



Community History

The Community History Project and
The Tollkeeper's Cottage Museum

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2016

In Review

February

The cottage was very busy this past winter and spring. Starting the new year with our **Knitting Social**, visitors dropped by the cottage on Saturdays throughout the month for knitting pointers and just plain ole' good company! In addition to weekend walk-ins, a group of Girl Guides was also hosted one evening after school where they were taught how to knit and were then given a flashlight-guided tour of the Cottage.



Did you know?....

While knitting is a long established craft and pastime of the Victorians and was a very necessary skill that women learned from a young age in order to make sweaters, shawls, etc. for themselves and their families, did you know that knitting was actually developed by early fishermen who knit their fishing nets?

ST. PATRICK'S DAY TEA

March 12, 2016

This year was a resounding success! Our largest group to date turned up at the Cottage to celebrate the Tollkeepers' Irish heritage. We served tea and soda bread made by Irene Ellis, Catherine Watts and Marilyn Spearin. A total of 35 people stopped by that day. It was so busy that visitors, still coming by at closing time, had to be turned away. We were so run off our feet that there wasn't time to even take a single picture of the event, but we're sure you get the picture – phew!



Coming Up Next...

It's summertime! Join us in celebrating its arrival this holiday weekend:

An old-fashioned **STRAWBERRY SOCIAL**



Saturday

July 2, 2016

12 - 4 pm

at the

Tollkeeper's Cottage

Join us for
tea and strawberry treats

\$7 per person

Planning your summer?

**Keep an afternoon
free for us!**

We're open

**EVERY Saturday in
July and August
and at least one Sunday
July 17th, 1-4pm**

EASTER EGG COLOURING

March 26, 2016

The Cottage celebrated Easter this spring by dying and decorating eggs with visitors. Doreen Moor-Mapes was on hand that day with an array of materials and supplies and in keeping with hand-knit hearts and shamrocks, Marilyn Spearin knit miniature egg toques to sell in our Gift Shop.



EARTH DAY ACTIVITY SOURDOUGH BREAD-MAKING

April 23, 2016

The Tollkeeper's Cottage honoured the arrival of spring by hosting an Earth Day activity. With emphasis on one of the three 'R's in following better environmental living practices, Marilyn Spearin showed about a dozen eager bread makers how to assemble and REUSE a yeast culture base in order to make sourdough bread. The participants also tried their hand at kneading the bread and came away with their own sample of sourdough starter (flour, water, yeast and bacilli in a Mason jar covered with a cloth) and once all the work was done, they all sat down for tea and samples of the bread.



MOTHER'S DAY LAVENDER SACHET WORKSHOP

May 7, 2016

We had a wonderful turnout for this workshop led by Doreen Moor-Mapes. Armed with lots of fresh lavender and fabric, visitors sewed their own sachets and filled them with the dried flowers, creating a lovely gift in time to give to mums the next day on Mother's Day. New volunteer, Elena Pizzamiglia, was also on hand and helped with the sewing. She even stayed past closing time to let a young seamstress finish her project.



JANE'S WALK – WEST ANNEX TOUR

May 7, 2016

On the very same day, with the only instruction to "meet at Bloor and Albany", Marilyn Spearin, Terry Marescaux, and Corinne Brown led a very enthusiastic crowd of about 60 people on a *Jane's Walk* of the West Annex.

FYI: Coloured pamphlets of a self-guided version of this walk are available for \$3.00 at the cottage if you missed this opportunity but would like to investigate on your own.

Meanwhile, back at the cottage on this day, Doreen entertained another *Jane's Walk* group of 25 that stopped into the cottage while en route along the Davenport escarpment.

We have several such tours available about neighbourhood gems pocketed in the area. If you would like to assemble a group of friends for your own guided tour please email:

tollkeeperscottage@gmail.com

VICTORIA DAY TEA

May 23, 2016

As expected, our annual Victoria Day Tea was very successful. Blessed with a stunningly gorgeous day, we were supplemented by a military escort of Barry Mapes, Richard Feltoe, and Mrs. Diane Feltoe. Richard, who had given a lecture on John Redpath the previous month and is a history buff and re-enactor, supplied an engaging hands-on display of historical weaponry and related artifacts. Both he and Barry were dressed in full military regalia which was very eye-catching and they demonstrated to curious young visitors how shotguns and other items from then were used.



A plentiful supply of lemon tarts, raspberry loaf, banana bread, cookies, scones, whipped cream and jam was supplied by Irene Ellis, Catherine Watts, Marilyn Spearin, Doreen Moor-Mapes, Libby Porth and Hillary Cunningham.



Victoria Day Tea cont'd

THE READING LINE:

“BOOKS ON BATHURST” — May 28th

A rather striking event took place this day when a troop of 40 bicyclists belonging to *The Reading Line* paraded up Bathurst and stopped at the Cottage for speeches and readings by politician Joe Mihevc, *Jane’s Walk* Chair Zahra Ebrahim, our own Bill Kindree, and 2 other local young authors who spoke on Jane Jacobs’ legacy and her love for Toronto, and the importance of and steadily changing landscape of cycling routes in our city. They even had their own police escort – on bikes, of course! The most beautiful violet cookies baked by Cathe-

rine Watts and lemonade were served as refreshments.

For more details about this group and where in our city they will be riding next as part of an event, please visit: www.thereadingline.ca



LECTURE SERIES:

“John Redpath: The Story of Sugar From York To Toronto” — April 14



A terrific lineup of topics this spring was kicked off by lively presenter Richard Feltoe of the Redpath Sugar Museum. Curator for decades of this Toronto shore landmark, he presented an in depth look at young trailblazer John Redpath who started this business in Montreal in the mid-1800s and went on to explain how its operations were relocated in Toronto during the 1950s.

“Lake Iroquois” — May 11

Mark Stabb of the Nature Conservancy of Canada presented next with an illustrated lecture on the Iroquois Plain – the area surrounding Lake Ontario that used to be covered by a larger post-glacial body of water known as Lake Iroquois with its shore at Davenport Road. We learned that its south eastern bank at the time, a ‘small’ remaining glacier, gave way nearly 15,000 years ago and produced the resulting Lake Ontario we know of today.



“Davenportage” — May 18

Remember the image from the last newsletter cover with people walking with canoes on their back? Well, we said they’d come back and they did! Leader of the pack, Michael Bumby elaborated on these wild and crazy guys and gals who portage canoes along Davenport Road just for something to do.



What started off as a one-off group of Bay St.-ers replicating the trek made by earlier Voyageurs and natives from the Humber River to the Don River, portaging canoes through downtown Toronto, is becoming a yearly event for the Cottage.

A special thank you goes out to Irene Ellis for baking her awesome rum cake and other delicious treats, which she served with tea to guests after each lecture during the series.

Coming Up... The Davenportagers will again be crossing the city on **Sunday, September 18** this fall. Come by and watch this amazing spectacle as we support them on their herculean journey!

Also, stay tuned for further announcements regarding the **Fall Lecture Series**. Confirmed is Wendy Smith who will be presenting her latest talk, and two Toronto Historical Association presentations are in the works as well.

**HILLCREST SCHOOL VISITS
June 8 and June 20, 2016**

A HUGE breakthrough... Kudos to Marilyn Spearin who, after **many** years of trying to entice one of our closest neighbours to visit the museum, was finally able to draw them through our doors! Yes, CHP was delighted to have two Grade One classes visit the Tollkeeper’s Cottage from Hillcrest School in the past couple of weeks.



During a tour of the museum, students learned how hard children were expected to work 150 years ago. Some students tried their strength when they slung a wooden yoke over their shoulders and balanced buckets of water. They learned that a child was often given the chore to churn milk into butter.



Each student was given a scoop of whipping cream in their own little churn (a juice bottle) and to everyone’s amazement, after 10 min of shaking the bottle, butter appeared. The students tasted their butter on slices of homemade bread.

Afterwards, in the yard, the children enjoyed playing games that children might have known in 1860 such as horseshoes, marbles and ring toss. Everyone enjoyed themselves and teachers have already recommended the program to their colleagues with two more visits from Hillcrest Tigers Daycare scheduled for later this summer.



Site Maintenance

SUMMER WORK PARTY

Unfortunately, weather hasn't exactly cooperated in our planning of a spring work party. Both tentative April and May dates had to be abandoned due to low temperatures, but we haven't given up hope on holding such an event in the future. Having said this, new volunteer, Laura Hwee, and Catherine Watts braved the cold regardless and got started on the garden, so, some bits like initial gardening, getting painting quotes and making inquiries about our issues are furthering us along before holding such a major gathering.

After 15+ years standing, it's clear some of the building's original craftsmanship is starting to wear and we need expertise and help in preserving what all we members created in resurrecting The Tollkeeper's Cottage.

For instance, it's been determined the base of the west wall of the interpretive side is rotting due to the lack of an eavestrough. Problem is, there doesn't seem to be a way to attach one with the way the roof was structured – any advice or suggestions?

The sample corduroy/plank road is in terrible shape and needs an overhaul. Over in the same area, some of the sidewalk ramp edges are rotting and need replacing, and while we have been promised small logs we still need wooden planks of varying dimensions.

And, then there's the paint scraping to be done before the paint job...

When the call comes, please consider joining us in working together on one of these projects at the Cottage.

General Interest

GOOGLE VIRTUAL TOUR: Check out the museum's NEW Virtual Tour. Simply Google "tollkeeperscottage" and, on the right side of the search page under the map, click on the "see inside" interior image. Navigate with your mouse or cursor buttons to tour the entire inside of the Cottage and finish up with an exterior tour of the building and grounds. Our website will soon have a link pointing to this tour.

CANADA'S 150th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS - 2017

The CHP has supplied a letter of interest in support of a grant application made in association with The Museum Network for The Tollkeeper's Cottage to participate in a passport-style entrance program during festivities commemorating Canada's 150th birthday next year. In an attempt to foster museum attendance by youth in order to

learn more about Canada's rich history, it's an initiative being devised for Grade 7 students across the city whereby they would be provided with a 'passport book' valid for the year which they would use to collect individual stamps from each participating museum they visit.

Again, we are only in the application stage at this time and are awaiting news about its acceptance.



Member News

Membership Renewal:

Membership renewal is now underway for 2016-2017. If you haven't already renewed or by now received your emailed or posted renewal notices, please notify us and we will forward a package to you.

Annual General Meeting: September 11, 2016

As it was moved last year to better work

with the fiscal year, our AGM will again take place in the fall. This year's meeting is scheduled to be held at the Tollkeeper's Cottage on **September 11 at 2pm.**

In order for the meeting to take place quorum is required, meaning a minimum of 15 percent of our membership must attend. Please ensure it can take place by planning to attend. Your presence is very important to us and we really want to see you there!

Volunteer Corner

Heritage Vegetable Garden, Victorian Herb Garden, Blue Canoe:

Have a 'green thumb' and want to get your hands dirty? Or don't have a back yard? "Get back to the garden" by joining us for some weekend maintenance. Drop by any Saturday during museum hours and help our docents in

the yard with planting and weeding. You'll not only get to know other members and fellow volunteers, but you'll certainly experience our unique community spirit.

Office & Archive

Closed for the season.



In Closing...

FYI:

What is becoming apparent is that inquiries from private groups and actual rentals of the cottage itself are increasing, and becoming somewhat of a steady source of income for us. From AGMs and monthly meetings of special interest groups (The York Pioneers and Toronto Historical Association) to visiting seniors (Delmanor Residence and Woodgreen Community Centre) and educational groups (Hillcrest School and Girl Guides), we've had quite a few bookings in just these last few months alone – not to mention spin-off sales derived from the Gift Shop.

In fact, Doreen Moor-Mapes, assisted by Irene Ellis, opened the Cottage on two Sundays in June and on one of these occasions oversaw a birthday/graduation party for a frequently visiting TKC member. The group of 25 had an outdoor picnic, and paid a fee for the use of the Cottage facilities.

It's wonderful to see that word about The Tollkeeper's Cottage and what we have to offer is spreading and being put to interesting use by a variety of community members.

A Sneak Peek at NEXT QUARTER (July, Aug & Sept)

- ◆ Strawberry Festival
- ◆ Summer Work Party
- ◆ AGM
- ◆ Davenportage
- ◆ Fall Speaker Series