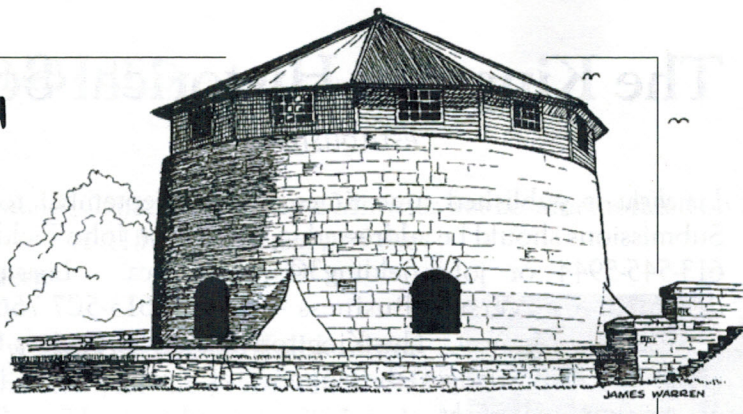


# LIMELIGHT

Newsletter of the  
Kingston Historical Society

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

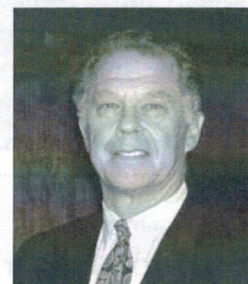
I hope that Society members experienced an enjoyable summer, the excessive rainfall notwithstanding, and are prepared to resume the pleasurable rigors of becoming immersed in Kingston's history as well as its promotion and preservation.

During the past summer, I continued my long-standing ritual of visiting as many of the local museums as I possibly can. I am always impressed with the annual presentation of fresh exhibits. Doubtless, many of the artifacts displayed in Kingston museums and historic sites are inescapably limited to developments and events in Kingston's lengthy history.

In July, the Murney Tower National Historic Site Committee, chaired by Warren Everett, produced a colourful brochure for the Tower that is now available at local tourist offices. The brochure emphasizes the Tower's World Heritage Site designation conferred by UNESCO in June 2007.

Congratulations are in order for two of the Society's stalwart members who received prestigious heritage awards during the early summer. Robert Cardwell, a veritable fixture in a host of Kingston's heritage organizations for the past three decades, was the

recipient of the Lieutenant-Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Lifetime Achievement. Lieutenant Governor David Onley, presented this award to Mr. Cardwell at a ceremony in the Ontario Legislature building in Toronto.



Brian Osborne, Past President of both the Kingston Historical Society and the Ontario Historical Society, was presented with the distinguished Cruickshank Award by the Ontario Historical Society at its recent Annual Conference in Guelph. The Award recognizes Professor Osborne's outstanding contributions to Ontario's written history and yeoman service to the provincial historical society and other Ontario heritage organizations.

Again, the Society's congratulations to Messrs. Cardwell and Osborne for the richly deserved recognition they received from their peers in the provincial heritage realm.

*Edward R. Grenda*

**THIS MONTH'S MEETING**  
Wednesday, 17 SEPTEMBER, 7:30PM  
**"Driven By A Dream: A History of  
Ongwanada in Kingston and Region."**

Presenters - John Pereira and Lisa Holmes of Ongwanada  
at the

**ONGWANADA CENTRE**  
191 PORTSMOUTH AVE, KINGSTON

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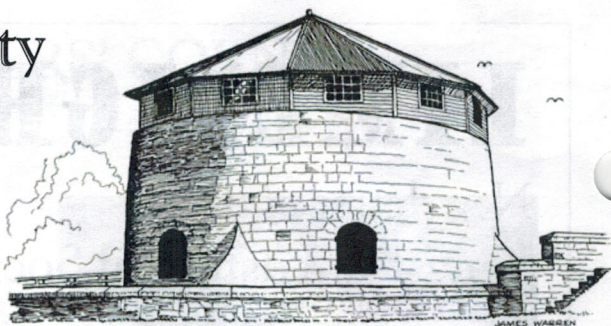
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# The Kingston Historical Society

established 1893

*Limelight* is published nine times a year - September to May. Submissions should be addressed to the Editor, John Fielding at 613-545-5944 or john.fielding3@sympatico.ca. *Limelight* is designed by Versus Business Forms (613-507-7667 or versus@kingston.net) The Kingston Historical Society (KHS) gratefully acknowledges the support of our sponsors in the production of *Limelight*.



Murney Tower by James Warren

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 Street at Bagot Street. 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!** Membership rates are \$40 individual, \$50 family, \$50 institutional or \$25 student. Memberships include *Historic Kingston*, published annually by The Kingston Historical Society.

## Kingston Historical Society

Box 54, Kingston, ON K7L 4V6  
www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca

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Vice President Alan MacLachlan presented the KHS awards, at the Kingston Regional Historica in May, to Francesca Parker (in photo above left) for her project titled, History of a Corner and Alec Suriyuth pictured above right with his Garden Island History project. Both young people are students at Calvin Park Elementary School.

## Speakers for the Fall

**October 15, 2008 – Janet Brooke:**

"The Art Collecting Society of Kingston" in conjunction with the Archives Annual Lecture.

**November 19th, 2008 – John Olsen:**

"The changing landscape of downtown Kingston: the impact of the car on Princess Street."

**December -**

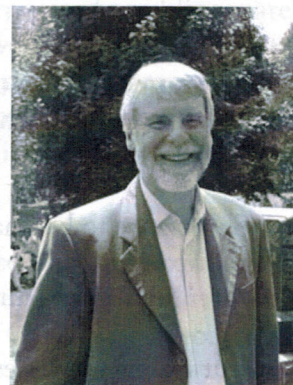
Christmas party (Date to be determined)



# SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD REMEMBERED

The 117th anniversary of the death of Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's first Prime Minister was commemorated on 6 June 2007 at the Cataraqui Cemetery and as well it was the 115th anniversary of the organization of this event by the Kingston Historical Society.

The commemoration was highlighted by the laying of wreaths on behalf of all levels of government, the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, and many of the professional and fraternal organizations of which Sir John was a member. The insights into Sir John's private life, marriage and move to Bellevue House as described by John Coleman in the essay insert of the programme undoubtedly would have met with his approval. The presence of the R.C.M.P and the laying of the wreath by Constable David Merritt on behalf of the Government of Canada would have pleased Sir John as a direct tie to his time period.



Guest speaker  
Roy MacSkimming

The address this year was delivered by Roy MacSkimming, a well known Canadian author, journalist and poet. Mr. MacSkimming delivered a topical, humorous and perceptive talk on "What Would Sir John Do?" examining the major issues that are confronting Canada today from Sir John's perspective.

The afternoon commemoration was blessed with a warm, sunny June day and this was made all the more stunning by the setting of the meticulously cared for grounds at the Cataraqui Cemetery. The ceremony was very capably directed by Peter Radley. The Fort Henry Guard added the appropriate music with the piper, bugler and guard while the costumed folk from Bellevue House also added historic colour. The voices of the student choir from Mother Theresa Elementary School and the students from the Limestone School board gave a youthful dimension to the event. Though Sir John's grave is a National Historic Site, it is hoped that the whole Cataraqui Cemetery could become a National Historic Site and bring greater recognition to the grave site of Canada's first prime minister. As chair for the first time of the Committee for the Memorial Service, it has been a pleasure to have worked with Barbara Bonner, Donna Lusk, Peter Radley, John Coleman, Mark Bennett, Ted Huber and Brian Osborne. Without the commitment and dedication to excellence by them, the success of the service would not have come to fruition.

Alan MacLachlan, Chair,  
Committee for the June 6 Memorial Service

Photos by Jennifer McKendry



Mother Theresa Elementary School choir



Master of ceremonies  
Peter Radley



# THE GENIUS LOCI OF MCBURNEY PARK: From Urban Edge To The Centre Of A Community

by Brian S. Osborne  
25 May 2008

## Introduction

The term, "genius loci" means the spirit of place, but not in that usual ghoulish association of graves and ghosts. Rather, it means, a sense of place, a distinctive identity, a place where memories reside. And there are so many memories here.

Some have to be imagined: before the arrival of the French and, later, the Loyalists, this escarpment was covered with a mixture of ash, oak, cedar and pines intersperse with open glades. No doubt, these lands were host to Iroquois and later Mississauga hunters as they traveled the area. To be sure, their sacred place, Belle Island, was close by.

But other memories of this place are materialized in the landscape: they are visual prompts to the remarkable history of this special place: Skeleton Park.

## The Military

This site long played an important role in Kingston's military history. Its prominence originally served as a defensive position against enemy attack from the north-east. And then, later it was a garrison burial ground. All of this is signaled by visual prompts: the cannon; the street names recording battles such as Alma and Balaclava and such military functions as Ordnance and Redan.

## The Barclay Statue

As if to make a point, the park's cannon is aimed along Clergy Street to St. Andrew's, a church that was central to the life of this part of town. On 2 June 1822, St. Andrew's, the first stone church in Kingston, opened its doors for "public worship." The new church's first minister was the Rev. Barclay who was soon to play an active role in this place.

The problem was that while the Presbyterians had a church they didn't have a burial ground and their initial requests for one were rebuffed. Further, while allowed to bury their dead in Kingston's Lower Burial Ground on lower Queens St., they had to rely on the services of the Anglican Clergy. It resulted in a conflict between two strong personalities: Rev. George Okill Stuart and John Barclay. The outcome of a series of quite un-Christian-like theological graveyard brawls at burials was the allocation of part of this Upper Burial Ground for Presbyterian burials in 1825. Barclay died the following year and was buried in the new graveyard. Barclay had won his battle in the ongoing war challenging the Anglican domination of Upper Canada and his grateful congregation erected this elegant memorial in his memory.

Indeed, St. Andrew's is closely connected with Skelton Park. It was always the centre of this emerging community on the hill to the north-east of the small town of Kingston. The surrounding open space around it served as a common-land that hosted a range of activities: parades of the Frontenac Light Dragoons and the Frontenac Militia; the "Kingston Fair and Cattle Show"; early son et lumière shows; and games of "shinty."

## Traces of Graves and Transition

Another element of the landscape of this place are the outlines of former burial-sites that appear periodically as reminders of the chequered history of the graveyard. Within a generation of Barclay's herculean battles, the Upper Burial Ground was described as "the receptacle of filth, of the bones and offal of dead beats; the play ground of idle and mischievous boys, and the place where some neighbours hang out their washing to dry." And yet, this was the last resting place of "many of the most respectable families in Kingston, and of several honoured strangers who were sojourners in this place."



On 10 August 1850, Cataraqui Cemetery Company was established and in July 1864, a bylaw was passed forbidding burials within the city limits. In May 1893, the lands were transferred to the City, "for the purposes of a public square." Several developments followed: fences were removed; the grounds were leveled; graves were marked; shrubs and flowers were planted; paths installed; and the Barclay monument restored and "put in a proper state of repair." Some thought that the exhumation and removal of hundreds of bodies was "a ghastly opening chapter" to the establishment of the park as "a thing of beauty." Nevertheless, on 6 February 1894, "Frontenac Park" was officially opened.

### Trees and Swings and Stories

But, as I look around, there are happier elements of this landscape too: the sprinkling of new trees planted by members of the community; the slides and swings signaling a healthy family community; the Celtic Cross reminding us of Kingston's Hibernian heritage; and the plaque to James McBurney, former Principal of Central P.S., recognizing what is so important to any healthy community, public service.

But what isn't visible in the landscape are the people-stories and, as Laura Murray and Jamie Swift have told us, there are so many of them. Taken together, they constitute the "memoryscape" of this place, the rich reminiscences people, families, and events that, while ephemeral, are also grounded in Skeleton Park.

### Conclusion

So, the story of Skeleton Park is an evolving one: a natural setting being transformed into a military strong-point and garrison burial ground; then a community cemetery becoming a neglected place; and then a public space being created as Frontenac Park and McBurney Park, and surviving as Skeleton Park. Today is part of this evolution: a celebration of community pride and vitality and to mark it, we are adding another element to the ever-growing landscape of this place: A Kingston Historic Society plaque.



Unveiling the plaque erected by the Kingston Historical Society with the assistance of the City of Kingston and the Ontario Heritage Trust are from left to right: KHS President Edward Grenda, Mayor Harvey Rosen, representing the community Claude Clement and Lydia Hansen, Alec Ross of the McBurney Park Neighbourhood Association and King's Town District Councillor Rob Hutchison. Photo by Jennifer McKendry.



## J. DOUGLAS STEWART, 1934-2008 "Gentleman and Regency 'Man of Taste' "

By Jennifer McKendry

Doug ~ Professor J. Douglas Stewart believed in courtesy, ceremony and decorum, although an off colour joke and a good laugh did not go amiss. Born in Kingston in 1934, he passed away on 21 July 2008, leaving a legacy to students, colleagues and the public of his deep appreciation of Kingston's architectural history through his writings and lectures. For many years a professor in the Art History department at Queen's University, his words wrapped lovingly around the forms of those buildings designed by his favourite architect, George Browne, and the elegant turnings of his favourite furniture style, the Regency.

I was privileged to know him from the early 1970s, when he asked me to design two room settings for the block-buster show, *Heritage Kingston*, curated by Doug and Ian Wilson at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre. Their illustrated catalogue of 1973 has become a timeless reference.

Margaret Angus, Doug and I attended many conferences and meetings in the heady days of waging war against the demolishers ravishing the city during the 1970s. Seeing past its state of deterioration, he fought to preserve John Counter's house on Ontario Street. Battles were lost, such as the Mowat Building, but Doug's manner of describing these structures as if seducing a beautiful woman swayed many to the cause.

I became Doug's marker for Canadian art and architecture courses, co-instructor on a course on Decorative Arts and then his M.A. student in the early 1980s, when Queen's introduced graduate courses in the history of art. Always affable and encouraging, he made pleasant the experience of writing a thesis on Kingston architecture. His main professional interest was English Baroque painting, especially the career of Godfrey Kneller (1646-1723), but he took time to write about Kingston during the 19th century: in 1979, an article on John Cartwright "Upper Canadian Gentleman and Regency 'Man of Taste'" with his wife Mary for *Historic Kingston* (vol. 27), a chapter on George Browne "the Primitive and Neo-Baroque" ~ in *Tulchinsky's To Preserve and Defend* (1976), a chapter on Browne's influence on the architecture of St George's Cathedral in *Swainson's Two Hundred Years of Community* (1991), entries on Browne and Thomas Rogers in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* and articles for the *Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada* on architect William Newlands, Browne at Kingston City Hall and his Molson Mausoleum in Montreal.

Beautifully orchestrated by Mary and their daughters, Venetia and Georgiana, one could not help but think that Doug would have enjoyed the ceremony and music of his funeral on 25 July at St George's Cathedral. Their personal loss is also Kingston's loss.

### Announcement:

The Kingston Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society will meet in the Wilson Room of Kingston Frontenac Public Library, 130 Johnson St., Saturday, September 20, 2008 at 10 a.m. "I Have All This Data, Now What? Organizing and Displaying Genealogical Information". Several members will discuss and display various systems of filing and organizing their genealogical documents. Visitors welcome.

For further information, visit our website at [www.ogs.on.ca/kingston](http://www.ogs.on.ca/kingston)



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## SPEAKERS' CORNER

*Prepared by Bill Fitsell*

### HOCKEY NIGHT AT K.H.S.

Linking Canada's first prime minister with athletic clubs has been a fruitless endeavour for sports historians and authors. Kingston Curling Club, formally organized in 1841, has attempted to associate Scottish-born John A. Macdonald with the roaring game in his adopted hometown. The best researchers could come up with was a Notman photomontage of him watching an outdoor match in Montreal. Another author recorded young Johnny as a skater, but the only available evidence was the fact that the young Kingston lawyer served as a director on the city's first indoor skating rink and offered a generous ten-dollar prize for the winner of a skating race.



*Jason Wilson and Kevin Shea in conversation with KHS member Margaret Channen*

Canada's national winter sport hockey and Macdonald have no known links, and yet the May meeting of KHS revealed in refreshing detail that Kingston's member of parliament had a unique relationship with the man who provided hockey's famous icon the Stanley Cup. Frederick Arthur Stanley, Canada's sixth governor general and Sir John A. had "Something More Than Ordinary Friendship," the topic chosen by Kevin Shea and Jason Wilson, authors of *Lord Stanley, the Man Behind the Cup* (H.B Fenn, 2006).

Stanley, born into privileged circumstances in England was 21 years junior to Macdonald, who had humble beginnings in Scotland, but they forged "a long and dear friendship" between 1888 and the latter's death in 1891. "It was a political relationship, a necessary relationship," said Wilson, a musician and Canadian cultural historian from Stouffville, Ont. It certainly wasn't a sporting relationship although Sir John A. was most adept at "stickhandling" legislation through Parliament.

"Researching the papers and the letters, notes and telegrams between the two, we actually see the crescendo at the beginning where it's a very polite language 'My best to Lady Macdonald' to a point where you can really feel the palpable ness of the relationship that's been growing where they really do care about each other...They had a very good working relationship as well as a fondness for Canada."

Kevin Shea, editor of publications for Toronto's Hockey Hall of Fame and an award-winning author, took the sporting side of the duo and outlined the years leading to Stanley's donation of a silver bowl emblematic of the Dominion hockey championship. The joint talk produced a lively "Hot Stove League" discussion period. It wasn't quite as raucous as "Coach's Corner," but a query about another favourite Kingston son, Don Cherry produced the loudest outburst. Shea marvels at the fact that during the first intermission of NHL games at the Air Canada Centre, spectators head for the exits not for the washrooms or the hot dog stands, but to catch Cherry on TV monitors. "He speaks for the people," he said. "He can be widely abrasive and wonderfully embracing. He's been a wonderful ambassador for the game."

Introduced by Heather Home, the presenters of the illustrated address were thanked by past president Bill Fitsell and current president Ed Grenda. All four are members of the Society for International Hockey Research, formed by 17 hockey buffs in Kingston in 1991 and now a 300-strong, worldwide organization.

Please note the change in location for this month's meeting  
The Ongwanada Centre on Portsmouth Avenue  
"Driven By A Dream: A History of Ongwanada in Kingston and Region."  
Presented by John Pereira and Lisa Holmes of Ongwanada