



# The Journal

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December 1  
1998



Author Ken Lamb was kept busy on October 25 when the Society introduced its newest publication "P.L. Inventor of the Robertson Screw." Seen from the right are Ilene Peddie, Bev Field, Fred Timbers, Jean Hearn, an unidentified person and Jack (Clancy) Charlton. —DONNA COULTER PHOTOS

## "P.L." employees give big push to book about Milton inventor

Our biography of P.L. Robertson got off to a lightning start Oct. 25 at the Milton Fairgrounds.

More than 200 – the vast majority present or former employees of the Milton Plant – overflowed the Agricultural Hall. Scores lined up to buy copies of "P.L. Inventor of the Robertson Screw." Total sales for the day: more than 170 copies.

The day felt like a high school reunion. Well before the start dozens gathered outside in the warm sun talking happily about old times. They were a tiny fraction of the many hundreds who passed through the local plant since it opened in 1908. An incomplete list published in the book contains more than one thousand names, a good number of whom worked there for more than 40 years.

Mayor Gordon Krantz got the session under way. Vice President Bill Weston of Robertson Inc. (until several weeks ago known as Robertson Whitehouse) brought greetings from the firm and a giant cake to mark the firm's 90th birthday. Author Ken Lamb and editor Jim Dills promised that everyone – even long-term employees – would learn lots of new things about "P.L." from the book.

Ken brought the audience up to date on the drama of P.L.'s daughter. Until newspaper stores appeared a few days before the launch, only a handful of Miltonians knew about the daughter. "Theresa." Just before the event "Theresa" decided to attend with her son, Ron. But they chose not to be publicly acknowledged.

The early book sales showed widespread interest in the biography. Within the first few days cheques began to arrive from the U.K., Florida, Nevada, B.C., Alberta, Nova Scotia, Manitoba and dozens of Ontario centres.



The 90th anniversary of the company P.L. Robertson founded was celebrated in conjunction with the Society's book launch in late October. Cutting the cake are Bill Weston, Company vice president; Mayor Gord Krantz, Author Ken Lamb, Ted Gazley, former Robertson employee and active participant in getting the book together and Jim Dills, who co-ordinated the publication.

## Blacksmith drive gains momentum

Success of the September Antique Roadshow and other fundraisers have given a solid start to our blacksmith renovation program.

To make sure the historic James Street building could withstand this winter's snowstorms project manager Malcolm Phillips and John Simpson have made temporary roof repairs and stabilized the walls. More must be done to strengthen the walls before a new roof is installed.

Financially the project is making steady progress. Quite a few residents have made charitable donations (income tax deductible) and we expect strong sales of t-shirts and golf shirts over the Christmas season. (Phone Marsha at 878-7171 for yours). Plans are well advanced for a fundraising bus tour next spring.

Overall the picture is rosier than at any time since Marsha and her sister, Gayle, started down the restoration road about ten years ago.

Mandy Sedgwick heads up the restoration committee which includes Bruce Carlin, Helen Comber, Dorrie Murdoch Greig, Malcolm Phillips and Marsha.



The restoration committee for the Waldie Blacksmith Shop looks forward to a pretty active campaign in 1999. And they'd love to have you join in the fun. For more details get in touch with Marsha Waldie (878-7171) or Mandy Sedgwick (878-4197).

## Lots of tips from Tim on road to renovation

When you're thinking of renovating your heritage home it's no time to rush to judgment. That was one of the major points made by Tim Kingsbury in his talk at our Oct. 15 meeting. More than 35 attended.

Planning is a top priority, Tim emphasized. Plenty of help is available in this area; Milton Heritage (LACAC) has collected a great amount of important information. And people who have won our Heritage Architectural awards are happy to share their experiences.

Tim also believes that early use of an architect or interior designer can avoid a lot of headaches and expense. Another smart financial move is to schedule projects for periods when construction trades are not so busy.

Tim explained why heritage renovation pays off: an unrestored heritage home in this area is worth more than a new mansion of the same size. Still he was taken aback when he asked an

insurance company for the replacement value of his Nassagaweya stone home., where CBC television shot the series "Chasing Rainbows." The assessor's figure: \$4.5 million.

Tim expressed concern that so many heritage barns had disappeared in recent years. To compile his own record Tim has taken thousands of barn photos.

### Xmas Mood-Setter

The Farm Museum presents four "Country Christmas and Lantern Tours" on Dec. 5, 6 and 12, 13. Hours are 2 to 7 p.m. The programs feature the Milton Choristers and a variety of entertainments in many of the historic buildings.

### Jack and Jean Hardy win President's Award

Jack and Jean Hardy have won our President's Award for keeping their historic home (91 Mill Street) in excellent condition. The award will be made at our Christmas party Dec. 10.

The house was built in 1877 for Ellen Halcro. In 1951 the Hardys paid \$1,640 for the fully-furnished residence.

### We'll elect new President at our January 21 meeting

Who will replace Bruce Carlin who is stepping down after serving two years as our president?

We'll find out January 21 when the annual elections form part of the program. It's a busy time for nominations chair Helen Comber – in addition to Bruce's successor, Helen is looking for a secretary, program director and newsletter editor. She'd welcome any ideas you might have. Give Helen a call at 876-1872.

## Ontario Heritage speaker describes changing role

The Ontario Heritage Foundation fills many vital roles, although in some ways things aren't what they used to be.

That's the message many got when the Foundation's historical consultant, Paul Litt, spoke to our Nov. 19 meeting. Paul is based at the Foundation's Toronto headquarters.

In his 40-minute address to an audience of about 25, he showed scores of slides of restored buildings, protected landscapes and other aspects of the heritage program. (As a trustee, the Foundation operates 60 heritage buildings, including one out-of-province site, the John Graves Simcoe estate in Devon, England.)

The Foundation's plaquing program is probably the best known to the public. More than 1100 plaques have been erected throughout Ontario. The only Milton example, on Bronte Street, describes the inventions of P.L. Robertson.

The meaning of "heritage" has broadened since the organization was formed in 1967. Although key buildings have been a focus since the start, protection of the natural environment has become equally important. The organization has played a strong role in protecting the Niagara Escarpment and in securing a permanent route for the 750-kilometre Bruce Trail from Queenston Heights to Tobermory.

In reply to a question about recent changes in the Foundation, the consultant referred to the suspension of grant programs a couple of years ago. For example Heritage grants no longer are available to books on local history. Since 1990 the number of persons employed by the Foundation has dropped from 54 to 37.



**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

### NOW IS THE HOUR!

Now is the time to renew your membership in the Society. If you won't be at our Jan. 21 meeting please mail in your renewal. See the box at left for the address and fee schedule.

## More than 350 attend first annual Antiques Roadshow at farm museum

More than 350 optimists, loaded down with grandfather clocks, family bibles, paintings, tables, chairs and other family treasures, attended our first Milton Antiques Roadshow Sept. 21 at the Farm Museum.

Proceeds of the event will help restore the downtown Waldie Blacksmith Shop. The James Street building, opened in 1865, was operated for more than 100 years by three generations of the Waldie family.

An oil painting by British artist Alfred de Breanski scored the highest valuation of the day – up to \$35,000 when fully restored and sold by an established retailer. Other rare items included a sewing table and a set of 12 silver Tiffany spoons, both assessed at about \$3,500.

Auctioneers who examined and estimated the value of the antiques were Don Colling, Bill Doherty, Pat Doherty, Mike Lutes and Jon Medley, all of Milton and Andrew Zegers of St. Catharines.

Show co-ordinator Lynda Leaver, who spent months planning the event with the help of Gail Richardson, Mandy Sedgwick and Marsha Waldie, was well pleased with the attendance and is already planning improvements for an encore next year. Most likely dates are the last Sunday in September or the first in October.



*Auctioneer Don Colling and Mike Lutes study one of the antiques that was brought to the Milton Historical Society Antiques Roadshow.*

## Jack Charlton wins Ont. Heritage Award

Plans had to be changed in September so that Jack Charlton could receive an award from the Ontario Heritage Foundation.

After health problems prevented Jack from attending the scheduled ceremony at the Milton council meeting, Mayor Gordon Krantz and MPP Ted Chudleigh called on Jack at home to deliver the pin and certificate recognizing Jack's many heritage contributions.

A former town assessor, Jack has played a large part in the Society's research efforts that advanced the home-plaquing program. As an author he re-packaged some of his knowledge in "Historic Homes of Milton. Volume 1." More recently memories of his years at the local screw factory appeared in "P.L. – Inventor of the Robertson Screw."

## Song Spinners add spark to our Christmas Pot Luck

Our good friends – the Song Spinners from the Milton Seniors' Activity Centre, under the direction of Joyce Hayward – will again entertain at our Christmas pot luck.

We'll gather at 6 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 10 at Halton Region Museum in Kelso Conservation area. That's where we enjoyed ourselves so much last year.

Executives are requested to bring a main dish; members are asked to contribute desserts.

The date is a week earlier than originally announced because of an accommodation mix-up.

## Bruce MacNab leaves legacy of service

Bruce MacNab, an early member of the Society and a prominent figure in the community, died Nov. 19 at his home on Bell School Line. He had been ill for more than a year.

A member of the Town Council 1948-50, Bruce had also played key roles in the Milton Branch, Royal Canadian Legion. He was one of the founders of Milton District Hospital, serving as Chairman of the Board in 1960-61 and in the 1950s he was president of the Chamber of Commerce, Chairman of Milton's first Safety Council and

Chairman of the Halton TB Assoc.

Bruce served as a wireless operator/airgunner during the darkest period of the war in North Africa. In March, 1943, in Buckingham Palace, King George VI awarded him the Distinguished Flying Medal. (Bruce's war experiences are described in the Society's 1995 book, "Milton Remembers World War II.")

Bruce leaves his wife, Marion (Castle), four daughters, brother Lawrence (North Bay), a long-time Society member; three sisters and six grandchildren.

## Search is on for Heritage winners

The search for winners of our 1999 Heritage Awards is well under way. Ads for nominations have appeared in 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 February 21 in Hugh Foster Hall. The program begins at 1:30 p.m.



## About friends we know. .



¶ Bruce MacNab, who died Nov. 19, got an early introduction to World War II. German submarines in 1941 attacked his trans-Atlantic convoy – Bruce's ship escaped but several others were sunk. Bruce reported that ships assigned to protect the convoy had been re-directed to help hunt down the German warship Bismarck, which sank the British battleship Hood with the loss of more than 1500 lives. Within a few days Bismarck itself was destroyed by Allied planes and ships. Bruce described the drama in a letter to his future wife, Marion Gastle.

¶ One of the first orders for our "P.L." book came from the United Kingdom. John Marchant of the Gillingham, Kent historical society, helped research P.L.'s years in Gillingham in the early 1900s. John knows our area, having spent several years at the nearby Lake Ontario oil refinery.

¶ Long-time members Len and Helen McNeil, now residents of Allendale, have sold their Campbell Avenue home where they had lived for 33 years. Len, who served as Halton County School Inspector, was president of our Society 1986-87. It was his research and perseverance that resulted in a provincial plaque marking the Bronte St. site of the first Robertson plant building in November 1986.

¶ A lot of people in Haldimand County, where P.L. Robertson was born, are going to read about the inventor's exploits. Copies of "P.L. Inventor of the Robertson Screw" will be available in the Caledonia, Cayuga and Hagersville libraries. The books were donated by the York Grand River Historical Society.

¶ The Streetsville Historical Society, as well as the entire Ontario heritage community, suffered a huge loss this summer in the death of Mary Manning. Author of books on historic inns and hotels and the town-founding Street

family, librarian, archivist, tour guide, researcher, musician, Girl Guide and Brownie leader and for 25 years a director of the Streetsville society, Mary truly was a much-loved legend in her own time.

¶ Ken Lamb and Jim Dills spoke to a group of 35 residents at Heritage House, near Guelph, following the introduction of Ken's new book on P.L. Robertson. Several with Milton roots purchased copies.

¶ Lois Parker, well-known in Campbellville and Halton for her leadership in the Women's Institute and other groups, died in late November. Many will recall that Lois spoke to us last year as part of our program about Women's Institutes. Lois was a leader for many years in Milton's Horticultural Society.

¶ Quite a few members took advantage of our Antiques Road Show to get an expert's assessment of their family treasures. Seen consulting the auctioneers were Mabel Coulson, Marion Detlor, Jim and Shirley Dills, Ken Hassard, Treasa Lamb, Craig and Peggy

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

Reid and Jack White. None was threatened with instant riches but all seemed happy with what they heard.

¶ Ed Goodall reports that mourners at Bruce MacNab's funeral in November made up the largest motorcade he has ever seen. By the time the last car had left the parking lot of St. George's Church at Derry and Guelph Line, the lead vehicle had reached Ontario St.

¶ We're expecting great things of the year 2000 but 1998 has been a wonderful year for the Society thanks to many new members. Those joining us over the past several months include George and Marjorie Clement, Bruce Corradetti, John and Sally Crawford, Trish Duivesteyn, Ted Gazley (Oakville), Bill and Mabel Greenfield, Sharon McCarthy (Mississauga), Roni McWilliam, Steve Murphy, Adam and Jennifer Smith, Walter Trafford (Hornby), Gayle Waldie (Mississauga), Mark and Lee Anne Wilson.

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 ( no GST) for delivery in Milton.  
Please add \$5.00 for shipping outside Milton area. \$20. U.S. includes postage and handling to U.S. Please make cheques payable to Milton Historical Society.





# The Journal

Volume 13 Number 2  
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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.

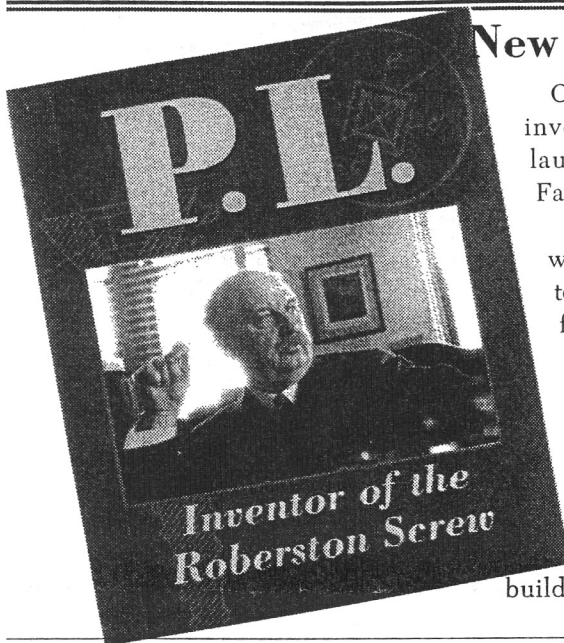
Although Jim didn't dwell on the subject, the Dills family has played a strong role in Halton publishing. His father, who got his start as an apprentice printer in Acton and purchased the newspaper there later, purchased The Canadian Champion in 1943. Jim and his brother Dave succeeded their father, 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***

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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.

*OH*



# The Journal

Volume 13 Number 1 Published by the Milton Historical Society

April 6  
1998

Principal Linda Rafuse, welcomes "Elizabeth Harrison" (Cindy Ledwith) and "George Brown" (Stephen Willson) to E.W. Foster School for a heritage presentation organized by the Milton Historical Society during Heritage Week. More than 400 students saw one of seven presentations at four different schools.



## Marsha tells about 100 years of smithing

At our May 21 meeting in Hugh Foster Hall, Marsha Waldie will describe a century of blacksmithing by her father, grandfather and great-grandfather. James Waldie Sr. opened the James Street shop in 1865; he was followed by James Jr. and Alfred Waldie, Marsha's father.

Marsha will show slides and demonstrate tools used in the shop, which still stands on James St. and is a potential tourist attraction one block off Main Street.

## Students see Milton's birth through eyes of our heritage actors

During Heritage Week in February two actors in period costume described the earliest days of our community to some 400 local primary school students.

Steve Willson and Cindy Ledwith played the roles of George Brown, Milton's first postmaster and first mayor, and Sarah Harrison, our first school teacher. They chatted about happenings in the early 1800s, including the experiences of Jasper and Sarah Martin, the pioneer family that operated the local grist mill for several generations.

Steve and Cindy were "naturals" for their roles because of their years of experience with children's programs at the Farm Museum. They told their story to seven groups at J.M. Denyes, E.W. Foster, Martin Street and Pineview ele-

mentary schools.

This was a new venture for the Society; judging by the reaction of the

students and teachers it may well become a regular feature of Heritage Week.

## Milton's 10 newspapers, many publishers, political conflicts, topic at April 16 meeting

Samuel Clarke ordered the equipment for producing the first Milton newspaper in a package from New York and was supplied with the "etceteras" of the printing trade.

He was the first in a long line of Milton newspaper publishers who wound their way through the history of the community, its political infighting, changing social influences, the limitations of print technology and handicaps

in methods of communication.

Jim Dills, himself a former publisher of *The Canadian Champion*, will be reporting on the newspapers of Milton and some of the people and events behind the pages. Artifacts will illustrate early print technology and pages of newspapers will provide visual examples of the papers of the past.

Jim's presentation is scheduled for 8 p.m. April 16 at Hugh Foster Hall.

## Councillors give big welcome to New Year's Levee visitors Jan. 1

Mayor Gordon Krantz and seven Councillors were on hand to welcome guests at the New Year's Day levee at Town Hall. They also acted as guides for those who wanted a tour of the 147-year-old former court house and jail.

Five of our displays in the council chamber featured local people promi-

nent in education, medicine, business and politics. We also showed documents from our archives and heritage costumes loaned by the Milton Players and Halton Region Museum.

Cameron Ivens, student at E.C. Drury High School, and harpist Sarah Sabatinos, a Guelph University student

in biochemistry, played on the upstairs landing.

Members who helped organize or stage the event included Bruce Carlin, Helen Comber, Jim Dills, Ed Goodall, Don Hayward, Jessie Hamilton and her daughter, Carol, Ken Lamb and Gail Richardson.

## Ted Stover cited for Archives gift



Ted Stover

As part of our Heritage Awards program Feb. 15, archivist Gail Richardson presented a copy of Milton Area Biographies (Vol. 1) to Ted Stover.

Ted had donated many photos of the Willmott, Bowes and other early families to the archives; Ted's late wife, Betty Jo, was a Willmott. Biographies of two family members – John Willmott (1770-1836) and James B. Willmott (1837-1915) were included in our first volume.

## 14 returned to office at Feb. 19 election

There were no fireworks at our election – all those on the slate presented by past president Helen Comber were quickly endorsed.

These included Dorrie Greig and Steve Willson, recently appointed directors of publicity-promotion and special events, respectively.

Others returning in familiar roles were: Bruce Carlin (president); Jessie Hamilton (treasurer); Gail Richardson (archivist); Jack Charlton, Jim Dills, Tim Kingsbury (research); Alex Cooke (genealogy); Frank Sisson (membership); Ken Lamb (newsletter); Linda Leaver (LACAC liaison); Marsha Waldie (plaquing); Audrea Lear-Costigan (town

## Stone artifacts from collections illustrate early Indian settlement

Collections of artifacts and a look back at the early pre-white history of Halton Region drew an interested group to a public meeting March 11. It was part of Halton Region's move toward preparation of an archaeological master plan. Individuals brought their collections of stone artifacts for assistance in dating and identification and Ronald Williamson, chief archaeologist of Archaeological Services Inc., sketched the development of native inhabitation of this area of Ontario. His firm, chosen by the Region, is looking for still-unidentified native sites which can be charted prior to development. Already

there are 552 sites identified in Halton. Analysis of the locations assists in determining likely sites still unknown.

Preparation of the Archaeological Master Plan will allow the Region to know in advance of development, whether construction in an area should be preceded by archaeological exploration.

## Busy Month

January was a hectic and exciting month for John and Lou Bradley. First fire damaged their heritage house on Court Street North, forcing them into a temporary stay in a Millside Drive apartment. Two weeks later friends and relatives crowded the auditorium at the Milton Seniors' Centre to celebrate the Bradleys' 50th wedding anniversary. Lou, a former teacher, is a native of New Brunswick; John farmed all his life at Hornby. They moved to Milton in the early 1980s.

liaison); Helen Comber (past president).

Helen would love to hear from members willing to sign up for any of the three vacant positions – secretary, publications director and program director.

## Museum setting right for Christmas party

The Halton Region Museum proved an ideal setting for our Dec. 18 Christmas party.

After the potluck supper Lou Bradley, Jim Dills and Dorrie Greig recited Christmas poems. Chorister Howard Willson followed with a humorous poem about day-after Christmas letdowns.

The "Song Spinners" from the Milton Seniors' Activity Centre, led by Joyce Hayward, entertained us with festive selections.

## Bowling Green site of pot luck for June outdoor meeting

Milton's Bowling Green on Commercial street has been providing recreation since 1916 when the Club bought the cherry orchard and converted it into today's green and club house.

The Historical Society will get an introduction to the history of the club, enjoy a pot luck supper in the club house and have an opportunity to watch or bowl under the supervision of members, all during the Society's June 18 meeting.

Bring your pot luck contribution and enjoy a beautiful June evening on the grounds of this historic club. You may decide you'd like to join the hospitable people who are there regularly.



**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



## Crowd scrambles for seats at Heritage Presentations

We had to dash out for extra chairs to accommodate the crowd at our annual Heritage Awards ceremony Feb. 15 in Hugh Foster Hall.

Four winners took home limestone-based awards: George Bergsma and his son Jeff (architectural); ten Brookville School students (education); Laura Dixon (writing); and John Duignan (visual arts).

Awards were presented by Councillor John Challinor, LACAC chair; School Trustee Erica Andrew; MPP Ted Chudleigh and Mayor Gordon Krantz.

Piper Robert Gorman added colour to the ceremony. So did the songs of the Milton Choristers.

Displays mounted by John Duignan, Laura Dixon, Brookville School, Milton

Heritage (LACAC) and our Society provided a meaningful backdrop.

Leading up to the ceremony Jim Dills took about 15 residents on a historic walk around adjacent Victoria Park. The park is part of the four acres donated in the early 1850s by land developer Hugh Foster as a site for the County Court House which is now our Town Hall.

## Winners of Heritage Awards

### Brookville Public School

Grade six students at the Nassagaweya school (Guelph Line) delved into their families' histories to earn the education award. Teacher Sue Dunsmore accepted the prize for the ten winning students: Mark Boycott, Karen Doering, Alex Frank, Ginger Furze, Craig Harding, Sarah Hastie, Rebecca Parker, Tracy Stokes, Chris Willes and Robbie Wilson.

Some of the students produced family-tree posters and others interviewed their parents and other relatives to produce videotapes of their origins.

### John Duignan

John Duignan, winner of the visual arts award, has been collecting postcards of the Milton area for ten years.



John Duignan, left receives award from Mayor Gord Krantz.

A Miltonian, John has visited dozens of shows in hope of adding to the more than 100 items in his collection.

At our March 19 meeting in Hugh Foster Hall more than 40 members and friends heard John speak; many asked questions and all carefully examined his fine collection of post cards which were grouped for display reflecting photographers and areas.



Brookville's Grade 6 was a winner with their family trees. In the background are Erica Andrew left, Trustee who presented the award, and Teacher Sue Dunsmore.

### Laura Dixon

Laura Dixon's writing award is a tribute to many years of work which produced a history of Kilbride United Church and four books of poetry, including a 1997 volume on her 90th birthday. Laura is a long-time member of the Society, as are her daughter and son-in-law, Ruth and Don Taylor.



MPP Ted Chudleigh gives Laura Dixon her award.

Through her mother's family (Pickett) Laura traces her roots to Massachusetts of the 1600s; her father's family (Prudham) settled in Halton in the early 1830s. Laura's father once farmed the site formerly occupied by an explosives factory and which today is the Cedar Springs community.

### George and Jeff Bergsma

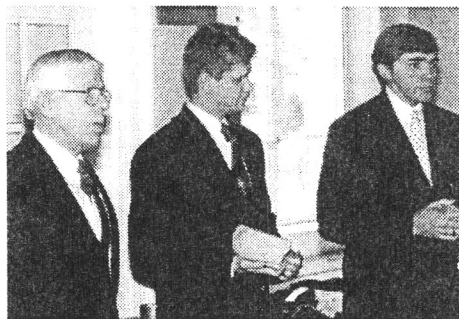
This year's architectural award recognizes extensive renovation of an 1855 Main Street business building. In the late 1800s it was known as the Stevenson Block; more recently it has housed the Walker, Selrite and Bi-Way stores.

The renovation included a new front, many interior changes and footings and support for the seven apartments on the two upper floors of the paint and wallpaper store.

George and his son Jeff will display the winning trophy in the store.

The Bergsma family came to Canada

from Holland in 1953. They opened their first store in Georgetown, later expanding to Milton and Brampton.



George and Jeff Bergsma are recognized by Councillor John Challinor, right.

## Roman Catholic Settlers came here 180 years ago

Speaker Willi Stutt at our Jan. 15 meeting described religious highlights over the 180 years since the first groups of Roman Catholics came to the area.

Irish immigrants first settled on the 8th and 9th concessions of Trafalgar in 1818 and six years later founded St. Peter's Church. Today the congregation on the 9th Line just north of Britannia attracts many of its members from the nearby Mississauga suburbs.

In Milton itself the first church was built on Pine Street shortly after the town was incorporated in 1857. When the congregation outgrew the building it became the United Steelworkers Union Hall and more recently a daycare centre.

The Milton Heights church, Our Lady of Victory, owes its start to Italian immigrants who arrived after World War I to work in district brick yards.

All three churches today serve a total

of almost 10,000 members. Holy Rosary on Martin Street has a seating capacity of about 750. In 1953 the congregation began to meet in what is now the church hall; the sanctuary was built in 1966.

This is a special year for Milton district Catholics – the 60th anniversary of the creation of the parish and the arrival of a resident priest. Today two priests reside here – in the Martin Street limestone house built for John Martin in 1857. They are also responsible for the 9th Line and Milton Heights congregations.

Willi – she has taught at the E.C. Drury School for the deaf for more than 25 years – was supported by Ada Scisizzi and Ada's sister-in-law Duella Serafini. Father Earl Talbot and several members of the congregation also helped answer questions. Ada's sister, Joyce Haslam was to have taken part but

she was making good on a Christmas present that took her to Las Vegas.

The audience, limited to 20 because of the snowstorm, showed lively interest in the three large displays of church photos.

## Farm Museum future uncertain funding falls short

More than \$838,000 raised by Country Heritage Experience was not enough to keep The Farm Museum (formerly Ontario Agricultural Museum) operating.

The Museum is providing a full flight of education programs this spring but the future appears bleak for the site to be opened to the general public, unless arrangements are made by a sponsor for short-term events.

Last year the museum was unable to develop programs to attract sufficient visitors to make up the short-fall after the government removed the previous subsidy. 1997 saw approximately 40,000 visitors at the site but the target was 70,000.

The Board, realizing attendance and fundraising efforts did not meet expectations, closed the site in 1997 and terminated staff. Some artifacts which were on loan have already been picked up by donors.

### 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 meetings please send your cheque: \$10 for families, \$7 for individuals to Milton Historical Society, Box 85, Milton Ont. L9T 2Y3.

## About friends we know. .



Mabel Parker, a former president of the Nasigeweya Historical Society, had a double reason for attending our mid-February Heritage Awards ceremony. In addition to having a long-standing interest in the event, Mabel is the grandmother of Rebecca Parker, one of the ten Brookville Public School students who won the education award.

Mike Ledwith has been recognized by the Milton Chamber of Commerce for a long career of community service. He has received a "Lifetime Achievement Award" for decades of intensive volunteering with Milton District Hospital, the Rotary organiza-

tion and many others. Before retiring Mike was a prominent businessman in downtown Milton and later a real estate appraiser.

Alice Pelz died suddenly in late February after suffering a heart attack. Her husband, Don, served several years on our executive as a representative of Heritage Milton (LACAC).

At our Heritage Awards ceremony Bruce Carlin paid tribute to five people and groups who had been considered for the plaques. Paintings by Marion Detlor and Donna Coulter's photo collection were entered in the visual arts category.

St. Peter's School (grade 8) and Holy Rosary School (grade 8) were runners-up for the education award. Alex Cooke, who won a writing award three years ago, declined nomination for his second volume this year.

### MEETING DATES

**APRIL 16** - *Milton Newspaper Pages and People* - Jim Dills.

**MAY 21** - *100 Years of Blacksmithing* - Marsha Waldie.

**JUNE 18** - *Pot Luck Supper* 6:30 p.m. Milton Bowling Club.