

THE BEACH AND EAST TORONTO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Annual Report



**Detail, Key Plan, East Toronto, Ont. Including Little York,  
Chas. E. Goad, September 1897**

Digital maps of the local area were donated by Hogtown Histories 2025  
and added to TBETHS website January 2026

**April 1 2025 to March 31 2026**

THE BEACH AND EAST TORONTO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**2025-2026 Board of Directors**

<b>Director</b>	<b>Position</b>
Jonathan Bradshaw	President
Mary Campbell	At Large
Glenn Chadwick	Event Coordinator; Web Committee
Samantha Little	At Large
Barbara Myrvold	Local History Index Project; Web Committee Chair; Bill 23 Response Committee
Julita Tyszewicz	Treasurer; Membership Secretary
Katherine Vice	Secretary; Local History Index Project; Web Contact Responder; 50 <sup>th</sup> anniversary Photo Project Lead
Vice-President	Position vacant from December 19, 2022

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

The Beach and East Toronto Historical Society (TBETHS) continued its commitment to preserving, documenting, and advocating for the heritage of our local neighbourhoods. This year brought significant challenges, particularly as concerns around redevelopment and the loss of historic buildings continued to grow across the Beach and East Toronto.

Throughout 2025–2026, TBETHS continued to advocate strongly for the preservation of historic properties that contribute to the architectural and cultural identity of our community. However, this work has become increasingly frustrating, since even when local buildings are added to the Toronto Heritage Register, their protection is by no means assured.

One of the most concerning examples involved the ten properties contained within four historic buildings located at 143, 155, 161, and 167 Main Street; 154 and 164 Main Street; and 2201–2207 Gerrard Street East. These properties had been added to the Toronto Heritage Register by Toronto City Council on March 20, 2024, in recognition of their heritage value and contribution to the historic character of the area. Despite this recognition, the properties were removed from the Register in 2026, as possible redevelopment plans advanced. Their removal underscores the limitations of heritage listing alone and highlighted the ongoing vulnerability of many historic buildings within our neighbourhoods.

TBETHS also followed closely the situation involving the Little York Hotel at 2736 Danforth Avenue, a significant landmark building that played an important role in the development of the area and was listed on the Toronto Heritage Register in December 2020. During 2025, redevelopment proposals for the site advanced through the City process, culminating in Council approval for demolition of the property. While a modern reconstruction of the original building will supposedly form part of the redevelopment proposal, it will not possess any actual heritage value. The loss of another long-standing heritage building was deeply disappointing and raised broader concerns about the failure to adequately balance heritage conservation with redevelopment pressures in Toronto. (See page 9 for illustrations.)

We also continued monitoring the fate of the Enderby Road and Gerrard Street East properties that TBETHS previously had advocated to be protected. Despite extensive research and submissions demonstrating their heritage value, our efforts to secure designation were unsuccessful. By late 2025, the properties had been sold and the buildings substantially gutted.

TBETHS will continue to monitor developments in the area closely and advocate for stronger protections before irreversible losses occur, however, we remain deeply disappointed by the response from Heritage Planning staff and the general lack of meaningful engagement on these issues.

While much of the year involved responding to difficult heritage challenges, there were also moments of celebration and recognition. We were pleased to see TBETHS member Richard White nominated for a Heritage Toronto Award for his book, *The Beaches: Creation of a Neighbourhood*, an important contribution to documenting and sharing the history of our community. Glenn Chadwick represented TBETHS at the awards ceremony held on October 20, and we congratulate Richard on this well-deserved recognition.

As always, TBETHS remains deeply grateful to our Board members, volunteers, researchers, and community supporters whose time, expertise, and passion continue to sustain the Society's work. I would personally like to thank Barbara Myrvold, Glenn Chadwick, Julita Tyszewicz, Mary Campbell, and Katherine Vice for their dedication and ongoing commitment. Whether through advocacy, archival research, publications, public engagement, or monitoring development applications, their contributions have been essential to our work and to preserving the heritage of the Beach and East Toronto.

I would also like to acknowledge Samantha Little, who stepped away from the Board this year, for the enthusiasm, creativity, and energy she brought to TBETHS and its initiatives. Samantha played an important role in helping develop the Society's Instagram presence, contributing to our efforts to reach broader audiences and engage new community members with local history. We are grateful for the time and work she dedicated to the Society and wish her all the best in the future.

In closing, TBETHS continues to be an active and committed voice for local heritage at a time when many historic buildings and neighbourhood character areas remain under increasing threat. With significant changes to the Ontario Heritage Act scheduled to come into effect on January 1, 2027, the challenges facing heritage preservation are expected to become even greater. These changes will require organizations such as TBETHS to work harder than ever to advocate for meaningful protections, raise public awareness, and ensure that the historic buildings and cultural landscapes that define our communities are not permanently lost.

While the challenges facing heritage preservation can at times feel discouraging, the Society remains committed to ensuring that the history and character of the Beach and East Toronto continue to be recognised, valued, and protected for future generations. We thank all of our members and supporters for their continued encouragement and involvement throughout the year.

**Jonathan Bradshaw, President**

## MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

As at March 31, 2026, TBETHS had 92 members (vs. 85 members as at March 31, 2025) – an increase of just over 8% from the previous year. 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, 2026

		\$
Cash as at April 1, 2025		3,802.28
<b>Income</b>		
Membership fees	1,720.00	
Donations and book sales	<u>40.00</u>	
<b>Total Income</b>		1,760.00
<b>Expenditures</b>		
Meetings and events	1,310.82	
Online communications	449.60	
Attendance at Heritage Toronto event	119.16	
Membership fee (Ontario Historical Society)	65.00	
Bank charges	<u>40.15</u>	
<b>Total Expenditures</b>		<u>1,984.73</u>
Cash as at March 31, 2026		<u><u>3,577.55</u></u>

**Julita Tyszewicz, Treasurer**

## MAJOR ACTIVITIES

### Increased our online presence through our social media platforms

#### Website

- Content was regularly added, revised and updated on our website.
- The Gallery section was augmented in August 2025 with links to more than 1,300 images (organized by eight major commercial streets and other places in TBETHS catchment area) that had been photographed by 14 dedicated volunteers in last year's Photograph Documentary Project, spearheaded by Katherine Vice, who also planned the new web page.
- A new section was added in January 2026 for "Maps and Atlases," which featured digital maps of East Toronto and area published by Charles Goad in 1897 and 1913 and donated to TBETHS in 2025. Katherine Vice and Barbara Myrvold planned these new pages, working closely with our webmaster, Pete Richardson. The maps were linked on Toronto Public Library's online guide to Toronto Fire Insurance Atlases & Plans <https://tpl.ca/downloads-ebooks/history-genealogy/fire-insurance-plans/>
- Special thanks to Pete Richardson, President of Tayson Information Technology, for his ongoing support.

#### Facebook

Dozens of posts and comments were made to our Facebook page where we had 700 followers. We are grateful to Deborah Livingston-Lowe for her diligent and consistent work in managing our Facebook page. Thanks also to TBETHS members, notably Eric Malmsten, who by supplied content to both our Facebook and Instagram accounts.

#### Instagram

Building on plans developed by Samantha Little, TBETHS launched an Instagram account in November 2025, with our first post on November 23. We were very fortunate that Siobhan Hallam, a master's student at the Faculty of Information, University of Toronto, volunteered to create and curate the content for our Instagram account, which, she explained "is a way of sharing local history on a popular social media platform in a visual format. It features archival photos, short write-ups, and event posts, focusing on people and places in the East End. ... The plan has been to post once a week on Sundays, along with additional posts (like event posters) as needed. We currently have content prepared and scheduled through to January 2027. Posts have been varied, including Goad's maps, notable figures' birthdays, landmarks still standing or lost to history, and community staples like the Beaches Library and the boardwalk. We also try to tie



content into broader events such as International Women's Day and Black History Month, as well as seasonal moments, for example, sharing historical snowstorm content during this year's polar vortex. We reached 100 followers in April 2026 and it steadily grows each month."

#### ***Screenshot of an Instagram page, May 2026***

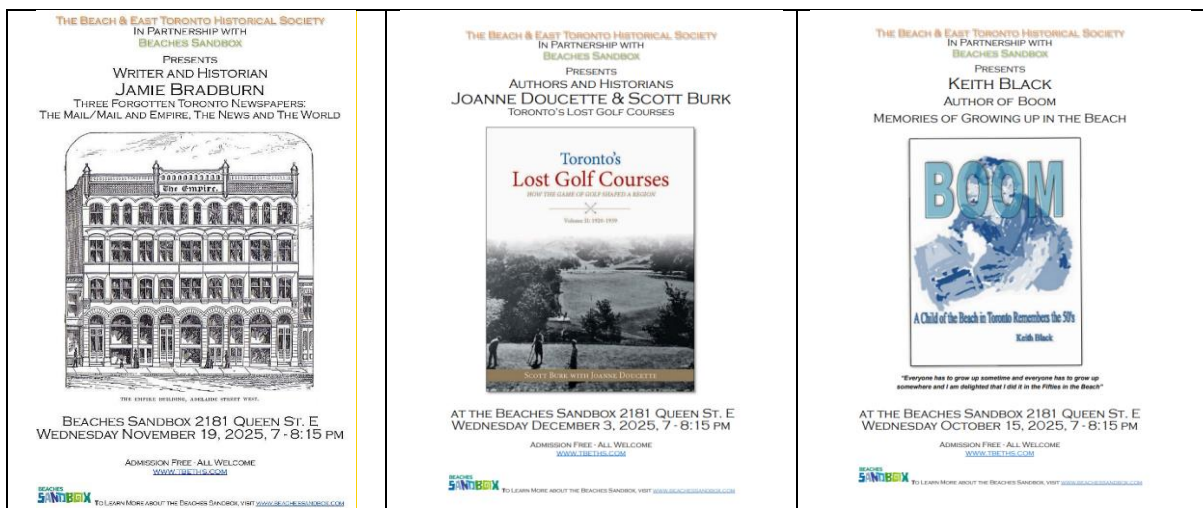
**Provided eight free public events at the Beaches Sandbox, 2181 Queen Street East (just east of Lee Avenue).**

Our public events mostly were held on Wednesdays from 7 to 8:30 pm, with an average attendance of 43 people. Thanks to the Beaches Sandbox owners (Jason Schuy and Paulette O’Leary) for renting us the venue, providing such helpful staff, and hosting receptions after a few of our events.

A big shout-out to Glenn Chadwick, Event Coordinator, for organizing a variety of interesting programs, and promoting them in the media and elsewhere with attractive posters that he created.

A special thanks to the speakers at this year’s events, who provided their services without charge, continuing our long-standing tradition:

- April 16, 2025. Richard White, author and historian. *The Beach in the 1920s and 1930s: the neighbourhood’s character takes shape*
- May 14, 2025. Mima Brown Kapches, archaeologist and author. *The English Trip of 1910: Toronto, Sir Henry Pellatt, the Queen’s Own Rifles and the Press Gang.*
- June 12, 2025. Annual Meeting. *Treasures From the Archives: A Presentation of Recent Donations to the Society*
- October 15, 2025. Keith Black, author and former local resident. *Boom, his book about growing up in the Beach and East End Toronto during the 1950s.*
- November 19, 2025. Jamie Bradburn, writer and historian. *Three Forgotten Toronto newspapers: The Mail/Mail and Empire, The News, and The World.*
- December 3, 2025. Authors and historians Joanne Doucette and Scott Burk. *Lost golf courses in the local area.*
- February 11, 2026. Bill Suddick, Beach Metro News cartoonist, artist and illustrator. *More stories and characters from Beach Metro News editorial cartoons.*
- March 11, 2026. Virginia Van Vliet, historian and member of the Cabbagetown Preservation Association Board. *The Cemeteries of Cabbagetown.*



**Posters for three of our public events held in 2025-2026**

**Provided or participated in several outdoor events in 2024**



Gene Domagala, our indefatigable and popular tour leader, conducted historic walking tours on five Saturdays afternoons in 2025: May 10, Main Street and the former Town of East Toronto; June 14, St. John’s Norway Cemetery; July 12, Kingston Road from Victoria Park Avenue westwards; August 9, Queen Street East in the Balmy Beach area; September 13, Queen Street East west from the Kew Beach Fire Hall to the Ashbridge Estate. Gene used the new sound system that the Board purchased this year to replace his old and unreliable equipment.

TBETHS continued its tradition of placing a memorial wreath at the annual Remembrance Day ceremony on November 11 at the cenotaph in Kew Gardens.

**Identified original drawings (compared to prints) in the Joan Oppertshouser Art Collection (donated to TBETHS in 2024) and developed strategies to increase maintenance, access and appreciation of it.**

Using his expertise as an artist, Director Glenn Chadwick examined the Joan Oppertshouser Art Collection and determined that of its 37 unique views, 36 items were pen and ink drawings (originals) and the remaining 387 items were photomechanical reproductions. To increase maintenance, access and appreciation of the collection, TBETHS Board passed the following recommendations at its meeting on March 18, 2026:

1. Considering that the Toronto Public Library already has 19 drawings created by Joan Oppertshouser in its collections, and provides online access to them with metadata and images on the Library’s Digital Archive, TBETHS first will offer to sell items in its collection to TPL, with the understanding that all newly-acquired images will be added to the TPL’s Digital Archive in a timely fashion;
2. Considering that the Joan Oppertshouser Art Collection at TBETHS includes both original drawings, which never have been offered for sale before, and reproductions (prints), a two-tier pricing scheme will be adopted for selling the pictures.
3. Once TPL has selected images for its collection and TBETHS’s inventory has been updated to reflect this, the remaining pictures will be offered for sale, first to the City of Toronto Archives and then to the general public through TBETHS website; and
4. The disposition of remaining pictures will be considered at a later date.

	
<p>“St. John the Baptist Anglican Church (opened 1893), Kingston Road, northwest corner Woodbine Avenue Toronto, Ontario”, 1976</p>	<p>“Lee Avenue house, Kew Beach Gardens, Toronto”, 1974</p>

**Two drawings from the Joan Oppertshouser Collection  
Toronto Public Library Digital Archive**

**Responded to 27 comments and questions received through the “[Contact Us](#)” section of our website (all from non-members of TBETHS).**

Thanks to Katherine Vice for monitoring Contact Us. Emails included

- Requests for research assistance/information about local businesses (e.g., at Queen southwest corner of Beech); places (e.g., a house on Silver Birch, Dr. Young memorial in Kew Gardens), and people (e.g., ‘eccentric’ Silver Birch resident Mary "Tessie" Taylor Mortinez; architect Ernest Albert Leigh, 1895-1944); contact information for Society directors, members and speakers at our events); for speakers from the Society; information about Society membership and activities; help and advice, e.g., to identify people in group photographs, such as Balmy Beach Women's War Canoe Club 1920s and Beaches St. John's Ambulance Brigade 1943; to send a follow-up letter to supported naming a local laneway for Herbert Waters, an early and prominent local resident.
- Offers to donate materials and to assist the Society with its work were received and accepted with thanks. In gratitude for our response to his request for information about Mary Mortinez, Peter Marshall of Hogtown House Histories sent digital copies of Goad's atlas maps of East Toronto from 1897 and 1913, some available only through British Library and none held in Toronto.

**Provided a program as part of St. John's Norway's 175th anniversary celebrations.**

Barbara Myrvold gave a PowerPoint presentation, “The area in the vicinity of St. John the Baptist, Norway before and after 1850,” at the Anglican church on January 18, 2026. At 175 years, it has the oldest congregation in the local area.

**Took steps for the long-term preservation of the digital images taken in the 50th Anniversary Documentary Photograph Project.**

Funds were allocated by the Board in May 2025 to print a representative selection of the more than 1,300 images that volunteers took in 2024 of buildings and other sites on major streets in the local area. By the end of March, Katherine Vice had completed most of the work to select, organize and describe the images.

**Prepared materials for inclusion in a new oral history section on TBETHS website, planned for 2025-26.**

- Barbara Myrvold prepared an inventory of oral history recordings and/or transcriptions about the local area that are held at TBETHS and the Toronto Public Library.
- Bill Clarke converted several oral histories from the 1970s and 1980s housed in TBETHS Archives from cassette tape to digital format.
- Ann Menheere transcribed two of these recordings – one of Duncan Meyer's talk to the historical society on May 28, 1978 discussing the history of local drug stores (including his own that operated for many years at Queen and Balsam), and the other of Charles Gregory's interview with Mary Campbell conducted on June 20, 1978. Ann also revised an introductory biography about her grandmother, Ellen (Nellie) Jane Walters, later Penney (1888-1986), that was included with a transcript of her interview with Pat Grant, c.1975.
- Susan Tonkin volunteered to conduct interviews with long-time residents, and will start with Dorothy Ottaway and Mary Campbell in the next fiscal year.

# THE BEACH AND EAST TORONTO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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



**Former Little York Hotel, 2736 Danforth Avenue, June 2025**  
Beach Metro News



**Halfway House, originally stood Kingston Road and Midland,  
now at Black Creek Pioneer Village, 2022**  
Little York Hotel probably looked much like this in its heyday.  
ToBuilt



**Proposed reconstruction of the demolished Little York Hotel  
within the new eight-storey and four-storey residential  
development, June 2026.**  
Beach Metro News