

THE BEACH AND EAST TORONTO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Annual Report

April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2025



Queen Street East at Nursewood Rd., July 7, 2024
Pat Antliff



1801 Gerrard Street East, July 7, 2024
Ron Grimes



671 & 673 Kingston Road, July 8, 2024
George Socka



2742 Danforth Avenue, July 5, 2024
Mark Bekkering

A selection of images from TBETHS' 50th Anniversary Documentary Photograph Project

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2024-2025 Board of Directors

Director	Position
Jonathan Bradshaw	President
Mary Campbell	At Large
Glenn Chadwick	Event Coordinator; Web Committee
Samantha Little	At Large
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; 50 th anniversary Photo Project Lead
Vice-President	Position vacant from December 19, 2022

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Throughout 2024–2025, The Beach and East Toronto Historical Society (“TBETHS”, the “Society”) has remained dedicated to our mission of preserving and promoting the rich heritage of our local neighbourhoods.

Our year began on a meaningful note at the June 2024 Annual Meeting, where we marked the Society’s 50th anniversary and presented flowers and a letter of appreciation to Mary Campbell, a founding member and our first president. It was a fitting tribute to Mary’s legacy and to the history of TBETHS itself.

One of the most exciting projects this year was a photography initiative led by our Secretary, Katherine Vice, which captured our neighbourhoods as they look today. The results are remarkable and this contemporary snapshot of our community provides a valuable visual record for the future. A big thank you to Katherine and to all the volunteers who helped bring this project to life.

We were honoured this year to be nominated for the Heritage Toronto Public History Award, which recognises projects that engage and educate the public through multimedia or collaborative formats. Our nomination was for the Local History Index—a major effort to digitize and automate a manual index of historical materials related to The Beach and East Toronto, now freely available through our website. Congratulations and sincere thanks go to the project leads: Irena Lewycka, Barbara Myrvold, and Katherine Vice.

We also were delighted that Heritage Toronto installed two plaques, without ceremony, within TBETHS’ catchment area in 2024. A new one titled "East Toronto & The Railways" was placed in September at the heritage-designated property at 292 Main Street (built in 1887). A replacement plaque commemorating Scarboro Beach Park was installed on the north side of the Boardwalk at the foot of Scarboro Beach Boulevard in November (see page 13). Both included information that TBETHS has provided or suggested to Heritage Toronto at various times. Plaque images courtesy Heritage Toronto.



New plaque for "East Toronto & the Railways 292 Main Street 1887"
Heritage Toronto 2024

Sadly, we also said goodbye to an important figure in our history. Rodney Travers-Griffin, our second president (1977–1982), passed away on February 5, 2025, just shy of his 93rd birthday. During his tenure, TBETHS joined the Ontario Historical Society, launched an archive, and supported the installation of plaques for Dr. William D. Young and the Beach Hebrew Institute. He also oversaw the early days of Gene Domagala's local history walks, which began in 1981. Rodney's wife, Helen Travers-Griffin—who also served on TBETHS' executive—passed away in 2024 in her 96th year. We are grateful to both Rodney and Helen for their lasting contributions to heritage preservation in our community.

One of the major challenges we faced this year was the looming threat of development to a block of 12 historic properties along Gerrard Street East, between Norwood Road and Enderby Road. Built between the 1890s and 1920s, these homes represent an important chapter of East Toronto's architectural and social history. Of particular note is the Donald Stephenson House (1894) at 2190 Gerrard Street East, which is already heritage-listed and underscores the broader significance of the entire block.

Concerns about the proposed redevelopment were first brought to TBETHS by Adam Wynne, Chair of the Toronto and East York Community Preservation Panel, who had initially nominated the block for protection. Once it became clear that the properties were being marketed as a development opportunity, Adam reached out to us for support.

Barbara Myrvold undertook extensive research into the history and heritage value of these properties, demonstrating how they meet multiple criteria under the Ontario Heritage Act. Properties must meet at

least two criteria under the Act to be considered to have heritage value or interest. The full list of criteria is:

- 1. The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.*
- 2. The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.*
- 3. The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.*
- 4. The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.*
- 5. The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.*
- 6. The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.*
- 7. The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.*
- 8. The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.*
- 9. The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.*

TBETHS, represented by Barbara Myrvold and Jonathan Bradshaw, subsequently met with staff at Toronto Heritage Planning Services. Unfortunately, Adam Wynne was unable to attend this meeting to offer additional context.

Despite Barbara's significant research, City Heritage Planning staff concluded that only the Stephenson House warranted protection. Much of Barbara's well-documented research was dismissed, including denying that the Dawes family, who had owned one of the properties for decades and for whom Dawes Road was named, was of any historical significance to the area.

This response was disappointing—not just from a heritage perspective, but because these homes also include 56 units of affordable housing, an issue staff refused to discuss.

Subsequently Jonathan, Barbara and Adam met with Councillor Bradford's Office to discuss the concerns. Unfortunately, the Councillor could not attend, and the assistant who did attend was unfamiliar with the project and requested materials that had already been submitted months earlier.

Despite these challenges, TBETHS remains committed to advocating for the preservation of this important

block. Our next steps include raising the issue with senior staff at City Heritage Planning and continuing to push for a meaningful response and solution through the Councillor's office.

As always, we are looking for more helping hands - whether you are interested in joining the Board, supporting specific projects, diving into research, or volunteering in other ways, we would love to have you involved and would encourage reaching out through our website.

In closing, TBETHS continues to be a strong and active voice for heritage in The Beach and East Toronto. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Board, our volunteers, and all our members for their passion, dedication, and support throughout the year.

Jonathan Bradshaw, President

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

As at March 31, 2025, TBETHS had 85 members (vs. 72 members as at March 31, 2024) – an increase of almost 20% from the previous year. This increase is consistent with our expectation that numbers would grow following the resumption of in-person presentations in fiscal 2024. In addition, the usage of the Beaches Sandbox as an event space has contributed to increased attendance and memberships. 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, 2025

		\$
Cash as at April 1, 2024		3,978.46
Income		
Membership fees	1,540.00	
Donations	340.00	
Total Income		1,880.00
Expenditures		
Meetings and events	926.60	
Online communications	449.49	
Attendance at Heritage Toronto event	355.44	
Administration	220.00	
Membership fee (Ontario Historical Society)	65.00	
Bank charges	39.65	
Total Expenditures		2,056.18
Cash as at March 31, 2025		<u>3,802.28</u>

Julita Tyszewicz, Treasurer

MAJOR ACTIVITIES

Reviewed and updated TBETHS' Constitution and By-Laws in compliance with the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (Ontario), required to be completed by October 2024

Changes mainly related to updating and standardizing language (for example, Annual General Meeting became Annual Meeting). Quorum for annual and general meetings was set at 25 percent of active members (those who have paid their fees), rather than the previous 20 percent. The size of the Board was set at "seven or more", meaning that members could be added as necessary without having to change TBETHS' by-laws. The Board also took the opportunity to make digital formats the primary means of communicating with the membership under the By-laws, although hard copy and postal service delivery would continue to be available on request. Updated materials were shared with the membership on May 18, 2024, and approved at the annual meeting held on June 12, 2024. The new constitution and by-laws were filed with the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery and Procurement on June 22, 2024. Great thanks to Jonathan Bradshaw, Julita Tyszewicz and Katherine Vice for their work on this file.

Undertook a 50th Anniversary Documentary Photograph Project

Under the initiative and coordination of Katherine Vice, a special project to help celebrate our 50th anniversary was launched at our Annual Meeting in June. Fourteen volunteers created a photographic snapshot of The Beach and East Toronto as it appeared in 2024, an ideal year to produce and preserve this record not only because of our anniversary, but also due to factors such as legislation encouraging intensification, generational changeover, and disruptive economic challenges that could alter the local landscape. Focus was on the major commercial streets - Queen, Kingston, Gerrard and Danforth - within the TBETHS catchment area. By year end, more than 1,300 photographs had been submitted documenting the incredible variety of the architecture in our neighbourhoods, from Victorian stores and houses to early 20th century walk-ups to mid-century malls to 21st century condominiums. Photographers captured the last vestiges of East Toronto's industrial past, different modes of transportation, thriving new businesses and empty storefronts--sometimes side by side.

Selections of the photos were shown at TBETHS' presentations through the year and will continue to be shared through various channels. Discussions are ongoing for long term preservation in both print and digital formats.

Many thanks to all those who made this project a success, especially the 14 volunteer photographers: Pat Antliff, Mark Bekkering, Philippa Campsie, Bill Clarke, Alan Dunlop, Giovanna Gatti, Ron Grimes, Zoltan Harsanyi, Anne Livingston, David Shilman, Birgit Siber, George Socka, Katherine Vice and Richard White.

Our Local History Index was nominated for a Heritage Toronto award in the public history section.

Heritage Toronto's Public History Award recognizes multi-media and collaborative projects specifically designed to engage, challenge, and educate the public. TBETHS' project, released on July 14, 2023,



automated a manual index documenting the history of The Beach and East Toronto area, and made it freely available through our website. It was one of 25 nominees representing wide-ranging engagement with Toronto's heritage, from short films to public art projects and history tours. The Project Leads, Barbara Myrvold, Irena Lewycka and Katherine Vice, represented TBETHS at the 49th annual Heritage Toronto awards, called "the city's premiere heritage event", held on October 28, 2024, at The Carlu (444 Yonge Street).

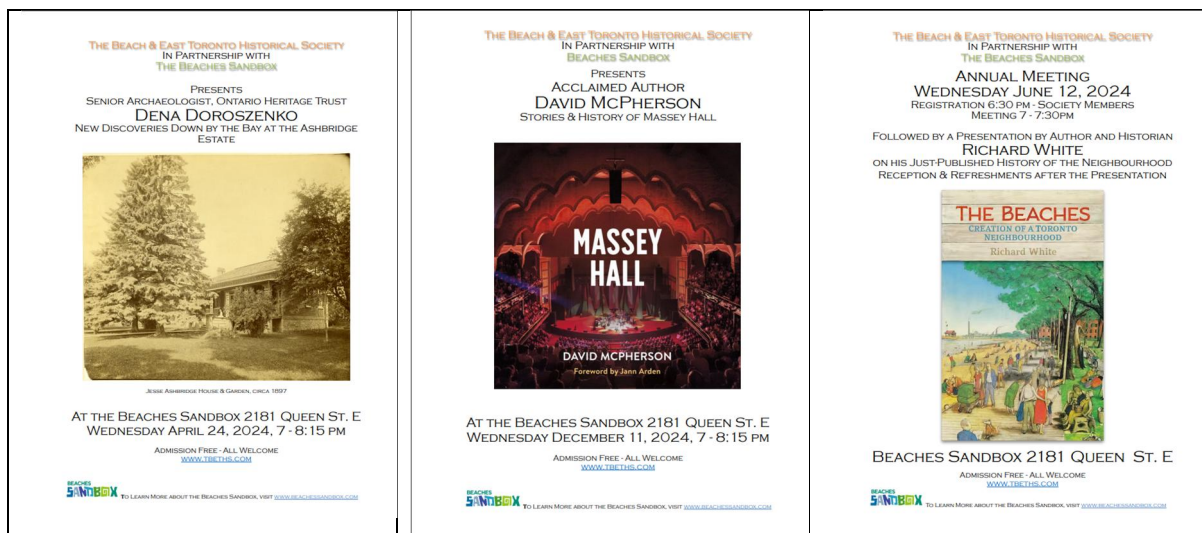
Katherine Vice, Barbara Myrvold and Irena Lewycka at the 49th annual Heritage Toronto awards, October 28, 2024

Provided seven free public events at 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, with an average attendance of 40 people. Thanks to the Beaches Sandbox staff and owners (Jason Schuy and Paulette O'Leary) for their helpfulness and for providing the venue. Our rent increased in January 2025 to help defray costs of an improved audio-visual system, which has made presentations much more enjoyable for our audiences.

A big shout-out to Glenn Chadwick, Event Coordinator, for organizing a variety of interesting programs, and promoting them in the media and with attractive posters that he created. A special thanks to the speakers at this year's events:

- April 24, 2024. Dena Doroszenko. Senior Archaeologist, Ontario Heritage Trust. *New Discoveries Down by the Bay at the Ashbridge Estate*
- June 12, 2024. Annual Meeting. Richard White. author and historian. *The Beaches; Creation of a Toronto Neighbourhood*
- October 16, 2024. Ira Wells, author, journalist & professor. *Norman Jewison; A Director's Life*.
- November 13, 2024. Sheila White, lay chaplain, musician & author. *The Letters; Postmark Prejudice in Black and White*
- December 11, 2024. David McPherson, author. *Stories & History of Massey Hall*
- February 12, 2025. Mark Vendramini, music historian. *Yonge Street's Incredible Music and Pop Culture History*
- March 12, 2025. Wayne Reeves, curator, historian & author. *Before Neon, Plastic and Digital: Toronto's Early Business Signs*



Posters for three of our public events held in 2024-2025

Provided or participated in several outdoor events in 2024

Gene Domagala, our indefatigable and popular tour leader, conducted two historic walking tours, one on June 29 of Main Street and the other on July 27 of the Balmy Beach area. The Board voted to buy a new sound system to replace Gene's old and unreliable equipment that he and others can use for TBETHS' programs and events. The purchase is planned for early spring 2025, before the season's walking tours begin.

TBETHS laid a memorial wreath at the annual Remembrance Day ceremony on November 11 at the cenotaph in Kew Gardens.

Supported naming a local laneway for Herbert Waters, an early and prominent local resident
TBETHS sent a letter in February 2025 to Pat Buchanan supporting her request to have a laneway in the vicinity of 95 Elmer Avenue named for her ancestor, Herbert Waters, an early and prominent resident in that area.

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

In March 2024, on the advice of Councillor Brad Bradford, TBETHS' Bill 23 Response Committee (Jonathan Bradshaw, Barbara Myrvold, Jeffrey Levitt, Clyde Robinson and Uwe Sehmrau), selected the top 10 or so building priorities (from approximately 220 listed properties in Ward 19 (Beaches-East York) within TBETHS' catchment area) for designation. We planned to forward these to City officials in the coming fiscal year (2024-25). However, Bill 200, which received Royal Assent on 6 June 2024, extended the period for giving notice of designation of properties that are listed on heritage registers as of December 31, 2022, before they must be removed from the registers. Such properties will now have two extra years (until January 1, 2027) to give notice of designation before they must be removed from heritage registers. This extension allowed us to shift our focus to more urgent heritage preservation issues, notably properties on Gerrard and Enderby.

Advocated for heritage designation protection of a block of houses on Gerrard Street East and Enderby Road



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

In early March 2024, TBETHS learned that the Toronto and East York Community Preservation Panel (the "Panel") "has nominated 2172, 2174 2172, 2174, 2178, 2180, 2182, 2184, 2186, 2188, and 2190 Gerrard Street East and 25-27 Norwood Road for heritage designation and encourages City of Toronto Heritage Planning to undertake an expedited heritage evaluation of these subject properties. These properties are currently for sale as a development related land assembly."

On March 14, 2024, Jonathan Bradshaw, TBETHS' president, e-mailed Mary MacDonald, Senior Director, Heritage Planning, City Planning Division copying Brad Bradford, Ward 23 Councillor, giving the Society's full support for designation, and stating, "We would be pleased to supply historical information about these properties from the Society's research files." From April until September 2024, Bar Myrvold conducted extensive research on each of the seven buildings outlining their heritage significance to the neighbourhood and the city. These were supplied to Toronto Heritage Planning staff in September 2024.

A Zoom meeting to discuss these properties was held on 15th October 2024 with Jonathan and Barbara representing TBETHS and three staff from Heritage Planning (Gary Miedema, Project Manager; Lindsay

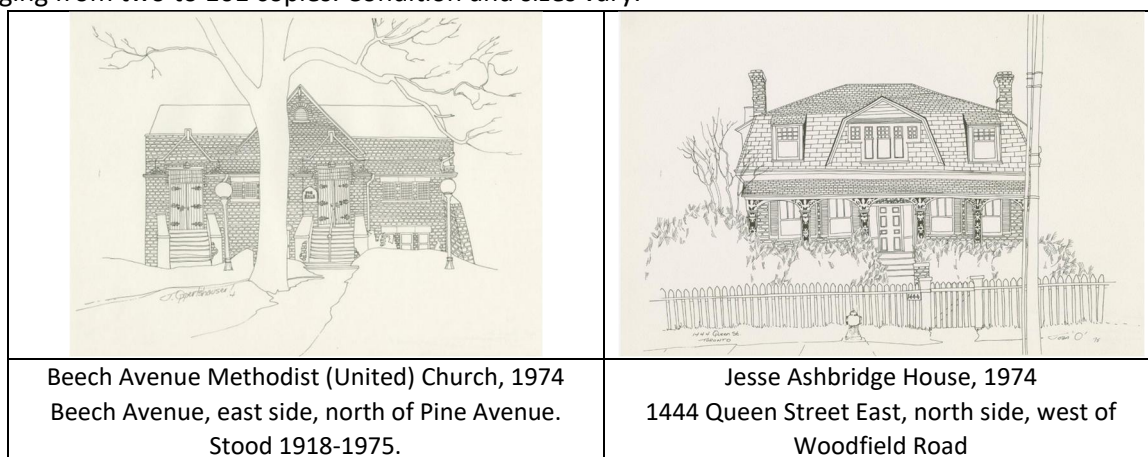
Parson, Heritage Planner and Elizabeth McFarland, Heritage Planner). Adam Wynne of the Panel could not attend. Heritage Planning staff outlined their view that none of the buildings on this stretch, apart from the already-listed Stephenson House at 2190 Gerrard Street East, was worth listing, based on them not meeting at least two of the nine criteria outlined in the *Ontario Heritage Act* under *Regulation 9/06: Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest*. They also indicated that they would wait on moving forward with a Heritage Designation for the Stephenson House until a demolition permit was requested at some future date.

Our disappointment with this assessment led to a further Zoom meeting on October 24 that included Sydney Scott from Councillor Brad Bradford's office, Jonathan and Barbara from TBETHS, and Adam Wynne of the Panel. We stated that TBETHS continued to believe that the remaining buildings possessed significant heritage value, as detailed extensively in the documents developed and shared by Barbara. In addition to the heritage value, the loss of the buildings would also result in the loss of approximately 56 units of affordable housing. The need to urgently designate the Stephenson House as soon as possible, rather than waiting for a demolition application, was also highlighted.

No action was forthcoming, and TBETHS continued to be frustrated with the indifference, negativity and lack of response to concerns about heritage properties within our catchment area from elected and appointed city officials and city staff.

Processed selected materials donated to TBETHS

- Samantha Little researched people included in the Hambly family scrapbook, donated to TBETHS in 2023-24. She compiled a family tree on Ancestry.ca, adding information scanned from selected pages in the scrapbook.
- Barbara Myrvold and Mary Campbell catalogued Joan Oppertshauser's documentary art collection that she officially donated on May 2, 2024. The collection consists of pen and ink drawings (originals and photomechanical reproductions) that Joan created between 1972 and 1976 during her 30-year residency at The Beach. The collection includes 37 unique views of buildings; all but one (Yorkville Fire Hall) are located in The Beach, East Toronto and vicinity. Some of the buildings have been demolished since the drawings were created. Twenty of the views are single copies and 17 are multiple copies, ranging from two to 101 copies. Condition and sizes vary.



Two drawings from the Joan Oppertshauser Collection

Toronto Public Library Digital Archive

Responded to 31 comments and questions received through the “Contact Us” section of our website.

Thanks to Katherine Vice for monitoring Contact Us. Emails included

- Requests for research assistance/information about local buildings (Leuty Lifesaving Station, 145-147 Main Street, 2172-2190 Gerrard & 25-27 Norwood Road, a house on Munro Park Avenue house), organizations (Beach United Church) and people (Laing family, shown in 1907 photograph); contact information for Society directors, members and speakers at our events); for speakers from the Society (for walking tours, history of Kingston Road); information about Society membership and activities; help and advice (for a Muddy York podcast about The Beach; from a new group wanting to protect properties bordering a laneway south of Kingston Road between Willow and Silver Birch avenues); to share ideas and initiatives (from the Riverdale Historical Society). D. Bruce McCowan’s request for assistance in identifying people in his photo of "The Hunters Return York 1907" resulted in a new “Local Story” on the TBETHS’ website, posted in April 2025.
- Offers to present Society programs by Sheila White, Mark Vendramini and Mima Brown Kapches, resulting in their presenting TBETHS’ events in November 2024, and February and May 2025, respectively. The Royal Ontario Museum’s Group Sales Department offered TBETHS a custom discount code for the ROM's exhibit, “Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away”. Our Membership Secretary Julita Tyszewicz e-mailed the discount code to all paid up members.
- Additional offers to donate monies and materials were received and accepted with thanks, specifically:
 - Monies donated by Peter Keleghan-Krakus for research conducted on his house.
 - Three scrapbooks created in the 1970s by The Upper Gerrard Ravine Committee documenting its successful efforts to prevent the route of the proposed Scarborough Expressway going through its neighbourhood; donated by Janice Habasinski.
 - Three trophies and three photographs relating to Dr. R. E. (Robert Edward) Davidson, 1883-1969, were donated by Lynn Harpley, his granddaughter, from the estate of her brother, Eric Davidson. Dr. Davidson won two of the trophies at the Glen Stewart Golf Club: the Ames Cup in 1924 and the Rosebowl for the club championship in 1927. The other, the Physicians’ Members’ Prize Tray, was won at the Cliffside Golf Club. The photographs are of 1980 Queen Street East, northeast corner of Waverley Road (demolished c.1961), where Dr. Davidson resided with his family and practised medicine for many years.
 - An eight-page brochure providing a wealth of information about the iconic fourplex and duplex apartments that the Price Brothers built in the late 1920s on part of the old Scarboro Beach Park (see page 13), was donated by Paul Moore, a descendant of the developers. This document will be added to TBETHS’ website.



Continued our online presence through our social media platforms

- Dozens of posts and comments were made to our Facebook page where we had 700 followers. Unfortunately, during the year, access to it was limited to registered Facebook subscribers, unlike previously when viewing was open to everyone. In addition, Meta continued its practice started in August 2023 to block articles on Facebook from Canadian news outlets in response to Canada’s O-line News Act. 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. Erik Malmsten discussed “Early years of the Civic Holiday at The Beach and East Toronto” noting the “fantastic new TBETHS Local History Index was my major source for details.” Erik and Barbara Myrvold updated their post on “Olympians from The Beach and East Toronto” adding local participants from Paris 2024. Posts were added about TBETHS’ nomination for a Heritage Toronto award, and, of course, our regular events. Special thanks to Pete Richardson, President of Tayson Information Technology, for his ongoing work as our Webmaster.
- To reach out to younger people, TBETHS investigated creating an Instagram account. Samantha Little created a plan for the proposed account, with six months of posts outlined. Her recommendations regarding sharing content responsibilities and using a lead curator and a social media management system will be considered by the Board in the next fiscal year.

Provided articles about TBETHS’ activities to local organizations and heritage groups

Articles by Katherine Vice were published in the Spring and Fall 2024 issues of *Triangle Topics*, the newsletter of the Beach Triangle Residents Association. She and Barbara Myrvold co-authored an article that was included in the July 17, 2024 issue of *Toronto Tree*, the newsletter of the Toronto Branch, Ontario Genealogical Society.

THE BEACH AND EAST TORONTO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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



SCARBORO BEACH PARK



Scarboro Beach used sensational activities and shows to draw a crowd. An illuminated 30-metre tower with an anchor and a beacon at the top was a popular backdrop for family photos and daredevil acts.
Left: Toronto World, June 1, 1907
Right: City of Toronto Archives



Lion carousel seat carved by Charles I.D. Loeff, c. 1898-1905. Parts of the Scarboro Beach carousel remain in use at Lakeside Park in St. Catharines.
Heritage Toronto

This site was once the centre of an amusement park that boasted attractions such as the Tickler, Cascades or Tunnel of Love, and Chute-the-Chutes. When Scarboro Beach Park opened to the public on June 1, 1907, it welcomed nearly two million visitors in its first season. Most rides cost about 10 cents each (\$3 in 2024) except the free Bump-the-Bumps slide.

In 1911, the Toronto Railway Company (TRC) bought Scarboro Beach Park, developing it as a "trolley park" destination to promote weekend and nighttime streetcar use. The TRC provided more electricity for lighting and allowed some rides, including the carousel, to be converted from steam to electric power.

The first public exhibition flights of airplanes in Canada took place at Scarboro Beach Park in 1909. Having been trained by aviator Glenn Curtiss, daredevil Charles F. Willard and his Golden Flyer airplane crashed twice before circling over the lake for about five minutes.

After the newly formed Toronto Transportation Commission (TTC) took over the TRC in 1921, Scarboro Beach Park was neglected, and it closed permanently in 1925. The TTC sold the land to an investment company that demolished the attractions, replacing them mostly with duplexes and fourplexes built by the Price Brothers.

Scarboro Beach Park survives in the name of Scarboro Beach Boulevard, which runs where the entrance gates to the park once stood.



Map of Scarboro Beach Park, 1963. In 1906, Harry and Mabel Dorsey bought the site for \$160,000 (about \$4 million in 2024) and built the first amusement park here.
Lorne V. Carroll, R.F. Corley, and B. Mullhall



Postcard, 1909. Inspired by New York's Luna Park and Dreamland, thousands of sparkling lights illuminated the park at night. Pictured left to right: San Francisco Earthquake exhibit, Temple of Music, Chute-the-Chutes flume, Bump-the-Bumps slide, and carousel.
City of Toronto Archives

HERITAGE TORONTO 2024

Replacement plaque for Scarboro Beach Park

Located on the north side of the Boardwalk at the foot of Scarboro Beach Boulevard, Toronto
Heritage Toronto 2024