

Glanmore restoration underway ⁰



By [Luke Hendry](#), The Intelligencer

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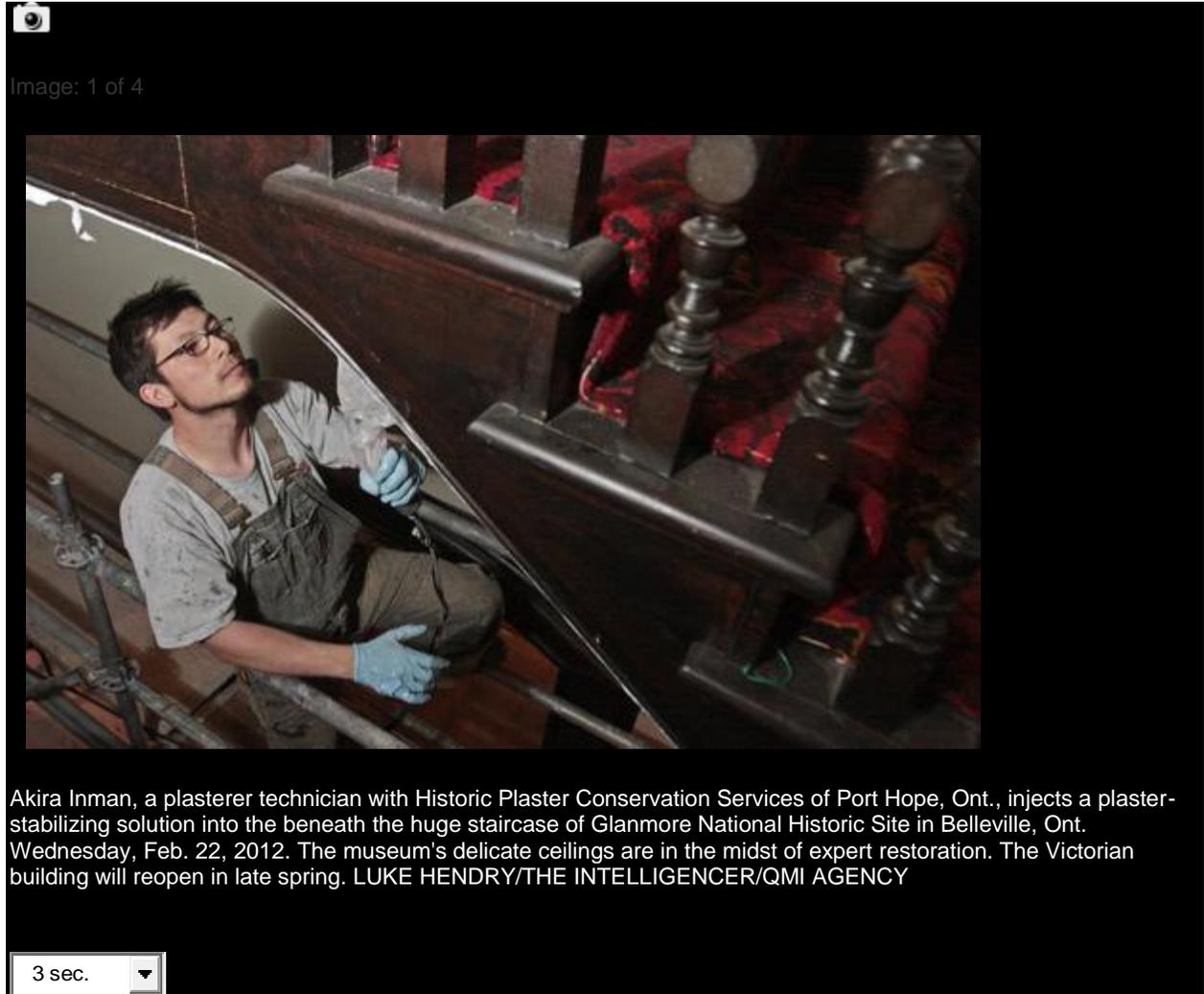


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Akira Inman, a plasterer technician with Historic Plaster Conservation Services of Port Hope, Ont., injects a plaster-stabilizing solution into the beneath the huge staircase of Glanmore National Historic Site in Belleville, Ont. Wednesday, Feb. 22, 2012. The museum's delicate ceilings are in the midst of expert restoration. The Victorian building will reopen in late spring. LUKE HENDRY/THE INTELLIGENCER/QMI AGENCY

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Glanmore National Historic Site is being restored with a little help from its friends.

That's right: kelp.

Funori, a Japanese seaweed-based product, has been used as experts preserve the paintings on the Victorian museum's first-floor ceilings.

The \$368,000 restoration began in early January and will continue until about April. Curator Rona Rustige said staff will then return artifacts to their proper places.

Glanmore's grand reopening is slated for May 18, which is International Museums Day.

The second-floor ceilings were restored in 2009.

But this time, apart from the structural concern, the main worry was hand-painted artwork on the ceilings. Staff wanted it preserved, but it wasn't known if certain features would survive the cleaning and restoration.

"The paint was very fragile," said Masumi Suzuki, co-owner of Port Hope's Historic Plaster Conservation Service. She's overseeing the work this week; joining her are plasterer technicians Evan Oxland and Akira Inman.

Suzuki pointed to one of many hand-painted, gargoyle-like faces - called grotesques - decorating the ceiling.

"The brown paint was untouchable," Suzuki said.

Conservators managed to clean the ceiling, however, clearing away nearly 140 years of the usual household dirt plus layers of smoke from centuries of burning candles and lamps.

There were even eggshells on the ceiling. Rustige said they were likely from some sort of egg-throwing fun in the 1960s before the large house was turned into a museum.

After the cleaning, conservators sprayed the ceiling with funori, using a contraption invented by company founder Rod Stewart, plaster was injected into the ceiling, keeping it attached to the lath - thin wooden slats - above it.

Suzuki said it was only the third time the company has used funori: the other applications were at Newfoundland's legislature and Toronto's Old City Hall.

Much of the elaborately-designed building's main floor is now filled with steel scaffolding that is supporting the ceiling and workers.

Artifacts have been placed delicately in other rooms or in storage - a risky process that makes staff worry about damage.

"That is a big fear," Rustige said. "You don't want to move artifacts unless you absolutely have to."

While no tourists can visit during the restoration, Glanmore staff have organized an exhibit at the Bay View Mall.

They've added old skates, Hastings County Historical Society photos and more to the Museum of Civilization's Lace Up display. It will be at the mall, which is on Dundas Street East just east of Herchimer Avenue, until April.

Glanmore is on the southeast corner of Bridge Street East and Dufferin Avenue.

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