



Wednesday, Feb 7 2024, 8:00 pm

Rousseau Room - Swanssea Town Hall

SPEAKER: Bob Roden

The Story of Windermere United Church – A Swanssea Landmark for More Than a Century

Visitors Welcome! Light Refreshments!

*The Swanssea Historical Society thankfully acknowledges
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President's Message: by Bob Roden, President

To members and friends of the Swansea Historical Society, we wish you good health, happiness, and prosperity for 2024. As most of you know, back in March 2020, with the advent of COVID-19, we had to close our Archives, cancel all indoor SHS meetings (including Executive meetings), and cut back on various other activities. Over the intervening years, we have done our best to fulfill all the administrative requirements to keep your Society afloat, while gradually restarting our normal activities. We have tried to keep in touch with our members through frequent e-mail messages, postings on the Society's website, and the occasional formal Newsletter. Unfortunately, communicating with members who do not use computers was a challenge. Starting in September 2023, we have resumed a more regular Newsletter schedule, which includes e-mailing of Newsletters to those who are willing to accept electronic copies, and hand deliveries and mailings by Canada Post for those members who have requested paper copies.

Between October 2021 and May 2023, we held “virtual” monthly Swansea Historical Society meetings, using the “Zoom” on-line conferencing tool. This worked well for many of our members, especially those who were uncomfortable attending in-person meetings during COVID-19, and those who were too far away to attend at the Swansea Town Hall. On the other hand, we regret that many people have been unable to participate, for various reasons. Starting with the October 2023 meeting, we have moved to a “hybrid” approach which means that participants now have a choice of attending SHS meetings in-person at the Town Hall, or connecting on-line using Zoom. In the long run, we hope the hybrid format will be good for everyone, including those who are comfortable now with in-person meetings and those who prefer to participate from a distance.

Please pass this information on to anyone you think would be interested and may not be receiving this notice.



In Sympathy

Dorothy Duncan, 1927-2023: We mourn the recent passing of Dorothy Duncan, a lifelong champion of Ontario's history and heritage, and an accomplished researcher and author. Among her many contributions to local history, Dorothy served as Executive Director of our parent organization, the Ontario Historical Society, in the 1980s. In 1984, she chaired exploratory meetings which led to the formation of the Swansea Historical Society the following year. Her honours included an honorary Doctorate of Laws from the University of Waterloo in 1996 and the Order of Ontario in 2003. In December 2012., Dorothy was the featured speaker at our SHS meeting. Her well-received presentation, entitled *Feasting and Fasting: Canada's Heritage Celebrations*, reflected just one of her many interests – pioneer cooking!! She will be greatly missed in the heritage community.



Historical Photo of the Month

This is just one of many local historical photos in our 2019 calendar. See the 2024 calendar at swanseahistoricalsociety.ca/publications/calendars



Shinny hockey game on a frozen Grenadier pond, date unknown.
(Swansea Historical Society Archives)



Swansea Historical Society Contact Information

During the pandemic, we have been doing our best to respond to all requests, although our answers may be delayed somewhat because of renovation work at the Town Hall is now complicating access to our Archives. In the meantime, we invite you to continue following our activities through the Society's website

www.swanseahistoricalsociety.ca and the website of the Swansea Town Hall www.swanseatownhall.ca . You can also follow us on X (formerly Twitter) at twitter.com/Swansea_History or Instagram at www.instagram.com/swansea_history .

If you wish to contact us, the Society's mobile telephone number is 647-859-3901, and you can send e-mails to: swanseahistoricalsociety@gmail.com or swancnews@gmail.com or through the SHS website. Our mailing address is 95 Lavinia Avenue, Box 102, Toronto ON M6S 3H9. However, for urgent items, we suggest that you use email or telephone where possible, since we have only occasional access to our mailbox at the Town Hall. Your comments and suggestions are always most welcome, and please let us know of any developments that may be of interest to the Society and its members.



Future Events

In addition to the following list, please note that our new “Events” web page contains a more complete and more up-to-date list of Swansea Historical Society events and local community events. See swanseahistoricalsociety.ca/events .

“The Laundry List”, 750 Spadina Ave., Sat. Jan. 27, 7:30 pm, Sun Jan 28, 3:00 pm & 7:30 pm,: Our lovely and talented December 2023 presenters, Trina Josdal and Amy Lintunen, will be performing with their troupe, The Vintage Taps, at the Al Green Theatre later this month. Step into the glitz and glamour of the Prohibition era with The Laundry List, a vaudeville-inspired musical comedy featuring live music, singing, and tap dancing from a talented cast. The Laundry List promises to leave you with a song in your heart and a skip in your step. It tells the story of sisters Ruby and Zelda Benoit, who embark on a wild adventure to save their family’s bootlegging business. The sisters go incognito and infiltrate the world of Frankie’s Suds and Bubbles—a speakeasy cleverly disguised as a laundry. Shimmying their way into the chorus, they two-step their way through a madcap mix of jazz singers, rum runners, and a whole lot of dirty laundry.

Tickets are \$35.00 for adults and \$20.00 for children. For more information, or to order tickets , please visit www.thevintagegaps.com .

Monthly SHS meeting, Wed. Feb. 7, 2024, 8:00 pm, Swansea Town Hall: Speaker: Our own Mr. Bob Roden – “The Story of Windermere United Church – A Swansea Landmark for More Than a Century”. Windermere United Church has played an important role in the life of the Swansea community ever since the congregation was founded in 1912, as Windermere Methodist Church. When the United Church of Canada was created in the 1920s, Windermere Methodist became Windermere United. For many decades, the congregation grew and prospered, and in recent years it was noted for its outreach initiatives. In 2023, as the membership was shrinking, the decision was made to merge with Runnymede United. We are pleased that the landmark building at the corner of Mayfield Avenue will be preserved as a hub for community-oriented activities, now known as the Windermere Campus of Runnymede United Church.

Tonight's speaker has been an active member of Windermere since he met Susan in 1984, and they were married in 1985. (Susan had been attending Windermere since she was 3 years old!) For several years, Bob served on the Church Council, including terms as Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee.

The February meeting will be conducted in a hybrid format so that participants can attend in-person at the Swansea Town Hall or connect on-line using the Zoom tool. Zoom links will be provided closer to the meeting date. The Zoom connection will be open by 7:45 pm on February 7. If possible, we suggest that on-line participants start tuning in as soon as the link is open, so that we can be ready to kick off the meeting at 8 pm.

Monthly SHS meeting, Wed. March 6, 2024, 8:00 pm, Swansea Town Hall: Speaker: Lorna Poplak -- *“Toronto's Don Jail”*. Lorna Poplak is a Toronto-based writer, editor, and researcher. She is the author of two award-nominated non-fiction books: -- *“The Don – The Story of Toronto's Infamous Jail”*, and *“Drop Dead – A Horrible History of Hanging in Canada”*. With these and other publications, Lorna is establishing herself as an authority on the history of crime and punishment in Canada. Her presentation will include many fascinating stories about people associated with the Don Jail – the inmates, the staff, the governors, people who escaped from the Don, and people whose lives ended there at the end of a rope.

As above, the March meeting will be conducted in a hybrid format so that participants can attend in-person at the Town Hall or connect on-line using the Zoom tool. Zoom links will be provided closer to the meeting date.



Executive Announcements: This may be old news to many of our readers, but we would like to formally recognize the following people who are now actively contributing to our Executive.

- Amy Wilkinson. In 2021, Amy answered our call for expertise in running virtual meetings. Since then, her assistance in hosting on-line meetings, and more recently hybrid meetings, has been invaluable. Also, in the fall of 2022, Amy took on the role of Programme Coordinator, arranging speakers for our monthly meetings.
- Heather Pessione. Starting with our first hybrid meeting last fall, Heather has served refreshments, taking over the role from Thelma Wheatley.
- Jordan Simons. In November 2022, Jordan volunteered to take over the management of our website and social media, replacing Sarah Lowenberg. In December, Jordan quickly stepped into the breach, managing the Zoom connection for our hybrid meeting, when Amy had a scheduling conflict.
- Sydney Reimer. In addition to her position of Membership Coordinator, Sydney recently agreed to become our Secretary, recording minutes of our business meetings, taking over from Sarah Casey.

We also wish to extend a sincere and heartfelt thank-you to the following people who have stepped aside from their former responsibilities, while remaining “members-at-large” on the Executive, where we can continue to benefit from their knowledge and experience.

- Lance Gleich. Lance joined the Executive in 2012, and he has played a pivotal role in keeping the Society and its programmes afloat, as Vice-President, Special Events Coordinator, and Representative to the Toronto Historical Association.
- Sarah Casey. Sarah filled in capably as Interim Secretary before and during the pandemic. Her last official duty in this position was taking minutes at the 2022 Annual General Meeting.

- Sarah Lowenberg. Sarah joined the Executive in 2016, and by the following year she had established the Society's highly-respected on-line presence through our web-site and social media, all of which she has continued to manage until now.
- Thelma Wheatley. Thelma accepted the position of Refreshments Coordinator in 2014, a job she continued to perform at our monthly meetings until COVID-19 shut us down in 2020.

We thank all these people for their contributions – past, present, and future. We ask our readers, if you can, to take the opportunity to speak personally to these people and let them know how much their assistance is appreciated.



Executive Vacancies: If your Society is to continue functioning, we still need more volunteers!! Three important positions, Vice-President, Events Coordinator, and Publications Coordinator, are currently vacant. In addition, some of us are well past our “best-before” dates, and some of us are dealing with personal issues that now limit our ability to participate. We can always benefit from new blood and new ideas! Please let us know if you would like to explore ways that you could become more involved in the operation of your Society, or if you can think of someone we might approach. In addition to the above vacancies, we are also happy to introduce people to the Executive as “members-at-large” with no specific ongoing responsibilities – just a willingness to help out when needed. The future of our Society is in your hands. We need to hear from you!!



2024 Swansea Community Calendars

We are pleased to remind you that the 2024 Swansea Community Calendar has been available for purchase since early December. As in past years, the calendar includes dates of upcoming community events and a selection of historic photographs of the area. The price is being held at \$10.00 per copy. Calendars can be purchased over-the-counter at the office of the Swansea Town Hall, or at any SHS events. We can also receive orders by telephone, email, or regular mail for calendars to be mailed to you -- or hand-delivered if you are in the area. (A hearty "thank-you" to Lance Gleich, Sarah Lowenberg, and Wallace Boustead for their roles in making the annual calendar a success once again).



Financial Notes: We are pleased to remind you that the Swansea Historical Society can now accept payments electronically. E-transfers directed to swanseahistoricalociety@gmail.com will result in a direct deposit to the SHS bank account at Scotiabank. This e-transfer approach can be used to pay membership fees, purchase publications, make donations to the Society, etc. (As a registered charity, the Society can provide tax receipts for donations). We invite you to give it a try. To assist our Treasurer with her accounting, if you are sending money by e-transfer, please use the “message” area to identify the purpose of your payment.



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL!!

As of September 1, 2023, we are in a new membership year which extends to August 31, 2024. Some of you have already paid your membership for 2023-2024, and we thank you. If you have not yet paid your membership fees for 2023-2024, we invite you to do so at your earliest convenience. Fees can be paid at any SHS events, or payments can be sent to: 95 Lavinia Avenue, Box 102, Toronto, M6S 3H9, or fees can be paid by e-transfer to: swanseahistoricalociety@gmail.com. To assist our Treasurer, please use the "message" area to indicate whether your e-transfer payment is for a single membership, family membership, and/or donation, etc.

For many years, the annual membership fees have been held at \$15 for an individual and \$20 for a family. Your fees help to offset many of the costs incurred by the Society in its ongoing operations. If you are reading this and you are not already a member of the Swansea Historical Society, please join us so that you can be added to our mailing list and help support this worthy cause.



SWANSEA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



2023/2024 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (The membership year runs from Sep – Aug)

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Individual..... \$15.00 _____
Family \$20.00 _____
Corporate \$25.00 _____

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Individual..... \$250.00 _____
Family \$500.00 _____

Family Name: _____ Given Name(s): _____ Membership Number: _____

Street Address: _____ Apartment Number: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal code: _____

Home Telephone: (_____) _____ Business Telephone: (_____) _____

E-Mail: _____ Please use e-mail for my newsletters: Yes No, thanks

Please send to: Swansea Historical Society Membership Secretary, 95 Lavinia Avenue, Box 102, Toronto, Ontario M6S 3H9