

## THEN AND NOW

The Acton Cenotaph, located in front of Trinity United Church on Mill Street, was originally unveiled on Nov. 11, 1920. The two side panels, visible in the current photo, were added after the Second World War to honour Acton's fallen soldiers. Remembrance Day services are held there every year to honour all who have sacrificed their lives in service to this country.



SOLDIERS MEMORIAL, ACTON, ONT.

EHS photo



Alison Walker photo

## OPINION

# LIGHTING THE WAY TO THE OUTHOUSE

'WHEN THE OUTHOUSE WAS FINALLY DECOMMISSIONED, THE LIGHT FIXTURE OUT BACK FOUND ANOTHER USE,' WRITES BROWN



TED BROWN  
Column

With winter within spittin' distance, I've been trying to get everything in order before it arrives with a flurry.

And one item I've recently tended to is the light fixture at the back of the farmhouse. That bulb and socket was originally installed when the house was wired for electricity back in 1942. It was put there for one purpose: it illuminated the way to the

outhouse, which was located behind the farmhouse.

When one wanted to use the outdoor facilities, they simply had to flip on the switch in the kitchen, and head out back, by way of a passageway between the house and wood shed.

I'm reminded there was an outhouse song years ago referring to it as "That little old shack out back, so dear to me..."

My dad once told me how my great uncle Harry used to live on the Fourth Line, and he could tell when someone was using the outhouse on this end -

he could see the pinprick of light shining through the darkness from a concession away. Even today, my relatives are still living in the same house, and I'm certain they can see it as well.

Now, our farmhouse had indoor plumbing installed before I was born, but the outhouse remained there many years later - probably as a backup.

So that old socket bulb fixture had a specific use: to light the way to the outhouse.

Years later, when the outhouse was finally decommissioned, the light fixture out back found another use.

In the winter, my kids would have tobogganing parties at night, and use

the hill out behind the house.

That old fixture was once again pressed into service, and we could watch the kids tobogganing from the warmth of the kitchen.

With age, my kids no longer hosted tobogganing parties, except for some grandkids and their parents who did a daylight run or two before they get too cold and wet.

But recently, it seems the use of the outdoor fixture out back has gone full circle.

I'll explain.

As I reported back in the summer, we no longer have sheep on the farm.

It was time, and since we've sold them I've had more time to take on other things.

Of course every major reorganization on the farm comes with some side effects.

Ours is Hamish the dog.

You see, he's been the sheep's watcher for nine years, and he did have a few pangs of withdrawal when they left.

We'd let him out in the morning and he was frenetic, exploding out of the barn, ready to herd anything in his path.

But he has finally calmed down.

And with his newfound semi-retired position, The Sidekick is bound and determined to convert him into a house dog, rather than a barn dog.

Now he is house-trained, but we still have to take him outside to do his business.

Once outside, he visits each tree to mark his territory so the local coyotes are kept at bay.

But when it comes to him doing his 'serious business' (a.k.a. No. 2), well, we have to go out with him while he finds THE perfect spot.

And guess where his favourite place is located - yup, down that back hill.

Since the light out there was installed to aid with that bodily task - well, decades later, Hamish is now taking advantage of it too. And with it, we can illuminate a couple hundred feet down the hill, so any coyotes who are nearby will be deterred from bothering him, with that bright light shining in their eyes.

And of course, no doubt our Fourth Line neighbours will also be able to tell when Hamish has to go.

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