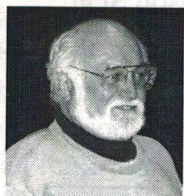
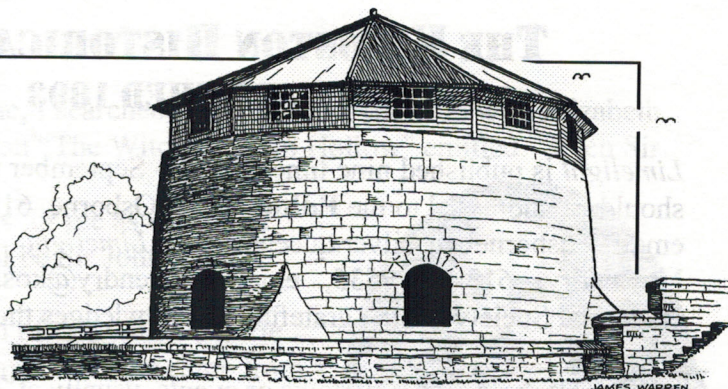


LIMELIGHT

NEWSLETTER of the
KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

vol 6 no 5 May 2004 ISSN 1488-5565



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

What a party it was! As you can see from the report on pages 6 and 7, some 150 persons attended the 110th Gala Concert and reveled in the ambience of City Hall's Memorial Hall

and the aesthetics and dramatics of the Sir John A. Macdonald evening. Over the years, KHS has developed an expertise in mounting these events. Once **Donna Ivey** and **Norma Kelly** got the inspiration, all else clicked into place: **Stewart Renfrew** on advertizing; **Jennifer McKendry** on designing the posters and programmes; **Alan MacLachlan** on planning; **Warren Everett** and **Doug Petty** on refreshments; **Randy Genois** on video taping and photography. Thank you all for fine team-work. And thanks again to the many life members who gave us



photo R. Genois

"birthday donations."

And now for something new from the KHS Web Committee. In 2000, KHS took the lead in organizing and financing an umbrella web-site intended to

nurture cooperation between Kingston's various heritage groups. Assigned a generic name, www.heritagekingston.org, the intention was that other groups would be partners in this site. It evolved, however, into a KHS site, reflecting members' news and activities. In 2002-03, in order to establish a more *distinct identity*, the Frontenac Historic Foundation legally changed its name to the Frontenac Heritage Foundation. Ironically, FHF is currently designing a website under the name www.heritagekingston.com. It should be operational in a couple of months and we are

THIS MONTH'S MEETING:



WED., 19 MAY at 7:30PM

MAURICE D. SMITH

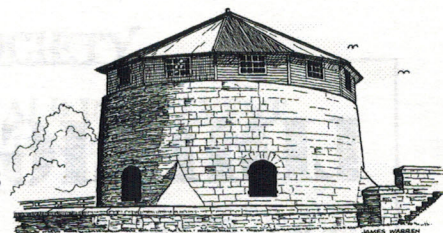
*"Calvin, Garden Island
& A Fleet for Lakes and Oceans"*

in the Wilson Room, **Kingston Public Library**, Johnson at Bagot
ALL WELCOME ~ REFRESHMENTS

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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.

Kingston Historical Society
Box 54, Kingston ON K7L 4V6

website www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca

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President's Message con't

concerned that it may cause confusion between the two web-sites (differentiated only by our *org* and their *com*!). Accordingly, we are changing our web-name. As of 1 May 2004, not only will our site have a new design, but it will be served by the eponymous www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca. For a while, users typing in our old name will be automatically forwarded to our new address. Personally, I like the new moniker: it has our name and our place, KHS and Canada ("ca"). As for the good old www.heritagekingston.org, it has served us well for four years and launched us into cyberspace. Nor will we forget its original mission: to cultivate better communication amongst like-minded heritage groups in the Kingston region. After all, there's so much heritage to go around -- and so much is being made every day!

Finally, as the winter session of the 2004 year draws to a close, a few reminders. Those of you who

are delinquent with your membership, please note that we need your support. Also, everyone should mark **Sunday 6 June** in the calendar for the 113th commemoration of the death of Sir John A. Macdonald (see back cover). And do take note of the field-trip to the wine country of the "County" planned for **Saturday, 2 October**. I have been telling my students for years that wine is "bottled history and geography." On 2 October, we study both in a celebration of the local wine and cider, apples and cheese, and geography and history of Prince Edward County. If you are interested, please contact Alan MacLachlan (549 8841) and reserve a seat for what promises to a very popular excursion. More details in September's *Limelight*. Happy Summer!

Brian S. Osborne

LETTER BOX: the saga of the bakery continues

A response from **Bill Patterson** to Steven Mallie's query regarding the "William Pollitt" bakery :

"As you have probably heard I am related to everyone! In this case it was my former wife, born Delores Pollitt, who had ancestors in the bakery business. I know so little that I am hesitant to get involved but I do know that you like to see people respond to the newsletter so here goes.

The first Pollitt I know of was Thomas, born in England, Church of England, a baker, who came to Canada (Kingston) sometime before 1850. He died on 6 August 1878, age 63. He was married to a Jane Jarvis, who died 25 April 1880, age 47; I feel that she was his second wife. There were several children. The first-born was Thomas, born 26 September 1852 and died sometime before 1910; he had been a baker, had married Rachel Vanluven of Portland Township, and had seven children. One, Norman James, was the founder of Pollitt Demolition and was Delores' father. There were several others: Francis, born 27 July 1854; Hannah,

born 5 August 1856; William, born 1 January 1863 (I believe by a second wife); Jessie, born 10 April 1866; Mary Jane, born 25 December 1871; Henry John, born 23 December 1873, died 1 September 1903, was also a baker.

The Pollitt family bakery, shown on the Kingston Fire Insurance map of 1908, was located at the end of Birch Lane, a short street that runs from Albert Street to Collingwood Street, just south of Johnson Street. At that time, the bakery appears to have fronted on Collingwood St, blocking Birch St from going on through (view today on left). I do not know whether this business later became Doyle's Bakery. When I was a boy in 1940, Doyle's Bakery was on Mack St, just west of Albert St.



Photo J. McKendry

I would hazard a guess that the William Pollitt in question is the one listed above. In any case, it should not be difficult between the census reports and the Kingston directories to trace him and his family, likewise the Pollitt, or the Doyle's, bakery enterprises. Over to you."

Thank you, Bill.

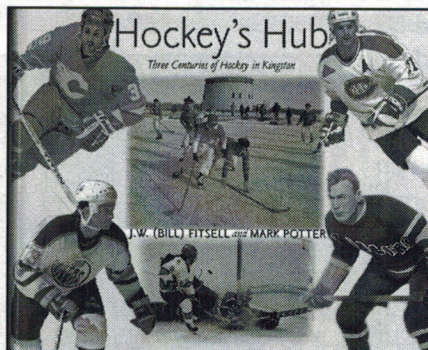
BOOK SHELF: *Hockey's Hub: Three Centuries of Hockey on Kingston*

In recent months, *Limelight* has proudly announced the appearance of two new books on Kingston's history: "*To Build a Good Neighbourhood*" Grenville Park, the first fifty years, and Jennifer McKendry's, *Into the Silent Land: Historic Cemeteries & Graveyards in Ontario*. Now, there is a third title for the shelves of collectors of Kingstonia: *Hockey's Hub: Three Centuries of Hockey on Kingston* by J.W. (Bill) Fittsell and Mark Potter.

The book opens with a rich endorsement from Kingston's Don Cherry: "Make no mistake, Kingston is the cradle of hockey and I am proud to be a Kingstonian." The following pages are profusely illustrated with a rich array of photographs of former teams, local stars, and interesting shots connecting Canada's game to our

city. As for the text, as Bill Fittsell puts it, "In spite of Kingston's long and storied connection with Canada's

National Winter Sport, no one has yet attempted to record a complete history." Certainly, Bill has given a good preliminary kick-at-the-can with his *Hockey's Captains, Colonels & Kings* (1987) and his *History of Hockey in Kingston* (1992). While not claiming this to be "the definitive book on Kingston hockey" it does contain some 117 years of highlights and Bill Fittsell and

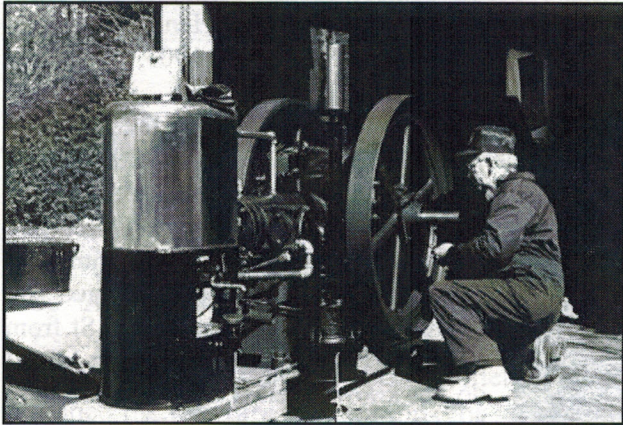


Mark Potter should be commended for adding another contribution to the social history of this city. For more information: the Hockey Hall of Fame 544-2355, Bill Fittsell 549-8354, Mark Potter 531-5547, or Novel Idea 546-9799.

SNAPSHOTS OF KINGSTON'S PAST

SAVING A PAST TECHNOLOGY

Gordon D. Smithson



Clive Rodger of Kingston Township makes minor adjustments to this operational 8 H.P. Fairbanks Morse throttle-governed Gas Engine in the open doorway of his garage. This type of gasoline-operated engine supplied belt power to line-shafts, and in addition could be used to power an electric generator. They were manufactured at the Fairbanks, Morse and Company plant located in Beloit, Wisconsin from as early as 1893. Photographed by Gordon Smithson in 1989

Although the foot of Gore Street has been previously documented with various aspects of its former historical background, my story commences at the residence of Clive Rodger, a retired employee of Dupont Canada. Clive gained the respect of area collectors with his expertise in restoring the old style "hit & miss" and "throttle-governed" gas engines. These engines were created to supply belt power to farm equipment and in places of industry, long before the arrival of electricity.

The engine he was working on in the above illustration was one that he obtained from the McAllister Towing & Salvage Company located below Ontario Street at the foot of Gore Street. Originally operating as a back-up power system for the electrically operated Canadian Marconi Wireless Radio Station located in Barriefield, the engine and its back-up generator were removed from the Barriefield site in 1946 and transported to the McAllister

Towing & Salvage building. There they sat on the second floor, in almost mint condition, unused for almost forty years. When plans were made to clear out the second floor storage area, in 1986, Clive Rodger bought the engine and removed it. A chain hoist lowered it through an opening to the first floor where it was loaded into the box of a heavy-duty three-quarter ton truck and then driven home to Mr. Rodger's residence. The face of the flywheels upon which the drive belt ran measured 5½ inches.

With a minimum of restoration and encouragement, the large engine came to life for the first time since its removal from Barriefield. After displaying the engine at various area antique-equipment shows, the engine was sold and is presently in the possession of a very excited and happy gas engine collector in Pennsylvania, USA.

A southwest view of the McAllister Towing & Salvage Company buildings situated on the waterfront at the foot of Gore Street. Photographed by Gordon Smithson in 1982.



IN MEMORIAM: DOUGLAS ALEXANDER McNEVIN 1919 - 2004

On 21 April, as part of our 110th anniversary celebration, we honoured members of the KHS who had been recorded as being members in 1966-67. Both Mr. and Mrs. McNevin were on the membership-list for that year and, indeed, they have been active members and supporters of the Society for over 40 years. Sadly, Douglas McNevin died on 22 April.

A prominent presence in the economic and social landscape of Kingston for over half a century, in 1952, Douglas McNevin took over the Kingston Creamery and Cold Storage Co. from his father. He later sold the business and turned his interests to Kingont Investments and, some years later, to McNevin Realty. Keenly interested in his community and country, Douglas McNevin supported many associations and groups, both financially and as a willing worker and leader: a past governor of KGH; a Rotarian of over 50 years and a Paul Harris fellow for services to his club; an active member of Sydenham Street United Church; a loyal member of his University of Toronto alumni association; a past president of the local Liberal association.

Douglas McNevin will be sorely missed by his family, the Kingston community, and the Kingston Historical Society.



late breaking news!

The Kingston Historical Society is pleased to announce that our President, Professor **Brian S. Osborne**, was elected, on 1 May 2004, **President of the Ontario Historical Society**. The KHS council and members extend best wishes and congratulations.

☼ **THE ANNUAL BUS TRIP OF THE PITTSBURGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY** will take place on Saturday, **5 June** departing at 8:30 a.m. from the Fire Hall on Gore Road (at Hwy 15). Members of the KHS are cordially invited to participate. The tour will visit the O'Hara Mill Museum and Conservation area, and the Actinolite Marble Church/Tweed Heritage Centre. Buffet lunch at Two Loons, Madoc. Cost, including lunch, is \$40. Tickets are available from Alice Hirst, 545-1492.

☼ **JENNIFER McKENDRY INVITES YOU TO VISIT HER WEBSITE**, www.kingstonarchitecture.com, now expanded with articles on regional architecture, as well as information on her recent book, *Into the Silent Land: Historic Graveyards & Cemeteries in Ontario*.

☼ **THE KHS WEBSITE**, www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca, **HAS A NEW LOOK**, designed by Mark Andrews. New features, such as a Members' Forum, are in the planning stages.

A GRAND CONCERT

photographs by Jennifer McKendry



The Kingston Historical Society is now 110 years old, and Donna Ivey and Norma Kelly kindly arranged a celebratory Grand Concert of music written to honour Sir John A. Macdonald and Lady Macdonald in the beautiful Memorial Hall of Kingston City Hall. An audience of more than 150 sang, clapped, and generally had a good time listening to spirited renditions of such late 19th century music as *Sir John's Welcome to Kingston – a Song for the Times!* and the *Sir John A. Macdonald Waltz*. But the greatest appreciation was reserved for 15-year-old Aventi Dey's original piece, *Land of the Free*, an ode to Sir John. And what concert of this nature would be complete without *The Maple Leaf for Ever*, *O Canada*, and *God Save the Queen*. Sir John A. Macdonald himself (reincarnated in the guise of Brian Porter), accompanied by Lady Macdonald (Renee Porter), entertained the audience and introduced the fine singers and pianists who, thanks to the skills of Norma Kelly, were in attire suited to the era of their repertoire.

Taken together, our Gala Birthday Party, was a wonderful evening of music, historical



above: We were honoured by the presence of the man himself and his lady (rumoured to be Brian and Renee Porter).

right: Soprano Diane Bootsma and pianist Larissa Kiyashko treated the audience to such pieces as *Joint High Commission Galop* of 1871.



(left to right) Carl Bray, Donna Ivey, Sarah Gibson-Bray, and Christopher Mayell



Concert organizers, Donna M. Ivey and I. Norma Kelly, were warmly thanked by Alan MacLachlan on behalf of KHS

concert photos in colour: www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca

reconstruction, and thespian ingenuity. Many thanks to Donna and Norma, Brian and Renee Porter, and cast of talented local performers: Diane Bootsma, Carl Bray, Avanti Dey, Larissa Kiyashko, Christopher Mayell, and Sarah Gibson-Bray. And a special thanks to Randy Genois who has provided us with a video-recording of this historical KHS event. Finally, the Society gratefully acknowledges generous "birthday donations" in support of this Gala from several members: Michael L. Davies,

Dawson W. Einarson, Ruby Garrow, William F.E. Morley, Emma Molson, D. Jack Miller, Brian S. Osborne, Stewart Renfrew, Stephen W. Roughton, Elizabeth Silliman, Marjorie Simmons, A. Britton Smith, Graham Thomson, Isobel Trumpour, and George Vosper.



above left: KHS President Brian Osborne presented Margaret Angus with a memento representing the Society's appreciation of 50 years of service to the Society. R.A. Preston and Bogart Trumpour were also recognized.



above middle: Pianist-soprano Avanti Dey pleased everyone with her original composition, an ode to Sir John A.



Sir John A. Macdonald in the flesh and in a painted portrait.

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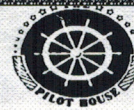
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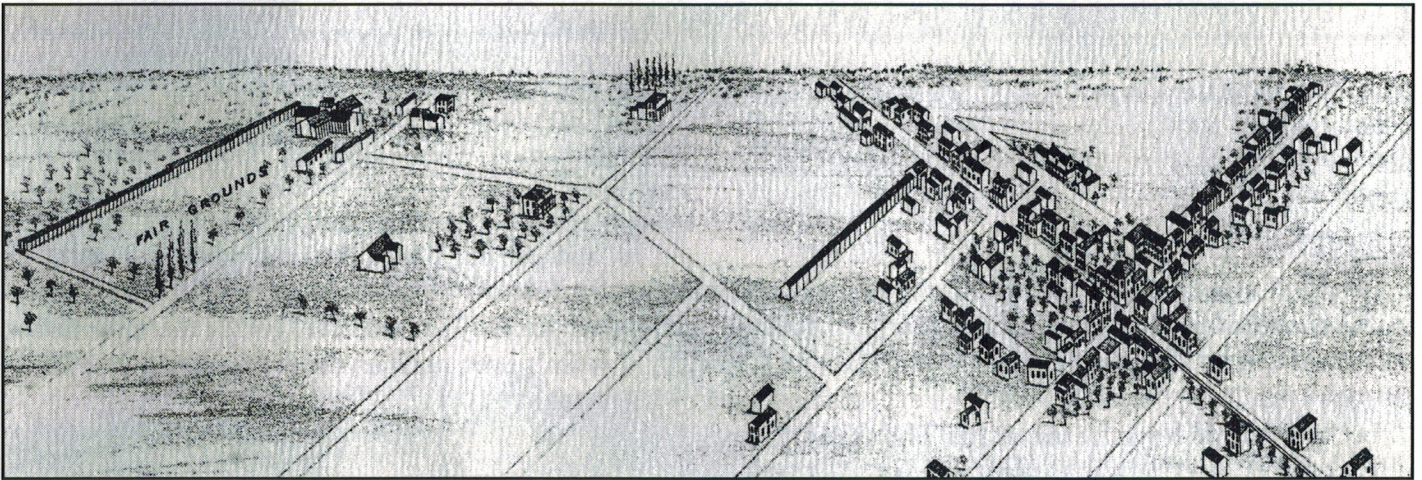
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LOCAL HISTORY BOOK IN THE WORKS



Fair Grounds on Palace Rd at Bath Rd on the left and Victoria St at Princess St on the right.
Detail from Brosius' bird's-eye view of Kingston 1875

A group of local history buffs have commenced work on a book project dealing with the history of Williamsville, a distinctive community in the west part of Kingston.

Williamsville lies within the boundaries of Johnson St north to Concession St, and west of Division St between Alfred St and the former Traffic Circle at the intersection of Princess St, Bath Rd and Concession St. The original hub of the hamlet was in the area near the corner of Princess St and Victoria St.

The project was initiated by Marjorie Simmons, a long-time Williamsville resident, and assisted by four other local history buffs: Barbara Bonner, John Lynn Bell, Russell Patterson, and Gordon Smithson. The proposed book will provide an historical sketch through the use of old photographs, personal interviews, and historical notes. Although the formal book-project has

been started only recently, the collection of old photographs and stories has been underway for the last forty years by Marjorie. However, with numerous loose ends to finalize before completion, it will be some months before the planned book will be ready for editing.

Area residents who may have information or old photographs of Williamsville, are encouraged to contact the authors for inclusion of this material in the book. Perhaps you have an old receipt from Woods Ice & Fuel, David Nesbitt Motors, Graham's Esso, Timm's Texaco, Duff's Supertest, and similar older businesses along Princess Street near Victoria Street. Please telephone Marjorie Simmons at 542-9847. Your support is appreciated.

Submitted By: Gordon Smithson



Does anyone recognize this charming frame house identified on the reverse of the photograph as 772 Montreal Street? Paul Banfield of Queen's University Archives speculates that it may have disappeared, but would be pleased to receive any information at 533-6000, ext. 74460. He can also be reached by email banfield@post.queensu.ca

LANDSCAPES/INSCAPES

"The Happening" Part 2: Sir John A. Macdonald's Path

by Shirley Gibson-Langille



Fourteen years have passed since "The Happening" at Sir John A. Macdonald's gravesite that I wrote about in last month's *Limelight*. Elizabeth Luther, writer for the *Toronto Star*, got all the information she needed on the Chapel window in Cataraqui Cemetery. I wasn't even curious about the window THEN!

In 2003, I decided that my next art-show (see p. 11) would be "**All About You: Leeds & the Thousand Islands**" (formerly Escott and The Front & Rear of Leeds and Lansdowne Townships). While painting in Seeley's Bay, I met historian, Dan Roantree, who loaned me two rare photographs for subjects to paint. One of them was of the Old Coleman Hotel, c1848 (right), that used to be in the village. Sir John A. Macdonald was a frequent visitor there on his way to Ottawa. The other was Mother Barnes, the famous "Witch of Plum Hollow." Although her log cabin (below right) near Lake Eloida is outside the township, she was very much a part of the community there. Farmers sought her advice about missing



livestock. One farmer consulted her about some sheep that had disappeared. She advised him that he would find his sheep at the neighbour's place: more exactly, their hides in the barn and the meat in a barrel.

One of her most famous predictions was of a murder. In 1863, a Mr. Dockstader went missing at Charleston Lake. Suspecting foul play, the community visited Mother Barnes. She told them he had been murdered and that they would find his body under a fallen tree in Charleston Lake. The body was found where she had said it would be and a Mr. Harter was arrested, tried, and hanged for murder. He then said, "EVEN SIR



JOHN A. MACDONALD SOUGHT HER ADVICE."

Now that rang a bell in my head! When I got home, I searched in my file and came up with Elizabeth Luther's wonderful 1987 article from the *Toronto Star* on "The Witch of Plum Hollow" entitled, "Even Sir John A. Macdonald sought her advice."

Wow! After all these years, "The Happening" was for me as well! The meaning was clear: the ghosts for my next art-show will be Sir John A. Macdonald and "The Witch of Plum Hollow."

Peggy Cohoe passed away last year so I shared all of this with Marjorie Simmons. She told me that the Cataraqui Cemetery Chapel window came from a church in that area. Lisa Russell of the Anglican Archives told me it was All Saints Church (1893-1974) in Redan. Sir John A. Macdonald spent much time in that area and the people were very fond of him. So much so that, when they built their church, they raised money and erected a beautiful stained glass window in his memory. In 1974, the congregation had dwindled and they were forced to sell the church. They took enough money out of the sale to have the window professionally removed and sent out to none other than our own Kingston Historical Society which, in turn, donated it to the Cataraqui Cemetery for their new chapel!

Mapping out a course that Sir John A. himself might have taken in his horse and wagon, I went on my adventure. I discovered Mother Barnes' deserted, shadowy cabin still standing and not too far from the church in Redan. I have painted the cabin but couldn't do the church because it had been renovated into a house. I'm certain I will find a photo of it so I can complete this story.

Oh, oh! There I go again: making assumptions! Could there be another part to this story? Should I follow Sir John A.'s trail further? Will there be another "Happening"?



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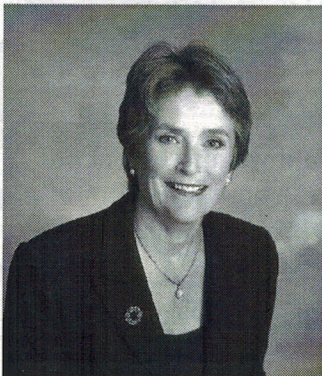
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THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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 **SUNDAY, 6 JUNE at 1:30PM** at Cataraqi 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 for the 113th grave-side ceremony commemorating the death of Sir John A. Macdonald will be **Dr. Christina Cameron**, Director General, National Historic Sites, Parks Canada.

Dr. Cameron's career as a heritage executive spans more than thirty years. In her role at National Historic Sites, she provides national direction for Canada's historic places, focussing on heritage conservation and education programs. Dr. Cameron's academic studies in Canada and the United States cover literature, art history, and museum studies, including an M.A. from Brown University and a Ph.D. in architectural history from Laval University. Since the 1970s, she has written extensively on Canadian architecture, heritage management, and World Heritage issues. Dr. Cameron has served on numerous heritage boards and advisory committees including the Getty Conservation Grants Committee, the Getty-sponsored international heritage education project, as well as heading Canada's delegation to the World Heritage Organization since 1990.



Clearly, on the occasion of this long-standing commemoration of our first prime-minister, Dr. Cameron is well-positioned to reflect on the influence of the man, and the importance of remembering his contribution to Canada.

You are welcome to tour historic picturesque Cataraqi 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.

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



photo: Randy Genoie

For further information, please see www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca