

# BUFFY'S CORNER

Conserve, Educate and Celebrate Brampton's History

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE **Brampton Historical Society**

Volume 7 • Issue 4 • December 2005



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## **19th Century Ontario Furniture**



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# **Bridging the Past on Creditview Road**

The historic bow string arch bridge on Creditview Road near Eldorado Park has recently been restored by the City of Brampton. The Works crew completed an extensive reconstruction of more than \$700,000 to restore the bridge and ensure that it meets current bridge code standards and keeps the original aesthetics intact.

One of only two historic arch bridges in the City, the structure had begun to degrade due to long term exposure to weather and traffic. The restoration kept the structure as faithful to the original 1928 design as possible, while still



– photos by Dawn Friesen

ensuring public safety as prescribed in bridge safety guidelines.

The bridge was designated a heritage property under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. The Brampton Heritage Board approved the restoration plan in 2002 and planning and design was completed in 2004. Construction began in July of this year and was completed on September 16.

“This project is a perfect example of Brampton’s continued commitment to heritage properties,” said Jim Leonard, Heritage Co-ordinator for the City of Brampton. “By ensuring that these properties are correctly restored to not only original appearance, but modern safety guidelines, these beautiful structures can be a part of the community for generations.”





## President's Message

– Peter Murphy, BHS President

It is with great regret that I note that this is the last edition of Buffy's Corners to be edited by Richard Hilson who recently submitted his resignation to the BHS executive.

Richard, with the able assistance of Dawn Friesen, published his first issue in June 2004, which was well received by our members and other subscribers. With a completely new look and layout, the new-look Buffy served to inspire our contributors to greater heights of prose and most of us did our best to comply with Richard's deadlines.

A huge collective vote of thanks to Richard is more than warranted and I'm sure all our readers will join with me in wishing him well in all his future endeavours.

The quality of Buffy's Corners has been the hallmark of the BHS since its inception under the editorship of Dorothy Willis. Now the executive is faced with the daunting challenge of finding a new editor. Please wrack your brains: do you know of a creative, ink-stained scribbler who is up to the job; one who will work for nothing and who is willing to light fires under tardy contributors?

On another note, Vice-President Lynne Genova has been working diligently to fill our roster of guest speakers for the New Year. One of our stars will surely be Senator Lorna Milne who will speak on the subject of pressed glass, but who also might just be persuaded to spill the beans on some of the dark secrets from the "Red Chamber".

To those who rode the rails on the Orangeville to Brampton train excursion, you will agree that it was a great success even though we were a little early for the best of the fall colours. Thanks go out to our key organizer Michael Avis and to our very knowledgeable tour guide, Sally Drummond from the Town of Caledon. Thanks also go out to Diane Kuster who helped us walk off the hearty lunch on a tour of Orangeville's heritage sites.

What is probably not widely known is that the 107 people who enjoyed the fine lunch at The Station Restaurant may soon appear in the Guinness Book of World records for perpetrating the greatest number to ever "dine and dash".

In order to protect the anonymity of the hapless executive member who left early without signing the cheque for the lunch... I shall terminate this column right here. ♦

## Keeping Our Station on Track

– Michael Avis, BHS Heritage Liaison

On October 1, *Riding the Rails* proved to be another stunningly successful field trip for the Brampton Historical Society. After the overwhelming success of our first Credit Valley train trip in 2004, the BHS executive confidently chartered both train coaches for this year's excursion. Once again it was a total sell!

Early Saturday morning, 136 eager participants climbed aboard and settled back to experience the early autumn charm and rugged beauty of the historic Credit Valley in the comfort of restored coaches from the early 1950s. Again this year, Sally Drummond, Heritage Officer for the Town of Caledon and noted authority on the valley, related tales, historical facts and anecdotes about the people and places that contributed to the colourful history of the area.

Following the trip more than 100 guests packed the *Old Train Station Restaurant* in downtown Orangeville to enjoy a wonderful buffet lunch. During lunch, Diane Kuster, member of Heritage Orangeville and a respected local historian, provided a brief history of the relocated early 1900s CPR station. Interestingly enough, the station narrowly missed destruction several times but is now a vibrant and vital historical component in Orangeville's Downtown Heritage District.

Coincidentally, this year's trip was underscored by the fact that the City of Brampton is in discussions with the Orangeville Brampton Railway (owners and operators of the restored train) with a view to bringing the popular tourist attraction into downtown Brampton instead of terminating the run as it presently does now in Snelgrove. A project such as this is fraught with difficulties and careful planning and investment would be required. However, the tourism and city centre business benefits should be abundantly obvious to anyone.

The Brampton Historical Society, the Brampton Heritage Board and all those concerned with our local heritage preservation welcome the initiative taken by the City and heartily endorse the concept.

Of course, BHS has made no secret of the fact that the Society has a very definite interest in the railway coming to downtown Brampton. Should the venture be deemed economically feasible, it would naturally

## BUFFY'S CORNER

Conserve, Educate and Celebrate Brampton's History



**Brampton  
Historical  
Society**

Local folklore has it that Buffy's Corner was the original name of Brampton and the site of

a respectable tavern owned by William Buffy. His pioneer spirit (pun intended) lives on in the name of our journal. History buffs are invited into The Corner to share stories and comments.

**Buffy's Corner** is published four times per year and is free to BHS members.

Editor ..... Richard Hilson  
Asst. Editor, Design & Layout ..... Dawn Friesen  
Printed by ..... Peel Graphics Inc.

### BHS Executive

President ..... Peter Murphy  
Vice President ..... Lynne Genova  
Recording Secretary ..... Lynne Genova  
Treasurer ..... Ron Raffan  
Corresponding Secretary ..... Peter Murphy  
Membership Chair ..... Paul Willoughby  
Executive Member-at-Large ..... Carolyn Tout  
Executive Member-at-Large ..... Linda Selkirk

For membership information come to one of our monthly meetings (see the events list on page 7) or visit [www.bramptonhistoricalsociety.com](http://www.bramptonhistoricalsociety.com)

## Editor's Note

This Christmas why not give the gift that keeps on giving. Why not a membership in the Brampton Historical Society?

As you are making that list and checking it twice, maybe there is someone close to you who would appreciate the opportunity to take advantage of our wonderful programming and organized excursions such as *Riding the Rails*.

Perhaps there is that 20-something niece who has always had an interest in the family history? Or maybe there is a favourite grandson who wants to know more about stories from Brampton past? And don't forget the brother-in law who talks politics all the time. He might want to visit us next April when Senator Lorna Milne visits.

At \$20 a BHS membership is a real deal...and a great gift!

– Richard Hilson



# Does Heritage Designation Lessen Property Values?

— Robert Hulley

*The Ontario Heritage Act was created to allow municipalities to declare individual properties or entire neighbourhoods as "designated" properties.*

Its purpose was to protect and preserve historic, cultural and architecturally significant properties throughout the province. But in the process, has it restricted the marketability of these properties or created a valuable new market for those who appreciate the ambient quality and workmanship evident in some older properties?



*Thomas Dale House, 250 Main St N.*



*The Farm House, 27 Church St E.*



*67 Main St. S.*

Robert Shipley of the University of Waterloo set aside any doubts about what happens when these properties are placed on the open market. He undertook a study involving some 3000 heritage-designated homes in 24 communities in Ontario, and found that 74 per cent of them sold at, or above, the average market levels in almost all communities studied. As his study was spread over a number of years he was also able to determine that heritage-designated properties maintained their value during times when the overall market declined. (1)



*The Elliott Homestead, 85 Cobblestone Ct.*

*The photographs shown here were all taken by Robert Hulley as part of a series of Brampton homes which are, or are about to be, Heritage Designated.*

Brampton Heritage Coordinator, Jim Leonard, recently spelled out some generally held misconceptions and facts about heritage designation. In effect, he said that designation puts in place a mechanism to encourage care, regular maintenance and preservation of a heritage property. He emphasized that designation did not restrict the use of the property or prevent the owner from making prudent alterations. Neither does it oblige the owner to restore the building to its original condition. (2)

Echoing this view, Mark Warrack, Mississauga's Heritage Coordinator, went on to say that they had been particularly successful in establishing heritage districts in Meadowvale and more recently, Port Credit. "People seem to like the concept very much because they are assured that the neighborhood will be preserved and continue in its present character. Having a heritage district has encouraged people to improve their homes knowing that others will do the same

and stimulate market demand. This incidentally, is very high at the moment," he said.

But what do people who own heritage-designated properties actually think? I asked Dian Landurie, and her husband Walter, who purchased a heritage-designated home, if they thought they paid a premium when they purchased the house.



*The Davidson House, 7558 Creditview Rd. Churchville*



*Kirkwood, 133 Main St. S.*

"They certainly were asking a premium," she said, but they were also anxious to sell, so I think we made a pretty good deal "There's something special about this house, knowing that people had walked on these floors over a hundred years ago, the feel of the banisters, the charming staircase — we just love it."

I also spoke with Dr. Bruce Cameron, who together with his wife has lived in their 1871 heritage-designated home for quite a number of years. He talked about how comfortable the house was to live in. Its orientation, high ceilings, fireplaces and elegant woodwork, gives it an ambiance that would be difficult to replace. I asked if he had any advice for anyone contemplating having his or her heritage home designated. "Yes, go for it!" he replied.

*continued on page 6*



# What is Local History?

*Excerpted from a presentation by  
Brian Gilchrist, Reference Archivist, Peel Heritage Complex  
at the BHS meeting in November 2005.*

*That was the first challenge thrown out to members by archivist J. Brian Gilchrist, Reference Archivist at the Peel Heritage Complex, at the November meeting of the Brampton Historical Society. What followed were more challenges, colourful anecdotes and a lively and informative dialogue that both delighted and impressed our audience.*

Gilchrist is considered to be one of North America's leading genealogists. A fourth generation Torontonian and a ninth generation Canadian, he is descended from families of English, Irish, Scottish, Germanic and American backgrounds. As a bit of local interest, his grandmother Gilchrist's maiden name was McClure and that noted family settled in the Brampton area in 1820.

He is a graduate of history from the University of Toronto and in 2006 he will be celebrating his 40th anniversary as a genealogical sleuth. He is a frequent guest on radio and television shows and is known for his leadership and dedication in helping to raise standards of genealogical knowledge and education.

"There is a fundamental difference between accumulating documents and data and turning it into wisdom," he cautioned.

For a person researching his or her family genealogy, these are words to live by.

He went on to explain how local history may be loosely defined as striving to capture the essence of a place at a particular point in time.

Following that, he offered an explanation of genealogy or the study of genetics. Simply put, it's the study of your genes or ancestors – knowing your pedigree.

Gilchrist went on to discuss the importance of developing either a genealogical chronology or a local history chronology and how to prepare them. He also offered insight in how to find resources that might not have

been used before or resources that have not been utilized to their greatest advantage.

There are no less than three ways to prepare a chronology: from current time to previous time, from past time to the current and from a chosen point in time moving in either (or both) directions.

As the fascination with family genealogy continues to increase in popularity, Gilchrist encourages all researchers to develop chains of inter-connecting chronologies. He offered several examples of these chronologies such as looking at an individual life cycle in context of social and technological changes, educational development, religious practices, the nation state in which a person lived, the locality in which the person lived, in the life cycles of related persons including parents, siblings, spouses and children and in the individual life cycle from birth to death.

In attempting to trace these chronologies a paper trail is of great advantage to researchers although unfortunately the legitimacy of genealogical research isn't always recognized by academics. He presented topics to suggest events that occur in a person's lifetime that might create a paper trail for the family historian to follow. Examples included baptism, adoption, education, military service, guild records, electoral records, land ownership, marriage, divorce, institutionalization, Estate settlement and others.

"Obviously, the only two definite events in a person's life cycle are birth and death and

everything else in between is subjective," he said.

Gilchrist also offered tips on using different types of chronologies, such as a religious one. For example, he asked members how did the religious practices of your ancestors differ among family members? Did anyone convert religion upon marriage? Was there an inter-faith marriage? He advised that when we research a chronology that we should at least be aware of the difference in the faith and practice of the religions of your ancestors and relations.

"What if your ancestors were not church people at all, or were non-conformists?" he asked. The answers to these questions all assist in developing genealogies and filling in the chronological blanks of our family trees.

He made several suggestions for an effective genealogical search such as keeping good notes, recording references and retrieving information carefully and the right way. As family historians we have to look for the tell tale signs and play detective in the life cycle of our ancestors and ask ourselves what they tell us.

"Why did they do what they did when they did?" he asked. And again, Gilchrist offered these words of caution. "The most important thing to remember here is, that until recently, most records that we genealogists use were not written by our ancestors themselves but by someone who wrote what they thought they heard." ♦

## ... on Track continued from page 2

follow that a terminal building will be required. At this point we feel that careful consideration must be given to the restoration of our historic CPR station, making it a landmark destination in Brampton once more. The importance of the preservation and protection of any remnants of our railway past is almost incalculable. I have taken every opportunity to point out that the significance of this railway station goes far beyond it's having been an integral part of Brampton's early transportation history. Our vast and sprawling nation owes virtually all of its early development to the thin ribbon

of steel laid from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Historic train stations are a tangible link to this legacy. Given the importance of the railway as a vital and fundamental part of the Canadian fabric, surely the recycling of our station and giving it another multi-use purpose for the next 100 years and beyond would be a culturally enlightened project requiring little or no debate. ♦





# 19th Century Ontario Furniture

*Excerpted from a presentation  
by Dr. John McIntyre at the  
BHS meeting in October 2005.*

*At the October meeting of the Brampton Historical Society, Dr. John McIntyre conducted a presentation to members on the subject of furniture in Ontario during the 19th century.*

McIntyre remarked that furniture from this period gives people a sense of how people lived their lives and provided "a window into understanding the past." Members agreed.

Arranging his slide presentation on stylistic traditions, he started with several examples from the 18th century to illustrate how furniture in Ontario evolved through several traditions into the 19th century. All pieces were from private collections and stored on more than 8,000 slides.

McIntyre explained how the 19th century – presided over by most part by the Victorian age – was really a sampling of several stylistic traditions including but not limited to Pennsylvania English, Dutch and German styles, neo-classical and Regency / Empire. This period also claimed several stylistic revivals of the Victorian Era including Gothic, Renaissance and Rococo.

Starting with an exquisite example of a blanket box, McIntyre quickly took aims to dispel the myth that early Ontario furniture was all crude and rough. He provided further examples of detailed secretaries made of exquisite woods with secret compartments and drawers.

Generally speaking the building of Canadian furniture prior to about 1870 was made by individual craftsmen or in small furniture shops of less than 12 men. Then, the market was mostly local. After 1870, furniture became hi-tech as steam power became practical and available. The railway ran from Sarnia to Montreal and north into the Bruce Peninsula and through the Muskokas. The population of Canada was exploding and so was prosperity. There was a need for a great deal of solid, inexpensive but stylish furniture.

The growth of the German and Mennonite populations in Pennsylvania combined with Lord Simcoe's immigration policies that reached into the early part of the 19th century resulted in a large number of skilled trades people as well as farmers settling in the Niagara Peninsula and then upward into the Bruce, Grey Counties along the rivers and

established and the demand for furniture was insatiable. The population of Toronto went from 46,000 in 1871 to 181,000 in 1891.

Be sure to check your furniture at home that came from your family. CFM (Canadian Furniture Manufacturers), Chesley Furniture, Owen Sound Furniture, Krug, Knechtel, Malcolm, Bell, Pepler are just some of the names you may find.

The introduction of steam powered lathes, saws and other tools of the trade lead to standardization and loss of individuality.



*Photos from Dr. John McIntyre's presentation were not available for this publication.*

*Photos shown here are courtesy Region of Peel Archives, R. Matthews Collection and are circa 1900-1910.*

*For more information or photo reference visit the Region of Peel Archives at 9 Wellington St. East, Brampton. Call 905-791-4055 or visit [www.region.peel.on.ca/heritage](http://www.region.peel.on.ca/heritage)*

the shore of Lake Huron. These areas were densely forested with hardwoods, oak and walnut and were also potentially good farm land. This combination had great appeal for the settlers of German descent who had strong farming and cabinet making skills. By 1870, the railway had reached the lake ports of Owen Sound and Collingwood. The towns of Hanover, Wingham, Warton and Southampton and others became well

The factories could reproduce Chippendale, Sheraton, Queen Ann and all the other styles of the previous 200 years. Everything became mix and match. However, style and fashion still influenced what people bought and the styles in furniture changed about every 15 years. McIntyre remarked that this allows us to look at most pieces and with reasonable certainty identify its age within a 10-15 year period.





Churchville Cemetery – photo by Dawn Friesen

## City Protects Brampton's Historic Cemeteries

BRAMPTON— The legacy of Brampton's past generations will be protected decades into the future, as Brampton Council has declared all pioneer and heritage cemeteries in the city to be designated as heritage properties.

Brampton is home to 29 heritage and pioneer cemeteries, and previously only two were designated as heritage properties (Churchville Cemetery and Ebenezer Methodist Cemetery). Heritage designation helps to protect cemeteries from encroachments and alterations by formally ensuring any proposed changes to the site factor in heritage considerations. The designation does not prevent change, but ensures historical and cultural elements are not lost unnecessarily.

The designation was initially proposed earlier this year by city staff and the Brampton Heritage Board. Cemeteries to be designated as heritage properties include: Brampton Cemetery on Wilson Avenue; Cheyne Cemetery on Main Street South; Hilltop

Gore Cemetery on Gore Road; Shiloh Cemetery on Highway 50 North and Eventide on Main Street North. Some of these sites are in remote areas or in farm fields with no formal headstone, merely crude stone markers.

This designation is one of many efforts by the city of Brampton to protect heritage resources our local heritage resources. The city community services department continues to implement a tombstone restoration program throughout the City. A recent example of this is the Main Street North pioneer cemetery.

The official heritage designation by-laws are currently being drafted and will be put toward City Council later in the fall or in January 2006.

*Editor's Note: The article above flows out of the presentation made by Jim Leonard, City of Brampton Heritage Coordinator who was our guest speaker at the September 20, 2005 general meeting of the Brampton Historical Society.*

## Does Heritage Designation Lessen Property Values?

– continued from page 3

Designation is seldom given without the owner's consent. Lydia Robertson, a Brampton realtor welcomed the invitation to have her house declared a heritage property.

"It wasn't because the designation might eventually entitle us to a tax break, or that we might qualify for a restoration grant, we just loved the house and its fine architectural detail. Knowing that the house carries a designation will ensure that it will remain a unique home. I don't know if a designation will increase its value or not, but I'm certain it won't decrease it," Robertson remarked.

From what I've heard and read, and from my own experience as a heritage property appraiser, I believe that the heritage designation definitely does not lessen property values. If anything it has helped maintain them and possibly created a sub market for those with a discerning taste for what might be termed a "disappearing art form."

### References:

- (1) *Heritage Designation and Property Values: Is There an Effect?* Appeared in *The International Journal of Heritage Studies*, Volume 6 Number 1, 2000
- (2) *Heritage Designation – A Quick Primer*, Sept. 2005

*Robert (Bob) Hulley is a heritage property appraiser, historian and photographer. He is a member of the Brampton Heritage Board and the Brampton Historical Society and publisher of the "Building Historian".*

## 19th Century Ontario Furniture

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A lot of the furniture produced was Oak especially at the turn of the century. Black Walnut, an early favourite, was becoming expensive, Mahogany had to be imported and Oak was plentiful. The prestige pieces were still made of Walnut and Mahogany but the demand was coming from the growing middle class. Eaton's Catalogue first appeared in 1884 and by 1912 you could order complete homes (from siding to plumbing, bedroom suites to kitchen sink) ready to assemble, delivered to your homestead. Therefore inexpensive practical furniture was needed and the Canadian Factories provided. ♦

## Volunteer Opportunities

The Brampton Historical Society and Buffy's Corner are currently looking to fill the positions of

- **Buffy's Corner Editor**
- **Distribution Manager**

Buffy's Corner is published 4 times per year. Interested persons should contact Peter Murphy at 905-457-0058.

## BUFFY'S CORNER

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**Brampton  
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# Upcoming Events & Exhibitions

## BHS Meetings

**Members Free / Non-Members \$5**  
Heart Lake Community Presbyterian Church  
25 Ruth Ave., Brampton.  
*unless otherwise specified*

**January 19 at 7:15 pm**

**ASI: Digging Up Our Past**  
featuring  
**Jessica Paquette & Bev Garner**  
Archaeological Services Inc.

**February 16 at 7:15 pm**

**Peel Heritage Complex**  
featuring  
**Diane Kuster**  
Senior Archivist, Peel Archives  
*February only: Meeting will be held  
at the Peel Heritage Complex*  
9 Wellington Street East, Brampton

**March 16 at 7:15 pm**

**Annual General Meeting  
& History Quiz**

**April 20 at 7:15 pm**

**Tales From Inside the Red Chamber**  
featuring  
**Senator Lorna Milne**

**May 18 at 7:15 pm**

**Barns: Our Vanishing Heritage**  
featuring  
**Dr. John Carter**



**Doors Open  
BRAMPTON  
June 2006**

## Paul Hunt Bursary Award DEADLINE EXTENTION

Applications will be accepted until  
**December 15, 2005**  
Contact Peter Murphy 905-457-0058.

*The new and improved*  
**Carriage House Crafts**  
at Historic Bovaird House  
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Kennedy Road at Bovaird Drive (SE corner)



The BHS gratefully  
acknowledges the  
generosity of the  
Heritage Theatre  
for their donations  
of tickets to Heritage  
Theatre presentations for use as door  
prizes at BHS meetings.

## Historic Bovaird House & Craft Shop

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On Kennedy Road at  
Bovaird Drive (SE corner)  
Brampton, Ontario.



## BUFFY'S CORNER

### Have a story to tell?

At Buffy's Corner we welcome  
your stories and photographs of  
historical interest.

- stories and photographs should  
relate to Brampton and area
- maximum 600 words / no minimum
- submit files electronically or ask  
us for assistance
- submit your story idea and we will  
do our best to follow up

### SUBMISSION DEADLINE

**Spring issue . . . . . Feb. 17, 2006**  
**Summer issue . . . . . May 19, 2006**

For more information or to submit a  
story, photograph or idea contact:  
Dawn Friesen . . . . . 905-456-1963

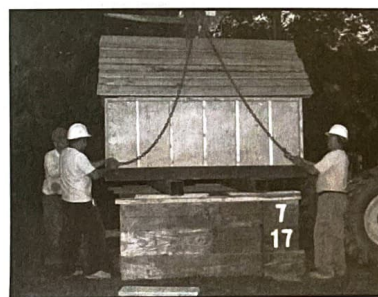
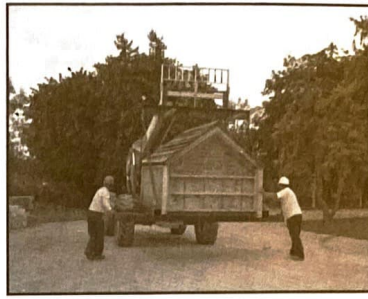
## Application for Membership in the Brampton Historical Society

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Additional Household Members: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ I enclose a Household Membership fee of \$20 for one full year.  
☐ I wish to enclose an additional donation to the Society of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
*A tax receipt is issued for donations to the Brampton Historical Society. Reg. Charity 87476-5720 RR0001.*

American money accepted at par.  
Please mail cheque or money order to:  
Brampton Historical Society  
P.O. Box 751  
Brampton, ON  
L6W 4S4





## Another Heritage Success Story . . .

A routine visit to a pioneer home has accidentally resulted in another heritage success story for the Brampton Historical Society.

Half hidden by waist-high weeds and an overgrown entanglement of shrubs, members of the Brampton Heritage Board discovered an unusual brick structure at the back of the now vacant home – a pioneer milk house or early refrigerator. The farm is located on the east side of Gore Road and built by Able Robinson in the 1930s.

The red brick structure, measuring approximately six feet by eight feet, is embellished at the vertical corners with very distinctive buff quoining and evidence of the original wood shingle roof still exists. A large trough runs parallel to one of the 8-foot walls and at either end of the trough are two small portals that would have allowed water from a nearby stream or well to be diverted into the building.

Although the old milk house was in rough

shape and scheduled for demolition, the Heritage Board convinced the developer, Baycliffe Homes to save it by relocating it to the Bovaird House property. As such, through the efforts of the many involved, including BHS, this unique and important example of Brampton's farming heritage now stands on the site.

*BHS proudly donated \$2500 to the relocation and restoration of the pioneer milk house.*

– photos of the milkhouse installation by Dawn Friesen

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