



Guelph Historical Society

www.guelphhistoricalsociety.ca

September 2005

NEWSLETTER

Upcoming Lecture: October

REGIONAL REALISM: THE NOVELS OF JOHN GALT — PETER ASHTON

October 4, 2005 at 7:30 p.m.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 161 Norfolk St., Guelph (corner of Norfolk St. and Suffolk St.)

John Galt, known in Guelph and surroundings as the entrepreneur working for the Canada Company, was also a highly popular novelist during the early 1800s. He considered his writing as secondary to his grand schemes, such as turning the Speed River into a canal to Lake Ontario, but nonetheless his novels were second in popularity only to Walter Scott in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

Writing novels and other works, namely the first biography of Lord Byron, Galt treated as a kind of hobby; he called them "clishmaclavers written in a closet". His writing served a practical purpose for him; they paid his way out of debtor's prison where he served time for doing all the right things for the Canada Company other than making a lot of immediate cash for them.

Although his novels are little read today, they bear looking at for a variety of reasons. The British historian, G.M. Trevelyan, said that to understand the life and times of the west of Scotland during the turn of the centuries, 1790– 1830, one must read the novels of John Galt. *Annals of the Parish* and *The Provost* would be among the most commonly read. His two North American novels, *Lawrie Todd or Settlers in the Woods* and *Bogle Corbet or the Emigrants*, are interesting in the fact that they accurately discern the essence of the American and Canadian characters long before anyone conceived of studying AM/CAN.

Peter Ashton has a degree in English Language and Literature from the University of Toronto (B.A. Hons) and a Master's degree from the University of Guelph. His thesis was researched and written at the University of Edinburgh.

He has taught English at North Toronto Collegiate, Canadian Junior College: Lausanne, and Centennial C.V.I. Guelph.

NOVEMBER LECTURE

Remembrance for the 21st Century: Educating Young Canadians — Terry Copp, retired Professor of History, Wilfred Laurier University

PROMINENT GUELPHITES:

ADMIRAL SIR CHARLES EDMUND KINGSMILL

Admiral Sir Charles Edmund Kingsmill, KT, was born in Guelph on July 7, 1855. His parents John Juchereau Kingsmill and Ellen Diana Grange were prominent members of the community. His father was a well-known lawyer who practised in Guelph in the 1850s and 1860s. He was promoted to Magistrate and served in the Niagara-on-the-Lake area.



Charles was sent to England to further his education and he joined the British Royal Navy. He served in the British Royal Navy from 1869 to 1908 when he retired with the rank of Rear-Admiral and returned to Canada.

Kingsmill was instrumental in the formation of the Royal Canadian Navy. In 1910, the Royal Canadian Navy became a reality and Kingsmill was its first Director of Naval Service. (In 2010, the Canadian Navy will celebrate its 100th anniversary.)

Admiral Kingsmill was the only person to be commissioned as an Admiral in both the British Navy and the Canadian Navy. In the Royal Canadian Navy, he attained the rank of Admiral on April 3, 1917 and the following year he was knighted by the King of England.

Admiral Kingsmill had a distinguished career. He was awarded:

- The Egyptian Bronze Star and Egyptian Medal,
- The decoration of an Officer of the French Legion of Honour,
- The Star of a Grand Officer of the Crown of Italy,
- King George V Coronation Medal.

He retired on December 31, 1920 and died July 15, 1935.

—With thanks to John Newstead

Two streets in Guelph are named after the prominent Kingsmill family: Kingsmill Avenue and Grange Street.

RESOURCES

For more information on Admiral Sir Charles Kingsmill, please see *Historic Guelph* (September 1991).

Department of Veteran Affairs. <http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca>

Department of National Defence

ESSAY CONTEST

Topic of your choice pertaining to Guelph's History — Any Era

Essays relating to historical events, residents, architecture, etc. can be based on archival documents, personal experiences, interviews, etc.

CASH PRIZES

First Prize: \$500 Second Prize: \$350

Third Prize: \$200

An extra \$50 is awarded to a first-time entrant prize winner.

Essays (approximately 3000 words) will be judged on their originality, literary style and research. Must include references to source materials and photos. Essays become the property of the Guelph Historical Society and may be published in its annual publication *Historic Guelph: The Royal City*.

The Verne McIlwraith Award Contest is sponsored by the Guelph Historical Society and is open to all residents of Guelph and area.

DEADLINE: JANUARY 31, 2006

Mail one hard copy (double-spaced) and one disk to:
Guelph Historical Society "Essay Contest"
Unit B9, 100 Crimea St.
Guelph, ON N1H 2Y6

Please note that members of the Guelph Historical Society Board are ineligible to receive cash prizes.



GUELPH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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2005-2006**

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A complete list of Board members is available on the GHS website at:
www.guelphhistoricalsociety.ca

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SECRETARY NEEDED

The GHS Board requires a secretary to fill this position on the Board. Responsibilities include taking and electronically distributing Board meeting minutes. There are six Board meetings a year. For more information, please contact Elysia DeLaurentis
(519) 846-8280, elysia@studiospace.com.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

A membership renewal form is included in the mailing with the September newsletter. Please note that this will be the **only** renewal notice sent to members. Renewals are due by December 31, 2005. Tax receipts will be available at the February 2006 meeting.

TRASH OR TREASURE: ANTIQUES APPRAISAL DAY

Sponsored by the Wellington County Historical Society
October 22, 2005 10:00 — 3:00 p.m.
Wellington County Museum & Archives
Appraisers will be on hand to evaluate your Attic Treasures and Garage Sale finds. All proceeds will go to publishing the Pilkington Township History Book. For more information contact Elysia DeLaurentis
(519) 846-8280.

ZEHRS TAPES

The GHS collects Zehrs tapes to help with the ongoing expenses of maintaining the office and the archives. Please bring your tapes to the monthly meetings and drop them in the box on the membership table.