

Former curator speaks at historical society

By Jasen Obermeyer

Wayne Townsend, author and former curator of Dufferin County Museum and Archives, spoke at the recent meeting of the Caledon East and District Historical Society, discussing the historical relationship between Orangeville and the village of Caledon East. Townsend was originally to discuss the history of Orangeville, but he told the roughly 40 people on hand for the talk that after some research, he wanted to delve into the historical relationship between Caledon East and Orangeville.

He said that despite leaving the museum, he continues to enjoy speaking about history, as "it's lifelong learning," and is a big supporter of "you're never too old to learn."

Townsend first discussed why he likes local history, which he simply said is because of its relevance.

"It makes them have a sense of belonging and has a sense of community," he said. "It gives you things to look back on, memories to share."

He said he believes the small stories have an impact on their community, from there, an impact on the province, to the country, and eventually, worldwide.

Townsend discussed the various historical relationships and similarities Orangeville and Caledon East have shared, from various aspects of society.

He mentioned the migration of workers going to Orangeville from Caledon for employment, and how a large number of Caledon East residents would eventually retire in Orangeville, something Townsend said was surprising. But he added Orangeville was considered "a relatively good place for people to live when they got older."

He also cited that residents in both towns went to the high school in Orangeville, and the "many children" from both towns born in the Orangeville hospital as further examples of similarities.

When the topic of marriage came up, Townsend explained, "political borders didn't stop people from falling in love," mentioning that many marriages took place between people from both towns.

He further added that political borders "don't really keep people from being friends, and being neighbours."

Townsend mentioned that when he looked through archived newspapers, he noticed the reporting on each other's towns was done "often in a very indirect, very sly way."

He also used sports as an example, how both towns competed against each other in lacrosse, "which really surprised me."

Townsend ended the presentation by saying he was very surprised of the connections, but proud of these "strong links."



Wayne Townsend (standing right) spoke at the recent meeting of Caledon East and District Historical Society. The former curator of Dufferin County Museum and Archives, Townsend spoke on the historical relationship and similarities between Orangeville and Caledon East. Photo by Jasen Obermeyer