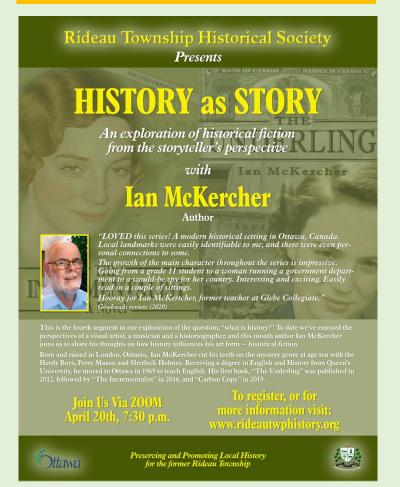


April Meeting Details



Click <u>HERE</u> for our website registration page.



We are so excited to be meeting again in person!

To be COVID safe: Individuals will be responsible for their own transportation. Please wear a mask while indoors!

Can't wait to see you there - Rain or Shine!

More details to follow at the April meeting and in future editions of this newsletter.

RTHS Remembers Brian Sawyer



Brian Sawyer, past president of the Rideau Township Historical Society passed away on March 23, 2022 at the age of 87. Brian was born in Llanelli, Wales. In 1958 he married Dorothy "Corky' Ness in Arvida, Quebec. They became the parents of Lynn, Owen and Lorne.

Brian graduated from Leeds University in 1956 with a degree in metallurgy. On graduation he received a prestigious international scholarship which allowed him to choose any mining or metallurgical company operating in the Commonwealth to spend one year as a scholar in residence. He choose the Aluminium Company of Canada (Alcan), in Arvida, Quebec.

Interestingly, he went on to work for his whole career with Alcan. In addition to Arvida, he worked in Montreal, Kitimat, BC., Australia, and Northumberland in the UK (1978-1988).

In preparation for retirement, in 1988 the Sawyers purchased a home on Long Island in Manotick backing onto Mahogany Harbour. Brian soon joined the historical society, becoming its president in 2013, 2014, and 2015.

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While RTHS president he frequently held meetings of the executive and the Dickinson House committee at his residence. He was a thoughtful host, always having snacks on the table. To brighten up a meeting he commonly brought out some antique gismo, asking his guests to identify the artifact.

Brian enjoyed showing guests around his home while sharing thoughts about his art and antique collection. He delighted in identifying trophies associated with competitive plowing; apparently Alcan sponsored plowing classes or plowing matches put on by the British Plowing Association in Cumberland, UK. Corky presented the trophies.

Brian enthusiastically displayed parts of his antique and tool collection in the Dickinson House Museum. He was often in the museum to describe and talk about the items he had on display.

In retirement Brian found pleasure in walking and cycling. He became president of the Probus Club in Manotick, and was a member of the Manotick Horticultural Society. In 2020 he became a resident at the "Ravines" in Nepean, where he lived until his passing.

Membership Matters

From our Membership Director Owen Cooke:

At present we have 52 active members:

- 28 life members
- 9 family memberships
- 7 single memberships
- 8 honorary memberships for 2022

Two e-mail calls will go out this month: one to last year's members calling for their renewals, and one to those whose memberships lapsed in 2020 indicating that their names will be removed from the membership list if they do not renew.

Report on February's RTHS Event

What is History? A participating exploration of how personal values & contexts influence the interpretation of historical events with Dr. Daniel Woolf

The past doesn't change, but does history? And if it does, so what?

Those were the central questions Dr. Daniel Woolf led us through at our meeting of March 16th. Employing an interactive format, and taking advantage of the best of Zoom technology, members were treated to about 90 minutes of



stimulating discussion about what history really is, and about how we as community historians interact with that "thing" we call history.

Luckily, we also ended up with some ideas about what WE could be thinking of as we do our own history.

Setting the tone with a discussion of the three key questions noted below, the group pretty quickly came to consensus that history and the past just aren't the same thing.

- 1. Is history the same as the past?
- 2. Is the past directly accessible to us? If so, in what form?
- 3. Is history "what happened" or what we *believe* happened based on our best good faith assessment of the fragmentary traces of the past?

With that consensus as the basis for our understanding, we then went on to explore notions of how we access the past, and how we interpret relevant information - Margot Belanger said it best when she said: "history is in the eye and the mindset of the beholder." If that is the truth, then is anything sacred? According to Dr. Woolf, historians will change their minds about past events based on several criteria, including, but not only: new evidence, new interpretations of old evidence, different approaches (e.g. asking a different question about an artefact), and of course the bias and contextual understanding of the historian at the time they are doing their research.

For *this* writer, the idea that history depends as much on the historian as the "facts" that the historian chooses to see and try to understand, contributes to a vague sense of disequilibrium - which of course is the basis of openness to learning, the place where historians begin, with a question.

This disequilibrium extends to the idea of the "causal chain". According to Dr. Woolf, the more complex an event, the more difficult it is to pinpoint an actual cause or series of causes, hence the idea of the "causal chain." What *caused* an event is often subject to spirited discussion, and never completely resolved! Few things are absolute, in this interpretation of history.

In an interesting interrogation of the relationship of history to memory, Dr. Woolf had us think about events

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that we may have lived through, comparing what we remembered of those events to what the current historical record has to say about them. Examples shared included artifacts, discussion about the assassination of President Kennedy, the Viet Nam War, and others. In each case, the group felt that the memory would only form a part of the historical record. Of course, this has resonance for RTHS because of the oral history work that we do. A framework for considering the relationship of memory to history can be based on work which categorizes memory as collective, group, or individual. And of course, if our perception of events changes over time, why can't perceptions of history?



With these key points as our own context, we then broke into smaller groups to consider three questions:

- 1. How do you balance what the evidence says with what people think they know?
- 2. Should a history of your community reflect existing beliefs about what was important, or ask new questions that reflect modern concerns?
- 3. To what degree should a community history be respectful of sensitivities even to the point of "sugar coating" episodes from the past, or omitting them?

Each group reported in turn; and what happened was a sort of consensus about some of the ethical dilemmas local historians face. A well-developed case in point is how the historians of Manotick have tended to treat the legacy of Moss Kent Dickinson, the founder of Manotick, as ably put forward by Bill Tupper.

We have no solutions, but a series of considerations that may serve to guide us in future. This is, according to Dr. Woolf, "the minefield where history and memory collide".

As RTHS moves forward in our work of documenting the history of the former Rideau Township, we will have lots to think about in our own practice. Thank you, Dr. Woolf, for a stimulating and thought provoking discussion. You have opened the door to an elevation of our discourse.

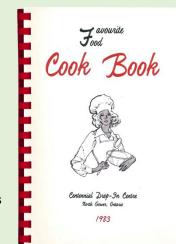
Myra McFarlane

Cookbook Creations

Easter Eggs

Ingredients

- 3 cups sugar
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup corn syrup
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2 stiffly beaten egg whites
- Coconuts and nuts to taste
- 1 lge bag chocolate chips
- 2 small bags butterscotch chips



Combine 1 cup sugar and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water, cook until mixture spins a thread. Add egg whites and beat until well mixed. In another pan combine 2 cups sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water and 1 cup corn syrup.

Cook until brittle when tested in cold water. Combine egg white mixture with syrup mixture and beat until thick. Add vanilla, coconut and nuts to taste. Form into eggs and let stand until cold. Melt butterscotch chips and chocolate chips together. Coat eggs with mixture. Let set until firm.

Athol Brose

Ingredients:

- 2 parts honey
- 1 part whiskey
- 6 parts cream

Mix honey and whiskey together, add cream, stir and put in wine glasses.

A good pick me up and lets you down gently.

Note: From the North Gower Favourite Food Cook Book, these two recipes are examples of the many local culinary features preserved among the records of Rideau Archives.



Note to RTHS Members: Beginning with our March speaker event, RTHS has discontinued the practice of preceding the formal presentation with a short business meeting. Accordingly, there are no Minutes included in the newsletter. However, beginning with the May newsletter, we will have a new feature, "President's Report" in which our RTHS president will provide an update on current Society activities.

Sign me up as a member of RTHS



Members of the Society enjoy:

- Monthly meetings featuring engaging presentations, followed by refreshments
- Group excursions to historical points of interest in Eastern ON
- Local books published by the Society, and a monthly newsletter
- Opportunities to participate and contribute as volunteers

For more information visit <u>https://rideautwphistory.org</u> and facebook.com/rideautownshiphistory.

Please **mail** this form with a cheque for membership dues payable to: Rideau Township Historical Society, Box 56, North Gower, ON, KOA 2TO, **OR** pay by **e**-transfer to <u>rideautwphistory@gmail.com</u> and email a scanned copy of the form to the same email address.

Name:	
Address:	
City & Postal Code:	
Telephone:	Email:
Date:	
Are you a new RTHS member?	Yes No
Individual Membership \$15	Life Membership \$100
Family Membership (2 adults & school-age children) \$20	
Donation \$50	Other Donation \$
ts for paid memberships will be issued when we are able to meet face-to-face but	

Receipts for paid memberships will be issued when we are able to meet face-to-face, but tax receipts for donations will be issued at the end of the year.

Thank you for supporting RTHS!

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