

Outdoor education:



Mill now 63 years old

The mill by the old mill stream at Wyevale turned 63 years old this year, and it is still very much a going concern for hundreds of schoolchildren from across Ontario, who come to Harry and Phyllis Hunt's outdoor education centre with their teachers. It offers a unique

overlooks the River Wye. For while the mill after which the centre is named was built 63 years ago, the lodge is spanking new, and designed with kids in mind.

The Floors are carpeted, the furniture is comfortable and casual and the washrooms are gleaming, bright and equipped with showers. The huge cafeteria-cum-common room with its stone fireplace is the focal point of activity.

There are separate dorms for girls and boys, and downstairs there is a classroom with facilities for audio-visual aids and native oriented projects.

educational experience, and, says Harry, "when pupils and teachers live together for a few days, they see each other in a different light. There's more to it than just learning. The whole class becomes more closely knit."

Staff photo

doors. The 100-acre site includes a hardwood bush, a springfed stream and valleys and fields that form a perfect outdoor classroom.

The mill is located in the heart of historic Huronia, within easy distance of the Martyrs' Shrine, Sainte Marie, the Museum of the Upper Lakes, Penetanguishene's Military and Naval Establishments, the Simcoe County Museum Springwater Part, the Wye Marsh, ski areas at Moonstone and Mount St. Louis, and the sandy beaches of Georgian Bay.

Harry arranges excursions to these attractions using his school bus for transportation. A top-rated outing is a trip

by tractor-pulled wagon to neighbouring beef and dairy farms.

And there's the mill itself, a two storey structure on the river bank which is still operable. The use of water power to grind grain fascinates youngsters who go home with a whole new understanding of terms like "dam", "flume" and "mill pond".

Harry and Phyllis Hunt are fugitives from the city. He is a former principal of an elementary school in York County. Phyllis is a teacher with 12 years experience.

"We saw a need for this kind of operation," says Harry, "and we had both had it with city living. We like the independence of

our life here, and although it's demanding and ties us down, we are our own bosses.

The property was known for years as Withall's Mill. The first mill was built in 1907 but was washed away in spring flooding five years later. In 1913, the present mill and dam were built, and for more than 50 years, Bill Withall of Wyevale operated the mill and farmed on the property. He sold the site to the Hunts in 1972.

As well as building the lodge, the Hunts have worked hard to maintain the beautiful natural surroundings in the valley setting. At the moment Harry, who was born and raised in a rural community, is involved with the Ministry of Natural Resources in a planting program. Ten-Thousand trees are being rooted on the river bank, to prevent erosion.

The mill is a family operation. Robert is 15, and a student at Penetanguishene Secondary School. David is in grade 7 at Midland's Bayview School. Susie is 6, and attends kindergarten in Wyevale.

David looks after the tuck shop in the lodge, and all the Hunt children take part in the chores. There's lots of grass to mow, and the Hunts have a large garden as well as six registered Hereford heifers and a pony.

Phyllis Hunt describes herself as chief cook and bottle washer. "I come from a big family," she says, "and there were always a lot of people around the place, so it's no big deal arranging the meals for the kids who stay with us."

The Hunts home adjoins the main lodge, and although they eat the same meals as their young guests, they try

It's Hunt's Hilarious Happenings for Ontario kids at the Wyevale centre by the old mill stream

hard to keep their family life separate and private. Harry's office is the buffer zone between family life and the business end of the operation. "Harry can play school principal in here when he has the time," grins Phyllis.

With the help of Madge Holt, Phyllis manages all the cooking, baking and cleaning in the lodge. She bases her weekly menus on Canada's Food Rules, and has a stock answer for picky eaters who whine "I don't like that!"

"Sorry," she says with a smile. "There are no substitutions."

She finds that appetites improve after a day in the fresh air. "The food is really important to the kids," she says. "It's the first thing they report if they phone home."

Roast beef, turkey and stew are menu basics, but the big favourite with youngsters is spaghetti, with hamburgers running a close second. There is always a cole slaw or lettuce salad, and the kids consume vats of milk and juice.

"I find that the kids from privileged homes go for the juice," says Phyllis. "The inner city kids who come up here just can't get enough milk."

Porridge for breakfast is a new experience for most of the youngsters who come to the mill.

"The first day, they aren't too keen," says Phyllis, "but the next morning, they empty the pot!"

When the youngsters are going out for an excursion, Phyllis and Madge pack box lunches for them. Phyllis Hunt has a warm sense of humour, and between bouts with the vacuum cleaner and the oven that bakes 20 pies at a time, she collects

anecdotes which she jots in a notebook loosely called "Hunt's Hilarious Happenings."

"I really think I could write a book some day," she says. "There was the time we caught one of the girls hanging parts of her wardrobe out her window on a fishing line, to the boys' windows down below; the time the grade eight teacher announced at breakfast that all girls who weren't wearing bras should go and put them on immediately; the time we found our big goofy Newfoundland dog sleeping in a bunk with one of our guests; the little boy who visited the dairy farm and announced that the reason cows have such big mouths is because that's where the calves come out; the inner city Italian boy who made his bed by carefully spreading one sheet under the mattress and the other on top...the list goes on and on."

The Metro Separate School Board books heavily with the Hunts. Other groups have come from Guelph, Peterborough, Windsor, Sarnia and Niagara Falls. In April, a group from Brockville was snowed in, and enjoyed their ex-

tended stay. The kids themselves contribute to the smooth running of the mill. "They all pitch in," says Harry. "They look after their own rooms and take turns clearing tables and taking dishes to the dishwasher."

Vandalism has been almost nil. There are no telephone numbers scratched on the walls of the washrooms, and there is no litter on the property. This, says Harry, is a tribute to the teachers who come with the school groups. "We don't provide staff for outdoor education work, but we find that the teachers are keen and knowledgeable, and that everyone pulls together as a group."

This is, in Harry's eyes, the most important facet of the mill experience. "When pupils and teachers live together for a few days, they see each other in a different light. There's more to it than just learning. The whole class becomes more closely knit."

Hunt's outdoor education centre is totally a private enterprise undertaking unsupported by government grants, and it has been enough of

a success that Phyllis and Harry were able to enjoy a two week holiday in Jamaica last January.

Hunt's Hilarious Happenings are scheduled right into the summer. And when school's finished, there will be two week-long camps for July with field

trips, swimming, canoeing, cookouts and hay rides.

In August, Phyllis will put the spaghetti pot away for a month, and she and the family will relax and enjoy 100 acres of paradise, down by the old mill stream.

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 69 Gem

surface
 71 Convened
 72 Freshwater worm
 76 Greenness
 78 Diving bird
 79 Mass
 81 Real
 83 Vine fruit
 84 Honorably
 86 Military absence
 88 Right-hand page
 89 Eye
 90 Seine
 91 Network
 92 Jokes
 94 Miscalculate
 96 Musical note
 97 Gallium symbol
 98 Throw
 101 March King
 103 Angry
 105 Burdensome
 109 Alcoholic beverage
 110 Possesses
 111 Egyptian landmark
 113 Eye
 114 Far down
 116 Silly mistake
 118 Heavy sweet
 119 Biblical woman
 120 Intensely
 123 Young goat
 124 Gravy spoon
 126 Frankness
 129 Twelve
 131 Male
 132 Biblical happenings
 137 Tonic
 138 Huge monster
 139 Absorbed
 142 Idolize
 143 Sluggish
 144 Presidential name
 145 Continent: abbr.
 147 Cordage fiber
 148 French

article
 150 He was. Latin
 151 Female chicken
 152 Squat
 153 Muck's companion
 155 Abundance
 158 Paid notices
 159 Oral pause
 160 Andes country
 161 Flowering shrub
 162 New Zealand
 163 God of love
 165 Daybreak
 166 Public comb. form
 168 Idle gossip
 170 Hoodwinked
 171 Angry
 172 Ten years
 173 Biblical animal
 174 Annoy
 175 European country

vehicle
 19 Difficult questions
 21 Legendary British King
 23 Supposition
 31 Cooing bird
 33 Declared
 36 Festival
 38 Japanese coin
 41 Conjunction
 43 Pluto's domain
 44 Hindu god
 46 Small bird
 48 Spread hay
 49 Grandiose
 51 Football official
 52 Fairy fort
 54 Harquebus support
 57 Greek letter
 58 Liturgical hats
 60 Peace goddess
 61 Man's name
 63 Label
 64 Wedge in
 65 Twilight
 66 Shopper-stopper
 67 Jogging
 69 Sudan
 70 Haul
 73 Shamash's wife
 74 Sluggishness
 75 Scottish river
 77 At home
 78 Detest
 80 Counterfeit
 82 Japanese drama
 85 Baking chamber
 87 Scottish article
 91 Manhandler
 93 Yawned
 94 Epochal
 95 Branch
 96 Dairy sound
 97 Travel U-boat
 100 Fire indicator

101 Cast off
 102 Canoe paddle
 103 Miled's son
 104 Anglo-Saxon
 106 Overhead train
 107 Blush
 108 Soak
 112 Connecticut school
 115 Pie slice
 117 Baseball team
 118 Specimen
 121 Greek goddess
 122 Neither
 124 Mauna
 125 Gabor
 126 Converted a check
 127 Changed
 128 Grammar part
 130 Tops
 131 Fur hunter
 133 Dutch commune
 134 Feminine name
 135 Auto down payment
 136 Attacks
 137 2 words
 138 Slow
 140 Indiana college
 156 abbr
 141 Doctrines
 144 Ventilator
 146 Regions
 149 Soda-sipper
 152 Brittle
 153 Isinglass
 154 Devour
 156 Mery outing
 157 Join
 160 Moccasin
 164 Bul
 167 Latin place
 169 Polynesian
 171 Helm position



A tranquil scene
 Animals are a definite part of the scene at the Wyevale outdoor education centre run by Harry and Phyllis Hunt, a pair of refugees from city living. Along with a chance to live and play with classmates and teachers, the young students who come to the centre have a chance to learn something of nature — too often buried under concrete in the city jungles to the south.
 Staff photo

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