



ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 51, Georgetown, Ontario, Canada L7G 4T1
www.esquesinghistoricalsociety.ca

Vol. 36 No. 1

March - April 2011

New Clock Installed in Post Office Tower Georgetown Now Has A Most Up-To-Date Public Building

This week saw the installation of a time clock in Georgetown's new Post Office and Custom House. On Monday evening we had the pleasure of going up into the tower and having the various mechanisms explained fully to us by an expert mechanic.



After taking two flights of stairs and ladder number one, we came to the first section of the large tower – the section where the ventilators may be seen from the street.... The work of installing was done by Messrs. H.A. Warrington and D.O. Adams, assisted by Mr. Muckart of Georgetown, as

electrician...

The clocks are weatherproof and waterproof and cased in rolled copper. Each dial is lighted by six electric bulbs automatically controlled for turning lights on at night and off in the morning.

This clock is the same type as installed in Orangeville, only a larger size; also at Collingwood, Dunville, Peterborough, Hamilton, and the one to be installed in Galt's new post office soon. The International Business machines of Toronto, who installed the clock, are manufacturers of all time equipment and time recorders for factories, and is Canadian throughout. – *Georgetown Herald*, 25 March 1936

New Post Office Opening Saturday

On Saturday next, Feb. 1st, Georgetown's fine new Post Office and Customs Office building will be officially opened by Dr. Anderson, ex-MP of Halton, largely through whose influence was made possible the erection of the building. Other



speakers will be Hughes Cleaver, MP of Burlington; L.K. Fleck and ex-Mayors LeRoy Dale, K.C. and J.B. Mackenzie. Mayor Joseph Gibbons will be the chairman. - *Georgetown Herald*, 29 January 1936



Acton Government Building 1913 ehs00385

GOOD-BYE TO OLD POST OFFICE – The New Government Building Opened Yesterday Without Ceremony

Bright and early Janitor Anderson had the new building open and a bright smile spread over his handsome features as he bowed his patrons in. Earlier still he had climbed to the base of the flagstaff and run up the Union Jack to the masthead. As the revolving door, at the main entrance was passed the grateful warmth and pure atmosphere gave evidence of careful attention to the comfort of all concerned. A walk across the tiled floor to one of the main delivery wickets with its polished brass fittings set in quartercut oak and Postmaster Matthews was on deck with another greeting and a smiling countenance which looked ten years younger than that of the day before. Associated with him were his deputies, Mr. J.C. Matthews and Miss Mae Moore ready to serve at the general wicket, sell stamps, make out pay money orders, or postal notes, with everything conveniently at hand, and in surroundings

-*Acton Free Press*, 26 Nov. 1914

most attractive.

**Annual General Meeting for 2010
Held Wednesday, February 9, 2011
At Knox Presbyterian Church, Georgetown, Ontario**

**Esquesing Historical Society
Annual Financial Statement - January 31, 2011**

Balance on Hand - January 31, 2010		\$21,031.46
<u>Income</u>		
Membership Fees	\$989.89	
Grants - Summer Career Placement	\$2,153.00	
Publication Sales	\$2,452.50	
Royalties - Access Copyright	\$349.86	
Archives Sales	\$410.03	
Donations	<u>\$38.00</u>	<u>\$6,393.28</u>
Total Income		\$27,424.74
<u>Expenses</u>		
Administration	\$658.74	
Newsletter	\$662.49	
Hall Rental	\$450.00	
Honoraria	\$150.00	
Archive - Supplies	\$752.25	
- Acquisitions	\$315.25	
Display Board	\$508.87	
Membership Fees - Ontario Historical Society	\$50.00	
- Archives Assoc. of Ontario	\$204.75	
Advertising	\$243.73	
Summer Student - Wages	\$2,367.12	
- Other	<u>\$306.32</u>	
Total Expenses		<u>\$6,669.52</u>
 Balance on Hand - January 31, 2011		 <u><u>\$20,755.22</u></u>

Karen Hunter, Treasurer



ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2010 ARCHIVAL REPORT

John Mark Rowe, Archivist

-excerpts-

2010 ACCESSIONS

The Archives had donations from Ron Law, Georgetown; Ann Lorusso, Georgetown; Dawn Livingstone, Georgetown; Lise Currie, Georgetown; George Pek, Hamilton; Elise Lyons, Cheltenham; Gloria Brown, Milton; Karen Scott, Oakville; Audrey Hillman, Huntsville; John Sommer, Georgetown; Milton Historical Society; Mary Finley, Mississauga; Library Archives Canada; Irma Coles, Acton; Geoff Cannon, Guelph; Tom McDonald, Milton; Woodstock Public Library; Halton Hills Public Library; Karen Hunter, Georgetown; Mark Rowe, Glen Williams; North Halton Red Cross; Nora Zylstra-Savage, Acton; Mike Harley, Acton.

EXTENT OF HOLDINGS

Textual – General Collection:	46 linear metres
Textual - Restricted Collection:	0.64 linear metres
Textual - Newspaper Collections:	14 linear metres
Cartographic Collection:	241 items
Architectural Drawings:	136 sets
Photograph Collection:	19 621 images (processed)
Digital Images Collection:	10 000 images (processed) est.
Audio-Visual Collection:	1 linear metre
Negatives Collection:	23 linear metres (mostly un-processed)

WEBSITE USE – esquesinghistoricalsociety.ca

Our website had 9977 visits over the past year, an increase of 1096 visits over last year and 1988 visits more compared to 2008. This averages out to 27 visits a day. These visits originated in the Canada 54% of the time followed by United States 35% of the time. The top ten countries were Great Britain, China, Thailand, Germany, Japan, The Ukraine, Russia, Romania, Moldova and Australia. Two countries bumped from the list from last year are Sweden (25) and The Netherlands (13). The unique visitors to the site (once only) were 81%.

Besides searching for EHS directly, the most popular search phrases were newspaper articles, Esquesing, Halton, Georgetown Herald, Speyside, Glen Williams, Ballinafad, and Acton.

Web pages accessed on our website in order of popularity were the Index, newspaper articles, Archives, Map of Georgetown 1854, EHS meetings, About Us, EHS executive, Links, Heritage Halton Hills, and features.

There were 4340(1592) downloads from the site, for our Archival Table of Contents. Next in popularity was the book list, The 1913 *Georgetown Herald*, various newsletters, the Kennedy Family files and then the 1893 *Toronto Daily Mail*.

The most popular months of visits were November (1300), December (1140), and March (1036). Local history was thought about least in June with 506 visits.



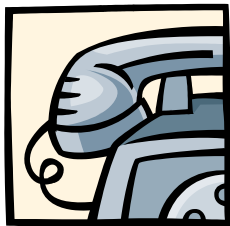
ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

2011

- Wed. 9
March
2011 **Canada's forgotten Nation Project-** Marc Boileau of the University of Guelph will speak on the architecture of Public Works Canada by focusing the history of our Customs & Post Office buildings. He is the author of *Towers of Time: Ontario* which examines regionally important Post Offices and Customs Houses to illustrate their architectural and historical context.
KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Main and Church Sts, Georgetown, 7:30p.m.
- Wed. 13
April 2011 **Acton Town Hall Project** – The wonderful glory of the public hall of the Acton Town Hall has been revealed to the public after decades of restoration work. Join Kathy and Bill Sanford for a tour of the facility and hear the story of the long road to the present restored showcase.
ACTON TOWN HALL, Willow Street, Acton, 7:30 p.m.
- Wed. 11
May 2011 **The Plewes Family, from Wensleydale, Yorkshire, to the building of Water Mills in Southern Ontario**– Gerry Hunt will share his interesting family history, the story of millers in two different places in our township and the family that contributed to the history of our communities.
- Wed. 8
June 2011 VENUE TO BE CONFIRMED, 7:30 p.m.
This is my Father's World – Limehouse Presbyterian celebrates 150 years of community service and Bill Sanford will lead a tour and a talk about the progress of the congregation since 1861. This meeting will be preceded by our annual pot luck dinner. Bring a dish and break bread with the Society or come a little later.
LIMEHOUSE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 22nd Sideroad and 5th Line,
Esquesing, DINNER arrive at 6 p.m.; Meeting arrive at 7 p.m.

ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AT NO CHARGE!

Refreshments served from 7:00 p.m.



Stephen Blake	905 877-8251	President
Karen Hunter	905 877-7363	Treasurer
Dawn Livingstone	905 877-6506	Secretary
Sherry Westfahl	905 873-7145	Past - President
J. Mark Rowe	905 877-9510	Archivist
Jan Raymond	905 877-9172	Publications
Marj Allan	905 877-9985	Membership
Cathy Hunt		Social
Lise Currie	905-877-0634	Member
Ron Raffan	519-853-1649	Webmaster
Ray Denny	905-877-3890	Member

Society Notes

INTERNET CONNECTIONS

<www.esquesinghistoricalsociety.ca>

Send your e-mail to mrowe6@sympatico.ca or dawn.livingstone@sympatico.ca

EHS NEWSLETTER

John Mark Rowe prepared this newsletter with assistance from Karen Hunter, Dawn Livingstone and Lise Currie. Submissions welcome.

You may opt to receive your newsletter sent electronically to an e-mail address you provide.

MEMBERSHIP

Renewal for 2011 is now due. The individual membership rate is \$10. The family or institution rate is \$12. Cheques payable to the Society can be mailed to our post box. Membership runs from February to February. Marj Allen, membership secretary, will accept your 2011 fee at the meetings.

ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO

www.archives.gov.on.ca

EHS ARCHIVES

The Georgetown branch of the Halton Hills Public Library will be closing in March and will re-open about 5 April at 224 Maple Avenue, the former home of Holy Cross Church. The Archives could not be accommodated and are now closed. Thank you to everyone who helped with the move to the Wellington Archives. We have access to the storage facility to add items to our collection, so please remember that the EHS is still accepting donations.

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS FOUND!

The EHS would like to welcome new executive members Ron Raffan and Ray Denny. Thank you gentlemen for supporting our Society by volunteering your time.

NEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Esquesing Historical Society welcomes the North Halton Celtic Historical Society to

our township. This group evolved from the Save Fallbrook farm group.

HALTON-PEEL OGS

Four Corners Branch Library, 65 Queen St., Brampton @ 2p.m.

Call Ann Logan at 905-845-7755

Mar. 27 – **Janice Nickerson**, "*Crime and Punishment in 19th Century Ontario*"

May 1 - "*Tracing Irish Ancestors*" - Oakville

HALTON HILLS SPORTS MUSEUM

The HHSM is open SATURDAY evenings between 7 and 9 PM during the JR A RAIDERS Home games and on SUNDAYS from 1 p.m. until 5 p.m.

DEVEREAUX HOUSE

It is located at 11494 Trafalgar Road, Georgetown, just north of Maple Avenue. The house is open at no charge to the public on Thursday afternoons. Call 905-877-1861 or visit devereauxhouse.ca.

STREETSVILLE HIST. SOCIETY

PO box 598, Streetsville, ON L5M 2C1
Our General meetings are held, opposite the Leslie Log House, at the Specialty Care, 4350 Mississauga Rd. S. on the 2nd Thurs. of the month (Feb, Apr, Oct, Dec,) at 7:30
Contact: 905-814-5958

BRAMPTON HIST. SOCIETY

The Society meets at Heart Lake Presbyterian Church, 25 Ruth Ave. at 7:15 on the third Thursday of the month.

Mar. 17 – AGM; *Heritage Update* by Antonietta Minichillo.

Apr. 21 – Doug Wrigglesworth, Sherlock Holmes: The First Profiler.

MILTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society meets at the Waldie Blacksmith Shop at 16 James Street at 8p.m. on the third Thursday of each month.

March 17 – TBA

April 21 - TBA

NASAGIWEYA HIST. SOCIETY

The Nasagaweya Historical Society meets the second Tuesday of each month at Nassagaweya Presbyterian Church in

Haltonville at 7 p.m. President Audrey Allison 905-854-2378

March 8 – Annual Irish Night

April 12 - AGM

OAKVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

For a list of walking tours and ghost tours of Oakville visit www.oakvillehistory.org and click on EVENTS or phone 905-844-2695.

Mar. 23 –AGM and pot luck

TRAFALGAR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

<http://www.trafalgartownshiphistory.ca>

April 26 – Speaker Series

PEEL HERITAGE COMPLEX

A new art gallery is under construction south of the old Peel County Courthouse. This will allow for a revitalized Archives and Museum. The entire complex is closed to the public until the Autumn of 2011.

NEW EXECUTIVE ACCLAIMED

The present board of directors was acclaimed. We were very pleased to have two members volunteer to also add their names to the board. Ron Raffan has been looking after our website for some time now, and Ray Denny has been a member of the society for several years.

Both were duly elected and welcomed to the board. Thank you both.

- Steve Blake President
- Karen Hunter Treasurer
- Mark Rowe Archivist
- Dawn Livingstone Secretary
- Marj Allan Membership
- Jan Raymond Publications
- Cathy Hunt Social
- Lise Currie Member
- Ray Denny Member
- Ron Raffan Webmaster
- Sherry Westfahl Past President

EXCELLENCE IN HISTORY AWARD

The EHS announced that they have established an Excellence in History Prize of \$200.00 annually, to be awarded to the top history student, chosen by the faculty at each

of the three township High Schools: Acton District High School; Georgetown District High School and Georgetown's Christ the King Catholic High School. The prize will be offered to the 2011 graduating class.

WALTER LEWIS RECOGNIZED

Congratulations to Walter Lewis, Information Architect and Technical Lead for Our Ontario and Manager of Library Support Services at Halton Hills Public Library. Walter has won the Larry Moore Distinguished Service Award, to be presented at the Ontario Library Association Super Conference 2011. Walter is most deserving of this recognition of his intelligent, forward thinking and consistent support and service to the library and related communities. Well done Walter!

A CENTURY AGO

30 March 1911 – *Acton Free Press*

Glenwilliams Athletic Club reorganized last week – President Joseph Beaumont; V-P Samuel Scofield; Sec.-Treasurer R.J. Hynds; Managing committee of W. Williams, S. Simpson, J. Bennett, B. Graham, J. Beaumont and F. Beaumont.

13 April 1911 – *Acton Free Press*

Rev. S.H. Roadhouse, of Grand Valley, has accepted the call to Georgetown Methodist Church.

Mr. George Edge had a portion of the top of his thumb taken off while operating a machine at Dayfoot's factory on Monday. – *Georgetown Herald*.

The Acton Tennis Club will hold its annual meeting on Monday afternoon in the Council Chamber.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

This will be your last newsletter unless you renew your 2011 membership. Thank you for supporting the Esquesing Historical Society.

ACTON TOWN HALL

In preparation for our April meeting, here are some excerpts from *Acton: The Story of Leathertown*, to help us understand the story of the Acton Town Hall.

THE STRUGGLE TO BUILD IT!

The question of building a Town Hall was raised in print by H. P. Moore, editor of the *Acton Free Press*, in an editorial 13 January 1881. After a public meeting, it was decided to progress forward by borrowing \$5,500 through public debentures. William H. Storey, glove maker and councillor changed his support for the project and resigned in protest. Nevertheless, a vote by all free-holders on 26 August, resulted in a 50:14 victory. After considering five lots, Council chose the property of Josiah Adams on the south-east corner of Bower and Willow, for \$500.



ehs00114

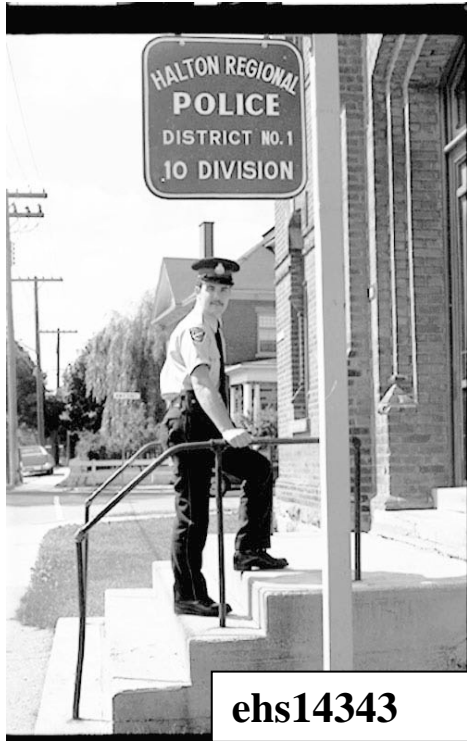
In March 1882 the construction was tendered to William McCulla of Brampton, for completion in October. However, the construction of the new hall was to be a trial for the Village. In June the workmen started excavating and laying the foundations. They decided to mortar the stones with water and lime mixed with the excavated loam. The architect, upon inspection, condemned the almost completed foundations, saying they had no more strength than mud. The entire foundation was torn up and re-laid.

In August the same mortar problem caused the back brick wall to be taken down and rebuilt. Everything was behind schedule and costs were climbing! The plasterers did not begin until October; while old-timers shook their heads at the thought of anyone hoping plaster applied in cold weather would hold. The bell arrived from Troy, New York in November. When the bell finally crowned the new structure, a new debate over when the bell should ring erupted.

Council finally moved into their chambers on 1 March 1883. Between 300 and 400 people filled the upstairs auditorium to enjoy the Acton Glee Club, dramatic sketches, a quartet, string orchestra and soloists. The verdict was that the hall was second to none in the province for beauty and acoustics. It had been worth the struggle.

THE STRUGGLE TO FIND A PURPOSE!

The Town of Halton Hills had chosen the Esqueusing Council Chambers as the new civic centre. The former Acton Clerk's office in the YMCA building was maintained, but the Town Hall was not needed by the new corporation. The Ontario Provincial Police still had their offices where the Public Library once operated, while local seniors took over the Council chambers across the hall. In 1977, the keystone above the hall facade fell out. The building was emptied and consultants employed to prepare a report. On 21 April 1977 Town staff recommended, based on the report, that Council demolish the building to create a parking lot for the attached fire hall.



THE STRUGGLE TO SAVE THE BUILDING!

A bus load of concerned citizens convinced Council at the crucial moment to work with a group formed to restore the Town Hall. In order to secure provincial funding, Council designated the structure as a heritage property. The Acton Town Hall committees worked long and hard to raise funds. The most successful was the launch in 1982 of weekly “Actario” lottery draws. This added over \$30,000 to the pot. Nevertheless, consultant reports of escalating costs matched by a fear of huge tax hikes by Georgetown and area ratepayers, pushed Council into voting to put the building up for tender. Only the Town Hall Restoration and Fund Raising Committee placed a bid. Council voted six to six to lift the heritage designation to allow demolition.

Actonians rallied to the renewed threat. The two committees were united to form a charitable organization known as Heritage Acton, chaired by Ted Tyler. This enabled them to access Heritage Foundation funding. This new group approached Council again and in 1983 were

able to purchase the building from the Town of Halton Hills for \$1.

THE STRUGGLE TO RESTORE THE BUILDING!

This encouraging development spurred the group to tackle the restoration of the structure. The ground floor was finished in 1985, allowing the first tenant, Acton Social Services and Information Centre to move in. Heritage Halton Hills, a committee of Council, re-designated the property a heritage building in 1988. In recent years, Heritage Acton has completed the restoration of the upstairs assembly hall and purchased the adjacent fire hall.

After years of work, the Acton Town Hall was officially re-opened to the people of the Town on 24 April 2010. At the re-opening Town Hall chair Ron Birrell and fundraising chair Kathleen Dills were presented with commemorative coat hooks made from left-over trim. Many participants like Father Robert Bulbrook were decked out in century-old attire.

The photo on the right shows the opening of the public hall in April 2010. Father Bob is standing in the cloak on the left. The photo was taken by J. M. Rowe.



Local citizens receive Arts Alive Awards

Local citizens receive Arts Alive Awards. Arts Alive Award recipients were: (in front, from left) Mary Lou Brock, Carolyn Martin, Gerry Kentner and Marilyn Serjeantson. Second row, Virginia Bancur, Linda Leask, Lois Fraser, Mary Bilik Udell, Hazel Armstrong, Jane Fogal, Ann Lawlor. In back, Doug Brock, John Miller, Mark Rowe, Al Fraser, Ron Birrell and Roper Galloway. Photo by *George Henderson*

A large and enthusiastic crowd gathered on Friday, Jan. 20 at the beautifully restored Acton Town Hall to celebrate the contributions of a host of Halton Hills community super stars.

The Arts Alive Awards are presented every five years to individuals and organizations that have significantly affected arts, culture and heritage in Halton Hills and are administered by the Halton Hills Cultural Roundtable. The awards were presented by Mayor Rick Bonnette.

Award winners included:

Arts Alive Award for Visual, Performing and/or Literary Arts: Roper Galloway & Linda Leask.

Arts Alive for Culture: The Acton Agricultural Society, Doug and Mary Lou Brock, Jane Fogal,

Arts Alive Award for Heritage: Mark Rowe, for his books and his devotion to heritage;

Ann Lawlor, for Devereaux House project; Heritage Acton.

Arts Alive Ralph Ussel Award for Volunteerism: Mary Bilik Udell, with Globe Productions.

Arts Alive Kenneth R. Harrison Award for Youth Mentorship: Sam Hancock.

Arts Alive Award for Patrons of the Arts: Lois and Al Fraser.

Arts Alive Award for Local Business Partner: Paul Armstrong, for financial support.

Arts Alive Award for New Arts, Culture and/or Heritage Event: Light Up The Hills.

Arts Alive Award for Established Arts, Culture and/or Heritage Event or Group: Georgetown Little Theatre.

Two special awards were also given out: A Special Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Barbara Halsall, posthumously, for her tenacious support for the preservation and improvement of our natural heritage; and a joint Special Recognition Award to Head Librarians Jane Diamanti and Betsy Cornwell for their unflagging efforts in advocating for adequate resources for our community's library needs resulting in this year's dual construction projects.

Honourable Mentions included: Paul d'Entremont, Ted Brown, Ron Stiel, Kay d'Entremont, Kellen & the Acton Roxy, Alex Colthart, Diane Murray-Charett, Eleanor Wallace, the Shepherd's Crook, Glen Oven Bakery, Johnson & Associates Real Estate, Centre Stage School of the Arts, Beyond the Stage, Acton Farmers' Market, Halton Hills Sports Museum, Georgetown Bach Chorale, 1st Acton Scouting, Christine Eagles and The Friends of the Old Seed House Garden.

- Inside Halton, 25 January 2011,

<http://www.insidehalton.com/opinion/columns/article/933524--local-citizens-receive-arts-alive-awards>

