

Community Organizations and Heritage

Community organizations are important to the development of our neighbourhoods, our society, and our future. So is their heritage. It seems that organizations that maintain a sense of their past and a respect for the members on whose foundation they are standing, endure. The celebration of the history of the organization creates a sense of pride and cohesion within the membership.

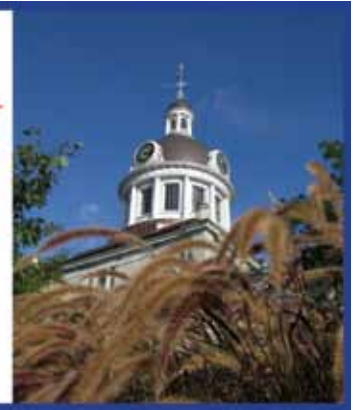
One such organization is the Royal Kingston Curling Club. It celebrates its history in the local, provincial, and national context. It also acknowledges the history of the Scottish sport of curling which was brought to Canada in the mid-1700s.



The Curling Club has had several moves since its inception in 1820. Its first location was at the foot of Earl Street in Donald McIntosh's storehouse. The second, a "two-sheet shed," built in 1860, was at the head of Gore Street; the Gore View apartments may be on the site. (This elegant residence was built in 1875.) Meanwhile, the Curling club moved in 1870 to the old Collegiate Institute grounds on Barrie Street and another two-sheet rink, which expanded to five sheets in 1899. A fire in 1922 resulted in a further move and construction of the rink between Earl and Clergy Streets west of Division Street. This penultimate site is now incorporated into the Queen's Centre.

The fifth and current location, on the east side of Days Road just north of Front Road, is one of which the Royal Kingston Curling Club can be proud. It is a highly functional building of modern materials and offers an attractive, safe, and healthy space for enthusiasts of the sport. The members of the Curling Club have viewed the concrete walls of this structure as a perfect background to display their history. However, they have not simply affixed their photographs, trophies, and bonspiel banners to the walls but have

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wisely invested in beautifully made wood and glass display cases that both enhance their building and preserve their treasures.

There are several other ways that this busy organization keeps its history alive. It has a club crest with the year 1820 incorporated into the design. It also tells its history through its handbook, along with the rules of the sport and other useful information so that each new member learns of the history on joining. In 1970 for the celebration of its 150th anniversary, the Kingston Curling Club produced a "Souvenir Book" that began with a letter of official congratulations from E.V. Swain (Val Swain), mayor of the City of Kingston, and an avid supporter of heritage. This was followed by (true to form) *Some History of the Kingston Curling Club*. Further on, *Some Historical Notes* which are about Kingston, its first mayor, Thomas Kirkpatrick, Barrister, and John Counter, eight-term mayor who "did a lot for the City of Kingston." And, that is not all. In *Some History of Curling in Kingston*, they have reproduced the original rules and regulations of the Kingston Curling Club, which were found by Colonel C.M. Strange of 25 West Street amongst his grandfather's papers.

You can see from the above, the importance of the history of the Royal Kingston Curling Club to its members. You will appreciate, then, the consternation they are experiencing because they have not been able to document 30 years of that history. 1820 to 1850 is the period they are trying to fill in and I know they would be grateful for any information or leads that may help them to do this. As I am assisting them in this endeavour, you could send them to me: Helen Finley, 52 Earl Street, Kingston ON, K7L 2G6; 613-548-4059; helen.finley@sympatico.ca