



# THE UPDATE

York Pioneer and Historical Society

PO Box 186, 260 Adelaide Street East, Toronto, ON M5A 1N1

[www.yorkpioneers.com](http://www.yorkpioneers.com)  
[yorkpioneers@gmail.com](mailto:yorkpioneers@gmail.com)

## The 2024 YPHS Winter Social!

**Date:** Saturday February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
**Time:** 1:00 PM to 3:30 PM  
**Location:** "Friends House"  
 60 Lowther Avenue, M5R 1C7  
**Speaker:** Adam Bunch, award winning author of *The Toronto Book of Love*  
**Ticket Price:** \$25.00. Purchase online at: [www.yorkpioneers.com](http://www.yorkpioneers.com)

Adam Bunch is author of *The Toronto Book of the Dead*, creator of the Toronto Dreams Project host and co-creator of the *Canadiana*, and the contributor to *Spacing*. His work popularizing Canadian history was recognized with the 2023 Governor General's Award for Popular Media – the Pierre Berton Award.

A light lunch is provided and book sale will be held. For more information, contact us at [yorkpioneers@gmail.com](mailto:yorkpioneers@gmail.com), or Kay at (647) 633-3687.

## The 2024 Annual General Meeting

Hold the Date: Sunday March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024

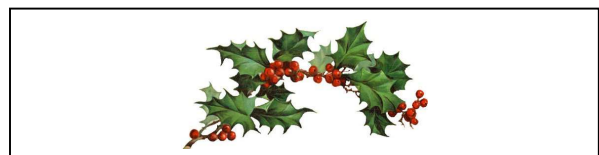
For the second year in a row the York Pioneers plan to hold an in-person AGM. The date is set for Sunday, March 24, 2024. Details of location, time and the final Board member slate will come in the new year. We hope you will plan to attend, hear more about 2023 and engage in planning for 2024!



*Above: Scadding Cabin recovering from repairs, October 2023. Photo: Brent Cunningham*

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## Report on Scadding Cabin repairs

When we last reported in the August edition of The Update, we had made two key projections – one that was right, the other wrong, but in aggregate, we managed to reach a satisfactory outcome, particularly with the help of strong support from the local community.

We reported in August that the Board had allocated \$30,000 towards anticipated repair costs and that at the time of writing, we had accumulated just north of \$8,000 in contributions from membership. However, the anticipated costs turned out to be dead wrong: in fact, when all engineering work required to obtain a construction permit was complete and an experienced contractor was brought on board, the final costs of repairs including taxes turned out to be \$72,500. The result of doing nothing would have doomed our beloved Cabin to permanent loss, contradicting our mandate as protectors and guardians of Toronto’s oldest homestead. Therefore, your Board made the easy decision to proceed as planned, while leaving the difficult problem of how to replenish our repair fund to a later time. This was when the local community stepped-up.

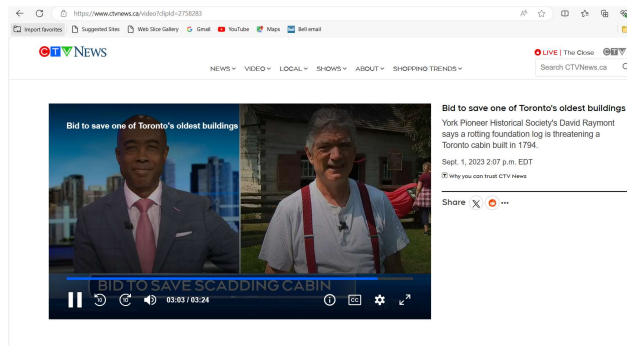
In August, the CNE again brought curious visitors to the Cabin and they could see with their own eyes the repair activities which naturally becomes a conversation starter with volunteers. Visitors felt compelled to contribute whatever cash they had on hand. But that was just the beginning.

As fate would have it, an article would appear in The Toronto History Weekly composed by local historian Adam Bunch. Adam had no connection to our Society: he took it upon himself to craft his own appeal; you can read that article here:

<https://torontohistory.substack.com/p/torontos-oldest-building-is-in-trouble>

Within hours, similar articles appeared on local news sites, quickly catching the attention of CTV News, who reached out to us, offering to do a lunchtime news segment. For those who missed it, that segment can be found here:

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=2758283>



The CTV report was streamed and broadcast the day before the CNE Air Show which historically draws peak foot traffic to the Cabin. That report naturally attracted more curious visitors opening their wallets to help out with whatever they could. Every one of these personal contributions towards our repair fund was so appreciated. We were still short of our funding requirement, but more on that in a moment.



*Above: Volunteers David Raymont and Kayoko Smith prepare footage for CTV News.  
Photos: Brent Cunningham*





**Top left and right:** CTV News interviews visitors to the Scadding Cabin for their report.  
**Bottom:** Volunteer David Raymont is interviewed by CTV News for their lunchtime report.  
**Photos:** Brent Cunningham.



It was at this point that our other prediction did come to fruition. Upon the closure of the CNE, we got down to the urgent work of replacing the rotting log by end of October – or in the parlance of our annual rhythm: before the last of the Ghost Walks. This meant that we would almost certainly have to sacrifice a portion of our participation in this year’s Ghost Walks (more on that in the next article). As soon as the CNE was over, we emptied out the museum artifacts and prepared our beloved patient for the daunting and delicate task of major reconstructive surgery. In addition to replacing the rotting log, repairs included applying an improved mortar to weatherproof the stonework on the concrete pad supporting the Cabin and an up-to-date chinking to replace the concrete and wire which was put in place in the 1980s, when the Cabin last had extensive repair to its walls. All of this work makes the Cabin more stable and better able to stand up to winter snows and summer heat, insects and rot.



*Above: Scadding Cabin interior as seen during repairs, October 2023. Photo: Kayoko Smith.*

Any parent who has dropped off a child with the surgeon knows the anxiety and apprehension of an uncertain outcome where the risks are high. But that parent also knows that the surgery is essential to restoring the long-term health of their child. In the same way, the York Pioneers experienced that same anxiety seeing the Cabin supported by bracing but reassured by the fact that we had done our homework and had the best experts in the business restoring the Cabin to its original charm and character. These repairs restore not only its functionality and appearance, but also honour its history and legacy while enhancing its future for the next 229 years.



**Top:** Scadding Cabin exterior as seen during repairs, October 2023. **Bottom:** Bruno DiSalvo of J. D. Strachan Construction applying epoxy to limit rot before installing the new log. **Photos:** David Rayment.



It was at this point that our friends and allies at Exhibition Place, which owns the land upon which the Cabin sits heard about the Cabin's maintenance needs and reached out to the Board. President Angus Palmer, and Scadding Cabin Committee Chair Kayoko Smith met with members of Exhibition Place's Capital Team in early September and explained our plans for Cabin repairs. In reply, Exhibition Place stated that it recognized the importance of the Scadding Cabin as a historical treasure that has drawn visitors since the very first Exhibition in 1879. It appreciated the efforts of the York Pioneers to commit to these repairs and recognized the outpouring of community support and shared everyone's beliefs in the importance of carrying out this preservation work. With that, Exhibition Place *very unexpectedly* generously offered to provide more than \$63,000 to our repair fund as their contribution to our collective efforts. A more detailed report on maintenance expenses will be available to members at the Annual General Meeting in the spring; what we can say at the time of this publication is that total donations to the restoration fund reached approximately \$23,500 and that any surpluses will remain in the restoration fund as an installment on future repair projects. We will expand on these plans in the spring edition of The Update.

In conclusion, this log replacement has been the most ambitious repair effort since the 1980s, and the 2013 roof replacement. The job is complete; on-time, and on quoted budget. The York Pioneers thank all donors, volunteers, publicists and media, visitors, and Exhibition Place for their collective care and concern in making this effort a success.



*Above:* Volunteer David Raymont with CTV News. *Photo:* Brent Cunningham

## Scadding Cabin Restoration Fund Donors

The York Pioneer & Historical Society wishes to recognize the following donors to the Scadding Cabin Restoration Fund:

Angus D. Palmer - \$500	Ann Lambert - \$70	Kayoko Smith \$200
Brent Cunningham - \$500	Mark Winter - \$35	Anonymous - \$25
Glenn Bonnetta - \$125	Gail Skikevitch - \$125	Marlies Lis - \$300
Madeleine McDowell - \$50	Joy Cohnstaedt - \$250	Regina Virgo - \$100
E. Sewell Russell - \$200	Nancy Conn - \$100	Lane Harrison - \$20
Joyce Crook - \$250	David Crombie \$75	Robert Kee - \$300
Ann Carter - \$250	Kate Fitzpatrick - \$20	Matthew Campbell - \$100
Hilary J. Dawson - \$150	Margaret Zeidler - \$100	Darcy Williams - \$150
Paul Litt - \$500	G. Michael Coulter - \$25	Leslie Francombe - \$25
Carl E. Benn - \$300	Jane Davidson Neville - \$45	Mariana Zonena - \$50
Michael Fitzpatrick - \$100	John Leeson - \$100	York Heritage - \$250
Linda Cobon - \$100	Joanne Roberts - \$25	John Deviney - \$30
Mary McFall - \$300	Michael Lester - \$25	David C. Reed - \$500
John Webb - \$250	Sean Dewart - \$250	Jules Arntz-Gray - \$20
Jeanine Avigdor - \$300	Andrew Hope - \$100	Laura Scadding - \$25
Dr. John Carter - \$25	Michael Regalie - \$100	Adam Waiser - \$100
Helen Hatton - \$500	Kevin Hong - \$25	Virgina Van Vliet - \$75
George Duncan - \$100	Matthew Price - \$50	John Mark Robertson - \$20
Kathy McKenzie - \$35	Kenneth Johnston - \$10	Chris Edgar - \$500
John Petrosoniak - \$250	Tim Darne - \$10.00	Pat Higgins - \$50
Ruth E. Manders - \$50	Martha Smart - \$100	Anonymous - \$100
Anonymous - \$100	Brendan Pynenburg - \$30	Simon Tunstall - \$25
Marilyn Elizabeth Oates Horwood - \$500	Michael DeMonte - \$100	Robert Chapman - \$30
Beth Alaksa - \$250	Heidi Janson - \$55	Charlaine Scadding - \$1,000
Stephanie Thomas - \$100	David Stephenson - \$100	David R. Scadding - \$5,000
Stephanie Lever - \$75	Walter Lis - \$30	Jouni Toivonen - \$100
John Marshall - \$100	Pas A. Taylor - \$100	Patricia Newland - \$1,500
Bob Roden - \$100	Mary Zarowsky - \$10	Katherine L. Williams - \$35.00
James Young - \$50	Michael Andrusiak - \$100	Nancy Smail - \$30
Joel Espedido - \$50	Sarah K. Clarke - \$100	John McIntyre - \$35.00
Suzanne B. Lewis - \$250	Margaret Burford - \$75	Charlene Mychaluk - \$100
Beatriz McCowan - \$300	Lyndsey Adam - \$25	Portia Reed - \$50
Thomas Turk - \$35	Beth Alaksa - \$10	Robert Rozumek - \$100
Mary Louise Ashbourne - \$100	Cindy Ewins - \$10	Robert Singerling - \$50
Judith Ann Watkins - \$50	James McGeachie - \$20	Denise Oliver - \$100
Nancy Cunningham - \$200	Frances Main - \$50	Katheleen Horiszny - \$200
Carol McArthur - \$100	Frances Main (2nd donation) \$50	Ruth and Alex Taylor - \$100
Russell D. Smith - \$250	Doris Davison - \$75	Judith Robinson-Snider - \$20
Michael Fitzgerald - \$75	David Fuller - \$25	Paul Willoughby - \$125
Rolande Smith - \$100	Alexander Laney - \$50	William McFall - \$200
John Stanley - \$125	Samantha Grasso - \$100	Stephanie Kampf - \$50
Brook Jarvis - \$25	Yasmin Piracha - \$5	Albert Bujanovs - \$50
William McFall - \$250	Cindy Ewins \$10	William K. Smith - \$1,000
		Peter McHale - \$100



## CNE Ghost Walks 2023 – One and Done...

If 2022 represented a return to the (para?)-normal, then 2023 represented a spooky shortage...

Steve Collie of After Dark Tours returned to the CNE to spook, entertain, and educate record numbers of visitors over the course of four October weekends this year. The popular 2-hour haunted tour ran every Friday night until Hallowe'en, covering some 200-years of the park's history, beginning at the Princes' Gates and ending at the Scadding Cabin. But this year there was a notable absence: the Scadding Cabin was missing-in-action for three of the four Fridays!

The spooky shortage is quite easy to explain with absolutely nothing paranormal about it: as outlined in the previous article, the most intense phase of the Scadding Cabin repairs occurred in the early weeks of October, with Cabin grounds fenced-off by the construction crews, preventing the public or volunteers from getting close for their own health and safety. However, since the repairs were completed on-schedule, it allowed the York Pioneers's volunteers just one opportunity – the very last Friday of October – to participate in the 2023 Ghost Walk. And those visitors who procrastinated until that last Friday were not disappointed!



*Above:* The awkward state of the Scadding Cabin just before sundown in the hours leading to the only Ghost Walk of 2023. *Photo:* Brent Cunningham.

Volunteers Diane Reid, Kayoko Smith, and Brent Cunningham improvised on the Mrs. Scadding schtick this year: there were no refreshments or walks through the Cabin this year, as the museum had been dismantled to accommodate the repairs. But visitors were treated to an unlimited supply of popular Hallowe'en chocolates and post-tour Q&A.

Nevertheless, the Scadding Cabin prepared to spook and thrill all visitors in 2024 and beyond! You'll be enamoured by its haunted glory and captivated by its mystery...



***Above:** An eerie Scadding Cabin shortly after sundown in the hours leading to the only Ghost Walk of 2023. **Photo:** Brent Cunningham.*





*Above: Volunteers Diane Reid and Kayoko Smith admire the repairs in an empty Scadding Cabin while preparing for the Ghost Walk. Photos: Brent Cunningham*



*Above: Volunteer Diane Reid rehearses her Mrs. Scadding routine while Kayoko Smith prepares treats for the coming guests. Photos: Brent Cunningham*



## THE WOODBRIDGE FALL FAIR 2023

In 1847, the first running of the Woodbridge Fall Fair was organized by John Gamble, the first Mayor of Vaughan Township. He was a parliamentary spokesman for Ontario farmers, millers, and merchants, believing the agricultural sector and its workers to be at the heart of a community's success.

True to these values, the Woodbridge Fall Fair was a place where farmers, residents, and business owners could enjoy the harvest time before winter. Fairs were, and still are, a central place for the community to come together and celebrate the joy of autumn, community agriculture, and history.

The 176th Annual Woodbridge Fall Fair was held on a cold weekend. The sun was shining for some time Saturday, but the wind drove a cold chill into the spectators. The crowds were busy for the first day. The York Pioneers gave small pumpkins to children as free take aways.

The live demonstration of rope making was entertaining. The pioneer talks on old tools and everyday life and times of pioneers were well received with many discussions and sharing of stories.



*Above: Volunteer Fred Robbins demonstrates rope making. Photo: Lionel Collier.*

The City of Vaughan donated a large marquee tent/canopy for the booth site. The Fair provided tables and chairs. The traditional Giant Vegetable Growers (GVG) which had many large pumpkins with a few over 1300 lbs. There was live sheep shearing was just across from the York Pioneer table and there was pioneer cooking just beside our booth.

The Fair hours were reduced on Sunday due to the weather, but the holiday Monday was busy again and the last of the pumpkins were distributed to the children watching.

Thank you to the Woodbridge Fair and Vaughan Township for including us and to Lionel Collier, Diane Reid and Fred Robbins who volunteered their time on Thanksgiving weekend.



*Above: Tools from pioneer life. Photo: Diane Reid.*



IN MEMORIAM

**Dorothy Duncan**, served on the Board of Directors of the York Pioneer and Historical Society for several years. As a student of local history, she also devoted her time to other local organizations including the Ontario Historical Society and Black Creek Pioneer Village. Dorothy passed away on August 29, 2023:

<https://obituaries.thestar.com/obituary/dorothy-duncan-1088773486>

**Jean Kell**, joined the York Pioneers in 2001 and became a life member in 2009. Jean passed away September 10, 2023:

<https://obituaries.thestar.com/obituary/jean-kell-1088812041>

**Geoffrey Geduld**, also a student of local history who in addition to the York Pioneers devoted his time to the North York Historical Society, the Ontario Historical Society, and Toronto Historical Association, passed away October 28, 2023:

<https://www.legacy.com/ca/obituaries/theglobeandmail/name/geoffrey-geduld-obituary?id=53508044>

The York Pioneer & Historical Society offers our condolences to the families of Dorothy, Jean, and Geoffrey.

## THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE 2024

The 2024 Nominating Committee members:

- From the 2023 Board: Beth Alaksa, Brent Cunningham, Angus Palmer
- From the 2023 general membership: David Raymont, Robert Horwood

The Nominating Committee is busy with the task of assembling the slate of candidates for the 2024 Board of Directors. The committee is committed to finding and nominating the most qualified and dedicated candidates. If you are passionate about local history and looking to expand your horizons, the Nominating Committee is interested in hearing from you.

Any member of the organization in good standing is free to put his or her own name forward and to stand for election to any Board position.

If you wish to stand for a Board position or wish to recommend a candidate to the Nominating Committee, please reach out to any member of the Nominating Committee or send your recommendation to [yorkpioneers@gmail.com](mailto:yorkpioneers@gmail.com).



**RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY**

The 2023 Volume of “The York Pioneer” is about to go to press shortly after the Board submits the 2022 Financial report and the 2022 member-related lists.

Ensure that you receive your copy and secure your vote by renewing your membership in the York Pioneer and Historical Society today

Individual membership is an affordable **\$30.00**, with students eligible to join for only **\$20.00**. Or sign-up your family for just **\$50.00**.

Send us your cheque payable to:

The York Pioneer and Historical Society  
PO Box 186  
260 Adelaide Street East  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5A 1N1

or, visit our website at [www.yorkpioneers.com](http://www.yorkpioneers.com), and pay by credit card or PayPal.

Don't miss your chance - renew your membership **today!**

The YPHS gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism, and Culture Industries.



**BEST WISHES IN 2024 FROM  
THE YORK PIONEER & HISTORICAL SOCIETY!!!**