



NEWS FROM KING TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Happy New Year to our KTHS members!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Please join us for the
2024 KTHS AGM
Sunday, March 3rd

from 12:00 – 3:00pm
at the King Heritage & Cultural
Centre, in the Gallery
Enjoy a potluck lunch,
followed by a meeting and
guest speaker

Our 2024 KTHS guest speaker will be **Joe Karabin**, Manager of the King City Cemetery. Joe will speak about the history of the property, people of interest who are buried there, the significance of the dead house, and answer our questions.

Holy Redeemer Choir Delights Members at Holiday Concert

We had a nice crowd for the annual KTHS Holiday concert on December 3rd at Sacred Heart Parish Hall in King. Guests were treated to an uplifting concert by members of the Holy Redeemer Pilgrims Choir, including numerous children's solos. What a festive start to the holiday season!



KTHS Speaker Shares Story of Father-Son Journey Circumnavigating the Globe

Steven Dengler was the guest speaker at our KTHS speaker series event on October 29th and shared the story of his Canada 150 Global Odyssey circumnavigating the globe with his father, Bob Dengler, from July 1 - August 17 in 2017. The father-son co-pilots flew 36,956 km with 92 stops in 14 countries over 48 elapsed days and 30 flying days.

Together in Bob's Canadian-made Bell 429 twin engine helicopter, they visited every Canadian province and territory, as well as landmarks across the world spotlighting notable achievements and events from Canada's amazing history; a fitting way to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation!



Steven's talk was absolutely riveting and his and his father's achievement, nothing short of remarkable. The Canada 150 Global Odyssey has since been recognized as the "First Canadian Circumnavigation in Helicopter, and FAI Exceptional Air Sports Performance, and set the Guinness World Record™ for First Father and Son to Circumnavigate the World by Aircraft."

Proceeds raised from their venture supported True Patriot Love Foundation which assists Canadian veterans and families, and Southlake Regional Health Centre Foundation.

KTHS Says Goodbye to Longstanding Members & Friends

It is with great sorrow and fondness, that we remember four of our KTHS members who passed away recently and offer our deepest condolences to their family members.

Vicki Hotte passed away on August 15th. She was a long-time member of the King Township Historical Society and a passionate advocate for King's natural heritage and environment. Vicki, with her husband Paul, made significant contributions to the protection of the Happy Valley Forest and the accessible trail at the Goldie Feldman Nature Preserve. Her articles on the Kettleby Kabin Klub and the Toronto Purchase have been featured in this newsletter. Vicki understood the close connection between the natural landscape of King and our heritage. King Township Historical Society will miss her strong advocacy and strategic mind. *(By Ann Love)*

Jean Kell passed away on September 10th. She was a devoted mother of four, a tireless community volunteer and a strong member of the King City United Church where she taught Sunday School and sang in the choir for many years. Jean had a strong interest in genealogy which came from her family background of United Empire Loyalists. When the Lewis family came to Canada, they settled in Newmarket and were involved in building the historic Quaker Meeting House in 1812. She was interested in history and joined the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC) in the 1990s and became especially interested in pioneer cemetery restoration. Jean and her husband, John, were longtime KTHS members.

Jean was a founding member of Hospice King and was active in helping patients in their final days. She originally trained as a teacher and spent many years working with disabled students. When a group of nuns from Mexico arrived at the Marylake Augustinian Monastery, Jean offered to teach them English. At age 50 she returned to York University graduating four years later with a degree in Religious Education. Jean was a quiet, unassuming woman who made a huge difference to the lives of many in her community. *(By Murdene Pozdrowski)*

Virginia Atkins passed away on November 17th. With her infectious smile, her willingness to take on any task, and her incredible attention to detail, she was a joy to work with. A long-time and passionate member of the King Township Historical Society and volunteer extraordinaire, Virginia served willingly as both President (2008, 2009 and 2012) and Past President over her long association with the Society. In 2003, Virginia and fellow members of King Township Archives Project Committee were honoured by Council and recognized by the Ontario Heritage Foundations Heritage Community Recognition Program *for their tireless work to identify, preserve, protect and promote Ontario's heritage*. Her legacy is evident in the strength that the KTHS enjoys today. *(By Bill Salter)*

Gillian Watt passed away on November 20th. Tony Rolph writes that he first met Gillian in 2016 when he was with the King Township Museum Board doing research with Gillian's husband, Gavin, for a public presentation on "Animals in the 1st World War". This working relationship evolved into a lasting friendship with Tony being invited frequently to evenings at the Watt home on Fog Road to enjoy Gillian's memorable home-cooked meals. Discussion was invariably lively involving opinions from Gillian (Concerned Citizens), Gavin (author) and Tony (Historical Society). "That we never came to a serious disagreement on an issue was undoubtedly due to Gillian's fine cooking." *(By Tony Rolph)*

History of King Book Teasers

Ann Love and Sharon Bentley continue to work away on our History of King Book project frequently coming upon a gem of a story that they cannot leave out. We will continue to include a few stories by local guest authors in each newsletter as we lead up to the publication date of 2025.

The Accidental Archives

By Elsa-Ann Pickard

The Archives may look like nothing but labeled grey boxes, files, and shelves of binders, but these containers hold the living stories of those who came before us. Inside are letters written by settlers who came with dreams of a better life. The letters tell of the hardships of building a home out of forest timber and of clearing the land to cultivate food. Archival photographs bring these people to life – we see their faces, clothing, horse-drawn plows, and Church picnics by the mill pond. In their diaries we share the thoughts and feelings of a young girl, the local minister, and the new teacher confronted by 28 students in a one-room schoolhouse.



As the world ushered in the twenty first century, interest in preserving our rich Canadian history grew. Federal and provincial governments offered grants for unique community heritage projects. This inspired the late Virginia Atkins, a longtime member of the King Township Historical Society (KTHS), to suggest a survey be conducted throughout the Township to record potentially valuable historical documents in private collections: wills, deeds, photographs, diaries, correspondence, family trees, etc. As the Society's Treasurer, Elsa-Ann Pickard joined Virginia to set the project in motion.

Back-to-back Ontario Trillium grants hired a researcher and archivist who contacted over 90 King residents to discover and document what treasures people had. Volunteers, including a class of Kettleby School students, taped histories from elders who wished to share their memories orally.

It was during home visits that residents requested an Archives be created to take family documents into safe keeping. Although this had never been the intention, the King Township Archives was born. Virginia and Elsa-Ann secured a small but adequate space in the basement of the King City Branch of the local Public Library. And the Archives grew. In 2005, the Archives partnership between KTHS and King Township Public Library won the Ontario Historical Society's Dorothy Duncan Award for contribution to preservation of local history.

In 2005, a bequest of \$25,000 from Dr. Bernice Bell (Copson), whose family were early settlers in King, sustained the ongoing operations of the Archives for more than the next 10 years. The bequest covered all expenses for conservation and office supplies, allowed volunteers to attend workshops on how to manage a growing collection, and paid for hiring personnel to help with special projects. Soon the Archives outgrew its Library home. The volunteers who had been its mainstay for more than 10 years, Louise Di Iorio and Elsa-Ann, recognized also that the valuable collection needed



to be professionally managed and protected. They encouraged the Township to take over this responsibility. In June 2015, the collection moved to the King Heritage & Cultural Centre with the immediate support of the King Museum curator Kathleen Fry. In April 2019, the King Township Historical Society officially turned over the Archives to King Township.

Since moving into the Museum, the collection has nearly doubled. Additions include 150 years of King assessment rolls and the entire King Township Public Library's Local History collection, originally overseen by Librarian Sharon Bentley. Volunteers continue to enter private donations to the Archives, help residents research family history, and do property searches upon request.

Part of the Library's local history collection that was transferred to the Archives included the Tweedsmuir Histories, in which each local institute recorded the history of their villages, and minutes books from the Women's Institute meetings. The minutes of the meetings record in detail the packing of parcels sent to the troops in the Great War, as well as wartime fund-raising efforts of the Women's Institutes, such as box lunches and strawberry teas.

With new technologies to preserve materials and information, the Archives works to keep pace. Oral history tape cassettes from the 1980s were updated to CDs and transcribed in 2010. Documents and photographs are now being scanned so that researchers will soon be able to view digital copies from home. Those interested will be able to access on their home computers everything from tintype photos from the late 1800s, an 1889 classroom photo, or a 1917 marriage certificate. Researchers may be able to hear the voice of a man as he recalls his father's stories of watching wagons loaded with the mighty timbers from Happy Valley Forest on their way to King Station. Those timbers were to be transformed into ships masts in England.

Pictures are indeed worth a thousand words, and they arrive in albums, envelopes, scrapbooks, picture frames, and shoe boxes. Many unidentified, undated, or out of focus; but all precious as they tell their own unique story. Barn raisings and village fairs, the town's first fire truck, the last run of the Annie Rooney, the moving of the train station, and the ravage of the trees on Keele Street. Little girls with big hair bows and pinafores, men in fur coats with hunting rifles, seriously posed five-generation family photos ... what will be the equivalent of shoe boxes from the digital age? What will future archivists sort through? We'd love to know and be ready....

Action!: A Brief History of King on Film

by Julia Galt

Canada's film history is well storied; with booming industries largely in Vancouver and Toronto chugging an impressive \$10 billion into the Canadian economy each year, it's launched the careers of dazzling movie stars, blockbuster producers, and some of the world's most critically acclaimed directors. The likes of Mary Pickford, Christopher Plummer, William Shatner, and Jim Carrey all hail from our country, while Canadian directors including James Cameron, David Cronenberg, and Denis Villeneuve have cemented their status as some of the most successful of all time.

King Township's role in this oh-so glitzy machine has long been well documented on celluloid, tapes, CDs, and, in modern times, a myriad of streaming services. For many living in the area, appearances of a familiar landmark may be a blink-and-you'll-miss-it occasion – or, for the sharper eye, a chance to glimpse into a somewhat familiar world lost or changed to time.

Locals who grew up in the 1960s may recall the Canadian television series *The Forest Rangers*, which ran from 1963 to 1965. Notable as the first Canadian TV series produced in colour, *The Forest Rangers* serialized the adventures of young (you guessed it) forest rangers exploring the Canadian wilderness and featured the stunning scenery of King Township. Summer lake scenes were filmed at Mary Lake in King City, while King Creek was the setting for a dog catcher chase. Filmed almost entirely in King and surrounding towns, it's no surprise that the cast decided to reunite just south of Kleinburg for fan events in June 2004 and June 2013.



In 1985, Schomberg's streets were blessed with the three-toed footprints of the world's yellowest and most feathery superstar: *Sesame Street's* Big Bird, starring alongside his cohorts in the first theatrical feature-length *Sesame Street* film, *Follow That Bird*. Notable as Jim Henson's final theatrical appearance as Kermit the Frog, *Follow That Bird* saw the title character traversing the countryside of Schomberg,

Bolton, and Georgetown – getting into plenty of hijinks along the way, of course.

Oscar-nominees, too, abound in our Township. Nominated for Best Original Screenplay (Nancy Oliver) at the 2008 Oscars, romantic comedy-drama *Lars and the Real Girl*, starring Ryan Gosling, filmed at locations across King Township, while David Cronenberg's masterpiece *A History of Violence*, nominated in 2005 for Best Adapted Screenplay (Josh Olson) and Best Supporting Actor (William Hurt), filmed its final (yes, violent) scene at Eaton Hall in King City.

Along with Eaton Hall and the picturesque Marylake Augustinian Monastery, the comparatively plain King City Secondary School also marks one of the area's most popular filming locations. The 1995 black comedy *To Die For*, starring superstars Nicole Kidman, Joaquin Phoenix, and Matt Dillon filmed several scenes at KCSS, with a lottery held for \$2 a ticket to determine which of the school's students would be cast as extras. The Lindsay Lohan-helmed *Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen* (2004) also featured scenes shot at the school – and, as a bonus, generated enough income for the construction of a new music room.



And while we're on the topic of high schoolers, they're likely to enjoy two other films shot locally: Adam Sandler comedy *Billy Madison* (1995), which featured Marylake's entrance as the titular character's luxurious gated driveway, and ensemble action flick *Four Brothers* (2005), which used King City as a stand-in for scenes supposedly set in Detroit, Michigan.

The full list of King Township's appearances in film and television is almost too long to be documented in detail. Films hitherto unmentioned include 1970's *Homer* (shot mainly in downtown Schomberg, and, interestingly, set in the fictional Schomberg, Wisconsin), 1972's *Mahoney's Estate* (downtown King City, including 12981 Keele Street), 1976's *The House By the Lake* (King's Eaton Hall, King Road, and 7th Concession), 1987's *The Gate* (King Heights subdivision, King City), 1996's *Black Sheep* (Schomberg) and *Salt Water Moose* (Main Street, Schomberg), 2004's *Godsend* (King City) and *A Home at the End of the World* (Schomberg), 2008's *One Week* (Schomberg), and 2013's *An Amish Murder* (Schomberg). Chris Farley, David Spade, Timothy Dalton, Greg Kinnear, Joshua Jackson, Rebecca Romijn, Colin Farrell, Robin Wright, Sissy Spacek, Neve Campbell, and Robert De Niro have all filmed scenes locally.

Carrying the TV side of the industry, *Cannonball* (1958-1959; Nobleton), *La Femme Nikita* (1997-2001; Schomberg), *Hemlock Grove* (2013-2015; Eaton Hall, King City), *Designated Survivor* (2016-2019; Nobleton), and *Private Eyes* (2016-2021; Main Street, Schomberg) mark some of the most successful filmed in the area.

With new projects attracted to the rolling landscape and sleepy neighbourhoods of King each year, it's a safe guess that our township will be frozen in time – but not motion – for further decades to come.

The Way Things Used to Be: Memories of Hammertown

By Bill Salter

One of the lesser known hamlets of early King Township is Hammertown at the intersection of the 12th concession and the 17th sideroad on the west side of the township. The name Hammertown came from the ringing of the hammer on the anvil in the blacksmith shop owned by Thomas Elmer and later by James Dulmadge.

Hammertown in the early days was serviced by two churches. The Baptist Church, situated on the east side of the 12th concession just south of the 17th, and the Primitive Methodist Church, on the west side of the 12th concession just to the North of the 17th, then known as Wellington Street. The Baptist Church building survived until about 1970 when it was destroyed by fire. The Methodist Church building of brick construction was ultimately demolished and the reclaimed bricks used to construct a residence in Bolton. The outlines of the foundations of both buildings are still visible on the properties.

In 1842 Duncan Anderson began a leather goods and shoemaking shop in the hamlet, and Tom Bowes operated a carpentry shop. An 1891 edition of the Bolton Enterprise reported that “a quarter of a century ago, Hammertown was a busy place. Wagons, sleighs, boots and shoes were made there.”

The Hammertown Post Office opened in 1912 when the nearby Coventry Post Office in Albion closed. Robert Barry was postmaster for several years and after his death in 1919, Mrs. Barry continued until it was closed in 1947.

The children of Hammertown were taught at the Crawford School located at the Northeast corner of the 17th Side Road and the 11th concession, on one acre of land donated by Alexander Crawford, son of the original owner of the 100-acre farm, William Crawford. William died three months after buying the property in 1857 from the Crown for the sum of 62 pounds 10 shillings, leaving the farm to his wife Catherine and his son Alexander. The original wood frame school building was replaced in 1926 on the same site by a new brick building which was closed in 1966 and stands today as an attractive private residence.



The names of the children in the class photo of 1928 are, Back row: Vida Laidlaw (Teacher), Jenny Gerosicky, Violet McBain, Hazel Fuller, Viola Coulter, Joe Kunisky, Joffre Bell. Middle row: Helen Gerosicky, Pearlle Fuller, Anne Kunisky, Reginald Rainey, Romeo Gladu. Front row: Clair Rainey, Wilfred Fuller, Stella Kunisky, Peter Kunisky and Billy Thompson.



Today, the two cemeteries located next to the churches are administered by the Township of King, and with the exception of a few grave markers that have broken over the years, are well maintained.

The date of the earliest burial is that of Ann Kennedy, wife of Malcolm McQuarry, who died in 1839. She is buried on the southside of the Baptist Cemetery.

Thomas Elmer, the first blacksmith in Hammertown died in 1907 at the age of 82. He is buried in the Baptist Cemetery, as is his wife Mary McKay, who predeceased him in 1897 at the age of 68, their infant child Robert, who died in 1856 at the age of 1 and 5 months, and their daughter Hannah born in 1862 and died in 1945 at the age of 83. Their daughter Mary born in 1859 and died in 1918 at the age of 59, and their son Edward born in 1857 and died in 1935 at the age of 78 are also buried there.

Although many of the early settlers of Hammertown lived well into their 80s and even 90s, evidence of the difficulties of life in those early years are the graves of the many children and young people who died from the ages of a few weeks old to their very early 20s. There were families such as Anthony and Rose Plaxton who lost their son in 1861 at the age of 7 weeks, followed by their daughter Louisa who died at birth in 1867, a son Neil, who died in 1868 at the age of 22, and daughter Rosa, who died in 1871 also at 22.

The two cemeteries and the Crawford School House on the 11th concession are all that remain still visible of the Village of Hammertown. It is said that when you pass in the quiet of the night by the intersection of the 17th at the 12th, if you listen carefully, you can still hear the ringing of the hammer on Thomas Elmer's anvil.

With thanks to Elizabeth McClure Gillam's book "Early Settlements of King Township", the York Branch OGS Cemetery Transcriptions, and the King Township Historical Society Archives as sources of information.

2023 Trees of Giving Supports ORTA

This year, the annual Trees of Giving fundraiser at the King Heritage & Cultural Centre raised more than \$800 for the Oak Ridges Trail Association.

The theme was Festive Forests and the KTHS tree was named Venerable Trees of King Township. In an effort to capture some of the oldest trees in our township, Diana Armitage and





Murdene Pozdrowski accompanied Ann Love on several walks to view and photograph some, including that of a sugar maple in Happy Valley Forest which may be one of the oldest trees in King Township at about 270 years old (pictured to the left).

Diana made sketches of the trees they saw and then Richard Vien worked with a teacher at The Country Day School who burned them onto wooden pine discs, cut by Diana's husband, Ian, using a laser printer to create beautiful ornaments.

Thank you to Diana and Murdene for once again organizing KTTHS's contribution!

What's Happening around King and at the King Heritage & Cultural Centre?

3rdnd Annual Art Show in recognition of International Women's Day February 3-March 30, 2024

In partnership with Arts Society King (ASK), the KHCC is pleased to present the **3rd annual Art Show in recognition of International Women's Day**. This year's theme is "Food for Thought" defined as "something that warrants serious consideration", Food for Thought invites artists to interpret the theme as it relates to their own lives and work.

Maple Syrup Festival March 9th, 2024 from 10am-2pm

Join us at **Cold Creek Conservation Area in Nobleton** for a day filled with fun activities. Enjoy a pancake breakfast, learn about the process of syrup making, guided hikes to the sugar bush, tree tapping demonstrations and a variety of vendors. Warm up with hot chocolate in a complimentary reusable cup provided by Chilly Moose (reusable cups for the first 300 attendees, first-come first-served, while supplies last). Cost: \$12.00/per person or \$40.00 for a family of four. For more information please visit coldcreek.ca/MapleSyrupFest



New Kids' Create Art Club King Heritage & Cultural Centre - Drop in every Saturday between 10am-11am!

Join the fun every Saturday at the Kids' Create Art Club to explore the KHCC with a twist: with art as your lens! Every week will feature a different artistic technique, style, or theme, all with the intention of cultivating your child's creative side and motor skills. New activities each week. Suitable for ages 5-12. \$7 + HST/ participation and includes FREE Admission to the Museum!



ASK presents Studio Tour King 2024 April 6 & 7 from 10am-4pm

Twenty-eight artists from across King Township will be displaying their work for all to see.

Kingcrafts Studio Upcoming Workshops

Learn more at <https://www.kingcrafts.ca/workshops>.



Renew Your KTHS Membership Today & Tell a Friend!

Are you interested in local history and learning more about how to support and preserve the history of King? Maybe you are new to King and looking to meet like-minded people. Consider joining the King Township Historical Society for just **\$25/individual and \$30/family for an annual membership!** You may submit your membership online through our website at www.kingtowshiphistoricalsociety.com or by mail. Questions? Please email us at kinghistoricalsociety@gmail.com.



Please follow us on Instagram @kinghistoricalsociety too!



King Township Historical Society, 2920 King Road, King City ON L7B 1L6

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(PLEASE PRINT INFORMATION AND MAIL CHEQUE TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS)

NAME(S) _____ PHONE _____
 ADDRESS _____ POSTAL CODE _____
 _____ YEAR 20
 EMAIL _____ NEW _____ RENEWAL _____

INDIVIDUAL \$25 _____ FAMILY \$30 _____ DONATION _____

ENCLOSED \$ _____

History of KTHS in Brief:

The KTHS dates back to 1972 when a group of dedicated residents, with interests in preserving the history of their Township, gathered to form the King Township Historical Society. In 1981 ~1982, the KTHS was incorporated by the Ontario Historical Society under a Provincial Letters Patent. Our goals and objectives are to encourage research into the history, to secure and preserve an accurate account of the progress and development, and to promote public interest in the history of King Township. More information may be found on our website at www.kingtowshiphistoricalsociety.com.