

Christie Lime Kilns to stay — final vote

The Christie Lime Kilns at Kelso have been granted a stay of execution, following a meeting of the Halton Region Conservation Authority on Thursday evening.

An earlier motion by the conservation areas information education advisory board to demolish the west and centre kilns and fence off the east kiln was defeated by the Authority on a narrow vote.

Authority members have now agreed to fence off the two kilns which remain in reasonable shape with a chain link fence and push down the third kiln which is nearly in ruins.

Two of the three kilns represent significant historical value and remain in good shape, argued members favoring retention of the kilns.

The issue first arose earlier this month, after members of the advisory board agreed the crumbling kilns posed a threat to the safety of those who wander near.

On Thursday evening the entire Authority met to battle the issue out again.

"I hope we can see fit to fence two of the kilns and not tear them down," stated member Gord Krantz from Milton, adding that the kilns had "sufficient uniqueness" to justify their existence.

His views were supported by fellow member Jim Watson, who deemed the historic kilns "more important than the old jail."

The views of the two Milton

representatives were met with opposition from Halton Hills spokesman Russ Miller and Burlington member Joan Allingham.

"It's difficult to imagine someone coming up with \$400,000 to restore the kilns," stated Mrs. Allingham, in response to a suggestion that the kilns could be restored at a future date.

A dollar a day

Manual labor ran kilns

At the turn of the century a man might have been paid one dollar for a 10-hour day spent hauling rocks from a quarry on the escarpment to the Christie Lime Kilns.

In a report to the Conservation Areas Education Information Advisory Board of Halton Region Conservation Authority concerning the kilns, a brief history is included. It was related to HRCA staff by George Black, who once worked in the operation.

According to the report, the first kiln was built in 1880. Two more were added to the west of it in 1903 and 1910. The kilns were used for extracting lime from limestone. The lime was then carried by train to processing factories in Toronto.

Limestone was quarried from the escarpment. It was first dynamited, then broken into smaller pieces by men

According to a report prepared by the HRCA's director of operations, Y.S. Kangas and Mia Lane, HRCA graphic illustrator, the estimated cost of reconstructing the east and west kiln and removing the centre one, which is already in ruins, would be close to \$400,000.

The cost of restoring only one kiln and ramp and removing the others was estimated at \$180,420. Tearing all the kilns down would cost \$12,000, the report states, while putting up a six-foot chain link fence would cost \$11,600.

Mrs. Allingham stated she had not heard from any historical societies interested in the restoration possibilities and that the Authority should proceed with the original motion.

"If we tear them down, we could discourage and close off the option of having someone in the future rebuild the kilns," argued Terry Mannell, Oakville representative.

"There is a lot of money involved here, and I don't know how we can manage two," said Russ Miller, in support of Mrs. Allingham's views.

Krantz argued that by fencing the two kilns, the Authority would be able to buy some time before any definite steps are taken. The interim would provide time for someone to come forward with suggestions and possible funding for the restoration project, stated other members.

The Ontario Heritage Foundation of the Ministry of Natural Resources may be interested in helping fund a restoration project, but the authority has to commit money — probably a third of the cost — before the foundation will consider the project.

Wintario was mentioned as another funding source, as were industries which deal in lime.

During the first meeting of the committee members, conservation areas director Bill Warwick was questioned about the effectiveness of a fence.

He stated a fence would keep out children, who now use the kilns for games of hide-and-seek.

The fence would have to be erected far enough away from the kilns so that no falling rocks would hit anyone outside the fence, said Mr. Kangas.

The kilns in their current state present a real danger to visitors. "They have to come down before somebody gets killed," said Miller.

—Meet the election candidates at the first public meeting, scheduled for tonight (Wednesday) at the high school at 8 o'clock.

—Poppies are on sale in local stores, in advance of Remembrance Day Nov. 11.

perature at which lime could be drawn. Saturday nights the kilns were heavily stoked with wood to keep them hot while workers had Sunday off.

The other six days, two firemen worked 12 hour-shifts to keep the kilns operating. After the initial firing up, wood was added into the fire holes on two sides of the kiln. The escarpment also yielded the trees for wood, which was collected with teams of horses.

Once the required temperature was reached, the firemen checked on the progress of the stones by looking through the fire holes. When the stones were white-hot and transparent, they were ready to be drawn. One fireman who had a vision problem, could detect by their odor when the stones were ready, states the report, which was written by Y. S. (Slim) Kangas and Mia Lane of HRCA staff.

Below the kiln a narrow long room held two carts or "tips". When the lime was ready, small draw holes were opened and the hot lumps of lime fell into the cart. The lime was stored until cool. Then the cart, which was on tracks, was sent down the hill to a ramp beside the train tracks. From there, the lime was tipped into a train car.

To get the empty metal cart back up the hill, the cart was hitched to a horse. Walking beside the track, the horse

pulling the cart up the escarpment and back to the kiln.

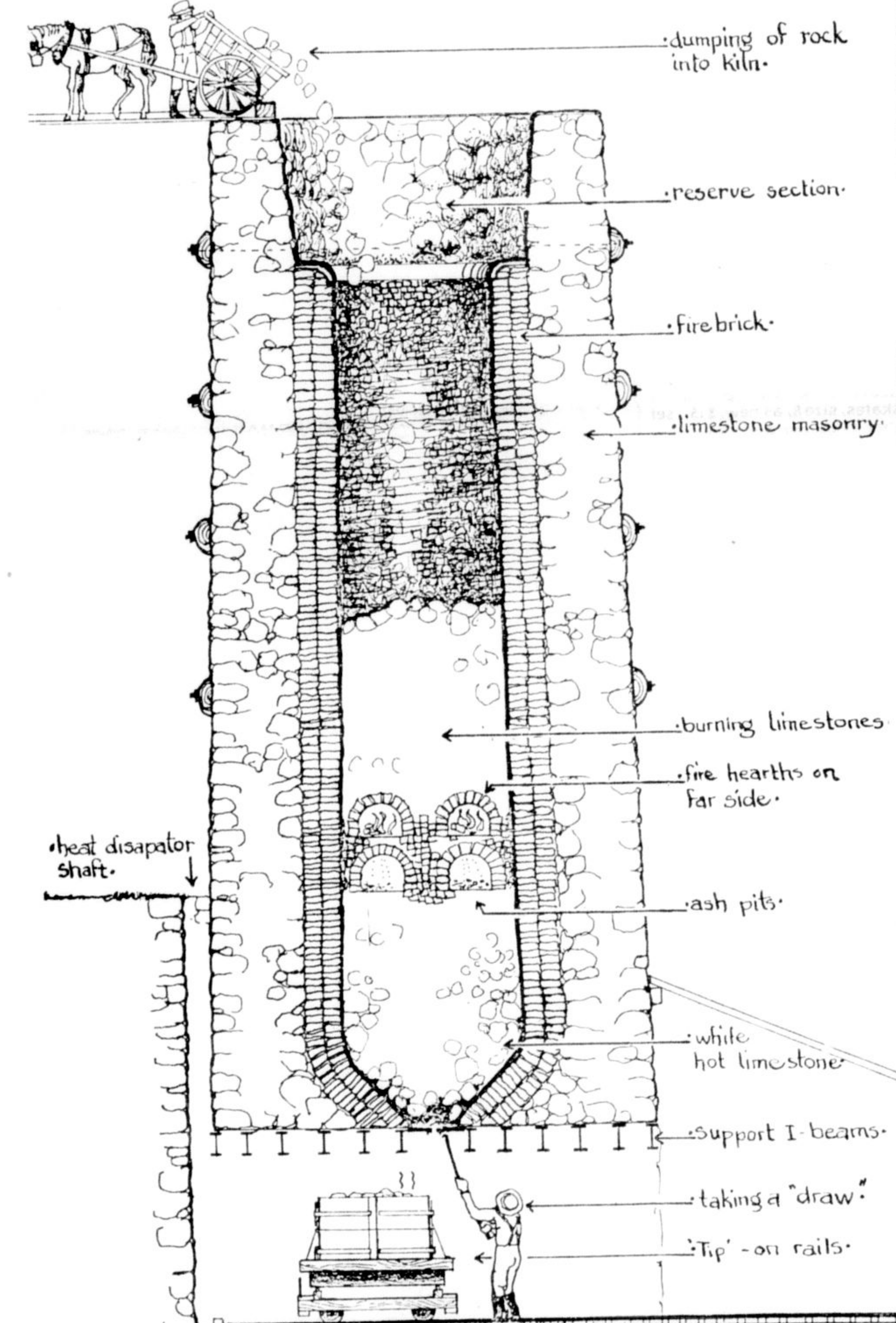
Four tons of lime were drawn every six hours from each kiln in use.

The kilns, located in what is now the Kelso Conservation Area, were owned by D. D. Christie and David Henderson, MP from Acton. Mr. Christie lived for a time in Kelso, later moving to Guelph. The firm provided homes within walking distance of the operation for its employees.

Christie Kilns were in use until 1929. By this time the demand for lump lime had decreased. The nearby Robertson Kilns, which produced hydrated and ground lump lime, adopted the Christie employees. The Robertson Kilns ceased operation in 1960. They were destroyed to eliminate the danger of rocks falling onto the nearby railway tracks.

After they shut down, the Christie Kilns were partially dismantled to salvage the reusable parts. Two of the three kilns are still standing, but are in a state of disrepair and a hazard to passers-by.

Christie Lime Kiln: cross-section



CHRISTIE LIME Kilns were operated by manual labor and horses were used for hauling the rock at the turn of the century. Rock from the lime quarry on the escarpment was dropped into the top of the kiln and the lime drawn from the bottom. Burning six cords of wood every day, the kilns were fired up to a temperature of 1,800 Fahrenheit. Illustration by Mia Lane.

Drumquin Bazaar

By Mrs. Cecil Patterson
Congratulations to the ladies of Bethel U.C.W. on their successful bazaar on Saturday, Oct. 28. A large number attended to purchase from the many sales tables and enjoy a fine lunch. Mrs. J. Griffin welcomed the visitors and opened the bazaar.

Belated birthday greetings and good wishes to Mrs. Frank Weller, Trafalgar Rd., who celebrated her 97th birthday this past week. Mrs. Weller does her own work, and enjoys making cookies for her son Dick and their many friends.

Birthday greetings to Wallace Simpson, Dwayne Curtis and Robert Hillman.

O.H.A. INTERMEDIATE A

Georgetown Chrysler Raiders vs. Port Elgin

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The HALTON HEALTH UNIT will also be located in the New Building
November 1, 1978




A PUBLIC HAZARD in their current state of disrepair, historic lime kilns at Kelso may be demolished unless funds can be found to reconstruct them. Besides the one shown here, there are two others, but one is already in ruins. The Christie Kilns were in use from 1880 to 1929.

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