



# ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 51, Georgetown, Ontario, Canada L7G 4T1  
[www.esquesinghistoricalsociety.ca](http://www.esquesinghistoricalsociety.ca)

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January – February 2008

## ROMAN CATHOLICISM IN ACTON AND GEORGETOWN



Holy Cross Church on Guelph Street, with home of Miss Annie Ryan on left of picture. This photograph was taken in 1934. EHS 650

### TIMELINE

- 1852 Jesuit priests from Guelph begin monthly visits to McCann farmhouse at Little Dublin (Acton).
- 1855 St. Patrick's Church built in Georgetown
- 1857 St. Joseph's Church built at Little Dublin. St. Joseph's Parish established with St. Patrick's, Georgetown as a Mission Church.
- 1877 Zion Congregational Church built on Church Street, Acton



Bishop Peter Crinnon,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Bishop of Hamilton

- c.1878 Bishop Crinnon refuses to enter decrepit St. Patrick's Church at Georgetown.
- 1882 Catholics rent empty Congregational Church for Masses. They return to Little Dublin after a short time.
- 1885 New stone Georgetown Church built dedicated to the Holy Cross and St. Patrick.
- 1886 Zion Church purchased by St. Joseph's and original church pews at Little Dublin removed and sold to Rockwood Church. St. Joseph's continues to use the same building to this day.
- 1956 Holy Cross Parish becomes a parish separate from St. Joseph's.
- 1965 New hexagonal Holy Cross Church opens on Maple Avenue in Georgetown. Former church is rededicated to Sacré Coeur, as a separate Francophone parish.
- 2007 Architects engaged to design new Holy Cross Church at Mountainview and Argyll.



**Top Left:** Former home of Miss Ryan, beside Sacré Coeur. EHS1200

**Bottom Left:** This red brick house was built in 1901 by James Buck. It was sold to the Lion's Club in 1953 who sold it as the rectory for the new Holy Cross Parish. It became the rectory for Sacré Coeur in 1965. It was demolished in 2001. EHS1203

**Right:** L'église Sacré Coeur in 2001. It was built as Holy Cross Church in 1885. EHS1201  
All three photos were taken for the EHS by Karen Hunter in June 2001.

**Catholic Temperance Society**- met in the Catholic Church. President John Bird, Vice-president M. Cleary; Secretary James Kelly; Treasurer William Morgan; Librarian Miss Mary Morgan. They meet in the Church every Sunday afternoon and have about 25 members. – *Halton Herald*, 6 April 1876

The congregation of St. Joseph's Church is negotiating for the purchase of a parsonage. – *Acton Free Press*, 9 March 1899

#### **1901 Census – Roman Catholic Families living in Village of Georgetown**

Hicks, Tracy, Millar, Cooney, Firestone, Curtis, Ryan, Dundas, Kiser, Gibbens, Belisle, Scott, McGrath, Hickey, Breen, Bulger, Costigan, McCannah, Langan, Kelly, Treanor, Levery, Cullen, Downey.

The Roman Catholic Church at Georgetown will hold a concert in the Town Hall. (*Acton Free Press*, 9 March 1911)

A branch of the **Catholic Women's League** has been organized in connection with St. Joseph's Church. A meeting was held Monday in the parish hall when the following officers were elected: Miss Anna Mulholland, pres.; Mrs. Jane Sayers, first v-p; Miss Marion McIntosh, second v-p; Mrs. Wm. Arnold, third v-p; Miss Lena N. Costello, recording and corresponding secretary; Miss Mary K. Gibbons, treasurer; Rev. Father Goodrow, chaplin. Arrangements were completed for the holding of the Christmas Tree on Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>. (*Acton Free Press*, 15 Dec. 1921)



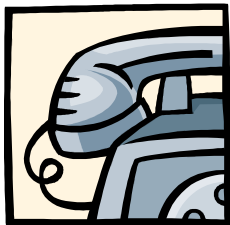
## **ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2008**

- Wed. 9  
January  
2008      **Sesquicentennial of Roman Catholicism in Acton and Georgetown** – Local historian John Mark Rowe will explore the early development of Catholicism in Esquesing area after a tour of the L'Eglise Sacré Coeur.  
SACRE COEUR CHURCH, Guelph Street, Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.
- Wed. 13  
February  
2008      **Tombstone Tales** – This meeting belongs to members who would like to talk about the life of a person represented by a tombstone standing in Esquesing Township. Several members will explore the life of someone buried locally while we display an image of his or her tombstone. It's not too late to sign up! Contact the executive to be added to the list of presenters.  
KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Main Street, Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.
- Wed. 12  
March  
2008      Kevin Gray, local author and military re-enactor, will speak to the Society about the British conquest of Quebec and the regiments involved in this defining moment in Canadian history.  
KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Main Street, Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.
- Wed. 09  
April 2008      **Limehouse Remembered** – Local historian John McDonald will share his slide show of the village of Limehouse, which he prepared for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the village last summer. Having grown up in the area, he can share many local tales with us.  
KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Main Street, Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.

**ALL MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AT NO CHARGE!**

Refreshments served from 7:00 p.m.

### **ESQUESING HISTORICAL SOCIETY EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**



Stephen Blake	905 877-8251	President
Karen Hunter	905 838-2109	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



## Society Notes

### INTERNET CONNECTIONS

The Esquesing Historical Society has an official web site on the World Wide Web. <[www.esquesinghistoricalsociety.ca](http://www.esquesinghistoricalsociety.ca)>

Send your e-mail to [mrowe6@cogeco.ca](mailto:mrowe6@cogeco.ca) or [dlvngstn@sympatico.ca](mailto:dlvngstn@sympatico.ca)

### EHS NEWSLETTER

John Mark Rowe prepared this newsletter with assistance from Karen Hunter and Dawn Livingstone. Submissions welcome. You may opt to receive your newsletter sent electronically to an e-mail address you provide.

### MEMBERSHIP

Our 2007 paid memberships stands at 115. The individual rate is \$10. The family or institution rate is \$12. Cheques payable to the Society can be mailed to our post box. Marj Allen, membership secretary, will accept your 2008 fee at the meetings. Our membership year runs from February. Renewals for 2008 are now due!

### ARCHIVES

Ken Baker, a custodian at the library, has made some improvements in the archives room by putting up some shelving, and hanging some of the library art collection, making a little more room.

The Archives has acquired copies of several local photographs from the National Archives which can be referenced from our Archives. They are intended for research purposes only.

The Archives received three copies of Georgetown's 1953 Coronation Parade, the only images we have.

Karen Hunter has found a long photograph of a group of Police Chiefs in behind an old framed photo of the early businessman's picnic at Eldorado Park. Several heads have numbers over them, so we hope they may be Georgetown area Police Chiefs.

We received a photograph of the Georgetown Victoria's football (soccer) team taken between 1909-1913. We didn't

even know the team existed. Does anyone have any other information?

### ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO

77 Grenville Street, Toronto 416-327-1600

[www.archives.gov.on.ca](http://www.archives.gov.on.ca)

### HALTON-PEEL OGS

Four Corners Branch Library, 65 Queen St., Brampton.

Call Betty Cameron at 905-792-0907

Jan. 27 **Bob Dawes**, Quinte Branch OGS, *Using Unorthodox Ways & Websites to Make Breakthroughs.*

Feb. 24 **Bill Bienia**, Cobblestone Legacies, *Documenting Your Findings.*

### STREETSVILLE HIST. SOCIETY

The Society meets the 2nd Thursday of the month (Feb, Apr, Oct, Dec), 8:00pm, at Streetsville Village Hall, 271 Queen Street South. Call Norm Potts at 905.858.0070.

### BRAMPTON HIST. SOCIETY

The Society meets at Heart Lake Presbyterian Church, 25 Ruth Ave. at 7:15

### 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.

Thursday January 17

"INTELLECTUAL AND SOCIAL ENTERTAINMENTS IN EARLY MILTON" with John McDonald

Thursday February 21

"HALTON RADIAL MUSEUM" with Shara Spencer

### OAKVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Admission Free \* Donations Welcome

For information about the Oakville

Historical Society and the collection, please telephone (905) 844-2695.

Feb. 21 Presentation: John Rutherford as Major General James Murray, 1st Governor of Quebec. Knox Presbyterian Church, 89 Dunn Street.

### NASAGIWEYA HIST. SOCIETY

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

Haltonville at 7 p.m. President Eli Daigle  
905-854-2628

### **HOMEcoming DONATES \$\$\$\$**

On Wed. 12 December 2007, the Halton Hills Public Library Board received an incredible donation from the Georgetown Homecoming Committee in the amount of \$79,271! The funds were generated by the Homecoming celebration in Georgetown in the summer of 2007.

### **HERITAGE DESIGNATION**

The Council of the Town of Halton Hills recently approved the designation of the Speyside Royal Oak and the Glen Williams Town Hall, upon the recommendation of Heritage Halton Hills. The Oak tree at the closed Speyside School was grown from an Acorn sent from Windsor Park in England. It was planted by local school children to commemorate the coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in 1937. The Glen Williams Town Hall has served as a community hall in every possible sense of the word since it was built by the villagers in 1871. It continues to operate under an elected board of trustees.

Both properties will receive a heritage plaque in the Spring of 2008.

### **EHS ELECTION**

February marks the end of one term for your executive and the beginning of a new term. Would you like to join our team to help preserve and share the history of our township? Please contact a member of the executive (see page 3) to indicate your interest.

### **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

The princely sum of \$10 is respectfully requested as soon as possible by all our members to renew for 2008. Please submit by post or in person at our January or February meeting. Thanks for your support!

### **2008 ANNIVERSARIES**

400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of Quebec City by Samuel de Champlain.

225<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the landing of the Loyalists at Shelburne, Nova Scotia.

190 years ago H.M. government negotiated the purchase of the "back townships" from the Mississauga native peoples – 1818.

150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Crown Colony of British Columbia. They joined Confederation in 1871.

1858 – United Province of Canada issued their first decimal coins, including a 20 cent piece.

1858- Halton County Tremaine Map published – one hangs in the Georgetown library

100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the publication of *Anne of Green Gables* by Lucy Maud Montgomery.

Centennial of the Royal Canadian Mint, the Canadian Nurses' Association and the Lifesaving Society.

1908 - Free rural mail service inaugurated  
Norval Station Post Office opened  
30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Joseph's Catholic School, Acton (1978)

## **Georgetown Herald**

15 January 1908

Coming to Georgetown on January 20-22 – The Mack and Alex Marks Big Moving Picture & Vaudeville Co. Evening admission: 10¢ & 25¢.

A meeting of the farmers of Esquesing was held in the council chambers, Stewarttown, on the evening of Monday January 13 to consider the matter of organization in connection with the Framers' Grange. Mr. William Bowman occupied the chair. Georgetown Town Hall – Friday night: Royal Scots Concert; Jan. 17<sup>th</sup> – Foresters' Concert

Two hockey matches were played on Lawson's Pond on Sat. afternoon. White Sox of Georgetown vs. Acton juniors (11-1 for Georgetown) and Red Sox vs. Brampton (2-1 Brampton).



## COME ON A CEMETERY WALK

At the February meeting EHS members will share their research on several tombstones which are of interest to them!



EHS 12718 (detail)  
Margaret Stewart



EHS15150 Patience  
Applebee



EHS15093 Benajah & Elizabeth  
Williams

## AN IRISH-CANADIAN STORY

In the Spring of 1931, a young Irish man came to work on my father Arthur Ruddell's farm which was situated south of Ashgrove on Trafalgar Rd. in Esquesing Township. His name was David McNeely. One Sunday afternoon in July our family went for a drive and David went for a swim in the village of Norval with a friend Fred Nurse who lived next door. In those days a mill race came into the Credit River at one point causing the water to deepen and creating undertows. When we came home my grandmother and aunt came quickly out of the house to tell us that David had drowned. I was only five years old at the time but I still remember it. Later I knew that he was buried in Ashgrove Cemetery which was taken out of the North corner of our farm. There was a metal marker to indicate the spot but over time it disappeared.

This young man had an aunt in Toronto and also his mother in Ireland wrote to my grandmother thanking her and my parents for their condolences. This was the end of the story I thought. But not quite!

In June, 2004 a couple, Joe & Norine Van Leeuwen were in Norval Hillcrest Cemetery. A carload of people came in. A gentleman approached Joe and asked him if he knew where the Ruddell plot was and also mentioned the name McNeely. Joe didn't know but would try and find out. My husband, Ward Brownridge, was celebrating his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday at an open house on July 4<sup>th</sup>. Norine & Joe came and told me about this encounter. I told her that I remembered the tragedy and had tears to think that seventy-three years later someone still cared about his past life and where he was buried. It was a short conversation and the birthday celebration continued.

The next week I planned how I would find out where the family lived and follow up the story. I went to the local libraries and found accounts of the drowning and the date was July 19<sup>th</sup>, 1931. It had taken four hours to locate his body. This was the first time I knew that the funeral had been conducted from our home to Ashgrove Cemetery. Rev. John Neill was the minister and David was referred to as a fine young man well thought of in the community. The letter from his mother was found among my grandmother's correspondence. He was the eldest child and had come out the previous year. She received many condolences from this community. His home was Crossmaglen, Co. Armagh, Northern Ireland.

My plan was to find a genealogical society in Armagh that might research families in that area. In case I had missed some vital piece of information I called Norine. It turned out that her husband had been given a business card of a relative in Toronto. Needless to say I called her and she, Kym Hyde, gave me the address of David's niece, Muriel Hyde of Milford, Co. Armagh, N. Ireland. I copied pictures of the buildings and family members of that era as well as the newspaper reports also the letter to my grandmother and sent them to Muriel. She wrote back and said how often her mother (David's sister) talked about activities she and David had shared and about that tragedy that had happened in Canada. Her mother is almost ninety-seven now with memory failing.

Their family talked about the cemetery marker and decided they would like a stone erected on David's grave. Ward is a caretaker and trustee of the cemetery. Over a period of many years he has been responsible for replacing broken stones and knew where a white slab stone with appropriate printing could be purchased from a Mennonite gentleman near West Montrose. Muriel's letter also referred to her granddaughter's wedding and I was concerned that she had made an error in the stone marking and the correct date of the drowning was the same as the wedding, July 19<sup>th</sup>. I called Kym who said "Leave it me. I am going to the wedding and will discuss the situation." The result was 19<sup>th</sup> July was correct - one life would be ended and a new life was beginning. We notified Mr. Martin of the Mennonite area and assured him of the correct date and ordered the stone. He does not have a telephone so we received a letter indicating the stone was ready. We drove up to West Montrose and met Pat Bahen a church member and caretaker of the cemetery and he offered to bring the stone back in his truck. Mr. Martin had to go to a funeral but left a note telling us to put the cheque between two slabs or we could mail it. We decided to leave it between the slabs and it was quite some time before the cheque was cashed. Ward suggested that probably Mr. Martin didn't go to town often as he drove a horse and buggy. The men stored the stone in our shed until they could get it set in place. This was done on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2005. The inscription reads -

I sent pictures of the stone and of Ward & Pat and received a letter back from Muriel. End of story. Not quite!

DAVID A. McNEELY  
BORN  
CO. ARMAGH  
N. IRELAND  
DROWNED IN THE  
CREDIT RIVER  
19<sup>TH</sup> JULY 1931  
AGE 24 YEARS

PEACE PERFECT PEACE



Muriel and the family members decided they would like to come to Canada again and wanted to meet us and visit the cemetery. They would arrive in Canada on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2006. It was arranged that they would come to our house on May 15<sup>th</sup> for lunch, have a visit and go to the cemetery. This they did and we had a great visit. Joe & Norine, John & Olive Wallace who came from N. Ireland in 1953, Muriel & Nancy & Kym Hyde, Vanessa Muldrew, Pat Bahen and Ward and I were in attendance and needless to say many pictures were taken. Lo and behold they even brought a picture of David. He was a very handsome young man. One story that circulated was when Muriel told her mother that she was coming to Canada she slowly replied "That's a long way." Then Muriel asked her if the name Ruddell meant anything to her and she replied "Arthur J" - that was my father's name and initial J for Joseph. This has all been a tremendous experience.

I am writing this on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006 and on July 19<sup>th</sup> it will be seventy-five years since this story began for me.

Betty (Ruddell) Brownridge.

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### **A Visit to Acton Fairview Cemetery**

"We had occasion to visit Fairview Cemetery, having buried a relative there recently, we passed the memorial to William Johnston, the founder of probably the best known and most efficient undertaking establishment in the district, now ably continued by his son-in-law, V. B. Rumley. Close together were the monuments of the Wansbroughs, Lambs and Murrays, all former residents of Crewson's Corners. John Murray, who married a Swackhamer, his sons Al and Will; Al being the benefactor who gave Acton its excellent YMCA building and other bequests; Will, who trimmed the Blue Springs Park to make an almost perfect setting for its present use by the Provincial Boy Scout authorities. Walter Lamb, the mason who built his own monument with field stone; whose father built the dry stone fences on the Harris farm at Rockwood, and whose son, Orrie, continues proficient in the family art.

We glanced at the monument of Sir Donald Mann of railway fame and at those of the McNabbs and Grahams from Eramosa. Way back on the hill, we noticed the fresh grave of Mrs. Al Nicklin, mother of Guelph's city engineer, and of Mr. Holmes, brother of H. S., former CNR agent. Coming back, we saw preparation for the burial of W.R.E. Blair, well-known Acton tinsmith. In the north corner stands the monument to Jack Wilderspin, winner of the Military Cross in world War I, with whom we attended school 50 years ago in England. We have been charged with a sort of morbid sadness in our tendency to look over cemeteries; we do not find it sad, it is historically interesting, and since one usually thinks of departed friends and acquaintances in a most generous manner, we know of no place where one can meet with so many old friends, in a sense, in a short time."

Monday 7 November, 1949

# Esquesing Cemeteries

Cemetery Name	Location
<a href="#">Acton Pioneer</a>	NE Lot 28, Conc 2
<a href="#">Ashgrove United</a>	NE Lot 9, Conc 7
<a href="#">Boston Presbyterian</a>	NW Lot 6, Conc 4
<a href="#">Brown Family Farm</a>	SE Lot 4, Conc 9
<a href="#">Brownridge Family Farm</a>	Lot 4, Conc 7
<a href="#">Churchill</a>	NW Lot 32, Conc 4
<a href="#">Disciple's (Stevenson Family)</a>	Lot 8, Conc 11
<a href="#">Dublin Roman Catholic - Acton</a>	NE Lot 25, Conc 1
<a href="#">Fairview - Acton</a>	NE Lot 27, Conc 2
<a href="#">Georgetown Methodist/Episcopal</a>	SW Lot 19, Conc 9
<a href="#">Georgetown Wesleyan Methodist (McCullough's)</a>	SW Lot 21, Conc 8
<a href="#">Glen Williams</a>	S mid Lot 21, Conc 10
<a href="#">Greenwood - Georgetown</a>	SE Lot 18, Conc 9
<a href="#">Hillcrest - Norval</a>	NE Lot 10 & SE Lot 11, Conc 11
<a href="#">Hornby Presbyterian</a>	SW Lot 1, Conc 9
<a href="#">Hornby Wesleyan Methodist (Eighth Line)</a>	SE Lot 1, Conc 8
<a href="#">Limehouse Presbyterian</a>	SE Lot 23, Conc 6
<a href="#">Mansewood United Presbyterian</a>	SE Lot 6, Conc 3
<a href="#">McNab Pioneer Cemetery</a>	NE Lot 11, Conc 11
<a href="#">McPherson Family Farm</a>	Mid Lot 4, Conc 8
<a href="#">Mount Pleasant Wesleyan Methodist</a>	NW Lot 13, Conc 8
<a href="#">Neilson Family Farm</a>	SE Lot 3, Conc 7
<a href="#">Old Kirk</a>	Lot 8, Conc 4
<a href="#">Pickard Family Farm (Wilson)</a>	Lot 3, Conc 9
<a href="#">St George's Anglican - Georgetown</a>	NW Lot 18, Conc 9
<a href="#">St John's Anglican - Stewarttown</a>	NW Lot 16, Conc 8
<a href="#">St Paul's Anglican</a>	SE Lot 11, Conc 11
<a href="#">Union Presbyterian</a>	SE Lot 23, Conc 11
<a href="#">Worden (Bannockburn)</a>	SW Lot 28, Conc 6

List from Halton-Peel Branch of the Ontario Genealogical Society website:

<http://www.halinet.on.ca/sigs/ogshp/cemindex.htm> Visit the website for further information and to order transcripts of these cemeteries. Transcripts can also be viewed at the Georgetown and Acton branch of the Halton Hills Public Libraries.



## The Carnival of the Season!

A gay assemblage was at the skating rink on Monday night. There were many attractive costumes. The Acton Citizen's Band played. – *Acton Free Press*, 5 March 1908.

Sleighting is grand at present. *Georgetown Herald*, 15 January 1908