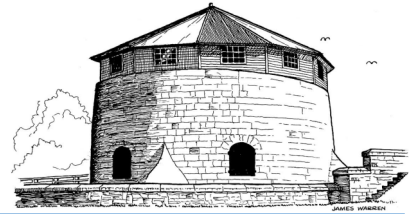


# Limelight

## Newsletter of the Kingston Historical Society

Kingston Ontario Canada



The Kingston Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.



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May 2020

KHS May 2020 Meeting

**Postponed**

Time TBA

Speaker to be rescheduled:

**Marc Seguin: The Lighthouses of Kingston: Guiding Ships through the Graveyard of Lake Ontario, 1828 to 1914**

Throughout the 19th century, Kingston was the most important shipping port on the Great Lakes and ships sailing to or from Lake Ontario had to navigate through some of the world's most dangerous waters, an area that became known as "the graveyard of Lake Ontario." Over the course of 85 years, more than 45 lighthouses were built on the Canadian side of eastern Lake Ontario. These aids to navigation contributed immeasurably to the prosperity of Kingston and to the economic development of Canada.

Marc Seguin brings his lifelong interest in history together with a passion for Canada's built heritage to this talk on the early lighthouses of Kingston and eastern Lake Ontario. Marc holds a degree in history from the University of Western Ontario and is a founding member of the lighthouse preservation organization "Save Our Lighthouses." He has authored two books focusing on Lake Ontario: *For Want of a Lighthouse: Guiding Ships through the Graveyard of Lake Ontario & The Cruise of The Breeze: The Journal and Life of a Victorian Soldier in Canada*. Marc lives on the shores of Wellers Bay in Prince Edward County with his wife and two sons.



### COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Regretfully, because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the commemorative service of 6 June is cancelled.

Please note that our slated speaker, Dr. Tim Cook, has agreed to be our guest speaker for 2021 should gatherings of more than 10 people be permitted.

## THE KINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Established 1893*

*LIMELIGHT is published nine times a year, September to May.*

*Please forward submissions to the Editor [betty.andrews@gmail.com](mailto:betty.andrews@gmail.com)*

*Reprinting of articles from the Limelight must be accompanied by an acknowledgement of the Society, the issue and date. Photo credits and by-lines must be retained.*

The Kingston Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the financial support of Kingston Association of Museums, Art Galleries and Historic Sites and the City of Kingston.



*The KHS gratefully acknowledges the support of its sponsors in producing Limelight.*

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### *President's Message*

*by Vincent Durant*

Our May meeting, along with the June 6<sup>th</sup> graveside ceremony honouring Sir John A. Macdonald, has had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In lieu of the June 6<sup>th</sup> ceremony, we have asked John Grenville to reprise a talk he gave for the Kingston Historical Society in 1991, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sir John A.'s death. At the time, John was Director of Bellevue House National Historic Site, the former residence of Sir John A.



In face of the need for social distancing, members of the KHS council and the Murney Tower Museum committee have been holding "virtual meetings" for the good of the Society. We are in the process of hiring two summer interns. They will do much-needed work inventorying and cataloguing the museum's artifacts and helping with programming for the coming year. The museum director Tabitha Renaud and manager Simge Erdogan have done a fine job in overseeing all of this. Meanwhile, Paul Van Nest has been busy indexing past issues of Limelight; the indexes will be a wonderful aid for both amateur and professional researchers. It is a job that requires dedication and serious attention to detail, as well as many hours of work! Paul is calling upon the expertise of current and past librarians Jo Stanbridge and Bruce Cossar as well as former Limelight editor John Fielding and former archivist John Whiteley. The work-in-progress may be accessed on the Limelight section of the KHS website.

As noted elsewhere in this issue of Limelight, the Ontario History collection is now online, and worth a visit. Also check out a new Limelight column, *Objects in Focus*, describing artefacts from the [Murney Tower](#) collection; the plan is to feature one object each issue. If you would like to see more of this type of feature, either in the pages of Limelight or on the Society's website, please let us know.

We are hoping to resume our monthly meetings in September. As always, please stay in touch through the Society's website and Facebook pages (links below). Best wishes for a pleasant summer.

### **Web addresses:**

KHS website: <https://www.kingstonhistoricalsociety.ca/>

KHS Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KHSOntario/>

It is noted with regret the death of Neita Pike 2 April 2020, the wife of Jack Pike and a long time member of the Kingston Historical Society.

## ***From the Mailbag***

**Flora Jardine writes:** I enjoyed the article in your January 2020 issue by Vincent Duran – "Eliza and Sir John A." John A. Macdonald was on my mind because of the controversy here in Victoria about his statue, which was taken down secretly at dawn one day in 2018 (like a prisoner going to the gallows?) after a secret decision by City Council that caused so much local dispute. Apparently the statue's due to go back up some time soon-ish, although with a plaque that intends to continue his symbolic decapitation. It made me wonder what Sir John A. himself would think if he could witness this controversy, controversy being something he was familiar with and well-equipped to weather. I imagined him writing a letter to Canadians about it, which I thought would be fun to share with you: <https://florajardine.blogspot.com/2020/02/what-john-macdonald-thinks-about.html>

**Paul Dumbleton writes:** I don't know the year but it was a few years ago. I was wondering if you had any pictures of Birds corner store on the corner of North and Bagot street in Kingston. It was my grandfather and grandmother's place. I would cherish any photos you could find. paulanddiane00@gmail.com

### **Treasured Memories**

#### **Book Launch**

**Date To Be Announced**

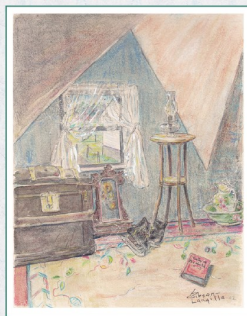
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## **The Second Sleep: Robert Harris (Random House Canada)**

***A Book Review by Peter Gower***

I am guessing that many KHS members enjoy historical fiction, either a story set, at least reasonably accurately, in the past, or a story using historical characters and settings with fictionalized actions. Robert Harris has proved himself to be a master of the latter, writing on, amongst other topics, Munich, Pompeii and Bletchley Park (Enigma).

"The Second Sleep" seems to fit into this genre. It is 1568 and in South West England Father Fairfax is travelling across Wessex in foul weather, hoping to reach Addicott St. George before curfew time – or face jail. He passes corpses hanging on gallows, hanged for less than breaking curfew. His bishop has sent him from Exeter to bury Father Thomas Lacey who has recently met a sudden death.

He stays at Lacey's lodgings, and sleeps in his study – the coffin is in the bedroom. He starts inspecting and reading the many books, and in the flickering candlelight realizes that they are a strange collection. The reader has to agree, especially when Fairfax reads about plastic.

Now that we have lived through a pandemic, Harris' most recent (2019) novel becomes very relevant.



Every year on 6<sup>th</sup> June the Kingston Historical Society reflects on Sir John A. Macdonald, the architect of Confederation and Kingston's beloved son. In 1991, a hundred years after Macdonald's death, the Historical Society remembered Canada's first prime minister at a special gravesite ceremony at which the Prime Minister was the guest speaker, and by publishing a book of the memorial speeches presented at the annual services. At the time, I was Area Superintendent for Parks Canada with responsibility for Bellevue House National Historic Site of Canada, one-time residence of Macdonald and the historic site chosen by the federal government to commemorate Canada's first prime minister. We marked the centenary of Macdonald's death with some special programs and an exhibit. The research for the exhibit provided me with the basis for a presentation to the Society in 1991 – "In Memoriam: Kingston Mourns Sir John A. Macdonald."<sup>1</sup>

I was fortunate to be able to use a letter that was written by Jim Stewart, a 22-year old from New Glasgow (Nova Scotia) who was attending the Belleville Business College and who came to Kingston to witness "so great an occasion." Much of what we know about the day comes from photographs and newspaper reports. Personal remembrances as recorded in letters and diaries are much less likely to have survived. Jim's letter to his friend Mary McKaracher in New Glasgow describes his time in Kingston in detail, from his arrival on the train on 11 June in the early morning, his entry at 4:15 a.m. into City Hall where Macdonald was lying in state and the procession to Cataraqui Cemetery and burial later that afternoon.

Jim's description of Macdonald lying in state in what is now Memorial Hall adds to the photograph of Macdonald's coffin, guarded by six RMC cadets, all under a "canopy of crepe." However, the photograph doesn't capture the emotion being felt by those in the room – "You can never imagine anything like the way that room was fixed up. It would fairly make one cry . . . I tell you Mary it would make anyone lonesome to stand (for we had ½ hour) and look at, he who did so much for Canada, and think that you were there beside him in death." Jim closes out his letter to Mary – "I have given you all principle points. I wish you had been there for I know you would like to see the loving, brotherly feeling that was so widely shown that memorable and long to be remembered day. Hoping you have a slight idea of how it was."<sup>2</sup>

*After his time at the business college, Jim returned to New Glasgow where he started a small brokerage firm. Mary, who was two years younger than Jim, lived with her widowed mother and spinster sisters, and worked as a schoolteacher. Neither Jim, nor his friend Mary ever married. Jim died in 1947 but fortunately the letterbook from his time in Belleville survives and gives us a glimpse of what happened on such an important day for Kingston in June 1891.*

**Lying in state in City Hall (now Memorial Hall), the casket was placed under a canopy of black cashmere decorated with ostrich feathers at the four corners and peak. Around the open casket was the guard of six RMC cadets. (RMC, negative M-133, X-102A)**



<sup>1</sup> *Historic Kingston*, vol. 40 (January 1992), pp. 93-105.

<sup>2</sup> Preserved in Jim Stewart's letterbook purchased by the Public Archives of Nova Scotia in 1987 (MG1, vol. 1311A, pp. 180-191) and published in *Archivaria*, vol. 31 (Winter 1990-91), pp. 157-162.

Soldiers holding the bridles awaiting the placement of Macdonald's casket into the hearse, in front of City Hall with the K&P train station in the background. (*Dominion Illustrated*, 20 June 1891, p. 596)

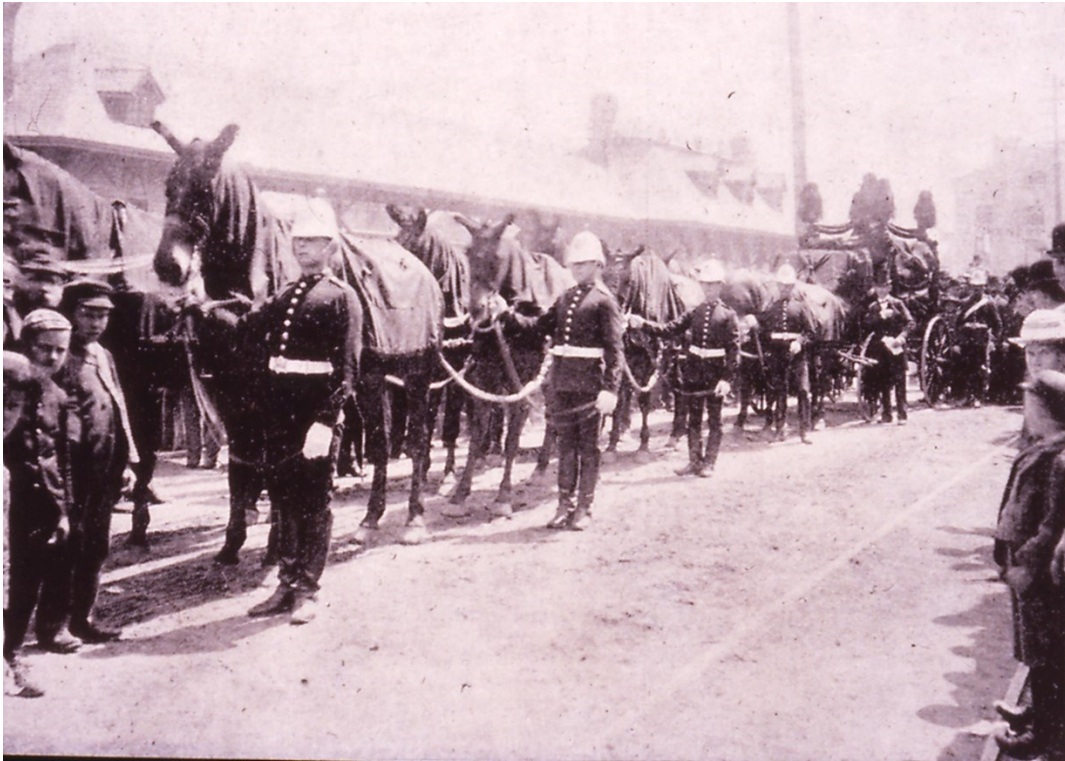
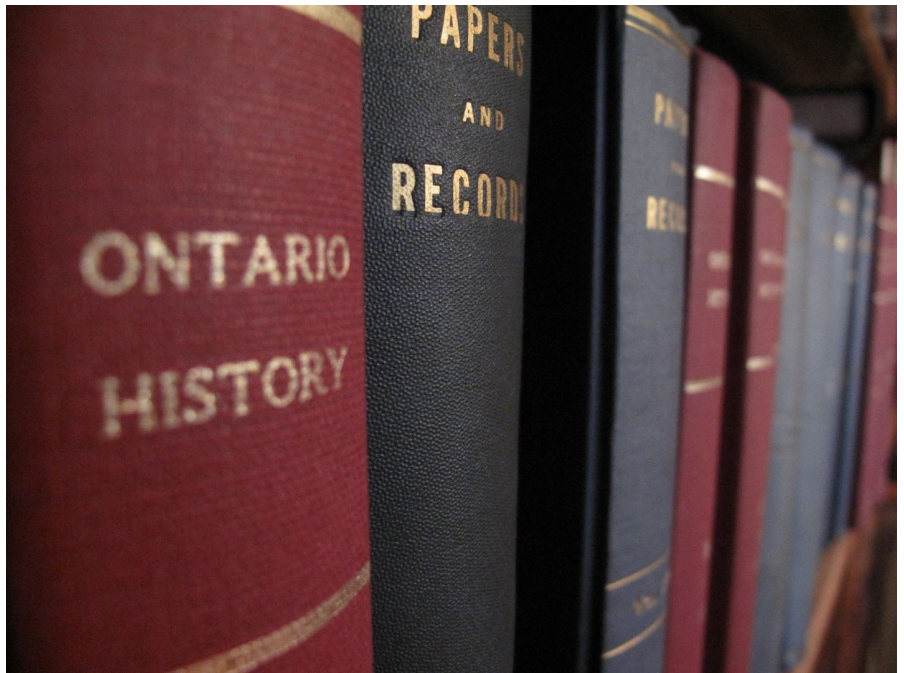


Photo by Henry Henderson of the funeral procession moving up Princess Street to Cataragui Cemetery, likely from his second-floor studio on Princess Street, between Wellington and King Street East. (Collection John Grenville)



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The Ontario Historical Society (OHS) is excited to announce that, for the first time, the entire run of over **120 years of the Society's *Ontario History* journal is now available online.** The OHS has digitized the full text of over 2,000 articles and book reviews,



making the archive the largest single collection of stories about Ontario's history.

Please visit the *Ontario History* digital archive at

<https://ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/back-issues/>

***Ontario History on Line***

The Ontario Historical Society has announced the posting on line of **13 issues of *Papers and Records* covering 1899 through 1915.** These papers cover a variety of rare documentary sources made in presentations to the Society. In 1907 the Society met in Kingston and this issue of *Ontario History* will be of particular interest to local historians. These first 13 issues may be viewed at [ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/back-issues/](https://ontariohistoricalsociety.ca/back-issues/)

**Suggested isolation-time reading:**

***There is a standard mailing charge of \$6 per volume.***

***To purchase, contact the KHS at. [kingstonhs@gmail.ca](mailto:kingstonhs@gmail.ca)***

Margaret Angus Paper by Sarah Morgan (on line)

Favourite Son? John A. Macdonald and the Voters of Kingston 1841-1891 by Ged Martin. \$35

A Troublesome Berth: The Journal of First Lieutenant Charles Allan Parker, Royal Marines: The Canada Years 1838-1840 edited by Robert J. Andrews & Rosalyn Parker Art. \$40

Illustrated Guide to Monuments, Memorials & Markers in the Kingston Area \$25

The City of Kingston Portrait Collection – Historical Sketches & Portrait Views by Marjorie Simmons. \$30

Kingston Volunteers: The Thing to Do by Peter Gower \$25

Sideshow or Main Event: Putting the War of 1812 into Regional Contexts (conference proceedings) Various authors. \$20

**Murney Tower**  
**Operated by**  
**the Kingston Historical Society**



**NEW MURNEY TOWER MUSEUM TEAM**

We would like to introduce to you the new Murney Tower Museum team: Tabitha Renaud started as Director in August 2019, and I, Simge Erdogan, took over the position of Manager and Curator in March 2020. Tabitha has a Ph.D. in History and works at Queen's University and I am a Ph.D. candidate in Cultural Studies at Queen's University. Because of the current COVID-19 situation, we are working remotely from our homes on several exciting projects that will not only ensure the continuation of the Tower's ongoing work in the changing local and global environment, but also the achievement of its long-term goals and objectives.



Throughout the summer and fall, you can see us working closely towards expanding the Tower's professional capacity by completing collections management and digitization, developing new digital tools and strategies, creating a new programming package for current and future years and undertaking extra initiatives such as developing a new strategic plan for 2020-2025. We do not

know whether the site will be open for the 2020 summer season or not, but we are closely monitoring the ongoing COVID-19 situation and taking guidance from the local, provincial and federal health and public safety agencies. We are looking forward to working with all of you and getting to know everyone a little bit better. Stay tuned for our work and updates.

**Murney Tower Museum Collections: Objects in Focus**

**Stereoscope, mid-19<sup>th</sup> century**

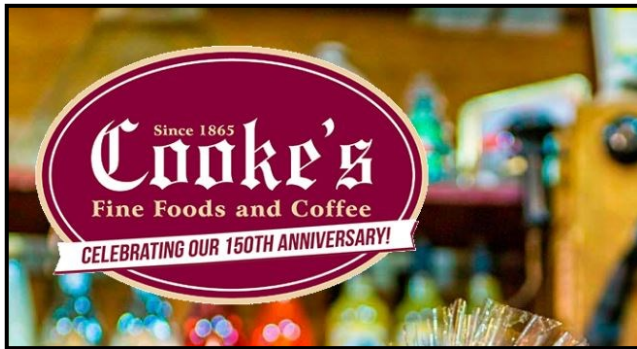


Here is a stereoscope from the Murney Tower Museum collection. A stereoscope is an optical instrument through which two pictures of the same object, taken from slightly different points of view are viewed. Stereoscopes create an illusion of a single three-dimensional image.

Stereoscopes were first made in the 1850s and became very popular between 1870 and the 1920s. They were introduced to the general public at the Great Exhibition held in the Crystal Palace in London in 1851.







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