



The Journal

Volume 12 Number 3 Published by the Milton Historical Society

December 10
1997

Speakers describe role played by Women's Institute

The Women's Institute has been serving communities world-wide for 100 years. At our Nov. 20 meeting four members who have given a combined 200 years to the organization gave us some idea of its broad scope.

Marion Inglis, president of the Campbellville unit, spoke of the scores of programs sponsored by her group since it was first formed in 1902. Mrs. Murray Crawford—her family once owned part of Crawford Lake Conservation Area—was the first president.

Not many parts of the community were left out of the group's activities: oyster suppers, fire prevention programs, help to Girl Guides and other youth; disease control, skating lessons, recording local history—to mention a few. The Institute sent hundreds of parcels to soldiers overseas during both World Wars; after 1945 it presented each war bride with a hand-made quilt.

Doreen Hume represented the Scotch Block Institute formed in 1933. Eva Chisholm is the only surviving member of the original group.

Scotch Block members purchased the former Ligny School in 1964; it served as the Institute's hall for 25 years.

Membership reached its peak of 58 in the mid-1950s. Today 12 women remain on the job. But with a few new members, Doreen said, it will carry on for another 65 years.

Fanny Clements joined the Mountain Union Institute 65 years ago. It took its name from a historic church and Sunday School on Bell School Line. Mountain Union merged with Nelson Institute in the mid-70s.

Fanny fondly recalled the annual March euchres and square dances at the

(Continued on page 4)



Four representatives of operating area Women's Institutes reviewed the activities and leadership provided by their groups. The Society was recognizing the 100th anniversary of the Women's Institute. From the left are Marion Inglis, Campbellville W. I.; Lois Parker, Campbellville, W. I.; Doreen Hume, Scotch Block W. I. and Fanny Clements, Mountain Union.

Good time guaranteed at Christmas party

Good food and good singing add up to a lot of fun at our Christmas Party Dec. 18.

We're taking over the main hall at Halton Region Museum in the Kelso Conservation Area. It's a potluck supper: our executive will bring the main dishes and other members are asked to supply desserts or salads. We eat at 7 p.m.

The other good news is that the "Song Spinners" from the Milton Seniors' Activity Centre will entertain us again under director Joyce Hayward. Many will remember their brave performance last year in a frigid church at the Ag. Museum. They'll perform just as well this year under balmier conditions. We'll join in with some carols, too.

New Year's Levee celebrates people who made a difference

Dozens of men and women who shaped our community will be celebrated at the Mayor's New Year's Day levee at the Town Hall.

Displays will feature doctors, farmers, teachers, mayors, business people and other groups, in all dozens of people who made a difference. (All were included in the two volumes of "Milton Area Biographies.")

True to tradition, Mayor Gordon Krantz and councillors will welcome visitors as they arrive. The town leaders will also conduct tours for those unfamiliar with the building.

Pianist Cameron Ivens and harpist Sarah Sabatinos will give the New Year a melodious start. Jessie Hamilton is in charge of refreshments.

The levee is held from 2 to 4 p.m. New Year's Day.

"Biographies" selling well

Introduced at our October meeting, the second volume of "Milton Area Biographies" compiled by Alex Cooke, is selling well in local book stores. Alex was on hand at SmithBooks November 29 for a signing and sale. A limited number of copies of Volume I is still available.

People scrambled for seats at our night of book introduction and review of next project

We scheduled a doubleheader Oct. 16 and had to bring in extra chairs for the overflow audience.

Author Alex Cooke was ready to sign copies of his second volume, *Milton Area Biographies* at 7 p.m. Minutes later Hugh Foster Hall was full and more people were passing through the door. At peak attendance about 100 filled both the hall and lounge.

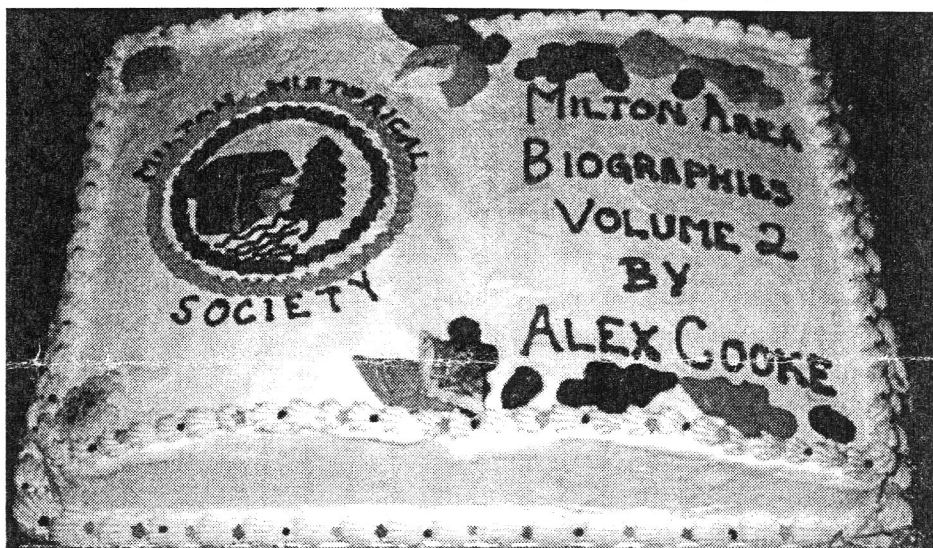
We brought 50 copies of the book to the event; even so we ended up with quite a few on our "waiting list."

The lives of more than 200 Milton area residents were included in the two volumes. And Alex hinted there may be a third some time.

The second volume includes residents who died after 1931. Three former members of our Society are included: Stan Allen, Carl Martin and Walter "Bus" Norrington.

Following the signing ceremony in the lobby, Alex and Jim Dills spoke to an enthusiastic audience. Jim initiated the project several years ago as head of the research team by encouraging Alex to begin. Alex wrote and Jim set up the pages for the printer. Brenda Whitlock edited the text and Kay Dills did the proof-reading.

President Bruce Carlin, who mailed invitations to relatives of people in the book, arranged for a celebratory cake.



Guests enjoyed a special cake at the introduction of Alex Cooke's second book of "Milton Area Biographies" in October. The second volume completes a project begun in 1991. The two volumes include biographies of 227 people who lived in Milton and area and "made a difference."

If you missed the Oct. 16 signing you will be able to buy the book at local bookstores, Smithbooks in the Mall and Harris Stationery in downtown Milton.

Most of those who came for the book launch stayed to hear Ken Lamb's talk about our coming biography of inventor P. L. Robertson. They merged with dozens of former Robertson plant employees resulting in a hurried visit to Town Hall and car trunks for 20 extra chairs. About 75 took part.

Ken described recent research on several aspects of P. L.'s career and promised many surprises for readers when the book appears next fall.

Visitor Jim Packham wrote a ten-page article on the Robertson screw for the September issue of the Tool Group newsletter. The organization is devoted to the history of tools. Jim had a second interest in the story – his aunt and uncle lived in Milton for many years – Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Laundon.

Briefly speaking . . .

- Thanks to the eagle eye of Geoff Cannon of the Georgetown Library our archives now holds a wonderfully-kept copy of the April 9, 1868 edition of *The Canadian Champion*. Annex Books, Toronto, sold it to us for \$20.

- Dorrie Greig, formerly our secretary, has taken on the post of director of promotion and publicity. Dorrie succeeds John Ladell, who died suddenly in late September.

- For months we have been trying to track down some of the paintings and other art objects owned by P. L. Robertson and distributed to friends and relatives after his death in 1951. We have learned that two of the paintings are owned by Milree Latimer, daughter of the late Campbell Wilson, a life-long employee of P. L. Robertson Manufacturing Company and a member of the board of directors.

- Brenda Whitlock has closed her "Harper Books" store at Campbellville. Brenda planned to be there five years – that stretched to seven. She still keeps her hand in with occasional appearances at Toronto's St. Lawrence market.

- Archivist Gail Richardson is taking the first step in a project to honour space hero Chris Hadfield. Gail will begin by taping interviews with Chris' mother, Eleanor. Chris was a student at Percy Merry and Milton District High schools.



**Milton
Historical
Society**

**P. O. Box 85 Milton, Ont.
L9T 2Y3**

**The Journal is published three
times a year.**

Annual Memberships

Single \$7; Family \$10; Students \$5;
Life \$60

The Holy Rosary congregation celebrates 60th anniversary

Quite a few members of the Holy Rosary congregation have been digging hard into their 60-year history.

What they found and how the church plans to celebrate their findings are the subjects of our Jan. 15 meeting. Speakers are Willi Stutt, a teacher, and two long-time residents Ada Scisizzi and her sister Joyce Haslam – all members of the congregation.

Members will recall that Holy Rosary won a Heritage Award a few years ago for architectural work on the priests' residence. The home on the Martin Street site was built in 1857 for John Martin, the eldest son of Jasper and Sarah Martin.

What's with this APOLROD?

Find out at Feb. 19 meeting

For more than ten years heritage groups have been worried about what could happen to many historic documents because of automation of records in Ontario Land Registry offices.

Specifically microfilm has been declared the legal record for the period 1858-1955 and the actual documents were to be destroyed.

Through strong representations the heritage community has been able to postpone the destruction. But authorities now have drawn the proverbial line in the sand. A tremendous amount of work has to be done within the next two years if these records are to be preserved.

Lois Knight will tell us all about the dilemma at our Feb. 19 meeting. Lois is Halton team leader, the Association for the Preservation of Ontario's Land Registry Office Documents (APOLROD).



Alex Cooke was honored by the Ontario Heritage Foundation. He was presented with a Community Heritage Recognition Achievement Certificate by M.P.P. Ted Chudleigh (left) in September. Mayor Krantz added the town's recognition. Alex is in the centre.

Only your stamp of approval needed for these postcards

We don't know how many times John Duignan has written "Wish you were here" but he certainly has a lot of postcards. And we'll see some of them at our March 19 meeting in Hugh Foster Hall.

A Miltonian and a new member of the Society, John has been collecting postcards for about ten years. He specializes in scenes of the Milton and Campbellville area. So far he has collected 122 different scenes and he knows there are quite a few he doesn't have.

John will show "blow ups" of some of his cards; perhaps we may be able to help identify buildings or other features shown.

It will be fun to hear about the joys and frustrations of hunting treasures at postcard shows.

Welcome New Members!

At our Oct. 16 meeting seven members joined our Society. Miltonians are Doris and Lyle Dales, Arlene Jones, Lois and Charles Thomson and Elizabeth Van Cleef-Scholtz. The seventh is Ted Gazley, a Milton native who now lives in Oakville.

Welcome in '98 with our Alex

Alex Cooke has the honour of ringing in 1998 at Victoria Park.

The traditional New Year's Eve ceremony gets under way at 11:45 p.m.; the Kinsmen again are hosts.

At the stroke of midnight Alex will toll the historic bell that sat atop the Town Hall for so many years.

A researcher and genealogist, Alex is one of the founding members of our Society.

President's Award won by the Mercers

Betty and Alex Mercer have won the President's Award for keeping their 19th century home in excellent condition.

The two-storey stone house, built in 1873, is on Main Street beside Grace Anglican Church.

Betty's parents, Ada and George White, bought the home on arrival from England in the late 1930s; the Mercers have lived there for 40 years.

Our search launched for Heritage winners

The search for winners of our 1998 Heritage Awards is well under way. Ads for nominations are scheduled for early editions of The Canadian Champion.

In co-operation with Heritage Milton (LACAC), we hold an annual ceremony to recognize excellence in heritage education as well as in visual, writing and architectural categories.

Winners will receive their plaques Sunday Feb. 15 in Hugh Foster Hall. The program begins at 1:30 p.m.

This time the event will be even more colorful than usual because of the participation of The Milton Choristers.

Share the fun. Bring a friend to our Society meetings.

17 treasures proudly shown at September show-and-tell

A show-and-tell is like a potluck supper – we never know what's coming but there's always enough variety to make everyone happy. That's how it was at our Sept. 18 meeting.

The items and their "cooks":

Gloria Brown: Two photos taken at the former Ligny School (Campbellville Road) – the 1909 student group and a group shot of former teachers of the one-room school.

Marion Detlor: Her paintings of St. Paul's United and Grace Anglican churches and Hugh Foster Hall.

Peggy Reid: Replica of a 1908 Sears catalogue; it listed ready-to-be-lived-in houses at \$1,995.

Mabel Coulson: a wreath of silk flowers and beads made about 1867 for her grandmother, Mary Hall. Also a 1924 photo of delegates to the Ontario

Association of Fairs and Exhibitions at the King Edward Hotel, Toronto; her uncle, Ernest Readhead, was a delegate.

Margaret Holmes; a cowbell that has been in her family for many years.

Ad Woodley: A century-old photo of the Huffman family home on the Ninth Line, Esquering and a painting of the home by Trish Romance who briefly lived in the house. Reta Woodley is a descendant of Henry Huffman, a land developer and farmer in early Milton.

Craig Reid: a sheep whistle used by his grandfather in the Cheviot Hills, England.

Jim Johnson was happy when his treasure was identified as a Masonic matchbox.

Jessie Hamilton: 1909 photo of about 100 employees in front of a Milton Pressed Brick building (north of Main St. and west of Bronte St.)

Man of many talents, John Ladell dies at 73

We have known John Ladell for the past few years as publicity director of our Society and of Milton Players. Also as a speaker at one of our meetings.

John, who came to rural Milton to be close to his daughter Lindsay Dutra, died suddenly in late September, two days short of his 73rd birthday.

Born in Thailand, John was a submarine officer in the Royal Navy during World War II. He came to Canada in 1946 and took a forestry degree at the University of Toronto. He later became an authority on land use and a consultant on environmental planning. After earning a Ph.D. at Oxford he served as a senior research scientist at the Ontario Research Foundation.

He and his late wife, Monica, collaborated on the book "Inheritance: Ontario's Century Farms Past & Present". In 1993 John completed "They Left Their Mark – Surveyors and their Role in the Settlement of Ontario."

Cliff Brown has left us

Cliff Brown, a familiar face at dozens of Society meetings, died Nov. 30. Cliff and Dorothy, who were married just a few years ago, were among our most faithful members.

For many years, before moving into town, Cliff farmed on Highway 25, opposite the Chudleigh apple farm.

Museum lays off staff; will try to re-open in '98

The Farm Museum in Milton may re-open in 1998 but if it does it will be a very different place.

In late November eight full-time employees were laid off, effective Dec. 12. So were 15 historical interpreters who have been employed when the museum is open to the public. The employees were given no assurance of future employment.

Major provincial funding ended last March. Since then a successor, non-profit organization, Country Heritage Experience, has been operating the site. Provincial funding toward site maintenance was the only assistance offered by the government.

Attendance in 1997 totalled about 40,000, including school groups – about 30,000 fewer than projected. This left a crushing financial problem.

The directors, under Robert Monte, are developing a plan for future operations. One possibility is that the grounds will be rented out to private organizations, such as farm machinery manufacturers, for short-term events.

Women's Institute ...

(Continued from page 1)

Milton Town Hall (Main St.). The events drew up to 400 people – and no questions asked about hall capacity.

Lois Parker, long-time member of the Campbellville unit, emphasized the international aspect of the Institute. At the week-long 100th anniversary celebration in June at Hamilton more than 1900 members from many countries took part. They sat utterly spellbound when Canada's first woman astronaut, Roberta Bondar, delivered her message.

Lois was also impressed with the organizational skills – more than 1700 were served at lunch with hardly a minute's delay. Even the intense heat couldn't dim her admiration for the women in national costumes, especially a 100-year-old German member in a dress she knitted 20 years ago.

Have you renewed your membership?

Make a resolution now to renew your membership this month.

Whether you attend meetings or not your membership keeps *The Journal* coming and helps support the ongoing work of the Society.

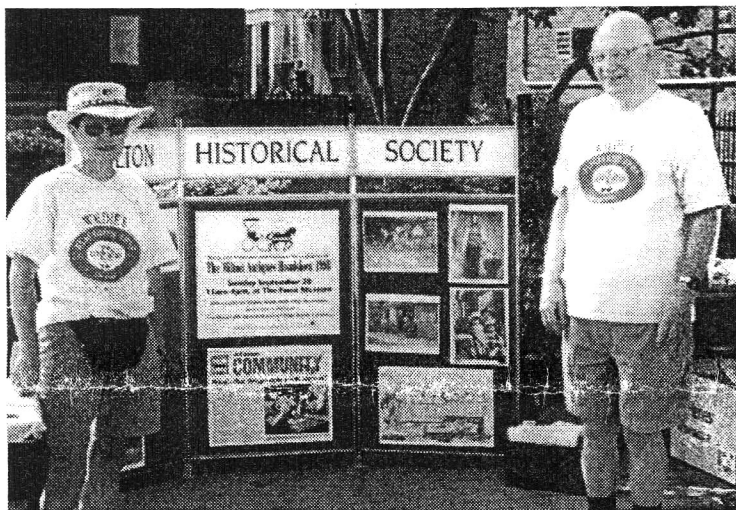
If you can't make our Jan. 15 meeting please send your cheque: \$10 for families, \$7 for individuals to Milton Historical Society, Box 85, Milton Ont. L9T 2Y3.



The Journal

Volume 13 Number 2 Published by the Milton Historical Society

September 5
1998



Sporting T-shirts designed to support restoration of the historic Waldie Blacksmith Shop, Marsha Waldie and Ken Lamb arrived early to help set up our Aug. 8 display at the Milton Farmers' Market.

Society sees early start to James St. restoration

Mandy Sedgewick, chair of our committee in charge of the Waldie Blacksmith restoration, is optimistic about an early start.

The first priority is to shore up the building so that it could withstand possible heavy snowfalls over the coming winter. John Simpson, a Society member with broad experience in building similar structures, visited the site and made recommendations on what needs to be done immediately.

Once this work has been done the focus will be on the need for a new roof. And Mandy expects to be making an early announcement about this significant part of the restoration.

In the meantime the sale of special T-shirts with the supporting logo has been brisk at the Farmer's Market on several Saturday mornings as members promote the project and the Antiques Roadshow in September.



Outdoor Smithy

Visitors to our Milton Antiques Roadshow Sept. 20 will see a blacksmith plying his trade outdoors.

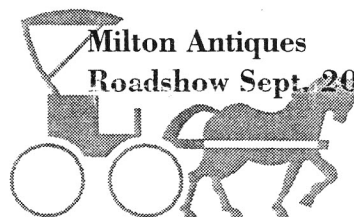
David Sykes, a blacksmith in Moffat, will set up his portable forge close to our show in Puslinch Township Hall. He'll demonstrate various techniques of the modern smithy.

David will feel quite at home at the Farm Museum – he worked at his trade there for more than ten years when it was known as the Ontario Agricultural Museum.

Lots of help needed for Antiques Roadshow

We are gearing up for what promises to be the best-attended event in our 21-year history – the Milton Antiques Roadshow at the Farm Museum, Sunday September 20.

We'll need lots of help that day – if you can spare a few hours please get in touch with Bruce Carlin 875-4588 – Today!



Similar events have proved extremely popular. A recent Toronto show attracted 15,000 people over two days. And tv programs based on the antiques theme

have strong ratings both here and in Britain.

Our preparations under committee chair Lynda Leaver have been under way for several months. At least half a dozen auctioneers will be on hand to estimate the value of treasures visitors bring.

The \$5 admission entitles a visitor to bring one treasure for review.

The event takes place in Puslinch Hall, which is within a few yards of the Farm Museum entrance on Tremaine Road.

Dorrie Murdoch-Greig, publicity/promotion director, has put together a big program to "push" the event. This includes four appearances at the Milton Farmers' Market, distribution of 15,000 bookmarks, large street banners and an extensive program for print and broadcast media.

Proceeds will help restore the Waldie Blacksmith Shop on James Street. Opened in 1865, the shop operated for more than 100 years under three generations. Marsha Waldie and Gayle Brown are daughters of Alfred, the last operator. Edna, Alfred's widow, has been a Society member since its early years.

A gift from Brenda

Brenda Whitlock is making a significant gift to the Society.

She is donating a display case for our archives located on the lower floor of the Milton Seniors' Activity Centre.

Brenda preceded Gail Richardson in the archivist position. While in the post Brenda spent countless hours of research to prepare a book listing all Milton's mayors and councillors since the town was incorporated in 1857.

Her interest in the archives continues and she can be found assisting there many Tuesday mornings.

We get advice from OHS heads

Executive director Dorothy Duncan and Vice-President Jeanne Hughes of the Ontario Historical Society attended our special executive meeting in July.

The meeting discussed fundraising for restoration of the Waldie Blacksmith Shop.

The OHS leaders described various programs developed during restoration of the new OHS headquarters in Willowdale. They explained that instead of emphasizing an overall financial objective, they sub-divided the project into a series of smaller goals – each aimed at completing a specific part of the building.

They stressed that the first and most important phase of a restoration project is to determine exactly how the building will be used.

Unique designs promote blacksmith shop program

T-shirts and golf shirts with distinctive designs by local artist Konrad Richter are helping support the Waldie Blacksmith restoration plan.

The shirts attracted a lot of attention – encouraging sales, too – at our display at the Farmers' Market.

If you missed us – and them – at our Main Street stand you'll have another chance at our October meeting. Price of the all-cotton T-shirts is \$15.



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Sisters help revive historic Waldie Shop

At our May 21 meeting the Waldie sisters – Marsha and Gayle (Brown) – dressed for the part and demonstrating many tools of the trade – described how three generations of the family had operated the James Street shop for more than a century.

As the meeting wound down Gayle mentioned that the Waldie photos and artifacts had been in storage since they had spoken to us five years before. She felt sad because the shop was in such bad shape that it might soon disintegrate.

Since the May meeting, of course, there has been a big change in the situation. Details of the restoration plans – and the means to pay for them – are described elsewhere in this issue.

Colorful tales told from the dozen papers in Milton's past

Jim Dills, at our April general meeting, gave a lively description of local newspaper history, especially hot political disputes that prevailed in the dozen Milton papers since the first was founded in 1855.

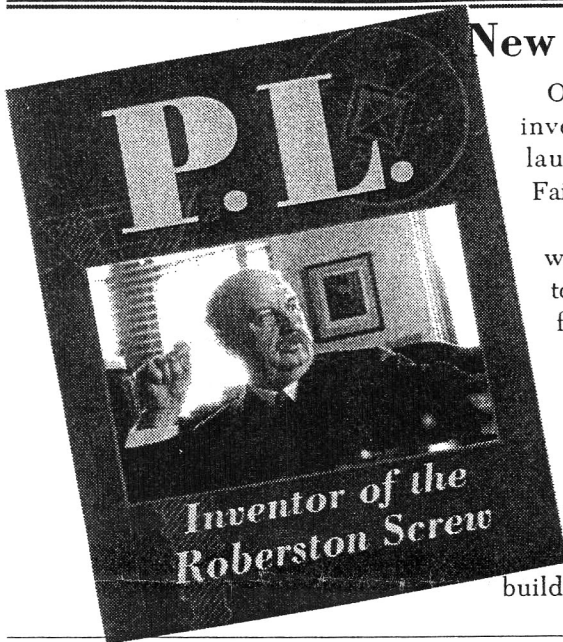
Although Jim didn't dwell on the subject, the Dills family has played a strong role in Halton publishing. His father, who got his start as an apprentice printer in Acton and purchased the newspaper there later, purchased The Canadian Champion in 1943. Jim and his brother Dave succeeded their father, establishing a third paper during the 1970s in Georgetown. They sold the papers in 1978.

Jim, our first president, brought with him an impressive collection, including cameras, photos and typesetting equipment. To create the proper print shop atmosphere he donned his printing apron, green eye shade and sleeve protectors.

Among his memories was the only time he uttered the fabled words "stop the presses!" That was during a particularly difficult time at the local hospital when the Board altered a critical decision after the pages of the paper had been closed. The new information was what appeared in the issues distributed.



A large Milton contingent was on hand in May when the Milton Historical Society received the Scadding Award from the Ontario Historical Society. Mayor Gord Krantz; Clive Thurston, LACAC Chair; Dorrie Murdoch-Greig, MHS Publicity; Jim Dills, MHS founding president and Bruce Carlin, current MHS president, are shown with the certificate.



New P.L. Robertson biography debut Oct. 25

Our long-planned biography of inventor P.L. Robertson will be launched Oct. 25 at the Milton Fairgrounds.

Two introductory get-togethers will be held. A session from 1 p.m. to 2:30 is primarily for present and former Robertson Company employees. A second meeting from 3 p.m. to 4:30 is for Society members and others. But if you can't attend the later meeting you will be welcome at the 1 p.m. session.

The Robertson-financed building is just inside the Robert St.

Fairgrounds gate; it's the regular site for auction sales.

Robertson Whitehouse company is donating a giant cake for the occasion as well as exhibiting company products related to P.L.'s invention. Company executives Bill Weston and Eito Nijholt will represent the firm at the earlier meeting.

Our Society is working on a special display that will provide visitors with a visual reminder of earlier years at the company and its founder.

Author Ken Lamb will be there to sign books and answer questions about the project backed up by collaborator Jim Dills. Assisted by dozens of former employees and Robertson family members, they have been working on the book for almost three years.

The 200-page biography includes more than 150 photos – some of them from the 1880s. Financed entirely by the Society, the book sells for \$25.

P.L. was born in 1879 on a farm near Binbrook, Haldimand County. Shortly after he invented the Robertson screw – the one with the square hole in the head – he built a plant in Milton in 1908.

For decades the Robertson firm was the financial heart of the town.

On Oct. 15 we hear about heritage home restoration

At our Oct. 15 meeting in Hugh Foster Hall Tim Kingsbury will tell us about some of the satisfactions – and pitfalls – in restoring heritage homes.

Many will recall that Tim and Julie won our architectural heritage award in 1993; the following year they won the Ontario heritage award for residences. The Kingsbury home is on Second Line in Nassagaweya.

Tim is the seventh generation of his family in southern Ontario. The Kingsburys, an English family, landed in Boston in 1795 and some weeks later Tim's ancestor came to southern Ontario. The family deed to Tim's property is dated 1818.

Heritage Foundation November meeting theme

At our November 19 meeting we'll learn about some of the current projects of the Ontario Heritage Foundation.

An Ontario government agency, the Foundation is involved in a wide range of programs, including commemorative plaquing – the P.L. Robertson tribute on Bronte Street is an example. The organization also has many heritage properties such as Spadina (House) in Toronto, which have been converted to contemporary uses.

No September Meeting

No general meeting will be held in September.

Normally we meet the third Thursday in Hugh Foster Hall. However, that would have been only three days before our Sept. 20 Milton Antiques Roadshow 1998 being held at the Farm Museum.

The executive decided that since so many members would be concentrating on the Farm Museum project the general meeting would be eliminated.



We were on a roll at bowling event

The opportunity to visit the historic Milton Lawn Bowling Club and enjoy a potluck supper ensured a strong turnout at our June 16 meeting.

Frances Clements told us about the history of the Club – it began before World War I – and Club President Ken Armstrong demonstrated some of the finer points of the sport. Members appreciated his help shortly afterwards when they tried bowling for the first time.

Society members who are experienced bowlers include Jessie Hamilton, Frank Sisson, Ed Parsons and Frances Clements.

About friends we know. .



¶ Annie Drew, a long-time member, and her husband, Joe, recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Annie and Joe are both natives of Milton. As former employees of the P.L. Robertson firm they have been helpful in providing memories for our coming Robertson biography.

¶ Mike Ledwith is being widely congratulated at Milton's Senior of the Year – an honour bestowed by the Town. Mike – a former mayor and Citizen of the Year – is an enthusiastic and effective member of many volunteer organizations.

¶ Glen Wicks, a well-known member, died in mid-summer. Perhaps best known locally as a musician, Glen played the saxophone during the depression at the fashionable Seigneury Club, Montebello, Quebec. Glen and Alma are parents of Judy Hunter, prominent musician and choir director. They grew up in the Dresden area; Alma's father for many years represented the area in the Ontario Legislature.

¶ Ed Parsons lost his long-time companion, Lydia Royce during the summer. Formerly of Hornby, Lydia worked many years at the former Halton Manor and was a much-respected member of the Milton Horticultural Society and other local groups.

¶ Shirley Dills extended her skill in porcelain art painting in June attending the week-long school of the Professional Porcelain Artist's Association at Cazenovia, N. Y. Another week in August was spent at the Porcelain Art School of Canada. Shirley is an exhibitor at the Farm Museum's Christmas Craft Show September 25, 26 and 27.

¶ Archivist Gail Richardson has landed an ideal job. Her position at the Milton Public Library is a great fit for her interests and background. And it's just around the corner from her Pine Street home.

¶ Many Society members and other friends greeted our treasurer, Jessie Hamilton, at her 80th birthday celebration Aug. 29 at the Milton Lawn Bowling Club.

¶ Mark Wilson, who with his wife, Lee Anne, joined the Society a few weeks ago, has plenty of "historical" experience. He formerly worked at the Farm Museum and before that spent several years with the Fort William historical park, Thunder Bay.

¶ Among those inquiring about the forthcoming book on P.L. Robertson – Dr. Wallace Yake, retired Edmonton doctor and surgeon. He is the great-grandson of P.L.'s sister Janet.

'97 Christmas Party good we'll do it again in '98

Our Christmas party will be held at the Halton Region Museum Dec. 17.

The event begins at 6 p.m. with the traditional potluck supper. Those who attended the event at the Museum last year agreed that the hall was just the right size for our group and provided a friendly festive atmosphere.



An Open House at the Historical Society Archives in June attracted interest. Here Archivist Gail Richardson, left shows guest Colleen Herring some of the valuable photos and manuscripts in the archives.

Who got the money?

When they read our soon-to-be released biography of P.L. Robertson many of his former employees will have a keen interest in one aspect of P.L.'s will.

P.L. left \$60,000 that was divided among 68 employees. The book identifies the 68 and tells how much each employee received.

**Share the fun.
Bring a friend
to our Society meetings.
Coffee at 7:30 p.m.
Meetings at 8:00 p.m.**

To: Milton Historical Society
P.O. Box 85, Milton, Ont. L9T 2Y3

Yes! I want to order _____ copies of the Society's new book
P.L. Inventor of the Robertson Screw

Name _____

Address _____

Town/City _____

Postal Code _____ Phone _____

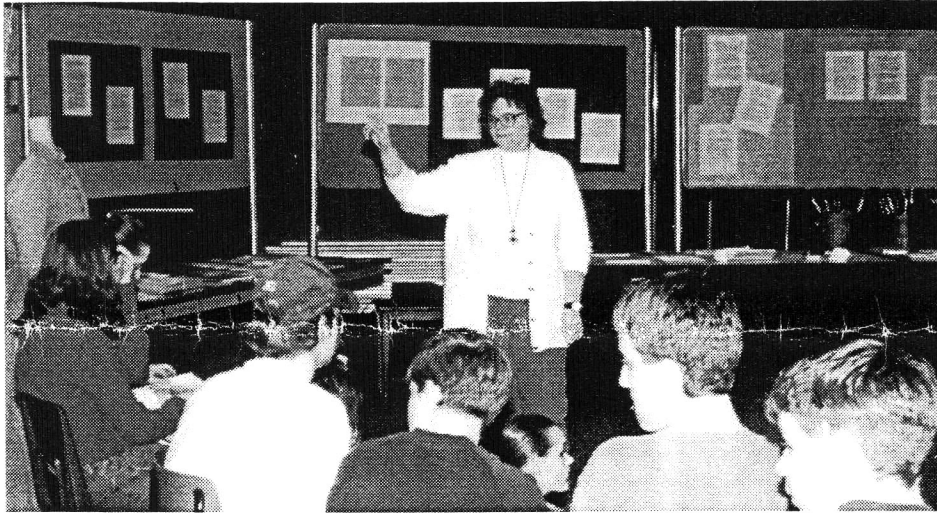
Enclosed is \$_____ (\$25 per copy for delivery in Milton)
Please add \$5.00 for shipping outside Milton area. Please
make cheques payable to Milton Historical Society. No GST.



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April 8
1997



Gail Richardson, the Society Archivist, spoke to 12 classes at Milton District High School using artifacts from our Archives. Gail will be speaking at the May 15 meeting of the Society reviewing the importance of the Archives and outlining opportunities to help. Photo by Bruce Carlin

Our Archives' comfortable in new home at Milton Seniors' Activity Centre

Under Gail Richardson's watchful eye a crew of members and two Town employees recently moved our archives from Sproat House. The new home is a basement room in the Seniors' Activity Centre, formerly the Pettit House wing of the Halton Manor.

Gail is well pleased with the new location: there is more room and the public will have better access. It's also

less susceptible to the intense temperature fluctuations of the former home.

The move in early February became necessary when the Town sold Sproat House (191 Margaret St.) to the owners of the Dorland-Haight Art Galleries on Main St.

The Town then made the Seniors' Centre space available; Audrea Lear-Costigan represented us in talks with the Town.

Those who helped Gail with the move were Bruce Carlin, Jim Dills, Ed Goodall, Don Hayward, Tim Kingsbury, Ken Lamb and Marsha Waldie.

Family pianist, violinist added to April 17 program

Author Jean Somerville will have plenty of family support when she appears at our April 17 meeting. Jean is speaking on the career of her late father, band leader Andy Frank, and the history of the Nassagaweya family.

Andy's sister, June Durrant, and his 10-year-old grandson, Alex will play.

About 300 students visit Gail's show

Students at Milton District High School flocked to a heritage exhibit staged at the school by our archivist Gail Richardson. Gail showed 65 items from our archives including many photos and P. L. Robertson's 1932 book "The Remedy".

The idea for the project came from an exhibition catalogue prepared by Gail for her master level studies in Library and Information Science.

Bruce Carlin, Alex Cooke and Jim Dills helped Gail during the four-day show in late February. Between 250 and 300 students from 12 classes attended the event which included a guess-what-this-is exhibit by the Halton Region Museum.

Fine Arts Society formed after art display at levee

A Fine Arts Society of Milton has developed following the successful display by artists at the Mayor's Levee January 1.

The group held its first meeting at the end of January. Two more executive meetings sorted out administrative details and the group is now planning its first project, Art in the Park.

Frank Sisson is president of the new group (as well as continuing as membership chair of our Society). Marion Detlor who "hung" the Jan. 1 show is vice president; Ann Elliot is treasurer; Bill LaFerla is on membership; Betty Basset is program co-ordinator; Ursula Reese, secretary; and Miriam Hynek, chair of Art in the Park.

Financial Report: We're in the black

Our Society is 20 years old this year and we've been putting aside an average of more than \$1,000 a year.

Mike Ledwith, giving our 1996 financial report at the Feb. 20 meeting, listed total financial assets at \$21,243.05. There were no liabilities.

A separate account has been set up to record expenses and revenues from publishing our books. At Jan. 1 it had a credit balance of about \$3,400 which will help in mounting future publications.

Membership Available

Historical Society membership is available for 1997. See Frank Sisson at the meetings or mail your cheque to Milton Historical Society, Box 85, Milton, Ont. L9T 2Y3.

Winners get weighty awards at annual Heritage Sunday event recognizing education, visual arts, writing and building heritage

There were lots of light comments at our Heritage Awards ceremony Feb. 16, most of them about the "weighty" awards. Those comments were a tribute to Brad Clements, donor of limestone bases for the winning plaques. Brad salvaged the stone from the walls of the 115-year-old Bruce Street School when it was demolished about 25 years ago.

Despite a heavy snowstorm almost 20 appeared for Jim Dills' historic walk in nearby Victoria Park. They later became part of the overflow audience for the awards ceremony in Hugh Foster Hall, in time for the opening flourish as Jim Douglas piped the winners to the front of the Hall. The 18 marchers included 11 honoured students from St. Peter's School.

Half a dozen displays provided an ideal setting for the ceremony. These portrayed the work done by all the winners and programs of Heritage Milton (LACAC) and our Society.

President Bruce Carlin was m.c. of the program. Mayor Gordon Krantz and LACAC Chair John Challinor presented the architectural awards to Andrew Gregg, representing his parents Carol and Bill, and to William and Rita Tielemans.

Tim Kingsbury presented the education award to St. Peter's teacher Nancy Pepper; Jim Dills honoured writer Jean

Somerville (daughter Carol Murphy was her stand-in); Helen Comber presented the visual arts award to painter Elizabeth Hoey and her daughter Martha Hoey-Weston.

Bill Town, vice-chair Heritage Milton (LACAC) spoke about the importance of the awards.

Jessie Hamilton and her daughter, Carol, arranged a tasteful display of scrumptious goodies.

1997 Heritage Award Winners

Education Award

Eleven boys and girls in grade four, St. Peter's School, Milton. Their winning project centred on prominent early Miltonians; each student concentrated on a different individual. They made gravestone rubbings at the Pioneer Cemetery on Bronte Street, toured historic areas of the town and visited Halton Region Museum. They got plenty of help from Alex Cooke. By the end of the three-week project each student had produced an illustrated booklet about his/her chosen pioneer.

Visual Arts Award

Joint award to painter Elizabeth Hoey and her daughter, sculptress Martha Hoey-Weston.

Elizabeth is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art; many of her oil and tile paintings feature historic homes and farm buildings. Other examples of her work appear in our Town Hall and in the court house (Steeles Ave.)

Martha, who took an arts degree at Concordia University, Montreal works with many materials, including field stones found near her Nassagaweya home and beams from the original Brookville Community Hall. In an international sculpture competition in Toronto in 1985 Martha won first and third prizes.

Writing Award

Jean Somerville, retired teacher and author of "The Bands Played On".

The book traces the musical careers of her father Andy Frank, her grandfather and other members of the Frank family of Nassagaweya. In the early 1930s the group played regularly on Hamilton radio station CKOC, featured as the "Sod Busters". Later it was known as Andy Frank's Orchestra. In a lengthy career Andy played at about 1,000 events; he was also a farmer, plasterer and Sheriff of Halton County (1958-'71). He was also the founder of the Milton Farmers' Market and served as Mayor of the Market for several years.

Conservation of a non-designated property award -

Carol and Bill Gregg.

They located historic but abandoned Clover Hill House near Cookstown and moved it more than 80 kilometres to Nassagaweya. They restored it, built an addition and made it their home. Bill is an historian, land developer and life-long collector, perhaps best known for his collection of Canadian army vehicles now on public display in Manitoba.

Architectural award (in-fill construction)

William and Rita Tielemans.

The couple recently built a home on John Street in a long-established Milton neighborhood, south of Main and east of Bronte St. The LACAC judges, describing the house as cottage-villa in style, felt the brick home fitted in well with its neighbours.

Honorable Mention

Mike McVey.

A 10th grade student at Milton District High School prepared a comprehensive study of Milton's downtown area. He described past problems and future challenges.



**Milton
Historical
Society**

**P. O. Box 85 Milton, Ont.
L9T 2Y3**

**The Journal is published three
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Annual Memberships

Single \$7; Family \$10; Students \$5;
Life \$60

Weather cold, feelings warm for carolling at Ag. Museum

Our Dec. 19 meeting at the Ontario Ag. Museum turned out to be the cold-



It was a wind-swept night as passengers left the horse-drawn wagon that took them to the Ag. Museum Carol sing. Here Dorothea Downs, Ken Lamb and Ann Elliot arrive.

est night of the month. For about 40 minutes we "carolled" bravely in the slightly warmed church.

After our second rendering of "Good King Wenceslas" – "Brightly shone the moon that night, though the frost was cruel" – we headed for the warmth and refreshments in Puslinch Hall.

Director Joyce Hayward and 20 "Song Spinners" from Milton Seniors' Activity Centre led the singing. Some 35 members and friends joined in. "Spinner" Howard Wilson earned numerous laughs with a recitation about an outhouse.

A 12-foot spruce tree decorated with hand-made ornaments lent a holiday atmosphere in Puslinch Hall. So did the horse-drawn wagon that took us between the Hall and the church.

Walt Elliot spoke briefly about efforts under way to keep the Museum in operation beyond March 31 when provincial funding ended. Museum director John Wylie, anticipating success for the rescue effort, invited us back for Christmas '97.

Bruce Carlin elected Society's ninth president for anniversary year

Bruce Carlin is our new president, the ninth to hold the office since the Society was formed in 1977. He succeeds Helen Comber, who served the traditional two years.

A native of Asbestos, Quebec, Bruce has been our publicity-promotion director for the past two years. A Miltonian for the past six years, Bruce is employed by the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Energy, Toronto.

In other changes to the executive Dorrie Greig, former chair of Heritage Milton (LACAC), succeeds Marsha Waldie as secretary; Marsha has joined Jack Charlton in the historic-home plaquing program. Linda Leaver is our new LACAC co-ordinator. Walt Elliot

has resigned as program head; George Wachmann, formerly in charge of special events, has moved to British Columbia; Marjorie Powys has been succeeded as past president by Helen Comber.

John Ladell has succeeded Bruce Carlin as director of publicity and promotion. Jessie Hamilton in agreeing to serve another year as treasurer warmly accepted Mike Ledwith's offer to help.

The executive will "double" up to fill vacant positions while continuing recruiting efforts.

Openings are still available for Program co-ordinator, Special Events co-ordinator. Contact Bruce Carlin if you are interested in serving.

Expectation high for agreement on future operation of Ag Museum

In mid-March final details were still being put on a hoped-for memorandum between Country Heritage Experience Inc. and the provincial government for the continued operation of the Ontario Agricultural Museum.

Country Heritage Experience Inc. is the group formed in December to undertake operation of the museum, subject to provincial agreement. Robert "Bob" Monte serves as chair and Dr. Clare Rennie as deputy chair.

Spokesmen at the museum indicate the school program will begin on April 15 with the usual opening scheduled later, if the agreement is in place. Expectations were high that the transfer would take place April 1 with staff already recruited for the new operation.

A new director, Rick Fortin, will assume direction under the new mandate.

Country Heritage Experience Inc. was formed after 12 months of work by a volunteer group of museum supporters known as Ontario's Rural Heritage Preservation Committee. This association, chaired by George Underwood of Wingham, developed a draft business plan charting the future of the museum.

Dr. Rennie suggested "The mission of the new corporation provides many opportunities. We look forward to the input of a wide variety of people and organizations as exciting new programs and exhibits are developed which showcase the evolution of rural life and food production in Ontario – past present and future."

On April 7 a representative group met to provide ideas for the "name generation process". The objective was to position the museum culturally, economically and as a tourist attraction. During past deliberations it was suggested that the term "museum" was not the most acceptable terminology for an active, living site.

Speaker tells us where, why of early surveys

Planning for war and dealing with wars' aftermath played a big part in the early settlement of Ontario. At our Feb. 20 meeting speaker John Ladell traced many of those chapters.

With a series of maps John showed how surveys, beginning near Kingston in 1783 following the American Revolution, spread west along the shore of Lake Ontario. They reached our region in 1806.

He also explained how the Revolution had affected other areas, including the Niagara peninsula. It was estimated that between 60 and 100-thousand "Loyalists" left the American colonies because of the War.

An earlier development – the building of a fort by the French at Detroit in

1740 – produced a farming community near Windsor. When John wrote a book a few years ago about heritage farms he identified a farm there that had been in the same family since 1760.

Over the years half a dozen survey systems were used in Ontario. The single-front system was employed until after the war of 1812. Surveyors hammered in two pegs at the front of the lot, leaving the settlers to look after surveying the sides. As a result many homesteaders built their houses at the very front of the lot to make sure they were on their own property.

Much of John's material was gathered for his book (1993), "They Left Their Mark – Surveyors and their Role in the Settlement of Ontario."

"Grave" subject in March as Mike Ledwith reviews Evergreen Cemetery history

Amid the muted humour about it being a "grave" subject, Mike Ledwith provided a look at the background and history of our local Evergreen Cemetery during our March meeting.

For more than 25 years Mike has been a member of the volunteer board that operates this non-profit cemetery and for 20 years he served as chair. He stepped down recently but has obviously not lost his interest.

It was Dec. 13, 1880 when the original minute book began and on Jan. 11, 1881 the first nine directors were elected. Shares were sold at \$5 for the first 48 shareholders who initiated the project. This followed the realization the cemetery on Bronte St. was no longer large enough to serve the growing community.

Mike's trip through the minute book touched on the plans for a bridge across the Sixteen Mile Creek to provide access—it didn't happen—plus a hiatus of 15 years when no meetings were held. By that time four original directors had died, three had moved away and only two were left to call a meeting.

The cemetery, within the town boundaries, had to be "legalized" in

1897 since legislation said cemeteries were not supposed to be in town limits.

Typical of the times, caretakers were paid \$2 for digging an adult grave and a secretary was paid \$30 for three years work. Payments finally increased—to \$2.50 to dig a grave and \$25 a year for the caretaker. At one time plot owners could dig their own grave, but that practice was discontinued when the placement of the grave sometimes proved incorrect.

Mike's detailed research and eye for the interesting provided a look behind the scenes at this town's unusual ownership and operation of a cemetery. It involves no municipal funding and is completely self-supporting. The earlier compensation to directors, of 50¢ for each meeting, was even discontinued.

Laura writes fourth book to mark her 90th birthday

Laura Dixon celebrates her 90th birthday May 7. By then friends will be reading her third book of poetry, "Changing Seasons". During the past few weeks Laura's daughter, Ruth Taylor, has been making final arrangements with the printer.

Laura spent three months in Milton



President Helen Comber presents the President's Award to Phyllis Gorman.

Charles Street couple wins President's Award

Phyllis and Jim Gorman have won the President's Award for outstanding maintenance of their handsome Charles Street home.

President Helen Comber presented the award at our Dec. 19 meeting at the Ontario Agricultural Museum.

Phyllis said she and Jim thought Milton was a fine community when they decided to buy their historic home and their 25 years here have confirmed the decision.

The lost is found

Good news for the hundreds of Milton people who have fond memories of inventor P. L. Robertson.

More than a dozen photos of a vacation visit with Scottish relatives in 1918 were "lost" for several months. But following the recent move of our archives to the Seniors' Activity Centre the photos turned up again. (See page 5).

West coast solution

Disturbed about cemetery vandalism, local historians in Victoria recently founded the Old Cemeteries Society.

It proved an instant success. The group now has about 250 members and runs programs involving cemetery visits.

District Hospital after suffering a heart attack early in January. Although feeling much better, she will be moving from her home on George Street.

A life-long resident of the area, Laura is well-known for her knowledge of local history. In 1960 she wrote a book about the history of Kilbride United Church.

Personal Chapters . . .



¶ Long-time member Ed Parsons has been honoured by the Milton Chamber of Commerce. Ed is the first recipient of the Chamber's honorary lifetime achievement award. He has served four terms as president of Club 88 seniors organization. His many community activities include long service with Meals on Wheels and the Milton and District Horticultural Society.

¶ George and Janet Wachmann are enjoying their new home on Saltspring Island, B.C. now that they've completed a seven-foot fence to protect their garden from hungry deer. They were marooned in their home for five days by a record snowstorm in early January. But a few days later George and his crew member competed in their first sailing race of the season.

¶ Perhaps not many visitors are aware of it but there's a former Miltonian in an honoured place in the British Columbia Legislature. Among

John McDonald enlivens old Halton

Our Jan. 15 meeting rivaled December's as the coldest night of the winter. But that didn't stop about 25 members from coming to see John McDonald's show about Georgetown, Acton and other north Halton communities.

John is a native of the tiny community of Dolly Vardon, near Georgetown. His interest in the unusual name – he tracked it to an 1846 Dickens novel – started him on a series of interviews with dozens of North Halton families. These became articles in the Georgetown Independent and the Acton Free Press published by the Dills family.

Next – this was more than 20 years ago – the articles were brought together in a book "Halton Sketches." An update published last year, "Halton Sketches Revisited", has sold about 1500 copies.

the portraits of B.C. Premiers is that of Joseph "Fighting Joe" Martin. A member of the pioneer local family, Joe was Premier for a brief term in 1900.

¶ In a recent visit to his son in Agassiz, B.C. Jim Dills found time to visit Harrison River and do some local research. Joseph Martin, son of Jasper, and uncle of "Fighting Joe" (above) took his two sons there to manage the Harrison River saw mill in the 1880s. It was there that Dr. Carl Martin was born. At that time it was wilderness country. While the sons returned to Milton, Joseph and his wife are buried in the area and daughter Lucretia married and remained in the area.

¶ Two new members have joined the Society. Gloria Brown and Beverley Grant have been added to the roster. This provides an opportunity to remind you to renew your 1997 membership if you haven't already done so. Encourage your friends to be supporters too.

Marie Clements had help to ring in the New Year

Marie Clements was chosen to ring in the New Year at the midnight ceremony in Victoria Park.

The historic bell, which rang out for so many years from the old Town Hall, was much too heavy for Marie to toll. But with the help of her daughter, Yvonne McNicoll of Edmonton and her 12-year-old grandson, Shawn, Marie came through beautifully.

Art theme a big draw for New Year's Levee

The creations of 30 local artists brought hundreds of visitors to the Town Hall for the New Year's Day levee. Eighty paintings and six sculptures filled the Council Chamber and dozens of wall spaces throughout the building.

The artists included five Society members: Marie Clements, Marion Detlor, Shirley Dills, Ann Elliot and Marsha Waldie.

Frank Sisson, with major help from well-known local artist Ursula Reese, was in charge of the show. Hard-working helpers included Marion Detlor and Marjorie Powys. Peter Haight of the Main St. Dorland-Haight gallery provided generous support.

Jessie Hamilton, her daughter, Carol, and Helen Comber took care of the refreshments. And, of course, Mayor Gordon Krantz and several Councillors stood in front of the giant Christmas tree in the lobby to welcome visitors.

Big Burlington update moves into final stage

A 300-page city history will be produced within the next few months by the Burlington Historical Society. This is an update, including 100 more pages, of the 1967 centennial version.

Club president Ruth Borthwick says author Claire (Emery) Machan has completed the text but a number of photos remain to be taken.

"The New Pathway to Skyway - the story of Burlington" covers the period from the days of Joseph Brant to the present.



This is one of the prized collection of P. L. Robertson's holiday photos which will be included in the book currently in preparation. The photo was taken at Arran, Scotland in August 1918. P. L. (right) is seen with William and Bella Morrison and Georgina Brand.

How did it all begin?

Love of our heritage and a good bit of fear and desperation brought our Society into being 20 years ago.

Len McNeil saw the need for heritage information in education, Shelagh Conway, as librarian, knew the frequent requests for local information and Jim Dills as publisher knew the lack of accurate historical information when doing research on current activity.

They called a meeting, knowing too that the future of the County Court House would soon be uncertain. The building had been the heart of the county for more than 120 years.

Public meetings were held, a steering committee established and an organization was born. The first meeting was in the fall of 1977 and an early challenge was saving the Court House.

It was saved and the early members can claim a good part of the credit for the activities and efforts that made that possible.

No doubt that rated a "first star" but there have been many other fine achievements since then. Remember these?

☆ Our historic building plaque program.

☆ Preservation of dozens of grave-stones in the Pioneer Cemetery.

☆ Research by Len McNeil that led to the plaquing of the P. L. Robertson building by the Ontario Heritage Foundation.

☆ Val Grimshaw's initiative in launching the Mayor's New Year's Day levee.

☆ Developing the Heritage Awards program in co-operation with Heritage Milton (LACAC).

☆ Our publishing program that has led to books by Jack Charlton, Brenda Whitlock, Alex Cooke, Ken Lamb, Jim Dills and Thomas Hutchinson.

☆ Early house tours organized by Val Grimshaw and later Walt Elliot.

☆ Promoting recognition of Hugh Foster in the naming of the former Registry Office.

Victoria Park gala being planned to mark Society's 20th anniversary

Several Society members are working hard on programs to celebrate our 20th anniversary.

The first event is scheduled for Saturday June 14 in Victoria Park. President Bruce Carlin says we're working closely with Milton Farmers' Market, which also celebrates its 20th anniversary in 1997.

Although plans are still preliminary, Bruce envisages a mid-day family event featuring a band, huge birthday cake and, of course, heritage displays. We'll hear more about it at our April and May meetings.

Another proposal - for October - would be to revive the well-loved Hallowe'en "nickel night" annually staged by P. L. Robertson at his

Margaret Street home. Youngsters made the Margaret St. walk to P.L.'s house where he handed out the prized nickels on the trick or treat night. We expect that scores, perhaps hundreds, of long-time residents will come to collect a nostalgic nickel and stay to give us their memories of "P. L." for our 1998 biography of the inventor.

Do you have a suggestion as to how we should mark our 20th anniversary? We're looking for other ways to stimulate public interest in our historic people and places. You'll be hearing more details about this. But if you just can't wait to get going call Bruce Carlin at 875-4588. He'd love to hear about your idea and how it can be implemented this year.

☆ Establishing our Archives when space was no longer to be made available at the Milton Library.

☆ Developing a commemorative gift on our 10th anniversary and presented to the town describing the town's coat of arms and motto "Look to this Day." The bronze plaque is in the town hall.

☆ Conducted numerous history walks for students, adults and special interest groups.

☆ Provided early assistance to the town in writing a heritage policy.

☆ Photos of all mayors dating back to 1857 were prepared, framed and presented to the town for displaying in the town hall.

☆ For several years the Society participated in the Festival of Countries and, under Audrea Lear-Costigan, co-ordinated the Canada pavilion.

☆ Street names for an expanding Milton were suggested to recognize early families.

☆ Preserved 1927 town fire insurance maps in the archival collection.

No list will be complete but please add your own recollections and send

Milton Historical Society

P. O. Box 85 Milton, Ont. L9T 2Y3

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