

# Having the 'doors open' for a day

Last weekend, Brown Farm was overrun with visitors as we took part in the Doors Open tour, an annual provincial program organizing Doors Open Ontario events across the province.

The Halton Region event was Oct. 1.

In the tour, homes and structures of various themes are opened to the public to allow an opportunity to appreciate the architecture and history.

The four Halton municipalities, Oakville, Burlington, Milton and Halton Hills, each had its own event - some with themes. The Halton Hills theme was pre-Confederation structures.

With our farm's origins going back to 1826, two of our farm structures were built prior to 1867, when approached to take part, The Sidekick and I experienced an "MOW" - otherwise known as a 'Moment of Weakness.'

"Sure we can do that!" Oct. 1 was the day, and throughout the summer, we maintained a to-do list which kept getting longer.

And as Oct. 1 closed in on us, we started removing items from the list.

Our goal was to freshen up a bit, paint this and that, and generally have the old farmstead lookin' her best.

Brown Farm was one of ten properties on the Halton Hills tour, with three of them being pre-1867 churches - St. Stephens, Churchill and Limehouse Presbyterian.



**TED BROWN**  
A Ted Bit

It's tough preparing for such an event. We had no idea how many people would drop by, nor did we know what kind of questions they'd be asking about the house, the barns, and those Browns who went before us.

The organizers assigned volunteer greeters who met the visitors and gave a brief overview of the property. The greeters also recorded where they came from and how many were in the group. From there, The Sidekick and I took over.

Visitation hours were 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The first visitors arrived at 9:40, and the last ones left at 5:25.

It was a non-stop flow of people wanting to see where we lived and the history associated with my ancestors.

Some asked to meet Macduff the ram, or Hamish the dog, but I couldn't accommodate their requests as our farm is a bio-secure operation.

And if I heard it once, I heard it a dozen times- "Gez, we've read all about your farm, now we actually get to see it."

In addition to touring the ground floor of the farmhouse, I displayed a printout of the original charter for the farm from King George IV, as well as the bill of sale for the property, purchased by my great-great-grandfather in 1826.

People were fascinated at the family stories and asked questions like how the ice house was used, the additions on the house, the wood shed (now our garage) and a myriad of other questions.

What amazed me was where they came from.

We had folks from North York, Scarborough, Oakville and Burlington, as well as some from the UK, on the tour because they happened to be in Canada.

And of course, many of our friends and colleagues dropped by too.

I tell you, it was a long day - but we loved it.

Since the place was all spiffed up, we invited my daughters and families to join us for dinner at the end of the day.

With a huge roast in the oven all day, (causing our guests to salivate at the smell as they passed though the kitchen,) it was the ending to a perfect day.

More than 200 people toured the farm, and I'm pretty sure The Sidekick and I spoke with pretty much each and every one of them.

As we dragged our aching bodies to bed that night, I sighed and said "My God I'm whacked!"

And The Sidekick agreed- then after a short delay, she said in the darkness ..

"But wasn't it great!"

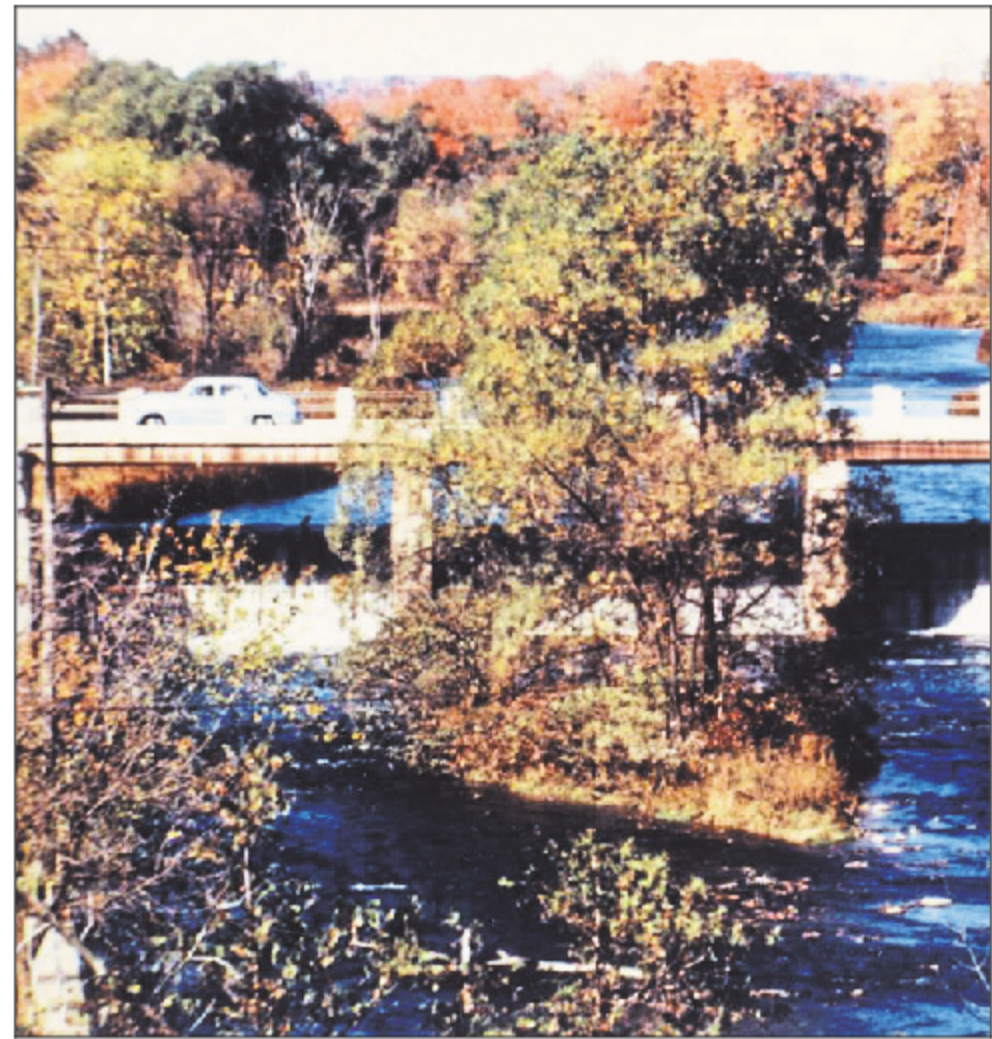


Photo courtesy of Esqueing Historical Society

The River Drive bridge crossing the Credit River just north of the former Barber Paper Mill always offers spectacular views of the area, especially in autumn. This photo from 1960 shows the fall colours looking upstream.

## LETTER

# Don't be a bicycle lane copycat

I have lived in Georgetown for 13 years and have been reasonably satisfied with the way that Council spends our tax money - until now.

I live near Berton Boulevard and Atwood Road, both wide roads through a subdivision more than capable of handling street parking on both sides and all vehicle and bicycle traffic demanded of it. It was just fine as it was.

About a month ago, a town contractor appears and paints bicycle lanes over these roads, so there is the expense of installing them then maintaining them, for no particular benefit to anyone, plus they are very ugly.

Come on Council, we don't have to copy things Brampton and Mississauga do just for the sake of it.

Alan Woosnam

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