

Right to your front door... the history of the Home Deliveryman

By Helen Yielding

Modern life has many advantages. Cars, shopping centres and pre-packaged goods are readily available.

Yet there was a time when the housewife could expect that many necessities of life, like bread, milk, eggs, groceries and other household items, would be delivered daily, right to the front door of her home! How convenient!

Herb Kingston, former milkman and Simpson's deliveryman, treated the members of the Tecumseth & West Gwillimbury

Historical Society to a delightful slide show and discussion of the home delivery business in the cities and towns of Ontario. From the 1890s to the 1950s, dairies, bakeries, ice companies and department stores vied for business with horse and wagon services.

It was a huge business. Drivers competed for local trade with free goods; wagon-building companies flourished — until trucks replaced wagons in the 1950s; and loyal horses knew their routes just as well as their drivers. Kingston told

the tale of a horse, whose last stop was always a local pub. The horse refused to go back to the barn until he had his daily treat of a beer and a Spanish onion!

Herb also displayed an interesting collection of milk bottles, dairy logos, bread baskets and bottle cartons that brought back memories for some in the audience. Perhaps the Internet and related mail order companies are providing efficient services to today's customers, but the personal services of a friendly deliveryman with

his horse and wagon or truck still resonate with many, as a fond memory of a time gone by.

The Tecumseth & West Gwillimbury Historical Society meeting on November 19 will honour Remembrance Day, with songs from World Wars I and II, by the Upper Canada Chordsmen. In the Tec-We-Gwill WI Hall in Newn Robinson, 7:30 p.m. Visitors are welcome; a social hour will follow the meeting.

For more information, call 905-775-7144 or 905-936-3659.