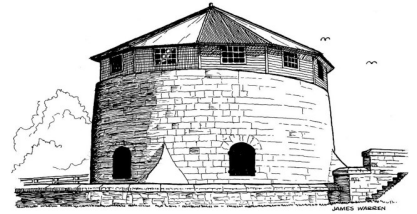


Limelight

Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

Kingston Ontario Canada



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President's Message

by Vincent Durant

On October 22nd, the Council for KHS resumed its monthly meetings. Normally, we would have met in September, but COVID-19 complications interfered! We finally held an almost glitch-free Zoom meeting! Here are a couple of highlights:



Membership Chair Paul Van Nest reported a good response to his call for early renewal of 2021 memberships. As mentioned last month, a 50% discount is offered to current members who renew their membership for 2021. Those who choose to pay the regular amount will be entitled to a tax receipt for the extra “donated” amount. Paul was happy to report many renewals, several new members, and even some donations.

Council debated a motion asking that we support the removal of the Sir John A. Macdonald statue in City Park. Discussion was wide-ranging, and not without moments of insight and passion. The motion was defeated by a wide margin. (Elsewhere in this issue of Limelight you will find a letter to the editor by retired Brigadier-General William J. Patterson, in which he lays out his personal reasons for keeping the statue in City Park, and laments Queen's University's decision to rename its law building.)

The Murney Tower Museum staff and volunteers have created an attractive newsletter, Murney News. You will find more information on it elsewhere in this issue of Limelight. The work of the museum goes on, despite the shutdown caused by the pandemic.

Finally, I want to mention that November's Council meeting (via Zoom) will be devoted in large part to finding our way forward. As mentioned in my last message to you, we are planning to brainstorm activities for 2021 and beyond. Soon afterwards, we hope to set up a “virtual town hall” so that members may ask questions and discuss our ongoing plans. More on this later!

Best wishes.

Vincent

THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Established 1893

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Please forward submissions to the Editor betty.andrews@gmail.com

Reprinting of articles from the Limelight must be accompanied by an acknowledgment of the Society, the issue and date. Photo credits and by-lines must be retained.

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Well known local artist Joanne Gervais welcomed passersby to her plein air kiosk in front of General Brock's Commissary near Kingston's Market Square on Saturday, September 26th. Eva Barnes, a member of the Kingston Historical Society, was invited to model an ensemble from her extensive personal collection of heritage clothing reproductions. The historically designed outfit that was chosen for the outdoor portrait sitting was similar to one worn by Queen Victoria to welcome guests to a country dance at her beloved Balmoral Castle in Scotland in

1857. The Queen's love of highland plaids started a world-wide fashion trend that continues to this day. Brochures from the KHS were available on the display table and generated much interest.

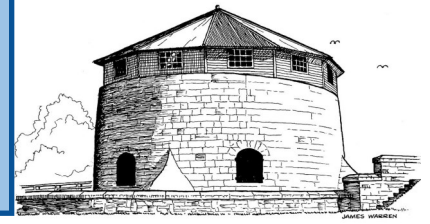
From the recent past of the Kingston Historical Society's Proceedings from *Then* newsletter— January 1992

November 1992 (5 pages) ...Phil Quattrocchi announces plans to build an outdoor skating rink on Block D...The rink will consist of a speed skating oval 106 metres long... Also: John Nalon decided to revive the Gananoque Historical Society, begun in the thirties but declined in recent times. His first meeting... attracted nine people...society now boasts one thousand and five...<https://www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/LL-1992-11-Nov92-1.pdf>

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Bill Fittell who celebrated their 75th anniversary on October 12 !

Murney Tower

Operated by the
Kingston Historical Society



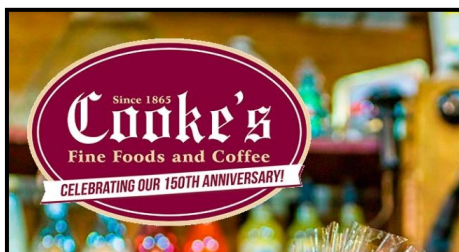
Updates from the Murney Tower Museum

Dr. Tabitha Renaud, Museum Director



CKWS visited the Tower in September to interview our staff about all the work we have been getting done despite the challenges of Covid-19. You can find this video on the KHS website! Thanks to the *Young Canada Works* and *Canada Summer Jobs* grant programs we have been able to hire many students this year spanning from May 2020 to March 2021. This summer we had two Museum Assistants from May to September working remotely. We will have three Museums Assistants this Fall and Winter. Olivia Anstess has been working weekly in the Tower with our curator, Simge Erdogan, to care for our artifacts and pack them up for the winter. Amy Abraham will begin her position in November working on programming and social media management. Emma Binns was with the Tower from May to October and left to focus on her studies. We are currently hiring a replacement for Emma that will begin with Amy in November. Our team is keeping very busy. Since there is always more to report about the museum's activities, we will be launching a separate electronic newsletter entitled *Murney News* for anyone interested in hearing more each month.

The Murney Tower Museum is starting a free electronic newsletter to share more updates! If you are interested in receiving this newsletter please email: manager@murneytower.com and request to be put on our email mailing list. We would love to share our adventures with you!



WHY IS IT THAT MUCH I HAVE HELD TO BE RIGHT IS NOW SAID TO BE WRONG?

The best example is the historical inheritance of Sir John A. Macdonald. I have always believed him to be a true and worthy Canadian leader, who represented Kingston in the federal parliament, as he led the Province of Canada, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia into a nation-founding confederation, The Dominion of Canada, on July 1, 1867.

He came at age 5 with his parents from Scotland and settled in Kingston in 1820. He became a lawyer and was elected an alderman of the city in 1843. In 1844, he became a member of the Legislative Assembly and remained an MP for 47 years until his death in 1891. During his time as Prime Minister, he brought the provinces of Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, and British Columbia, and the vast lands belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company into Confederation. Among his many achievements was the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway from coast to coast. Above all, he always considered Kingston his home, and so after his death in Ottawa his body was brought here to be buried in Cataraqui Cemetery.

Recently, there has been an outcry to diminish Sir John A. in our minds by protest marches and media attacks on his character and his public record as prime minister of Canada. Worse, there have been acts of violence directed against his statues, even in Kingston's City Park and by the defacing of plaques at his grave-site. There have been serious attempts to influence the elected Council of the City of Kingston to remove his statue, and for the Principal of Queen's University to abolish his name from the building housing the Law Faculty. One wonders when there will be an outcry to change the name of Sir John A. Macdonald Boulevard - the main entry to the city from Highway 401, the Macdonald-Cartier Freeway.

A founder of Queen's University, the Father of Confederation, and First (and probably the greatest) Prime Minister of Canada, Macdonald remains Kingston's greatest gift to our country. It is the duty of the Principal of Queen's and its Board of Trustees and the Mayor and Council of the City of Kingston to resist all attempts to belittle Sir John and his role in the history of Canada.

One of my mentors, Dr. Ronald L. Way, the restorer of Fort Henry and the founder of the Fort Henry Guard, once explained to me how "the past is dead." Nothing we can do now can change it, so destroying Sir John's statue or burning him in effigy will do nothing to change his role in history. Whatever Sir John did in his life is done - we can only study whatever evidence there is of his life and try and understand his motives during his period of active ministry from 1867 to 1891. If anything he did is deemed unsuitable by today's standards by a majority of Canadians, for instance the Indian Act of 1876 (much amended) and the establishment of the Residential Schools (since abolished), then let us correct the record now by democratic means, and not by acts of violence.

I am pleased to note that Report No. 2, "How to handle Sir John of Kingston in Canadian History" was tabled at the 7th of July 2020 meeting of the City of Kingston's Council. This comprehensive report

recommends the retention of landmarks to Sir John but at the same time makes provision for the public education of the good and the bad of his leadership in the history of Canada.

The statue of Sir John was erected by the good people of Kingston on October 23, 1895. It was the fifth city of Canada to erect a statue to him. Kingston was not a wealthy city so, in the interest of economy, it obtained a copy of the one erected in Montreal a few months earlier. The statue is now 125 years old, and part of the historic fabric of Kingston.

So much of Kingston's historic past has been lost; let us not lose another piece of our history through ill-considered judgments of the past.

A Kingstonian I was born, and a Kingstonian I will die

An Addendum

I wrote the above on July 26, 2020 as a Letter to the Editor of the Kingston Whig-Standard. Events since that date have made some of my comments redundant, but some of them more relevant.

The tearing down of the statue of Macdonald in Montreal has made the Kingston statue, a direct copy of the one in Montreal, all the more valuable. Although I did not read of this factor being a reason, the City of Kingston recently announced that surveillance cameras would be erected around the Kingston statue to deter any attempts to vandalize it. So far so good.

The recent decision of the Board of Governors to accept the recommendation of the Principal of Queen's University to remove the name of Macdonald from the building housing the Faculty of Law was a blow. As requested by the university, I, as a graduate of Queen's, had submitted the Letter to the Editor as my reason for opposing such a move. Probably nothing can be done now, except to do as I have done - withdraw my financial support to the university, which I have faithfully given since 1953.

Brigadier-General (Retired) William J. Patterson, OMM, CD, UE, MA, FAPT



THE HOCHELAGA INN

— EST. 1879 —

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LITTLE LAD LOST

Long ago, in a place far away, a four-year-old Scottish lad of “remarkably sweet and amiable disposition” held a basket for his mother as she laboured in the vegetable garden. When little John Machar became sleepy in the late afternoon summer sunshine, she carried him gently to the cot in her country kitchen for a wee bit of slumber. John’s eight older siblings were helping their father in the fields around his flax mill that day. September was coming and much needed to be done. In the year 1800, Scottish country life near the village of Tannadice demanded hard physical exertion and relentless perseverance by the entire family.

When Jean Machar entered her kitchen domain to start supper, she saw that John was gone. He was not in the barnyard with the geese, nor among the raspberries. Where was he? As his siblings returned from the fields, all were recruited into an increasingly desperate search. Had John fallen into the millstream? He liked watching the ducklings. Neighbours came to help, calling his name repeatedly. Jean, a kind-hearted and affectionate woman, was clearly distraught.

Just as the sun was setting, and there was earnest talk of bringing lanterns into the nearby woods, a messenger arrived breathlessly from the village. Little John Machar had been found wandering in a laneway near the schoolhouse carrying one of his mother’s most treasured books under his tiny arm. It was the Sternhold and Hopkins Psalter. This quiet little boy with the sweet smile and bright eyes had told the schoolmaster who found him that he wanted to learn to read and was looking for a school.

John’s father, grinning broadly with relief, saddled his horse and went immediately to retrieve his unexpectedly determined youngest son from the village. In the meantime, the kindly village schoolmaster had engaged John in an impromptu lesson, and invited him to come again.

And he did. His mother, a classically educated daughter of a country school teacher, encouraged and assisted John in his studies through grammar school. His remarkable intelligence and scholarly diligence led to his winning of a bursary over many competitors and acceptance, at just age thirteen, into one of Scotland’s ancient universities in 1809. The prestigious King’s College of Aberdeen granted him the degree of MA in 1814.

Not a soul could have imagined that this studious and gifted young man would one day become a founder of Queen’s College in distant Kingston, Canada West in 1841, and the greatly respected and much beloved Rev. Dr. John Machar of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church (1827- 1863).



National Gallery Scotland,

J. Baptiste Greuze

Boy with book

Source reference: Machar, Rev. Dr. John; *Memorials of the Life and Ministry of the Rev. John Machar, D.D.*, James Campbell and Son, Toronto 1873

NEXT MONTH: *An unexpected journey leads John to a challenging life in colonial Kingston, Upper Canada*

In October, a new interpretive panel was unveiled at The Annandale. The panel, visible from the sidewalk along Earl Street, describes the heritage of the site, its buildings and the residents, from the 19th century through to the current time.

John Carruthers, a successful Kingston merchant and ship owner, built the Carruthers Villa and called it Annandale – after the area of Scotland he came from. Over the years, he expanded the property, in part, by purchasing the original Chalmers Church situated next door. He was a modest, private and generous man involved in numerous public and private charities and a generous supporter of Chalmers Church and Queen's University. As an ardent "Grit", he ran against Sir John A. MacDonald twice, being narrowly defeated each time.

The house was a social centre in Kingston, and among many distinguished visitors was Lord Stanley, the Governor General.

On his death in 1889, the house passed to his eldest son, John Bell Carruthers. It was an ideal home for John Bell and his wife Lillie and their nine children. After Lillie's death, the Villa and grounds passed out of the Carruthers family.

John Bell was an accomplished amateur photographer. The pictures of the house and grounds dating from the late 19th and early 20th century come from his camera.

What makes the Annandale site of particular importance to Kingston's architecture is the span of years it covers, from 1849 with the Carruthers Villa by architect William Coverdale to 1927 with the Annandale Annex and Apartments by architect Colin Drever. Traditional stone residential is found next to the modern 5-storey high-rise in steel and reinforced concrete. Architecture evolves and different styles can sit comfortably or even dynamically side-by-side.

In 1927, it was claimed that Kingston now had the largest modern apartment house between Ottawa and Toronto. Modern features included a refrigerator and double sink in each kitchen. The living rooms each featured an electric fireplace with marble mantel. The owners were Tekla and Matthew Hanson, a builder.

The Annex at 119-121 Earl Street is a particularly severe exercise in International Style. The cubic form, plain wall surfaces and ribbon windows echo certain aspects of Gropius's Bauhaus Building of 1925-26 in Dessau. Ribbon windows in houses were incorporated into certain of Le Corbusier's houses of the mid-1920s.

The 1849 Carruthers Villa, was a two-storey stone house with a wraparound verandah facing Earl Street. The grounds extended along Sydenham Street to Earl. In 1873, a large two-storey wing with a mansard roof was added to the villa's rear along Sydenham Street by architect Robert Gage. By 1947, the original part of villa had been raised a storey and additions made to two corners.



The new historical interpretive panel commemorates the many contributions of the Carruthers family to the city's heritage.

The Splendid and the Vile by Eric Larson

A Book Report by John Fielding

There are lots of books about Churchill, a number of which I have read. Which begs the question why read this one and what makes it unique? Probably two reasons: my wife raved about it and read sections aloud and because of a New York Times review praising its qualities.

Eric Larson accessed personal diaries not only of the Churchill family but also a number of Churchill's closest advisors and cabinet ministers. His access to original archival documents and once-secret intelligence reports, some released only recently, provide the author with a new and more personal focus on the darkest 57 days of the German blitz of London and most of England's cities in 1940 and 1941. His writing shines a clearer light on Winston's wife Clementine, their youngest daughter Mary, their son Randolph and his beautiful unhappy wife Pamela, her American lover, and the inner circle of advisers. Of particular note for me was the incredibly important role played by the Canadian born and raised William Maxwell (Max) Aitken better known in the UK as Lord Beaverbrook.

What I marvelled at was Larson's presentation of the resourcefulness and resolution of the everyday Brit to endure and "keep calm and carry on". At the same time class differences are laid bare.

Most of us are certainly well aware of all the hardships that the war brought, but this book gives us a deeper understanding for the feelings of residents of London, Liverpool, Birmingham and Coventry and other cities who did not know if they would be alive the next day or what the future would hold for them if they survived.

Travellers today on the London underground subway must marvel at the resilience of the people who took shelter and slept on these narrow underground subway platforms which even today in peacetime give you a feeling of claustrophobia.

Larson brings to the fore what a true eccentric Churchill was but also how very perceptive he was of what needed to be done in order to save Great Britain from Hitler and the Nazi threatened invasion and to muster the British spirit during the blitz. Absolutely essential to that, and the author makes this point numerous times, was just how important it was to get the Americans involved in the war effort.

Larson also cleverly intersperses glimpses of what was going on with the Nazi leadership. These short chapters are clear and effective as they present the vile of *The Splendid and the Vile*.

Larson, by describing the dinners and social life of Churchill, his daughter and daughter-in-law, and closest friends, creates a clear-cut comparison of the difference in the war experience between the "privileged" and the everyday working people.

I do recommend this book and view it as an important account of the saga of Churchill, family, and defiance of the British people during the darkest days of the blitz.

HOMESTEAD