



THE UPDATE

York Pioneer and Historical Society

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Doors Open 2024 – Unfold Hidden Histories at Scadding Cabin this spring!

Dates: Saturday May 25, 2024
Sunday May 26, 2024
Time: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., both days

The Scadding Cabin is accepting volunteers for this year’s Doors Open Toronto.

This year’s theme is ‘Hidden Histories.’

Do you know a little piece of the Hidden History of the York Pioneers or the Scadding Cabin?

David Raymont shares a captivating tale – one that intertwines the past with the present. What secrets lie within the timeworn walls of the cabin? Did it harbour intrigue during the 1837 raid on Toronto by Peter Matthews? And did American soldiers, in the throes of war, use this very cabin as a guardhouse in 1813, scanning the horizon for militia and redcoats from Kingston?

Interested volunteers are asked to contact Kayoko Smith at yorkpioneers@gmail.com to make arrangements.

Volunteers are encouraged to bring their cell phones and cameras, and to share photos and memories of their volunteer experience! And above all, share your Hidden History stories with David Raymont at yorkpioneers@gmail.com.



*Above: Montgomery’s Inn, venue for the 2023 AGM.
Photo: Bob Krawczyk, Architectural Conservancy Ontario*

155th ANNIVERSARY OF THE YORK PIONEER ASSOCIATION

April 17, 2024 at the St. Louis Bar and Grill
92 King Street East at 6:30 pm.
Contact Diane Reid at dhreid65@gmail.com

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REPORT FROM THE 2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Above: Re-Elected President Angus Palmer chairs the 2024 AGM. *Photo:* Adene Kuchera

As the sun cast its golden glow upon the historic walls of Montgomery's Inn, members of the York Pioneer and Historical Society gathered once again for their annual general meeting. It was a momentous occasion—the second consecutive year that our cherished assembly took place within these venerable halls since the pandemic lockdowns disrupted our routines. The weather, too, seemed to conspire in our favour, offering a gentle breeze and clear skies—a fitting backdrop for the day's deliberations. As we settled into our seats, the air buzzed with anticipation. There was much to discuss on the agenda: preservation efforts, community outreach, and the timeless stories etched into the very beams of this revered inn. With masks off and hearts open, we embarked on a journey that bridged the past and the present, honoring our heritage while embracing the promise of renewal.

President Angus Palmer opened with the Land Acknowledgement, motions to approve the Minutes of the 2023 AGM, along with the reports from the President and Committee



Above: Past-President Paul Litt acted as Pro-Tem Chair for the AGM. *Photo:* Adene Kuchera

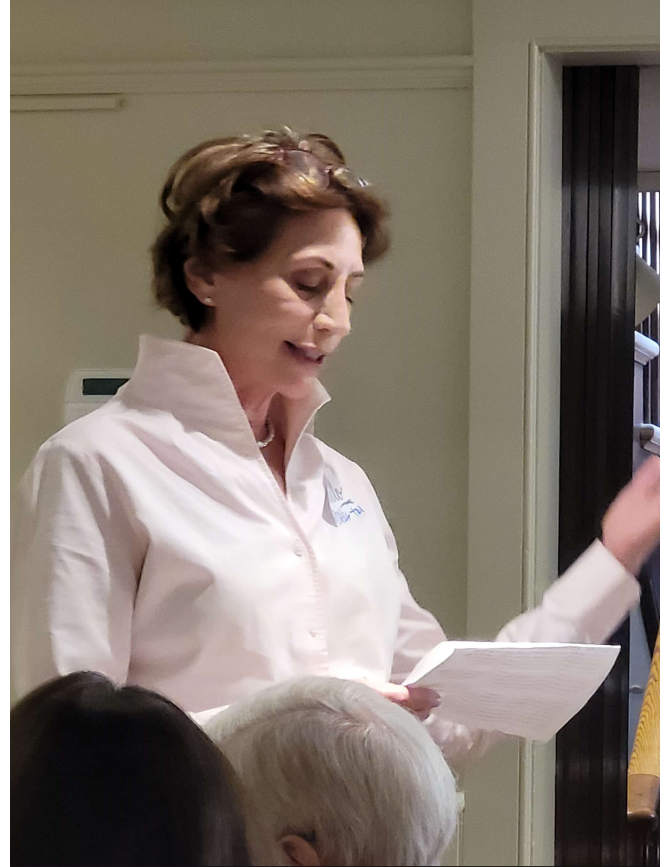
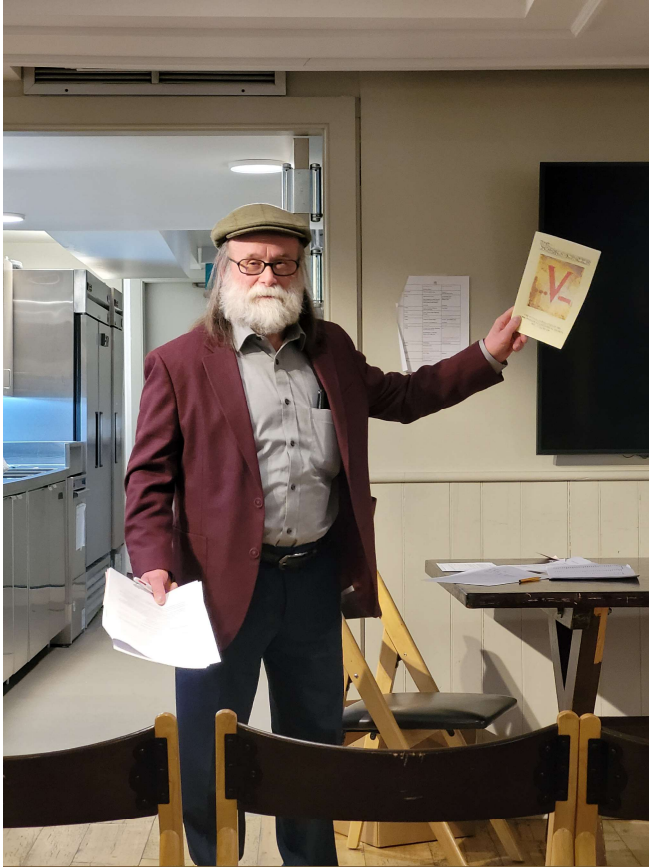
Chairs, with the latter being adopted *en bloc*. The financial statements for November 1, 2022 to October 31, 2023 were **NOT** presented at the AGM: consequently, your Board promised at the AGM to deliver the financial statements to all Members when completed.

While the usual business of appointing our accounting firm (Chapman and Co) for the incoming year was approved, three debated motions were presented and voted upon.

The first motion was the Statement of Responsibility which affirms your Board of Directors stewardship over "all acts, contracts, bylaws, proceedings, appointments, and payments enacted" on behalf of the membership. The motion was adopted unanimously.

The second motion was to accept the new draft by-laws written to bring the York Pioneer & Historical Society's by-laws into compliance with the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act ahead of the October 19, 2024 proclamation of the updated Act. Following discussion that identified minor corrections to be made to the text of the draft, this motion too was adopted with 28 in favour and 0 opposed.

The third motion was the proposal to separate the Annual Report/Previous Year in Review completely from the York Pioneer Journal. Both sides of this debate presented factual and impassioned reasons for and against the proposal which went to a secret ballot. The motion was defeated by the Membership with 7 for, 23 against, and 2 abstentions. The status quo held firm.



Above: Editorial Chair Bruce McCowan (left) and Past-President Audrey Fox (right) debate the York Pioneer Journal motion. Photos: Adene Kuchera.

Finally, the Membership endorsed the slate of candidates for the incoming 2024 Board of Directors as presented by the Nominating Committee. The York Pioneers welcome newly elected Board members: Jennifer Horwood, Treasurer; Robert Horwood, Recording Secretary; Bob Georgiou, Corresponding Secretary; Marilyn Horwood, Membership; Liam Peppiatt, CNEA Representative, Sebastian Aguanno and Bob Murphy as Members at Large. President Angus Palmer thanked the retiring members of the 2023 Board with special recognition of Cindy Ewins for her many years of faithful, tenacious service as Treasurer.

As we turn our gaze to 2024, we heed President Angus Palmer's letter (see Page 5) as a compass pointing toward preservation, community, and renewal. With the right mix of experience and ambition, our incoming Board stands ready to honour our heritage while embracing the winds of change.



Your incoming 2024 Board of Directors. Front Row, left-to-right: Bruce McCowan, Editorial Chair; Beth Alaksa, Programme; Robert Horwood, Recording Secretary; Jennifer Horwood, Treasurer; Marilyn Horwood, Membership; Bob Murphy, Member-At-Large; Erin Baxter, Archivist; Kayoko Smith, Scadding Cabin Chair; Sebastian Aguanno, Member-At-Large. Back Row, left-to-right: Bob Georgiou, Corresponding Secretary; Angus Palmer, President; Brent Cunningham, Vice-President and Publicity Chair; Glenn Bonnetta, YPHS Representative on the Board of the Sharon Temple. Absent: Fred Robbins, Past-President; Liam Peppiatt, CNE Association Representative. Photo: Audrey Fox.



Left: Life member Ethan Fox, at the tender age of 3, and Patricia Robertson, our esteemed 93-year-old life member, embody the very essence of humanity within the York Pioneer & Historical Society. Their presence enriches our community, transcending mere numbers and years. Let us celebrate their wisdom, curiosity, and unwavering commitment, for they remind us that the best of humanity knows no boundaries of age. Photo: Audrey Fox.

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

I'd like to start by thanking the membership for re-electing me as President at the Annual General Meeting which was held on March 24, 2024. I am truly grateful for your support.

I want at the outset to recognize our outgoing Board members – Matthew Campbell, Lionel Collier, Alexander Coomes, Cindy Ewins, and Edward Fenner. It's not easy being a volunteer Board member. Our world today is a busy one, and while being a volunteer is satisfying, it can also be draining. I'm grateful for every single contribution that each of you made this year, and every year that you have served. Thank you!

I'd also like to welcome all our new and returning Board members. We have a great team. There's lots to do, and I look forward to all of us working collectively to strengthen and grow the York Pioneer and Historical Society. Thank you for taking this role on!

Some months after I was first elected as President, in 2023, I was presented with the President's pin. Now, the truth is that I'm not really one for pins and medals, but aside from the historical significance, one thing struck me immediately, and that was the two simple words engraved beneath the crest, at the top of the pin.

Deeds Speak.

And it's true. Great speeches can move us. Rhetoric can inspire us. But deeds speak.

And it's with that as context that I'm proud of what has been accomplished over the past year. Here are just some of the highlights:

- with a landmark contribution secured from Exhibition Place; over 100 donations from members and the public; and a very recent donation from Scotiabank, we have raised more than \$85,000 in the past twelve months. That collective generosity and commitment allowed us to complete the first phase of renovations to Scadding Cabin.
- not one, but two editions of *The York Pioneer* have been published in the past 12 months. Work has started on the 2024 edition. And *The Update* was published four times throughout the year.
- Between "Doors Open Toronto", the CNE, and the Ghost Walk, thousands of members of the public visited Scadding Cabin between May and the end of October.
- In February, we held a fun and fascinating "Brunch with Adam Bunch" programming event.

Lots was accomplished but still more must be done.

In the next 12 months, my hope is that, among other things, we will be able to complete the second stage of the Scadding Cabin renovations; build on the success of last year's fundraising by growing the number of individual contributors as well as the number of corporate donations; ensure that the 2024 edition of the York Pioneer is published in 2024; and increase the number of programming events that we hold.

Yes, last year showed significant progress. But while we want to preserve the past for the future, it is in the present that we live, and it is in the present that we must build.

Deeds speak. And that will be the measure of our success.

Respectfully,

Angus D. Palmer, President

AN EVENING OUT FOR YORK PIONEERS AT ST. LAWRENCE -
FIRST TORONTO POST OFFICE, FUNDRAISER

By: Fred Robbins

The Unveiling Toronto's Architectural Tapestry: A History of Toronto's Changing Landscape was an evening out with three keynote speakers, Alessandro Tersigni from the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, Toronto; Adam Bunch hidden Romance History; and Summer Leigh, Toronto based artist who shared a visual journey. The Annual fundraising event was supporting the Town of York Historical Society and Toronto's First Post Office. This is where our mail service is located.

The room was on the third floor and a good size group had gathered to be entertained and support the FTPO fund raiser. One table included Kayoko Smith, David Raymont, Diane Reid, Fred Robbins, Lionel Collier and Joyce Crooks. David was recognized for donating a print for the silent auction. The refreshments were soda or wine with a small cup of charcuterie. Tea and coffee were served during the two breaks which we had.

Most of the audience was in support of saving heritage and new ideas for the development world we now must navigate. Some concerns were shared about various Toronto buildings including the Ontario Science Center.

It was a good time for York Pioneers to be present and have our corporate presence seen. We had a chance to chat to others and network. It was delightful to reconnect with old friends like Sarah McCabe from OHS, who shared our interests and warmly greeted the group.



Above, back row: Fred Robbins, David Raymont, Lionel Collier. Front row: Diane Reid, Kayoko Smith, Joyce Crook. Photo: Richard Longley.

VALENTINE SOCIAL AT FRIENDS HOUSE

By: *Kayoko Smith*

Gorgeous spring-like weather in February was welcomed by members for this special event, which took place at Friends House in the historic Annex district in Toronto on Sunday, February 11th.

Our program for the day included:

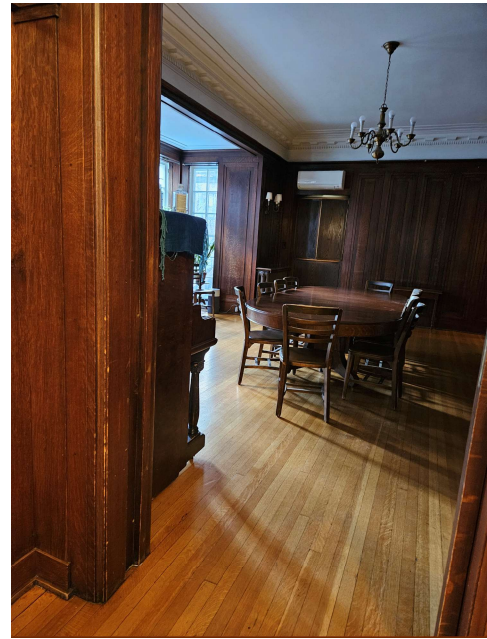
- Past President George Duncan, on the history of Friends House
- Adam Bunch, guest speaker, author of *The Toronto Book of Love*
- Past President John Marshall, a silent auction of local history books donated by members

All were introduced by President Angus Palmer.

A meticulously researched presentation by George Duncan shed light on the original owner of the house and history of the building. This well-maintained Georgian revival-style house, with its oak panelled dining room, was built by Miller Lash (1872-1941) on Lowther Avenue in



*Above: Adam Bunch at Friends House.
Photo: Kayoko Smith*



*Above: Friends House
Photo: Kayoko Smith*

the early 1900s. Lash, a wealthy businessman, was a director of the Canadian Bank of Commerce and president of Brazilian Traction Light and Power (now Brookfield Asset Management).

The record shows a building permit was issued on March 8th, 1906. After changing hands several times in 1949, the house was sold to the Toronto Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and has been the location of the Toronto Monthly Meeting (Quakers) and a meeting place for non-profit organizations.

Adam Bunch - storyteller, producer, recipient of the Governor General's History Award for Popular Media, and author of *The Toronto Book of the Dead* and *The Toronto Book of Love* - presented colourful stories of the past. With splendid imagination Adam captivated his audience with the romantic and tragic history of Toronto.

It was not just a coincidence that he chose to share stories from *The Toronto Book of Love*, as our

event was just two days before St. Valentine's Day. What a timely topic! Thank you, Adam, for your unique style in telling fascinating stories which have opened new windows to the multi-generational audience and infused new life into Toronto history.

Over light refreshments, we chatted and mingled; a pleasant February afternoon passed quickly. This event contributed over \$700.00 to the Society after expenses, including sales from the book auction.

Thank you to everyone who attended the event, helping our society to bond more strongly and become more resilient.

A big thank you to Beth Alaksa, Diane Reid and Kayoko Smith for making the event successful.



Above: Friends House. Photo: Kayoko Smith

At the **Ontario Genealogical Society June 2024 Conference**, York Pioneer Editor **Bruce McCowan** will be hosting a fun interactive 2 hour "gathering" -- participants will banter about their antics in January 1834:

Scarboro's First Burns Supper: Values of the Immigrants (A Living History Snapshot of Jan. 25, 1834)

This interactive session will show how Robert Burns became the worldwide hero of common folk and will help us appreciate that Canada's heritage is the sum of the histories of its diverse native and immigrant peoples.

In spite of Burns' humble beginnings, his work became almost legendary in his own time. The very down-to-earth Burns Club meetings held in Ayrshire 200 years ago spawned a movement that has spread Burns' words around the world.

Each participant will play a role in re-living the first Burns Supper in Scarborough – held, for argument's sake, in 1834. The characters in this re-enactment were all real people – recent Scottish immigrants.

The script is fictitious, but the general format of our gathering is reasonably accurate. The many toasts, other short speeches and the periodic songs and poems made up the typical Burns Supper agenda at that time.

Each participant will have a sheet with their character's name and the short script that they will read, as well as the program so that they can tell exactly when it is their turn to speak.

The year 1834 would be an important turning point for the Scots in Scarborough. They would establish several new institutions as their community graduated from a state of self-sufficient isolation to bustling commerce and economic prosperity.

Just imagine. It is January 25, 1834, the 75th anniversary of Robert Burns' birth. You're taking an evening away from the spinning wheel and the barn to celebrate the legacy of Scotland's National Poet...

More info here: <https://conference2024.ogs.on.ca/registration/>

Call for Papers - Sharpen Your Digital Pencils

The York Pioneer Journal is one of the longest-running local history journals in Canada.

Hoping that you enjoyed the 2023 issue of The York Pioneer, members and friends are invited to compose articles for the 2024 issue.

Oral histories and transcriptions of old documents that relate to Toronto or anywhere else in York County (a.k.a. Region) are fair game. Artificial Intelligence bots are not. For the other (very few) guidelines, please email the editor, Bruce McCowan, bmccowan@netrover.com.

For the 2024 issue of the York Pioneer, please email your solid draft (with footnotes, illustrations and permissions) to the Editor by June 1 2024.



RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY

The 2024 Volume of **The York Pioneer Journal** is currently in development!

Ensure that you receive your copy 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, and pay by e-transfer or PayPal.

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



Above: York Pioneers Social Re-Union, St. George Hall, March 3, 1911. Photo: F.W. Micklethwaite, 243 Yonge Street, Toronto, Copyright Canada, 1911

2024 Board Members

Officers

Past President: Fred Robbins

President: Angus D. Palmer

Vice President: Brent Cunningham

Treasurer: Jennifer Horwood

Recording Secretary: Robert Horwood

Corresponding Secretary [Social media]: Bob Georgiou

Archivist: Erin Baxter

Committee Chairs

Editorial: Bruce McCowan

Membership: Marilyn Horwood

Programme: Beth Alaksa

Publicity/Newsletter: Brent Cunningham

Scadding Cabin: Kayoko Smith

Representative on the Board of Sharon Temple: Glenn Bonnetta

CNE Association Representative: Liam Peppiatt

Members at Large

Sebastian Aguanno

Robert Murphy

Welcome New Life Members!

Ethan M. S. Fox Gabriel Kuchera

IN MEMORIAM

Lillian Powell, longtime member, passed away peacefully December 27, 2023:

<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/toronto-on/lillian-powell-11609333>

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