

# NEWSLETTER

## The Town of York Historical Society

January 2018

Vol. XXXIV No. 1

### TORONTO'S 184TH BIRTHDAY

March 6 is the anniversary of Toronto's incorporation as a city, and March 6, the Town of York Historical Society throws a birthday party, and commemorates some aspect of Toronto history. This year, with all eyes on King Street's transit pilot program, we'll take a look at the history of this historic avenue with "King Street: The Main Thoroughfare of Toronto."

Special guest Christopher Hume, architecture critic and urban issues columnist of the Toronto Star, will speak on his favourite Toronto thoroughfare, paying special attention to the recent transit pilot and the historical district east of Yonge Street. He will examine what makes King a great street and how it has managed to remain vital for nearly 200 years.

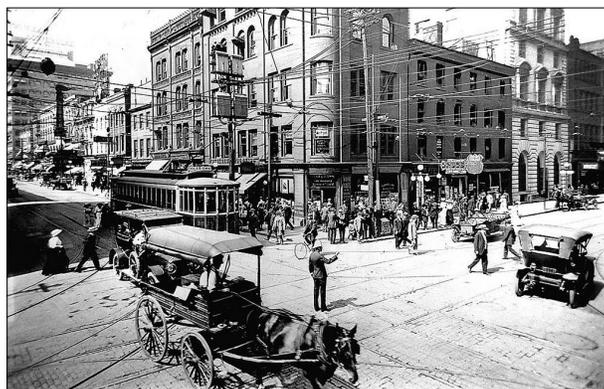


Photo courtesy of Toronto Archives.

Tickets are already available in the Post Office or online, and updates, previews, and more from our packed program will be released soon. Keep an eye on your mailbox, and make sure to follow Toronto's First Post Office @TOS1stPO on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Of course, the popular Old Town Silent Auction will return! Treasures from our favourite neighbours are already arriving at the Post Office!

Join us at St. Lawrence Hall the evening of Tuesday, March 6, 2018. Tickets are \$35 (\$20 for students) and available at 260 Adelaide St. East, by phone at 416-865-1833, or online at [tos184th.eventbrite.ca](http://tos184th.eventbrite.ca).

### NEW POSTAL MUSEUM OPENS IN LONDON



by TYHS Board Member and freelance travel writer, Nancy Wigston  
One of the hottest destinations in London these days is the new Postal Museum, especially its underground Mail Rail train. Although the ride on the tiny train is frequently sold out, some tickets are released on a same-day basis, so, lucky us—for an extra £5 we headed down to the train platform, and climbed aboard.

Letters and parcels, not people, were transported by underground rail from 1927 to 2003. The cheerful recorded voice you hear on board belongs to Ray Middlesworth, twenty-seven-year Royal Mail veteran. "Mail Rail was like was like having your own giant train set to run." (And like sitting in one too.) Travelling through time, we pause at various points along the way to hear about times past with visual depictions of Royal Mail history and vignettes of individuals who relied on mail delivery.

*Continued on page 3*

# COMING UP

## At Toronto's First Post Office



### Planning on Paper

Thursday, January 18, 6:30-9:00 pm

Learn 3 proven notebook-based systems to organize and succeed in your New Year's resolutions. \$20 [planningonpaper.eventbrite.ca](http://planningonpaper.eventbrite.ca)



### Old Card Workshop

Sunday, January 28, 2-4 pm

Give your best-loved greeting cards new life as you transform them into notebooks, wallets, and more. \$20 [oldcards.eventbrite.ca](http://oldcards.eventbrite.ca)



### Valentine's Paper Fair

Sunday, February 4, noon—4 pm

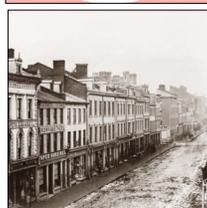
Toronto paper-goods makers will be gathering at the Post Office to lay out their best goodies and gifts for you and your sweetheart. Free admission! Swag bags! 10% off in the gift shop!



### Valentine's Bee

Sunday, February 11, 1-4 pm

Drop in to create a sweet card that'll make your honey happy. Free admission and suitable for all ages and relationship statuses.



### Toronto's 184th Birthday

Tuesday, March 6, 7pm, St. Lawrence Hall, 157 King St. East

Celebrate the 184th anniversary of Toronto's incorporation at historic St. Lawrence Hall! This year, we'll celebrate **King Street, The Great Thoroughfare of Toronto** with special guest Christopher Hume. *More details on page 1.*

Members \$30, non-members \$35, [tos184th.eventbrite.ca](http://tos184th.eventbrite.ca)

### Also Of Note...

### Toronto Postcard Club 37th Annual Show

Sunday, February 25, 10 am—5 pm, Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre, 6 Garamond Court, (Don Mills and Wynford Drive)

### Building Toronto: Stories of the St. Lawrence Market

until February 24, Market Gallery, 2nd Floor, St. Lawrence Market



### BULLETIN ON SALE

*A message from Paulette and Frank Touby, publishers of The Bulletin*

Downtown Toronto's most popular community newspaper is up for sale! After two decades of publishing the monthly newspaper, owners Paulette and Frank Touby, have retired. The Bulletin ceased monthly printing after the November 2016 edition. The company's website [www.thebulletin.ca](http://www.thebulletin.ca), continues to publish and new content is added daily. For more information please contact The Bulletin at 416-368-3071.

### VALENTINE'S DAY



Paper valentines are now on the shelves at Toronto's First Post Office. Shop at TFPO and you're shopping local, locally made, and supporting the museum!

## CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

by TFPO Curator, Zoé Delguste-Cincotta  
Develop a deeper relationship with your community and discover Toronto history! If you have enthusiasm and a few hours each week or month to share, consider becoming a volunteer at Toronto's First Post Office. Email [info@tos1stpo.com](mailto:info@tos1stpo.com) with any questions or to set up a volunteer interview.



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Many new members joined the Town of York Historical Society in December, and are receiving this newsletter for the first time! Welcome, and we look forward to getting to know you better on March 6, and at the AGM in May.

Thank you for supporting history preservation, research, and education in Old Town Toronto!

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## POSTAL MUSEUM, *from page 1*

The twenty-minute loop underground was just a taste of the feast of material awaiting above us in the museum. Royal Mail was launched in 1782, when theatre owner John Palmer hired out his stage coach to carry mail between Bath and Bristol (it had been carrying actors). His idea was a hit. Members of Parliament received free mail delivery; everyone else paid for their mail—so, ordinary folk often decoded hidden messages on their envelopes, and refused to pay. That all changed in 1840, with the introduction of the Penny Post stamp, bearing the monarch's likeness.

With guaranteed delivery, literacy rates soared—it seemed everyone wanted to send or receive news for a penny; The Royal Mail created a bond with the public that exists to this day. Red pillar boxes meant stability in British daily life. The first pillar boxes (1853) in the Channel Islands were green, however, and were designed by long time Post Office employee Anthony Trollope, the prolific 19<sup>th</sup> century novelist.

This plethora of savoury tidbits attracts a broad range of visitors to the new museum--stamp lovers, transport enthusiasts, social history and graphic design buffs—but one of the most universal and striking storylines follows the emergence of postmen (and from 1870 onward, women) as heroes. During World War One, letters and packages from home nourished both spirits and appetites of those serving at The Front, and letter carriers became honoured soldiers.

In addition to riveting history, the museum offers lots of interactive activities—Morse Code lessons, sorting challenges while standing aboard a moving train, and more. Perhaps the most popular stop is the create-your-own stamp booth. My own effort arrived via email shortly after my visit to the museum. On reflection, I rather regret my choice of the green tint, but the jewelled crown atop my head does look rather splendid.

For hours and ticket prices: [www.postalmuseum.org](http://www.postalmuseum.org) An average visit takes at least ninety minutes (excluding the Mail Rail ride). Ground floor treats include a café and a gift shop bursting with mail-related items. The most popular gifts, we discovered, were the red salt-and-pepper shakers a Royal Mail pillar box (salt) and an iconic English telephone booth (pepper). Both were sold out when we visited.

**The Postal Museum, Calthorpe House, 15-20 Phoenix Place, London, WC1X 0DA**



# GET INVOLVED

## Become a Member.

Show your support for history in Old Town Toronto, get 10% off in the shop, and receive the Newsletter right in your mailbox.

**Individual Memberships: \$30      Family Memberships: \$50**

Mail-in membership forms can be found at [townofyork.com/membership.html](http://townofyork.com/membership.html)

## Donate.

All donations and memberships come with a tax receipt!

Cheques may be sent to Toronto's First Post Office, 260 Adelaide St. East, Toronto, Ontario, M5A 1N1. Many other ways to donate, including by credit card or PayPal, can be found at [townofyork.com/support.html](http://townofyork.com/support.html).

## Get Your Mail at a Museum.

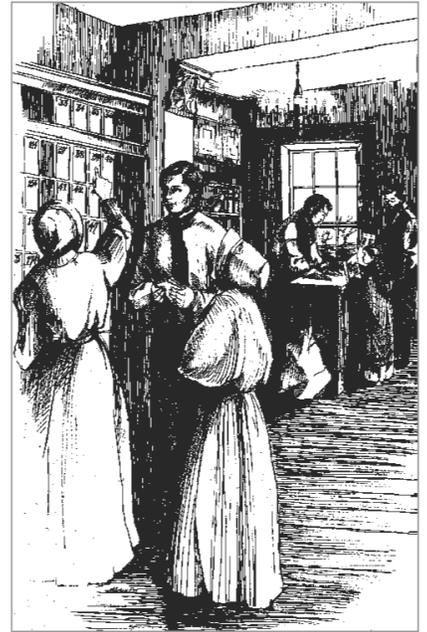
*A limited number of P.O. boxes have become available!*

Only \$173.85 per year, tax and membership included. Enjoy value and security, outstanding and responsive customer service, and courier deliveries.

All within a National Historic Site. And yes, we're open on weekends!

## Be Social.

We post regularly on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @TOs1stPO. Join us!



## Toronto's First Post Office

is administered by the

## Town of York Historical Society

260 Adelaide Street East  
Toronto, ON M5A 1N1

The Post Office will be closed February 18 and 19 for Family Day,  
and March 30, April 1 and 2 for the Easter weekend.

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Hours of operation:  
Monday to Friday: 9:00 – 5:30  
Saturdays: 10:00 – 4:00  
Sundays: 12:00 – 4:00  
Closed on holiday Mondays and Sundays preceding.

The Town of York Historical Society Directors: Tom Arnold, Kevin Both, Adriana Ermtter, Shirley Farrar, Michael Kaspro, Suzanne Kavanagh, Geoffrey Milos, Martin Rainbow and Nancy Wigston.

The Town of York Historical Society is a legally incorporated non-profit organization and registered charity.  
Toronto's First Post Office is a museum, National Historic Site and Canada Post outlet.

Gratefully acknowledged is the support of the City of Toronto; the Ontario Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Sport, our members, donors and customers, and Canada Post Corporation.

**Town of York**  
**HISTORICAL SOCIETY**



**TORONTO'S FIRST**  
**Post Office**