

Heritage Railway supporters will boogie to Big Band

With its first full season of operation recently completed, the York-Durham Heritage Railway is holding a benefit dance Nov. 15 at the Uxbridge Arena and Community Centre. Thanks to the generosity of the Don Bowes Big Band, which has

donated its services free of charge, ticket prices are just \$20 each. Stouffville resident Jack MacQuarrie has been with the band since its inception about 14 years ago, and he and Bowes are the only original members

remaining, although some who joined soon after are still involved. "Don started collecting musical arrangements about 20 years ago, initially when he was playing with other groups, and at some stage he realized he had

built up quite a collection and began to consider forming a group of his own," MacQuarrie noted. When the North York elementary school Bowes' children attended was closed down and converted into a community cen-

tre in the early 1980s, the band was born. "We started rehearsals at the Edithvale Community Centre and the band has been going ever since. One of our first engagements was to play at the centre's grand opening." The band was featured at a recent fundraiser for the art gallery and Stephen Leacock Museum in Orillia and last year recorded its first CD in a professional studio.

Selections from the album have been played on radio shows on CBC and CJRT.

Among the 18 members who currently make up the Don Bowes Big Band are a number of teachers, some of whom teach music, and several retired professional musicians.

"One of our people toured the U.S. for a few years with a top band," observed MacQuarrie, who also plays in the University of Toronto Alumni Band, which performed at the railway opening in 1996.

Accomplished vocalist Jan Laurie will be part of the lineup at the benefit dance, which begins at 8 p.m., and spot prizes and door prizes will be featured during the evening.

Tickets are available from Blue Heron Books and Guardian Drugs in Uxbridge and Freckles and Lindy's Floral Boutique in Stouffville.

All proceeds will be used for the maintenance of the York-Durham Heritage Railway, which is a non-profit organization operating a tourist train between Stouffville and Uxbridge.

- KATE GILDERDALE

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