

MURNEY TOWER MUSEUM
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE OF CANADA



ANNUAL REPORT

2021



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Ontario, Canada, K7L 4V6



OUR MISSION

The Murney Tower Museum NHSC is a public, non-profit museum which strives to connect visitors with Kingston's military and cultural history through collection, preservation, research, and interpretation.

OUR VISION

At Murney Tower Museum, our vision is to create meaningful experiences and provide a sense of place for our community by representing Kingston's distinct cultural and military heritage through programs, research, and interpretation as a designated NHSC.

OUR VALUES

As Kingston's oldest museum, our values are as time-honoured and deep-rooted as our institution.

ENHANCE PRESERVATION.

FOSTER EDUCATION.

FACILITATE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.

PROMOTE COLLABORATION.

AUGMENT ACCESSIBILITY.

YEAR AT A GLANCE

MURNEY TOWER MUSEUM
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The 2021 operating season was a season like no other. Murney Tower Museum National Historic Site of Canada (NHSC) faced the unprecedented challenge of operating during a global pandemic, yet the numbers of new initiatives and engaging programs developed by the museum were also unprecedented.

This Annual Report provides a comprehensive overview of Murney Tower Museum's activities throughout the preceding 2021 year. After an entirely remote beginning to the summer season, the museum was once again able to open its doors to the public on July 17, 2021 - the first time since 2019. Due to the generous funding provided by the City of Kingston Heritage Fund, Kingston Association of Museums, Art Galleries, and Historic Sites, Tourism Kingston, Young Canada Works, and Canada Summer Jobs, the museum was able to not only stay afloat but also deliver both online and onsite initiatives.

The switch to onsite work in the time of COVID-19 required the restructuring of the museum experience in order to ensure a healthy and safe visit for all visitors. With a limited operating schedule, the museum implemented online booking protocols, "bubbled" tour groups, limited capacities, and comprehensive cleaning procedures. Staff arrived onsite early every Saturday and Sunday morning to prepare the tower to safely accommodate visitors.

By overhauling the traditional museum experience, Murney Tower Museum staff were able to welcome visitors into our doors while ensuring that our doors themselves could remain open.

YEAR AT A GLANCE: IN NUMBERS

2 MAJOR PROJECTS

STRATEGIC PLAN & NEW WEBSITE

We launched the museum's first-ever website in May and our 2021-2026 Strategic Plan in August.

7 PROGRAMS

CONNECTING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

Among other programs, the museum offered its first collections program, C&C: Curator and Collections, as well as an educational school program designed for grades 7-8.

20 VIDEOS

INTERACTIVE LEARNING

From arts and crafts activities to our cooking channel, the museum delivered a total of 20 online tutorials from November 2020 to December 2021.

10 FEATURES

MURNEY IN THE MEDIA

Local newspapers, a marketplace booth, a TV feature, a podcast, and more - these are the avenues through which the museum shared its achievements with the community.

5 EXHIBITS

VISUALIZING HISTORY

We shared the hidden stories of our artifacts through five virtual, interactive exhibits.

2 OUTREACH INITIATIVES

STAYING IN TOUCH

Twelve monthly e-newsletter issues and one exciting photo contest allowed us to keep in touch with our community.

11 STORIES

DISCOVERING THE PAST

Eleven stories related to artifacts in the museum's collections were researched, written, and published this year.

6 COLLABORATIONS

WORKING TOGETHER

We partnered with Kingston and Area Association of Museums, Art Galleries, and Historic Sites and local museums to deliver programs for diverse groups.

660 VISITORS

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Once we were finally able to open our doors, we welcomed a total of 660 visitors into our tower.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

MURNEY TOWER MUSEUM
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Vincent Durant



During the past two years, as president of the Kingston Historical Society, I've had the pleasure of being an ex-officio member of the Murney Tower Museum operating committee. This advisory group has both KHS and public membership and acts in an advisory capacity for the direction and operation of the museum.

Through an arrangement with the government of Canada, the owner of the Murney Tower, KHS has proudly operated the site and museum for close to 100 years. (We'll be celebrating the centenary in 2025!) At times, it has been a struggle to gain funding, attract visitors, and deal with the myriad of issues that arise when attending to an old stone structure with steep stairs and neither heat nor plumbing; and more recently the dreaded COVID pandemic! However, with a spirit of cooperation between Parks Canada on behalf of the Government, and KHS, a great deal has been accomplished during the past few years.

Credit for the recent success of the Murney Tower Museum goes to the indefatigable efforts of the museum's Director Dr. Tabitha Renaud, and the Manager/Curator Simge Erdogan-O'Connor. When COVID closed them down, they moved online. Then when partial reopening was allowed, they and their student staff offered a hybrid operation incorporating on-site limited events along with a plethora of online attractions. As you read through this report, I'm sure you'll be as impressed as I am with how the museum, through its leadership and very talented staff, carries on the fine tradition of the Murney Tower Museum.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

MURNEY TOWER MUSEUM
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Tabitha Renaud



Despite the challenges of the pandemic this year, the Tower team broke a lot of new ground. We launched our first-ever website. This huge milestone was made possible by a grant from Tourism Kingston and it allows us to better serve our community through sharing our collection, exhibits, activities, research, programming, contests and more. Our team created an unprecedented volume of content this year thanks to a dedicated team of students and volunteers. We made huge advances in improving our Collections Management. Our "Murney in Retrospect" contest allowed us to build a collection of Murney images across the decades while supporting local shops during the pandemic.

We launched our new Strategic Plan for 2021-2026, driven by consultation with Kingstonians to make sure our museum stays relevant to its community. Murney had ten media spots this year helping put Kingston on the map. We also participated in many collaborations with community partners including paranormal investigations with The Phantoms of Yore, a paint night with the Marine Museum, virtual workshops with the Kingston Heritage Fair, and March Break programming with the Kingston Association of Museums (KAM).

Lastly, I would like to thank Parks Canada and the Kingston Historical Society for their stewardship over our beloved little Tower. Hats off to our museum staff, students, and volunteers for their hard work. I am also grateful to Queen's History department, Queen's Conservation program, Queen's Law Clinic, and Fleming College's museum program for all the help they provided us this year. Our deepest thanks also to the City of Kingston, Tourism Kingston, KEDCO and the KAM for all their support in keeping the Murney Tower Museum running.

MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER/CURATOR

Sinige Erdogan-O'Connor



The 2021 season was a very challenging yet rewarding season. Mid-July witnessed the opening of our doors to the public for the first time since 2019. Over the course of two and half months, we welcomed more than 600 visitors to our museum. Our staff and volunteers worked enthusiastically during a global pandemic, putting their efforts into making our services more accessible and appealing to a diverse group of audiences. We believed that if we worked together, we could extend our reach far beyond the thick limestone walls of the Murney Tower.

Successful museums in the twenty-first century are those who listen to their audiences and seek new ways to revise their offerings in light of changing local, national, and global conditions. To adapt our services to changing audience needs, we have launched a set of new virtual programs and strategic initiatives. From a new museum website to a community-created strategic plan, new educational programs to community projects, we have extended our reach both within and beyond Kingston. Working closely with our audiences and with other heritage organizations, we have strengthened the museum's position on local and regional levels.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Kingston Historical Society, the City of Kingston, and the Kingston and Area Association of Museums, Art Galleries and Historic Sites for their ongoing support and contribution. I would also like to thank our visitors, followers, and audience members - all those who engaged with our museum this year by visiting us on site, participating in our events, following our initiatives, building new memories with the Murney Tower Museum. We would not have been able to do this without you!

2021 STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

MURNEY TOWER MUSEUM
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MANAGEMENT TEAM



Dr. Tabitha Renaud
Director



Simge Erdogan-O'Connor
Manager/Curator

STEERING COMMITTEE

Chair: Dr. Tabitha Renaud, Director
Staff Resource: Simge Erdogan-O'Connor

Committee members: Vincent Durant,
Peter Ginn, Don Richardson, Tanya
Scott, Liz Watkins-McLean

WINTER 2021/SPRING 2021



Amy Abraham
Museum Assistant



Olivia Anstess
Museum Assistant



Meghan Webster
Museum Assistant



Melina Mohitovis
Practicum Student
Queen's University, Faculty of Education



Chloe Fine
Intern
Queen's University, Department of History

SUMMER 2021/FALL 2021



Alison Dringenberg
Historical Interpreter
Museum Assistant



Sam Nicholls
Historical Interpreter



Annabeth Deakin
Historical Interpreter



Allison Mei
Collections Intern



Madison Hall
Museum Assistant

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

MURNEY TOWER MUSEUM
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The 2021 season saw the launch of Murney Tower Museum's 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, our first-ever website, as well as a wide range of collaborative, programming, collections, and marketing initiatives. The museum constantly revitalizes its cultural heritage programs to address changing audience needs. This year, we have implemented innovative strategies, both online and onsite, to foster cultural vitality and audience engagement in the city of Kingston.

Overview

PROJECTS

2021-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN
NEW WEBSITE

COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES

MARCH OF THE MUSEUMS
KINGSTON REGIONAL
HERITAGE FAIR
FORT HENRY KAM
COMMUNITY EXHIBIT
PHANTOMS OF YORE
PAINT NIGHT WITH THE
MARINE MUSEUM
DOORS OPEN

PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

ONLINE EDUCATIONAL
TUTORIALS
COOKING CHANNEL
SCHOOL PROGRAMS
C&C: CURATOR AND
COLLECTIONS
STAFF INTERVIEW SERIES

COLLECTIONS

MANAGEMENT
RESEARCH
EXHIBITS

PUBLICITY

MARKETING STRATEGY
LOVE KINGSTON MARKETPLACE
KINGSTON'S TREASURES
LOCAL NEWSPAPERS
KAM MARKETING PRESENTATION
WORK IN CULTURE
PRESENTATION

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

E-NEWSLETTER
MURNEY IN RETROSPECT PHOTO
CONTEST

STRATEGIC PLAN

On August 26, 2021, Murney Tower Museum officially launched its 2021-2026 Strategic Plan. This plan was the product of an extensive, one-year planning and data collection process, co-developed with a broad range of internal and external stakeholders. Between January-March 2021, the museum held five focus group conversations attended by 49 participants, and in spring 2021 we launched a comprehensive online survey, which received 262 responses. We spent summer 2021 completing our full report, now available on our website. At the heart of this plan is a commitment to strengthening the museum's relationship with the community and making its services more accessible and appealing to a diverse group of audiences. We are deeply grateful for every participant whose voice has helped shape our community-oriented strategic plan that will guide us toward our 100th anniversary in 2025 and beyond.



NEW WEBSITE

We launched the museum's first-ever website in May 2021 as part of our efforts to increase both our digital presence and accessibility to the general public. Thanks to the generous redevelopment bursary offered by the Kingston Association of Museums, Art Galleries, and Historic Sites (KAM) and Tourism Kingston, Murney Tower Museum was able to work closely with the SPARKS Creative Communications Agency at St. Lawrence College in order to develop an entirely new website. Our regularly updated website is home to several online initiatives, including collections stories, blog posts, staff profiles, virtual exhibits, and collections information. The launch of www.murneytower.com constituted a significant step toward the modernization and professionalization of our institution. Since its launch, our website has received over 4,000 visits from over 10 countries.



MARCH OF THE MUSEUMS

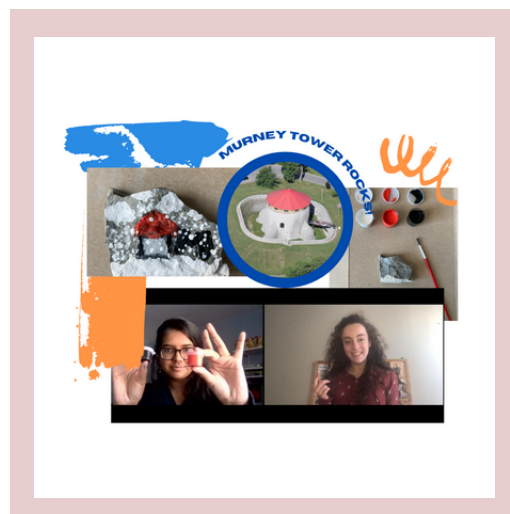
From April 12-16, Murney Tower Museum participated in KAM's virtual March of the Museums, reaching 200 children with an activity titled Murney Tower Rocks. Eight participating sites shared various activities and videos in order to bring local museums into Kingstonians' homes. Murney Tower Rocks, a rock-painting activity, explored the limestone heritage of Kingston and featured on KAM and our museum's YouTube channels. All sites worked together to prepare 200 home kits for children and families, which contained all supplies needed for the arts and crafts activities.



kingston
and area
association
of museums
art galleries +
historic sites

KINGSTON REGIONAL HERITAGE FAIR

The Kingston Regional Heritage Fair, the oldest fair in Ontario, moved online this year. Sponsored by the Kingston Historical Society, the fair allows students to engage in the learning process and the exchange of ideas through presentations and interactive workshops. We reached 200 elementary-school children from grades 4-8 with two scavenger hunts and two engaging workshops: Murney Tower Rocks for grades 4-6 and Tower Construction for grades 6-8.



FORT HENRY KAM COMMUNITY EXHIBIT

Each year, the Kingston and Area Association of Museum organizes a community exhibit at Fort Henry that brings together Kingston museums and heritage sites. This year's goal was to encourage Fort Henry's visitors to find out about, explore, and visit other KAM sites and organizations in the Kingston area. The exhibition provided a glimpse into each featured site, and Murney Tower Museum participated by loaning two artifacts important to the history of our tower: a 1920s replica of an original Royal Canadian Rifle Regiment (RCRR) hat and a black-and-white photograph of Murney May Pugh, the woman born inside the tower in 1822.

PHANTOMS OF YORE

In May and June, Phantoms of Yore hosted two online paranormal investigation events featuring Murney Tower Museum. In partnership with The Haunted Walk, these two live investigations amassed thousands of views, and we teamed up with Phantoms of Yore again in the fall. On October 1 and 2, brave groups of ghost hunters completed a Paranormal Investigation Challenge at our historic site using the latest ghost-hunting technology. Informed about the history of the site, the equipment to be used, and the best ghost-hunting practices, these groups ventured inside our little tower to see if they could discover any traces of the paranormal.



PAINT NIGHT WITH THE MARINE MUSEUM

On a beautiful summer evening, the Marine Museum of the Great Lakes hosted Part II of their Paint Night Series at Murney Tower Museum. With the week's theme of "History and Fortifications," our museum was the ideal location to host this second segment. On August 12, our staff enthusiastically assisted the Marine Museum in hosting the Paint Night, presenting the history of the museum to the audience and highlighting the key aspects of the nineteenth-century fortification. Ten eager painters spent two hours painting the iconic view of our national historic site.



DOORS OPEN

On September 25 and 26, 2021, several KAM sites collectively opened their doors to welcome pre-registered tour groups at no admission. Doors Open was the final weekend of the museum's opening season, and we were delighted to welcome 144 more visitors over the final weekend of September. This was a great opportunity to connect with the public one last time before officially closing for the season.



ONLINE EDUCATIONAL TUTORIALS

This year we have launched an ambitious online educational initiative that includes arts and crafts tutorials, instructional videos for families, a school program for teachers, and fun at-home activities for children. Between November 2020 and September 2021, we launched a total of 20 online educational tutorials, which engaged more than 400 people. Murney Tower Rocks, High Tea with Murney Tower, Tower Construction, How About Hat, and Martello Cups are just a few examples of the free tutorials offered by the museum to the public. All are available for free on the museum's YouTube channel and our website.

COOKING CHANNEL

In June 2021, Murney Tower Museum launched a cooking channel. Currently, four episodes are available on our YouTube channel: Nineteenth-Century Bread, Soldier's Stew, Afternoon Tea, and Thanksgiving Cake. The research for our cooking channel was based both on our records of soldiers' rations in the RCRR and general nineteenth-century food history. Each video outlines the historical background of the dish of the day and walks the viewer through the process of cooking their very own nineteenth-century-inspired meal.



No 141. *Thanksgiving Cake.*
Six pounds of flour, one pint of good yeast, made over night with warm milk, that it may rise by morning, add three pounds of sugar, half a pound of butter, six eggs, three pounds of currants or raisins, one ounce cingamon, two of cloves, gill of brandy, bake one hour and a half.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Near the end of summer 2021, we revitalized the museum's educational school programs: Murney Redoubt and Living in a Tower. Murney Redoubt is a lesson plan designed for a social studies class of grades 7-8, with direct curriculum links. We also created an at-home educational program for families entitled Living in a Tower, which is designed to provide accurate historical insight into a day in the life of an RCRR soldier living at Murney Tower.

C&C: CURATOR AND COLLECTIONS

Our first-ever collections program, C&C: Curator and Collections, launched this past summer as a free, virtual event intended to provide an in-depth exploration of the museum's collections. Each monthly session highlighted a different artifact in our collections, carefully selected by our curator. Over Zoom, our curator took participants on a voyage into nineteenth-century life in Kingston. The first session on June 9 discussed the history of the people who lived in the tower; the second, on July 7, explored our newly acquired prints by William Henry Bartlett; the third, on September 16, investigated a fraudulent Bank of Upper Canada banknote from the 1820s in our General Collection. C&C allowed the museum to maintain its community engagement and education while our doors were closed.



STAFF INTERVIEW SERIES

As a way to introduce the faces behind Murney Tower Museum, we launched an ongoing Staff Interview Series on our YouTube channel in 2021. Beginning with our manager/curator, each staff member was subsequently interviewed over the season on their job position, their connection to, favourite fact, and most meaningful experience at Murney Tower Museum. Teasers were posted across social media platforms, with the full interviews available for free on our YouTube. This series allowed staff to share their behind-the-scenes knowledge with the public while providing a glimpse into the experience of working at the tower.



COLLECTIONS WORK

We undertook extensive collections management and care work to ensure that our artifacts were stored, preserved, and cared for according to international museum standards. We arranged for the Fleming College Conservation Program to assist us with the cleaning and restoration of twelve artifacts. In addition, we completed our collection digitization project by transferring over 700 files into a digital database. As of 2021, 100% of our collection records have been digitized. The digital collection is available to staff through our online software, and hope to soon have these collections accessible to the general public on our website.

COLLECTIONS RESEARCH

Museum staff researched and wrote articles about some of the most fascinating artifacts in our collections, eleven of which are now available to read on our website.

Lt. Col. Bowen Van Straubenzee: A Reflection of Canadian History

The "Pretended" Bank of Upper Canada

Housewife Sewing Kit

Kingston, Ontario: Through an Artist's Eyes

A Glimpse into Kingston's Past

Stereographic Stories: Love, War, and Nineteenth-Century Virtual Reality

What's the Weather? A Glance at Historical Weather Forecasting

The Knife on the Desk and the Art of Correspondence

The Unknown Stories of Murney Tower

A Token for Your Thoughts: Uncovering the Lost Tracks of Kingston's Transit System



ONLINE EXHIBITS

In addition to Collection Stories, staff also undertook research to create online, interactive exhibits that would allow us to bring our collections and their stories to the public. These exhibits, designed on Prezi, allow viewers to engage with artifacts and history in their own time and at their own speed. To date, we have shared five virtual exhibits on our website:

The Lost Tracks of Kingston's Transit System

The People Before the Tower

Stereographic Stories: 19th-Century Virtual Reality

The People of Murney

Shoemaking in Kingston



MARKETING STRATEGY

This summer, staff developed a novel Marketing Strategy for the museum. The Strategy outlines the marketing approaches and decisions made throughout the year in order to guide future staff in their marketing endeavours. The Marketing Strategy constitutes a valuable step towards the branding and professionalization of the museum.

LOVE KINGSTON MARKETPLACE

On Friday, July 16, our staff spent the day at a Love Kingston Marketplace tent in Springer Market Square, advertising our museum and its midsummer reopening. Throughout the day, we engaged with tourists and locals alike, discussing our museum and Kingston-area historic sites. The booth was arranged by KAM and provided staff the opportunity to publicize our website and updated reopening plan, as well as connect with our community.

KINGSTON'S TREASURES

In an episode that aired on July 20th, our manager/curator was invited to chat with YourTV Kingston about our little museum. This interview was the fifth episode of Kingston's Treasures, a segment that provides a close-up look at Kingston's local museums and other tourist attractions. In a lively discussion with host Bill Visser, our manager/curator talked all about our history, collections, and programs. The twenty-minute episode allowed us to highlight some of the exciting initiatives we've been working on and featured some unique artifacts from our collection.



LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

Our 2020-2021 projects were recognized in several news articles and publications. The interest of several reporters from various organizations, including the Kingston Whig Standard, CKWS News Kingston, the Kingstonist, the Kingston Local, and Fifty-Five Plus all helped to highlight the many projects we have taken on over the past year.

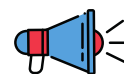


MARKETING PRESENTATION FOR KAM

On May 25, 2021 our manager and curator facilitated a peer-led discussion at Kingston Association and Area of Museums, Art Galleries and Historic Sites' General Membership meeting. Her presentation was entitled "Reconnecting with Kingstonians: Murney Tower Museum's New Marketing Initiatives" focused on the development and implementation of the museum's new three-step marketing strategy, which has been an incredibly important asset to the museum's public outreach and audience engagement efforts this year.

WORK IN CULTURE PRESENTATION

In June 2021, our manager/curator was invited by WorkInCulture to give a presentation on our website development project in order to demonstrate how museums can successfully engage in digital marketing. Her presentation will be shown to all participants of the Marketing Master Class Training Program and, upon completion of the program in 2022, will be available to the public.



E-NEWSLETTER

In September 2020, the museum launched a monthly e-newsletter titled "Murney News." This newsletter provides updates on ongoing museum initiatives, events, and fun to our growing mailing list of 300 subscribers. Each edition features a short introduction reflecting on the past month and includes three articles written by staff, updating our readers on everything from current events to collaborations to collections. By sharing our e-newsletter at the end of every month, the museum is able to maintain consistent and ongoing community engagement with our valued subscribers.

MURNEY IN RETROSPECT PHOTO CONTEST

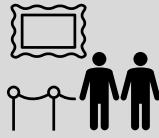
The museum launched an online photo contest titled "Murney in Retrospect," which invited photo submissions taken inside or outside the tower to create a photo archive. From December 2020 to April 2021, we received (number) submissions from community members far and wide. Our Murney in Retrospect project was a unique way to stay connected with our community, allowing us to document past moments with Murney Tower throughout Kingston's history.



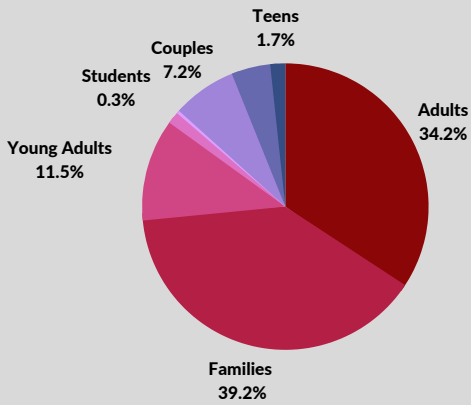
MURNEY IN NUMBERS

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660



VISITORS



852

YOUTUBE VIEWS



4,000

WEBSITE VIEWS



643

INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS



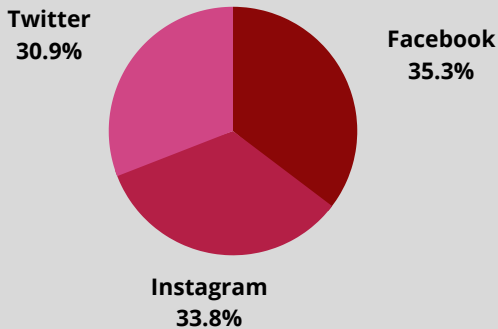
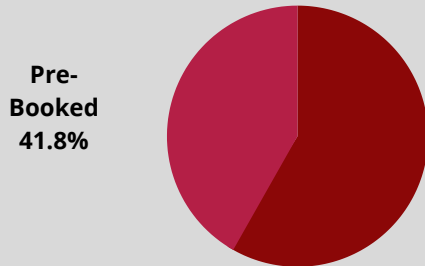
514

FACEBOOK LIKES



477

TWITTER FOLLOWERS



ACKNOWLEDGING OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

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Murney Tower Museum acknowledges with thanks the continued support of our contributors:

The City of Kingston

Parks Canada

Kingston Association of Museums, Art Galleries, and Heritage Sites

Tourism Kingston

Kingston Economic Development Corporation

Government of Canada, Young Canada Works Program for Heritage Organizations

Government of Canada, Canada Summer Jobs Program

Queen's University Department of Art History and Art Conservation

Fleming College Cultural Heritage and Conservation Program

Queen's University Law Clinics

Queen's University Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science

Queen's University Department of History

Queen's University Department of Education

Special thanks to our recent contributors:

Paul van Nest, Peter Gower, Betty Andrews, Paul Charbonneau, Kyle Mayne, Warren Everett, Reza Aaleifar, Graeme Watson, Jonathan David O'Connor, Danielle Marshall, Joanna Dermejinian, Marcus Letourneau, Gordon Robinson, Eva Barnes



