

# England's Lord Johnny Acton coming to Acton

## Will open Acton Fall Fair and Town Hall speaker series in September

By **KATHLEEN DILLS**  
*Special to The IFP*

Ottawa might have Will and Kate. But Acton has Johnny and Lucinda, Lord and Lady Acton, who are coming to Acton for a 17-day visit in September to kick off a speakers series at the Acton Town Hall Centre.

The high-profile line up of speakers also includes lawyer James Lockyer, best known for freeing the wrongly convicted, *Toronto Star* columnist Christopher Hume and the father-daughter duo of Clay Powell and Betsy Powell. She's an award-winning *Toronto Star* crime reporter and he's a lawyer whose famous clients have included Rolling Stones' guitarist Keith Richard.

The series kicks off Sept. 18 with a dinner at the town hall featuring Lord Acton as keynote speaker and a menu with local Ontario food.

Acton, 44, a pig enthusiast and author of 13 books on everything from sausages to hot air ballooning, will also open the 98th annual Acton Fall Fair. He and Lady Acton will be paddled across Fairy Lake to do the honours. Plans are

also underway to have Lord Acton demonstrate sausage-making as part of the fair's Education Day activities.

"We're very excited," said Kathleen Dills, events coordinator for Heritage Acton, which rescued the 1883 town hall from demolition and restored it to its former glory.

Other plans for Acton's visit include the Eden Mills Writers' Festival, the Halton Federation of Agriculture farm tour and dinner and a book signing at the new River St. library in Acton.

"This promises to be a fun-filled 17-day tour not only for Lord and Lady Acton, but for the citizens of Acton," said Mayor Rick Bonnette.

The name of the series was inspired by a famous quote by the 1st Lord Acton, an historian and rabble rouser in Victorian England. He was the man behind the line, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts ab-



Lord Johnny Acton (right) with writing partner Nick Sandler, demonstrate some of the sausages that he is an expert at making. Lord Acton will open the Acton Fall Fair and kick off the Acton Town Hall Centre speaker series.

solutely," which is often wrongly attributed to 16th century political schemer Niccolo Machiavelli.

The series is a fundraiser for an elevator at the Town Hall.

Lord Acton, who lives in Gloucestershire, England, keeps two Oxford Sandy and Black pigs, a rare breed also known as The Plum Pudding Pig because of its markings and saved from extinction 20 years ago.

As a writer, Acton specializes in digging up obscure nuggets of information and making complex subjects accessible. For a book on the world's biggest food brands, for example, he discovered a certain ketchup company insists its product pour no faster than .028 miles/h.

He also spent a year travelling around Britain for a book on the farmers who supply products to Prince Charles' organic food brand, Duchy Originals.

For many of his books, Acton developed original recipes with his friend Nick Sandler, a chef. One of the recipes—grilled pork loin with rustic fennel and fresh sage—will be featured on the menu for the Sept. 18 dinner at the Town Hall, which is centred around a harvest theme and seasonal foods.

Tickets went on sale on Monday (July 4) and can be purchased at the Town of Halton Hills Box Office ([www.haltonhills.ca/the](http://www.haltonhills.ca/the)

atre), Tyler Travel Service Ltd. or from members of Heritage Acton or Acton Rotary Club.

Tickets are \$100 for a complete package, including Lord Acton's dinner and all speakers. Dinner tickets are \$75. Tickets to individual speaking events, \$15.

Acton is putting the finishing touches on his next book, which comes out in November. It's geared toward the Olympics in London next summer, with amazon.ca promoting it as "witty" and "insightful." The book is called *How to Watch the Olympics and get fanatical about fencing, hot for handball and switched on to synchronized swimming.*

It picks up on how the games most of the world knows, such as football, baseball and cricket, are either missing or have a token presence at the Olympics, the planet's biggest sporting event. In their place are sports most people have no clue about.

While his trip to Canada might help him better understand and explain canoeing, it has to be in the publisher's hands by the time he gets here. But there's always the next edition, in time for Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

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