



# LIMELIGHT

NEWSLETTER OF THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Millennium  
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1999

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we enter this Christmas Season, KHS is nearing the close of its second century. We have reason to be pleased with our society which has survived many ups and downs. We have had a good year with well attended meetings characterized by lively discussion and knowledgeable input from the floor.



***"To our next millennium together"***

The upcoming Christmas meeting will provide us with a special opportunity to socialize and -- thanks to the effort of the Awards Committee -- to recognize individuals who have contributed to the progress of KHS and to our knowledge of local history.

An important part of the evening will be a presentation on the restoration and refurbishing of the British Whig Building. This focus on this prominent element of Market Square underscores the importance of buildings such as this in our shared history and heritage. I hope that discussion will be lively.

As an historical society, we report on, record, and interpret the past. But we must also look to the future so that we continue to meet the needs of our members with presentations that provoke discussion,

interaction, and participation by those present -- members and guests alike. On the eve of the new century and millennium, it seems appropriate -- even essential -- to consider new initiatives to supplement our current activities. Several ideas come to mind: occasional one-day symposia centred around a specific theme; group-visits to sites of historical interest; and the promotion of interaction with other local groups active in historical and heritage affairs.

These and other ideas first surfaced in discussion within the Ways and Means Committee in 1996. They were then seen as devices to diversify our programme, increase our visibility, and broaden our membership base. The year 2000 seems an appropriate time for such new initiatives. (Desmond O'Meara)

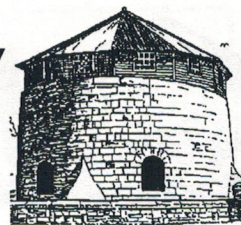
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# Kingston Historical Society

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**Editor: Dr. Brian Osborne (interim) - Phone (613) 533-6042**

## AND ONE FROM THE EDITOR...

A hundred years ago -- in 1901 actually - England celebrated the commencement of the 20th century. It was also the "millenary" of the death of



1900 or 1901, 2000 or 2001?

King Alfred. Perhaps we should have used that term, but a simple spelling mistake and we would have had people asking what the celebration had to do with "millinery" -- "women's apparel for the head"! Clearly, letters are important.

But so too are numbers. Let's not get into the arcane niceties of whether the new millennium starts on 1 January in 2000 or 2001. They worked that out a century ago. If you want more information on

this read Hilliel Schwartz's **Century's End: A Cultural History of the Fin de Siècle Through the 1990s**, New York: Doubleday, 1990. It's a scholarly examination of society's preoccupation with marking the edges of time.

Writing about the 1900/1901 debate, Schwartz argues that "from the point of view of common sense and common usage the 20th century began on the first day of 1900, and from the perspective of astronomers, mathematicians, civil engineers, scientists, and official chronologers it began on the first day of 1901." A century ago, science and logic won the argument. Only Kaiser Wilhelm's Germany celebrated the advent of the 20th century on 1 January 1900. The rest of the world had to wait another year -- at least officially.

But few could ignore the symbolic change of digits as 1899 turned into 1900! Indeed, on the first day of 1901, the **Christian Science Monitor** confessed that it was satisfied that the 20th century had started a year ago and apologized to its readers that "Our governmental authorities officially postponed the beginning of the new century until this year."

There's an economic strategy in all of this. Given the world-wide concern that the \$2000-a-couple celebrations might fizzle out this year, look out for advertisements next fall. They will argue that **TECHNICALLY** the **REAL** celebration should be on New Year's Eve

2000 -- hopefully at only \$2001-a-couple. A millennial bargain!

But it certainly is a significant change for KHS. Soon we will be able to declare that we have been in existence in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. Not a bad record. —

## LETTER BOX

Since returning to Kingston two years ago, I have been happily immersing myself in our local history. Among other things, I am reading the back issues of **Historic Kingston**, having acquired from Margaret Burdsall as full a file as she could supply. I shall be happy to hear from anyone who can spare any of the following issues: Issues Wanted: 11 (1962); 13-14 (1965-66); 16-19 (1968-71); 37 (1989); 39 (1991); 41 (1993); 45 (1997).

Bruce Cossar (546-6790)





*Please join us  
At the Christmas Party of the  
**Kingston Historical Society**  
In Memorial Hall, Kingston City Hall  
Wednesday 15 December 1999 at 7:00pm*

*The reception will be followed at 7:30pm  
with our annual KHS Awards*

*At 8:00pm following the award ceremony our speakers for the  
evening are Andrew Dobson and Kim Donovan  
from KINCOR who will speak on the  
restoration of the British Whig Building*

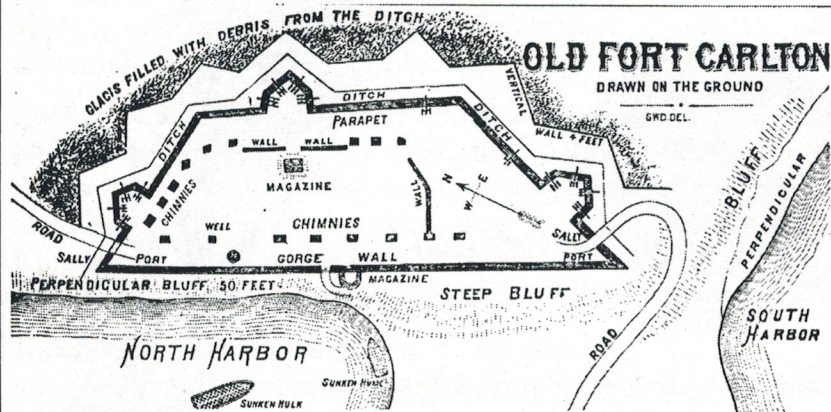
*After the presentation the reception will continue with the  
**Music of Paul Chabot***

*All for only \$5.00 per person  
Wine and Cheese and Christmas Cheer  
Merry Christmas*



## TILT AT CARLETON ISLAND

In 1986, the Thousand Islands Land Trust (TILT) acquired conservation easements for Carleton Island's Fort Haldimand. As we all remember from Sarah Gibson's fine paper (**Historic Kingston**, 46, 1998, 5-30), the fort was built in 1777-8 and named after General Frederick Haldimand. It originally consisted of a powder magazine, a well, several barracks, and a parapet. Placed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places in December 1978, all



that remains of this British outpost are two partially standing chimneys, several piles of rubble that were once the 16 chimneys of the barracks, and signs of the magazine and well. Under the direction of site-archaeologist, Doug Pippin, TILT has been engaged in a major assault on the fort in recent months to free it from its most recent invader -- sumac. As their call for assistance put it, "it is very important to document and preserve this wonderful place so that future generations may experience the thrill of standing in an 18th century fort....Our goal is to preserve the site's features so they may be further investigated and documented..."

Anyone interested in offering "hands across the border" please contact Aaron R. Vogel, Land Steward, TILT (315 686 5345). (Information provided by Bill Fittell).

## NOVEMBER SPEAKERS

At the November meeting, Messrs. Bill Thomson and Don McQueen entertained KHS with their paper, "**The Canadian Locomotive Works**" -- a foretaste of their forthcoming volume. The 150 year overview of the business and technological history of this important part of Kingston's history was studded with images of locomotives -- ancient and modern -- and plant operations. Ironically, the CLW continues to exercise our collective imaginations as we wrestle with its chief legacy for modern Kingstonians -- Block D!

## IN MEMORIAM

KHS members will be saddened to hear of the death of Maxwell Pearson Martyn on Sunday, 21 November 1999. A graduate of the University of Alberta, he served with the R.C.A.F. from 1938 to 1965, attaining the rank of Air Vice-Marshal. His subsequent career included President of Trans Air of Winnipeg and aviation consultant to Richardson Securities. Mr. Martyn's retirement found him active in the Merrickville Historical Society and, after moving to Kingston in 1985, the United Services Club. We extend our sympathies to his wife, Virginia Hopkirk, a former member of KHS.

## ANOTHER PLAQUE?

On 6 August 1829, the Cataraqui Bridge -- the old "Penny Bridge" -- was officially opened. Its principal rationale was to improve communications between the garrison in Kingston and the growing naval and military establishment at Point Frederick. It was also much appreciated by the villagers of Barriefield and the settlers located throughout Pittsburgh Township. Hitherto, the Cataraqui river had always been an obstacle. The scow-ferry could only operate when the weather permitted -- and often not at all in Spring and Fall. The alternative was a circuitous journey up to Kingston Mills and then back down to Navy Bay. Until its replacement by the La Salle Causeway in 1917, the Cataraqui Bridge served Kingston well.

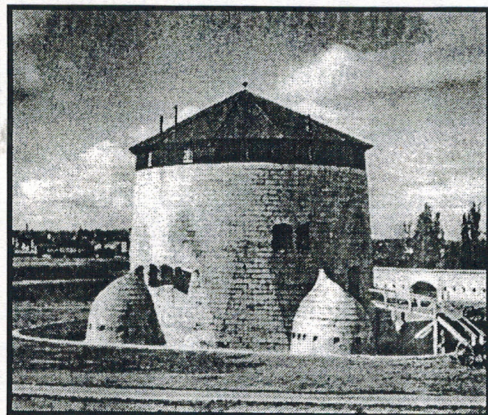
In recognition of the importance of the Cataraqui Bridge, it is proposed that a plaque and seating platform be built about the middle of the causeway on the lake side. The view towards the lake and up the Cataraqui are quite splendid and will provide a place of rest and contemplation for walkers and historians.

If it went ahead, the platform could be completed next year so that the plaque and finishings could be added early in 2001. Either Her Majesty the Queen or the Governor General is expected on 15 June 2001 and the unveiling could take place for the 160th anniversary of Kingston becoming the first capital of Canada. What do you think? (A proposal from Ian R. Milne).



## RENOVATIONS TO FORT FREDERICK TOWER

In view of the recently completed repair of the Murney and Shoal Martello Towers, it is gratifying to report that the Department of National Defence has set in



m o t i o n a  
m a j o r  
restoration of  
the masonry  
and roof of the  
Fort Frederick  
Tower, which  
stands in the  
grounds of the  
R o y a l  
M i l i t a r y  
C o l l e g e o f  
Canada. The

work, which commenced in early August, is being carried out by Phoenix Restorations of Toronto.

The RMC Museum was established in the Fort Frederick Tower in the early 1920s. Newspaper articles of the day suggest that this was the stimulation for the creation, shortly afterwards, of the museum in the Murney Tower. That these two structures continue, some seventy years later, to play significant roles in the interpretation of Kingston's history is a strong endorsement of the foresight and wisdom of those responsible during this period for their upkeep and maintenance. (Prepared by Jack Pike). —————

## CONSTITUTION

The revised "Constitution and By-laws" were formally presented for adoption at the November General Meeting. In the ensuing discussion, two amendments to the revised format were duly moved, seconded and accepted, as follows:

An additional section, (e), was added to clause I-1, to wit, "to be an advocate for the preservation of buildings and areas of historic interest in the City of Kingston and district"; and the addition of the words "and heritage" to clause I-1-(a) so that it now reads "to create, foster and maintain interest in the history and heritage of the City of Kingston and its environs."

It is anticipated that the acceptance of the revised Constitution and By-laws will be decided by a vote of the members present as the first item of business at the January AGM. (Prepared by Jack Pike). —————

## REMEMBERING MACKENZIE BOWELL

Canada's "National Pantheon" is located behind the railings on Parliament Hill. It's a site reserved for monuments to Fathers of Confederation, prime ministers, and royalty. It started with Cartier (1885) who was followed by Sir John A. (1895), Queen Victoria (1901), Mackenzie (1901), George Brown (1913), Baldwin and Lafontaine (1914), D'Arcy McGee (1922), and Laurier (1927). Then this frenzy of memorialization stopped for thirty years. It recommenced with Borden (1957), Mackenzie-King (1968), Diefenbaker (1986), and Pearson (1990). But not St. Laurent (1976) -- he's at the Supreme Court -- while Trudeau, Clarke, Turner, Mulroney, Campbell, and Chretien are all waiting patiently to be bronzed.

And what about Sir Mackenzie Bowell, prime minister 1894-96? He's not included in the Pantheon. However, **Outlook**, Hasting County Historical Society's newsletter (No. 163, October 1999) reports that on 17 September 1999 a plaque was unveiled in his honour at the entrance to Belleville Cemetery. Part of Parks Canada's National Program for the Grave Sites of Canadian Prime Ministers, the Hon. Lyle Vanclief represented the federal government and paid tribute to Bowell's contributions. Almost 150 people attended, including several of Bowell's descendants, among them his great-great-grandson, Blake Holton, who brought greetings from the family. The choir of Bridge Street United Church added an appropriate choral note to the occasion.

Congratulations to Parks Canada, the Belleville Cemetery Board, and the participants for remembering Mackenzie Bowell. (And thanks to Marjorie Simmons for bringing this into the **Limelight**). —————

## CELEBRATING SIR JOHN

The Orillia Historical Society is again honouring Sir John A. Macdonald with a dinner on Monday, 10 January 2000. The guest speaker will be Bob Rae and the Honoured Guest will be Hugh Gainsford, Sir John's great grandson. Tickets are \$25 and are available from Richard Johnston (705-325-9018) and Jim Angus (705-329-2127). The reason this event is being held on the 10th January is that Bob Rae could not attend on the 11th, Sir John A's actual birthday. However, some have postulated that -- depending on the time of birth in Glasgow -- it could have still been the 10th in Canada when J.A.M. entered the world! (Thanks to Margaret Burdsall for this item.) —————

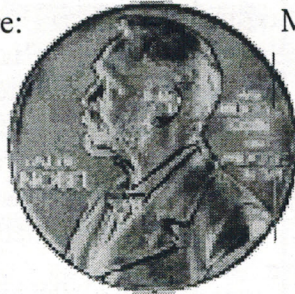


## WHOSE NOBEL LAUREATE ANYWAY?

Recently, the news was bruited abroad that Robert A. Mundell -- a "Kingstonian" -- had received the Nobel Prize for Economics. It raised the question, "What makes a Kingstonian?"

In another recent announcement, the **Whig-Standard** trumpeted forth another act of local appropriation: "Kingstonian Becomes National Archivist." This may have been a bit overdone, methinks. Ian Wilson had only been among us for a few years as Master's student and a couple more as Queen's Archivist. Then off he went to the greener pastures of provincial and federal bureaucracy. But this being said, we can surely claim him as ours as he has long been a member of KHS! And then there is the other "Kingstonian" who recently won the Governor General's Award for Literature: Matt Cohen. Surely, he's really a "Salemite"?

But I think we can safely say that Professor Mundell, at least, is a genuine Kingstonian. He was born in Kingston in 1932, where his father was attached to the military. His family lived in Inverary and later in one of the gatehouses at RMC and Robert attended KCVI. Now surely that is sufficient claim to label him as a Kingstonian, albeit not as an "Old Stone," three generations in Cataraqui Cemetery!



His the gatehouses at RMC and Robert sufficient claim to label him as a lacking that ultimate diagnostic factor --

All of this leads me to reflect on the number of notables who -- like Laureate Mundell -- have attended KCVI. According to the **Historical Times** -- a historical account of KCVI produced in 1973 -- the school's long history allows it to claim such worthies among its early staff as the Reverend John Stuart, his son, George Okill Stuart, and John, later Bishop John, Strachan. A little later in its history, KCVI could argue that its students included John A. Macdonald and -- that much overlooked Kingston politician -- Oliver Mowat. More recently, such local notables as mayors Val Swain, George Speal, Ken Keyes, Helen Cooper, and our current MP, Peter Milliken, graced the halls of KCVI. And then there is Robertson Davies who -- rumour has it -- was once considered as a nominee for the Nobel Prize for Literature. All would agree that, even without it, he certainly merits acclaim as a distinguished writer -- and distinctive character.

But who are the other Kingstonians who have reached eminence and celebrity status? Perhaps **Limelight** readers could add to this list in a later number. (Prepared by Stewart Renfrew)

## WHIG HISTORY

It's not only KHS's **Historic Kingston** that writes the history of this place. In recent months, the **Kingston Whig-Standard** has got into the act. To mark the 150th anniversary of the KWS, "Canada's oldest continuously published daily newspaper" has been presenting a fascinating little column, "HISTORY: As we saw it."



### HISTORY: As we saw it

The "we", of course, is intended to be a loaded meaning. It's a reference to journalists' role as the vigilant observers, recorders, and scribes of our community -- those trained to take the pulse of the body politic. And because we depend on their reportage, it is through their eyes that we, the public,

come to see so much of what's going on -- even if we don't like the view on times.

That's what we enjoyed about Lyndon Jones' long-running column, "Looking Back": he was always able to dig up something that reminded us of our personal and collective pasts -- long-forgotten names, dramatic events, and individual achievements.

The KWS "HISTORY" column is continuing this much appreciated exercise of remembering. For example, the 27 October column presents us with an interesting conundrum. It refers to a 1941 report that a Major Charles D.T. (Chick) Mundell, had been injured while serving overseas. A major in the Medical Corps, he was a graduate of KCVI, played hockey and football at both Queen's and RMC, and helped coach Queen's to an intercollegiate championship. Another Mundell! Any relation to "our own" Robert A. Mundell?



MILLENNIUM PROJECT of the KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO  
MONUMENTS, MEMORIALS & MARKERS  
IN THE KINGSTON AREA

The KHS Plaque Committee - John Grenville, David Kasserra, Jennifer McKendry, Bill Patterson, and Ted Storey - is hard at work on the final editing for this forthcoming book - with design help from Peter Dorn. It commemorates the new millennium by publishing the texts of more than 180 plaques, monuments, and memorials that record our history from 1673 to 1945. Sponsors vary but many were, of course, erected by the Kingston Historical Society, which expressed an interest in markers as early as 1894. The markers are grouped geographically for ease in touring, assisted by helpful maps. Additional information provides greater depth to the marker's text. Suggested readings are given, so that a researcher can delve further into a subject. The readings, given in short form in the individual entry for a marker, have a full citation in the extensive bibliography. More than 150 interesting illustrations - contemporary and historic - are found throughout the *Guide*. The release date is projected as February 2000: look for it at KHS meetings and in bookstores, as well as by mail order. Here is the entry for

**SIR RICHARD CARTWRIGHT 1835-1912**

**Grandson of a prominent Loyalist merchant, Richard John Cartwright was born in Kingston, Upper Canada, and became a successful businessman. A Conservative in the Legislative Assembly of Canada (1863-67), he was later a Liberal member of the House of Commons for thirty-seven years (1867-1904), until appointed to the Senate. He served as minister of finance in the Mackenzie cabinet (1873-78) and under Laurier as minister of trade and commerce (1896-1904). A renowned orator and free trader, he was the architect of the Liberal election policy of 1891 favouring unrestricted reciprocity with the United States. He died at Kingston.**

*Location:* City Hall, 216 Ontario Street, near the entrance to Memorial Hall

*Type:* bronze plaque

*Sponsor:* Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada

*Date Erected:* 1948

*Readings:* Cartwright 1912; Swainson 1968b;  
DCB vol. 14

*Related Markers:* the Cartwright House

*Additional Information:* Sir Richard's grandfather was the Honourable Richard Cartwright (1759-1815), United Empire Loyalist and merchant who married Magdalene Secord (sister-in-law of Laura Secord). They had eight children including twins John Solomon and Robert David. The latter who became an assistant minister at St George's, was the father of Sir Richard, born in 1835 in the Cartwright House, 191 King Street East.



Queen's University Archives



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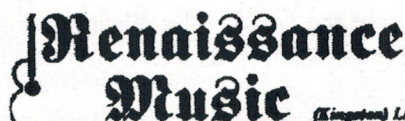
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