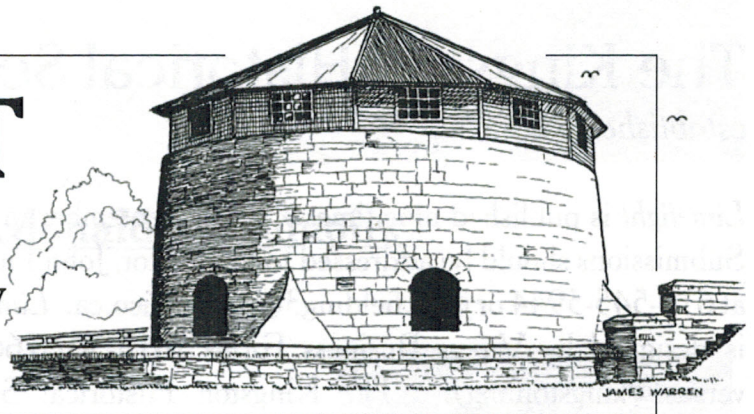


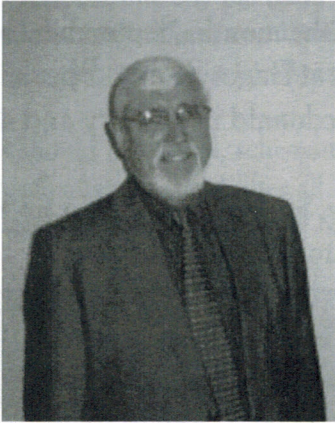
LIMELIGHT

Newsletter of the
Kingston Historical Society

vol 11 no 7 October 2009 ISSN 1488-5565



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



The proposal to have Breakwater Park re-named "Bradstreet Park" and the debate that it has engendered in the past few months causes one to ponder the meaning of 'history' and 'historians'. The term 'history' has many meanings and has been used by many over the centuries to convey what each wants to advance. On a very fundamental level "history" is simply the interpretation, assessment or explanation of past events, passions, and the acts and deeds of personalities. That being said it is not the list of past events which in effect would be a chronology. Also each time we make an interpretation of an event or action we are playing historian. How well we view the facts of the past, how well we recognize the biases in our sources and how well we control and know our own prejudices will contribute to how accurate and well produced our 'history' of that event or person will be. Yes! there is well written history and there is poorly written history.

How should history be used? When used properly it, as Carl Gustavson said, "teaches respect for reality, an ability to discern and trace out the existing contours and the social forces at work in society".

The public meeting of 22 September held in Memorial Hall to discuss the renaming of Breakwater Park drew a dozen concerned citizens of Kingston. The speakers demonstrated the social forces that are at play here in Kingston. Among the 12 were views from the Bradstreet supporters, those for a non-military/political name, others being sensitive to the French-Canadian feelings, the pro-Breakwater Park forces and a Bradstreet-de Noyen voice. It is to be hoped that a mature sense of historical-mindedness will be present in the decision making process. As well that a faithfulness to the rich historical past of Kingston will be continued and avoid conforming to trends and vogues thus having a respect for our historic reality.

The provincial government of Ontario annually recognizes the service and contributions made by individuals to organizations across the province. Recently five of our KHS members were recognized with the 2009 Ontario Volunteer Service Awards: Bea Corbett, John Grenville, Ted Huber, Maurice Smith and Marjorie Simmons. Without the dedication, commitment and selflessness of individuals such as these, our Society and other organizations across the province and nation would be much the poorer. On behalf of the Society, I extend our thanks and congratulations to these five volunteers.

May all of us have a joyful Thanksgiving!

Alan MacLachlan

THIS MONTH'S MEETING

Wednesday, 21 October, 7:30 PM

Wilson Room, Kingston Public Library, Johnson St. at Bagot

Refreshments All Welcome

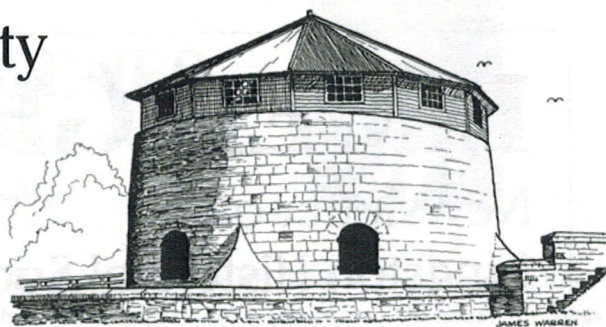
***"Energy, Shrewdness and Integrity:
Robert Drummond in Kingston"***

Rev. Bruce Cossar

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

Executive

Alan MacLachlan, *President*
Edward Grenda, *Past President*
Gordon Sinclair, *Vice President*
Ted Huber, *Secretary*
John Whiteley, *Treasurer*

Councillors

Elizabeth Andrews	Jeremy Heil
Robert Andrews	Ross McKenzie
Dorothy Farr	Douglas Petty
Peter Ginn	

KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

"A Troublesome Berth" The Journal of First Lieutenant Charles Allan Parker, Royal Marines: The Canada Years 1838-1840, Robert J. Andrews & Rosalyn Parker Art, editors, \$40

Illustrated Guide To Monuments, Memorials & Markers In The Kingston Area, \$24.95

The City Of Kingston Portrait Collection: Historical Sketches & Portrait Views by Marjorie Simmons, \$29.95

Williamsville Revisited: an Illustrated History of "Williamsville" at Kingston, \$35

Selected volumes and indexes of **Historic Kingston** (listed on KHS website publications order page), \$12 to \$18

For information on ordering and postage costs: www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca

(also available at Novel Idea, Princess & Bagot)

In this issue...

President's Report	1
Masthead	2
Our Sponsors	3
What was the fate of the first St. George's Church?	4 & 5
Sir John A. Macdonald lives on at St. Lawrence College	6 & 7
Speakers' Corner	8

Our sponsors....

EARTH to SPIRIT
FAIR TRADE COMPANY
 340 KING ST. EAST TEL: 536-5252
Explore the Extraordinary!

THE PILOT HOUSE OF KINGSTON



265 KING ST EAST

613-542-0222

Kingston's Independent Bookstore

156 Princess Street

613-546-9799

Oscar Malan, Bookseller

**NOVEL
IDEA** 



Marc F. Raymond
OPTICIANS LTD

324 King St E. 613-549-2020



GRAHAM THOMSON
 REAL ESTATE

TERRY STAFFORD
 BRIAN STAFFORD
 613-546-3171

for
 "ULTIMATE SERVICE"



THE
**IRON
DUKE**
 On Wellington

Kingston's Finest
 British Pub

207 Wellington St.
 Kingston, ON
 K7K 2Y6
 Ph: 613.542.4244
 www.ironduke.ca



RESTAURANT
 68-R Princess St
 613-549-7673

"The Pig with a Peel"

PAN CHANCHO 44 Princess St 613-544-7790



Dining Room / Bar

Courtyard Terrace

69 Brock Street

613-549-5635

*Cataragui
 Cemetery*

Tel: 613-546-6545
 927 Purdy's Mill Road • Kingston • Ontario • K7M 3N1

331 King St East



613-531-0800

"Step up to Tango" Tapas Bar & Restaurant

Larry Brennan - Sales Representative
 Royal LePage Proalliance Realty

Independently Owned and Operated

(613) 384-1200 Office

(613) 329-7222 Cell

lbrennan2@cogeco.ca

www.larrybrennan.com



61 Brock St

613-548-7721

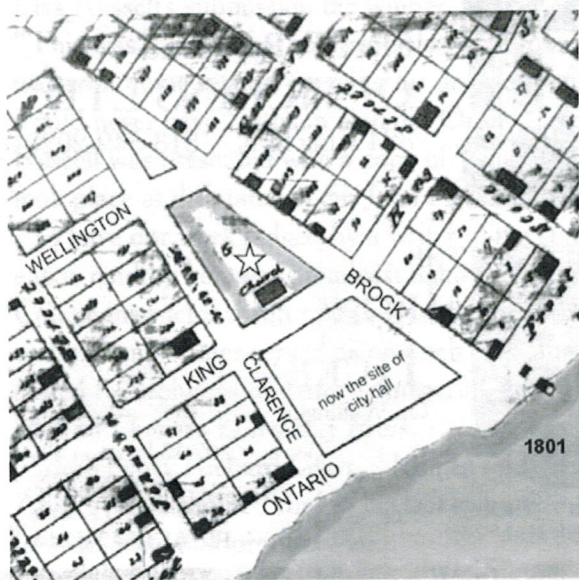
www.cookesfinefoods.com

Established 1865



What Was the Fate of the First St. George's Church?

Many of us are familiar with the beginning of the first St George's Church (the second St George's became a cathedral in 1862) -- built of timber-framed wood, 32 x 40 feet, in 1792 by Archibald Thompson under the guidance of the Reverend John Stuart on Block G (at that time there were no other buildings on the block) formed by King Street East, Clarence, Brock and Wellington Streets. But when and how did it finally disappear?



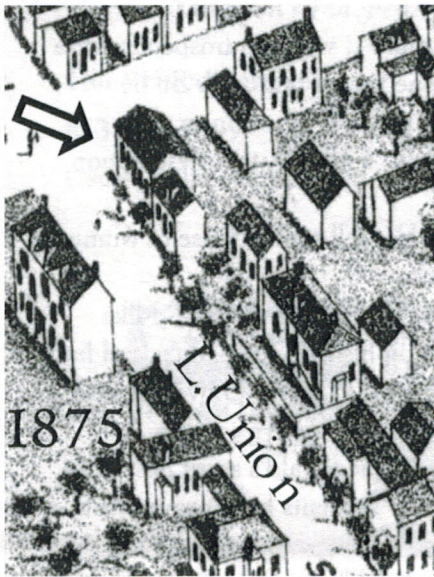
I looked into this story when researching the Old Sydenham Ward Study for possible district designation by the city. I did not, however, have the final piece of the puzzle until the report was finished (available on www.cityofkingston.ca -- see PDF "Final HCD Study"). Recently, Rick Neilson and I separately found indisputable evidence of the church's fate.

Surprisingly, there are no reliable paintings or drawings of the first church (the one that is frequently reproduced is a later conjectural image). Written descriptions draw a picture of a small building painted blue, with square windows, an entrance door in one of the gable walls and another in one of the side walls (Daily British Whig, 25 April 1891) and a belfry on the end over the altar area (instead of over the entrance door -- which is more traditional). As

the church's length paralleled King Street, no doubt one of the entrance doors was in the side facing that street and the town market. The other door may have faced Clarence, because that was more or less towards the west, a traditional location for an entrance. In 1795, a gallery was added over the communion table (an unusual position). There was a bell to call the faithful who, during the winter, were no doubt grateful for the heat from a wood stove. In 1802, the church was lengthened by 20 feet and another gallery installed. In 1811, John Stuart died and his son George took over as rector.

In the early 1820s, plans were being made to replace the frame structure with a stone building (today's St George's Cathedral) located on the adjacent block at King and Johnson. The new church was in use in 1826, making the old one redundant. The church wardens were in the process of developing Block G for income realized from leasing building sites to various businesses. In fact, as early as 1818, there was an auction held in the old church for these leases (Kingston Gazette, 24 May 1818). A map of 1824 (NMC 16105), however, shows no buildings on the block other than the church. By 1828, maps show buildings fronting all the streets except for a gap in the middle of the block along Clarence Street. The church was later said to have been converted into a Lancasterian School (Daily British Whig, 25 April 1891), although a contemporary notice describes a school house built "in rear of the church" (Kingston Gazette, 12 August 1817). This may have been in addition to the church being converted to a school, because the new Lancasterian School was described as such ten years later (Kingston Chronicle, 25 May 1827). At some point previous to the mid 1820s, the church was moved to Clarence Street, likely to clear its desirable original site for a new business (British Whig,

19 June 1900). It thus escaped the fires of 1826 and 1833 that attacked the King and Brock Streets area. A source from 1838 confirms the new location: the artist J. Gall moved in that year to Clarence Street, next to the Lancasterian School House (British Whig, 7 April 1838). As the church-school house does not show in a number of paintings from the 1830s portraying King and Clarence Streets, one may speculate that it was closer to Wellington Street.



Adam Main (1801-86), a cabinet and coffin maker, having bought lot 170 at Wellington and Lower Union Streets in 1842, moved the old church-school house there for use as his workshop (British Whig Supplement, Dec. 1886).

The Brosius bird's-eye view of Kingston in 1875 finally gives us a view, albeit simplified, of the building as a cabinet maker's shop 83 years after it was built as a church. Not surprisingly, it has been stripped of the belfry, which would look too church-like. Under a gable roof, it is the height of neighbouring two-storey buildings but has only one row of 6 windows on the side facing Lower Union Street. The entrance must have been in the gable wall facing Lower Union Street. Attached at the south end is a 1½-storey cottage, where Main lived (demolished c1970s).

In 1899, the British Whig mentioned that the late Adam Main's cabinet shop, an old building moved to Wellington and Lower Union Streets, was still standing (5 January 1899) but, in 1900, in volume 13 of the Canadian Architect and Builder, it was announced that the original St George's Anglican Church at Kingston, built in 1792, had been demolished. A fuller description was in the 19 June 1900 issue of the British Whig,* under the heading of "An Ancient Building - one of the landmarks of Kingston -- is being demolished." Described as a "frame plastered building" built in 1792 on the site of the Whig Office [306-310 King St E.], it was moved to Clarence Street and then to Wellington and Lower Union, where it was used as Main's cabinet shop. The story noted that it had given "splendid service as a place of worship and a place of trade."



The site is now occupied by 87-89 Lower Union Street.

* Rick Neilson discovered this source. Thanks!

Sir John A. Macdonald lives on at St. Lawrence College

More than 100 years after his death, Canada's first and founding Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, is back on the Canadian political scene. Students in the Memoirs Writing course have made sure of it.

As part of a class assignment, the continuing education students each wrote the first page of the imaginary Memoirs of Sir John A. Macdonald (Sir John A. never had time to write his own memoirs) and their work was judged by one of Canada's premiere journalists, Macdonald biographer Richard Gwyn. Gwyn, who is now in the midst of research for Volume II of his acclaimed biography of Canada's Father of Confederation, *The Man Who Made Us*, chose Kingston's Lisa Russell's submission the winner.

"This was the one that came the closest to John A.'s own voice and style," Gwyn said. "John A. wasn't introspective. He wasted no time second-guessing his decisions and none at all on preening about having done this or that well. So he would never have written a memoir. Or, if he did, it's been buried with him."

Russell was presented with a copy of Volume I of Gwyn's Macdonald biography as her prize. Fittingly, the presentation took place at the statue of Sir John A. Macdonald at City Park in Kingston.

"To have our work judged by a writer of the statue of Mr. Gwyn is such an honour," Lisa Russell said. Russell's winning entry, read by her, was broadcast nationally across the CBC Radio network on Canada Day.

Course instructor Arthur Milnes said all his students approached the assignment with a great deal of Macdonald-like enthusiasm. Milnes served as research assistant to former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney on his 2007 memoirs, and has edited two volumes of Prime Ministerial speeches for the Centre for the Study of Democracy at Queen's University and McGill-Queen's University Press.

"I didn't envy Richard Gwyn," Milnes said. "Each entry was excellent but Lisa's captured Macdonald's spirit best of all. As the voters shouted during his last campaign, 'Sir John, You'll Never Die!' Lisa and all my students have proven just how accurate that prophecy was."

Due to the success of the Memoirs Writing course and the Macdonald Memoirs assignment, Milnes will be teaching a full course this fall called *The Prime Ministers of Canada*. For eight weeks beginning September 14, the three-hour Monday evening class will explore the lives and legacies through lectures, videos, guest speakers and more of the 21 men and one woman, beginning with Sir John A. Macdonald, who have served in Canada's top political office since Confederation. It is one of the only full courses on Canadian Prime Ministers offered at the college level in Ontario.

"Since Kingston is known as the home of Sir John A., it is fitting that this course be offered here," said Lori Crossley, coordinator, Continuing Education for St. Lawrence College. "Arthur's experience working on Mr. Mulroney's memoirs, his extensive studies of Canada's Prime Ministers, and his long service as the Political History columnist for the *Hill Times* on Parliament Hill, will help make *The Prime Ministers of Canada* one of our most popular courses this fall."

Mark your calendars!



This year's Sir John A. Macdonald Anniversary Dinner will be held on Monday, 11 January, 2010 at the Senior Staff Mess, RMC. We will gather at 6:00pm for dinner at 7:00pm. Our guest speaker will be Charlotte Gray, notable Canadian author. Her topic: **"Sir John A's Women"**

Cost for this year's dinner will be \$45 for members and \$50 for non-members. A vegetarian meal is available. The Reservation form will be in the November and December Issues of *Limelight*.

Please note, the dinner will be limited to 96 members and guests.

The First Page of Sir John A. Macdonald's "Memoirs"

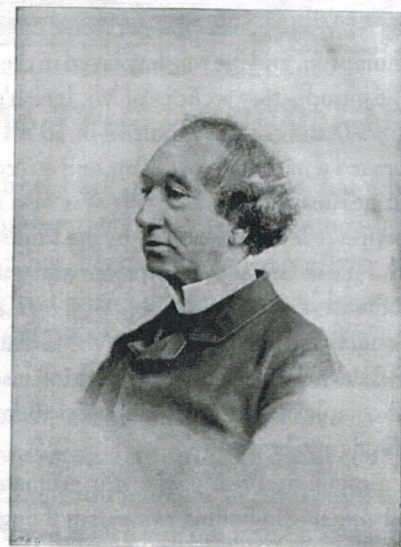
By Lisa H. Russell

Ruddy Hell!

I suppose one day the poor, stupid sods will read this and expect me to say something brilliant and illuminating about politics. I suppose as well I should be considering the public when I write this.

I should be careful, schematic and so on. Well, sod it all, I say! This won't be found until after I'm dead after all. Stupid sods, the lot of them. Enough with politics. I am tired. No one will ever find this private epistle for I will make sure it is so.

How will I be remembered? Confederation? The CPR? What of it all at this point? Why now when I am so ill and tired and yet still filled with enough restlessness to blow it all to smithereens! How truly peculiar public life is. They all think they know me and yet not one of them has any idea who I really am. It is a good thing I am writing this alone, in near darkness here at Earnscliffe. It will all be buried with me in the end.



*Yours Truly
John A. Macdonald*

Buried because this goddamned country and . . . ruddy hell, that's enough!



Kingston Historical Society Awards

Since 1993, the Society has made one or more awards to individuals, groups or institutions in recognition of outstanding contributions to the preservation and interpretation of local history.

Members of the Society are encouraged to nominate those whom they feel meet the criteria for the award. Please do so in writing, either on paper or via e-mail, giving the name and contact information of your nominee, and as much information as possible about your reasons for nominating the person, group or institution.

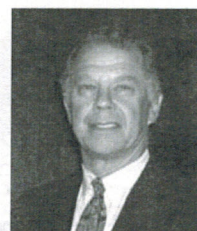
Please address same to Chairperson, KHS Awards Committee, Box 54, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 4V8 or to Chairperson KHS Awards, andrewser@sympatico.ca.

Awards are presented at the annual KHS Christmas Party in December. Please submit such nominations by 31 October 2009.

The Kingston Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society will meet in the Wilson Room of Kingston Frontenac Public Library, 130 Johnson St., Saturday, October 17, 2009 at 10 a.m. Nancy Cutway will demonstrate "Using Legacy Family Tree" - software to keep track of your family history. Visitors welcome. For further information, visit our website www.ogs.on.ca/kingston

SPEAKERS' CORNER

with Edward Grenda



"Why Wolfe Island is in Canada" by D'Arcy Jenish (Author and Journalist)

With a provocative title that piques one's curiosity, especially those who live in Kingston or on Wolfe Island, it was not surprising to see that the talk attracted one of the largest Society audiences in quite some time. Over one hundred were in attendance! Although the focus was on Wolfe Island, the pervasive theme throughout the talk centered on the notable explorer of 19th century Western Canada, David Thompson, and the role he played in the Kingston area.

The introductory sections of Mr. Jenish's talk dwelled on David Thompson's early background. Thompson was born in London, England in 1770 and died in Montreal in 1857. He came to Canada when he was fourteen years of age with seven years of formal education. He pursued a multitude of talents and a record of remarkable accomplishments fur trader, explorer, astronomer, surveyor, mapmaker, farmer, businessman, and writer. He was also multilingual, being able to speak Cree, Blackfoot, and French in addition to his first language, English. He was employed by the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company, both fur trading concerns. For the first 28 years of his life in Canada, he explored and mapped the area then commonly referred to as the Great Northwest. This was the land encompassed by the west coast of Hudson Bay, by Lake Superior, by the upper Missouri River and reaching all the way to the Pacific Coast. While engaging in his explorations of the Great Northwest, he developed the indispensable skills of leadership and survival capabilities in the vast wilderness he traversed. Thompson also mastered a bundle of skills which rendered him unique among his fur trader colleagues namely, the complexities of celestial observations. This enabled him to determine with precision his position on the earth's surface in degrees of latitude and longitude.

In a rough and ready way, it is estimated that he covered over 50,000 miles by canoe, walking, snowshoeing, and horseback. He was instrumental in finding two passes through the Rocky Mountains to the West Coast and pinpointed the source of the Columbia River (then known as the Great River of the West) and became the first person to navigate the 1,200 miles of the Columbia River from its source to the Pacific Ocean. Throughout his travels in the West, he meticulously recorded the latitude and longitude of prominent features in the landscape. Eventually, these observations constituted the foundation of what is widely considered to be his paramount accomplishment "The Map of the North West Territory of the Province of Canada", measuring six feet nine inches by ten feet four inches and embracing 1.2 million square miles of land, all of which are based on Thompson's own surveys.

After he concluded his work in the West, Thompson ventured east to Montreal and became involved in the first International Joint Commission formed by Britain and the U.S.A. following the War of 1812 in order to survey the boundary between the two territories. He was appointed Chief Surveyor to the British Commission and charged with drawing the boundary from St. Regis, in the east near the current Ontario-Quebec border, along the St. Lawrence River, the Great Lakes to Lake of the Woods in the west.

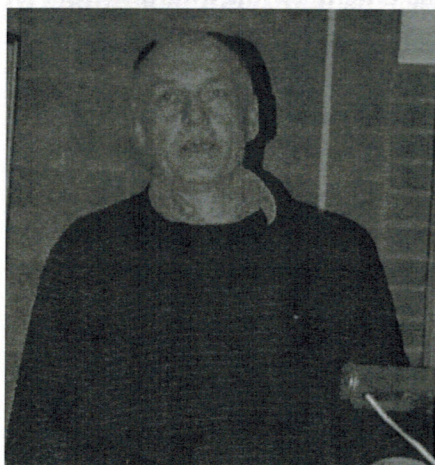
Thompson began his Commission work in the spring of 1817, surveying the north shore of the St. Lawrence while the Americans surveyed the south shore. By August 1818, the two survey parties reached the head of the St. Lawrence surveying 1500 islands in the process.

When the fieldwork was completed, the British and American surveyors prepared maps of the shorelines and submitted them to the British and American Commissioners who were charged with the unenviable task of drawing the boundary. The chief principle, among others, that the Commission followed in this endeavor was that the boundary was to be on the water and not on land. The deliberations of the

Commission were characterized by compromise and concession, especially where large islands were at issue. The British and Americans were both intent on securing the Long Sault Islands near Cornwall and Grand Isle (as Wolfe Island was then called). The British ceded the Long Sault Islands to the Americans and strongly insisted on retaining Wolfe Island as its possession on the persuasive recommendation by Thompson. He was cognizant of the strategic significance of Wolfe Island for the defence of Kingston, especially its proximity to Kingston's naval dockyard and fortifications. The British Commission maintained that these elements "were the most important in these provinces". Largely because of Thompson, Wolfe Island has remained securely in Canada's embrace ever since.

A pleasant and fascinating surprise cropped up during the lively question period following the talk. After posing several questions on Thompson's background, Mrs. Narjis Phillips revealed that she was a descendant of David Thompson, six generations removed!

Professor Brian Osborne responded on behalf of the Society and contributed several insightful observations on Thompson and the Wolfe Island question. He thanked Mr. Jenish for his interesting and stimulating presentation.



Guest Speaker, D'Arcy Jenish, photo by Peter Ginn