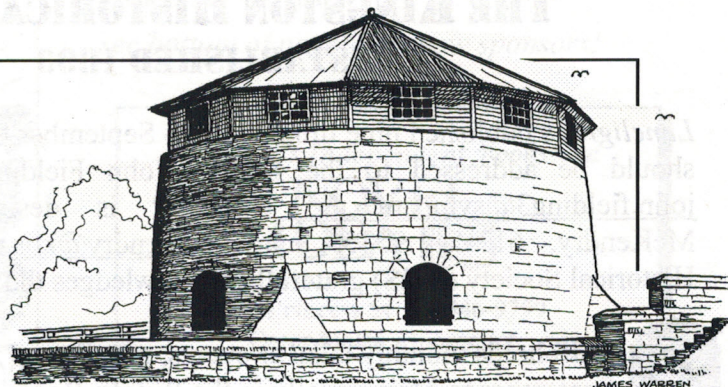


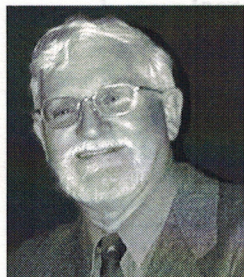
# LIMELIGHT

NEWSLETTER of the  
KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

vol 8 no 2 February 2006 ISSN 1488-5565



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



The father of Confederation, Sir John A. Macdonald continues to be a source of never ending fascination. There are at least two major biographies being written for release in 2006 and it is easy

to imagine graduate students across Canada exploring new facets of Sir John A.'s political and private life. What a delight, then, when a leading historian, Desmond Morton delivered on January 11<sup>th</sup> (*photos p. 4*) his well tempered thoughts to Society members and our guests about the remarkable man who represented Kingston in parliament for so many years. Dr. Morton did so with deep understanding, with the kind of thought and articulation that only comes after spending a lifetime in researching and thinking. Labour historians would describe Dr. Morton as a brain worker. The theme was the relationship between United States and Canada and, of course, in Dr.

Morton's hands, with roaring 21<sup>st</sup> century topicality. It was sobering stuff and, as a Canadian who likes the flag and all that, a little difficult to accept. Such is the world of real politics. It is easy to wish, after listening to Dr. Morton, that the man known as "old tomorrow" was thinking of us today.

Earlier that day, Society members gathered around the statue of Sir John A Macdonald in City Park at King and West Streets (*photos p. 5*). It was an altogether more profane gathering with off key singing, jokes (all bad but good), and celebratory bending of the elbow. At the expense of being gauche about this, I am proud of the fact that the Society is central to these two events on each January 11<sup>th</sup>.

*Maurice Smith*

**THIS MONTH'S MEETING**  
WEDNESDAY, 15 FEBRUARY, 7:30PM

**AGM & AUCTION**

in the Wilson Room,  
Kingston Public Library  
Johnson at Bagot



refreshments

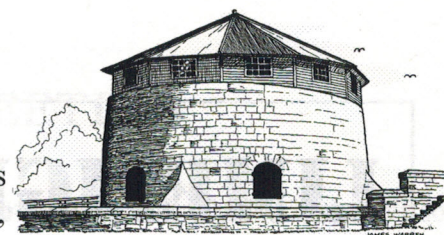
all welcome

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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](mailto:john.fielding3@sympatico.ca). *Limelight* is designed by Jennifer McKendry, 613-544-9535, email [mckendry@kos.net](mailto: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](http://www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca)

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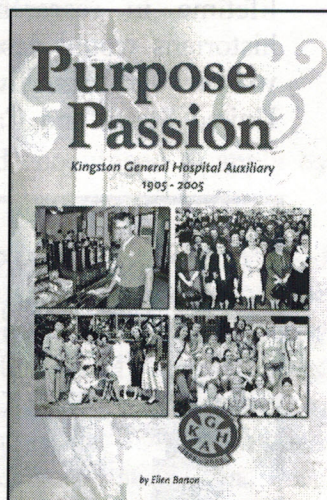
*submitted by Brian Osborne*

## ***Passion and Purpose: Kingston General Hospital Auxiliary, 1905-2005***

by **Ellen Barton** (available at Novel Idea, 156 Princess St at Bagot)

Towns are made up of a visible inventory of buildings, houses, shops, and public spaces. But communities require more intangible things if they are to be vibrant places. Over time, people establish networks of support and service that enhance the way we live as individuals, families, and citizens. They produce a myriad of institutions that ensure our well-being and survival. For over a century, Kingston has been well served by one of these, The Kingston General Hospital Auxiliary.

Based on exhaustive research, Ellen Barton has produced a lively narrative of how in 1905 a group of elite ladies of Kingston established an organization of volunteers committed to enhancing the non-medical services provided by the hospital. The title of Barton's study, *Purpose and Passion*, encapsulates the essence of her thesis: how several generations of Kingston women and men have directed their passionate commitment to serving others by tea-trolleys, gift shops, clever fund-raising initiatives, and a focused sense of mission. Well written and richly illustrated, this study also provides valuable insights into the evolving social and cultural landscape of our community.



# SPEAKERS' CORNER

with John Abbott



On 11 January, KHS members and guests celebrated the 191<sup>st</sup> anniversary of Sir John A. Macdonald's birth at RMC (*photos p. 4*). Following dinner, Sir John A's association with Scotland and Canada was celebrated by short speeches and toasts. The jewel was a rousing campaign speech, lit by flashes of wit and laughter generated by droll stories, delivered by Sir John A. himself. His audience demonstrated their enthusiasm by beating the tables, shouting encouraging words, and finally by responding with a toast to The Dominion of Canada. Heartfelt thanks to **Brian Porter**, whose research and delivery gave us an insight into a late 19<sup>th</sup>-century political campaign.

Guest speaker, **Desmond Morton**, revealed that the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century fortifications securing the entrance to the Rideau Canal symbolized in stone, iron and sinew the British determination to defend British North America against Yankee aggression. For his part, John A. Macdonald realized that the new Dominion's safety was contingent upon a defense policy that posed no threat to American security. Ensuring peace with the USA also produced a financial and political dividend. Maintaining a small permanent force and providing an outlet for the aspirations of "week-end warriors" in the militia

was cheap and placated the electorate. That touchstone of Canadian defense policy, the necessity of continuing to shape deportment to satisfy American security requirements is, Professor Morton argued, as crucial today as it was in Macdonald's time.

At our regular January meeting, **Maurice D. Smith's** survey of the Kingston Dry Dock & Shipyard began with the building of the dry dock by the government. Shipping companies were tired of being held to ransom by Americans repair facilities. But when it became apparent that the dry dock was only capable of doing rudimentary repairs without workshops, the shipyard was constructed. Born of necessity, progress ultimately rendered these facilities obsolete. Ships increased in size and shrunk in number, yet plans to enlarge the dock came to naught. The Seaway banished the canaller, and Kingston ceased to be an over-wintering and repair port. As smoke-stack industries disappeared, cultural industries emerged. One can imagine what noisy, dirty, maritime industry was all about by visiting the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes, housed in Shipyard buildings beside the dry-dock, on Kingston's waterfront.

## THIRD ANNUAL KHS AUCTION



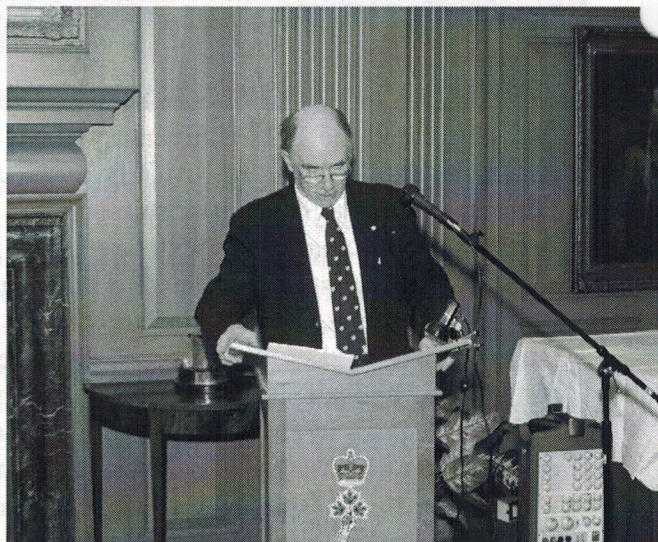
Following the AGM in the library on **Wednesday, 15 February**, KHS faithful will once again have the opportunity to savour the thrills of the auctioneer's hammer. All donations for the auction will be gratefully received and tax receipts will be issued for the selling price of the items. Suggestions include postcards, early toys, china, marbles, dolls, early advertising items, prints, paintings, crocks, vases, old bottles, old coins, flags, maps, scrap-books and pre-1950

motorcycles! Give the auctioneer a challenge - surprises are welcome adding to the spontaneity of the evening. Don't forget the silent auction that runs in the background; art and history books do particularly well in this forum. Please contact Doug Petty (546-0422) or Warren Everett (545-9316) for advice about donations and any requests for pick-up of items. Advance notice of donations helps the auction house, but not essential. Last minute arrivals can often be show stoppers! Income from this event benefits KHS.

# KHS SALUTES SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD ON JANUARY 11<sup>TH</sup>

The Kingston Historical Society feted in fine form the birthday of Sir John A. Macdonald on January 11th in the handsome setting of the Royal Military College. After the annual dinner, accompanied by rousing toasts, the attendees enjoyed an eloquent talk by guest speaker, **Desmond Morton** (right).

Photography by Randy Genois



above: Past and present Kingston politicians at the dinner: Sir John A. Macdonald and Lady Macdonald and Mayor Harvey Rosen and Sharon Monson. Also attending were Brian and Renee Porter.

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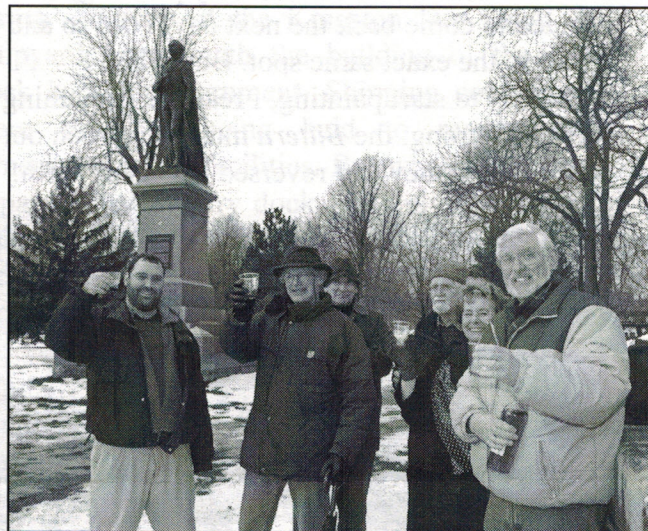
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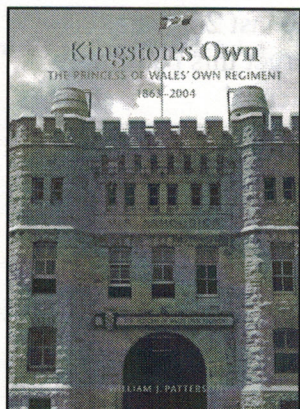
## hurrahs

were voiced in the park for the birthday of Sir John A. Macdonald—under his watchful eye— by an intrepid group of Kingstonians, whose spirits were not dampened by winter rain on January 11th .

Photography by Randy Genoio



## KHS congratulates Bill Patterson on his new book



Bill Patterson and Doug Thompson at the book launch on 14 January at the Armouries of Bill's latest book, *Kingston's Own: the Princess of Wales' Own Regiment 1863-2004*.



Photo by Jennifer McKendry

Special thanks to **Ted Huber** for his help in copy-editing and distributing this issue of *Limelight*.

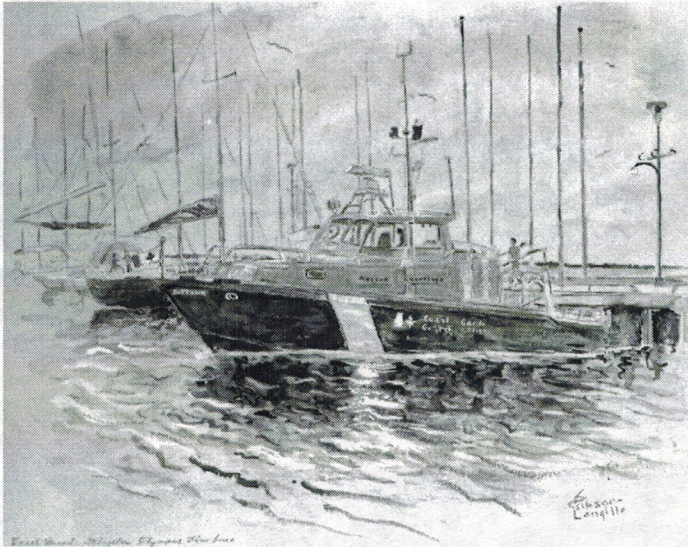
## LANDSCAPES/INSCAPES

### MY "BITTERN-SWEET" EXPERIENCE

by Shirley Gibson-Langille



**O**n 11 June 1988, I took my painting gear to the Portsmouth Olympic Harbour. The Canadian Coast Guard Cutter, *Bittern*, caught my eye and I set up in front of it. As there wasn't time to finish my painting, I decided to come back the next day. I did so and set up in the exact same spot. But, when I looked up to start painting, I realized something was very wrong: the *Bittern* must have been out on a call and they had reversed into their berth!



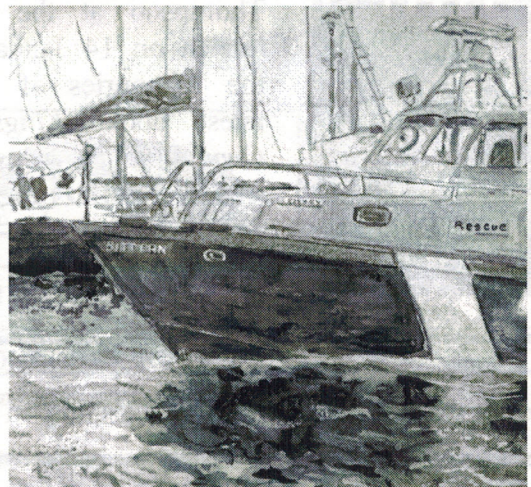
Because I'm a possibility thinker, I decided to carry on with the painting. If anyone had been watching me, they must have thought I was insane. And I was! I kept running back and forth to see what it was like on the other side. Surprisingly, I finally did get it finished.

Then, fourteen years later, in 2002, I found myself parked in front of the *Bittern* again. The Commanding Officer of Crew A, Ray Throop, came over and introduced himself. He was curious about my license-plate, 2CGULS and soon we were talking about his vessel. He told me that the 41-foot cutter had twin 903 Cummins engines and had been built in 1982 in

Kingston as a Class 100 search-and-rescue vessel designed to cruise at 28 knots with a maximum range of 500 nautical miles. He invited me into their station where I met the other crew members and then took me on a tour of the working and storage areas and their comfortable living area. Over coffee, the crew shared some exciting stories of the rescues they had made in the past. It was a fascinating visit and when I left they gave me one of their specially engraved Coast Guard mugs to take home as a souvenir.

In December 2004, I read in the *Whig-Standard* that the *Bittern* was to leave Kingston in the summer of 2005. Her replacement was to be a brand new American-designed 47-foot self-righting 300 B class motor lifeboat with twin 450 horsepower caterpillar engines that would allow her to cruise at 25 knots. While Wade Buell, Commanding Officer of Crew B, appreciated that "new technology and new systems are imperative in this day and age of search and rescue," he admitted to "a sad and forlorn feeling" about leaving the old 41 foot V-hull vessel. As for his new command, he expressed the hope that "it serves me as well as the *Bittern* served me over the last 26 years."

As for me, I will never forget this painting, or my "*Bittern-Sweet*" experience!



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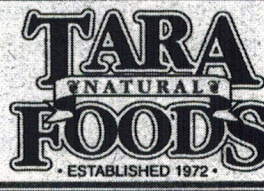


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# KHS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At the AGM of the Kingston Historical Society on Wednesday, **15 February 2006** at 7:30 PM, in the Wilson Room, Kingston Public Library, the Society's Nominating Committee will present the following slate of candidates to the membership for their consideration:

## EXECUTIVE

<i>President</i>	Maurice Smith	<i>Treasurer</i>	Gordon Sinclair
<i>Vice-President</i>	Ed Grenda	<i>Past President</i>	Brian Osborne
<i>General Secretary</i>	Alan MacLachlan		

## COUNCIL

John Abbott	Marc Letourneau
Robert Andrews	Doug Petty
Heather Home	Jack Pike
Ted Huber	

As specified in the Constitution, the newly elected Council will appoint persons to several responsibilities. The Nominations Committee will recommend the following who have agreed to serve in the following capacities:

Editor of *Historic Kingston*, Jane Errington  
Editor of *Limelight*, John Fielding  
Chair, Murney Tower Committee, Warren Everett.

The Nominating Committee will also recommend the following slate of committee chairs:

<i>Awards</i> , Jack Pike	<i>Programme</i> , John Abbott
<i>Finance</i> , Gordon Sinclair	<i>Publications</i> , Robert Andrews
<i>Grants and Reports</i> , Ed Grenda	<i>Publicity</i> , Marc Letourneau
<i>11 January event</i> , Jack Pike	<i>School Liaison</i> , John Fielding
<i>6 June event</i> , Brian Osborne	<i>Web-Site</i> , Mark Andrews
<i>Membership</i> , Ted Huber	<i>Welcome</i> , Shirley Gibson-Langille

Members wishing to serve on any of the above committees are most welcome and encouraged to apply by contacting any member of the Executive.

Any member of the Society in good standing may nominate any other member of the Society in good standing for any office. Incumbents may be nominated for an additional term, and nominations may be submitted for any or all of the positions to be filled. Members wishing to nominate a candidate for any position as a member of the Executive or Council may do so from the floor at the AGM, by submitting written nominations to Brian Osborne, 25 Lakeland Point Drive, Kingston, K7M 4E8, or by handing them to any member of the present Executive and Council before 10 February 2006. Submission of a nomination carries the assumption that the nominee is willing to stand for election and serve, and that this has been verified by the nominator.

Please participate in this extremely important activity to ensure the continuing health and efficiency of the Society.

*Brian Osborne*, Past President & Chair of the Nominating Committee