



Vol. 20 No. 5

Editor: Jim Warren

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HOLD THE PHONE

For the final regular meeting of this season, the Kingston Historical Society is pleased to welcome Dr. Robert Pike of Queen's Sociology Department, who will examine the social impact when 'The Telephone Comes to Kingston 1883-1911'. During this period, 1382 telephones were installed in our city. Who were their subscribers? How did Mother Bell reach them? Prof. Pike was educated in the London School of Economics in England, the Australian National University and came to Canada in 1965. As head of the Department of Sociology, his main academic interests lie in the social aspects of education and communication, particularly the postal service and the telephone. As usual, we meet upstairs in the Wilson Room of the Kingston Public Library at 130 Johnson Street, on Wednesday 19 May 1993 at 7:30 p.m. Bye for now.

SCOTTISH SETTLERS IN KINGSTON

At our April meeting, Patsy Fleming delivered a warm, personal account of a little-known group of Scottish settlers who crossed the Atlantic in the 1820's, one on the same boat as John A., to build a commercial empire in the nineteenth century and to contribute much to the social life of Kingston. They were the Carruthers, the Gunns, the Davidsons and the Craigs. Her talk was well-illustrated with slides and we look forward to reading the story in the next *Historic Kingston*.

FAREWELL SIR JOHN

On Sunday 6 June 1993 we will say farewell, once again, to our first Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald at his gravesite in Cataraqui Cemetery. This is to the north east of the intersection of Princess Street and Sydenham Road; the entrance is off Sydenham at Beach Avenue. The memorial service will begin at 2:30. Guest speaker will be the distinguished Canadian historian Prof. S.F. Wise of the History Department in Carleton University formerly of Queen's. His talk is entitled: 'Sir John A. Macdonald: House of Commons Man.' This year, our federal government will install yet another plaque to commemorate our first Prime Minister. This will make three cast metal plaques and three carved in stone at the



ANTHONY JENKINS/The Globe and Mail

gravesite. Others may be found on buildings in which he lived or practiced law.

NEW MEMBERS

While a few of our members are fashionably late in paying their membership fees, due in January, most are making up for lost time, goaded by Membership Chairman Joe Boucher. We are happy to announce three new memberships. Carmel E. Conley lives in Kingston. Our best wishes to you, Carmel Conley. Another is

Donald B. Smith in Calgary, who is in the Department of History, University of Calgary. Greetings from historic Kingston, Prof. Donald Smith. The third is an institutional membership for the Superintendent of Bellevue House, whoever he may be. Welcome to you all! Fifteen new friends have joined us this year. Sadly, three of our members have departed this life. After a distinguished career as soldier in both World Wars, first warden of Joyceville Penitentiary, land developer, city alderman, active member of service clubs, curator of Murney Tower Museum and Life Member of our society, Lieut. Col. O.A. Earl has died at age 96. Also at 96, Life Member Miss Hilda Buckmaster has died after a dedicated career as teacher, defender of historic properties and Dean of St. Hilda's. We regret, too, the passing of Family Member Aubrey Fudge and are touched by his wife Evelyn's determination to maintain ties with our Society by bringing granddaughter Deborah Money into our fold.

NEW MEMBERSHIP PAMPHLET

After several rewrites, our membership pamphlet has been redesigned once again by Jim Warren and will appear in quantity shortly to expand our membership base. The previous pamphlet was extremely well-written, but its photographs appeared dated and did not reproduce clearly on the grey background. The new design uses the 1875 birdseye view of Kingston and other historic line drawings as illustration and now employs our standard logo and typography. It will be printed on blue stock and appear more noticeably in displays. Please use it to recruit new members!

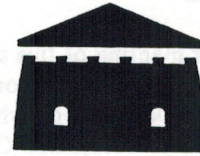
HURRAY FOR US!

We are delighted and not a little proud to announce that our Kingston Historical Society has won the prestigious Scadding Award for Excellence presented by the Ontario Historical Society. President Frank Milledge will journey to Peterborough on Saturday 15 May to attend the OHS annual convention and to receive the prize. Meanwhile, Bill Fittsell has been amassing looneys from our monthly book draw, and suggests we donate the money to the building fund of the Ontario Historical Society. Let us give him our enthusiastic support.

ART 100

I know. We mentioned this in our last newsletter. But Bill Fittsell and his team are progressing so splendidly in collecting historic art donors for our October historic artshow, Art 100, that we thought you, too, would want to participate. Some 30 pictures have been identified, from 9 sources. If you have an original drawing,

watercolour or oil on an historic theme and can provide its date, artist and framed size, call Bill Fittsell at 549-8354.



1893 – 1993

**ART
100**

**Kingston
Historical
Society**

ORGY IN FEBRUARY

Bill Fittsell is at it again. Don't tell anyone I told you, but now he is suggesting that our society, the respected, restrained and exemplary Kingston Historical Society, engage in a social affair during the depths of next winter. Dear me. First it was gambling: the looney lottery to win a book. Then an art show. And you know what artists are like. And now a party in mid winter. Are there no limits to this fellow's proposed indiscretions? Next he will suggest spirituous beverages and members of both sexes, and a locale like Fort Henry, far from the eyes of the constabulary. Mind you, the prospect of another winter might well drive all of us over the edge. Maybe we should support Bill Fittsell's proposal after all.

MARKETING HISTORY

The Kingston Tourist Office has consented to our installing a wall display from which our historical vignettes can be sold for a dollar apiece. They report considerable tourist interest in pamphlets and posters having a distinctive Kingston connotation, such as those dealing with the Canadian Locomotive Company, the Kingston Portsmouth and Cataraqui Street Railway, the waterfront, the Shipyards and the Military Sites like Murney Tower. We are rushing them into print to promote the opening of our museum on the weekend of Queen Victoria's birthday. Our museum will have its own gift shop, and we hope to see well-designed products on historical themes. It may be noted that while there are many gift shops in Kingston stores and museums, many carrying goods of quality, there are few gift items which are distinctive of this city, of good quality and which show some creative imagination. By contrast, gift shops in the United States offer items that are far superior. Undoubtedly there is a market for chintzy cushions bearing the likeness of bunnies, piggies and teddies, or tee shirts carrying such stirring messages as 'Sure I am a hateful bitch but, damn, I am good at it,' but such contributions to our culture can be bought in every sleazy bazaar from Cairo to California. With a city as rich as ours, surely we can do a little better.

THE PENNY POST?

The days are past when a letter could be dispatched by Concord coach or steamship to the farthest reaches of Empire for a penny or two. Our modest book *Historic Kingston* enjoyed the postal book rate which cost 70¢ a mailing. However on 22 March 1993, our Department of Communications discontinued the book rate, and we now pay \$1.95 a mailing. We thus contribute \$343.75 more than before to the common weal. Any wonder that we whine so when collecting your membership fee.

ARCHITECTURAL STUDY CONFERENCE

As reported in *THEN* in November, the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada is conducting a conference on the Architecture of Work & Leisure, Profit & Pleasure which will run from Thursday 27 May to Saturday 29 on the Queen's campus. The registration fee for non-members is \$145, which includes admission to sessions, registration package and abstracts, three lunches, nutrition breaks (sic) and a tour of City Hall. Jennifer McKendry can supply further information at (613) 544-9535. Registration is at Victoria Hall, at Queen's Crescent and Albert Street where items of architectural and historical interest will be on sale from 8 a.m. to 9:15 a.m. Sessions begin at 9:30 a.m. Thursday in the Policy Studies Building, Union Street, Queen's University. The conference ends at 5 p.m. Saturday.

FAIRFIELD HOUSE

Historic Fairfield House, with its pretty park setting beside the lake on the Loyalist Parkway, is two hundred years old. It was built by William Fairfield, late of Jessups Loyal Rangers, in 1793 on land received for his loyal efforts during the unpleasantness with those rebel Americans. The house is of two storeys, wood covering brick, with long verandahs at both levels. Inside is a great fireplace which could consume eight foot logs, and upstairs is a ballroom in which housewarmings sometimes lasted three days. The house is in surprisingly good shape, thanks to a restoration completed at the time of the Queen's visit in the mid-eighties, under the supervision of architect-historian Peter Stokes. Fairfield House is normally maintained by the St. Lawrence Parks Commission. This year, their budget for the property has been reduced to nil. Responsibility has been thrown into the lap of Ernestown Township and the Fairfield Homestead Heritage Association. Prospects looked dim, but private enterprise to the rescue! Victor Dubbleman of VRD Landscaping at R.R. 3, Bath, near Odessa has volunteered to maintain the grounds this year. Victor and his wife Ronetta Dubbleman were married in Fairfield House in 1986. Negotiations continue. Meanwhile, your editor has phoned Peter Stokes who has very kindly agreed to send us a set of the plans of the house, prepared when it was being restored. He noted that the timber frame construction is peculiarly eighteenth century, a rare example in Ontario. And perhaps you, too, can help. The best ways to preserve an historic home are to visit it frequently, to put some money in their kitty, and to roll up your sleeves and help as a volunteer. Help in the garden, dust the furniture, fix the roof, paint the verandahs. But help!

HOUSE TOUR IN MADOC

The Madoc Historical Foundation invites you to attend their Sixth Annual Victoria Day House Tour on Sunday 23 May 1993 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. On view will be stone, brick and frame homes, school houses and churches in both town and country locations. Tickets are \$7 per person including a draw for Bob White's watercolour 'A Rural Home in Hastings'. On the day of the tour, you can get tickets from Madoc Bakeshop Antiques after 10:30 a.m. in the village. For information or reservations, phone Anne Hinchliffe at (613) 473-2623. Madoc is in the heart of Hastings County.

LACROSSE REVISITED

In our April newsletter, we noted the history of lacrosse and the Gildersleeve Challenge Cup. In the Canadian Lacrosse News, Wes Clark, Executive Director of the Canadian Lacrosse Association, tells of the discovery of the long-lost trophy in the basement of Murney Tower Museum where, presumably, it had languished since it was last seen in 1882. He hopes that our loaning of the trophy to the CLA becomes permanent. Your editor strongly endorses the idea and is delighted to have a note from member Pip Nation adding his voice. Could we have a formal response from our executive?

1929 KINGSTON MAP

At the risk of consuming newsletter paper in a profligate manner, we thought you might enjoy seeing our city as it was in 1929. The Defence Department map is at a scale of 2 inches to 1 mile and shows the urban area before the postwar boom. The municipal airport, built in 1930, is shown in the centre in happy anticipation of an aeronautical revolution, just three years after Lindburgh crossed the Atlantic solo. Instead, we saw the Great Depression and World War II.

FORT HENRY GUARD SURRENDERS

A controversy has arisen in the ranks of the Kingston Historical Society and on the Letters page of the Whig-Standard regarding the appropriate sex for members of the Fort Henry Guard. It appears that the question has been resolved. John Robertson, Manager of Fort Henry, advises us that sixteen women have been offered employment in the Guard, out of a total complement of one hundred and eleven. As historical purists, we must not be too downhearted by this lamentable example of rampant political correctness. In Mexico, the police have discovered that lady cops do better than men at investigating crimes caused by drugs. Apparently Mexican men, even criminals, are less likely to lie to a lady. With

women in the Fort Henry Guard in Canada, it should be possible to curb American adventurism abroad. Mind you, we had better keep an eye on Hilary Clinton! Have a great summer. Jim Warren