

Jessop's Auto Repairs closes its doors

By Wendy-Sue Bishop

Sadly, another little piece of Schomberg's history and heritage has been chipped away.

Jessop's Auto Repairs Ltd, closed its doors on May 31. That closure ends a family tradition of 63 years serving the community of Schomberg and the surrounding area. Now, anyone who needs an auto repair of some sort will have to travel a little further. The [Chantilly VA auto repair](#) shop seems like a popular choice for many!

Linda, Mark and Ronda welcomed their loyal customers to join them on the last day for cake and coffee and remembrances and share with them in this wistful and nostalgic next step.

Many of you know Mark Jessop, as the mechanic of Jessop's Auto Repairs for the last 20 years, but that family history goes way back beyond those 20 years.

Seventy years ago, in 1947, Mark's grandparents, Clarence and Mildred Jessop, came to Schomberg. They bought a stock truck with which they hauled coal and livestock. In 1954, Clarence bought a fuel truck, to deliver White Rose fuels and in that same year Clarence and Mildred established "CW Jessop Auto Repair" with two service bays, on the north-west side of Highway 27 and Main Street. We all knew it as the "White Rose Gas Station.

These were the times of family and generational businesses ??names like Maynard, Graham, Coffey, Dale and Bishop. They were all mom and pop, father and son businesses. Schomberg thrived, businesses thrived and Main Street thrived.

Schomberg spirit soared high and everyone volunteered.

We built our arena in 1963, thanks to the dedicated leadership of Dr. Jones, all with everyone's blood and sweat, free labour, donated supplies, fundraisers from the Lions like dances and car draws; the ladies had garden and euchre parties, and it went on and on. That arena was built with no debt and "pay as you go" was the slogan.

Greta Graham kept that spirit alive for many years with many of us as group leaders, organizing over 300 volunteers to run the booth in the arena. That booth raised a lot of money each year and that all went back into the running of the arena. This spirit, participation and generosity was indicative of the times! You sure can't build arenas debt-free these days and that unbridled spirit of community and volunteerism seems to have somewhat changed course these days.

Times were different then. People lived within their means. They worked towards the day when they could envision their mortgage would and could be paid off. Basically that generation worked hard and played hard and they knew how to keep it all separate.

Clarence owned and serviced trucks to deliver vegetables to Dominion Stores all over Ontario, for Hardy Farms. Ironically enough, on the day of Hurricane Hazel, Oct. 15, 1954, Clarence and Mildred registered their company "CW Jessop Ltd." They must have figured it could only be uphill from there!

Then, in 1967, Clarence realized the need for more room, more service bays so he packed up and moved across the road to the east side of Highway 27. Ultimately, Bill ran the fuel order delivery service, Bob manned the Shell gas bar and Bruce opened a parts department and repair shop.

The Jessop family was definitely known for more than serving the public gas and repairing their cars. Clarence Jessop served as municipal councillor of Ward 4 in 1977 and in the 1980 election, he became mayor of the Township of King, a position he held with great honour, esteem, respect and trust for the next three terms.

Again, in the manner that the Jessop family perpetuates, Clarence's daughter-in-law, Bruce's wife, Linda, served as councillor, also for Ward 4.

Bruce was a volunteer firefighter with the Township of King for over 28 years, with 18 of them serving as chief. He, along with his dad, served with the Lions Club for many years and like his dad, he was well thought of and held in the highest esteem.

In 1997, Bruce and Linda opened Jessop's Auto Repairs Ltd. and often in the summer holidays you would see all three of Bruce's boys at the garage ??David, Michael and Mark. As a third generation proud Jessop, Mark has run the business with a loyal customer base that comes from as far as Bracebridge.

Mark and Ronda and their young family will be moving up to Burk's Falls and we wish them well in their new venture.

The Jessop Legacy will not be soon forgotten in our little community. It's another little part of what has made Schomberg great!