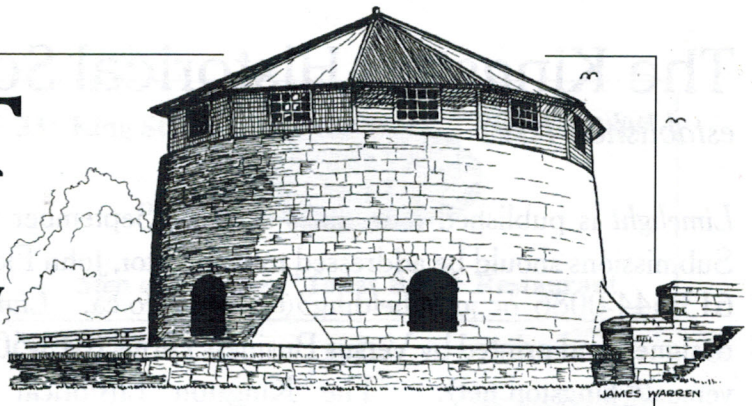


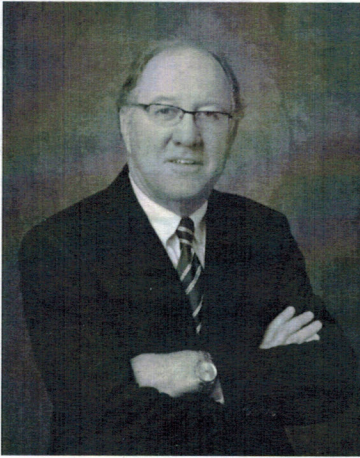
# LIMELIGHT

Newsletter of the  
Kingston Historical Society

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



The great eventful Present hides the Past; but through the din  
Of its loud life hints and echoes from the life behind steal in.

~John Greenleaf Whittier

Little has changed, it seems, in the intervening 150 years. The "hints and echoes" are up to us. One glance at the impressive list of former presidents of the Kingston Historical Society is enough to humble the bravest of hearts. So it is with a mix of pride and trepidation that I take over the reigns of the society from Alan MacLachlan, who so capably carried out his responsibilities over the past two years.

You are very fortunate to have such a dedicated group of people on Council working to sustain and improve the society. Thank you to all members of Council for their fine work on your behalf over the last years. I'm very much looking forward to working with them over the next two years, albeit in a slightly different capacity.

At our recent Annual General Meeting, Alan was recognized for his contributions of time and talent to the society. The commendation was well-deserved, in that he gave generously of his time to steer the society through the last couple of years, and during his tenure, the society has flourished.

Also at the AGM, Empire Life vice-president Timo Hytonen was presented with a plaque recognizing the corporate donation supporting our recent publication, *Favourite Son? John A. Macdonald and the Voters of Kingston 1841-1891* by Ged Martin. Without corporate support, it would be very difficult to sustain our publication output, one of the great things, in my view, that your Society does.

Thank you also to Doug Petty and Warren Everett, as well as the enthusiastic bidders among us, for a superb auction following our AGM. Funds generated will go to our general operating account.

*Gordon Sinclair*

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### THIS MONTH'S MEETING Wednesday, 16 March, 7:30 PM

"Collecting Stories:  
The Heritage Quilt Collection"

Alicia Boutillier

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

Refreshments

All Welcome



# The Kingston Historical Society

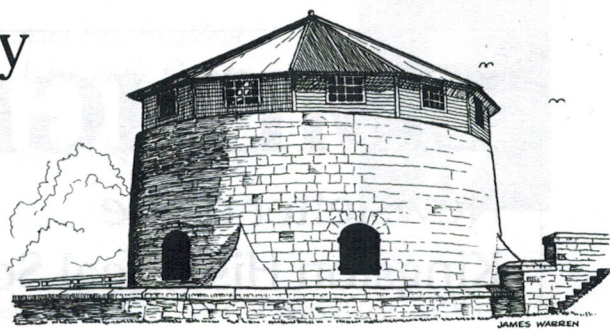
established 1893

*Limelight* is published nine times a year - September to May. Submissions should be addressed to the Editor, John Fielding at 613-544-0086 or [john.fielding3@sympatico.ca](mailto:john.fielding3@sympatico.ca). *Limelight* is designed and printed by Versus Business Forms (613-507-7667 [versus@kingston.net](mailto:versus@kingston.net)). The Kingston Historical Society

(KHS) gratefully acknowledges the support of our sponsors in the production of *Limelight*.

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.



Murney Tower by James Warren

## Kingston Historical Society

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*The Kingston Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Ministry of Culture of the Government of Ontario*

## Executive

Gordon Sinclair, *President*

Alan MacLachlan, *Past President*

Peter Gower, *Vice President*

Ted Huber, *Secretary*

John Whiteley, *Treasurer*

## Councillors

Alicia Boutilier

Dorothy Farr

Peter Ginn

Jeremy Heil

Ross McKenzie

Douglas Petty

Hazel Fotheringham, *Editor, Historic Kingston*

Warren Everett, *Chair, Murney Tower Committee*

John Fielding, *Editor, Limelight*

## Announcements of Historical Interest

**The Kingston Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society** will meet in the Wilson Room of Kingston Frontenac Public Library, 130 Johnson St., March 19, 2011 at 10 a.m. "My Interesting Ancestor - Part II." Some members will speak about one of their ancestors. Visitors are welcome. For further info, visit our website [www.ogs.on.ca/kingston](http://www.ogs.on.ca/kingston).

**Kingston Branch, United Empire Loyalist Association** meets Saturday, March 26, 2011 at St. Paul's Anglican, Montreal and Queen Streets. Come at 11:30 a.m. for a noon sandwich lunch - cost \$3.50. Take some time to browse the library before 1:00 pm meeting. Speaker will be Mr. Craig Boals, Director of Operations at Cataraqui Cemetery in Kingston. Cataraqui is Kingston's largest cemetery, final resting place of many early Kingstonians including numerous Loyalists and their families. Visitors always welcome - info 613-546-2256.

## Update on Cataraqui Trail

Thanks to their meeting with Sue Bazely, Mary and Edward Farrar are able to tell us more about the Cataraqui Trail. a) We learned that Molly Brant's house was at the back of Rideaucrest. So number 7 should have read "Molly Brant Point near the Woolen Mill and near where Molly Brant lived." b) Also, the railways actually were not those that Sir John was involved with. Too bad!!! c) The Point Peninsula site was actually from 300 - 900 AD. d) The archaeological site is properly called the "Kingston Outer Station" archaeological site, confusing as it is. And actually now we have found 33 sites, not just 15. Amazing isn't it!



# LANDSCAPES/INSCAPES

## MARJORIE'S GRAMMA'S HOUSE

*by Shirley Gibson-Langille*

I first met my dear friend, Marjorie Simmons, in 1985 at my Kingston Waterfront art show. We then arranged a date for the next week to have a picnic lunch in beautiful Cataraqui Cemetery.

Besides what turned out to be several lunch dates in Cataraqui Cemetery, I spent many enjoyable visits to her lovely Regent Street home. We often sat in her office where there was a very beautiful old clock. Marjorie enjoyed telling me that it was her prized possession and that it had once belonged to her Gramma Compton. She remembered as a child seeing it in the kitchen of her Grammas' house at 450 Frontenac Street and it brought back many happy memories of family dinners sitting at the long kitchen table enjoying Grammas' delicious home cooked meals. It also reminded her of her visits there when she and her younger sister, Norma, would play outside and walk the short distance to Victoria Park near by.



In 2009, Marjorie, said that she would like to go and see the house again. She thought that if she knocked at the door, the owner just might invite her inside. I told Marjorie that that might not be possible as many of the buildings in that area had been bought up as rental properties for Queen's students.

Anyway, on 17 November, I picked up Marjorie and off we went to at least look at the house. As we turned onto Frontenac Street, we could see that there were no parking places. However, just then, a car left and, would you believe it, we were able to park right

in front of No. 450, Marjorie's Gramma's old house! We both looked out at it with some regret as we realized it was empty.

But, then, a white half ton truck drove into the driveway. I quickly got out of the car and met Greg Bowman who had bought the house the day before. I told him why we were there and asked him if he would like to meet Marjorie. They were so happy to meet each other and Marjorie enjoyed sharing all her childhood memories with Greg. They both agreed that their chance meeting was an amazing "Happening" for sure!

Marjorie had her 90th Birthday Party on 17 March 2010 at the River Mill Restaurant and I painted a picture of the house as a gift. I felt it was for the best that she didn't get to see inside the house and, this way, she can look at the painting and remember it just the way it was way back then.

I am proud that this painting of mine now hangs on the wall of Marjorie's new home in Rideaucrest. As a life-long member of, and contributor to, KHS, she has many mementos and memories around her. I am pleased I have added a personal one to this collection.





# "To See ourselves as Others See Us": An American Perspective, 1890

by *Brian Osborne*

On 17 August 1890, the New York Times published a somewhat dyspeptic account of that "quaint old city," Kingston. Recognizing its role as a "kind of a gateway to travelers from the Thousand Islands and the Upper St. Lawrence," our good essayist noted that the "charm of this place and its surroundings" attracted many visitors from south of the line who arrive in "excursion squads," while some stay for extended periods. That done, he then proceeded to wax critical of this "colonial place" and directed his bile at the appearance of the town as well as the "habits of thought" of its inhabitants, its "military aspect," and the "customs humbug."



This condescending gaze was first directed to the "time-stained walls" of the solid, squat, unpretentious" houses of the business district that reminded the visitor of downtown New York "a century or more ago." While many of them had been "transformed into shops, the marks of their "original purpose" had not been erased. The impressions of this dated place were reinforced by the macadamised streets flanked by plank sidewalks, and cedar-post crossings. For some reason (perhaps good old-fashioned republicanism!), our vitriolic scribe was quite exercised by the ubiquity of the "V.R." crest "cut in stone" or as "raised stone carvings" on official buildings everywhere. Noting that on the death of Victoria

Regina and the ascension of the Prince of Wales, the V.R.s would have to be replaced by A.R. or E.R., the cost of replacement in the Dominion would be "more than \$50,000 on the smallest calculation, and ... five times as much throughout the British Empire." His solution? "J.B. for John Bull would express things more accurately, besides being a decided saving in money."

And then there were the social peculiarities of Kingstonians. First, "English ways, although sneered at in private, are frequently aped in public." But, to be fair, our critic recognized that Kingstonians lacked the customary hauteur, or "open, staring insolence, that seems to be part and parcel of the Anglo-Saxon globe-trotter," although they did exhibit the "habitual reserve and lack of sociability which are only one degree removed" from it! This exotic Englishness was ubiquitous: pipes favoured over cigarettes; English relishes and sauces at dinner; strong ales and stouts rather than lagers; and coffee was a "mockery" with tea "the stable temperance drink at table."

Of course, given the past history and contemporary events in 1890, Kingston's military presence and "warlike aspect" prompted critical commentary: the sounds of the "guns from the fort" and bands of the "garrison"; the prominence of uniforms everywhere; and the ubiquity of "old, rusty cannon mounted upon old fashioned wooden gun carriages" wherever "the city fixed up a park for recreation purposes." As for the soldiers, they were said to be attired "in the peculiarly absurd manner which prevails only in the British Army and in comic operas." In particular, attention was directed to their "curiously short jackets, tight trousers, and funny little polo caps set over one ear and with a strap extending under the nose," an ensemble that was declared to be "out of place except upon the stage."

Despite all this negativity from our acerbic scribe, American visitors patronized Kingston's shops, even though they were "unattractive, both in regard to their appearance and the character and price of their contents." Apparently, the ladies took "particular delight in buying things simply for the purpose of smuggling them across the line," even though "they can be bought cheaper on the United States side of the St. Lawrence." For others, the attraction was access to "fishing resorts" on Lake Ontario or the Rideau lakes whose "waters teems with black bass and large pickerel," or the Bay of Quinte famous for its "muskallouge or maskinoge" [sic] ranging up to "forty or fifty pounds." With these opportunities, together with reasonable hotel rates, good accommodations, and that "the sportsman may without exciting comment, discard the conventionalities of dress in behalf of greater comment" (the mind boggles!), no wonder "persons of this class" were persuaded to "cross the St. Lawrence on a pilgrimage to and through this Canadian city."



KEDCO take note: plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose!



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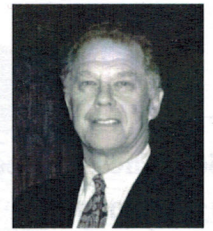
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# Report on the 2011 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

with Past President  
Edward R. Grenda

photos by Peter Ginn

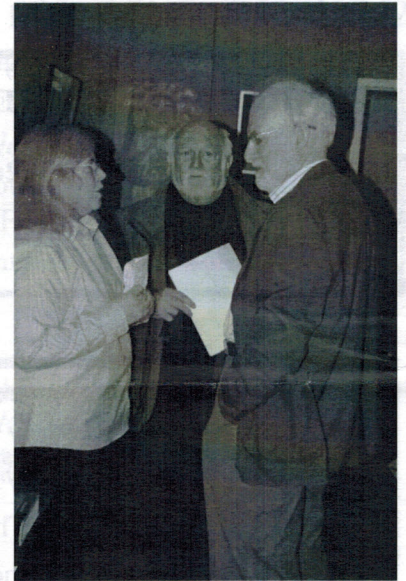


The Kingston Historical Society held its 2011 Annual General Meeting in its 118th year of operations on Wednesday, February 16, 2011. Even though the weather was brisk and cold, 56 Society members attended the meeting. As with most AGMs, the Society's meeting was relatively subdued but business-like in character with a full complement of committee reports detailing the various component parts of the Society's activities during the past year. The financial report showed a solid state of financial affairs which has been prudently and responsibly handled by the Treasurer, John Whiteley and the Council.



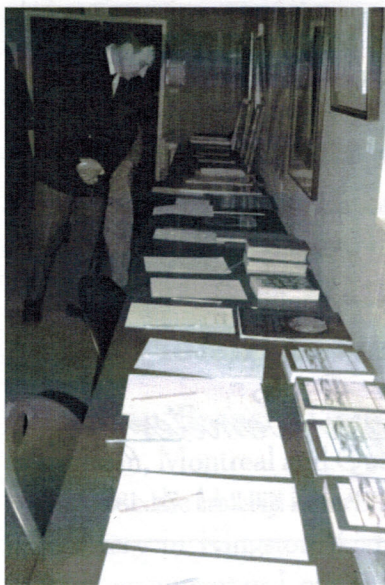
Presiding over his last Society meeting, outgoing President, Alan MacLachlan noted the Society's highlights and accomplishments in 2010. The Society published a significant book on Sir John A. Macdonald (*Favourite Son?* by Ged Martin) and held special events commemorating the birth (January 11) and death (June 6) of Sir John A. The monthly talks by various speakers consistently drew high attendance numbers.

E. Grenda, Past President, reported that after he had prepared his Grants report in early February, the Community Museums Operating Grant (CMOG) from the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Culture arrived in the amount of \$3700.00.



President MacLachlan thanked members of Council and the Membership for their cooperation and assistance during his two year tenure as President. The new Society executive will include Gordon Sinclair as President and Peter Gower as Vice President, Ted Huber and John Whiteley remain as Secretary and Treasurer respectively. The meeting concluded with the new President, Gordon Sinclair, thanking Alan MacLachlan for his work as President and presenting him with a parting gift.

Following the AGM, the Society held a silent auction plus a regular auction of various books, paintings, pictures, and other assorted objects which were recently donated to the Society. Again, the auctions were ably and humorously conducted by Doug Petty and Warren Everett.



On the whole, the event was an informative, successful endeavour demonstrating the Society's inestimable

contribution to the understanding of local history and the unstinting support it receives from its loyal membership, which, in turn, renders the Society a vibrant, engaged organization.

From left to right:

Ross McKenzie, Peter Ginn, Ted Huber, Alan MacLachlan, Doug Petty, Hazel Fotheringham, Peter Gower, Gordon Sinclair, Dorothy Farr.

