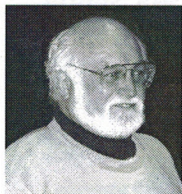
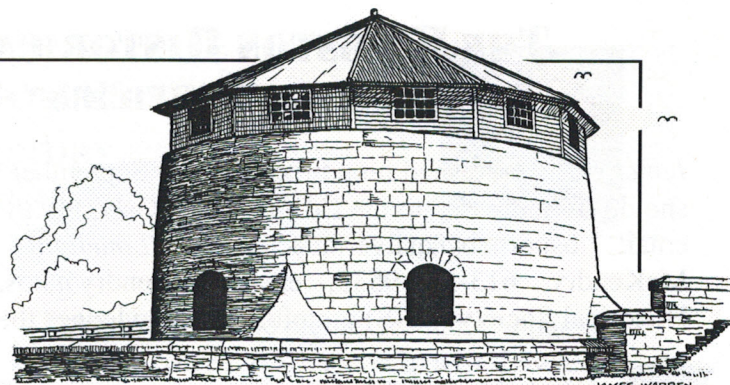


LIMELIGHT

NEWSLETTER of the
KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

vol 6 no 1 January 2004 ISSN 1488-5565



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

It's December 22 and I have lit a bonfire. It's such a happy date for pre-Anglicans, nay, even pre-St. Augustinians. But it should be for everyone! My ecologically-irresponsible pagan fire-in-the-night celebrates the arrival of the winter solstice. It's a wonderful event. From here on, each day get longer -- by a "*cam ceiliog*" (the step of a cockerel), as my wife puts it. The solstice marks the advent of a New Year and a time to reflect on the past one.

For KHS, we have had our usual calendar of events: banquets and papers; committee meetings and elections; parties in the Murney Tower and commemorations in the cemetery; successful walk-about in town and thwarted bus-excursions

out of town (next year we go even if there's only a corporal's guard of us!). And all of this is due to the enthusiastic participation of the members and the conscientious work of the Society's officers. Personally I wish to acknowledge publicly the support I receive from a dedicated Executive and Council. But some need particular mention.

Douglas Petty is my right-hand man in exceeding his job-description as Secretary in so many ways. **Alan MacLachlan** is on the boards each month introducing the speakers in the excellent programme he orchestrates. **Desmond O'Meara** and **Ted Huber** keep us on the financial straight and narrow. **Warren Everett**, **Ed Grenda**, and **Barbara Snyder** deserve

continued page 3



THIS MONTH'S MEETING:

SUNDAY, 11 JANUARY at 6:00PM for 7:00PM

at the Senior Staff Mess, Royal Military College

Peter MacKay, M.P.

"John A. Macdonald and the Future of Conservatism in Canada"

THE 4TH ANNUAL KHS DINNER TO CELEBRATE

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD'S BIRTHDAY

Members \$40 each. Non-members \$50 each. Please make cheques payable to the Kingston Historical Society and mail* (to arrive no later than 7 January) to:

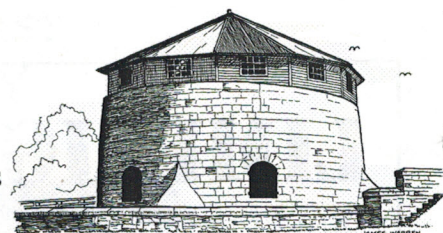
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THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ESTABLISHED 1893



Murney Tower by James Warren

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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.

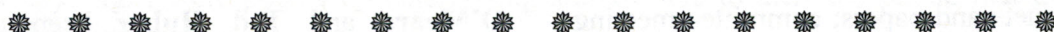
Kingston Historical Society
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website www.heritagekingston.org

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DEDICATION of NAVY MEMORIAL PARK

Townscapes are memory-machines. Every building, every open space, every monument prompts a recollection of past people, past events, and past associations. Kingston has so many of these prompts. That's what makes it such a fine place to live. And now there's a new think-piece: the Navy Memorial Park at 55 Ontario Street, close to the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes. It's perhaps one of the fastest conceptualised and finalised monument in the history of Kingston!

First mooted early in 2003 by the WRCNS (WRENS) Association of Kingston as a park dedicated to Navy veterans, on 15 July City Council approved their request and on 6 October 2003 the Navy Memorial Park was dedicated. Apart from honouring "those Navy people who have gone before," the benches and green space will serve as a quiet place to sit and contemplate Kingston's maritime heritage and the sacrifices of those who served us all in the past.



Mayor Turner and Barbara Lesslie, President of the WRCNS (WRENS) Assoc. of Kingston, unveiling the plaque. Photo by Randy Genois

BOOK CASE: LOOKING BACK 51 YEARS AGO

cover artwork for Roy's *King's Town*



The *Globe and Mail's* "Saturday Review" of 28 February 1953 led off with a title, "Cataragui Now Kingston: Pivotal Canadian Point." It was flagging a review of James A. Roy's volume, *Kingston: The King's Town* that had been published the previous year. The review opens with a comparison with another urban biography, Raddall's *Halifax, Warden of the North*, noting that it had been "easy to segregate this isolated port." Kingston, however, was a different matter. The good reviewer noted that Roy had been "unable to cut Kingston off from the main stream of Canadian history." The review went on to comment that "Obviously a town like that, a place of coming and going, a place so thoroughly integrated with the national life, cannot be narrowly isolated for study for study within the city limits alone." The final assessment was that "This is a careful and scholarly history of inestimable value; but it is more than Kingston because Kingston always was more than Kingston, even when it was only Cataragui." But if the *Globe* reviewer found the value of Roy's tome to be "inestimable" in 1953, by 11 June 1987, the *Kingston Whig-Standard* had a different perspective. A brief

note opened with the query, "What book by a Kingston author has appreciated the most in value?" It went on to observe that a signed copy of Roy's *King's Town* was on sale at Paulson's Books for \$60 -- ten times the publication price of 1952. Of course, as some KHS members have found out to their chagrin, the last two decades has seen a further escalation in value of this "inestimably valuable" volume.

A final thought: perhaps Professor Roy merits a paper for KHS. After all, he was a prestigious professor of English at Queen's. Author of several volumes of fiction, poetry and plays, he also wrote literary criticism, biographies, and histories of such diverse groups as the Scots in Canada and the Poles in Silesia. His autobiography, *The Heart is Highland*, while comprehensive, did not report on all of his distinctive contributions to the social fabric and anecdotal of Kingston: he was truly a Robertson Davisian character worthy of Salterton and Waverley University. Perhaps we should hear more of him.

President's Message continued from page 1

particular mention for their stewardship of the Murney Tower and their ideas for enhancing what we do there. Then there's **Jack Pike** and his "diocesan-cabal" that assigns Society honours and awards. Finally, **Jane Errington** continues her exacting duties as Editor of *Historic Kingston* but, unfortunately, steps down as Vice-President because of the demands of her very active scholarly career.

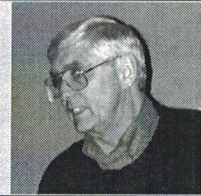
And there are others who are not even on Council. If the 6 June commemoration was particularly successful this year, it was due to **Peter Radley** who was assiduous in dragooning us into delivering a well-planned event. A very

low-profile **Randy Genois** acts as an unofficial KHS photographer ensuring that we have a Society-memory on film and in cassette. **Ken Watson** continues to monitor our entries on the KHS web-site, while **Mark Andrews** has undertaken the arduous chore of educating Council in cyber-space planning. And, **Jennifer McKendry** must be accredited with the felicities of design and presentation in *Limelight* while directing responsibility for all sins of omission and commission elsewhere...speaking of which, I had better go and tend my pagan fire of celebration!

Brian S. Osborne

SPEAKERS' CORNER

with Alan MacLachlan



Over 110 members and friends attended the **KHS CHRISTMAS PARTY** at the Officer's Mess in Fort Frontenac on 10 December. Following a social hour, the formal program began with the presentation of the KHS annual awards for 2003:

HELMUT L. GRAF

Following the traditional footsteps of several family members, Mr. Graf was apprenticed as a stonemason in his native Stuttgart, Germany. He immigrated to Canada, first to Ottawa where he plied his trade on the Parliament Buildings and, in 1957, to Kingston. During the ensuing four decades, as an employee of the Friendship Construction Company, he applied his pre-eminent skill in stone cutting and supervision to the restoration of virtually every major stone building in Kingston. Religious, commercial, institutional and military structures have all received the benefit of his practised hand and eye. The continuing impact of Kingston's stone buildings upon the historic ambience of our community has been greatly strengthened by the talent of Helmut Graf. It is to be hoped that his recent retirement will provide the opportunity for him to view his life's work with the satisfaction and pleasure which it provides to his fellow citizens.

INGBERT J. HUBER

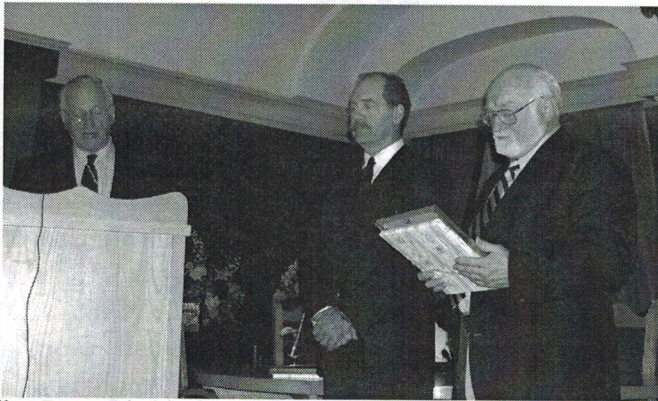
Ingbert Huber gained his early experience in the masonry trade following his 1956 emigration from Germany and settlement in the Niagara Peninsula. From that region of abundant limestone and historic sites, it was perhaps natural that he should find his way to Kingston. Here he has been engaged in the restoration of heritage buildings for nearly 40 years. This work has established Mr. Huber's reputation of possessing an unerring sense of the distinctive masonry style in a given building, an exceedingly valuable skill considering the variety of stonework to be found in Kingston. As a result, his involvement has been actively sought in projects for which the retention of historical integrity of the masonry was essential. Also, he is widely respected for providing strong leadership to those working under his direction and for instilling in them a full understanding of and pride in their craft. The KHS is pleased to recognize Mr. Huber's outstanding contribution to our continuing appreciation of Kingston's history.

DOWNTOWN KINGSTON! BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA

The promotion of public awareness of Kingston's historic buildings and their role in defining the character of the community are major elements in the long-term preservation of this essential feature of the Limestone City's heritage. Downtown Kingston! has made and continues to make significant contributions in this area. The pewter ornaments depicting historic buildings, which they issue at Christmas time, have been particularly effective. Over the past 10 years, this scheme has distributed nearly 100,000 of these sought-after ornaments, representing 50 of Kingston's buildings and each accompanied by an explanation of the historic significance. The involvement of the public in the nomination process for the structures to be included each year is an additional aspect of community awareness. The association's ongoing encouragement for the restoration of facilities owned or occupied by its members, in the central core of the city, results not only in more pleasant surroundings in which to do business but, as well, in an enrichment of our streetscapes. It is a pleasure to recognize the success of these innovative mergers of commercial and heritage interests.



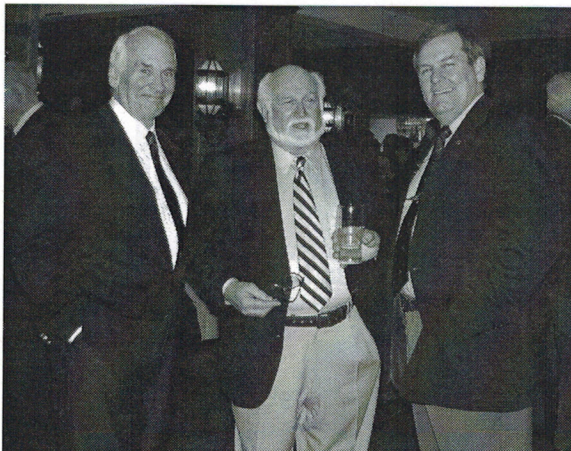
Helmut Graf and Ingbert Huber, KHS award winners



Jack Pike, Doug Ritchie from Downtown Kingston! BIA, and Brian Osborne during awards ceremony



The militia infiltrates the ranks of the revelers.




Bob Andrews, Brian Osborne, and Warren Everrett

Following the awards, guests enjoyed a presentation by guest speaker, **Sue Bazely** (*right*), the resident archaeologist at the Cataraqui Archaeological Research Foundation. Her paper's title, "A Matter of Time: Five Centuries at Fort Frontenac" was fitting given the venue of the reception. An informative, well illustrated, exposition on Fort Frontenac's history and on-site archaeological studies prompted many questions from an appreciative audience.



Photography by Jennifer McKendry. For colour images, please see www.heritagekingston.org

The Kingston Historical Society appreciates the support of this year's sponsors of *Limelight*. Best wishes to all for the New Year.



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LANDSCAPES/INSCAPES

THE JOHNNY WALL STORY

by Shirley Gibson-Langille



A year or so go, Marjorie Simmons showed me two fascinating photographs entitled, "Johnny Wall, a Squatter on Brophy's Point." On investigating this interesting character, I was disappointed to find that none of the Brophy families who had lived on the Point on the east end of Wolfe Island had ever heard of Johnny Wall. You can imagine my surprise when I got a call from Margaret Darling who told me that her mother, Mary Brophy Darling, had written down her memories of Johnny Wall.

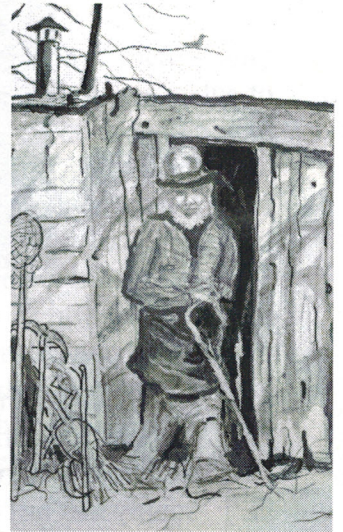
Some time in the 1890s, Brophy's Point was developed as a popular destination for steamers bringing picnic-parties to the island. It was about this time that Johnny Wall arrived and made his home in the cabin of an old schooner which he had set up on government land, 150 feet west of the Lighthouse there. According to Mary's recollections, he had a cook-stove, a table, two



chairs, and a bunk-bed. Outside, he kept chickens and hung fishing nets on large wooden frames. Johnny also acquired a fleet of skiffs that he towed from the Lighthouse and rented to the picnickers at 25 cents an hour. He also worked as a commercial fisherman, netting sturgeon which he trapped in the small marshy bay between the

lighthouse and the picnic-ground. On market-days, he rowed to Kingston in a St. Lawrence skiff to sell his catch, pulling on each of the oars alternately in what became known as the "Johnny Wall" style.

Johnny was a little man, probably not much more than 5 feet tall, and even though his legs were permanently crossed at the knees, he was able to walk with the aid of a cane. He always wore a bowler-hat, sported a big, white beard, and was invariably accompanied by his dog, "Sailor." Sailor's duty was to get Johnny home if he had had a few too many on a Saturday night at the



Brophy's Point Pavilion. It is truly amazing that a person with such physical limitations was able to make his way as an entrepreneur a hundred years ago. But Johnny was not always alone. There was an old log-cabin nearby and, over the years, a succession of tenants supplied him gifts of food and company. It was in that cabin that he died around 1922.

On 28 July 2002, Margaret Darling shared Johnny Wall's story with a full house at my art-show in Wolfe Island's St. Margaret's Hall. Can you imagine our shock when Johnny Wall's ghost appeared on stage? Unbeknownst to anyone, John King, who had been displaying his miniatures in the show, put on a bowler-hat and costume which, together with his own white beard and cane, portrayed an uncanny resemblance to Johnny Wall. Thus, the life and times of Johnny Wall will live on forever, thanks to Marjorie, Mary, Margaret, and John.

SNAPSHOTS OF KINGSTON'S PAST

THE E.W. MULLIN AGENCY

Gordon D. Smithson



E.W. MULLIN AGENCY c1910

Photo courtesy, Marjorie Simmons

In an advertising tableau, young boys, holding newspapers, pose in front of Edward Mullin's store, at the corner of Johnson and Division Streets. In this era, fresh oysters were considered a delicacy; signs were posted by enterprising storeowners to alert the public that a fresh supply had arrived.

Established in 1893, Edward Mullin opened a store at 87 Division Street on the corner of William Street. From this location, he sold groceries and acted as an agent for the Brabant Needle Company. The store remained here until 1901, at which time the store was moved to a new building at 278 Johnson Street on the corner of Division Street (one block over from the old store). By 1909, The E.W. Mullin Store carried such items for sale as fancy and staple groceries, provisions, flour, feed, and pressed hay and straw. In addition to tea and coffee, fresh meats were also sold at this establishment. The E.W. Mullin Store also served as a sales agency for the *Toronto World*; the price being one cent daily, and five cents for the Sunday edition.

The city directories record Edward Mullin's occupation as grocer in 1909-10; grocer and real

estate agent, 1911-12; real estate agent, 1916; real estate and insurance at 344 Johnson Street at the corner of Division Street, 1939; and real estate and mortgage loans officer, 1946. Four years later, the business is listed as Edward W. Mullin Real Estate Agency with Lorne S. Raven, insurance agent.

A note of caution to the reader of city directories: about 1925, the street numbers along Johnson Street must have been re-numbered. The former civic address of 278 was changed to 344 Johnson Street, at the corner of Division, and the former number 278 assigned to a building further east on Johnson Street (occupied in 1939 by the Cain Funeral Home).

Today, Coffee and Company occupies 344 Johnson Street on the southeast corner at Division Street.