

Limelight

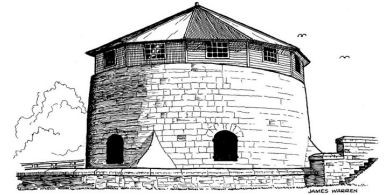
Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

Kingston Ontario Canada

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The Kingston Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.



President's Message

by Vincent Durant

November Council meeting saw members come together for a heartfelt consideration of where the Kingston Historical Society is headed in the post-pandemic days. Program Chair Dr. Duncan McDowall guided the discussion, focussing on four key member services: the monthly lecture series; the annual Heritage Dinner; the June 6th Graveside Service; and our printed communications, including Limelight and the annual Historic Kingston. In addition to this, the operation of the Murney Tower Museum has been greatly affected by the current crisis.



Council's ongoing discussions will lead to several changes, including a greater use of social media for digital presentations. One advantage to incorporating more digital delivery lies in the extended availability - online discussions and presentations will become available to members across Canada, or around the world! Of course, we will not lose sight of the critical benefits of face-to-face meetings, and the need for them will continue to be part of our discussions as we move forward.

As we move forward into the digital age, I invite you to share your thoughts, positive and negative. You may contact me through the KHS website:

www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca

On behalf of the Kingston Historical Society, I recently wrote to Mayor Patterson to express our desire to be part of the ongoing City of Kingston deliberation on Macdonald's role in the cultural heritage strategy of the city. This was a follow-up to our October Council discussion regarding the statue of Sir John A. Macdonald in City Park. A copy of my letter to the mayor is included elsewhere in this issue of Limelight.

In closing, on behalf of the KHS Council I want to wish you a joyful and happy holiday, as we all practice safe social distancing, with friends and family. Let us hope that 2021 will see an end to the pandemic, and a more peaceful, calmer world.

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.

The Kingston Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support of Kingston Association of Museums, Art Galleries and Historic Sites and the City of Kingston.



The KHS gratefully acknowledges the support of its sponsors in producing Limelight.

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December's Featured Sponsor

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November 12, 2020, Letter from the KHS President to the Mayor:

Mayor Bryan Paterson
Kingston, Ontario

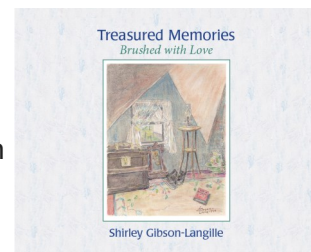
Dear Mayor Paterson,

The Kingston Historical Society wishes to convey its willingness to participate in the ongoing discussions regarding the statue of Sir John A Macdonald in City Park. Established in 1893, two years before erection of the Macdonald statue, our Society remains a leading heritage organization, dedicated to critical thought, research, and presentations about Kingston's past. We recognize that there are often multiple opinions, perspectives and understandings about historical events and people. At a recent meeting of the KHS Council, we debated a motion asking that we support the removal of the Macdonald statue in City Park. Discussion was wide ranging, and not without moments of insight and passion. The motion was however defeated by a wide margin. In closing, I want to restate our willingness to participate fully, perhaps through membership on a committee or through research, as Kingston deliberates Macdonald's role in the cultural heritage strategy of the city.

Yours sincerely,
Vincent Durant,
President Kingston Historical Society

Shirley Gibson-Langille writes:

Because of Covid-19, I wasn't able to hold a Book Launch for "Treasured Memories Brushed with Love." I am happy to report, though, that I have sold all but 16 books. Lately, I have been busy matting and framing pictures for my next Art Show, "Romancing Downtown Kingston". I have 116 paintings wrapped and put in boxes waiting to see how things go with Covid 19, and then I will proceed to find a time and place to have it. I will keep you posted.

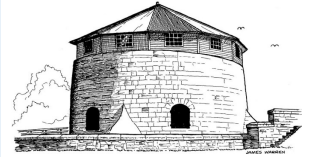


It is noted with regret, the death of Bernard Trotter, November 5, 2020, a longtime member of the Kingston Historical Society.

It is noted with regret, the death of Edward Farrar, November 8, 2020, a longtime member of the Kingston Historical Society.

Murney Tower

Operated by the Kingston Historical Society



Volunteer Service Award of Excellence

The OMA Volunteer Service Award of Excellence is presented to individuals who have made a significant contribution to a museum or museums through volunteer work.

After 17 years in the navy, Graeme Watson returned to his native Kingston and approached the Murney Tower Museum with an idea for an exhibit. Only a year later and with no previous heritage experience, Graeme became Volunteer Director of the institution. Graeme has shown unmatched passion and dedication to the Murney Tower Museum ever since. Graeme went above and beyond in this role, dedicating countless hours to his multiple responsibilities, all while having a full-time job. His leadership was central to modernizing the Murney Tower Museum and to building connections with its community. Graeme's accomplishments include developing new policies and operational processes, designing a 5-year strategic plan, securing funding to hire a formally trained curator, and instituting training programs for staff. Notably, he led the Museum to stronger financial independence and viability by shifting a system that was primarily dependent on grants to one based on marketing strategy. Building diversified partnerships with local and national organizations – such as Queen's University and Parks Canada – was central to his vision for the future of the Tower Museum. Graeme's proudest moment was when he developed an Indigenous display within the Tower, fulfilling the museum's mandate towards greater inclusion of all local voices. Committed to excellence, he obtained a Certificate in Museum Studies at the Ontario Museum Association in 2018. "Graeme exemplified leadership and innovation in helping to revamp and update the Murney Tower Museum. Through countless volunteer hours, Graeme sought to place the museum on a new path... In my view, Graeme demonstrated the best of what one could expect from a volunteer leader and innovator, and his work is more than deserving of recognition." – **Marcus R. Letourneau, Managing Principal and Senior Heritage Planner at Letourneau Heritage Consulting**



Graeme Watson
Volunteer Director,
Murney Tower Museum

From the recent past of the Kingston Historical Society's Proceedings

Taken from THEN newsletter – December 1992

December 1992 Murney Tower – Bev Lazier has decided to step down as Chair of our Museum Committee...she will become Museum Treasurer...Ken Rutherford will take on the job of Museum Committee Chairman. **Also:** The editor wrote: In 1894, the Mayor of Kingston ...noted the need for "a museum in the City buildings...Perhaps the recently formed Historical Society might be induced to...undertake its management." Perhaps.

In The Garden of Beasts

Eric Larson

Book Review by John Fielding

When Dianne, my spouse, finished reading Eric Larson's *The Splendid and The Vile: A Saga of Churchill, Family, and Defiance During the Blitz*, my first reaction was I don't need to read another book about Churchill. But I was wrong. Then she suggested that I should read Larson's *In the Garden of Beasts: Love, Terror, and an American Family in Hitler's Berlin*. No, I thought, not another book about Hitler and Nazi Germany. I had read and taught about World War II, Winston Churchill, and Hitler's Germany every year of my 34 years of teaching history. I don't need more. Again I was wrong.

Dianne and I spent six weeks in Germany on two house exchanges in two communities and have visited many major cities, including Berlin, and couldn't have been more welcomed and greeted in a more friendly manner. But as Larson writes *In the Garden of Beasts*, "I have always wondered what it would have been like for an outsider to have witnessed firsthand the gathering dark of Hitler's rule."

Larson also poses the questions, "Hindsight tells us that during this fragile time history could so easily have been changed. Why, then, did no one change it? Why did it take so long to recognize the real danger posed by Hitler and his regime?" The author, starting from these important questions, builds a very clear and enlightening explanation using as his main sources the detailed accounts of the American Ambassador William E. Dodd in his diaries and his daughter Martha's memoir *Through Embassy Eyes* and her letters and papers in the Library of Congress.

Dodd, the chairman of the history department at the University of Chicago, was an unlikely choice by President Roosevelt to fill the post of ambassador to Germany in 1933. He remained, despite much criticism from Washington detractors as unqualified, in this role for four and a half years during Germany's bleakest time as Hitler and the Nazi consolidated their power using every possible distortion of the truth, tactic of intimidation, and terror imaginable.

Dodd, a very modest man both in his life style and demeanor, along with his family, and especially his impressionable young daughter, were initially swept up in their limited vision of Berlin. They dined and socialized in luxurious fashion with the leadership of the Nazi party, including Hitler, Goebbels and the rapacious Goering. They saw a Germany that was reviving from the chaos and collapsed economy after World War I and the early throws of the depression of the 1930s. But ultimately the horrors of the Nazi regime and in particular the Brown Shirts, the persecution of Jews and anyone else who was considered inferior or in any way opposed or even suspected of questioning Hitler and his henchmen were revealed.

Reluctant to read another book about the Nazi Regime, I am glad that I read this unique and superbly researched and written account seen through the eyes of somewhat everyday people whose understanding of what was happening in Germany grew through their firsthand experiences. What is also revealed, as Larson asks in his opening questions, is why no person, group or government, including the USA which was informed of the horrors, did anything.

THE BEE WHISPERER

In Victorian times it was believed that rest, in pleasantly engaging surroundings far away, would offer healing for body and spirit. Beautiful gardens would achieve the same.

The young Rev. John Machar of Edinburgh was of robust constitution and in good health when he left for his new charge at St. Andrew's Church in Kingston, Upper Canada, in 1827.

John embraced his posting with passionate dedication, and was much loved by his congregation. But life in a rustic frontier settlement proved extraordinarily demanding. By 1829 he was verging on collapse from exhaustion. The Elders recommended a leave in Scotland for refreshment of spirit.

Unfortunately, the good effects of this sojourn were undone in one tempestuous night of terror on the open Atlantic. His passenger sailing packet was set on fire by fierce lightning. Panic prevailed as all hands worked feverishly to keep the vessel afloat. John later wrote: "The Lord's voice was in that thunderbolt, which had well-nigh buried me in the deep. Through the tender mercy of God, I have been spared." The ship was saved, but he returned to St. Andrew's profoundly shaken.

In the summer of 1831, John was stricken by severe rheumatic fever, followed by life-long recurring bouts of debilitating erysipelas. Today, thanks to antibiotics, this devastating bacterial infection is almost unknown.

The Rev. Machar travelled again to Scotland in 1832 and 1848, "...the state of his health, after years of arduous and unrelenting labour, very much requiring rest and change."

Alas, in 1848, his express train into Edinburgh derailed at 50 mph. John's carriage was split asunder and he was buried under many passengers. Incredibly, he sustained only a shoulder injury, and still arrived on time at the Presbyterian General Assembly.



Der Bienenfreund (The Bee Friend) by 19th century artist Hans Thoma, circa 1863. Image from the art collection at Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe (Germany).

The restorative excursion of 1860 was his last. He toured Heidelberg University in Germany, enjoyed art at the Louvre in France, visited the London residence of former Queen's Principal, the Rev. Liddell, and preached in his childhood church in Scotland, surrounded by much encouraging affection and experiencing a deeply sustaining peace.

When the Rev. Machar returned to Kingston, he found serene restoration in caring for the extensive and greatly admired gardens around St. Andrew's manse. His favourite flower was the white narcissus. The first spring bloom was always brought to his study. "Lo, the winter is past..." he said each year.

And bees were kept. It was the 19thC custom to whisper joys and sorrows in private conversations with buzzing bee colonies. The belief was that bees understood people's souls and could heal hardships of the heart as tiny messengers from God.

The Rev. Machar spent many gentle hours amid the flowers and these small, industrious creatures. In the end, perhaps the sweetest repose was found in his beloved garden sanctuary at home in Kingston.

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

Since Confederation, two campaign medals have been authorized for military actions in Canada. They are the Canadian General Service Medal (CGSM) for the Fenian Raids of 1866 and 1870 and for the Red River expedition to Manitoba in 1870. For a variety of reasons, the CGSM was not issued until January 1899. The second, the Northwest Canada Medal, was awarded for the Riel Rebellion in 1885.

The Fenians was a Brotherhood organized in 1859 in New York City. Its purpose was to forward the cause of Irish independence from Britain. Following the United States Civil War, the Brotherhood met in Philadelphia in October 1865. The plan was to capture Canada by force and exchange it with Britain for Irish independence. Initially, the concept was considered ridiculous and voted down. However, four months later in Pittsburgh, the scheme was adopted and the Brotherhood went ahead with plans to invade Canada. In the end, both Fenian Raid attempts in 1866 and 1870 failed.

Of the 16,121 Canada General Service Medals awarded, 1,421 officers and men received the medal with the clasps, Fenian Raid 1866 and 1870. Pictured here, is one of those medals. This medal was awarded to Lawrence Richard Dowdall, born in Ireland on 11 February 1843. He was Commissioned, by purchase, an Ensign of the Royal Canadian Rifle Regiment (RCRR) on 21 November 1865 and with this Regiment took part in the Fenian Raids of 1866 and 1870.

The RCRR, was a unique regiment in the British Army. It became apparent to the War Office that desertion to the United States of America (USA) was a serious matter. In many cases the USA was just across a few hundred yards of the St Lawrence River. In 1840 it was decided to form a regiment of older men whose principal duty was to be the prevention of desertion. The men had to have completed 15 years of service, demonstrating their loyalty. Later the length of time in service was reduced to 10 years to maintain the Regiment at operational strength. Two additional inducements were offered: the men would be able to take up land in Canada at a reduced Government rate on retirement, and the number of wives allowed on strength of the Regiment was doubled from six per hundred men to twelve. The Regiment provided small garrisons from Fort Garry in North West Canada to the Maritimes. Ensign Dowdall spent most of his career with the RCRR in the Kingston and St. Lawrence Valley area. Those who have visited the Murney Tower know that the RCRR figured prominently in the history of the Tower, garrisoning it until 1871. Dowdall likely walked the floors of all four of the Kingston Towers. The following is an extract from the Regimental history referencing Dowdall.

In the year 1866 he was frequently employed with the Head Quarters of my Regiment at Kingston in the occupation of several forts on outpost duty, on guard where enemy expected attack. In the year 1867 he proceeded with 100 rank and file to occupy Fort Wellington, Prescott and being joined by a detachment of the R.A. – was for 18 months constantly employed in various military duties with view to repelling any attack that may be made from Ogdensburg. 1870 he was again employed with the Head Quarters at Kingston on various military duties, attack being expected”

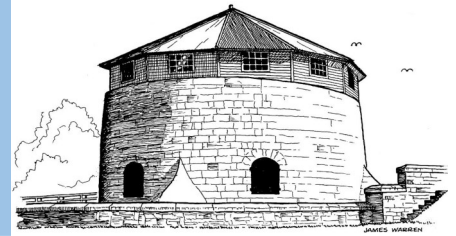
Signed Colonel's Moffatt and Hibbert

Following the departure of the Imperial Regiments from Canada in 1871, Dowdall transferred to the 19th Regiment of Foot. He eventually rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and died 5 November 1908 in Dublin Ireland.



Murney Tower

Operated by the Kingston Historical Society



Murney Tower Museum might be quiet on the outside but a lot of things are happening behind the closed doors. This summer, the Tower appeared in two *Kingston Local* articles by Zoha Khalid, one focusing on the museum's 95th birthday and one talking about its founder, the Kingston Historical Society. The museum also recently featured in an article by Peter Johansen in a regional travel magazine *Fifty-Five Plus*. The article focused on opportunities for "virtual trekking" using digital resources, including Murney Tower Museum's 360-degree virtual tour. On Friday, September 17, Mike Postovit of CKWS TV visited Murney Tower and chatted with the museum staff about the ongoing projects and the behind-the-scenes work including collection digitization, cleaning of the Tower, and artifact conservation, and how operations have been affected by COVID-19. His piece was broadcast on September 18th and has received great feedback. You can see the video and article on the CKWS TV website.

Collections Management

Last year a paid intern, professionally trained in collections management, laid the groundwork for staff and volunteers to work on digitizing the museum's collection of over 1000 artifacts. In 2020 we have been shifting hundreds of artifacts from paper records to a searchable, digital database with pictures. There is much work to do cleaning, packaging, organizing, and photographing our artifacts. We are preparing to move to a larger, more accessible storage space when Covid-19 permits. Currently, our collection is housed at Queen's Archives, which has limited space and limited access. A larger storage space will allow room to remove all artifacts from the Tower over the winter and to access the collection on our own schedule.

From the Murney Tower Collection



International Order of Allied Mothers in Sacrifice

In honour of Canada's fallen veterans, we're sharing a very special object from our McGregor/McIntyre Collection. The collection was donated to the museum in 1970 by Mrs. W. Bruce McGregor. The items are from the estate of Miss Margaret McIntyre. The McIntyre Family were notable members of the Kingston community, with one member of the family, John McIntyre (Margaret's uncle), serving as mayor in 1878. The artifact is an International Order of Allied Mothers in Sacrifice medal, which was granted by the Associated Kin of the Canadian Expeditionary Force to mothers who lost children in the Great War. This specific medal was bestowed on Margaret Ann McIntyre for the loss of her son, Lieutenant Douglas Neil McIntyre, who was killed on November 8, 1917 at the Battle of Passchendaele while serving as an intelligence officer in command of a scout and observation corps. A Queen's grad (BAH in English and Classics, 1903), Douglas Neil was once a Canadian sprinting champion. In later years, he was a resident of Victoria, served as deputy Commissioner of Fisheries for BC, and worked for multiple newspapers. He rests in peace at Tyne Cot Cemetery in Belgium.

Because several of the normal activities presented to members could not be fulfilled due to the pandemic, the KHS Council recently passed a motion that half of the 2020 paid-up members' fees be used as a credit on the 2021 membership renewal."

KHS Membership Renewal: 2021

- Individual membership: \$50 reduced to \$25.
- Family membership: \$60 reduced to \$30.
- Student membership: \$25 reduced to \$12.50.
- Institutional membership: \$60 remains unchanged.
- Sponsor fee remains at \$300.

Pay by cheque made out to the 'Kingston Historical Society': mail to

Kingston Historical Society, Box 54, Kingston ON K7L 4V6

Pay online from our webpage: www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca > Membership

Please indicate, if it is the case, that I would like to receive my Limelight online _____

**Please renew your
KHS membership
now!**

Welcome, new member

**Jon Fish
Gordon Hall
Jack Barnes**



HOMESTEAD

HERITAGE DINNER UPDATE

Please be advised that, regretfully, we will not be hosting the Society's Canadian Heritage Dinner in February 2021 due to COVID-19.

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