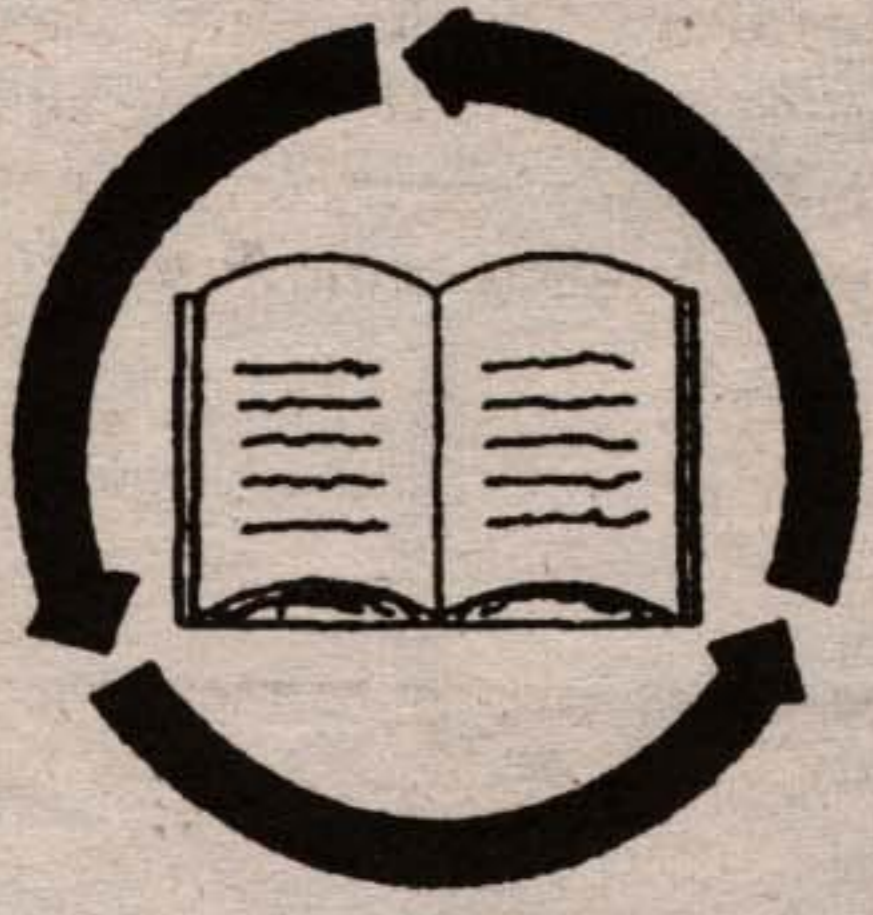


# John W. L. Forster

~ A national treasure ~

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John Wycliffe Lower Forster, one of the most gifted artists that Canada has ever produced, was born in 1850 in a log cabin on the 10th Line of Esquesing near the West Branch of the Credit River. In 1854, his father built a substantial home on the Town Line just south of the village of Norval. That beautiful home is now owned by the Matsuwera family.

John got his early schooling in Norval Public School under the guidance of Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Fraser. John would sketch his teacher at the blackboard causing ripples of laughter during

class. He was severely reprimanded for these misdemeanors, but at the same time Mr. Buchanan felt he must speak to the lad's parents and impress on them that John's incredible talent deserved the best instructors they could afford, preferably in the Art Schools of Europe - Italy, Paris and London.

When John and his brother tried their entrance exams for high school they walked to Milton from Norval, a distance of about 14 miles. Both were successful and they went on to Brampton Academy on Queen Street, but that long eight mile walk twice a day was too much for young John so he finished his secondary course in Toronto.

From then on, John travelled the world studying and painting, always painting; it was a passion with him. One of the first of many prizes he won was for a portrait of his Mother which he entered into the Milton Fair exhibit when just 16 years old.

While still in his twenties and early thirties he was becoming very well known in the art

circles here and in the United States. One critic at that time wrote that "Forester had an uncanny ability to portray with his brush the personality of his subject that a camera could not bring out, no detail escaped his notice."

John Forster thoroughly enjoyed his work and the companionship of those he had been asked to paint. In his books *Sight and Insight* and *Under the Studio Light* he relates many anecdotes told to him as his subjects sat for their portraits.

Not only did he paint the rich and famous of the world but also painted many of the people in his home area (Norval). We have seen three samples of his work in Peel County and without a doubt there are others, signed or unsigned, hanging in pioneer homes or stored in attics.

His books are really biographies. Listed in the back of *Under the Studio Light* there are 500 names, covering only a part of his life's work: Governors, Presidents, members of Royal families, giants in industry, Members of Parliament, Military leaders, Prelates of the Church, Heads of State, Bankers, College Principals and many women of distinction.

The list reads like a "who's

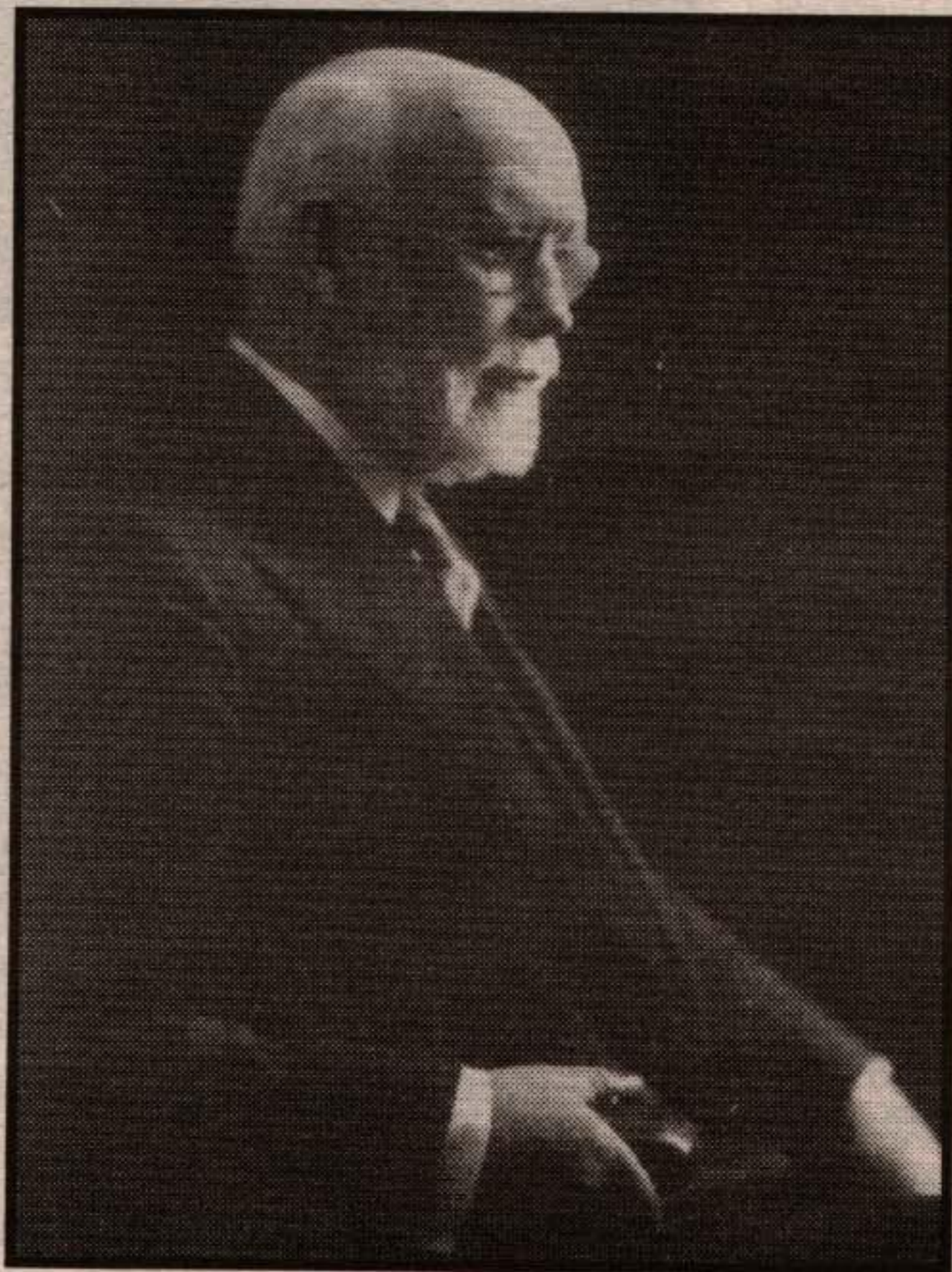
who" of his times. Sir John A. MacDonald, Wilfrid Laurier, General Booth of the Salvation Army, Bishop Stringer - the famous Anglican Bishop of the North who boiled his boots for soup during a bad period in the Yukon, and many members of the early Colonial families in Washington and Virginia.

A later portrait of his own Mother hung over the mantel in his Toronto home. Towards the end of his life John Forster was well aware that he had literally painted his way through early history of Canada. And with that in mind he left a legacy of over one hundred paintings and a sum of money to be used towards establishing a "Portrait Gallery of Canada." It was entrusted to the Art Gallery of Toronto. Where could it now be?

Forster died in 1937 and was buried in the family plot in Brampton. The funeral service was attended by members of Art Galleries from around the world, even the Prime Minister of Canada was there.

We are pleased to say that plans are afoot to honour John Forster's memory in Norval along with several others of whom it can be said:

*Lives of good men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime  
And departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sand of time*



JOHN W. L. FORSTER - a self-portrait.

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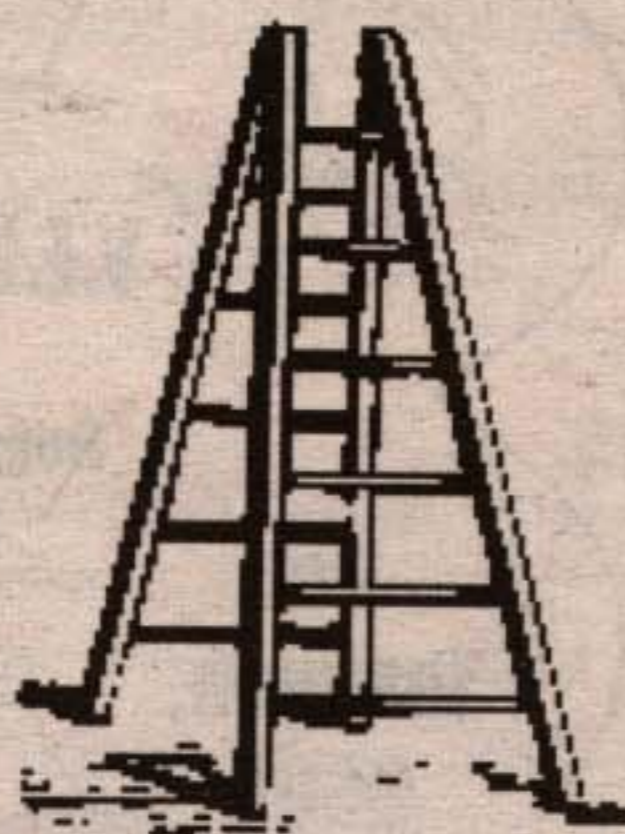
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References

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## Milton Council Recap by Councillor Cindy Lunau

**Taxes:** Property Tax By-Law are passed.

**Residential/Farm Rates:** The final Rural Tax rate is 1.272454%. To calculate your taxes, multiply your Current Value Assessment (CVA as determined by the Province) by this percentage. The rural rate exempts properties from Waste Management and Urban Services. The Urban Residential rate including these services is 1.390797%. A two-year phase-in program will apply to residential taxes over 15% or \$300 per year. Tax decreases are immediate.

**Commercial/Industrial Rates:** These rates are considerably higher (3.290484% and 5.334928%) but are also exempt from Urban Services. Council has directed Town staff to investigate the actual impact of commercial assessments in the rural area, particularly as they affect horse farms and 'cottage' enterprises. The Region will offer some relief in the form of Rebates for assessments increasing by more than 15% or \$1500. In just the last few days, the Provincial government has agreed to honour a commitment to similarly fund rebates to the School Board portion. You must apply for this Rebate.

**Appeal:** There is a good possibility that the appeal deadline of August 31st will be extended. You may wish to register your support of an extension by phoning the Provincial Assessment Office or your MPP.

**Tax Bills:** Tax bills will be mailed by September 9th with payments due on September 30th and October 30th, 1998.

**Information:** The new format of tax bills may be difficult to understand. Milton has additional staff to answer individual questions.

Phone Numbers: Milton Town Hall: Tax Office (905) 878-7252, ext. 147 or (for 519 exchanges) 1-800-418-5494. Regional Assessment Office: 1-800-387-5909.

**Your representatives:**

Your questions, comments, concerns are important. Please call us.

Lieven Gevaert (519) 856-4529;

Barry Lee (519) 824-0679 or (519) 853-5790;

Cindy Lunau (519) 853-3772

## The Town of Halton Hills News by Councillor Kevin Kuiack

**Taxes:** Your 1998 tax bills are expected to be out by the end of August or first week of September. If you would like to inquire about your tax rates they are now available by calling the Finance Department at 905-873-2600, ext 244. If you anticipate or find out that you need to appeal your assessment, be forewarned that the appeals deadline is August 31, 1998. Appeal forms are available at the Finance Department in the Civic Centre.

**Roads:** The 4th Line from 10th to 15th Sideroad and 5th Line from 10th to 17th Sideroad have just been surface treated. Some retaining wall work still needs to be done, however, on 4th Line south of 15th Sideroad. On the Milton Townline ditching and culvert replacement will be done between 22 Sideroad and 25 Sideroad over the next couple of weeks.

**Developments in Georgetown South/ West/ Troisville:**

**Georgetown South:** There is a Pre-hearing scheduled on August 25 and 26, 1998 at the Civic Centre, for the proposed Industrial Conversion to Residential. This is an opportunity to scope the issues and allow concerns and positions to be stated.

**Georgetown West (Trafalgar Road):** Presently, construction/grading is underway for the CN underpass between the Hospital and the proposed development. Preliminary lot grading is now occurring, while the Engineering Department reviews the drawings. Pro-servicing is expected to occur in the fall of this year.

**Troisville:** The Town is finalizing the acquisition of the Valley lands for parkland. Pre-servicing for Phase 1 and 2 is currently underway.

**Your Elected Officials:**

Please don't hesitate to call your local and/or regional councillors with concerns, questions or praise.

Rick Bonnette, 519-853-4203; Kathy Gastle, 905-877-7509; Kevin Kuiack, 905-877-8963