

Looking into Shelburne's 11 recently named lanes

Written By PETER RICHARDSON

Shelburne has almost more back lanes than downtown streets and now, they are being named. As part of the Canada 150 celebrations, the Town received a grant from The County of Dufferin Canada 150 Legacy Fund. On receiving the grant, the Heritage Committee then chose the lanes to name, and the names to use.

Each lane is marked at one end by a plaque, which contains the name and a brief history of who, or what, the lane was named after. Much of this research was done by Wayne Townsend, a noted local historian and one time curator of the Museum of Dufferin. Wayne depended heavily on a text called the Rose Book, whose real name is The History of Shelburne and was written by John Rose. Town Clerk Jennifer Willoughby assisted with the research and oversaw the making and installation of each plaque.

When the project was conceived, the Heritage Committee consisted of Geoff Dunlop, Sharron Peet, Lauita Townsend, Wade Mills and Sohayla Smith.

Though all of the heritage lane's namesakes are long deceased, the grandson of one still lives in the area and still practices a part of his grandfather's work. Tom Claridge is still in the newspaper business, as the Editor Emeritus of the Orangeville Citizen. His grandfather, Ern Claridge, known locally as TFE, owned and operated the Shelburne Economist from 1894 onwards, after purchasing it from the Smith brothers in that year. Ern, also known as Ern 'Good Day' Claridge resided in Shelburne for 82 years and for that whole time was the leader of the Shelburne Citizens' Band.

All of the 11 lanes originally selected today have names and plaques erected, but the project is still ongoing. Several other lanes are yet to be named and designated, but will be so in the future. Currently, we have Nurse Dudgeon Lane, Jelly Lane, Brickyard Lane, Claridge Lane, Belle Air Lane, Old School Lane, Station Lane, Economist Lane, Red Front Store Lane, Veterans Lane and Berwick Lane. Each has a unique part in Shelburne's past history.

Miss Jennie Dudgeon, was a registered nurse who worked at the Shelburne Hospital. Some 5,000 or more babies were delivered by Nurse Dudgeon at the Shelburne Hospital, before she moved on to the Dufferin Area Hospital, from which she retired and returned to live in Shelburne, until her death in 1973.

Jelly Lane memorializes William Jelly, the Father of Shelburne, while Brickyard Lane commemorates Thomas Horsley's Shelburne Brickyards, which in it's heyday could produce 135,000 bricks per burn. Claridge Lane we have already discussed, but Belle Air Lane is an ode to a once grand three storey home built by Dr. Thomas Norton in 1890.

The home was wired for electricity when built and was home Shelburne's first telephone, installed in 1891. Though damaged by fire in 1929, the first floor was saved and converted to a cottage style house still standing today.

Old School Lane is named for Shelburne's first public school, while Station Lane recognizes the Toronto Grey and Bruce Railway station built in 1873. Economist Lane is named for the building which housed the Shelburne Economist, started in 1883. The building was built by the two sons of William Jelly, William Jr. and Andrew. The newspaper, was originally owned by two other brothers, the Smith brothers.

In 1872, Edward F. Bowes erected one of Shelburne's first general stores, at Main St. and Victoria St. Stocked with everything from groceries to farm implements, it would soon become known as the Red Front Store.

Veterans Lane takes it's name from the Royal Canadian Legion, which now occupies the old Shelburne Curling Rink building. The Shelburne Legion opened it's doors in 1931, for the use of the Great War Veterans' Association. Berwick Lane is an ode to Edward Berwick, an Irish settler who arrived in town in 1866 and became a prominent businessman and was also the local postman. Dynes

-Grey Apartments, previously the home of the Shelburne Hospital, sit on what was once Berwick Park, owned by Edward Berwick.

By naming the backlanes, in such a fashion, Shelburne has connected it's present, with it's past and forever immortalized some of it's more prominent and interesting people and history.

The project, when fully completed will give Shelburne residents a sense of where their town came from and the route it has taken to get to where it is today.