

Five deaths last year

O.P.P. statistics point to Highway 401 as North Halton's big "killer strip"

An average of seven people are killed and 192 are injured in motor vehicle accidents in the North Halton area every year, according to statistics on file in the Milton Detachment office of the Ontario Provincial Police.

The deaths and the injuries (they range from three to 12 deaths and from 160 to 230 injuries a year) are the result of an average of 495 accidents per year on the highways and roads in North Halton. These crashes account for an average \$268,931 annually in property damage.

(The figures are an average of statistics piling up in the O.P.P. files over the past five years. These records go far their back, but for comparison purposes, the writer is taking 1962-66 figures for the basis of the facts presented in this feature.)

For 1966 alone, motorists in the North Halton area patrolled by Milton O.P.P. turned in a below-average year. There were only 483 accidents, only five were killed, 194 were injured and property damage totalled \$296,771.

The decrease in traffic deaths from 1965 (five last year compared to 12 the previous year) produces no great cause for jubilation.

No jubilation, anyway, to the families and loved ones of those five people who died. To them, one fatality was one too many if it wiped out the life of a father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister or other loved one.

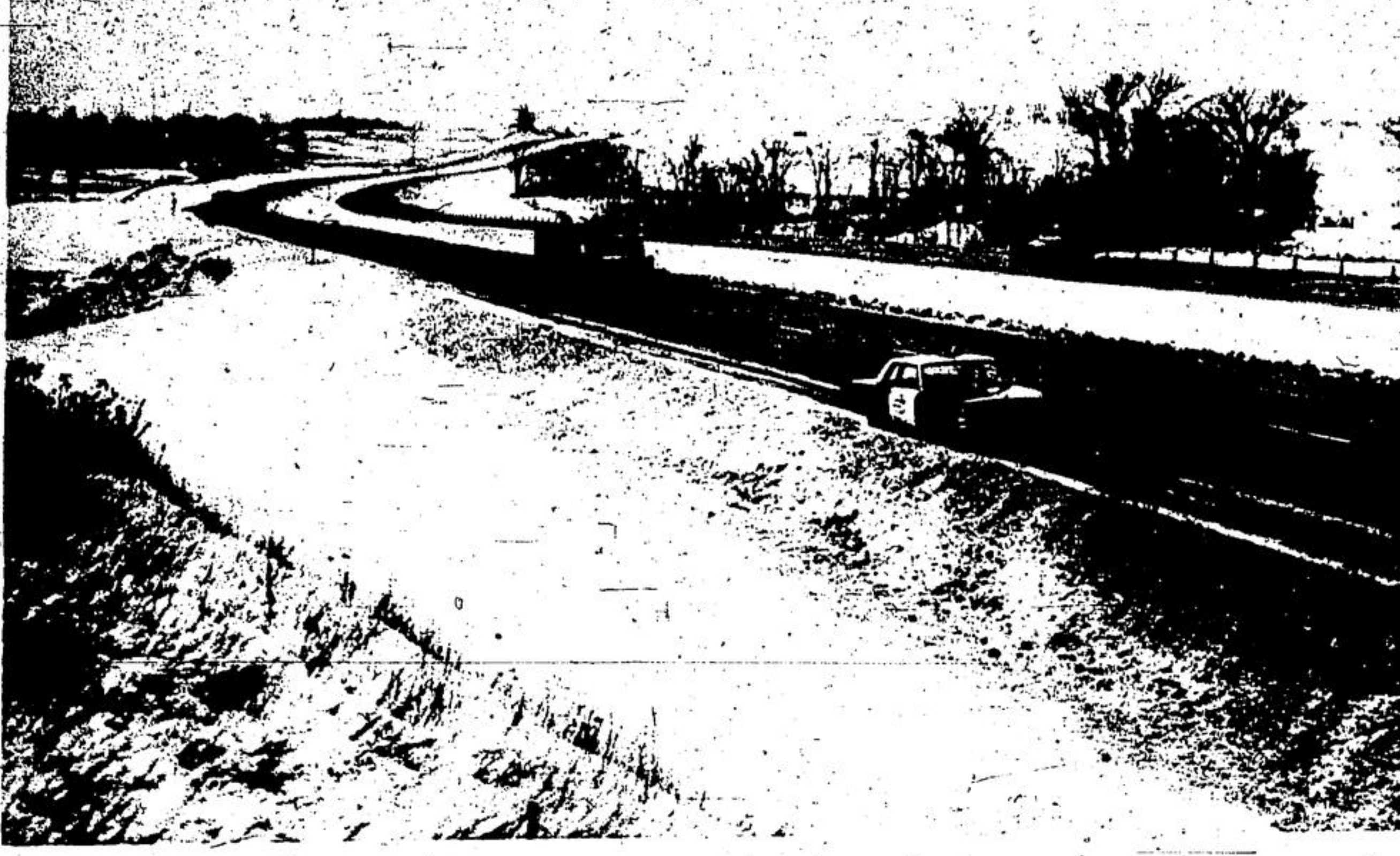
Statistics can be fun, but not if they are accident or fatality statistics. It wasn't much fun but it was highly educational to spend an hour the other afternoon at the O.P.P. headquarters on the Base Line Road, Milton, and review the facts and figures the O.P.P. personnel have kept on half the county's traffic problems during the past year.

There are 26 men in the Milton O.P.P. Detachment — a sergeant, three corporals and 22 constables. They patrol a total of 367 miles of roads in North Halton including 40 miles of provincial highways (13 miles of Highway 7, 11 miles of Highway 25, and 16 miles of Highway 401) plus 80 miles of county roads and 247 miles of township roads in Esqueping and Nassagaweya.

The statistics prove conclusively three main things:

- (1) Where the most accidents are happening.
- (2) When they are happening; and
- (3) Why they are happening.

The answer to Where? is easy. Highway 401 is the "killer strip" in North Halton. During 1966, 165 of the 483 accidents investigated (roughly one out of every three) happened on Highway 401.



HIGHWAY 401 SNAKES ACROSS HALTON and the four-lane superhighway accounts for one in every three accidents that happen in the North Halton area every year. Const. Al Jordan of Milton O.P.P. is shown keeping an eye on traffic at the "killer strip" on the road — a three-mile stretch between Kelso

The whole story is portrayed by a large map of North Halton hanging in the stenographers' office. As accidents are reported, the stenographers put a colored pin on the map to indicate the location.

A white pin means a non-reportable accident (under \$100 damage). There are few of these.

A yellow pin indicates an accident with over \$100 property damage. The map is heavily sprinkled with this type.

A blue pin denotes an accident where someone suffered a personal injury. These are fewer than the yellow pins, but there are still plenty.

A red pin, with an accompanying red plastic flag, shows where a fatal accident has happened. Last year, five red pins decorated the map — four on Highway 401 and one at McCullough's Corners on Highway 7 near Georgetown.

The detachment personnel have so many accidents to investigate in the course of a year, there isn't enough room on the map to accommodate all the pins. Every three

months, the maps are photographed, an 8 x 10 inch print goes into the file, and the pins are pulled out so a fresh start can be made.

To an interested outsider, even a glance at a map covering a three month period is enough to shock you.

And WHEN do the accidents happen?

Throughout most of the year, the accidents are evenly spread among the days of the week and times of the day. On the whole, weekends are the busiest times for accidents due to increased traffic. The time of day varies, with from dawn to 9 a.m., 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., all afternoon and evenings until midnight as the most frequent periods for accidents to happen.

Stenographers at the O.P.P., besides keeping their map posted with pins to indicate the location of accidents, also record the day of the week and the time of day on which an accident happened. They keep a separate chart filled for a year at a time.

In January, for instance, a quick glance at the map shows

Conservation Area and the Campbellville overpass where the largest number of 401 accidents happened in 1966. Motorists get confused on the curves and hills in this area when they are "lulled" by the otherwise straight highway.

that Sunday afternoons and Fridays from 11 to 12 midnight are the busiest times for accidents. In February, it's early Sunday afternoons from noon to 3 p.m.

In March, drivers make more miscues Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. April charts indicate Friday from 7 to 8 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 10 p.m. to midnight are the most probable times for an accident. Many records show Saturday from 7 to 8 p.m. and any day from 11 o'clock until midnight are the heaviest.

June, oddly enough, has no set period when the majority of accidents happen. The 37 that were recorded last June came at various times through the various days of the week.

Saturday afternoons in July are popular, as they are in October. In August, it's Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 4 to 8 p.m.

September's most mishaps came from 6 to 10 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. The November toll (probably influenced by Mohawk Raceway traffic) was heaviest around 11 p.m. to midnight, Wednesday to Saturday evenings. And in December, more accidents happened from Friday to Sunday, 2 to 7 p.m., than at any other time.

Sgt. Major Carl Wildfong of District No. 3 headquarters dropped into the Milton O.P.P. office as the writer was researching the traffic statistics.

Marking on the high incidence of accidents in the Campbellville area of Highway 401, the Sgt. Major explained these maps of accident locations are very important to the O.P.P. When a "trouble spot" shows up, the force increases its patrols in that area.

And the time charts are also important. When the senior officers, realize, for instance, that weekend afternoons in June and July are producing the heaviest traffic, they can step up the highway patrols at the peak traffic flow times and perhaps prevent the high incidence of accidents.

It's a recognized fact that a marked police patrol car in the area tends to make drivers more aware, and perhaps cut down on accidents by acting as "visible preventative medicine." Not many people try

breaking the law with a police officer looking on, so the urge to "behave" while the cruiser is in sight is an understandable one.

Milton O.P.P. recognize the high incidence of accidents on the heavily-travelled 401. They keep at least one car patrolling their 16-mile stretch of highway at all times, 24 hours a day, and at peak traffic periods extra-cruisers are placed on duty there.

Now WHY do accidents happen? That answer is up to the driver. Inattentive driving, im-fractions of speed rules, improper passing, failure to leave a "clear space" around you — these and other common reasons blamed on the motorist are among the main reasons.

Oh sure, scoffed a constable, some accidents are blamed on the weather or heavy traffic conditions. "But in the end, isn't it the motorist who is at fault, for not adapting his driving to the weather and traffic conditions?"

You know, he's got a point there.

The 2,480 accidents, the 36 fatalities, the 959 injured people, and the shocking \$1,344,622 in property damage recorded in the North Halton area during the last half of a decade speak for themselves.

Weekly report Acton O.P.P.

From January 8 to 14 members of Acton Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police worked a total of 224½ hours and patrolled 814 miles in and for the town of Acton.

They investigated one disturbance, one cheque fraud and found one premise insecure. There were no accidents reported, seven traffic charges were preferred and 19 warnings issued.

There were six convictions which included four traffic and two liquor violations. Four persons were assessed fines and costs of \$56, and two persons received suspended sentences.

Acton police report weekly to the Free Press.

Five-man team

Many duties for Acton O.P.P.

Although there are only 16 miles of streets within the town boundaries, Acton's O.P.P. detachment comprising a corporal and four constables averages approximately 3,500 miles per month in the cruiser and covers an undetermined number of miles on foot patrol.

Headed by corporal Ray Mason, the force of Constables Mervin Harness, Bruce McArthur, Bruce Kressler and Nick Farlon provides police protection 24 hours per day.

History of S.S. 8 W.I. centennial

Rockwood — The January meeting of Rockalong Women's Institute was held in the home of Mrs. Harvey Shultz. The president Mrs. Norman Harris opened with the Mary Stewart Collect and the Institute Ode. There was a good attendance at the meeting with the roll call being a health hazard and how to overcome it.

The minutes and treasurer's report were read and approved. More plans were made to attend the short course to be held in Acton on March 7 and 8.

The annual eucharist at S.S. No. 8 Community Centre will begin Friday, January 13 at 8:30 p.m. and continue every second Friday evening. Letters were read in appreciation of flowers and gifts received by persons during the Christmas season. The committee for the history of S.S. No. 8 as a Centennial project will be sending out letters in the vicinity shortly.

Mrs. Roy Pfaff from the Red Cross, Guelph Branch, showed two excellent and informative sound films on cancer. These were of special interest to women and are available to any interested women's group.

The February meeting will be at the home of Mrs. Harry Bonner who will also take charge of the program for the evening. A contest was conducted by Mrs. Shultz and the singing of the Queen closed the meeting. A lovely lunch was served during the social hour.

Three accidents in district

Limehouse and Acton area drivers were involved in three accidents in the North Halton area patrolled by Milton O.P.P. during the past week.

One driven by Robert C. Blyth of R.R. 1 Acton struck a bridge on the Guelph Line at 20 Sideroad Wednesday evening of last week, causing \$200 damage.

A Limehouse man, Donald W. Cooper, was the driver of a car which went out of control on 20 Sideroad near the Ninth Line, Saturday, striking a house. Damage to the house was \$1,000 and a further \$1,000 damage was estimated for the car.

A vehicle driven by Charles William Griese of R.R. 2 Acton received \$50 damage and one driven by Robert J. Tuckwell of Islington had \$225 damage following a collision on Highway 7 east of the Fourth Line Esqueping on Friday.

No injuries were reported in any of the accidents.

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401 in Campbellville area is worst spot for accident

Look at any of the accident location maps or pictures in Milton O.P.P. files and you'll immediately spot the locations where cars and trucks are piling up. The majority of the accident statistics:

One point on the map has pins clamoring for space. They are wedged into the map at odd angles, denoting one stretch of the highway where the O.P.P. have declared a "trouble spot" and placed extra cruiser patrols.

This short stretch of highway where so many of the accidents are happening is on Highway 401 (Macdonald - Carlier Freeway) between the Campbellville Road overpass and the Kelso Conservation Area.

The terrain is rugged there, and the highway engineers have developed the road to follow the terrain. Curves and hills abound in this three-mile stretch of highway — a joy to behold on a sunny summer's day, but a perfect spot for the well-known "accident" looking for a place to happen.

About 100 accidents (one in every five) the O.P.P. were called to investigate last year happened on this curving, hilly strip of road that's only three miles long.

One constable explained that many motorists get into trouble on this strip of road because they are "spooked" by the rest of the highway where long, straight stretches of road "hall" a driver into a false sense of security. Suddenly he

hits the hills and curves and he either panics or fails to slow his speed and increase his awareness to cope with the different situation before him.

Another officer explained many cars get into accidents at this stretch because one or two wheels drop over the "lip" of the paved highway onto the gravel shoulder. When this happens, many motorists continue their speed and try to ram the car back onto the highway. They crank the wheel hard to the left and nothing happens — then suddenly, they jump over the "lip" back onto the pavement and go too far to the left, causing the car to either hit another vehicle or go completely out of control.

The proper method to get back onto the highway, of course, is to slow your speed and continue driving with two wheels on the shoulder to a point where it is easier to re-enter the highway. The driver should also keep an eye on the traffic to make sure his re-entry into the driving lane does not cause problems to other motorists.

Mohawk Raceway traffic also accounts for a majority of the accidents on this section of the highway. Drivers approaching the Campbellville cutoff on 401 often find themselves in the wrong lane for the turn, and accidents happen when they try to squeeze into the right lane. The conglomeration of normal 401 traffic and the hundreds of cars attempting to enter the traffic lanes when

the raceway closes each night also account for many of the accidents there.

Where else are the most accidents happening? Three other places on Highway 401 are popular fender-benders, too. Fifteen accidents last year happened around the Town Line intersection near Milton Heights — another spot where a curve causes problems.

And 36 more happened in the vicinity of the Highway 25 overpass and the bridge over the C.N.R. track just east of the Milton cutoff. Eight more happened at the overpass where Highway 401 goes under the Base Line Road. Both these locations have curves in the road.

Highway 7 in the Silvercreek Hill area was also a good spot for calamities. There were 48 between Silvercreek Hill and the outskirts of Georgetown in 1966.

Eight more were registered at Crewson's Corners west of Acton on Highway 7.

A total of 38 were counted on Highway 25 between Acton and Milton, eight of them in the Speyside Hill area between No. 10 and No. 15 Sideroads. The Seventh Line of Esqueping accounted for 30 more, most of them in the Stewart town and Hornby community areas. Another 28 happened on the Base Line, more east of Milton than west.

And finally, the Campbellville Road, formerly known as the Guelph Line, accounted for another 19.

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As well as routine police patrol both on foot and in the cruiser, officers are kept busy investigating accidents, attending court sessions in Milton, investigating thefts and traffic violations as well as spending considerable time in the office completing reports following investigations.

During the past year the Acton Detachment's duty roster included investigating 413 occurrences of which 30 were major crime investigations. These major crimes included fraud, bogus cheques, assault, disturbances, break and entry and theft.

The detachment also had 89 traffic investigations which included motor vehicle accidents, impaired driving, driving with license under suspension and dangerous driving offences.

Almost every week at least one, and sometimes as many as three officers attend Milton court as a result of charges being laid by the local detachment.

Radar in the cruiser has proven to be of great assistance and is used frequently resulting in a number of motorists being stopped and charged with traffic violations.

A number of parking tags were placed on illegally parked cars during 1966 resulting in fines to the owners.

During the year constables conducted several safety lectures at local schools and among the numerous duties is

"point duty" as the result of funerals and other special occasions. With the two-way radio in the cruiser and monitor of the local detachment can keep abreast with up-to-the-minute reports from headquarters and other detachments.

In spite of their heavy work schedule, officers manage to find spare time off duty to attend lectures at headquarters to keep up-to-date on the latest method of policing.

Nature hike for Girl Guides

The Second Acton Guide Company under the leadership of Captain Lowrie, held a nature hike Sunday, January 15. The girls walked to Limehouse and rambled through the woods.

A resident of Limehouse accompanied the girls into the woods and identified tracks, trees and birds for them. They sighted a woodchuck, pheasant and a chickadee. Before they walked home they were treated to hot chocolate and cookies and held a discussion on what they had seen. Each girl has to write an essay on their day and the nature subjects sighted and identified in order to pass her nature test.

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