

LIMELIGHT

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NEWSLETTER OF THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT


When I was elected President at last month's AGM, I was very aware of the significance of the role I am about to perform. Those words in our newsletter masthead, "Established 1893" are quite intimidating, as is the fact that our journal, *Historic Kingston*, will be celebrating 50 years of continuous publication in 2002. This being said, I must admit to being bolstered by the best wishes of the membership, and especially those of the five Past-Presidents who were present that night and who are pictured below.



But that's looking to the past. If we are to continue to function as a vital presence in our community we must address our objectives:

- ♦ To sustain the culture of KHS that has made it such a meaningful organization for its long-standing members over its 104 year history.
- ♦ To attract new members from the community who are interested in being involved with the heritage of our community, region, and nation.
- ♦ To make KHS more attractive to newcomers by adding other activities to our regular programme of learned talks.
- ♦ And, finally, given the dynamic times in which we live, we must decide whether or not we are going to be a passive Society studying the past or whether we are going to be engaged actively in the planning, protection, and

nurturing of the heritage of our community.

These are some of the issues we should be considering in our third century as the Kingston Historical Society. What do you think? (Brian Osborne) 

OUR NEXT MEETING

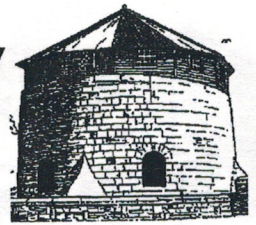
- Date:** Wednesday 20 March 2002
Place: The Wilson Room, Kingston Public Library
Time: 7.30 p.m.
Speaker: Mr. Jonathan Moore, Parks Canada
Title: "Another Look at the Fate of Kingston's Warships"

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KHS Web Site: <http://www.heritagekingston.org/khs>

AND ONE FROM THE EDITORS...

For those of us who are fascinated by the past, the journals, letters, and writings of the women and men who first travelled to, and lived in, Canada offer us a unique glimpse into the past. Across space and time, we hear voices telling stories about the everyday events of their lives.

On 1 March 1840, Anne Langton began her journal, "I hesitated today whether I should not postpone my journal until a more promising month." She explained to her brother William in Britain that "I very much fear two-thirds of it will be filled with comments on the weather" and mundane domestic affairs. We don't know whether William found Anne's subsequent entries for March as dull as she had feared. Langton told her brother – and us – of her problems with Bridget, her maid; surprise, albeit most welcome, visits from neighbours; candle-making; and, at the end of the month, a narrow escape when fire almost destroyed the house.

During her first year in Upper Canada, Catharine Parr Traill remarked on how pleased she was with the rapidity of the spring thaw, and went to considerable lengths to explain to her readers about "the art and mystery" of sugaring. In 1838, her sister, Susanna Moodie recorded her loneliness and anxiety as she waited for news of her husband, Dunbar, who was serving on the Niagara frontier defending the colony against invasion from south of the border.

But such letters and journals can be frustrating. Like all eavesdroppers, we don't hear all the conversation and rarely understand or appreciate to whom or what the writer is referring. The past only really comes alive when someone can place those snippets into their broader context. One example of this is the work of Charlotte Gray. Intrigued by the impact that two icons of Canadian history – Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill – have had on the contemporary literary scene, Gray wondered what these women were "really like." She found the answers in their letters and personal papers and *Sisters in the Wilderness*, (Viking, 1999) is the result. Highly entertaining and informative, *Sisters* is more than an account of the Strickland sisters' lives and experiences. It is also a story of emigration and settlement and of the development of the colony.

In *Sisters*, the readers are not just dropping in on isolated bits of conversation. It is as though we are part of it. And that's a sign of good writing -- and excellent history.



IN MEMORIAM: MARGARET ("PEGGY") M. COHOE

We were all saddened to hear of the death on 25 February 2002 of a long-standing, active, and vital member of the Kingston Historical Society, Margaret (Peggy) M. Cohoe. "Peggy" has left her mark in so many areas of the landscape of the Kingston community as teacher, librarian, genealogist, and historian. Two members of Kingston Historical Society share with us their memories of a respected colleague and friend.

Bill Fittell

Born in Australia, trained as teacher in England, Peggy Cohoe came to Canada in 1947 as war-bride with husband, Allan Cohoe. She established the first nursery schools in North Bay and Hamilton Mountain. On moving to Kingston, Peggy became the only teacher qualified to teach early childhood education at St. Lawrence College and, in 1998, she was awarded an Honourary diploma by this institution in recognition of her services there.

Peggy was also an active member of the Kingston Public Library Board, serving on the personnel and art acquisition committees and was one of the founding members of "The Friends of the Library." In all of these capacities, she never missed an opportunity to promote the library and in her inimitable style to "tell a story" or "leave a message." In appreciation of her unstinting volunteer service, a meeting room was named in her honour at the Calvin Park Branch Library.

Peggy was invaluable to me as a columnist. Always inquisitive and knowledgeable, she was a fountainhead of information about historic happenings and Kingston markers and monuments. She gave me considerable information for a paper on Kingston ice-rinks and the Cricket Field. A stalwart supporter of the Kingston Historical Society, Peggy presented several papers on a variety of topics and her presentation on the "Red Rose League" is enshrined in our annual grave-side commemoration of Sir John A. Macdonald.

Peggy Cohoe was a lamplighter, the consummate teacher and mentor, and community contributor. She will be sorely missed.

Gordon Smithson

Peggy was like an old friend to everyone from the first time they met. I'll always remember how she gave encouragement and inspiration to prospective genealogists starting the task of tracing their family lineages. Her "words of wisdom" as she usually put it, were down-to-earth and awakened a yearning to succeed in the members of the audience. Her next sentence might commence with, "*Maybe some of you still don't know what I'm talking about, and, if you don't, well, pay attention and I'll get you going in the right direction.*" Comments such as these would usually bring a smile and keep the attention of the audience focused on her informative notes.

Peggy was certainly interested in local history and over the years became an excellent resource person. If you had a question and she didn't have the answer, you could rest assured that a letter would arrive in your mailbox within the month solving your problem or else providing some information that would lead you to someone that could help you.

These are but a few of the many pleasant memories I have of Peggy Cohoe. We will miss her expertise, bright personality, and willing support.



SPEAKERS' CORNER

On 21 February 2002, the society was treated to an engaging experience with the Second Annual "Show and Tell" program. Started last year, its excellent reception prompted nine contributors to appear this year.

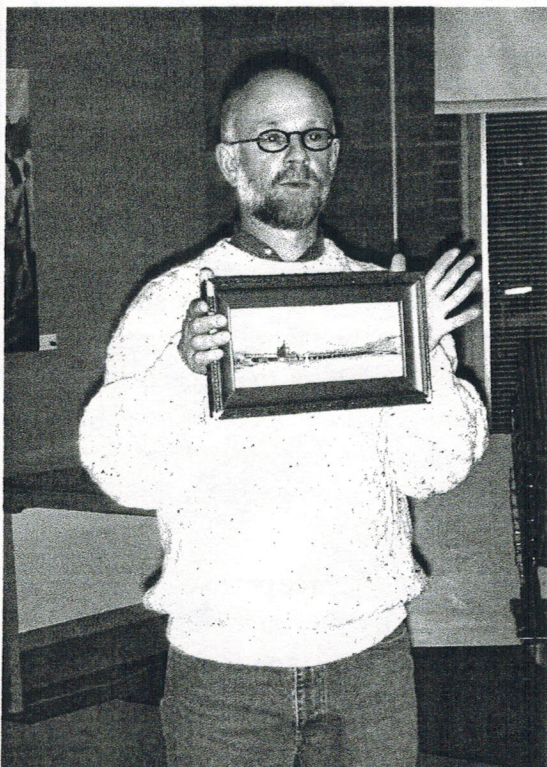
Gordon Bale discussed the enigmatic provenance of a molded relief bust of an elderly Sir John A. Macdonald. **Diane and John Fielding** each had offerings for the group. Diane had a photograph of the steam engine that carried the body of Sir John to Kingston. What increased the personal value of the artifact is that the engineer in the train was her grandfather. John delighted us with the photograph of his mother and grand parents. The intriguing aspect of this photograph was that his grandfather was overseas in World War I at the time of the photograph. Fearing that he would not return, he had had his image painted into the family grouping. **Doug Petty** brought several paintings of Kingston scenes dating from the turn of the century through to the 1940s.

He regaled us with stories about his fascinating discoveries. **Nan**

Yeomans brought in her pictorial history of Block D and gave a brief description of some of the highlights of the past year's developments with the property. **Jennifer McKendry** had two artifacts: one was the hairbrush from the Jenkins-Hatter firm in Kingston, which existed from the 1890s to the 1920s; the other was a nineteenth century bookmark from the Jameson-Cartwright family. **Lou Grimshaw** presented pre-Confederation Militia documents from several counties in eastern Ontario. **Bea Corbett** described a wonderful book on the Isle of Skye. **Isabel Trumpour**, as the final presenter, showed us an unusual artifact; a family carriage insignia.



Bea Corbett



Doug Petty

Following the presentations, over seventy visitors and members enjoyed refreshments as they inspected the artifacts and chatted with the presenters. We thank the members for sharing their treasures with us.

On 20 March, the KHS speaker will be Jonathan Moore who will present, "**Another Look at the Fate of Kingston's Warships.**" Fifty years ago, on 30 January 1952, Professor Richard Preston of the Royal Military College of Canada delivered a paper to the Kingston Historical Society entitled "The Fate of Kingston's Warships." Although the location and identity of the wreck of the **St. Lawrence** had never been in question, Preston was able to identify provisionally two old warships lying in Deadman Bay as the **Prince Regent** and **Montreal**. Jonathan Moore will recount the story of the exploration of these wrecks, then outline research conducted on these important archaeological sites in the fifty years since the publication of Preston's paper in the very first volume of **Historic Kingston**. He will also describe how our interpretation of the identities of the Deadman Bay wrecks has changed. This talk will be illustrated with slides, including underwater photographs. (Alan MacLachlan)

KHS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The KHS Annual General Meeting was held on 20 February 2002. The President and the Society's officers reported on the finances, memberships, activities, and general health of our organization for the year 2001. A slate of officers was elected for 2002. **Executive:** Brian Osborne (President), Warren Everett (Past-President), Carl Bray (Vice-President),



KHS Council 2002

Douglas Petty (General Secretary), Desmond O'Meara (Treasurer). **Council:** Lynda Cyr, Jack Pike, Barbara Snyder, Louis Grimshaw, Alan MacLachlan, Sarah Meharg, Robert Andrews. **Appointments:** Jane Errington (Editor, *Historic Kingston*), Brian Osborne (Editor, *Limelight*), Ed Grenda (Chair, Murney Tower Committee).

WEB SITINGS: THE ROYAL GOLDEN JUBILEE

Last month, Canada's Heritage Minister, Sheila Copps, launched a new web-site in connection with the Government's programme to commemorate H.M. Queen Elizabeth's Golden Jubilee. In her words,

The Queen has been by our side as a faithful witness to our successes and achievements. This great celebration will be an opportunity for us to celebrate together the extraordinary changes in our country, our culture and our identity over the past 50 years, and the achievements of our artists, our creative people, our scientists, our entrepreneurs, and all the women and men who have reshaped the face of Canada in the past half-century.

You may find this fine website at:

<http://www.goldenjubilee.gov.uk>



KINGSTON'S DAVID

Few would argue that the dominant ethnic celebration in Canada is St. Patrick's Day: on 17 March each year, everything including the complexion of many celebrants is green. But there's another ethnic celebration in March, albeit a quieter and less visible one: St. David's Day. On 1 March each year, Welsh men and women everywhere raise their glasses in the toast of the exiles: "The land of our birth, the land of our adoption."

While less numerous than their fellow Celts, the Welsh have also played their part in the history of Canada and Kingston. It would have been interesting – if time and schedules had allowed it – to have organized a St. David's Day dinner in Kingston in the 1790s. David ap Thomas (David Thompson, the famous explorer of the Canadian West), Elizabeth Posthuma Gwillim (the wife of Lieut. Governor Simcoe), and Augustus Jones (father of Peter Jones,

"Kahkewaguonaby," missionary to the Mississauga and translator of the scriptures into Ojibwa) could all have sat down to a meal of *cawl*, salmon, and lamb in some Kingston hostelry and compared notes.

But these fantasies aside, perhaps the best known resident of Kingston is "Dafydd" of Forth Henry. The history of the Royal Welch Fusiliers, the 23rd Regiment of Foot, records that "It has been the custom of this regiment, from time immemorial, to be preceded in all its marches and accompanied in all its parades by a mighty goat, the emblem of old Cambria, whose venerable beard and grave aspect might inspire the fanciful idea, under the old superstition of the transmutation of souls, of being a fitting dwelling place for the departed spirit of one of those ancient bards so famed in Cambrian song." In 1844, on hearing of the death of the 23rd's mascot, Queen Victoria presented them with a Cashmere goat from her royal herd in Windsor Great Park. In



that year, a reserve battalion of the regiment was stationed at Fort Henry, and they too received a goat.

"Dafydd," "Gwilym," or "Llewellyn" was always paraded at the front of the regiment, attended church parade (as a good Anglican!), and was buried with full military honours when he reached the end of his days. Such was the care lavished on the regimental mascot while in India that the local populace thought he was a god. If not sacred, the goat was required to behave appropriately. One of the Lance-corporals ("goat-Major") responsible for his upkeep was court-martialled in that he "did prostitute the Royal Goat" by selling his charge's service to "a farmer and goat breeder of Wrexham." For his part, the goat-Major claimed he had been motivated by compassion for the goat's loneliness!

On 6 June 1953, in honour of the Royal Welch Fusiliers' service in the garrison at Fort Henry, the St. David's Society of Toronto presented "David I" to the Fort Henry Guard. Since that date, David's successors have been regular members of the military establishment on the Hill and a popular attraction for the tourists. (With thanks to the Fort Henry archives and Byron Farwell's *Mr. Kipling's Army: All the Queen's Men*)

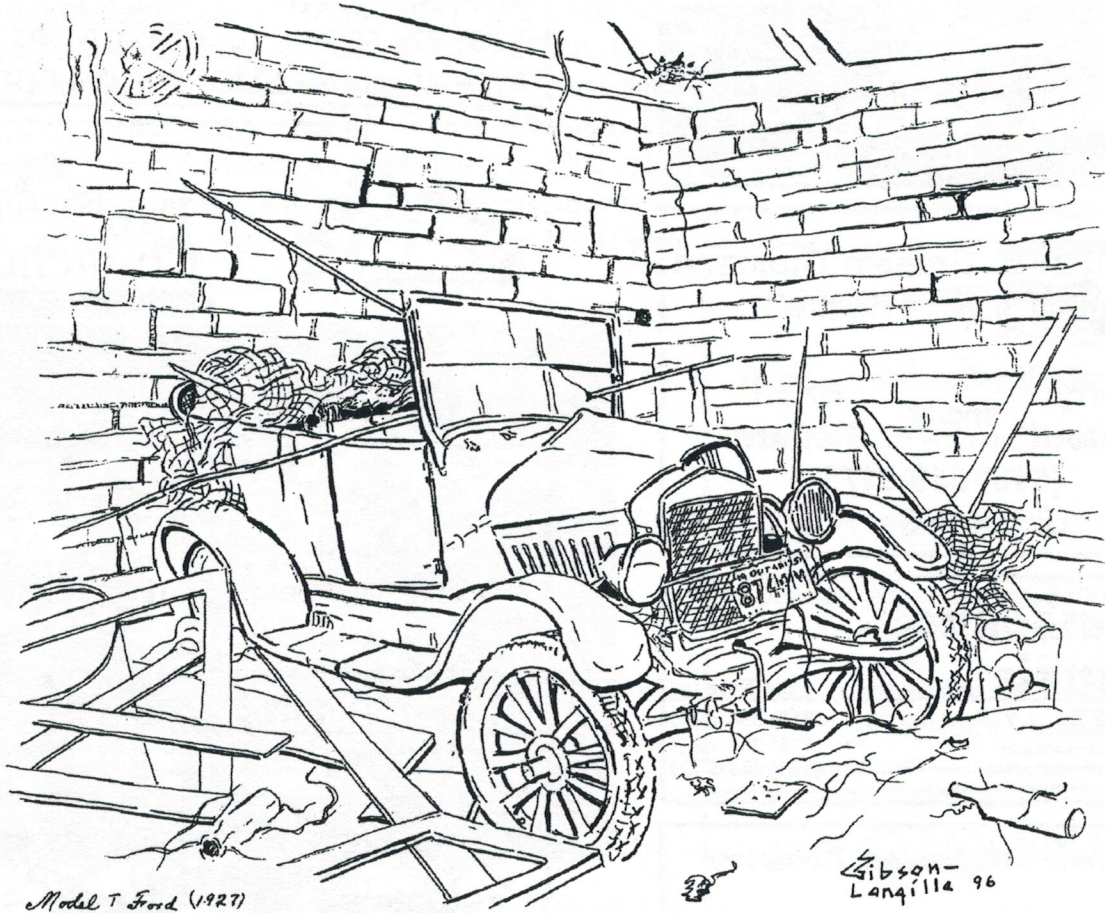


LANDSCAPES/INSCAPES: GHOST TOWN ADVENTURES

Not all my experiences while painting are good ones.

In 1996, while painting in Storrington Township, I found the fascinating ghost town of Latimer. The area had "Neighbourhood Watch" signs posted everywhere, so I arranged to go to one of their meetings in the old Latimer Church. I told them what I was up to and that if they saw me or my car in the area, not to worry. I also informed the police.


I was especially interested in painting the old vacant William Latimer estate, circa 1853, and a 1927 Model T



Ford in the drive-shed. I got permission from Norm Ritchie, the owner at that time. I thought that I had covered all the bases and that everything would be OK. Unfortunately, I didn't get back to paint the Model T for a month or so.

My friend Eleanor had come along with me. She was sitting in the yard reading a book. We had heard that the house was haunted. Eleanor was nervous, especially when she started to hear strange noises in the bushes. She went to the front of the house to investigate. What a shock she got! Here we were, surrounded by police cars, a tow truck and the owner. Eleanor pointed her finger at them and said, "Don't you dare go in there! You will scare her to death. She is only doing a painting!"

They all left. I also packed up and left. I felt really upset for causing everyone so much trouble. I realized too late that a phone call to Norm that morning would have prevented all this.

I always like to think that there is a reason for everything. In this case, all the excitement stopped me from adding colour to my picture. Now I feel really strongly that it was **meant** to be done in black and white. Anyway, I think the memory of all this is quite colourful enough. Don't you?! (Shirley Gibson-Langille). 

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