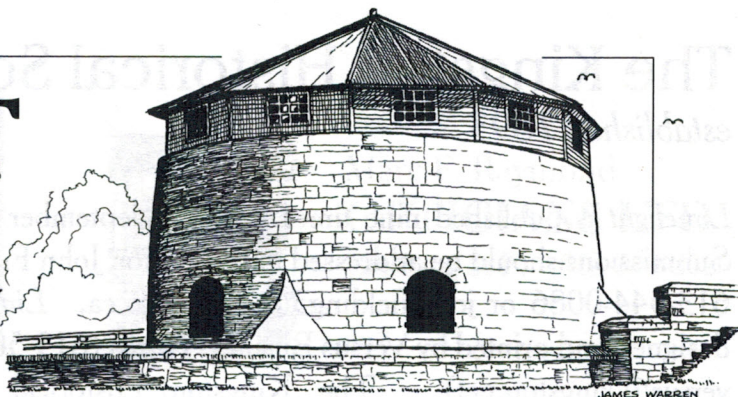


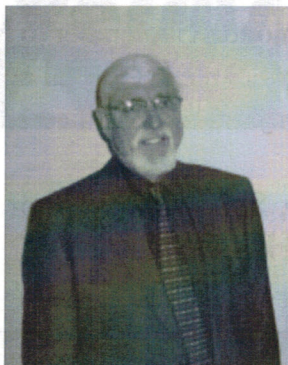
# LIMELIGHT

Newsletter of the  
Kingston Historical Society

vol 12 no 8 November 2010 ISSN 1488-5565



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



How will you remember?

When one reflects on Remembrance Day and November 11, one tends to think of Canada's participation in foreign lands in The Great War, World War Two, the Korean Conflict, The Suez Crisis, Cyprus, The Congo, Rwanda, Yugoslavia, the Gulf War, Kosovo, or Afghanistan. Some may have thoughts of the earlier Boer War in which over 7300 Canadians saw action in South Africa and by 1902 when the war ended, 89 Canadian men had been killed in action.

However there was an earlier foreign conflict in which a Canadian force was involved. The Nile Expedition, sometimes called the Gordon Relief Expedition, was a British mission to relieve Major-General Charles George Gordon at Khartoum, Sudan. It was the first foreign campaign for Canadians. The expedition was under the command of one familiar to Canadians, General Garnet Wolseley, who had seen service in the Red River Rebellion. His experience in that conflict caused him to ask the Governor-General, the Marquess Landsdowne, to recruit a contingent of 'voyageurs' which would aid him ascend and navigate the Nile River. Within 24 days of the request, 386 voyageurs had volunteered and set sail for Egypt on September 15, 1884. This group of Canadians was known as the 'Nile Voyageurs'. By the beginning of November, they were at the first of six Nile cataracts and were employed in manning boats that were over 9 metres long, two metres wide and three-quarters of a metre deep. The voyageurs had signed a 6 month contract and though they were offered generous inducements, only 86 of the voyageurs volunteered to re-enlist. According to one source, some believe that the others wanted to return to Canada in time for the spring logging season.

On January 26, 1885, Muhammed Ahmad and his 50,000 Mahdist army had breached the defences of Khartoum. Two days later, Wolseley's relief column entered the city only to discover that the Mahdists had slaughtered the entire garrison. The British retreated to Egypt with the fall of Khartoum. The remaining 'Nile Voyageurs' sailed for Canada on April 17, 1885, leaving behind 16 Canadian comrades who had died on the expedition. They have been memorialized in Canada's Peace Tower, which recognizes all of Canada's war dead. Wolseley wrote to the Canadian Governor General praising the Canadians' service and it should be noted that the British Parliament passed a motion thanking them for their efforts.

Though the expedition failed in its main purpose, according to the historian Roy MacLaren, "it was an exotic opportunity to prove themselves [Canadians] against others from all over the growing British Empire."

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Whether on November 11 or at other times when we ponder on Canada's involvement in military engagements, may our thoughts and remembrance extend not just to Canadians who made the supreme sacrifice in recent conflicts but also in the pre-1914 hostilities in which we were immersed.

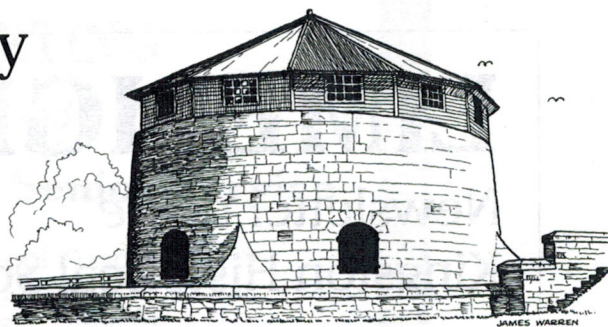
*Alan MacLachlan*



# 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*.



Murney Tower by James Warren

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.

## Kingston Historical Society

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[www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca](http://www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca)



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

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## Announcements of Interest

**Kingston & District Branch UEL Association** meet Saturday, Nov. 20, at St. Paul's Church Hall, Montreal and Queen Street. Come at 1:00 pm to browse the library and mingle before the meeting begins at 1:30 pm. Following the AGM and election of officers, we'll have "Participation!" -- no jogging, just members bringing a family artifact and speaking about it. Visitors are always welcome. For further info contact Carol Davy at 613-546-2256.

**The Kingston Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society** will meet in the Wilson Room of Kingston Frontenac Public Library, 130 Johnson St., Saturday, November 20, 2010 at 10 a.m. "Life in the Trenches". David Dossett, a local artist who lived like a World War I soldier for two weeks during the filming of *The Great War* and *Passchendaele*, will describe what life was like for the soldiers. Visitors welcome. For further info, visit our website [www.ogs.on.ca/kingston](http://www.ogs.on.ca/kingston).

**Orchestra Kingston** and Conductor John Palmer welcome audiences to the Orchestra's third season in a new performance space at the Salvation Army's Citadel, Centennial Drive and Taylor Kidd.

Opening their season on Sunday, November 28 at 2:30 p.m. with the Third Annual Singalong "Messiah", the orchestra invites all who love to sing to join their guest soloists in this popular event. Scores will be available at the door to buy or rent. Info at: 613-389-8110



# 11th Annual Sir John A. Macdonald Dinner



Our guest speaker for this year's Sir John A. Macdonald Anniversary Dinner on Tuesday, January 11 2011, will be Mr. Graham Fraser, Commissioner of Official Languages. His talk will be:

**"Treat them as a nation":**

**Sir John A. and the French fact in Canada**

The dinner will take place at the Senior Staff Mess at the Royal Military College. Please gather in the Mess any time after 6:00PM to meet our guest. The dinner will commence at 7:00PM. The cost for the dinner will be \$45.00 for Society members and \$50.00 for guests of members. Please fill out the tear off portion below and send it along with your payment.

## Menu

*Garden Salad*  
*Tomato and Roasted Red Pepper Bisque*  
*Chicken Breast Supreme with Smoked Gouda*  
*(Vegetarian Meal Offered)*  
*Hazelnut Truffle Mousse Cake*  
*Coffee and Tea*



**Sir John A. Macdonald Anniversary Dinner, Tuesday January 11, 2011**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Member(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Non-Member(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Food Allergies: \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetarian: \_\_\_\_\_

Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail Reservations & Cheque to:**

**Sir John A Macdonald Dinner, 253 Willingdon Ave, Kingston, ON, K7L 4J2**



# Major Bruce Carruthers

by Peter Ginn

On October 22, 2010, the Military Communications and Electronics Branch of the Canadian Forces, with members of the Carruthers family, gathered at the Cataraqui Cemetery gravesite of Major Bruce Carruthers, as they have done annually, to celebrate the founder of the Canadian Signal Corps. Coincidentally, this year is the centenary of his death on October 21, 1910.

Wallace Bruce Matthews Carruthers, the youngest son of John and Mary (nee Matthews) Carruthers, was born February 13, 1863. His father was a prominent Kingston merchant and businessman, promoter of the city and the Royal Military College (RMC), a founding member of Chalmers church, and a generous benefactor of both Chalmers church and Queen's College (later University).

Bruce Carruthers graduated with honours from RMC in 1883 (Cadet # 82). He served as a Lieutenant with the 21st Hussars (British Army) in Ireland before returning to Canada to serve first as Lieutenant and then Captain with the 14th battalion of Rifles (Princess of Wales Own Regiment). In 1899 he resigned his commission (as many did) in order to serve as a Sergeant with the Royal Canadians in South Africa.



After he was discharged in 1900, Carruthers returned to Canada. The next year, he re-enlisted as a Lieutenant with the 2nd Regiment, Canadian Mounted Rifles (CMR) and returned to South Africa.

The high point of his second tour of service was the action of Boschbult on March 31, 1902. A British force, including the 2nd CMR, was attacked by a commando of Boers. Carruthers and thirty men were left as part of a screen, behind which the main body began to entrench. The screen collapsed during a withdrawal. Carruthers and twenty other Canadians were cut off. They fought until they ran out of ammunition. Seventeen men were killed or wounded, including Carruthers. The London Standard reported that Carruthers' clothes "were perforated with bullets." As a result of his service, he was awarded the Queen's South Africa Medal with five clasps. Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain sent congratulations to the

Canadian government, and Carruthers was promoted to captain.

He noted that, in South Africa, signalling inadequacies had severely limited the efficiency of British Empire forces. Even before the South African war, Captain Carruthers had a keen interest in signalling. On his return to Canada, he proposed that a specialist signalling corps be created to ensure standardization of signalling among Canadian army units. His proposal was accepted and, on October 24, 1903, General Order (GO) 167 authorized formation of the "Canadian Signalling Corps (Militia)" (CSC)—the first independently organized Signal Corps in the British Empire.

The stated function of the CSC was "to supervise signal training of the cavalry, artillery and infantry signal sections and to ensure uniform methods of instruction and standards of qualification". General Order 167 authorized a complement of eighteen officers and sixty other ranks.

Interestingly, there was no Permanent Force counterpart to the CSC until after the First World War when the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals was established.

Major Carruthers was appointed Assistant Adjutant-General for Signalling in 1906. The Signalling Corps defined the Signalling Service of the Canadian Militia. It included a regimental staff drawn from the Permanent Force and regimental signallers of the Permanent Force, city and rural corps

By 1908, the Corps had grown to 13 sections, numbered sequentially: London, Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa, Montreal,



Granby, Quebec, Saint John, Halifax, Winnipeg, Victoria, Charlottetown and Calgary.

Outside of his work with the army, Carruthers was prominent in the social life of Kingston. He was a governor of the Queen's College School of Mining and the Kingston General Hospital, and he belonged to the St Andrew's Society. He also belonged to the Kingston Yacht Club (KYC) where, in 1901, he served as Commodore and donated "The Commodore Bruce Carruthers Trophy – 1901". The trophy remains a centrepiece in the club's trophy case. It is presented to the winner of a series of races held each September. Sailors in the popular "Carruthers Series" compete in a distance race of about 20 miles, and two course races of about 10 miles each.

Between 1890 and 1904 Carruthers was one of the city's leading Liberals, serving a term as president of the Young Liberals Club and as a member of the Reform Association of Kingston. While a student, he had been a keen football player, and when the Ontario Rugby Football Union was formed in 1883, he became its vice-president. In 1904, he was president of the Royal Military College Club.

Though he suffered from tuberculosis, Carruthers remained active until two weeks before his death on October 21, 1910. He was given a huge military funeral at Chalmers Presbyterian Church and was buried in the Cataraqui Cemetery.

On November 10, 2010, Major Wallace Bruce Matthews Carruthers will be inducted into the Canadian Telecommunications Hall of Fame joining such laureates as Ted Rogers, Jim Balsillie, The Honourable Francis Fox and Alexander Graham Bell.

One of Kingston's distinguished museums, "The Military Communications and Electronics Museum" provides an excellent history of the Canadian military development and application of telecommunications. The museum is open weekdays 8am-4pm, plus summer weekends and holidays 11am-5pm (from May 1st until Labour Day).

## Congratulations Jennifer!

At a recent meeting of the Frontenac Heritage Foundation Jennifer McKendry was presented with the Foundation's highest honour, the Margaret Angus Award, for her outstanding contribution to heritage in Kingston, Frontenac County and Loyalist Township and beyond. A leading historian of architecture, photography, graveyards, and cemeteries in Canada, Jennifer has taken an active role in heritage initiatives in the Kingston area for four decades.

An active member of the Frontenac Historic Foundation (which later became the Frontenac Heritage Foundation), Jennifer served as a member of the Board in the early days and as Vice President. At the same time, Jennifer was active in the Kingston Historical Society where for many years she provided the design work for Limelight. Her wide-ranging interests have resulted in numerous published papers, many articles and books on a host of topics, including: architecture in Kingston and Portsmouth, photography in Kingston and cemeteries in Kingston and Ontario. Recently, she provided important research on the buildings in the Old Sydenham area of Kingston as part of making this a Designated Heritage District. All of us who share an interest in the history and heritage of Kingston and region have much to thank Jennifer for as she continues her outstanding work.



*Paul Christianson presented the Frontenac Heritage Foundation's Margaret Angus Award to Jennifer McKendry on 12 October, 2010*



## Speakers' Corner

### 1760: The Forgotten Year

*Presented by Robert Andrews*

with Edward R. Grenda  
& photos by Dianne Fielding



At the very outset, Robert Andrews dealt with what he considered to be the widely held belief that when the British defeated the French at the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in Quebec in September 1759, Canada, for all intents and purposes became British. Not so, he argued. The British simply won the battle but the French still held onto New France (Quebec).

It was not until 1760 that New France came under British control which was firmly enshrined in a peace treaty several years later. This was a result of a three-pronged attack on Montreal led by three accomplished British military commanders- James Murray, Jeffery Amherst, and Archibald Montgomery. Mr. Andrews spelled out in meticulous detail the composition of the military material and the number and type of soldiers each commander wielded in launching their attacks. Suffice it to say, the French troops were vastly outnumbered and fell victim relatively quickly to the relentless British onslaught.

According to Mr. Andrews, it appeared that the government in France did not take too seriously the political importance and strategic significance of its colony in New France. Mr. Andrews then elaborated on the aftermath of the 1760 battles, especially as to how the French forces were treated by the British and how the French government was seemingly indifferent to the fate and welfare of its troops and colonists in Quebec.

According to Mr. Andrews, 1760 was the "forgotten year" in North America largely because the Battle of the Plains of Abraham and the notable deaths of the two contending military commanders, Wolfe and Montcalm clearly overshadowed the subsequent military and political events in New France.



Former Society Councillor and historian in his own right, John Abbott, thanked Mr. Andrews on behalf of the Society.

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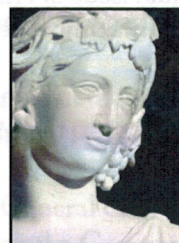
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# THIS MONTH'S MEETING

Wednesday, 17 November, 7:30 PM

## HMCS Cataraqui: Kingston's Senior Service

Chris Varley, President HMCS Cataraqui Association

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

Refreshments All Welcome

## Renew Now for 2011!

Renew Now for 2011!

The Kinston Historical Society values your membership and we're sure you do too. To continue to enjoy our monthly meetings, the Limelight newsletter, the annual issue of Historic Kingston, free admission to the Murney Tower Museum and the fellowship of likeminded people- NOW is the time to renew your membership for 2011.

Please complete the membership form with your name and current mailing address, mark-off your category of membership and send the form, along with your cheque, back to the Membership Secretary, c/o the Kingston Historical Society, Box 54, Kingston, ON, Canada K7L 4V6.

## Kingston Historical Society Membership Form

I am renewing	
I am not renewing	
I am a new member	\$
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As a family or institution \$50	\$
As a student \$25	\$
I am making a donation	\$
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Optional Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I give permission to publish my name in *Historic Kingston* and *Limelight* Newsletter. ☐ YES ☐ NO

I am interested in receiving *Limelight* by email. ☐ YES ☐ NO

Please mail to:  
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OR

Hand form and payment to a member of the KHS Council at a monthly meeting.

Your support is appreciated!

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