woodland burial site and the site of a Recollet mission during the time of Count Frontenac. Belle Island is officially off limits for trail development but still an interesting and beautiful walk.
- 13) The "Outer Station" archaeological site on the waterfront ca/ 200 m north of John Counter Blvd. used in the past for hunting and fishing by five different First Nations.
- 14) The islands in the wetland near the 401 that were lived on by three brothers who were trappers and who all came to sad deaths. A wonderful vignette of "Swamp Ward" oral history.
- 15) "Maplehurst", the residence of Thomas Burrowes, clerk for the lower section of the Rideau Waterway. This beautiful old stone house near Kingston Mills Locks could, many years hence, serve as a museum celebrating the life and water colour paintings of Burrowes whose paintings are currently buried in Archives Ontario.

This thumbnail listing of some of the interesting historical features along our proposed trail shows how our trail would truly be a "Heritage" trail, offering an opportunity to celebrate Kingston's Aboriginal presence both past and present, Count Frontenac and the French history, Sir John A's railway vision, the Industrial History (as well as the present industries including Metalcraft Marine, the Woolen Mill and the Dye Company). There may well be more heritage features we have not yet discovered.

The next step is our first "Working Group" meeting with City Staff and a small group of interested individuals on 25 January where we will begin to discuss the feasibility of our proposed trail. When the study has been completed sometime in the spring, a report will be presented to City Council.

# Celebrating Sir John A Macdonald's Birthday on



*Citizens of all stripes gathered at Sir John A's statue at City Park at 12:00 noon to begin a day of celebration.*



*A school choir added their of this significant day and*



*As has become the fashion on this occasion a number of our members who share Sir John's Scottish heritage came appropriately attired. Here we have Vice President Gordon Sinclair and Piper Douglas Green.*



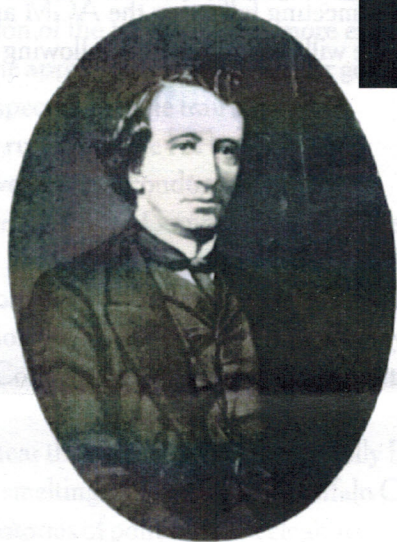
*There was time for relaxed conversation before the excellent dinner was served at the Senior Staff Mess of the Royal Military College. Here our guest for the evening, Graham Fraser, chats with John Meisel, Queen's professor emeritus.*

# January 11th

Photos by Peter Ginn and Jennifer McKendry  
with captions by John Fielding



...ing voices in recognition  
...asion in Canada's history.



Our speaker for the evening was Mr. Graham Fraser,  
Commissioner of Official Languages who spoke on  
"Treat them as a nation":  
Sir John A and the French fact in Canada.



Those who couldn't hide their "other than Scottish  
heritage" came in their best formal wear. Despite his not  
being Scottish, Alison Ginn spoke with your editor John  
Fielding.

Sir John A made an appearance in the person of Brian Porter.  
The story is that Sir John A was not a man for the kilt – he  
was a true Canadian by his own declaration.



# Annual General Meeting

On **Wednesday, February 16, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.** in the Wilson Room of the Kingston Frontenac Public Library (130 Johnson Street, Kingston), the Kingston Historical Society will be holding its Annual General Meeting. The Nominations Committee of the Society will present the following slate of candidates to the Society's membership.

## **Executive:**

President: Gordon Sinclair  
Vice-President: Peter Gower  
Secretary: Ted Huber  
Treasurer: John Whiteley  
Past President: Alan MacLachlan

## **Council:**

Doug Petty  
Peter Ginn  
Jeremy Heil  
Ross McKenzie  
Dorothy Farr  
(Vacancy – to be filled later by Council)

The Society's constitution requires that the newly elected Council at its first meeting following the AGM appoint to the Council three persons who will hold specific positions. The Nominations Committee will recommend the following individuals who have agreed to serve in the following positions:

Editor of "Historic Kingston": Hazel Fotheringham  
Editor of "Limelight" (newsletter): John Fielding  
Chair of Murney Tower NHS Committee: Warren Everett

The Nominations Committee will recommend that the following serve as chairs of the Society's committees:

Awards: Peter Ginn  
Programme: Alicia Boutillier  
Finance: Warren Everett  
Membership: Ross McKenzie  
Website: Jeremy Heil  
Jan. 11 event: Warren Everett  
June 6 event: Alan MacLachlan

The Council will later appoint chairs of the Grants and Publicity Committees, positions that the Nominations Committee were unable to fill prior to the AGM.

Society members who wish to serve on any of the aforementioned committees are encouraged to do so by contacting an Executive member.

Any member of the Society who is in good standing may nominate any other Society member in good standing for any office. Incumbents may be nominated for an additional term, and nominations may be submitted for any of the positions to be filled. Members who wish to nominate a candidate for any position on the Executive or Council may do so from the floor at the Society's AGM by first submitting a written nomination to Edward Grenda (Chair, Nominations Committee) 65 Gilmour Avenue, Kingston, Ontario K7M 1S1 or by handing them to any member of the current Executive or Council prior to February 9, 2011. Nominators must confirm that the nominee is willing to stand for election and serve on the Council.

Edward R. Grenda

*Edward R. Grenda*

Past President and Chair of the Nominations Committee

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## Speakers' Corner

with Edward R. Grenda

### "Kingston's Wartime Shipbuilding Industry. 1939-1945: An Update."

*Presented by Professor James Pritchard*



During its long history, Kingston has markedly transformed itself on several key occasions. Initially, it was an entrepot during the fur trade and exploration era. Then it became a trans-shipment point from the continent's interior to the Atlantic. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it became a thriving industrial centre with its locomotive works and shipbuilding endeavours. Today, Kingston is principally a service town, an institutional town focusing on education, the military, and health services. Professor Pritchard turned his analytical attention to Kingston's shipbuilding industry during World War II, an era which he styles on the "glory days" of shipbuilding in Kingston.

At the outset, Professor Pritchard noted that the records of Kingston's early shipbuilding prowess are somewhat incomplete.

Indeed, even the Canadian Navy's account is not all that accurate in regard to navy ships built in Kingston.

As a general gloss, Kingston was well served by the wartime shipbuilding boom. The Shipyards built nine corvettes and forty other ships and marine craft. The yards employed approximately 1000 men. There were substantial achievements during a compressed period in Kingston's history. Interestingly, Kingston had one of the smallest shipyards in Canada compared to those located on the Pacific Atlantic coasts and the Great Lakes region. Nonetheless, the shipyards contributed to Kingston's wartime economy. Shipbuilding in Kingston peaked in July 1943.

When World War II broke out, the shipbuilding industry in Kingston was in the doldrums. Very few ships were built during the 1920s and 1930s. Indeed, one of the major shipbuilding companies in Kinston, Canadian Shipbuilding Company (the other being Canadian Dredge and Dock) had not built a ship fifteen years prior to 1940.

Once contracts had been secured with the Canadian Navy, the two aforementioned companies began an unprecedented, highly intensive building program that lasted, surprisingly, only five years in total. The focal point was the construction of corvettes. These were relatively small simple ships whose maximum speed was 16 knots on 280 tons of fuel. They were never intended for operations in the high seas. A number of the corvettes built in Kingston were appropriately names after cities and areas in Eastern Ontario: HMCS Frontenac, HMCS Trentonian, HMCS Peterborough, HMCS Belleville, and HMCS Smiths Falls. The latter was the last corvette build in Kingston in August 1944, the first notably being HMCS Napanee in August 1940.

On more than one occasion during the war, scarcity of materials slowed down ship construction; one of the unsavory consequences of this was that local shipbuilders were invariably laid off until materials became available.

A notable socio-economic element during the Kingston shipbuilding campaign was the age profile of the shipyard works. The bulk of the labourers were teenagers roughly between 15 and 19 years of age. What is more, many of the young labourers had dependents at home. Given current concerns and commercial tendencies, it is highly improbable that a shipbuilding endeavour such as the one Kingston experienced during World War II will ever occur again.

Former Society President, Major Lou Grimshaw presented Professor Pritchard with a Society pin and thanked him on behalf of the Society.

