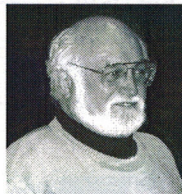
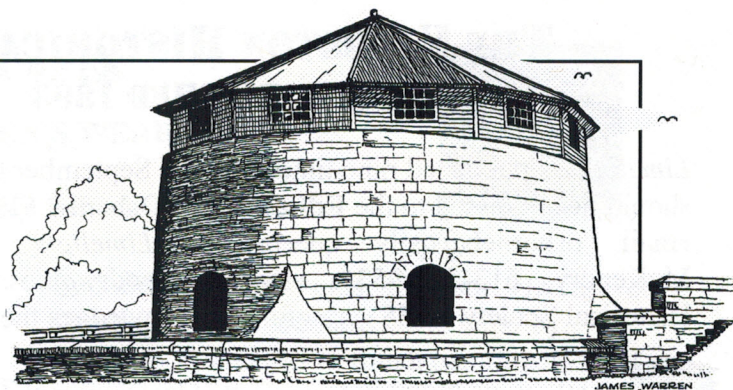


LIMELIGHT

NEWSLETTER of the
KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

vol 5 no 5 May 2003 ISSN 1488-5565



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

What is it that we do as a Society that best serves our mission of furthering our knowledge, dissemination, and enjoyment of Kingston's heritage? Our monthly meetings? *Historic Kingston*? *Limelight*? Our annual tributes to Sir John A. Macdonald?

Increasingly, the KHS web-site, www.heritagekingston.org, is becoming another important agency for telling others about us, as well as keeping us informed about our activities. While a product of modern technology, a web-site is really but an electronic form of traditional institutions: it provides some of the resources of a library; like a newspaper, it communicates current events; it lends itself to frequent think-pieces as do good magazines; and it even accommodates the information-buzz-gossip of the market-place!

If you check out our current site, you will find several enhancements and additions: an extensive chronology on the history of Kingston; a bibliography on regional history; a story and map of Sir John A. Macdonald's Kingston; and a searchable database for the markers, memorials, and monuments found in the Kingston area. The

most recent additions relate to the programme of events planned for 6 June Commemoration of Sir John A. Macdonald. Future additions may include a monthly column on regional history, including items submitted by members. One satisfying measure of the success of the site is that it has been visited in cyberspace some 75 to 150 times a week since its inception.

While the present web-site is now a rich and diverse source of information, it is essential that we continue to develop it. Accordingly, your Council has struck a Web-site Committee and we are most grateful to KHS member, Mark Andrews, for agreeing to chair and oversee the work of this new group. Mark, a professional web-site designer and computer consultant, will be assisted by Jennifer McKendry (who has long been advocating this initiative); Doug Petty; Edward Snider; Ken Watson, our volunteer web-master (ex officio); and myself (ex-officio). Other volunteer-enthusiasts are most welcome to join us. Check us out on the web!

Brian S. Osborne

THIS MONTH'S MEETING:
WEDNESDAY, 21 MAY at 7:30PM
in the Wilson Room, Kingston Public Library

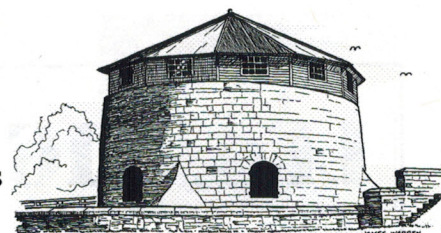
Christopher McCreery
"W.F. Nickle, Kingston's Forgotten Statesman"

ALL WELCOME! REFRESHMENTS
please see more on p. 8

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THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ESTABLISHED 1893



Murney Tower by James Warren

Limelight is published nine times a year - September to May. Submissions should be addressed to the **Editor**, Brian Osborne, 613-533-6042, email osborneb@qsilver.queensu.ca. *Limelight* designer, Jennifer McKendry, 613-544-9535, email mckendry@kos.net. The Kingston Historical Society (KHS) gratefully acknowledges the support of *Limelight*'s sponsors.



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 St at Bagot St. 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!** - individual \$35, family \$40, institutional \$40, student \$25; memberships include *Historic Kingston*, published annually by KHS.

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website www.heritagekingston.org

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MURNEY TOWER'S ANNUAL MEMBER'S OPEN HOUSE



photo: J. McKendry

WEDNESDAY, 25 JUNE

3PM to 5PM

All KHS members are invited to our annual open house. Wine and cheese will be served. This is an excellent opportunity to meet our staff and view the exhibits at the tower. We look forward to seeing you there.

SIR JOHN'S SECRET SUMMER PLACE: *LES ROCHERS, QUEBEC*



Perhaps Les Rochers is Sir John A. Macdonald's best kept secret! It is only vaguely mentioned in two or three of the many books written about our first Canadian Prime Minister and there are only two photos that I know of that show him in this place. But to the families who continue to go to neighbouring summer properties on the Lower St Lawrence, the story is etched in generations of remembered history!

From 1872 until he died in 1891, Sir John, Agnes, and Mary stole away to a favourite summer place, Les Rochers, just to the west of Riviere-du-Loup. The little community was named St Patrick when a post-office and telegraph office was established there for him. His secretary, Joseph Pope, and other close friends, business associates, and ministers also bought properties nearby. Indeed, some sixth-generation family members still return faithfully each summer.

Les Rochers is perched high on a rocky bluff overlooking the magnificent St Lawrence. The story goes that Macdonald and his great friend, Sir Henry Bate, commissioned a doctor from Baltimore to find the healthiest place in the country. Agnes was anxious to get Sir John A. far enough away from Ottawa,



The interior today remains almost exactly the same as when the Macdonalds were there 120 years ago.



and Mary's health and happiness were very important to them. It seems they were looking for quiet and privacy and good air, all of which they found here in the summers.

The original part of the building is an 1850 Quebec farm house which the Macdonalds first rented, then purchased in 1875. They added a large section, a Victorian style wrap-around gallery with a Mansard roof. The interior today remains almost exactly the same as when the Macdonalds were there 120 years ago. In 1895, Lady Macdonald sold their property as, reportedly, she could not bear to be there without her husband. In 1981, after being owned by several families, it was given to the Canadian Heritage of Quebec Foundation by Margaret Eakin. For the last eight summers, Les Rochers has been offering B & B accommodation with five rooms, open late June to Labour Day. For more information, call Meredith at 506-536-4906 (summer: 418-868-1435).

P.S. Some local Riviere-du-Loup folks claim that the decision to execute Louis Riel was made at Les Rochers. As you can imagine, this is somewhat controversial in the heart of "Mario Dumont Land."

Invited submission by Meredith Fisher



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for a catalogue of our books on
Canadian & Kingston
art & architecture,
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or see our website

www.mckendry.net



ANOTHER KINGSTON FIRST CAPITAL?

Margaret Moore O'Meara

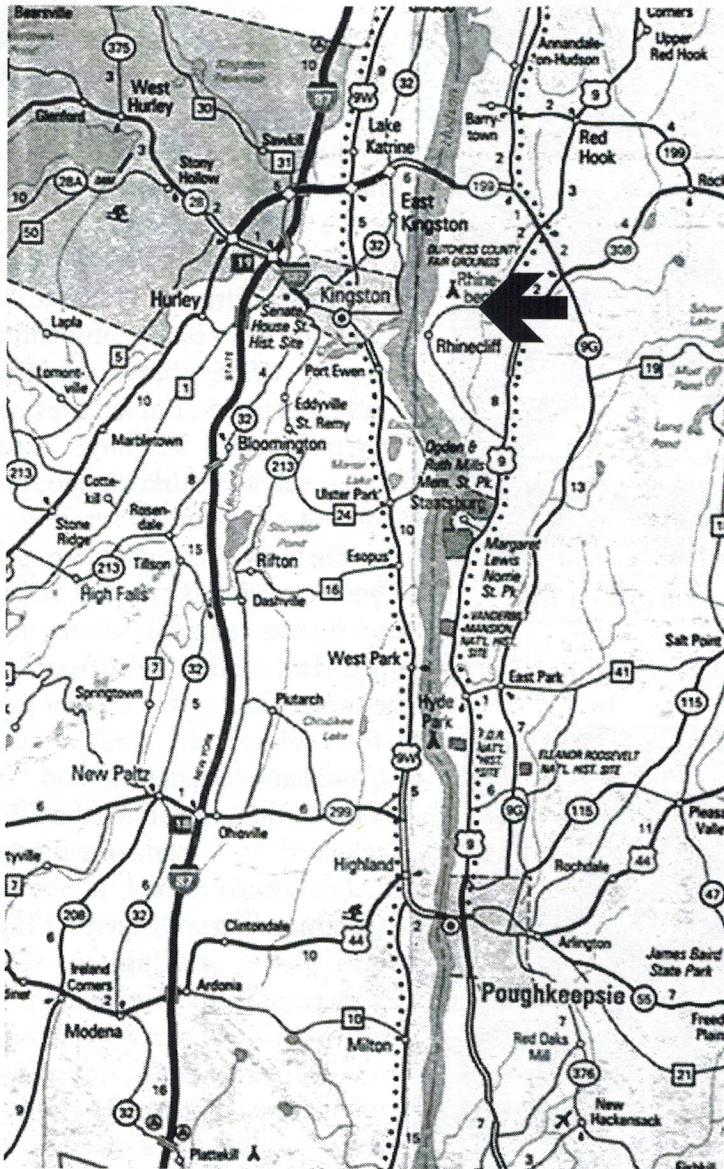
On a recent drive along Route 87 to Montreal, I was intrigued by a sign, KINGSTON FIRST CAPITAL. My subsequent research determined that the other Kingston started out as a Dutch colony. In 1609, Henry Hudson explored the interior along the Hudson River and by the mid seventeenth century, there were three major Dutch colonies: Manhattan, at the mouth of the river; Fort Orange, later re-named Albany; and Kingston, established in 1614. First called "Esopus" and later called "Wiltwyck" ("wild woods"), the settlement was renamed Kingston in 1664 when acquired by the English.

Problems with the native population prompted Governor Stuyvesant to build a stockade with palisades eight feet high. It was burnt down in 1653, and a village eventually took shape in its place. For the first hundred years or so of its existence, Kingston was the centre of a peaceful and prosperous farming area and a shipping and supply centre. In 1777, John Jay and a number of leading patriots met in one of Kingston's stone houses to declare the province of New York a sovereign state. The first State Assembly met there and, thus, Kingston became New York State's first capital.

During the War of Independence, the local populace sided with the rebels. Known as the "Bread Basket of the Revolution," Kingston attracted the attention of the British. General William Clinton landed his forces at nearby Kingston Point. He burned Kingston to the ground, leaving only one house standing, and the inhabitants fled to Hurley, a nearby village.

After this set-back, Kingston was rebuilt. It again became a transport centre. Industry flourished, and it continued as a peaceful, prosperous and progressive city. Nevertheless, Albany was declared the permanent state capital in 1797, long before our Kingston lost out to Ottawa. Now it enjoys a vigorous tourist trade. Chief amongst its attractions is its

architecture, with early Dutch colonist limestone houses, as well as English Colonist, Federalist, Georgian, Greek Revival, Victorian, Romanesque, Italianate, Neo-Classical, Art Deco, and Contemporary styles. With the Hudson River and all its attractions on the one hand and the scenic Catskill Mountains on the other, it sounds an inviting place to visit.



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SNAPSHOTS OF KINGSTON'S PAST IN 1941: A RESPONSE.

No, the mysterious lady in front of St. George's has not yet been identified from last month's *Limelight*, though three names have been suggested for confirmation! And yes, the cannons were at the John A. Macdonald statue, just out of range of the camera! But, also, **Bill Patterson** has written to clarify the enigma of the 21st Battalion Memorial Cross. What follows is derived from his work on the history of the Princess of Wales' Own Regiment (PWOR), which perpetuates the 21st Battalion.



The Cross at RMC in 1941

"The popular story of the Cross is that after the battle of Vimy Ridge, the date of which is detailed on the Cross [9 April 1917], the 21st Battalion erected it there immediately afterwards. Before returning to Canada the Cross was removed and later put over at the Royal Military College (why there I do not know). The story is mostly untrue, but I have not researched sufficiently to know the whole story, but here is what I do know.

In the 21st Battalion Association newspaper *Communique* July 1968, on page 12, there is the story of the Cross as remembered by the man who made it. George Williams of Cornwall, a member of the 21st Battalion who was wounded at the battle of the Somme and spent seven

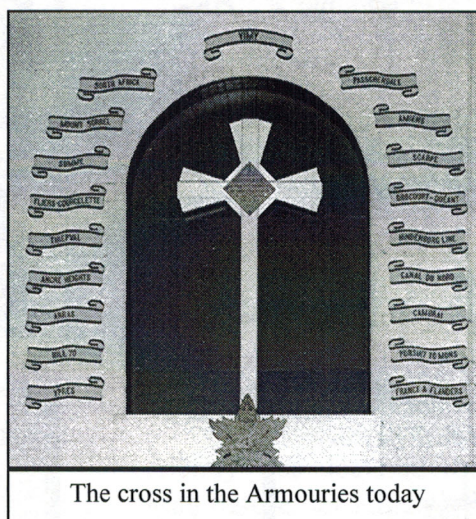
months in hospital, returned to the 21st in May 1917, a month after Vimy. He was posted to the Transport Section to work on vehicle repair and maintenance, and from there attached to a Canadian Engineers' depot. While there the idea of a memorial cross to those killed at Vimy was formed (I have a thought in the back of my mind that other Vimy battalions had already put memorial crosses on Vimy Ridge). In any case, George set to work, made the Cross out of materials scrounged from the Engineers, and brought it back to the Transport lines where it was painted white, the

colour it has retained. He claims the officers of the 21st donated the money to pay for the plaque. The Cross was then placed in one of the Canadian cemeteries, not on Vimy Ridge. Before the 21st returned to Canada the Cross was recovered by the Commanding Officer, LCol H.E. Pense of Kingston, who was responsible for placing it at RMC.

This memorial is written up in the Kingston Historical Society's *Monuments, Memorials and Markers* on page 57, which details the memorial in its present location in the Kingston Armouries."



Thank you, Bill Patterson.



The cross in the Armouries today

LANDSCAPES/INSCAPES

LARRY'S MEN'S WEAR ~ 1938-1989

by Shirley Gibson-Langille



I grew up on King Street between Earl and William Streets. My happiest memories were walking downtown to go

shopping with my Mom. I was an only child and it usually meant getting a toy or a treat. One of the shops Mom frequented was Larry's Men's Wear where she bought work clothes for my Dad. There were no treats for me there!

Harry Dubenofsky immigrated from Russia in 1912. In 1938, he opened Larry's Men's Wear on King Street where the Victoria Café had been. He named it after his eldest son, Larry, who, after working there for two weeks, decided that it wasn't for him. Larry's brother, Bud, joined the Air Force in 1942. When he returned from the war four years later, he found that his father's assistant had been cheating the store of money and stock. It was then that Bud went into the store to help his Dad and stayed there until it closed in 1989.

On Sunday, 16 April 1989, I painted the outside of the store. It was a cold, damp day the following Monday when I went to paint the interior. My God, what a challenge: 51 years of stuff! Every nook and cranny was jam-packed! I enjoyed it immensely though. It was a real pleasure watching the clientele of farmers, Queen's students, and teens.

Bud's son, Steve, came in to help. He was a nice young fellow but you could tell he didn't enjoy working there. He didn't stay long, but I was soon chilled to the bone as Bud kept the door wide open. I realized that the only way I could finish my drawing was to buy some warm long-johns and socks. So I did, but even then,

Bud did not offer to close the door! He enjoyed standing outside greeting the passers-by. Anyway, I managed to finish painting and left before closing.

I didn't see Bud after that until November 1996. I got a surprise phone call from him. He asked me to bring the two pictures I did of Larry's for him to see. He was living in the Shipyard Apartments on Ontario Street. His nurse let me in and I saw that Larry was recovering from a stroke. He seemed very happy in his beautifully furnished condo with his pussycat. I noticed a large photo of his father on the wall. I remembered him! I felt Bud had really missed the store. He loved the paintings and bought both of them. I felt bad a short time later when I read in the paper that he had passed away.



SPEAKERS' CORNER

with Alan MacLachlan

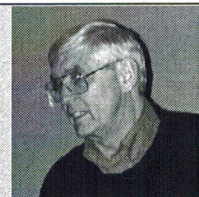


Photo by Bob Lonsdale



At our April monthly meeting, approximately 70 members and friends of the Society were treated to excellent insights on the topic of early photography in Kingston. **Jennifer McKendry**, the well-known architectural historian, traced photographic techniques from daguerreotypes of the 1840s to paper prints of the early 20th century, as employed by Kingston and area photographers (1841 is the year the earliest-known photographer worked in Kingston). Jennifer brought examples from her collection: daguerreotype portraits, ambrotypes, tintypes, postcards, cartes de visites, cabinet cards, and charcoal portraits made from paper prints. Faces of babies and grandmothers - some known by name and others with identities lost over the years - peered out, as well as vistas of buildings and streetscapes, familiar yet inexorably changed by time and progress.

POSTCARD views, like this one of Ontario Street (with Queen Street on the right and City Hall on the left), were reprinted over many years. They can help date buildings by their cancellation dates, or buildings can help date the postcards if not cancelled and if the dates of the buildings are known. This undated, coloured example seems to be taken from a more panoramic, uncoloured card cancelled in 1909. All the buildings seen here must predate 1909. McKendry Collection



On Wednesday, **21 May** at 7:30PM in the Kingston Public Library, **Christopher McCreery** will be speaking on "W.F. Nickle, Kingston's Forgotten Statesman." In the early 20th century, Nickle served Kingston as Alderman and Mayor. Apart from a career as MPP, Nickle was federal MP (Conservative) for Kingston (1911-19). His best claim to fame may be the Nickle Resolution, the federal policy that prevents Canadians from accepting knighthoods or peerages. Nickle's motivation was his general dislike of titles and his relationship with his father-in-law, Queen's principal, D.M. Gordon, who had been denied a knighthood while the presidents of the universities of Toronto and McGill were awarded them in 1916. As Chris

puts it, "a rather fun story about inter-University rivalries, in which Nickle played a prominent role."



Please refer to, AND SAVE, the insert, sent with this newsletter, to savour the full agenda of **Coming Events** this spring, summer, and fall. Please take special note of those KHS events occurring in May and June. When the KHS monthly meetings resume in September, we look forward to a varied range of topics over the year such as Thomas MacLeod (a Kingston Seaman in the Antarctic with Scott and Shackleton); the Internment of Austro-Hungarian Prisoners at Fort Henry; KGH and Charles Darwin; Fort Frontenac; and Historic Restorations in the Limestone City.

THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

INVITES YOU TO REMEMBER SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD IN AN EVENT
ON 6 JUNE THAT COMBINES PAGEANTRY & HISTORY
IN A SPECIAL OUTDOOR SETTING

Please join us **FRIDAY, 6 JUNE at 1:30PM** at Cataraqui Cemetery to remember Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, who died on 6 June 1891. This year, the annual commemorative ceremony features the Fort Henry Guard, a school choir, Bellevue House staff in period dress, city officials, as well as many dignitaries and representatives of various organizations laying wreaths. The guest speaker is **Dr Ian Wilson**, Canada's National Archivist, who will speak on "Sir John A. Macdonald and the Cultural Life of the New Dominion."



Dr Wilson was awarded an Honourary Doctorate of Letters (DLitt) from York University in recognition of his contribution to Canadian archives and, in May 2002, he was appointed to the Order of Canada. Dr Wilson has been President of the Champlain Society since 1995 and has published extensively on history, archives, heritage, and information management, and has lectured both nationally and abroad.

You are welcome to tour historic picturesque Cataraqui Cemetery (927 Purdy Mills Road off Counter Street) before and after the ceremony and enjoy refreshments in the outdoors chapel. Two Fathers of Confederation, Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir Alexander Campbell, and many other noteworthy Kingstonians and Canadians are buried here.



photo: Randy Genois

We look forward to seeing you, your family, and your organization or group.

For further information, please see www.heritagekingston.org

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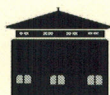
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COMING EVENTS

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Thursday & Friday, 8-9 May: KINGSTON REGIONAL HERITAGE FAIR, Faculty of Education, Queen's University, Union St at Sir John A. Macdonald Blvd, free admission. Opening Ceremonies at 6.00 p.m. on Thursday in McArthur Hall Auditorium. On Friday, opening at 10 a.m., enjoy viewing student displays and a variety of exciting workshops presented by community groups such as the Fort Henry Guard and the Quinte Mohawk School dancers. The Awards Ceremony starts at 1 p.m. Information: Alan Hesketh 453-2526 or email heritage@limestone.on.ca

Friday to Sunday, 9-11 May: UPPER CANADA TRADE FAIRE, by Upper Canadian Historical Association, at Brentwood Farm, 584 Maple Road, Odessa. A living history encampment; sale of C18 & C19 reproduction items; period re-enactors; craft demonstrations; grub and grog eatery. Information: 386-7571; www.tradefaire.ca



Saturday, 10 May: KHS TOURS of 110 RIDEAU STREET, home of Sir John A. Macdonald, at 1:30 or 2:30 p.m. RSVP Alan MacLachlan, 549-8841 (or email alan-tour@kos.net) about your choice of time.

Saturday, 17 May "DOORS OPEN KINGSTON," 10 a.m.- 4 p.m (free admission) to such interesting sites as Bellevue House; British Whig Building, Penitentiary Museum, Dupont, Masonic Temple, Murney Tower. Details and maps: www.city.kingston or www.whatsonkingston.com or www.doorsopenontario.on.ca



Wednesday, 21 May: Last KHS TALK of the season at 7:30 p.m. in the Kingston Public Library. Details in May *Limelight*, p. 8.

Wednesday, 28 May: AGM, FRONTENAC HERITAGE FOUNDATION, at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre at 7 p.m., exhibition tour, business meeting, short talk, all welcome.



Friday, 6 June: KHS event. SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD COMMEMORATION, 1:30 p.m., Cataraqui Cemetery. (See over)

Sunday, 15 June: FIRST CAPITAL DAY, ceremony at 12.30-1.30 p.m, City Hall. Music, family-day, and picnic in Confederation Park. First Capital ale at

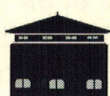
Kingston Brewing Co. Information:
Lesley Kimble 546-7998 (ext 1706);
email, LKimble@city.kingston.on.ca



Tuesday, 17 June: KHS event. ASCENT & TOUR of ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL BELL-TOWER at 5:30 p.m. RSVP: Alan MacLachlan, 549-8841 or email alantour@kos.net



Wednesday, 25 June: KHS annual MURNEY TOWER OPEN HOUSE for KHS members from 3:00p.m. to 5:00p.m. Wine and cheese. This is an excellent opportunity to meet our staff and view the exhibits at the tower. (See May *Limelight*, p. 2)



Saturday, 12 July: REDEDICATION of RELOCATED KHS PLAQUE commemorating the founding of the French settlement at Cataraqui, known as Fort Frontenac, on the 330th anniversary of the original date. This year also marks the 110th anniversary of the KHS and the 20th birthday of the Cataraqui Archaeological Research Foundation. Updates: www.heritagekingston.org Information: John Grenville, KHS's Plaque Committee Chair, email john.grenville@pc.gc.ca or 545-8666, ext. 102; or Cataraqui Archaeological Research Foundation, e-mail carf@carf.info or 542-3483

Saturday, 23 August: "SCENE OF THE CRIME FESTIVAL," Wolfe Island. Join some of Canada's top crime writers. Information & tickets: www.sceneofthecrime.ca or Maureen Lollar at 385-2540 or email festival@wolfeisland.com



Wednesday, 17 September: new season of KHS TALKS at the Kingston Public Library at 7:30 p.m. Harvey Medland will give a talk on "Thomas MacLeod: Kingston Seaman in the Antarctic with Scott and Shackleton."



Saturday, 27 September: KHS FALL BUS TOUR. A tour of the "two sisters' country" (Susanna Moodie and Catherine Parr Trail); details to be announced (See www.heritagekingston.org for updates and next September's *Limelight*.)

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