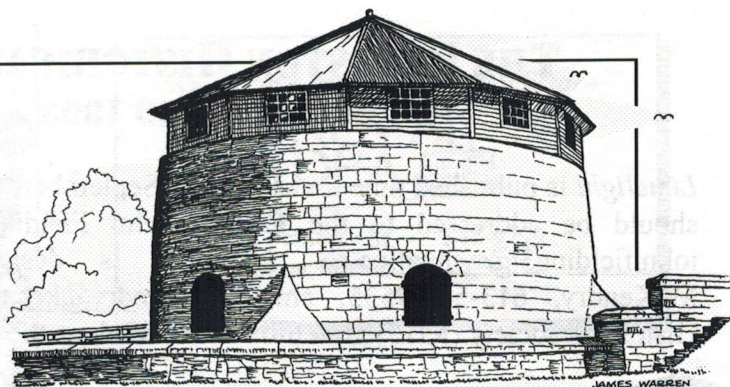


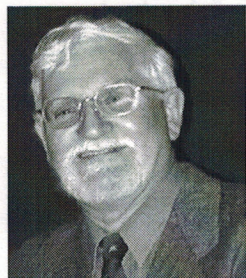
LIMELIGHT

NEWSLETTER *of the*
KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

vol 7 no 8 November 2005 ISSN 1488-5565



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



The great gate leading into the Royal Military College is a Memorial, as are the magnificent stained-glass windows in City Hall. November 11th will be particularly poignant this year, as many of those who served, have themselves become but a memory. Earlier this year, we heard from Blake Seward, an enthusiastic teacher who gave good account of his young students' projects remembering soldiers in the Smiths Falls area. Each of us has a different way of connecting with these singular events of the past. For me, it is a lone photograph of an old pal, the late Donald Chown, looking

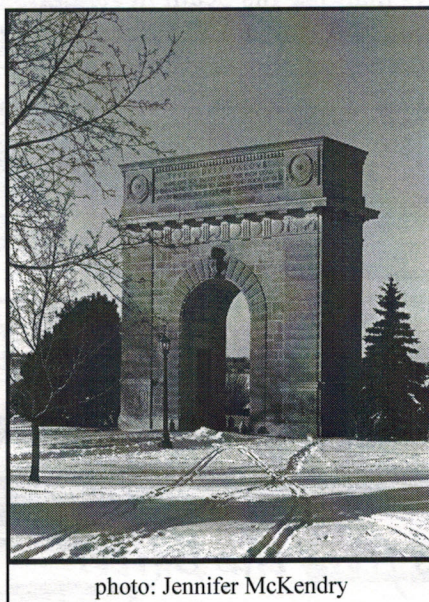


photo: Jennifer McKendry

sharp in his uniform in 1943. For Chris Varley, it is a labour of love. He and many others have created a magnificent exhibition, "Honouring the 60th Anniversary of the End of World War II" that can be seen at the Naval Reserve Division, HMCS Cataraqui (hwy 2, across from RMC). It is one of the ephemeral memorials to those who served on land and at sea. Those in our Society who served "over there" and sit among us at our meetings, are a direct personal connection: they are the honored among us. ✎

Maurice Smith

THIS MONTH'S MEETING:

WEDNESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER at 7:30PM

Eric Van Dalen

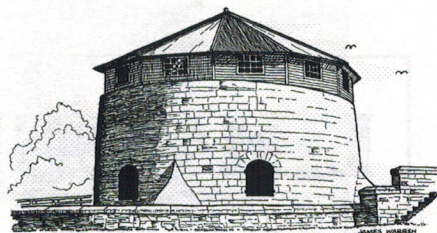
**"Alcan and Kingston, 1938-2004:
Challenge and Response"**

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**, John Fielding, 613-545-5944, john.fielding3@sympatico.ca. *Limelight* is designed by 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.

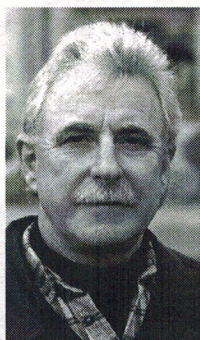
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Notes from the Editor

I was very pleased to hear that our departed friend and member of KHS, **Don Richan**, was honoured recently by his archivist colleagues. On 6 September 2005, Dr. Ian Wilson, the Librarian and Archivist of Canada, presented the inaugural Don Richan Memorial Lecture, "The Gift of One Generation to Another." It was the keynote address for the International Council on Archives hosted by Michigan State University. The lecture has been established in recognition of the leadership given by Don in the period he was President, 2001-03.

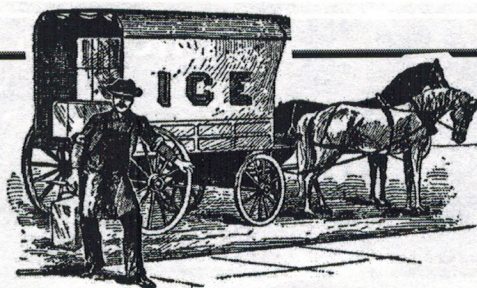
My sincere apology to **Carl Croy** for mistyping his name in last month's *Limelight*. When it was suggested that we welcome new

members with an announcement in the newsletter, I thought it was a good idea but it defeats the purpose if I can't type a name correctly! We need to consider whether some people might not want their name to appear in print. If you have an opinion on this, please speak to me at the next meeting or email me.

Finally, don't forget to nominate a deserving person for the KHS Award by **18 November**. Nomination forms were inserted in last month's newsletter and are also available from www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca under Coming Events. They should be mailed to Dr J.G. Pike, 150 Macdonnell St, Kingston ON K7L 4B8 (or handed to Jack at the November 16th meeting).

John Fielding

Letter to the Editor: ICE CUTTING & HOUSES



Gord Smithson's letter of inquiry last month about "The Old Ice House on King Street West" brought back memories. While I have no recall of that particular ice house, I fondly recall the fun we teenagers had in the 1940s at two other ice houses, one on Beverley St, the other on Collingwood St.

The ice houses are long gone. The Campbell family ran the Lake Ontario Ice Co., at 25 Beverley Street, according to the 1927 city directory. The same source states that Phillip H. Small was the manager of the Kingston Ice Co. Ltd at 20 Collingwood St. This may be the same ice house once operated by the O'Donnell family who lived at 54 Collingwood.

The ice houses were large barn-like structures. The front of the O'Donnell one had a vertical opening, about 5' wide and running from the ground to the roof, in order to pass through blocks of ice for storing with straw between each layer. The blocks of ice were man-handled into place using ice tongs. It was sometimes necessary first to level the layer over which the blocks were being pulled, if the blocks below were not uniform in thickness. One did this by scraping the ice with a metal device, shaped like a hockey stick with cutting blades in the shape of four fingers (resembling one's hand when pushed down onto a table). An elevator facilitated moving the blocks through the ice-house opening. The elevator was a wooden platform onto which the ice was placed after being taken from a vehicle that had brought it from Lake Ontario. The elevator was raised in the following manner: a rope, attached to the top of the elevator cage, ran through a pulley affixed to a beam protruding outward from the ice house's top; from there, it ran to a fitting on a horse's saddle; the animal would be backed up to lower the elevator and moved

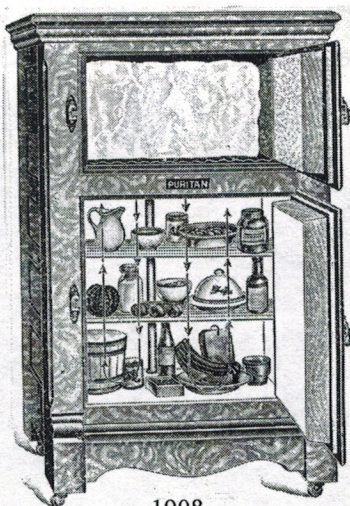
forward to raise it.

The equipment for cutting ice on Lake Ontario passed through an opening in the breakwater railing between Beverley and Collingwood Streets, just east of the coal dock (where city's water filtration plant is now located - you can still see the railing post holes on the remaining sidewalk that once ran on the south side of King St W. between Lower University and Beverley Streets.) In addition to the trucks needed to bring ice to the ice house, there were trucks pulling sleighs, on which car engines were mounted. One engine was adapted to operate a huge, circular, mill saw used to cut a checker-board pattern in the ice. Another engine was fitted out with a conveyor to carry the ice from the lake to the truck destined for the ice house. Getting the first block of ice out of the checker board was a tricky business. Then, a steel V-tipped pole was used to separate the blocks. The freed blocks were then floated to the conveyor using pike poles. The ice thickness was greater then than now, perhaps 18" or more.

Walking to the cutting site, about a mile off-shore, was not a warming experience. Harvesting ice must be one of the coldest imaginable jobs. Sometimes we would hitch a ride back to shore. A young member of the Campbell family lost his life when a vehicle went through the ice.

The last step was delivering the ice blocks to customers' houses for placement in old-fashioned ice boxes, soon to be replaced with electric refrigerators, spelling the end of the ice-block industry.

Stephen Roughton



1908

KHS Third Annual October Day Trip *or* How We Invaded Ottawa & Merrickville

by Alan MacLachlan

Photographs by Robert Cardwell (in colour www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca)

On October 1st, a contingent of 29 members and friends of KHS left Kingston by bus for the



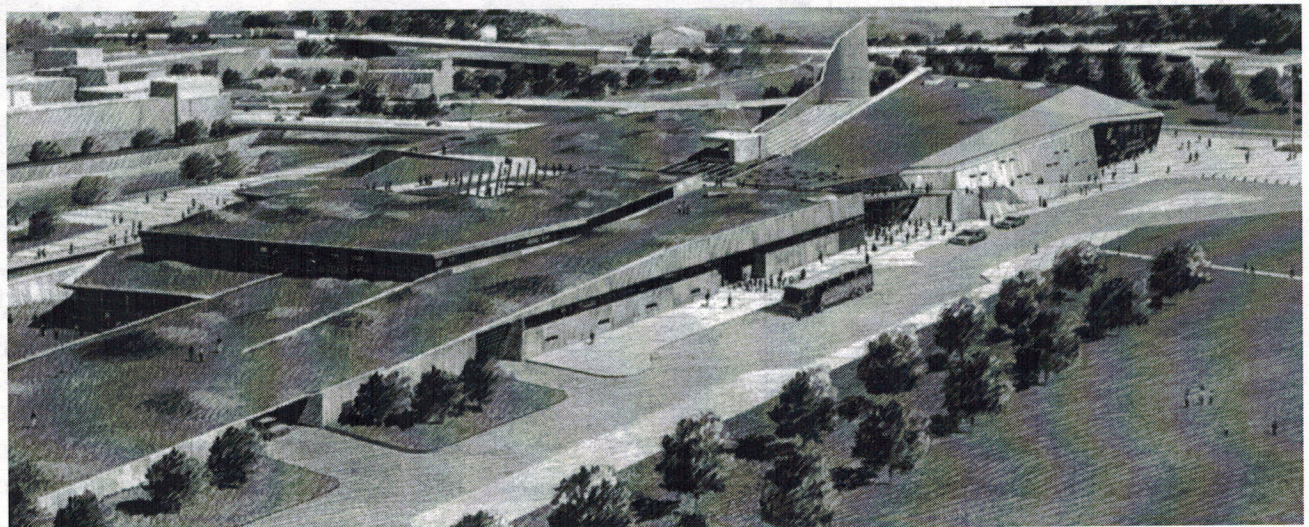
new Canadian War Museum in Ottawa. Our guides, Melissa and Geneviève, took us on the Grand Tour of the museum. The focus of the guided tour was the innovative architectural design by Raymond Moriyama and Alex Rankin, based on the theme of 'regeneration,' which brings to mind not only the impact of war on the land and the people, but also nature's ability to regenerate and to recover from the devastation of human conflict.

Following the tour, we explored the museum including the galleries, which trace the wars and military involvement by Canada from earliest times

to recent conflicts and peacekeeping endeavours. Some of our group meandered through the LeBreton Gallery, which contains a diverse collection of vehicles, artillery and other large



artifacts including a 1960s RCAF "Voodoo" jet fighter. We were awed by the more than 330 pieces of original artwork that were on display. It is worthwhile noting that the museum has 400 paintings and sketches by Alex Colville and 370 by the Group of Seven. At the end of November, an exhibition showcasing artwork by painters from Australia, Great Britain and Canada will be shown in the Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae Gallery.





In the afternoon, our small force invaded Merrickville and had afternoon tea at the Sam Jakes Inn, the former residence of Sam Jakes (*below*). By 1861, Sam Jakes, an enterprising Irish immigrant who arrived in Merrickville in the 1830s, operated a three-storey department store (now the Baldachin Inn), which was considered the largest department store between Montreal and Chicago. It even had an elevator.

Following tea, our contingent divided into two platoons. One ventured into the Merrickville shops and studios that were hosting its annual studio tour and came away with sundry booty. The second platoon enjoyed a tour of the Merrickville Blockhouse, the largest blockhouse on the Rideau

Canal. Our hosts were Pat Molsen and John Cowan of the Merrickville Historical Society, which operates the blockhouse. Taking us into the Parks Canada Reception Area beside the hydropower dam, Pat regaled us with some of the history of the over 50 water-powered industries, which dotted the shoreline of the Rideau at Merrickville. Some of these included a gristmill, sawmill, tannery, cheese factory, creamery, blacksmith shops, ironworks shops, and mills for textiles and wool.

Our return to Kingston allowed us to reflect on the day that we had including the fall foliage, excellent cooperation by Mother Nature and most notably the enjoyable camaraderie. 🍂



Please mark your calendars for another excursion on 30 September 2006.

LANDSCAPES/INSCAPES

MILLARD'S SMOKE SHOP

by Shirley Gibson-Langille



It was the evening of 14 October 1961 when I left my apartment at 207 Wellington Street to go to Millard's Smoke Shop at 201 Wellington Street in Kingston. I often went there after supper to buy a bag of potato chips and a coke, and also to visit with Pearl Beauclair. She worked there in the evenings and said she enjoyed my company as I helped to keep her awake. Imagine!

Pearl was the sole supporter of her eight children who lived with her in the small third floor apartment above the Smoke Shop. I really admired her. She never asked for welfare and held down three jobs along with

The children always went home happy. I'm sure that even today many of them look back on their favourite candy store.

supper for the children, clean up, and get ready to work at the Smoke Shop until 11.00 pm.

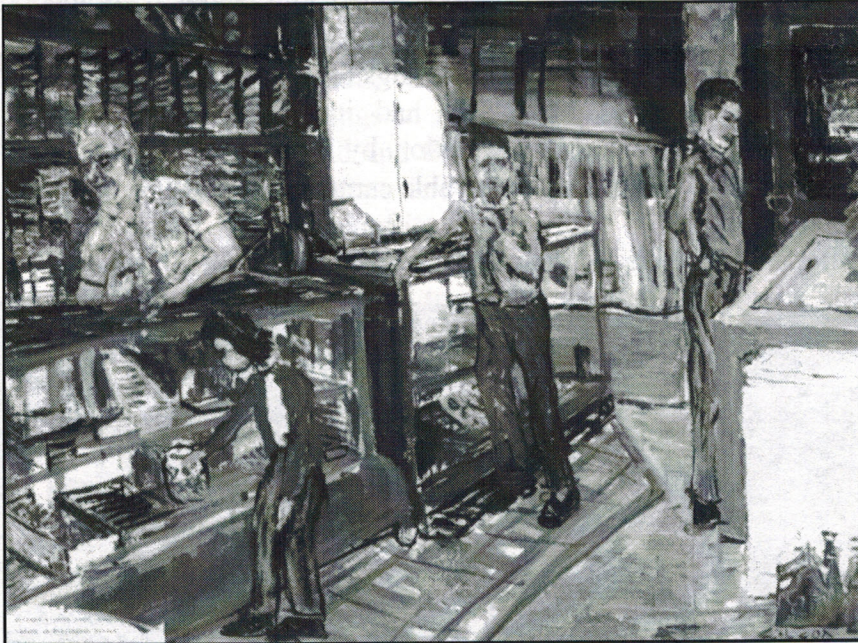
On this particular night, I had a plan. I brought my sketchbook and did a detailed

drawing of the interior along with a neighbour, a Mr. Brown and his son. After the shop closed, I went home, got out my oil paints, and worked on the painting until 3:30am.

The next afternoon, I took the painting back to the shop and painted in dear Mr. Millard in the act of picking out candy for Pearl's daughter, Doris. He was such a kind man who enjoyed serving his customers and chatting with them. He was

especially nice with the many children who came in with their pennies as he directed them to the glass-case under his counter that was full of a wonderful assortment of lip-smacking candy. What patience he had with them trying to pick out just the right ones to match the little bit of money they had. I noticed that he sometimes made mistakes in their favour. It must have been extremely hard on his back for sure! The children always went home happy. I'm sure that even today many of them look back on their favourite candy store. I know, I can remember mine. Do you?

When Mr. Millard died a couple of years later, his family wanted to buy the painting, however, the Smoke Shop and all my memories around there were a big part of my life and it is one painting that I will never sell. ☺



selling Avon, Tupperware, and Regal products on the side. Each day at 5:00am, Pearl went to work at Kresge's in the bakery. She would leave that job and go on to one of the city's motels where she worked as a chambermaid. She would then go home, do all her chores, make

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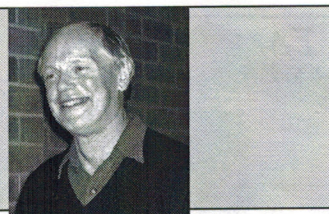


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SPEAKERS' CORNER

with John Abbott
photographs by Jennifer McKendry



Yet again, the members and guests of the KHS have been entertained and enlightened by an informed historian and accomplished speaker. At our October meeting **Brian Porter**, fully attired in the accoutrements of a late 19th-century N.W.M.P. constable, traced the intersecting careers of two remarkable figures: Major James Walsh of Brockville, one of the original set of nine officers appointed to the force, and Sitting Bull, Chief of the Sioux. Superb story-teller that he is, Brian Porter set his subjects in the contexts of time and place - the last quarter of the 19th century in the border country of the interior plains east of the Rocky Mountains



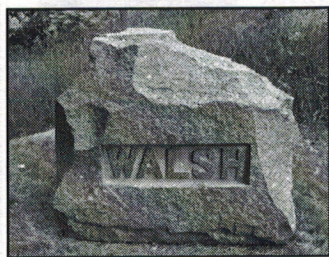
November 16th's presentation, "Alcan and Kingston, 1938-2004: Challenge and Response," is not to be missed. Come and bring your friends to the Kingston Public Library at 7:30PM to hear Dr. **Eric Van Dalen**, as he explores the sometimes-intricate economic, social and political relationships forged between the Aluminum Company of Canada and the city and people of Kingston over a period of 65 years. Eric Van Dalen and Martin Reeve (his collaborator) were long-term Alcan employees, with wide experience of aluminum production in Canada and Europe.



Mark your calendars, please, for two more celebratory KHS events: first, **14 December**, the date of our annual Christmas party in the cozy quarters of Fort Frontenac. This is a time when we forgo the usual formal presentation, snuggle into leather sofas or gather round the bar, hoist the merry glass and honour a few good, deserving people with awards. And second, **11 January 2006**, when we will celebrate John A. Macdonald's birth during a fine feast of vittles at the Senior Staff Officers' Mess, RMC.



Please look for more details about both events in next month's *Limelight*.



Walsh's monument,
Brockville.
Photo by Gord Smithson

eastern horses in western environments. As a bonus, we were treated to **Brian Osborne's** deadpan assumption of Brian Porter's persona while introducing Brian Porter.

Kingston Historical Society Membership Form for 2006

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I give permission to publish my name in
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Or hand this form and payment to a
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At one of our monthly meetings.

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