

Limelight

Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

Kingston Ontario Canada

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THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY *Established 1893*

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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.

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Marc Shaw

Membership: Paul Van Nest:

Paul Van Nest

pvan nest@cogeco.ca

John Whiteley

MAILING ADDRESS:

Kingston Historical Society P.O. Box 54, Kingston K7L 4V6
kingstonhs@gmail.com www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca

Announcements, About Us	1	President's Message	2
Sir John A. Dinner	3,4,5	Speaker's Corner	6
Murney Tower	6,7,8	Our Sponsors	8

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

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS of Historical Interest

KHS Meeting

Seniors Centre 56 Francis St

Wednesday, February 21, 2018

Annual General Meeting

Speaker: Jean Rae Baxter

"Freedom Bound: The Story of the Black Loyalists"

The Kingston Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society will meet on Saturday, February 17th at 10 a.m. at the Kingston Seniors Centre, [56 Francis St.](http://www.kingston.ogs.on.ca) Annual General Meeting and our 45th Anniversary. Slide show of photographs, scrap-books and history of the Branch with anniversary cake plus a small silent auction. Visitors always welcome. Further details at www.kingston.ogs.on.ca

CEMETERY CELEBRATION WEEKEND

AT CATARAQUI UNITED CHURCH

965 SYDENHAM RD., KINGSTON ON
YOU ARE INVITED - SAVE THE DATES!

Sat. June 9th: - time to explore the cemetery
 - opportunities to find family grave sites and give them some TLC
 - information about how to clean headstones
 - learning about the ongoing restoration work to the cemetery at Cataraqui
 - information about local history
 - stories and music from the early days of the United Empire Loyalists and the Wesleyan church at Cataraqui
 - people available on site who can take your requests for record searches to help with genealogies

Sun. June 10th: The Sunday service will feature stories of the people who came to Cataraqui as United Empire Loyalists and the Methodist church on the hill as well as music from over the years since 1784 at Cataraqui

For those of you who were unable to attend, the annual Sir John A. Macdonald dinner was one of the best in memory! It was also an opportunity for us to reflect upon the anniversary of the Society as well as the key role historical societies play in facilitating critical discussion and debate. By special request, the following section has been excerpted verbatim from my speech at the dinner.



This year is a very special year for not only the Kingston Historical Society, but also for Kingston's heritage community as well. This is not only the Society's 125th Anniversary, but also is the 60th anniversary of the City of Kingston's heritage committee (which was formed in 1958).

The fortunes of the Kingston Historical Society have waxed and waned over the last 125 years. At one point, the contribution of the Society during the 1930s and 1940s was described as being limited to running the Murney Tower and holding a few poorly attended lectures; at another point in the 1960s, the Society had over 600 members. But notwithstanding the particular circumstances the Society has remained as heritage leader in Kingston. The Society has supported presentations, publications, specific events such as tonight's dinner, publishing society lectures, collaborations with the City, Queen's and other organizations, and running the Murney Tower Museum NHSC. Early in the history of the Society, at its earliest meetings, it argued for the importance of documenting and conserving key heritage landmarks, publishing works on Kingston History, placing markers at key sites, and creating a City museum. Many of these same concerns echo to this day.

The Kingston Historical Society remains an organization dedicated to critical thought, research, and presentations about Kingston's past. As an organization with a diverse membership, it is recognized there are often multiple opinions, perspectives, and understandings about particular past events and people. And as an organization that supports dialogue, we welcome rigorous discussion and debate about those events and people. We understand that the past has contributed to who we are today – as a nation, as a province, as a community, as an organization, and as individuals – and provides a foundation for the future. We also know we cannot change the past, but can work to better understand and elucidate it.

The Society is currently exploring how it can host (or cohost) several special events this year! Details will be forthcoming.

This month, the Kingston heritage community lost an early leader. George Muirhead, past planning director and Order of Canada winner, passed on January 11 in his 102nd year. The following link to his obituary provides a wonderful statement about his remarkable life.

<http://yourlifemoments.ca/sitepages/obituary.asp?oid=1060205>

See also the article about George in the Kingston Whig Standard.

<http://www.thewhig.com/2018/01/18/muirhead-helped-modernize-kingston>

And a video of him speaking to Global News.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/3966653/george-muirhead-kingston-heritage-visionary-passes-away-at-101/>

Lastly, a reminder that our February meeting will be our annual AGM. Special for this year, the AGM will also feature a guest speaker. I hope you can all attend!

We note with regret the death of KHS Member Carl Croy in March 2017, of former KHS Treasurer Randall Levi in December 2017, and of KHS Life Member William Morley in December 2017.

KHS 125th Anniversary Cake

Photo by Anne Richardson



Oyez Oyez Oyez

My lords Ladies and Gentlemen:

FEW CANADIAN POLITICIANS have had such an impact on Canada as did Sir John A. Macdonald, the architect and father of Confederation and the first Prime Minister of Canada.

We gather tonight in this, the 125th Anniversary year of the Kingston Historical Society, an added special significance to this annual Sir John A. dinner, to recognize a noble Kingstonian, Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's first and founding Prime Minister, born on January 11 in 1815.

His greatest achievements were many but include: the confederation of the colonies of the United Provinces of Canada in 1867 and the creation of a transcontinental nation in 1871 with the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, just to name a few. When Macdonald died in 1891 the foundation for the nation had been well laid.

No Canadian Prime Minister is as closely associated with a Canadian community as Sir John A. Macdonald is with Kingston, now recognized and lauded as Canada's first capital city and a world heritage destination.

To all, welcome to this special celebration not only of Sir John but of 125 years of creating, fostering and maintaining the interest in the history and heritage of the City of Kingston and area.

The Kingston Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.



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 Cataraqui Cemetery National Historic Site commemorating his death.

Sir John A. Macdonald Dinner & 125th KHS Anniversary Celebration



Town Crier Chris Whyman

Photo Anne Richardson

Sir John A. Macdonald Birthday Dinner

by Anne Richardson



Pianist John Hall Jack Barnes looks on

Photo by Eva Barnes



Relatives of Sir John A Macdonald, Laurie Keefe and Sandra Stevenson.

Photo by Joe Brites



Piper Doug Green

Photo by Joe Brites



Eva Barnes, Alison Ginn, and Graeme Watson in period costume

Photo by Joe Brites



JAM Dinner Chair Anne Richardson and KHS Secretary Don Richardson

Guests at the 2018 Celebration of the 203rd birthday of Sir John A Macdonald and the 125th anniversary of the Kingston Historical Society

Photo by Joe Brites





Guest Speaker Mayor Bryan Paterson and KHS President Marcus Létourneau prepare to cut the cake.



Murney Tower Curator Danielle Marshall with Town Crier Chris Whyman and Nancy Hazell. Photo by Joe Brites

Sir John A. Macdonald Dinner & 125th KHS Anniversary Celebration By Anne Richardson

On the evening of Saturday, January 13, 2018, members of the Kingston Historical Society and guests came together at the Senior Staff Mess on the grounds of RMC. We had a delightful reception in the lounge where everyone could talk and mingle accompanied by the music of John Hall on piano.

Along with all in their finery, it was lovely to see those dressed in period costume.

Once again we were fortunate to have Mr. Doug Green as our piper. Doug has been a mainstay of our dinner for many years and his piping definitely adds a touch of heritage and ceremony to our evening.

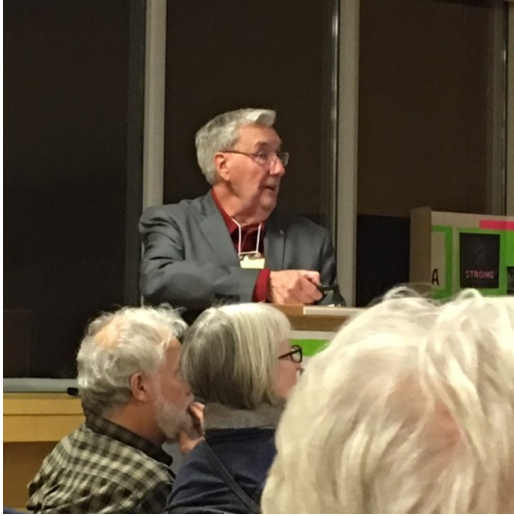
Doug led the way for the head table as he piped them into the dining room. Our head table this year consisted of Mr. Chris Whyman, Kingston's official town crier, his partner Ms. Nancy Hazell, Mayor Bryan Paterson, our guest speaker, his wife Shyla, Mr. Marcus Letourneau, KHS President, and Don and Anne Richardson (event organizer). Marcus made everyone feel welcome with his opening remarks and recognized that we were hosting not only the Sir John A. dinner but also celebrating the 125th anniversary of the KHS.

Chris Whyman, as part of the opening, gave us a rousing proclamation. Chris always adds quite a bit of flair to any event and he certainly did not disappoint guests.

We enjoyed a delicious dinner served by the Senior Staff Mess staff in a very professional manner. After dinner in the mess, we adjourned to the lounge to watch the ceremonial cutting of the 125th anniversary cake, and have a group photo taken by Joe Brites. The official cake cutting ceremony was carried out by Marcus Letourneau and Mayor Paterson, using a period sword from the Murney Tower. While Alan MacLachlan introduced our guest speaker, we enjoyed our cake and beverages.

Our guest speaker was His Worship Mayor Bryan Paterson who spoke to us about Sir John's early years in political life. The title of his speech was **Crisis, Controversy and Opportunity: Sir John A. Macdonald as Kingston Alderman, 1843-1846**. Mayor Paterson is a very engaging and accomplished speaker, and he provided us with a most interesting and highly informative perspective on Sir John. Past President Peter Gower then thanked the mayor for his speech.

Marcus Letourneau finished the event by thanking everyone for their attendance and expressing his hope that we would all be there again next year.



Our speaker, Paul Van Nest

On Wednesday, January 17, 2018, a large group gathered to hear Paul Van Nest speak on “The Impact of the United States on Canada’s Confederation”. In under an hour Paul gave a thorough review of 200 years of political developments as they occurred in parallel on both sides of what became the Canada-US border, and which culminated in Confederation in 1867. Paul paid particular attention to the events and tensions of the US Civil War, and built a convincing case that Confederation owed as much to our American cousins as it did to domestic pressures. Paul is a passionate Civil War buff who has led 61 battle-field tours, and his expertise

in this area was on full display. Throughout his talk, Paul was able to draw comparisons between events at that time and in our own day, showing that some things never change.



Murney Tower

Operated by the Kingston Historical Society

This past summer, Murney Tower Museum hosted a new travelling exhibit in one of the alcoves on the main level. Kingston’s Scout Museum supplied 2 display cases of artefacts, one containing significant neckerchiefs from the Scouts while the other contained a variety of historical uniforms from the 1940s to the 1990s. These displays garnered much attention and many positive comments from visitors, of whom many reminisced on their own Scouting days. We hope to continue to host visiting exhibits over future summers.

As part of the Canada 150th Celebrations, the Tower decided to get festive this holiday season by putting wreathes and lights in the windows. They were a great addition and brightened up those dark winter nights!

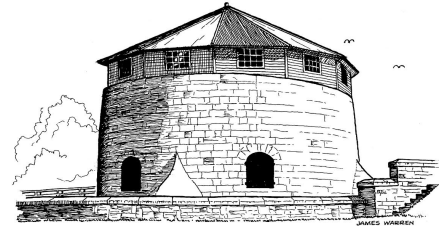


Murney Tower



**Curator Danielle Marshall at the October 2017
Bring Your Thing Event**

At the end of the 2017 Operating Season, with monies from the City of Kingston Heritage Fund, Murney Tower hired a Contract Curator – Danielle Marshall.



Danielle has a Master's Degree in Museum Studies, from Bournemouth University, Bournemouth, UK and over 9 years of museum and art gallery experience.

One of the major ongoing tasks Danielle has undertaken is the reorganization of the Heritage Room. at Queen's Archives. The Heritage Room is where the Society keeps its archival records. The room is also the storage area for the museum's

collection. The reorganization has been done in stages with the help of interns and a volunteer, Charmaine Martel. The reorganization process is an important one for a number of reasons: it provides ease of access to objects; it will be easier to monitor the state of objects; and it gives a great opportunity to do a complete collection inventory.

Stage 1 – Items were moved to create more floor space and reorganize the shelving units. An old cabinet was repurposed to hold object boxes.

Stage 2 – Included getting rid of two filing cabinets that were taking up wall and floor space. With the floor space now available, two new shelving units were installed. The boxes that were on the old shelving units were moved to the new ones. The old shelving units will be used to store items that are too large for boxes. Conservation supplies have been ordered and will be used to help keep the objects in display condition.

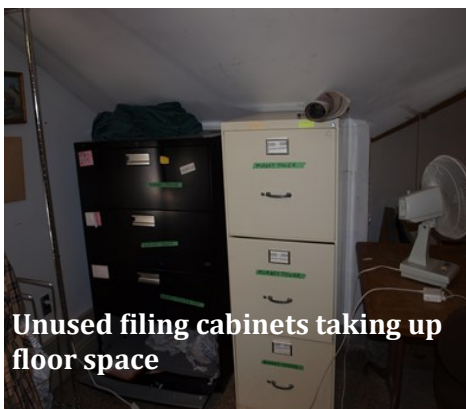
Stage 3 – Will include addressing any conservation needs of the collection using the supplies ordered to ensure proper storage and care.



Filing cabinets being recycled



**After Stage 1 of the reorganization,
and after Stage 2, below**



**Unused filing cabinets taking up
floor space**



New shelving units in place



Murney Tower



Storage boxes in new location

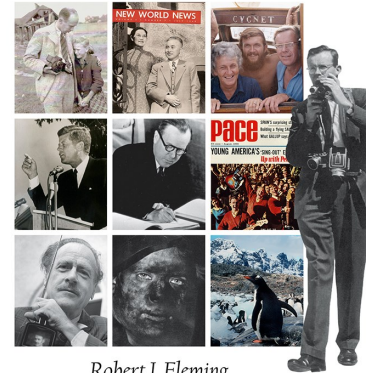


Volunteer Charmaine Martel and Danielle Marshall, Murney Tower Curator, putting away the last box.

A New Book
by KHS member
Robert J. Fleming

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Robert J. Fleming

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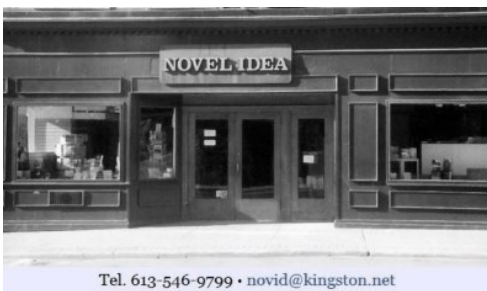
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