

## St John's, York Mills Churchyard



In 1816, the people of the village of York Mills came together to form a church and burying ground for their growing community. The land on Yonge Street, now Old Yonge Street, was donated by the Shepard and Marsh families. The churchyard is still in use for the parishioners of St. John's Anglican Church, York Mills.

A walk through our churchyard is a walk through the history of York Mills. The earliest markers commemorate some of the first families in the area: the Marshes, the Shepards, the VanNostrands, the Harrisons, Ketchums, and the Mercers. For almost 200 years the churchyard has been available to those who make St. John's their church home.

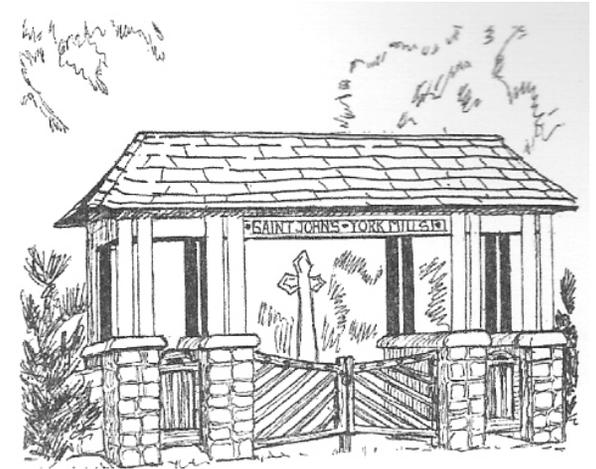
## The Mercer Family Monument



This monument is typical of older parishioner headstones. The Thomas Mercer family arrived in York Mills in 1794 from Pennsylvania.

Also on the monument is a memorial to Seneca Ketchum, who conducted the first worship services in his home on Yonge Street. As the little gathering grew, services were conducted in the schoolhouse, until the decision was made to build a church. The cornerstone for the first St. John's was laid in September, 1816

## The Lychgate



Artist: Ruth M. Collins

The lychgate, given in memory of parishioner Alexander Dawson in 1956, recalls the tradition of a roofed gate into a churchyard.

The word *lych* comes from Middle English and means *body* or *corpse*. In earlier times, the funeral procession was met here by the priest, and often short introductory prayers were said before the full funeral service in the church. In inclement weather, it provided shelter as well.

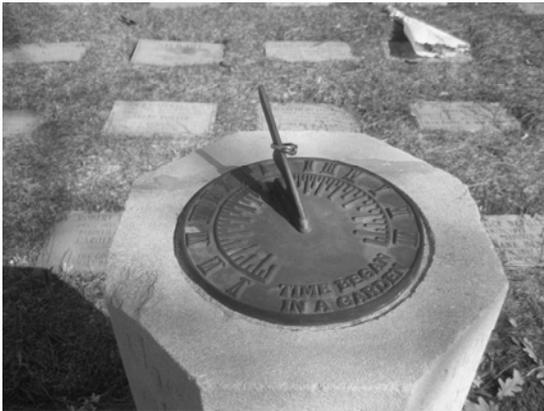
## The Churchyard

### The Cambridge Cremation Garden

Consecrated in 1974 by Bishop Lewis Garnsworthy, the Cremation Garden was given by Martha and Don Cambridge, in memory of Martha's mother. The Future expansion of our cremation facilities is currently under consideration

The sundial is inscribed, located in the centre of the garden, is inscribed

TIME BEGAN  
IN A GARDEN



Parishioners in need of a gravesite or cremation plot should contact the church office and will be assisted by the Verger or the Sexton. Current practice is that a burial plot cannot be pre-purchased, but one will be made available when required.

The Churchyard is administered by an independent committee, on a not-for-profit basis, in accordance with the By-Laws approved by the St. John's Vestry and the Ontario Cemeteries Act of 1993. All funds received from the sale of burial and cremation plots are used for the care, operation and maintenance of the churchyard.

We are blessed to have space in our churchyard for perhaps the next 100 years. A price list is available through the church office

Each year the committee hosts Flower Sunday in commemoration of those interred in the churchyard.

The monuments in the cemetery were read and recorded by the Ontario Genealogical Society in 1997, and are available for viewing at the Toronto Public Library North York Branch, Canadiana Room.

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### *The Churchyard*

