



THE UPDATE

York Pioneer and Historical Society

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August 2020 Special Edition of The Update!

Sharon Temple Illumination Tickets – On Sale Now!

On Friday, September 11th, 2020, the Sharon Temple National Historic Site and Museum will present their annual Illumination in a re-imagined way. Taking inspiration from the York Pioneers of 1918 during the Spanish Flu Pandemic, guests will enjoy the 2020 Illumination and musical performances from the grounds of the Temple.

Tickets are \$35.00 per person, and in compliance with COVID-19 protocols will be limited to 100 guests. For more information and tickets, visit www.sharontemple.ca/illumination.

Visit the CNE At Home!

While the grounds may be closed for 2020, the CNE is offering many virtual programs through the following link:

www.theex.com/main/entertainment/cne-at-home/

The CNE and YPHS have been faithful partners since the very first Industrial Exhibition in 1879. The YPHS encourages all members to demonstrate our support for the CNE through this season’s virtual features online!



Above: Scadding Cabin backyard in the shade, September 2016. Photo: Brent Cunningham

2020 SCADDING CABIN VOLUNTEERS – PAST & PRESENT

As the State of Emergency measures remain in effect across the Province of Ontario, we invite all volunteers to share their stories. See page 11.

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Audrey Fox Honoured

On Saturday, July 18 Board Member Cindy Ewins arranged to drop in on Audrey Fox for a brief visit. Shortly after she arrived, a small group of Board Members and past Presidents showed up to surprise Audrey with a very special presentation honouring her many contributions to the York Pioneer and Historical Society over the past 21 years.



Photos: Cindy Ewins

The gathering took place in Audrey's beautiful garden. President Fred Robbins spoke to the group, who were masked and physically distanced (except during the photo-taking). He presented Audrey with a framed certificate and a large English-style bouquet.

Audrey joined the YPHS in 1999, when she wrote "The Turners of Bracondale", the first of several articles she contributed to *The York Pioneer*. She joined the Board of Directors in 2006, serving four years as Editor of the *Update*. In 2008, in addition to her duties producing the newsletter, she was elected Vice-President and joined the Editorial Committee of *The York Pioneer* as Assistant Editor. Elected President in 2010, the indefatigable Audrey continued to serve on the Editorial Committee as Co-Editor, becoming editor in 2011, a position she has held until this year. In her final year on the Board she was also Recording Secretary.

During her three years as President, the Society benefited from Audrey's organizational abilities and her "let's get it done" approach to the business at hand. One of her major accomplishments, in 2012, was the long-discussed sale of Eversley Church, which was underused and had become a financial burden. A large portion of the proceeds was shared with Sharon Temple and the Sharon Burying Ground.

As Editor of *The York Pioneer*, Audrey took an already excellent publication and made it even better. Her professionalism and attention to detail has set a high standard which we hope will continue under future editors.



Left: Audrey with Diane Reid for the November 2016 Toronto launch of Peter C. Newman's book "Hostages to Fortune." Right: the English-style bouquet presented to Audrey, a gift from the York Pioneers, July 2020.

Photos: David Raymont

Audrey was the driving force behind many other projects, including our sponsorship of Heritage Toronto plaques at Scadding Cabin in 2012 and the Scadding Estate this year. She promoted the Society's work through networking, speaking engagements, and the establishment of the York Pioneers' Award, presented annually for several years to students at the Ontario Heritage Fair. She recently worked with a professional indexer to update *The York Pioneer* index, which will soon be available on our website.

In addition to all of the above, Audrey found interesting locations for dinners and launches, graciously hosted numerous Board and Committee meetings, and signed up many new members.

In recognition of her outstanding service to the York Pioneer and Historical Society, Audrey Fox now holds the title of Honorary President.

Thank you, Audrey!

A tribute from Chris Raible who worked with Audrey often, as she edited his contributions to the York Pioneer magazine and other YPHS publications.

For 12 years Audrey Fox has embodied:

An eye for a misplaced comma or a dangling participle

An ear for an unnecessary phrase or a confused paragraph

A nose for sniffing out new authors and fresh content

A head for keeping track of many tasks and ideas all at once

A hand for helping others' ideas become published articles

A taste for good stories clearly presented

A stomach rarely upset by criticism.

In short, she has the anatomy of a perfect editor!

Her legacy will be long cherished and her energies sorely missed.

Chris Raible



My Handspinning Adventures at Scadding Cabin – Part 2

By Sarah Gossip

If someone had told me 10 years ago that I would become a competent handspinner participating regularly in demonstrations, I wouldn't have believed it; the opportunities tied to this continue to develop and grow too. Recently, through my association with YPHS, I have been invited to participate in such events as Doors Open (2019) at the Cabin, spinning at the YPHS booth in the Enercare Centre (2018 and 2019), and most recently in 2019 spinning at the Woodbridge Fall Fair. In my opinion the demographic belonging to each event “feels” a little different, with slightly different questions asked. It is always very satisfying to watch the awe on the faces of visitors who have never seen handspinning done before. And why, oh why, do little children always want to stick their fingers in the wheel as it spins?



Lieutenant Governor Simcoe looks down upon the large wheel in the Scadding Cabin, CNE 2019.

Photo: Brent Cunningham

In Part 2 of this article, I was asked to comment on any questions I might get during demonstrations. Examples include:

How long would it take you to make enough yarn to knit a sweater?

On a treadle-driven wheel I can produce a bobbin's worth of spun yarn in about an hour to an hour and three quarters. This generates about an 80 gram ball of single strand yarn. Typically, however, to ensure that the end result has uniform strength and appearance, a single strand would be plied with one or two additional strands, requiring on average 4.5-5.5 hours total effort to produce three 80 gram balls, which, when plied together, would produce 240 grams of 3-ply yarn. To make yarn for a sweater requiring 1200 yards of yarn, you'd need approximately 1.5 lbs. of spinning washed, dried and carded fiber. By the ratio above, it would take approximately 15 hours to spin enough fibre to knit a sweater. Additional processing, including "relaxing" the spun yarn, is required before the yarn could be used for knitting. This would involve wetting and slightly stretching the spun and plied yarn as it dries, to relax the twist.

The spindle that pricked the finger of Sleeping Beauty – where is it on the wheel you are using?

A traditional spindle does not have a sharp end capable of pricking a person's finger. In most images we are familiar with, such as the beloved Sleeping Beauty fairytale, what is actually represented is the distaff, which supports a "bale" of flax waiting to be spun. Trying to explain this, however, usually confuses the questioner; I am still learning how best to respond to this one.

Wouldn't it be easier just to buy the yarn ready-made?

I'm not sure that question even deserves an answer.

Why don't you knit me a hat?

My assumption is that anyone who makes a project suggestion like this knows nothing, first of all, about knitting, and is not serious about the request in any case. Anyone reading this article who knits knows that even small projects can be very time-consuming to complete. Having to "make" the yarn first extends the project timeline exponentially.

Does it take a long time to learn how to do?

Yes, it does, especially if you are self-taught. I have been at it for 10 years and I am still learning. To give some definition to what is involved in that learning process, I have recently started inviting interested visitors to try carding some fibre, usually sheep's fleece, so they can have a more visceral experience of what the prep work involved might be like. Universally, each visitor agrees that it is surprisingly hard work and requires strength and coordination.

Some of the questions I am surprised that I am not asked are:

- *How did you get into spinning?*
- *Is it difficult to find product to spin with?*
- *Do you teach spinning?*
- *What kind of preparation is needed to get a fleece ready to spin?*

Occasionally someone will walk into the Cabin who is more interested in the wheels than the end product. These visitors don't typically ask a lot of questions, being satisfied to just watch, and discover what is actually going on.



*Sarah demonstrates her craft at the YPHS booth at the 2019 CNE.
Photos: Gerald Lee*

Recent Donations to our Scadding Cabin Museum

The York Pioneers are grateful for the artifacts that have been donated to our Society over the years. Below are three recent examples that have been donated to our collection in 2020:

One could be forgiven for mistaking Item 1 for a pair of tweezers. In fact, it is a 19th century moustache curler!



Item 2 is a beautiful glazed bowl. It's dating is to be determined...



Item 3 is a tin pierced lantern rediscovered in the Cabin that was donated as far back as 1955!



Again, we wish to express our thanks for these donations. The Scadding Cabin will always be a welcome home for artifacts from Toronto's earliest history.

All photos: Fred Robbins

Visitors of a different kind in 2020...

While the CNE may be closed to the public for the summer of 2020, not all visitors will be turned away.

So who is visiting the Cabin? As Kayoko Smith and David Creelman discovered, we have had many visitors in recent months! Pictured below are a juvenile mocking bird in an apple tree and a recently emerged black swallowtail butterfly resting on an orange weed!



Some other notable Cabin visitors were: cardinals, Baltimore orioles and Downey wood peckers to just name a few. In the foreground of the Cabin, white elderberry blooms and the hop plants are cascading over the split-rail cedar fence.



Did you know the hollowed elderberry twigs have been used as a spile to tap maple trees for syrup and the berries have been used as flavouring for wine? Naturally, we still use hops in beer to add its distinct flavour. *All photos: David Creelman*

SCADDING CABIN VOLUNTEERS - PAST & PRESENT

Everyone looks forward to our summers working at the Cabin. Health measures this year will keep the doors and windows closed. However, Kayoko has maintained the garden as colourful and butterfly friendly as usual. Fred has seen to several necessary repairs.

Can the rest of us, like Sarah use this unexpected free time to do some reminiscing, with a pen? Can you share a short story of the interesting memories you have enjoyed at the Cabin? Perhaps recalling who or what inspired your participation?

Our visitors always have the most surprising information to enrich our experience. So often visitors compare Cabin life with their own, when growing up in various locations around the world!

Please everyone, tell about the fun of your summers at Scadding Cabin. These stories will be another treat waiting for us when we reopen in 2021.

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In Memoriam

Paul Bitzer, annual member since 1967, sadly passed away May 2020. The YPHS offers our condolences to his family.

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/therecord-waterloo/obituary.aspx?n=paul-jewitt-bitzer&pid=196213129&fhid=31138>

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

