



# THE UPDATE

York Pioneer and Historical Society

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## Join us for our Annual General Meeting

**Date:** Sunday January 26, 2020  
**Time:** 2pm to 4pm  
**Location:** John McKenzie House  
 34 Parkview Avenue, Willowdale

**GUEST SPEAKER:** Jane Fairburn

Jane Fairburn has for many years lived at or near the north shore of Lake Ontario. She is deeply connected to the ecology, history, and landscape of the Toronto waterfront.

Born in Toronto, Jane graduated from the University of Toronto with an honours B.A. in Political Science. She studied law at the University of Windsor and was called to the Bar in 1990.

In 2005, Jane received a Toronto Arts Council grant for some of the research that has gone into *Along the Shore*. Her own earliest memories include playing on the former estate of her great-grandfather, the lawyer, author, and economist William Henry Moore, whose property Moorlands, near the mouth of the Rouge River, is now known as the Petticoat Creek Conservation Area. Jane currently lives in the Scarborough Bluffs, and is a part-time resident of Port Medway, Nova Scotia. Her most recent project, still in development, is *Longing for the Land*, which examines the cultural, historical, and spiritual connections between people and landscape.

**NOTE:** For those who have not been to John McKenzie House, exercise caution when using your GPS or Google as they may mistake John McKenzie House for Mackenzie House in downtown Toronto.



*Above: the oldest known photo of John McKenzie House, taken circa 1919; now the home of the Ontario Historical Society and the venue for our AGM*

### UPCOMING EVENTS - ICE LANTERNS/WINTER SOLSTICE - December 21

Sharon Burying Grounds, 18391 Leslie St, East Gwillimbury, 6pm -10pm

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REPORT FROM THE 150<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL YORK PIONEERS DINNER

*Above:* YPHS President Fred Robbins commences the 150<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner  
*Photo:* Brent Cunningham

The annual dinner was held on Nov. 9, 2019 at the Toronto Lawn Tennis club. We had a private room to ourselves. The evening started with sparkling wine and appetizers. As the members arrived the welcome was warm and friendly – good to see old friends again. The silent auction book table was filled and overflowing. It was slow to get bids going but we did well at the end.



*Photo:* Audrey Fox

With a formal beginning and singing we toasted the Queen done by Fred Robbins, President and this was flowed by a toast to fallen members since we last met done by Barry Mapes. Pat Robertson led us all in singing revised wording of “The Maple Forever”.



*Above:* Project Manager and Librarian Sarah McCabe and Executive Director Rob Leverty from the OHS with President Robbins. *Photo:* Audrey Fox

We were amazed to receive a special award and recognition for our 150 years from the Ontario Historical Society. Rob shared that he often tells the story of the York Pioneers being the beginning of historical societies in the province.

The food was delicious and filling followed by three types of cakes for desert. The buffet style pleased each member as they had their choice of main course.

Jordan St. John was an excellent speaker and entertained us all with stories, humour and finished by ably answering good questions from the audience. He also brought a sample of early beer to a tasting later.



*Above:* Guest Speaker Jordan St. John  
*Photo:* Brent Cunningham



**Above:** Presidents Fred Robbins and Past President David Raymont with eight former presidents. Back Row: George Duncan, President Robbins, Past-President Raymont, Audrey Fox, John Marshall, and Paul Litt. Front Row: Brooke Jarvis, Diane Reid, Jeanne Avigdor, Patricia Robertson.  
**Photo:** Jairo Gomez

A special photo shoot of the current Board was taken. This was followed by past Presidents of which we had ten in attendance. This covered almost 40 years of presidents.

The 60 members went home with a good evening being enjoyed by all. The extra funds from the book table helped to offset costs for the special event.



**Above:** Joyce Crook and Lionel Collier with books galore! **Photo:** Fred Robbins



**Above:** Linda and George Duncan, Cheryl and Fred Robbins. **Below:** Diane Reid in costume with Brook Jarvis and Kayoko Smith. **Photos:** Christopher Nash.



**Above:** The 2019 Board of Directors. Back row: Bob Georgiou, Fred Robbins, David Raymont, Audrey Fox, Angus Palmer. Front Row: Kayoko Smith, Brent Cunningham, Cindy Ewins, Michael Nettleton.  
**Photo:** Cheryl Robbins



### THE WOODBRIDGE FAIR 2019

The Woodbridge Fair has been going since 1847 over 172 years. The thanksgiving weekend was the annual date. It was on for three days Saturday, Sunday and the holiday Monday.

The York Pioneers were asked to promote Pioneer life and costumes. We fitted in nicely along with the pioneer cooking over an open fire and a blacksmith working over a forge. Our booth was manned by dedicated members who chose to help out on a family weekend.

Saturday we had Sarah and Diane in costume. Sarah was weaving with the small spinning wheel demonstration. Diane was able to answer questions and tell the stories of pioneer life. Fred was there to greet and promote the Society. The pioneer games were good fun for the children as they came by. Fred also gave away miniature pumpkins as a free take away.



*Above: Sarah Gossip and Diane Reid.  
Photo: Fred Robbins.*

Sunday was a nicer day the sun came out and we had many visitors to the booth. Diane was back again and did a fine job greeting and answering questions. John Marshall was able to help and tell people about the society. John was even engaged with a good conversation with members from the fair board. It was interesting the many connections John was able to talk about. Fred was able to display the Scadding Cabin and tell people about the York Pioneers.



*Above: Diane Reid and John Marshall.  
Photo: Fred Robbins.*

Monday we had an early start being the holiday more people came out. We had Diane, Kayoko and Fred to greet the visitors. Fred added to the display with a personal collection of old tools. This drew men to examine and recall things their fathers had used. The pioneer candy sticks soon disappeared as well.

The Woodbridge Fall Fair saw over 10,000 people attend over the weekend. We made a good impression and are welcome back next year.

## THE CNE GHOST WALKS - HALLOWE'EN 2019

The CNE Ghost Walks take a spooky stroll through the CNE grounds. The 1 hour walk is held every Friday night in October until Hallowe'en and covers some 200 years of haunted history of the grounds. The walk begins at the Prince's Gates and ends at the Scadding Cabin where every year, York Pioneers volunteers serve thirsty visitors apple cider and cookies.

On **Monday October 14**, the Scadding Cabin received John and Patsy Scadding (pictured below) visiting from Somerset, England, not far from the Simcoe's Wolford Estate. They were visiting friends in the US and made a special detour to Toronto to visit the home of their distant relative.



**Top Row:** An eerie Scadding Cabin looms, as it appeared Fri October 18, while volunteers Diane Reid and Sarah Gossip light candles and make preparations inside. **Photos:** Kayoko Smith and Brent Cunningham. **Bottom row:** volunteers Sarah Gossip and Diane Reid prepare refreshments while Ghost Walk tour guide Chris arrives with guests and relays ghost stories about the Cabin and surrounding grounds. John and Patsy Scadding visit the Cabin, Monday October 14. **Photos:** Kayoko Smith, Gerry Lee, and, John Marshall.



THE CANADIAN NATIONAL EXHIBITION 2019

In addition to Scadding Cabin, on one very busy weekend during the Canadian National Exhibition, York Pioneers staffed a booth at the Enercare Centre. Located near the entrance of the Centre, we enjoyed significant interest from those coming into the building and met a steady flow of visitors. Pictured here are volunteers Angus Palmer at our literature table, Diane Reid explaining the benefits of membership in front of our Scadding Cabin model.



*Above:* Board member Angus Palmer chats with a visitor at the CNE booth. *Photo:* Michael Nettleton.



*Above:* Diane Reid explains the Society to CNE booth visitors. *Photo:* Michael Nettleton.

Sarah Gossip explains the finer points of spinning, and demonstrating carding of wool fibers. Many thanks to the volunteers who came out to staff and visit our booth.



*Above:* Sarah Gossip.  
*Photo:* Michael Nettleton.



*Above:* Sarah Gossip teaches a young visitor how to card fibres at the CNE booth. *Photo:* Michael Nettleton.

### The Tinsmith – Part Four

The morning started out bright, with a light breeze which would make it a great day to ride down to Fort York for the annual militia muster. I had just saddled up Chestnut when Mrs. MacNamera came over to ask if I could pick up some ginger and raisins for her as she was going to bake cookies later in the week. I said I would be happy to and after receiving the money, Chestnut and I set out for Toronto. At first the scenery consisted of virgin forest or freshly plowed fields with the occasional building. Then as we approached Cruickshank Lane and Tollroad (now Bathurst St and Bloor Av W) you could see the encroachment of civilization (more buildings, less trees, garbage on the road). I also noticed the people were a lot less friendly here too.

I wanted to stop at the little tavern on the corner but I needed to get to the Fort as quickly as possible so I could submit my bid for the supplying of mess kits to the army. I can't believe the amount of congestion on this road, in both directions. In fact Chestnut and I were almost run off the road by a delivery wagon whose driver appeared to have sampled too much of his cargo.

Finally the Fort is in sight and I can hear the Fife and Drums calling the lads to form up. I found a nice little place to board Chestnut while I went to see the Quartermaster. While walking to the QM's office, I had to be careful to avoid the three recruiting Sergeants who were on the prowl for fresh cannon fodder. I found the Quartermaster and handed him my bid. I was fortunate to get it in as the time had come to stop accepting them. As I turned to leave his office, I noticed two other gentlemen standing outside. They were my competition. We waited for about forty five minutes and then the Captain came out to announce the winning bid. After what seemed like an eternity he announced the contract for one hundred mess kits will be awarded to Squire Mapes of Victoria's Tin Goods. I was stunned. My bid was deliberately high so as not to get the contract for I knew how much work would be involved, not to mention the scrutiny of the workmanship. Also I would have to put my private business on hold for this venture. On the plus side, it was a great feeling to know that I beat out the town's two established tinsmiths. As is custom, I offered to buy a round at the Sergeant's mess which was graciously accepted. After our drink, I walked over to the Quartermaster's office to finalize and sign the contract.

The initial order was for one hundred mess kits comprising of a 6" dinner plate, a small bowl and a one pint mug. I asked about cutlery and was told that was being brought in from England. He then advised that a further sixty sets could be ordered upon completion of this order. After reading the terms I was about to sign the contract when I noticed a short paragraph stating that my rank would be 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant and my uniform would be supplied. The QM looked at me puzzled and asked why I was hesitating to sign. I brought up the fact that there had been no mention of joining the regiment upon winning the contract. Both the Captain and Quartermaster assure me it was only for three years and I would be compensated as a soldier on top of being paid the agreed price of the contract. Beside they said with a grin we weren't at war anyway. Somehow I saw the logic and signed on the line, only after securing a place for my horse here at the fort. After being told I had to report for duty in two weeks, I inquired about where I could buy some ginger and raisins. The Quartermaster excused himself for a few moments and came back with two pounds of raisins and twelve ounces of ginger. When I tried to pay him, he told me not worry about it. I thanked him and saluted both officers and then took my leave to collect Chestnut and head for home.

Barry Mapes, Esq., Tinsmith



*From Wikipedia: A tinsmith, sometimes known as a whitesmith, tinner, tinker, tinman, or tinplate worker is a person who makes and repairs things made of tin or other light metals. By extension it can also refer to the person who deals in tinware, or tin plate. Tinsmith was a common occupation in pre-industrial times.*

York Pioneer member Barry Mapes is a volunteer at the Tollkeeper's Cottage and has been learning about tinsmithing.

## REPORT FROM THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The 2019 Nominating Committee members:

- From the current Board: Kayoko Smith, Fred Robbins, Brent Cunningham
- From the general membership: Gerald Lee, Glenn Bonnetta

The Committee hereby reports, proposing the following slate of candidates for the 2020 Board of Directors:

### Officers

**Past President:** David Raymont

**President:** Fred Robbins

**Vice President:** Michael Nettleton

**Treasurer:** Lionel Collier

**Recording Secretary:** Gerald A. Lee

**Corresponding Secretary [Social media]:** Bob Georgiou

**Archivist:** Jennifer Gray

### Committee Chairs:

**Editorial:** Virginia Grimaldi

**Membership:** Angus Palmer

**Programme:** Beth Alaksa

**Publicity (newsletter):** Brent Cunningham

**Scadding Cabin:** Kayoko Smith

**Representative on the Board of Sharon Temple:** Fred Robbins

**Members at Large:** Cindy Ewins, Sarah Gossip

In addition to this slate of candidates, 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. Do this by declaring as a candidate at the Annual General Meeting coming up on January 26, 2020. At that point, there would be a vote to determine the outcome of the election. For further information, contact Kayoko Smith (Chair of the Nominating Committee) at [kayto.ca@live.ca](mailto:kayto.ca@live.ca).



**Have You Considered Life Membership?**  
**Do It Now — Ahead of Proposed Fee Increases**

Have you considered the benefits of life membership? It's a great deal — it relieves a member of the need to remember to renew each year — and most of our members are with us for longer than 10 years.

Your Board has decided to recommend an increase in membership fees to the Annual General Meeting in January 2020 — to help your Society remain fiscally responsible, and also to create a new level of Student membership to facilitate future membership development.

Current membership fees	Proposed membership fees
Individual membership                      \$20 annual	Student membership                              \$20 annual
Family membership                              \$25 annual	Individual membership                              \$30 annual
Life membership                                      \$200 one time	Family membership                                      \$50 annual
	Life membership                                      \$300 one time

The current fee for life membership is \$200 — it is a great deal now, and you can renew at that level any time until it changes. And, as our membership contributions are charitable donations, you will receive a charitable donation receipt for the full amount.

You can renew from the Society web page at <https://www.yorkpioneers.com/membership/> — or send your cheque, payable to The York Pioneer and Historical Society, to:

The York Pioneer and Historical Society  
 PO Box 45026  
 2842 Yonge Street  
 Toronto, ON M4P 3E3

Sign up today for a lifetime of history — and save.

**A 200-year-old family feud comes to an end in East Gwillimbury**

Steve Paikin is the anchor of TVO's flagship current affairs program, *The Agenda with Steve Paikin*. Read his 23 August 2019 article about recent events at the Sharon Temple:

<https://www.tvo.org/article/a-200-year-old-family-feud-comes-to-an-end-in-east-gwillimbury>

1869 – 2019

**150<sup>th</sup>**

**Welcome New Members!**

Colby Bayne   D'Arcy Boulton   Ava Henye  
 Jacob Larsen   Richard MacLeod   John Noble

**New Life Member!**

James Macdonald

**Elevated to Life Members!**

David Jarvis  
 Leslie Dickinson

**Long Time Member Elevated to Life Member!**

Margaret McKelvey

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

