

THE BEACH AND EAST TORONTO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Annual Report

April 1 2023 to March 31 2024



Some TBETHS members at the presentation of a Heritage Toronto plaque for the Red Oak in Kew Gardens on Thursday May 25 at 2 pm.

L to R: Eric Malmsten, Gene Domagala, Mary Campbell,
Julita Tyszewicz, Barbara Myrvold, Glenn Chadwick and Birgit Siber

Image courtesy Alan Shackleton/Beach Metro Community News

THE BEACH AND EAST TORONTO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2023-2024 Board of Directors

Director	Position
Jonathan Bradshaw	President
Mary Campbell	At Large
Glenn Chadwick	Event Coordinator; Web Committee
Samantha Little	At Large; Elected to the Board November 22, 2023
Barbara Myrvold	Card Index Automation Project Lead; Web Committee Chair; Bill 23 Response Committee
Julita Tyszewicz	Treasurer; Membership Secretary
Katherine Vice	Secretary; Card Index Automation Project Lead; Web Contact Responder
Vice-President	Position vacant from December 19, 2022



TBETHS Board members at Annual Meeting, November 22, 2023

L to R. Glenn Chadwick, Jonathan Bradshaw, Samantha Little, Barbara Myrvold, Julita Tyszewicz, Katherine Vice, Mary Campbell

PRESIDENTS' REPORT

Throughout 2022-2023, The Beach and East Toronto Historical Society (TBETHS) has remained committed to our mission of highlighting and preserving heritage throughout our local neighbourhoods.

Notable TBETHS achievements in 2023-2024 included launching our online local history index; presenting or participating in about a dozen events; supporting the addition or nomination of a score of local properties to the Toronto Heritage Register; advocating that local buildings listed on the Toronto Heritage Register be designated and not be removed from the list for five years; and providing information or suggestions to individuals and organizations.

Over the course of the year, the Board held nine meetings, transitioning from virtual Zoom gatherings in 2023 to in-person meetings at Glenn Chadwick's studio in 2024. I and the whole Board extend our gratitude to Glenn and Birgit Siber for providing us with this attractive and welcoming meeting space.

TBETHS moved to standardize our slogans. Mary Campbell spearheaded this effort, culminating in the approval of our new motto, which now is being used consistently across our letterheads and other TBETHS documents.

Working to highlight and preserve the natural, built and documentary heritage of The Beach and East Toronto.

Following challenges with meeting space at the Toronto Public Library, whose staff initiated the historical society in 1974 and where we held co-sponsored programs for decades, we moved to holding meetings and events at Beaches Sandbox. We are grateful to its owners and staff for their warm welcome, strong support for TBETHS initiatives, and facilitating our meetings at a reasonable rent.

As you all know, we were unable to hold regular Annual Meetings for a number of years due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Recognizing the importance of having an Annual Meeting after such a long hiatus and the need to play catch up, we successfully convened an Annual Meeting in November 2023 covering the previous four years, 2020-2023. This event not only provided a platform for essential business proceedings but also served as an opportunity for a membership drive and much needed social interaction among our community. We were delighted to welcome Samantha Little, Senior Manager of Programming at Beaches Sandbox, as a valuable addition to our Board. Samantha's proactive involvement and fresh perspectives have already made a significant impact on our projects, and we know that will continue moving forward.

2024 marks the 50th Anniversary of TBETHS. As we commemorate this important milestone, it also serves as a reminder of our neighbourhood's rich heritage and the importance of preserving it for future generations. We are working on some projects to commemorate this significant occasion and will continue to share information about them as it becomes available.

In conclusion, TBETHS remains committed to addressing various heritage-related issues and projects in our community. I extend my appreciation to the Board, volunteers, and members for their unwavering dedication and support throughout the year.

Jonathan Bradshaw, President

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

As at March 31, 2024, TBETHS had 72 members (vs. 49 members at March 31, 2023) – an increase of almost 50% from the previous year. This increase was expected following the resumption of in-person events in fiscal 2024 and it is hoped that numbers will continue to increase in fiscal 2025. The annual membership fee continues to be only \$20 and is applicable from April 1 to March 31.

Julita Tyszewicz, Membership Secretary

TREASURER'S REPORT
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2024

		\$
Cash as at April 1, 2023		3,828.36
Income		
Membership fees	1,360.00	
Donations and raffle proceeds	<u>135.00</u>	
Total Income		1,495.00
Expenditures		
Online communications	755.50	
Meetings and events	452.00	
Bank charges	32.40	
Membership fees *	<u>105.00</u>	
Total Expenditures		<u>1,344.90</u>
Cash as at March 31, 2024		<u><u>3,978.46</u></u>

** paid to Ontario Historical Society and Architectural Conservancy of Ontario*

Julita Tyszewicz, Treasurer

MAJOR ACTIVITIES

Launched an online automated version of the Society’s historical card index

- Producing an online searchable database of TBETHS card index proved to be more challenging and time-consuming for volunteers than was anticipated. The Project Leads (Barbara Myrvold, Irena Lewycka and Katherine Vice) and the Board considered other options to provide public access as quickly as possible to the more than 11,300 records created during Phase One of project. This resulted in the development of a web version of the Index via Google Sheets, which had a soft launch on TBETHS website in July 2023. <http://tbeths.com/lhi.asp>
- The Local History Index was launched officially following TBETHS' Annual Meeting on November 22, 2023. The event included a demonstration of the automated index by Barbara Myrvold; stories about local people and events derived from the Index by Katherine Vice; and recognition of the volunteers who generously contributed their time to achieve this major milestone. Each volunteer was introduced and presented with a certificate and an autographed copy of *The Beach in Pictures*.
- Katherine Vice’s story about Ada Courtice was repurposed as a Local Story on TBETHS website. <http://tbeths.com/pdf/ada-courtice.pdf>
- Although use statistics for the Index are not available through TBETHS website software, anecdotal reports indicated that the Index was being found, used and appreciated by independent researchers and Society members to answer questions and prepare reports and stories. For example, Wayne Reeves, Chief Curator Emeritus, City of Toronto, reported that he discovered new information about John E. Zieman’s business on Main Street in the early 1900s for a study that he was preparing.
- An article written by Barbara Myrvold and Katherine Vice, “Automating a Local History Index: The Beach and East Toronto Historical Society,” was published in *ELAN Ex Libris Association Newsletter*, Number 75/Spring 2024. https://www.exlibris.ca/lib/exe/fetch.php?media=newsletters:elan_issue_75_spring_2024.pdf

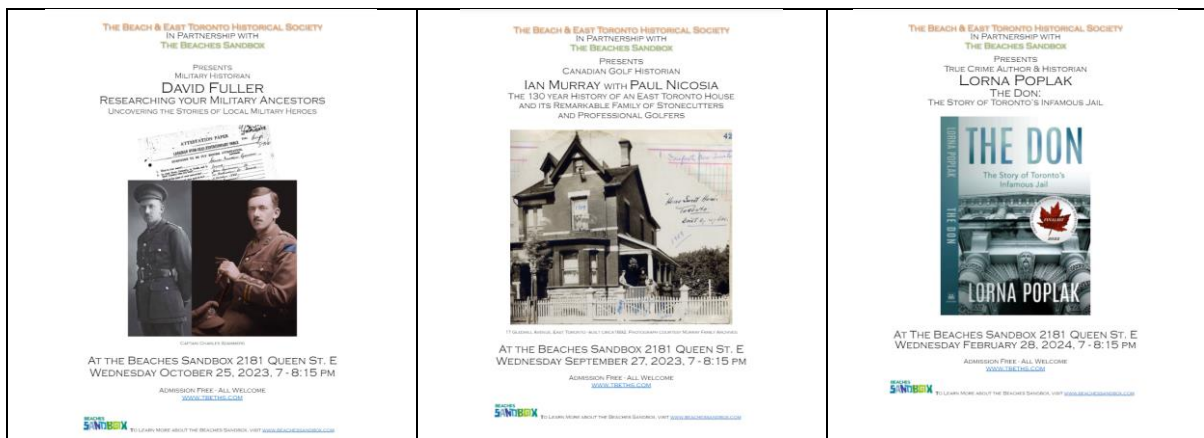
Then and Now

	Subjects	Article title	Title of newspaper, book, etc.	Date created	Page	Column
	Abbott, Frank B. (Baker), 1862-1939	East Toronto	Toronto World	1906-11-10	20	2
	Abbott, Frank B. (Baker), 1862-1939 Stores, Retail--Ontario--Toronto Shopping--Ontario--Toronto	East Toronto	Toronto World	1907-08-30	14	2
	Aberdeen Curling Club (Toronto, Ont.)	Suburban Notes	Toronto World	1894-11-02	12	2
	Aberdeen Curling Club (Toronto, Ont.)	East Toronto	Toronto World	1901-12-23	5	3
Card Catalog Index	Detail from the Automated Index					

Provided six free public events at our new venue, The Beaches Sandbox, 2181 Queen Street East (just east of Lee Avenue).

- Our public events were held on Wednesdays from 7 to 8:30 pm, and had an average attendance of 60 people. Many thanks to our speakers and to the owners and staff of The Beaches Sandbox. A big shout-out to Glenn Chadwick, Event Coordinator, for finding our new venue, organizing a variety of interesting events and creating attractive posters to promote them.

- June 7, 2023. Don Loucks & Leslie Valpy. Modest Hopes: Homes and Stories of Toronto's Workers from the 1820's to the 1920's
- September 27, 2023. Ian Murray with Paul Nicosia. The 130-year History of an East Toronto House (17 Gledhill Avenue) and its Remarkable Family of Stonecutters and Professional Golfers
- October 25, 2023. Military Historian David Fuller. Researching your Military Ancestors and Uncovering the Stories of Local Military Heroes.
- November 22, 2023. Annual Meeting Followed by a Presentation (by Barbara Myrvoid and Katherine Vice) and Launch of TBETHS Local History Index, and a Social Event
- February 28, 2024. True Crime Author & Historian Lorna Poplak. The Don: The Story of Toronto's Infamous Jail
- March 20, 2024. Author, Historian & Travel Writer Ron Brown. Toronto's Lost Villages



Posters for three of our public events held in 2023-2024

Provided or participated in several outdoor events in 2023

- Presentation of a Heritage Toronto plaque for the Red Oak in Kew Gardens on Thursday May 25 at 2 pm. This initiative was spearheaded by TBETHS member Birgit Siber. [Additional information](#)
- Three walking tours conducted by Gene Domagala, our indefatigable and popular tour leader
 - May 13. Houses of Worship, Beach
 - June 17. Houses of Worship, East Toronto
 - July 22. Historic Danforth, Woodbine to Dawes Road
- Annual Remembrance Day ceremony on November 11 at the cenotaph in Kew Gardens where TBETHS laid a memorial wreath

UNVEILING OF THE HERITAGE TORONTO
COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE
FOR THE
GREAT RED OAK IN KEW GARDENS
DATE: THURSDAY, MAY 25, 2023 AT 2PM
PLEASE JOIN US TO CELEBRATE
SOUTH OF QUEEN STREET, ALONG LEE AVENUE
NEAR THE DR. WILLIAM D. YOUNG MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN



Supported the addition of 21 properties in 11 buildings within TBETHS catchment area to the Toronto Heritage Register

- Sent a supporting letter on February 13, 2024 to Toronto and East York Community Council about ten properties in four buildings on Gerrard Street East and Main Street -- 143, 155, 161, 167 Main Street, 154 and 164 Main Street, and 2201–2207 Gerrard Street East. Toronto City

Council added them to the Toronto Heritage Register on March 20, 2024. See <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.TE11.14>



143 Main Street. Built 1927. Representative of an early-20th century Main Street Commercial Row type building with commercial uses at grade. Housed community's post office 1930-1950.



154 Main Street. Originally constructed 1909; partially reconstructed by 1920 following a fire in 1918. Representative of early-20th century Main Street Commercial Block building. Valued for its association with the Snell family, significant in the early development of East Toronto.



155, 161, and 167 Main Street and 2201-2207 Gerrard Street East. Built 1903. Representative of early-20th century Main Street Commercial Block building. Valued for its association with the Snell family, significant in the early development of East Toronto.



164 Main Street, southwest corner of Gerrard Street East. Built 1903. Representative of an early-20th Main Street Commercial Block type building. Historically known as Snell's Hall, valued for its association with the Snell family, significant in the early development of East Toronto.

Ten properties in four buildings at Main and Gerrard were added to the Toronto Heritage Register, 20 March 2024

Images and descriptions from City of Toronto Heritage Planning, [Report for Action, Inclusion of 10 Properties on the Heritage Register, January 29, 2024](#)

- Sent a supporting letter on March 14, 2024 to Mary McDonald, Senior Planner, Toronto Heritage Planning, with copies to Councillor Brad Bradford and Adam Wynne, Toronto and East York Community Preservation Panel (TEYCPP), about the latter's nomination for heritage designation of eleven properties in six buildings on the north side of Gerrard Street East between Norwood Road and Enderby Road - 2172, 2174, 2178, 2180, 2182, 2184, 2186, 2188 and 2190 Gerrard Street East - and two properties in one building at 25-27 Norwood Road. TEYCPP encouraged City of Toronto Heritage Planning staff 'to undertake an expedited heritage evaluation of these properties since

they were currently for sale as a development related land assembly.” TBETHS offered to provide research on these properties.



Panoramic view of 2174, 2178, 2180, 2182, 2184, 2186, 2188 and 2190 Gerrard Street East, March 2024
Image courtesy Adam G. Wynne

Continued to work to protect local buildings listed on the Toronto Heritage Register now under threat by the Ontario More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 (Bill 23)

- The Ontario Government brought about changes to the Ontario Heritage Act through [Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022](#), given Royal Assent on November 28, 2022, effective on January 1, 2023. Of great concern for TBETHS was the requirement that Council designate all ‘listed’ properties on the Heritage Register, or for such properties to be removed from the Register if not designated by January 1, 2025 and not be included in the register again for five years. Designated properties or heritage conservation districts were not affected. [Designated properties in TBETHS catchment area](#)
- TBETHS formed the Bill 23 Response Committee (Jonathan Bradshaw, Barbara Myrvold, Jeffrey Levitt, Clyde Robinson, Uwe Sehmrau). It produced an inventory of approximately 220 listed properties in Ward 19 (Beaches-East York) within [TBETHS catchment area](#)
- On April 19, 2023, TBETHS Committee met with representatives from Toronto Heritage Planning staff (Gary Medina, Paul Maka and Adrian Gamble), and were told that it was unlikely that the City would be able to designate the approximate 4,000 listed properties on the Register within the given time frame.
- The Committee developed criteria and made site visits to evaluate and rank the listed properties. In October 2023, it recommended 40 of the 220 listed properties in our area for designation.
- Following meeting with Councillor Brad Bradford and attending an information meeting with city staff and their consultants in February 2024, the Committee determined that it was doubtful that even the 40 buildings we had prioritized from our area would be designated. In March, the Committee selected its top 10 or so building priorities that could assist the City in selecting its city-wide priorities for designation. These will be forwarded to City officials in the coming fiscal year.

Responded to 25 comments and questions received through the “[Contact Us](#)” section of our website.

- Thanks to Katherine Vice for monitoring Contact Us. Emails included concerns about potential redevelopments (at Queen and Lee; 204 Waverly Road; Maclean Avenue); request for research assistance (125th anniversary of Danforth Gospel Hall, the history of local buildings, a walking tour of St. John’s Norway Cemetery; and about local residents such as William Kurelek); for historic photographs (Benlamond Hotel, Thompson’s Hollywood Ice Cream on Kingston Road); advice (planning the centennial of Earl Beatty School in May 2024; wording for a plaque for Scarborough Beach

Park); support (for adding properties to the Toronto Heritage Register); sharing ideas and initiatives (from the Riverdale Historical Society).

- In addition, we received offers of three donations
 - Hambly Family Scrapbook, donated by Leigh Miller. Photos, clippings and letters from around 1914 to the 1930s.
 - Books about the Beach and Toronto, donated by Alex Suthern, Beaches Branch, Toronto Public Library.
 - Joan Oppertshouser artwork, offered by the artist. Line drawings created in the mid-1970s of dozens of Beach buildings.
- Lee Hickman's article "GRover 1924: The Introduction of Dial Telephone Service In The City of Toronto; A Centenary Narrative" was received and posted on TBETHS website.
<http://tbeths.com/pdf/telephone-service.pdf>

Expanded our online presence through our social media platforms

- Dozens of posts and comments were made to our [Facebook page](#). We continued our series celebrating the birthdays of prominent people of the past who at one time had called the Beach and East Toronto home. We are grateful to Deborah Livingston-Lowe for her diligent and consistent work in managing our Facebook page.
- Content was regularly added, revised and updated on our [website](#). The Local History Index was a major addition representing years of work. Special thanks to Pete Richardson, President of Tayson Information Technology, for his ongoing work as our Webmaster.

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c/o 9 Cedar Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M4E 1K1

www.tbeths.com

Working to highlight and preserve the natural, built and documentary heritage of The Beach and East Toronto

KEW GARDENS RED OAK

This red oak (*Quercus rubra*) is likely the oldest tree in Kew Gardens. Estimates suggest it sprouted in the early 1800s and produced its first acorns in the 1850s.

Kew Gardens is close to the eastern boundary of the land covered by Treaty 13 signed in 1805 by the British Crown and the Mississaugas at the head of Lake Ontario. This tree took root around the time the treaty was created. Before colonization, this part of the waterfront was a forest that contained many red oaks and natural creeks.

When this red oak was still young, the neighbouring land was farmed by Joseph Williams and Jane Henry. In 1879 the family turned this property into the Canadian Kew Gardens, which offered camping, picnicking, and amusements for tourists attracted by the beaches. The family sold the land to the City of Toronto in 1907 and it became a public park.

Red oaks are native to Southern Ontario and can be found throughout the city. Under optimal conditions, they can live to around 500 years old. Like many other tree species, red oaks have a root system that often extends two to three times the extent of its branches. This oak's great size and age have made it a local landmark.

Forests Ontario Heritage Tree HF-2021-255-266
HERITAGE TORONTO 2022

The Kew Gardens Red Oak (right) in 2021. In 2022, it was officially measured at 36 metres (118 feet) tall and 5.1 metres (16.7 feet) around the trunk.
Forests Ontario

Children's race, Kew Gardens, circa 1911. The tree was about 100 years old at this time.
Toronto Public Library

Southward towards Kew Gardens from the Kew Beach Fire Hall, circa 1906. The large building on the right is Kew Beach Public School on Kippendavie Avenue.
City of Toronto Archives

Kew Gardens Red Oak

Plaque Presented by Heritage Toronto, May 25, 2023

Image courtesy Heritage Toronto