

HISTORICAL FIGURE



*Archivist, heritage buff
Mark Rowe
likes being a
history 'detective'*

Story by Michael Burton
Photos by Ted Brown



"What's my story?" Mark Rowe asked. Sitting in a black leather chair in the Silvercreek Café in downtown Georgetown, Rowe paused to reflect on the question.

It's a bit loud in the small coffee shop. It's bustling with students and shoppers ordering espresso and grabbing a bite to eat.

"I've always been interested in history," he said over the buzz of the cafe.

"I was supported by my community growing up and felt it was important to give back. That got me into being a part of the community, sharing history and teaching people in the community about their own history."

Rowe sipped on his coffee and spoke slowly about his 31 years of teaching, his community involvement and his healthy obsession with local and Canadian history.

He moved to Acton from Toronto when he was just three years old. After finishing high school he attended the University of Guelph, receiving his bachelor's degree in history. After that he completed teacher's college at the University of Toronto.

"I joined the Esquesing Historical Society

shortly after I started my family in Georgetown. I've been involved since the early 80's and held lots of different positions," Rowe said.

"Several years later I joined Heritage Halton Hills as the Esquesing Historical Society representative, and I've been on it ever since."

"I like being a detective," he said. "I like being a sleuth and looking for information. I like putting the pieces together and figuring out who is responsible for what and what families were important."

Mark Rowe

Rowe showed up at his first Esquesing Historical Society meeting in 1982. Now he is a part of the Historical Society that advises Town council on heritage matters.

"I really enjoy researching buildings and houses," he said. "We provide information to council so that they can make a decision on

whether places need to be put on a heritage register, or whether they need to be designated.

"I'm the archivist at the Historical Society now. We work to establish the archives at the Georgetown Public Library.

"Our job is to collect local history, including documents, papers and photographs, related to our local heritage. But we also educate the public and share the information with them," Rowe said.

He's an honest and kind man who speaks softly while leaning forward in his chair.

During his involvement with the Historical Society, Rowe began writing articles for The Georgetown Independent in the 1980's.

"I learned different things. I wrote brochures and smaller booklets before I got into the bigger projects of book writing."

Rowe has penned three books including Acton: The History of Leathertown in 2003, Georgetown: Reflections of A Small Town in 2006, and most recently Bats Balls And Sticks in November of 2011.

Continued on page 20