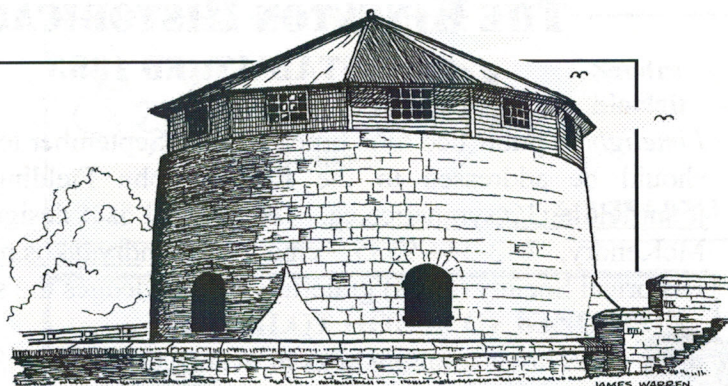


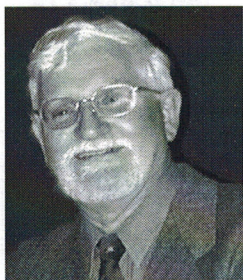
LIMELIGHT

NEWSLETTER of the
KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

vol 8 no 8 November 2006 ISSN 1488-5565



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



There was a good run of days in the last week of October for regional historians. Midway between celebrating the 30th anniversary of service for the *Wolfe Islander III* and the 150th anniversary of the first arrival of steam train locomotives in Kingston on 27 October 1856, was an illustrated lecture given to the Pittsburgh Historical Society by Joe Calnan. Joe is a trained and active professional boat builder who took on the task of exploring the first four vessels built on the Great Lakes by the French in the 17th century. His close examination of contracts in the Quebec Archives and of a rare illustrated work located in France revealed to all of us, who listened in wonder, new ideas about the origins of Kingston. Earlier in the week, aboard the *Wolfe Islander* the Minister of Transport, officials and guests listened and

consulted Captain Brian P. Johnson about the history of the ferry service. It was a perfect blustery day aboard a vessel that has given 30 years of reliable service. On Friday, Via Rail toasted 150 years of the Quebec City-Windsor Corridor with much credit for organizing the event going to well known *bon vivant*, Brian Osborne. The Town Crier, costumed ladies and rail enthusiasts whooped it up in the hustle of a very busy station. In the background and much honoured was rail historian, Bill Thomson. Joe Calnan, Brian P. Johnson and Bill Thomson have a characteristic in common—a deep knowledge of their subject informed by their life experience. It was a good week for Kingston history in all respects.

Maurice Smith

THIS MONTH'S MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 15 NOVEMBER, 7:30PM

DONNA IVEY

"The Unfinished *Curriculum Vitae* of R.C. Wallace,
Principal of Queen's University, 1936-1951"

Wilson Room, Kingston Public Library, Johnson @ Bagot
refreshments all welcome

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Around and About Us, 2-3

KHS trip on 30 September, 4-5

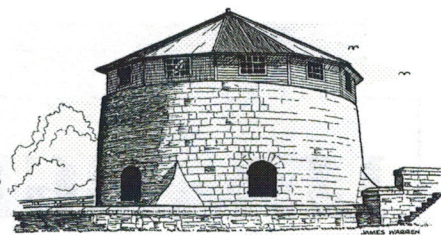
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THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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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website www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca

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AROUND AND ABOUT US

by Brian S. Osborne

History is alive and well in Kingston, and also in our neighbouring communities. Consider some of the activities that took place this summer.



SYDENHAM

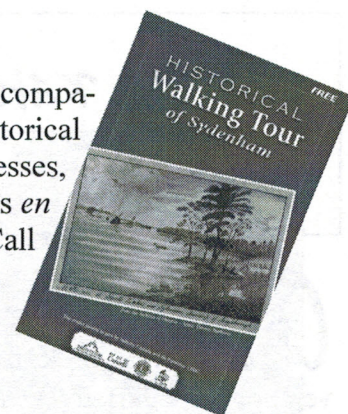
Who says there's no such thing as a free lunch? Ginny Trousdale and Wilma Kenny, with support from local businesses, the Frontenac Community Futures Development Corporation, and the Eastern Ontario Development Fund, have

View of Sydenham from an undated postcard
(collection of Jennifer McKendry)

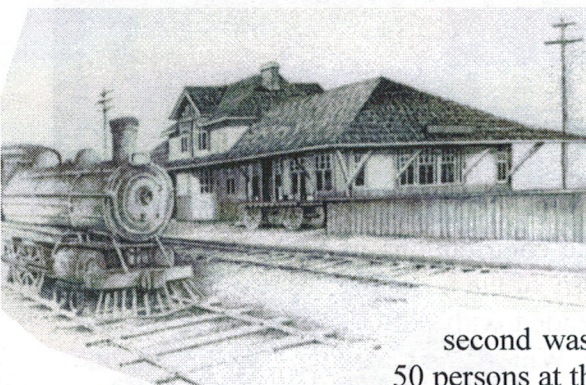


Section of SYDENHAM Looking South

provided us with one. Their free booklet provides a survey-history of Sydenham, accompanied by a well-illustrated walking tour. Appropriately, the latter starts at "An Historical Gem of a Store," Trousdale's, and goes on to identify notable homes, businesses, industries, and institutions. And there are stories too - the one about the grave-robbers *en route* to Queen's medical school is worth the effort of picking up this fine booklet! (Call 800-763-9610 for information)



SHARBOT LAKE & PARHAM



For over a year, Central Frontenac Councillor, Janet Gutowski, chair of the Economic Development Committee has been actively promoting a series of "historical murals" in Sharbot Lake, Parham, Mountain Grove, Arden, and Picadilly. They are intended to enhance life in these communities by beautifying, building pride, and stimulating the economy by attracting tourists. The first one, "The Final Journey," was unveiled on 13 May in Sharbot Lake. This 4 x 8 meter mural depicts the passing of Sir John A. Macdonald's funeral train through the village in June of 1891. The second was unveiled on 25 August during the 14th Parham Fair and depicted the 50 persons at the 1950 Fair. Six prints (*Tichborne on the left*) by John DuChene of all the proposed murals have been produced and are available through Janet Gutowski at 613-375-8814.



YARKER

On 7 October, the Yarker History Project unveiled a wall-sculpture overlooking the beautiful Yarker waterfalls. Financed by the Ontario Arts Council's Artist in the Community Program and the Yarker Community Association, the History Project commemorates the village's rich industrial past. Part of the original land grant awarded to Governor James Simcoe, Yarker was long a centre of lumbering and possessed many mills and industries. The most famous is the Benjamin Hub and Spoke Factory. This plaque is the first of a series intended to highlight the community's outstanding natural and historical attributes.

*Well done Sydenham,
Central Frontenac, &
Yarker!*

Wooden pointing-hand sign "To Yarker" and View of Yarker from an undated postcard (collection of Jennifer McKendry)

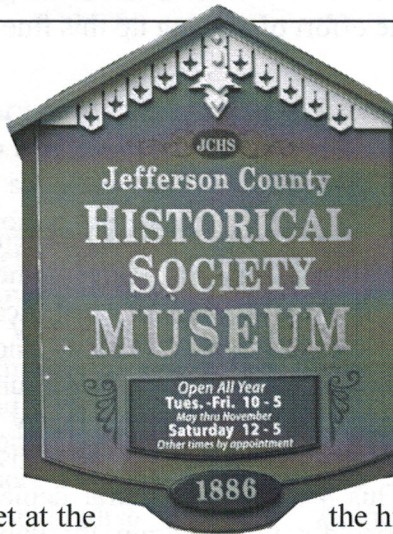


The KHS 4th ANNUAL AUTUMN EXCURSION

by Alan MacLachlan
Photography by Robert Cardwell

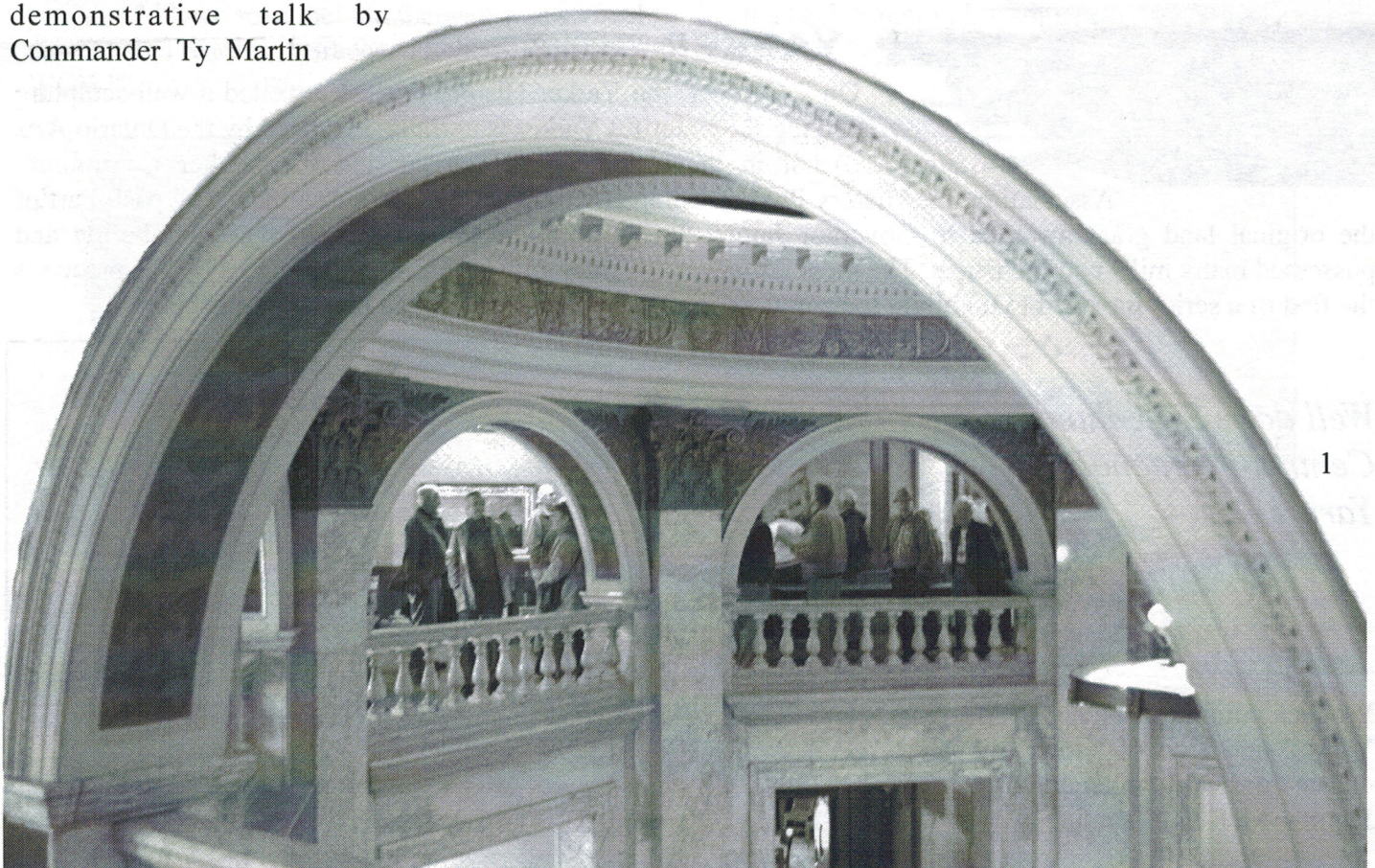
On the 30th of September a group of 27 KHS members ventured into Jefferson County, New York to explore several historic architectural gems of Watertown, including: the 1851 Paddock Arcade (the first indoor shopping mall in the U.S.A), the 1876 Paddock House (now home to the Jefferson County Historical Society) and the 1903 Flowers Memorial Library. Following a delightful luncheon buffet at the Partridge Berry Inn, we quenched our thirst at the 1801 Burrville Cider Mill situated beside a 10 m. high rushing waterfall.

The afternoon began at the Sackets Harbour battlefield with an informative, humorous and demonstrative talk by Commander Ty Martin



(Rtd.) who compared the 1808 USS *Constitution* and the 1812 USS *Superior*. After we toured the commandant's home and the displays of the War of 1812, Bob Brennan, the 85-year-old resident historian of Sackets Harbor, guided us through Madison Barracks and regaled us with his voluminous knowledge. Everyone gained a much better understanding of the contributions of Sackets Harbour to the history of the United States.

Our day ended with a tour of the newly opened Yellow Barn Winery and a wine tasting. As one member said, "A perfect autumn tour: the sun, colourful foliage, intriguing venues, good camaraderie and wine."

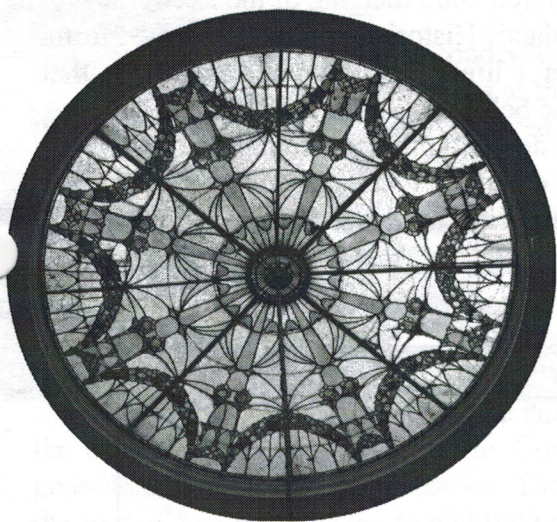




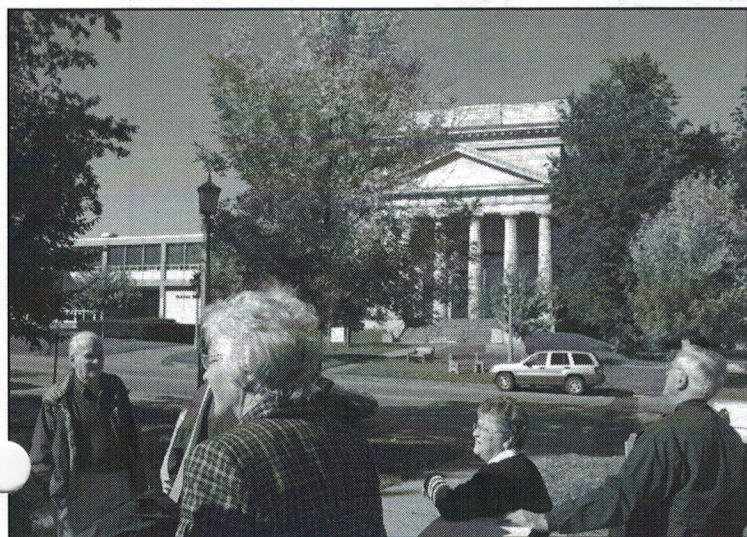
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6

1. KHS members visit Flowers Memorial Library
2. Restored commandant's house in Sackets Harbor Battlefield State Park
3. Our visit to Burrville Cider Mill
4. Beautiful stained-glass window in Flowers Memorial Library
5. Impressive waterfall beside the Cider Mill
6. Gathering outside the Flowers Memorial Library

LANDSCAPES/INSCAPES

It was as good as it gets!

by Shirley Gibson-Langille



It started out to be just an ordinary day that 5th of June 2003 when I took off to Leeds and the Thousand Islands. I was in search of something of interest to paint. I found myself exploring the village of Lansdowne. There, on a back street, Centre at Cliff Street, I made an amazing discovery—the old stone J.W. Lackie & Sons Feed Mill Warehouse. It was just as if I had traveled back in time.

Needless to say, I was excited and inspired to get started. How I enjoyed drawing the building—along with all the different birds feeding there. At noon, after I had finished my peanut butter and radish sandwich, I decided to walk around this fascinating building with its interesting stonework. When I got to the south side of the building, I made an astounding discovery. If you think Christopher Columbus was excited when he discovered America, you should have seen me! On the wall was an oval cement sign reading, “Braehead School 1872.”
WOW!!!

Later, I found out the history of the school from a 1994 Front of Leeds and Lansdowne Historical Society Newsletter. It appears that, in 1826, Lansdowne was granted a common school called McKelvey School. Originally a log building, as the community grew and developed, about 1860, it was replaced by a brick school on the east side of Railway Street. It was also used as a place of worship. Then as the local population continued to grow, a larger school, Braehead, was built of stone in 1872.

At the March 2005 meeting of the Leeds and Thousand Islands Historical Society, I learned from Eric Webster, a lifetime resident of Lansdowne, that he owned the bell from Braehead School. It had been passed down to him by his grandfather.

Nothing could top that wonderful red letter day on a back Street in Lansdowne! *It was as good as it gets!*



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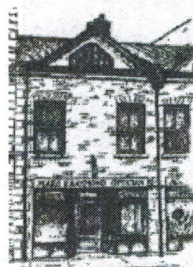
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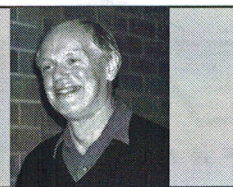
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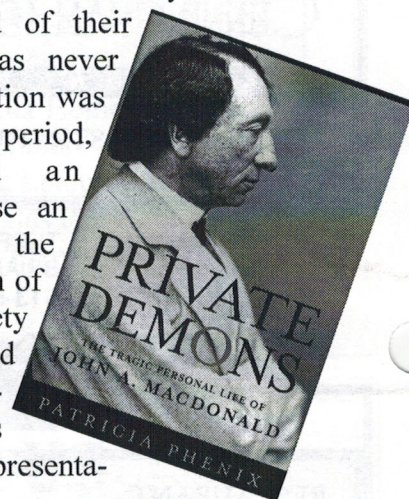
SPEAKERS' CORNER

with John Abbott
Photograph by Jennifer McKendry



On 19 October **Patricia Phenix**, the author of *Private Demons, The Tragic Personal Life of John A. Macdonald*, addressed some 70 members of the Society and guests. She organized her presentation around key incidents in John A. Macdonald's life that she considers crucial in conditioning the mood and mode of the

inner man. These included his assumption of a responsibility to support the family from a tender age, an obligation occasioned by his father's feckless nature and alcoholic habits. Given his success in this, John A. was lionized by the women in his family, whose adoration created difficulties for Isabella, his first wife, whom he referred to as "the invisible woman". Then there was the searing experience of witnessing, at age seven, the brutal death of his younger brother, James, who was beaten senseless by a drunken child-minder—a friend of their father. That crime was never reported. The presentation was followed by a question period, refreshments and an opportunity to purchase an autographed copy of the book from Oscar Malan of Novel Idea . The Society appreciates McClelland & Stewart's underwriting the major expenses associated with this presentation.



We look forward to hearing on **15 November** at 7:30PM in the public library, **Donna Ivey** on "The Unfinished *Curriculum Vitae* of R.C. Wallace, Principal of Queen's University, 1936-1951"

THE KHS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

Please reserve the evening of Wednesday, **13 December** for the Christmas Party, which will take place at the Fort Frontenac Officers' Mess, beginning at 7:30PM. Your Council has struck a committee to ensure that this opportunity to convene for the festive season will be punctuated by song, short dramatic readings about Kingston Christmases, and, as always, the KHS awards. All KHS members are invited and Christmas fare will be laid on. More details in next month's newsletter.