

LIMELIGHT

Vol. 4: No 5
May 2002


NEWSLETTER OF THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The May meeting marks the close of the winter series of monthly talks and we should all be grateful to Alan MacLachlan for the excellent programme he has produced for our edification and entertainment. Now, like nineteenth century farmers, with the promise of good weather (as I write this it's snowing!), we turn our attention outdoors. But to ensure that you don't go stale over the halcyon days of summer, please note the following events:

- Saturday, 18 May: This is the inaugural year of the Ontario Heritage Foundation's "Discover Community Heritage." Through the "Doors Open Ontario" programme, eighteen sites have been selected to demonstrate Kingston's Heritage in the "magnificently preserved heritage architecture...and the hearts of the residents who delight in an idyllic landscape (www.kingstoncanada.com).
- Saturday, 1 June: The Pittsburgh Historical Society holds its annual Bus Tour and our friends to the east have invited us. This year, the theme is the "Spirit of Glengarry," the destination is Williamstown, and the focus is on fur-traders, Loyalists, and Scottish settlers. Guided by local authority David Anderson, there will be visits to the fur-trade museum, the Sir John Johnson Manor House, and the Bethune-Thompson House. (Aficionados of Canada's history will know that David Thompson was not Scottish!). Tour and lunch cost \$45 (544 0151).
- Thursday, 6 June: This year's speaker at the annual Sir John A. Macdonald ceremony will be Peter Trueman. His topic will direct us to a new dimension of Sir John's contribution to Canada. Noted for his "national dream" of the continental railway, Mr. Trueman will speak of his role in initiating those places where people "dream about Canada": our national parks.
- Thursday, 6 June: Edwin C. Bearss, Historian Emeritus of the U.S. National Parks Service will be speaking in R.M.C.'s Currie Hall. His Civil War topic is "Grant vs. Jackson: Who was the Greater Captain?"

- 27 July - 2 August: Wolfe Island has always captured our imagination and it is living up to its reputation with two weekends of culture and fun. As an extra attraction, KHS's own Shirley Gibson-Langille will be exhibiting her work as part of the festivities.

I look forward to seeing you at these events and welcoming you back to the Fall activities in September. (Brian Osborne). 

OUR NEXT MEETING

Date: Thursday 15 May 2002

Place: Agnes Etherington Art Centre

Time: 7.30 p.m.

Speakers: Ms. Pamela Dodd, Ms. Pat Sullivan, Mr. Berkeley Brean

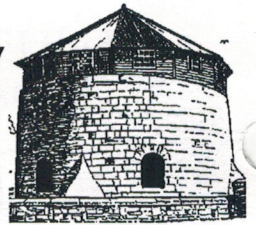
Title: "The Winburn House and Art in the C21st"

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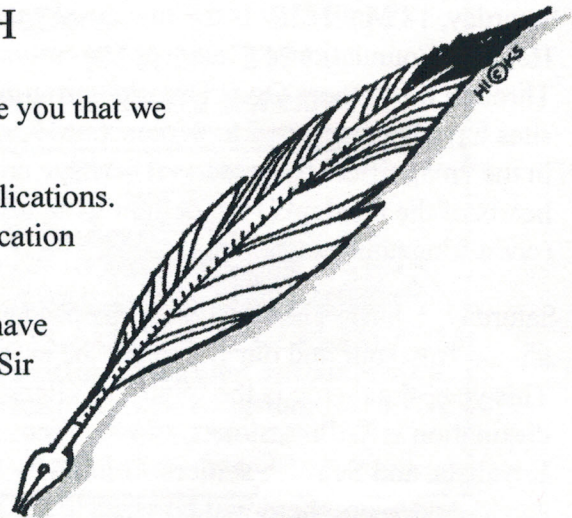
Limelight is published nine times a year - September to May. Copyright rests in Kingston Historical Society. Submissions should be addressed to the editor. **Past President:** Warren Everett. **President:** Brian Osborne. **Vice-President:** Carl Bray. **Secretary:** Douglas Petty. **Treasurer:** Desmond O'Meara. **Councillors:** Robert Andrews, Jane Errington, Ed Grenda, Louis Grimshaw, Sarah Meharg, Jack Pike, Alan MacLachlan, Peter Radley, Barbara Snyder. Memberships: Individual, \$35; Family, \$40; Institutional, \$40; Student, \$25. **Copyright** © KHS, Box 54 Kingston Ontario Canada K7L 4V6 (544-9925) **Editor:** Brian Osborne - (613) 533-6042 **KHS Web Site:** <http://www.heritagekingston.org/khs>

NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY'S BENCH

Some brief notes of your Council's recent deliberations to assure you that we have been at work on your behalf!

- KHS has recently been given a collection of local history publications. We are currently exploring the most appropriate and useful location for these materials.
- Our friends in the Lennox and Addington Historical Society have alerted us to developments that threaten sites associated with Sir John A. in the Bay of Quinte region. Together with them, we are exploring appropriate measures to ensure that they be surveyed archeologically before building takes place.
- The Treasurer has reported that our finances have been audited and provided Council with a detailed statement of current income and expenditures.
- We have sent out thank-you letters to all past, current, and new sponsors of **Limelight**, noting that they play an important role in sustaining the Society, by helping us to spread the word amongst all of our far-flung members.
- Jane Errington, Editor of **Historic Kingston**, reports that the next volume -- Volume 50 -- is due out in June. It promises to be another excellent record of the Society's achievements and should help while away those dog-days of Summer!
- The Murney Tower Museum is currently interviewing potential staff preparatory to its opening. It needs your support. Bring out your summer visitors!
- Regrettably, Lynda Cyr has been obliged to step down as Councillor. A warm welcome to her replacement, Peter Radley.

Members who wish a more detailed account of Council's activities should consult the Minutes on display at the next meeting (R. Douglas Petty, Secretary).





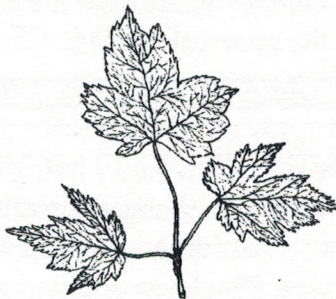
THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
invites you to the
Annual Memorial Service
honouring
SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD
who died 6 June 1891

Guest Speaker: **Peter Trueman**,
writer and host of "Great Canadian Parks,"
speaking on
"Sir John and the National Parks"

Thursday, June 6th, at 2:30 PM

at the Macdonald family gravesite in
Cataraqui Cemetery
Purdy Mills Road off Counter Street, Kingston

all welcome



refreshments

design by Jennifer McKendry

LOOK FOR THE TULIPS!

In 1984, the "Year of the Disabled," the "Parkinson Tulip," was developed by a Dutch horticulturalist for the Canadian Parkinson Foundation. For years, Felicity McKendry has been the Parkinson Tulip bulb co-ordinator for the Kingston Chapter of the Parkinson's Society. She has promoted the Beds of Hope where signs have been displayed over sponsored beds of hundreds of red and white tulips in Kingston parks and gardens. Shirley Hulley immortalized the thousands that bloomed around Confederation Basin in a painting she donated to Parkinson's, "History and Hope." It is an ongoing fund-raiser and is available at the Tourist Information Bureau.

In March 2001, Gus Panageotopoulos, a member of the Cataraqui Cemetery Board, suggested that Sir John A. Macdonald's grave would be an appropriate site for the red and white tulips. In August 2001, Mr. George Turcotte, Principal of Sempar School, agreed to sponsor 500 Parkinson tulips as part of the beautification project. (Mrs. McKendry is a lady of many talents: she has fond memories of her conversations with Mr. Turcotte when he was a student pilot under her instruction at the Kingston Flying Club!).



Bryan Metcalfe, Felicity McKendry, Gus Panageotopoulos, Gord Raymo, George Turcotte

The bulbs were presented in a ceremony on 25 September 2001 and were planted at the Sir John A. grave-site by Sempar School students later in the fall. An additional 1300 red and white tulip bulbs were planted throughout the cemetery. They are late blooming tulips and, with some luck, they may present an attractive and appropriately patriotic display on 6 June.

All Kingstonians indeed, all Canadians should be grateful for the commitment of Mrs. Felicity McKendry, the initiative of Mr. Gus Panageotopoulos, the generosity of Mr. George Turcotte, and the labours of the students of Sempar School.

WEB SIGHTINGS

"Music From Canada's Past" website (www.nlc-bnc.ca/sheetmusic/). The Digital Library of Canada invites you to visit "Sheet Music from Canada's Past", featuring a searchable database of digitized sheet music from pre-Confederation times to the World War I era. The latest addition to the site is a gallery of sheet-music covers highlighting Canadian city and country life, fads and fashions, and work and leisure. Another 900 pieces of music will be added to the database this spring, making it an even richer source of Canadian musical history.

SPEAKERS' CORNER

At the **17 April monthly meeting**, seventy members and friends of the Society were treated to not one, nor two, but three wonderful speakers with three entertaining, informative and insightful talks. What made these presentations especially memorable was that three members of the Kingston Historical Society gave them.



Bea Corbett, Bill Fittell, Isobell Trumpour

Our first speaker, Isobell Trumpour, took us through the Memorial Chamber of Ottawa's Peace Tower. Using slides taken by Martin Betcherman, Isobell revealed the historic treasures carved into the walls of the Memorial Chamber. Isobell's father was closely involved in designing these images which illustrated Canada's role in the Great War, 1914-1918.

Bill Fittell, our second speaker, gave us insights into one of Kingston's former editors of the **Whig Standard**. George Henry Williamson, who Mr. Fittell described as a "journalist who wrote history as it happened." He described the on-going concerns of Kingston in the 1920s and 1930s in his regular column, "The Town Watchman" using humour and wit.

The evening ended with an assessment of Robertson Davies by Bea Corbett. She described in a most colourful manner her encounters with Robertson Davies during his sojourn in Kingston and especially at Kingston Collegiate. Her initial youthful intimidation has certainly been dissipated as witnessed by her humorous recollections and rich interpretation of the man and his works.

Following the presentations, the members of the Society had the opportunity to talk privately with the speakers as they enjoyed light refreshments.

On **Saturday 27 April**, Jennifer McKendry led over 25 members of the society on a tour through the **First Congregationalist Church** of Kingston. It began with an exterior walk-about that presented the external views of the church as it was built in 1864 by John Power. It is interesting to note that the church was not constructed according to the original design which, as Jennifer McKendry emphasized, was common in buildings of this era. This was followed by a brief history of the building and a tour of its interior. This involved the formal church area, the basement which was at one time the Sunday School, and the upper meeting hall which is graced by nine wall murals representing nineteenth century Kingston. These were painted by Ole Jonassen on a commission from the Masonic Order. The Society is very grateful to Mr. Peter Radley, a new member of the KHS Council, for helping arrange our access to this most interesting piece of Kingston's history. .

On **15 May**, our regular monthly meeting will be held at the **Agnes Etherington Art Centre**. Our three docents for the evening, Ms. Pamela Dodd, Ms. Pat Sullivan, and Mr. Berkeley Brean, will take us on a tour through the Victorian house originally known as "Winburn," which had been built for the Richardson family in 1872. This will be followed by a tour of the gallery which has been modernized to make it one of the best in Ontario. Members should note that there is plenty of parking in the large parking lot off Union Street.

Please be aware that the Society is planning an October Fall "Foliage Jaunt" to Ottawa to tour Earnscliff, residence of the British High Commissioner and former residence of Sir John A. Macdonald. Plans call for lunch at the Art Gallery and a visit Rideau Hall. Details will be available in the September **Limelight**.

(Submitted by Alan MacLachlan, picture by Jennifer McKendry)

AN UNBROKEN CHAIN OF TRADITION

On 9 April of this year, Kingston city councillors evaluated the proposed design for an appropriate chain of office to represent the new amalgamated city. A reflection of the city and a symbol of the authority, the design presented by "International Coat of Arms" was the product of an exercise in iconography, arcane heraldry, history, and the realpolitik of community sensitivities: crowns, maple leaves and trilliums, ships, wheat-sheafs and – a Martello tower!

We are fortunate, however, that the proposal prompted Ian McAskill of Kinnear d'Esterre, to pen an informed and sensitive letter to the **Kingston Whig Standard** arguing that "Kingston's crown jewel is magnificent and worthy of respect." He was speaking of the current solid gold chain that records the names of past Kingston mayors and renders the city's distinctiveness in images of historical events and geographical landmarks. Mr. McAskill's evaluation of this "wonderful symbol of our past" justify repetition and recording for the KHS record:



"The City of Kingston has many unique and valuable symbols of our rich heritage. The Market Square, our beautiful City Hall, the Martello Towers and our Town Crier are all glorious symbols of Kingston's historic past. Lesser known to most Kingstonians, but of equal importance, is the Mayor's chain of office from the old City of Kingston. This chain is one of the most valuable, unique and historic ceremonial chains in all of North America. The citizens and politicians of Kingston should be aware and proud of the immeasurable value of this magnificent symbol of our heritage.

Kinnear d'Esterre Jewellers has had the great privilege of designing, hand-making and hand-engraving individual karat gold links for Kingston's chain of office during much of the past century. I have held and marvelled at Kingston's splendid old chain many times. Kingston's crown jewel is truly magnificent and worthy of great respect.

The pure gold content is fabulously valuable and the historic value is immeasurable. When the Mayor's chain was moved from City Hall to our shop, it was always delivered and returned under police escort. Kingston's old chain is made from solid karat gold and it weighs thousands of grams.

Former Mayors physically felt the full weight of office. Kingston's old chain showcases the finest examples of the goldsmith's and hand engraver's art from both the 19th and 20th centuries. In addition to bearing the names of each Mayor, our old chain portrays important Kingston maps, heraldic devices, Kingston scenes and historic events. The progression of the chain can be seen in the successive portraits displayed in City Hall.

Kingston's old chain of office has witnessed many important moment's in our city's history. In my memory, the finest hour occurred on a glorious fall afternoon on the steps of City Hall. Her Worship, Helen Cooper, greeted Lady Diana and Prince Charles. The Royals appeared happy, Helen looked wonderful, and the afternoon sun lit up Kingston's gold chain of office in a dazzling display of authority.

It is my great hope that the City of Kingston will thoroughly document all three of our old chains of office and make them safely accessible to public view at City Hall. They are our crown jewels and they are wonderful symbols of our historic past.

As we begin the discussions about Kingston's new chain of office, it is vital that Kingston's past, present and future are served with great dignity and respect."

Thank you, Ian McAskill, for enhancing our knowledge of another element of this community's rich heritage.

LANDSCAPES/INSCAPES

THE SIMMONS FEEDMILL, WILTON, ONTARIO

It takes a lot of living to learn in life! One thing I've discovered is there is no such thing as a coincidence and when something happens you must be prepared to go for it and never ignore it!

An example of this came on a blustery day, 13 December 1989. I had just started on my research of Ernestown Township for my next art show. I had come to Wilton, Ontario to find Vera Babcock, the local historian. I went into the Hardware Store to ask. The clerk tried to find her number in the phone book but there were too many Babcocks.



I then received permission to park there to do a painting of the Simmons Mill across the street. I had just got back in my car when a car pulled up beside me. A lady got out and went into the store. The next thing I knew she was knocking at my window. "I'm Vera Babcock," she said. "Did you want to see me?"

I told her I was interested in the area's history and notable places to paint. She offered to take me on a tour sometime. Seizing the moment, I asked her if now would be OK? We then started an incredible ride. She showed me a house with an upstairs upside-down window that used to be the Thorpe Post Office. Other places of interest were the Raymond Ruttan's farm with its interestingly shaped barn, the Charlie Ackerman, George Henderson, and Edith Scouton homes, as well as the Lappan School, cheese factory, Tom and Mona Hare's home (formerly Sidney Warner's) -- and finally back to Simmons Mills.

Vera said that Lt. Henry Simmons, who fought for the Jessup Loyal Rangers, arrived in Ernestown with 400 men, women, and children, all United Empire Loyalists. By 1811, Benjamin Simmons set up a saw mill and flour mill on Wilton Creek. The settlement was called Simmons Mills until 1832 when it was renamed Wilton by Sidney Warner (who was postmaster and eventually became the warden of United Counties of Frontenac, Lennox & Addington). Meanwhile, ownership of the flour mill carried on under the Simmons family name. Archie and his son Russell took it over in 1939. They sold it in 1982 and it continued as a feed and seed store under the ownership of Elke Herrington. In December 1997, the 200 year-old mill was auctioned off to three local farmers. Two of them Howie Mahon and Alan Babcock, are running the business now and, while it has been changed somewhat to keep up with the times, the old grinding stones of the mill are still there -- as is the Simmons' connection.

My friendship with Vera has continued through the years. She has always been so supportive with her ideas and extraordinary knowledge of history. I'm so grateful that I met her and went on that marvellous ride with her. I hope it will go on and on for miles and miles -- that is, if the cost of gas doesn't keep going up and up! Ha! (By Shirley Gibson-Langille).

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE OF GREATER KINGSTON INVITES YOU TO MEET AND HEAR **EDWIN C. BEARSS**

HISTORIAN EMERITUS OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (U.S.)
and acknowledged expert of the American Civil War.

The topic for this special appearance is

GRANT vs. JACKSON WHO WAS THE GREATER CAPTAIN?

Grant's Vicksburg Campaign and Jackson's Valley Campaign: The American Civil War



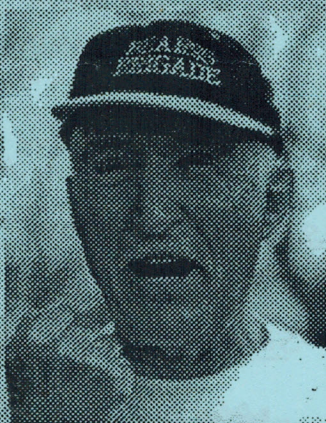
JUNE 6, 2002
7:30 PM
CURRIE HALL
ROYAL
MILITARY COLLEGE
OF CANADA
KINGSTON, ONTARIO
Parking on the parade square



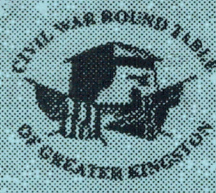
At the age of 79, Ed Bearss maintains a rigorous schedule of battlefield tours and speaking engagements across the United States and Canada.

Ed enlisted in the Marines right after Pearl Harbor and was badly wounded in action. His first job with the Park Service was at Vicksburg, Mississippi where he helped find and recover the lost Ironclad, The Cairo. He eventually became chief historian of the Park Service as it went through an incredible growth matching an increased interest in history by the American public.

Although Mr. Bearss was involved in every aspect of American history, his abiding interest has been the American Civil War. He has become the acknowledged expert - in battles and skirmishes, generals and drummer boys, heroes and scoundrels.



Sponsored by:
Civil War Round Table
of Greater Kingston
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Restoration of Fort Henry
Information:
Tom Brzezick (613) 530-3820
Tickets: \$10.00
Doug Huddle (613) 389-0756



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by

Shirley Gibson - Langille

Sat. July 27 11am

Sun. July 28 10am - 4pm

OPENING mc Gord Smithson

Mayor Jim Vanden Hoek &
ex MP Ken Keyes

HISTORY - Rene Marshall

GHOST of Tricky McDermott
played by Art Warmington (nephew)

GHOST story by: John O'Shea &
Richard Fawcett

Ballad Of Tricky - Gilbert Riddell

HISTORICAL DISPLAYS

GAMES - PRIZES - Refreshments

MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT

Bill McDonald, Moscow Piper,
Gilbert Riddell

Old Time Fiddlers more

Mon. July 29 through Friday Aug 2 ART SHOW - Historical Displays

Games Prizes Continues - ARTIST will be in attendance 10am - 4pm Daily

All proceeds and a percentage of painting sales will provide
GRANITE PARK BENCHES for WOLFE, SIMCOE and HOWE ISLANDS.

12:30pm Fascinating Story
of JOHNNY WALL a squatter
on Brophy's Pt. 1895-1927
By Margaret Darling

1:15 HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

OF MARYSVILLE WALKING
TOUR by Marjorie Boustfield - Leaves
From St. Margaret's Hall - free -

HISTORICAL DISPLAYS

GAMES - PRIZES - Refreshments

MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT

Barry & Lisa Russell

Andrew Ray
Pickett Fences more



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