

# SWANSEA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



2025 Annual General Meeting of the Society

Election of Board Members for 2025-2026

Election of Auditor for 2025-2026

Illustrated Talk by Mark Vendramini  
“Yonge Street's Incredible Music and Pop-Culture History”

to be followed by refreshments

Wednesday, October 1, 2025, 7:30 pm  
Rousseau Room  
Swansea Town Hall  
95 Lavinia Avenue  
(and on-line via “Zoom”)

**Message from your President:** As our readers may have heard, a number of current SHS Board members will not be seeking re-election to their present positions in the October 1 Annual General Meeting. These include:

- **I, Robert (Bob) Roden** will be stepping down as President after 13½ years. (I also served as Auditor and then Membership Coordinator for several years before becoming President).
- **Lance Gleich** has moved on to become the President of Heritage York, the organization which manages the historic Lambton House. Lance served as our Vice-President for several years, he played a leading role in the acquisition of computer equipment and software for SHS, and he has also looked after our walking tours and the annual Community Calendar.
- **Amy Wilkinson** has stepped down from her roles as Zoom-Meeting Facilitator and Programme Coordinator.
- **Wendy Board** will be stepping down after 5 years as the Society's Treasurer.
- **Richard Fogel** will be stepping down from his two roles as Newsletter Editor and Publicity Coordinator.

I wish to extend a sincere thank-you to Lance, Amy, Wendy, and Richard for their many contributions to the Swansea Historical Society over the years. I also wish to thank the Board and the membership of the Society for the support they have given me in my role as President. The opportunity to serve as President of SHS has been a privilege, and a truly rewarding experience.

I am pleased to report that Fereshteh Hashemi, one of the newest additions to the Board of Directors, has agreed to run for Treasurer, and she has already been working with Wendy to learn the details of the job. Also (late-breaking news), we are delighted to share the information that Matthew Bourne, another recent addition to the Board of Directors, has agreed to be nominated for Vice-President, and Ken Stark, currently our Vice-President, has agreed to put his name forward to run for President.

The Board Members who are stepping down have indicated that they will be available to share their knowledge and experience with their replacements, in order to ensure the smoothest possible transitions. We will be entering a new chapter in the story of the Swansea Historical Society, and I plan to continue supporting the SHS in my new role as Past President.

The main volunteer positions we are still working to fill include the following:

- **Programme Coordinator:** Schedules and interacts with speakers for the Society's monthly meetings.
- **Publicity Coordinator:** Manages announcements of the Society's upcoming events.
- **Walking Tours Leader / Coordinator:** Manages walking tours and may develop new walks.
- **Special Projects / Special Events Coordinator:** Manages the Society's participation in community events and also projects initiated by SHS.

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 of the Society and be able to participate in Board meetings. 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 Board. 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!

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!! Formal elections will be held at the next Annual General Meeting, 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, or any of its current Directors / Executive Members. 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:**

**"Tea & Talk", 71 Baby Point Road, Fri. Sept. 5:** The next event in Onward Real Estate's "Tea & Talk" series will be at the Baby Point Club on Friday, September 5. 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. 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 Sept. 5 are asked to RSVP to [hello@onwardrealestategroup.ca](mailto:hello@onwardrealestategroup.ca) .

**Annual Governor Simcoe Walking Tour, 9:30 am and 1:00 pm, Sat. Sept. 27, 2025:** As in past years, this FREE guided walking tour will retrace a portion of Governor Simcoe's 1793 expedition up the Toronto Carrying Place portage route. Part 1 of the tour will start at 9:30 am at the Rousseau plaque (8 South Kingsway, beside the Petro Canada station), heading north, mainly along Riverside Drive, and finishing near Bloor Street. After a break for lunch on Bloor Street, Part 2 will start at 1:00 pm at the Alex Ling Fountain (north-west corner of Bloor and Jane Streets), and then head farther north, mainly following residential streets east of the Humber River. Participants are free to join or leave the walk at any point along the route.

**Monthly SHS meeting, Wed. Oct. 1, 2025, 7:30 pm:** Speaker: Mark Vendramini – *Yonge Street's Incredible Music and Pop-Culture History*. We look forward to welcoming our guest speaker, Mark Vendramini, as he explores Yonge Street's connection to music, theatre, and pop culture. From Jazz, Motown, and Hip-Hop, to Rock-N-Roll, Heavy Metal, and Alternative, if you are a music fan, a local-history buff, or if you just like hearing great stories, then this is an introduction to the City's musical past that will show you a side of "The Strip" that you may never have known existed.

Our speaker, Mark Vendramini, is the founder of the *Memories of the Yonge Street Strip* Facebook group. He believes that Yonge Street's influence is unmatched, rivalling Times Square and Hollywood Boulevard. For example, did you know that Gordon Lightfoot once sang for just \$25 a day at a Yonge Street dinner theatre, or that a chance encounter in Toronto shaped The Beatles' greatest album? We hope you can join us for a presentation that promises to be both informative and entertaining.

The October 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 7:15 pm on October 1, and the evening's programme will start at 7:30 pm with a brief Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Elections. We request that members be on time, so that we can achieve a quorum for the AGM. We will move on to Mark Vendramini's presentation about 8:00 pm.

**Notice:** There are currently two (2) motions which are to be voted on by the membership at the AGM.

**Motion #1:** To increase the annual fee for an individual membership from \$15 to \$20, to increase the annual fee for a family membership from \$20 to \$25; and to create a student membership category with an annual fee of \$10.

**Motion #2:** To update the Society's Constitution and By-Laws (last revised in 2014). These documents were recently reviewed for compliance with the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA) and they were found to be generally in compliance. However, it was recommended that a number of changes could improve the Society's compliance. Some of the proposed updates are simple changes in terminology. For example, references to "Executive" or "Executive Committee" are replaced by "Board" or "Board of Directors", and references to "Officers" are replaced by "Directors". Several of the proposed updates involve minor adjustments

to operating procedures for ONCA compliance. Finally, some updates are being proposed to bring the documents in line with current operating procedures (for example, authorizing the use of email and electronic banking for certain purposes). The proposed 2025 version of the Constitution and By-Laws, and a summary of the proposed changes, are contained in separate attachments. Thank you to Board member Heather Pessione for her work on this initiative.

**Monthly SHS meeting, Wed. Nov. 5, 2025, 7:30 pm:** Speaker – Sheila White. -- *How a Toronto Marriage Blazed a Trail*. Scarborough-born author Sheila White will give an illustrated talk about her biographical novel, “*The Letters: Postmark Prejudice in Black and White*” (2023, Yorkland Publishing). Drawn from diary accounts, correspondence, photos, and artifacts from the 1940s, the story revolves around a seven-month-long family and community letter-writing campaign targeting the author’s mother in opposition to her interracial marriage in Toronto in the summer of 1947. Vivian Keeler is an intelligent, attractive, and determined white woman from a traditional Nova Scotia family, who risked it all by falling in love with a Black man, “Billy” White, a charismatic and gifted member of a prominent Black family in Halifax.

Sheila is an award-winning community leader, whose background includes local news reporting and editing, political and media work, and environmental activism. She is Music Director at Don Heights Unitarian Congregation, and a licensed lay chaplain. She is a published songwriter and leads an open choir that performs mostly her original material. Sheila’s awards include an African Canadian Achievement Award, a Canada 125 Medal, an Urban Hero Award, a Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal, and a King Charles III Coronation Medal. She lives in Agincourt with her husband Alex. “*The Letters ...*” is her debut novel. It is on this year’s reading list for the African-Canadian Literature course at the University of Toronto.

Once again, the 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. (See notes above for the October meeting).

**Monthly SHS meeting, Wed. Dec. 3, 2025, 7:30 pm:** Speaker– John Beram – *Former Industries in the West End of Toronto*. We are pleased to welcome John back to Swansea as our speaker for December. John has been researching various industries that once existed in the west end (including Swansea). He will also talk about the industrial sports leagues and facilities that were used by those industries, their histories, and the lasting impact on our communities!! (Can any of our members recall watching industrial-league hockey games on Saturday nights at the Ravina Gardens arena, which sadly was demolished years ago?)

As above, the 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. (See notes for the October meeting).

**Communicating with Your Society:** You can follow our activities through the Society's website [www.swanseahistoricalsociety.ca](http://www.swanseahistoricalsociety.ca) and the website of the Swansea Town Hall [www.swanseatownhall.ca](http://www.swanseatownhall.ca) . You can also follow us on Twitter (X) at [twitter.com/Swansea\\_History](https://twitter.com/Swansea_History) or Instagram at [www.instagram.com/swansea\\_history](https://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](mailto:swanseahistoricalsociety@gmail.com) or [swancnews@gmail.com](mailto: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 mail-box 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.

**Membership:** As of September 1, 2025, we will be in a new membership year which extends to August 31, 2026. Some of you have already paid your membership for 2025-2026, and we thank you. If you have not yet paid your membership fees for 2025-2026, 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) . In order to assist our Treasurer, 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.

For many years, the annual membership fees have been held at \$15 for an individual and \$20 for a family. In view of rising costs, your Board has been considering the option of increasing the fees and bringing them more in line with other organizations in the area. As noted above, this will be brought before the membership for consideration at the October AGM. In the meantime, we encourage you to renew your membership now, while the current fee structure is still in place.

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.

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**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
Student	\$10.00
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) .]