

# SWANSEA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Special Joint Event – Wednesday, May 7, 2025, 7:30 pm  
hosted by Runnymede United Church and the Swansea Historical Society

Meet at the former Windermere United Church building  
356 Windermere Avenue, corner of Mayfield Avenue, in Swansea  
(now known as the Windermere Campus of Runnymede United Church,  
following the June 1, 2023, amalgamation).

Please join us for a talk and guided tour of the Windermere building,  
to be followed by refreshments in the Parlour

**Swansea Historical Society:** Mailing address – 95 Lavinia Avenue, Box 102, Toronto ON M6S 3H9 ; mobile telephone – 647-859-3901 ; website – [www.swanseahistoricalociety.ca](http://www.swanseahistoricalociety.ca) ; e-mail – [swanseahistoricalociety@gmail.com](mailto:swanseahistoricalociety@gmail.com) .

**Message from your President:** As you may have heard, the Swansea Historical Society (SHS) is seeking to fill various volunteer positions, which are either currently vacant or expected to become vacant in the coming months.

Firstly, I **Robert (Bob) Roden** have been a member of SHS since the mid-1980s. I served as Auditor and then Membership Coordinator for several years. In the spring of 2012, a vacancy suddenly arose, and I was invited to fill in temporarily as Acting President. Now, after 13 years as SHS President, I feel it is time for me to accept a promotion to Past-President, and make way for someone who can bring fresh perspectives, new ideas, and renewed energy to the organization. My tentative target date for moving on is August 31, 2025 – the end of our current programme and financial year.

Secondly, **Lance Gleich** recently accepted the position of President of Heritage York, the organization which manages the historic Lambton House building and all the activities that take place there. It is an enormous responsibility, and he has stated that he needs to step away from any formal duties with SHS. Lance joined the SHS Executive in 2012 and served as our Vice-President for several years. Among his many contributions to SHS, he played a leading role in the acquisition of computer equipment and software for SHS, and in recent years he has also looked after our walking tours and the annual Community Calendar.

Thirdly, after assisting with the April 2025 SHS meeting, **Amy Wilkinson** has stepped down from her two roles as Zoom-Meeting Facilitator and Programme Coordinator. In the fall of 2021, after COVID restrictions had shut down our meetings for more than a year, Amy answered the call for someone with the technical knowledge to set up and manage "virtual" meetings, to enable members to participate on-line. Subsequently, she took on the role of Programme Coordinator, and she also managed our transition to hybrid meetings in 2023.

Please join me in thanking Lance and Amy for their many contributions to the Swansea Historical Society over the years. We, the Board Members who are stepping down from our Executive positions, have all indicated that we will be available to share our knowledge and experience with our replacements, in order to ensure the smoothest possible transitions.

**Brief Job Descriptions:** Without going into great detail, the jobs that now need to be filled are essentially as follows. Some understanding of local history is useful, but not required. The most important requirements are an interest and commitment to furthering the preservation and promotion of Swansea's fascinating history, and a willingness to work in collaboration with the other members of the Executive. For some positions, management experience would be useful (but not required). Experience working on committees and working with non-profit volunteer organizations is also useful but not required. There is much that can be learned on the job!

**President:** The President acts as the chief executive officer of the Society, presides at meetings, and is an *ex-officio* member of committees. The President is accountable to report, as appropriate, to the Executive and SHS members on activities and developments undertaken by or impacting the Society, at monthly meetings, at the Annual General Meeting, and through the SHS Newsletter. As CEO, the President has the authority to delegate duties and responsibilities, and the ultimate responsibility to ensure: (a) smooth operation of all SHS activities through monitoring and providing guidance, (b) awareness of heritage activities in the community; (c) that all legal and financial obligations are satisfied; (d) that the requirements of the Society's Constitution, By-laws, and policy documents are adhered to; and (e) that productive relationships are maintained with other organizations, including sister historical societies, the Ontario Historical Society (the parent organization of the SHS), and the administration of the Swansea Town Hall (currently the host of many SHS activities).

Virtual Meetings Facilitator: The Virtual Meetings Facilitator is responsible for managing the on-line aspects of the Society's meetings. This includes ensuring that licensing for on-line activities is current, that the required equipment and software are available and functioning correctly, and that links are provided to members in advance of meetings. The Facilitator is also responsible for the operation of the equipment and software during any meetings that have an on-line component. [Note: The Society's current practice involves holding hybrid meetings where members and guests can attend in-person at the Swansea Town Hall, and people can also participate on-line using the Zoom conferencing tool.]

Programme Coordinator: The Programme Coordinator is responsible for (a) scheduling speakers for the Society's monthly meetings, (b) providing the speakers with background information, directions, and instructions, (c) obtaining information needed in order to announce the speakers' presentations and introduce the speakers, and (d) following-up to ensure that honoraria are provided when appropriate. [We currently have speakers booked through December 2025. The next meeting for which a speaker is required is February 2026.]

Walking Tours Coordinator: Working with the Society's Executive, the Walking Tours Coordinator is responsible for planning and scheduling the Society's guided walking tours, and ensuring that tour leader(s) are scheduled. [Note: Regular guided tours typically include Jane's Walk(s) in May, an annual walk in June, and a Governor Simcoe Walk in September/October. There are detailed tour leader's notes for itineraries which have been followed in past years. Optionally, the Coordinator may be invited to develop new walking tours.]

Special Projects / Special Events Coordinator: Working with the Society's Executive, the Coordinator is responsible for planning, scheduling, and staffing the Society's participation in community events and also projects initiated by SHS. [Note: Recent events include, for example: Heritage Fairs, History on the Humber, Bloor West Street Festivals, Brûlé 400-years commemoration, Doors Open Toronto, etc.]

Persons holding any of the above positions should be members in good standing of the SHS. It is also desirable, although not mandatory, that members holding these positions should be recognized as Directors (also known as "Executive Members") of the Society and be able to participate in Executive meetings. If your Society is to continue functioning, we need more volunteers. Please let us know if you are willing 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. The future of our Society is in your hands. We need to hear from you now!! We anticipate that formal elections will be held at the next Annual General Meeting, currently scheduled for October 1, 2025.

To express interest in any of these positions, or to obtain more detailed information, please contact the Swansea Historical Society, any of its current Directors / Executive Members, or members of the recently constituted Search Committee (currently Ken Stark, Jordan Simons, and Robert Roden).

Also, please feel free to share the information in this Newsletter with neighbours, friends, family, etc., who may not be on our mailing list.

### **Coming Events:**

**Lucy Maud Montgomery (LMM) Exhibit, Sat Apr 26, 2025, 12 noon – 5 pm:** An exhibit of photographs and quotes from Lucy Maud Montgomery's journals and books was created last year to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of LMM's birth. As many of you may know, LMM, the celebrated author of *Anne of Green Gables* and many other classics, had a Swansea connection, living the last seven years of her life on Riverside Drive. For those who missed it in 2024, this fascinating exhibit will be on display once again, Saturday afternoon, April 26, at Backlane Studios, 9 Neepawa Avenue (a few steps east of Roncesvalles in Parkdale). For more information, see <https://www.backlanestudios.ca>

**Jane's Walks, Fri. May 2 – Sun. May 4, 2025:** Guided walking tours are planned for various areas across the City of Toronto, including several in the West End. For a listing of this year's tours, please see <https://www.janeswalkfestivalto.com/walks>

**Monthly SHS meeting, Wed. May 7, 2025, 7:30 pm:** In a break from recent practice, our May meeting will be an event jointly hosted by the Swansea Historical Society and the congregation of Runnymede United Church, and it will be held at 356 Windermere Avenue (corner of Mayfield Avenue – 2 short blocks south of Bloor Street West) – **not at the Swansea Town Hall!!**

This year, 2025, marks the 100th Anniversary of both the founding of Runnymede United Church and the creation of the United Church of Canada.

The building at 356 Windermere opened in 1926, and it has a rich history within the Swansea community. For almost a century, it was the home of Windermere United Church (founded in 1912 as Windermere Avenue Methodist Church), until the Windermere congregation merged with Runnymede United Church in 2023. The building is now known as “The Windermere Campus of Runnymede United Church”, and thankfully it continues to function as a hub for many community-outreach activities in the Swansea area.

We hope you can join us for a historical talk in the Sanctuary and a tour of the Windermere building, presented by a team of Swansea Historical Society and Runnymede United Church members. Following the tour, Katherine Stevens and Robin McDonald of Onward Real Estate have graciously offered to provide refreshments in the Parlour.

We are hoping that it will be possible to conduct the May meeting in a hybrid format so that participants can choose to attend in-person at Windermere or connect on-line using the Zoom tool. Assuming the details can be worked out, Zoom links will be provided closer to the meeting date. The Zoom connection should be open by 7:15 pm on May 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 7:30 pm.

**Swansea Horticultural Society Plant & Bake Sale, Sat. May 10, 9 am - noon:** The Swansea Horticultural Society will be holding its annual plant & bake sale fund-raiser on the front patio of the Swansea Town Hall on Saturday, May 10. We recommend that purchasers come early for the best selection. Also, if you have any plants or baked goods that you would like to donate to the sale, we request that you plan to arrive before 9:00 am, if possible.

**Guided Walking Tour of Swansea, Sat. May 10, 11 am – 12:30 pm:** Alex Rascanu of #ExperienceTO will be conducting a walking tour of the Swansea area, with assistance from the Swansea Historical Society. The tour will start at 11 am on the front patio of the Swansea Town Hall and finish about 12:30 pm at a nearby coffee shop. There is no charge to join the tour, but participants are asked to register on-line through Eventbrite.

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/experienceto-swanea-historical-tour-tickets-1116153417919?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

Please note that this tour replaces the Annual SHS Walking Tour, which had been planned for June 7, 2025. Unless there is a further change in plans, there will **not** be a walking tour on June 7

**Swansea Town Hall Association Annual General Meeting, Thurs. May 15, 7:30 pm:** The Swansea Town Hall Association (STHA) will be holding its AGM in the Rousseau Room on Thursday, May 15. Plans for the evening include a short business meeting and a “meet and greet” involving presentations by community groups based at the Town Hall. All are welcome. In order to vote on issues brought forward, one must be a paid-up member of the STHA. Memberships can be purchased at the meeting for two dollars (\$2.00).

**Green Day at Swansea Town Hall, Sat. May 24, 10 am – 2 pm:** “Repair, Recycle, and Plant with Swansea Town Hall”. Join us on Saturday, May 24 for a FREE event full of Earth-Friendly and Family-Friendly initiatives. (See flier for details).

**"Tea & Talk", 71 Baby Point Road, Fri. May 30:** The next event in Onward Real Estate's "Tea & Talk" series will be at the Baby Point Club on Friday, May 30. The featured speaker will be Richard Jordan. At 11:00 am, he will be presenting an illustrated talk on the history of The Kingsway. After a break for refreshments, and starting at 2 pm, Richard will be talking about "Adventures on the Silk Road", based on a trip that he and his wife Maureen took last year to the exotic area of Central Asia, also known as "The Stans". Richard is a well-known writer and speaker on historical topics, and a former President of the Etobicoke Historical Society (EHS). We have thoroughly enjoyed his talks to our Swansea Historical Society in recent years. On April 17, the Etobicoke Historical Society presented to Richard their Jean Hibbert Award for outstanding contributions to heritage preservation and awareness in Etobicoke. We extend our warmest congratulations to Richard on this well-deserved Award. Please note that there is no charge for attending the Tea & Talk, but those wishing to attend on May 30 are asked to RSVP to [hello@onwardrealestategroup.ca](mailto:hello@onwardrealestategroup.ca) .

**SHS Membership:** Our current membership year runs from September 1, 2024 to August 31, 2025. Many of you have already paid your membership for 2024-2025, and we thank you. If you have not yet paid your membership fees for 2024-2025, 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 electronically by means of e-transfer to: [swanseahistoricalociety@gmail.com](mailto:swanseahistoricalociety@gmail.com) . If using e-transfer, please use the "message" area to indicate whether your payment is for a single membership, family membership, and/or donation, etc. As we move towards the summer break, we are also accepting membership fees for the 2025-2026 membership year, which will take effect immediately and will run to August 31, 2026.

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 2025-2026 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**  
(The Membership Year runs from September 1 through August 31)

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 , 95 Lavinia Avenue, Box 102, Toronto, Ontario M6S 3H9**  
[ Payments to the SHS may be made by cash, cheque, or e-transfer to [swanseahistoricalociety@gmail.com](mailto:swanseahistoricalociety@gmail.com) .]