

The Birthplace of Toronto

The Newsletter of Historic Fort York ~ Vol. 1, No. 2 ~ Autumn 2003



The Fort York Regency Dancers pose in front of Battlefield House in Stoney Creek, where they entertained for the crowd as part of the re-enactment of the anniversary of the Battle of Stoney Creek in early June.

Another issue of *Birthplace*!

Welcome to the second issue of The Birthplace of Toronto, the newsletter of Historic Fort York.

June saw the school year come to an end with the usual tradition of the end-of-year class visits. Despite all the difficulties which have beset Toronto over the past several months, by the end of June school groups numbers had returned to near normal. We are looking forward to starting the process all over again now that it is September. Encourage your local school to book a visit to the fort.

July and August were busy months with lots of colour provided by this year's version of the Fort York Guard. Fort Staff provided hourly tours in soldiers and officers lifestyle (Barracks Tour), Artillery and Cannon firing and a Fortifications tours which let visitors in on the secrets of fort defences. Visitors were entertained by hourly demonstrations of musket firing, marching, cannon firing, and fife & drum music. For the third year in a row, the Squad won 1st place in the annual competition held at Fort George in August. Well done squad! Celebratory chocolate cake was again enjoyed – it has become a tradition.

As part of Toronto's Caribana celebration, for the first time the steel orchestra competition, *Pan Alive*, was held at Fort

York the Friday of the Simcoe Day (August long) weekend. Some 800 musicians participated and crowds numbered well above expectations. Within days, the Fort was again closed to "regular business" for the annual *Festival of Beer*. Another successful year saw many thousands enjoying the open space, the great weather, live music and some amazing and interesting beverages! Check out their website thebeerstore.ca.

Construction began on the new western entrance way and has continued off and on between events. Due to the final stages of this project, the fort will be closed to visitors between Sunday September 14th and Monday September 22nd inclusively. The final touches are expected to be made in October. Drop by and have a look!

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Garrison News ~ A Staff Report by Karen Crisp

Our new gift shop attendant, **Valerie Wakil**, has settled in and has brought many new ideas with her. The inside of the canteen has undergone some changes and looks FABULOUS! We are also having our first *Inventory Reduction Sale* with special discounts on selected books, souvenirs and gift packages.

Once again, we say goodbye at the end of August to some of our staff. One of our part-time interpreters, **Trina Hogg**, is leaving to go to Graduate school in Halifax, Nova Scotia. We all wish Trina the best of luck in her coming adventures, and hope that she will keep in touch. **Brian Rawding**, one of our most fascinating part-time interpreters, has started a new job on August 25th – teaching Grade 6. We are sure his students will love him as much as we did, and we wish him the best of luck in his new career. **Jennifer Carlile**, another part-time interpreter, moves to Ottawa on September 2nd to start her new job working as a Foreign Service Officer - a fantastic new job that will lead her to many interesting places. We wish her all the best. We are going to miss you all very much, you have all contributed so much to the fort.

This is also the end of the Summer Guard, until next year. We hope they all have a great year. What are the Summer Guard and Fife and Drum Corps doing until next summer??? **Keiko Twist**, is going into her 2nd year at the University of Toronto; **Ewan Wardle** is starting his 1st year at the University of Toronto; **Boon-hau Teh**, is going into his 2nd year at the University of Toronto; **Edward Bell**, is going into his 2nd year at the University of Toronto; **Jeff Colden**, is starting his 1st year at Queens; **Brendon Gray**, is going into his 2nd year at Dalhousie; **Andrew Ng**, is leaving for his 1st year of University in New York City, he will be attending Cornell for a Political Science Program; **Niroshan Arumugan** is starting his 1st year at McMaster; **Alex Myers** is starting his 1st at Trent; **Michael Ramsey** is starting his 1st year at York Universtiy; **Ian Biggar**, **Jessica Hanna**, **Khary Mathuriri**, and **Matthew Wickson** are finishing their last year of High School; and last but not least, **Ned Gallagher** is going into Gr. 10. The Fife and Drum Corps will continue to meet and practise during the winter. We would also like to say goodbye to our Drum Major, **Andrea Putnam** who is moving to Kingston to a new teaching position. We all wish Andrea lots of luck and happiness in her new job!

On a welcome note, the staff would like to welcome **Franz Martin**, a new member of the Fort York Property Management crew. We hope that he will enjoy working here at the fort.

The fort would also like to congratulate Ken and Tonya Purvis on their new puppy, a Bernese Mountain Dog that will grow to be *about 125lbs.* They have named him Bronty.

Karen Crisp is a part-time museum store attendant.

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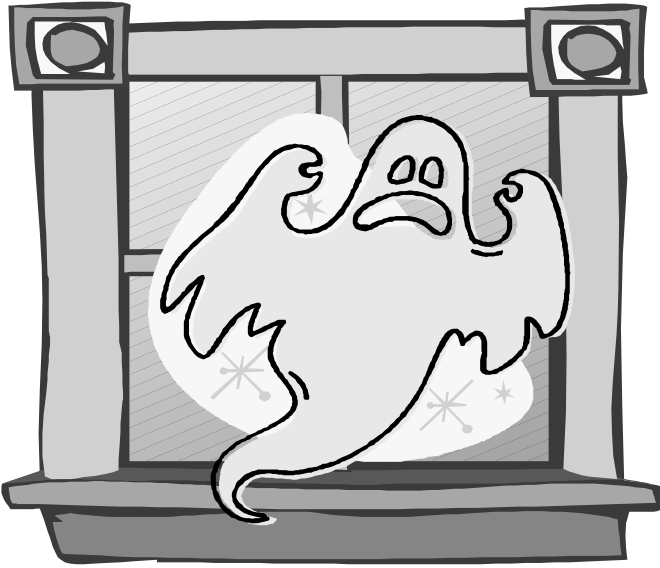


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The Ghosts of the Garrison

Storytelling at Fort York

By David Juliusson



*I*t is dark outside and the wind is blowing. Inside the building the walls glow by candlelight. A Grade 7 group is chattering nervously while sipping their hot chocolate, unsure of what is about to happen. Suddenly the room quiets down and a costumed interpreter begins to speak. "This is the story of Mr. Fox's Courtship." So another evening of storytelling at Fort York's *Ghosts of the Garrison* begins.

When people think of storytelling at Fort York, they might know it as a component of the "living history" Overnight program. While that is where we do the majority of our storytelling, there are five other distinct events in which storytelling plays an important part. In February, the fort is one of many venues for the *Toronto Festival of Storytelling*. Last year, George Blake created a story around John Graves Simcoe and his support of the 1793 Act banning the importation of slaves into Upper Canada - 41 years before slavery was outlawed in the British Empire.

During the *March Break Time Machine*, visitors are led into a darkened Officers' Mess, lit only by a tin lantern, where they hear strange tales from the Fort's rich lore of characters and events. In June, the *Buffalo Jump Peace March* meets at Fort York and tales are told by various First Nations Elders. Traditional storytelling is also part of the *Tecumseh Festival*, October 4th and 5th this year.

Also in October, Fort York will hold its 4th annual *Ghosts of the Garrison* evenings. Participants will gather in the Blue Barracks and Fort York staff will lead small groups around the fort. There are some people who claim to have seen ghosts and the staff will tell of these stories. They will also tell two stories in which apparitions are seen elsewhere in Toronto said to be soldiers from the Garrison.

As participants are led into the Officers' Mess, the Officers' Kitchen and the Soldiers' Barracks, a strange phenomenon happens. They will encounter ghosts in candlelit rooms who tell their unique stories. One speaks of robbing the dead after a battle, another tells the story of the mouthless child. These stories are actually taken from early 19th century story books and folk tales. Sometimes they are highly amusing and, in at least one case, downright scary. At all times they are interesting.

This year the *Ghosts of the Garrison* will be seen on Thursday, October 23rd, Friday, October 24th and Thursday, October 30th. The cost is \$10 for Adults, Seniors and Youth, \$5 for Children 12 years and under. Book early. Each evening is restricted to 100 participants and sells out quickly. Groups are welcome. Call the office Monday through Friday at 416-392-6907 to register.

Meet in the Blue Barracks for Hot Chocolate between 7:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. The program runs from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

David Juliusson is a full-time program officer and has been with the fort since 1989.

Volunteers are needed for this event to assist with visitor reception and refreshments. High School Students welcome!

If you are interested, please call Richard Haynes at 416-392-6907 xt. 223

A Dance from the Officers' Mess

La Jupon Rouge

Dance from Thomas Wilson's *A Companion to the Ballroom*, (3rd edition)
published in London, England, probably in 1816.

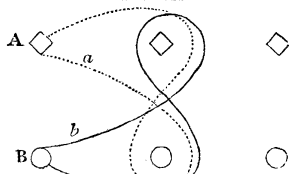
Original text: "Whole figure at top lead down the middle up again & allemande"

This is a longways dance for a minimum of three couples, and "as many as will" thereafter. These particular "figures" or actions are from the simplest of several different dances given for this tune.

ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCING. 25

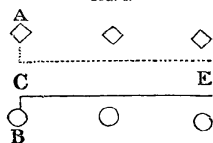
Whole Figure round the second couple, or from the top.

The whole of the Figure as performed by the Lady and Gentleman.



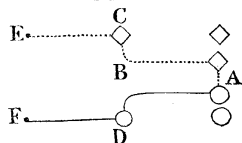
The Lady A and Gentleman B move at the same time, the Lady in the line a, and Gentleman in the direction b, the Lady passes round the second Gentleman, and the Gentleman round the second Lady, back to their places at A B, which finishes the Figure, with seven Chasses one Jetté and Assemblé, eight bars.

Lead down the middle.
FIG. I.



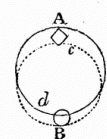
The Lady and Gentleman A B join hands at C, and lead* down the middle to E,† and return as shown in Fig. 2.

Lead down the middle.
FIG. II.



The Lady and Gentleman at A lead up to D, taking the situations of the Lady and Gentleman at C D, who move up to E F, which finishes the Figure.

12 THE COMPLETE SYSTEM OF
Allemande.



The Lady at A, and Gentleman at B, move round each other's situation back to back; the Lady in the direction c, and the Gentleman in the direction d, forming complete circles round each other, which bring them to their original situations and couples, completes the Figure, and is performed with three Chasses one Jetté and Assemblé—four bars.

Illustrations from Thomas Wilson's *Complete System of English Country Dancing*.

First Figure: Whole figure at top

1st Couple walks a "whole" figure, (a figure eight), around the 2nd couple – the 1st lady starts by crossing right shoulders with the 2nd gentleman (who does not move at all). **At the same time** the 1st gent starts by crossing left shoulders with the 2nd lady (who does not move at all either.) Both continue to trace the figure eight and return to their starting place.

Second Figure: Lead down the middle up again

1st Couple join hands (lady's right and gent's left) and walk down the set, let go hands and turn towards each other to face back up the set then taking hands again walk up the set into second position. The 2nd couple "progresses" into first position in order to create the gap into which the 1st couple end after leading down and up.

Third Figure: & allemande

Lastly, the 1st Couple faces each other and by crossing right shoulders "do - si - do" around each other, or as Thomas Wilson writes: "move round each other's situation back to back".

Continuing... 1st couple repeats these figures around the 3rd couple, and then a "new" 1st couple at the top of the set is in position to begin. If there are only three couples dancing, the new top couple begins. If there are more than three couple dancing, these two couples dance the figures simultaneously, then 1st, 3rd and 5th couples and so on.

Historic Background: *La Jupon Rouge* is french for red skirt or petticoat. Diarist Elizabeth Simcoe, wife of John Graves Simcoe, 1st Lt. Gov. of Upper Canada, wrote in Montreal "Monday June 4th [1792] - A splendid ball at the Chateau, but the heat was so great that I was very near fainting after having danced Money Musk and the Jupon rouge." Judging by the date, it must have been a King's Birthday Ball

Want to learn more about early 19th century social dance? Would you like to give it a try? Historic Fort York presents the 8th annual **Dance & Dance-ability**, an evening workshop of 19th century English Country Dance. Jane Austen fans and anyone interested in the social life of the officers' in garrison are encouraged to attend. **Friday September 26th at 7:30 p.m. Cost is \$10 per person.** Beginners are welcome and no partners are required. Live music and historic refreshments will be served. Call 416-392-6907 to register today!

If you are interested in the volunteer dance program but are not able to attend **Dance & Dance-ability** on the 26th, there will be a special **Volunteer Recruitment Night** on October 16th starting at 6:30 p.m. Come out and learn all about opportunities in the **historic cooking program, community bake oven, officers' garden and dance programmes.** Call 416-392-6907 for more information.

Three-peat for Fort York Guard

By Ken Purvis

The Fort York Guard has done it again! For the third year in a row the Fort York Guard, generously sponsored by The Friends of Fort York, has taken top honours at the annual Fort George field day and drill competition on the August 16/17 weekend. Under the direction of Sergeant Keiko Twist the nine member team marched, wheeled, and delivered "hot stuff" from the muzzles of their flintlock muskets edging out teams from Forts George and Erie.

The field day was a great success despite the weather and the great power outage of 2003. Unfortunately the Guard from Fort Malden (near Windsor) were unable to attend this year, narrowing the competition slightly, however Fort George was still able to field a total of four drill teams making Fort York the best of six.

The competition was tight with Fort York garnering 146.87 out of a possible 155 points (94.7%) - an excellent showing by them in their threepeat year. The 41st Grenadiers from Fort George came second with 144.66 (93.3%); the 41st Battalion (also from Fort George) came in 3rd. The lowest mark of the day was 82.5 % - still a very respectable finish.

Congratulations should also be passed on to Jeffery Colden (Fort York) and Jim Hill (Fort Erie) who tied in the speed-loading competition. There was some excellent camaraderie and sportsmanship and good-natured fun that all groups bring to the competition.

One of the objectives of the competition is to improve the quality of military demonstrations at the various War of 1812 museums throughout the Province. "I think the level of drill performance has really improved exponentially since the first field day 4 years ago," said Gavin Watt, Education Officer at Fort George and one of the key event organizers. "I think all the sites benefit from the co-operation and sportsmanship these groups bring together and the mutual enhancement of all the sites."

This year's victory for Fort York was made more difficult by the fact that there were so few returnees this year. Aside from Sgt. Twist, only two members of the nine-person team were at Fort York last summer. The remaining seven had never held a musket in their hands before June 23rd.

Congratulations Fort York Guard and let's do it again next year!

Ken Purvis is Senior Program Officer.

First Firing

By Bridget Wranich



The first firing of the newly restored brick bake oven.

In early August Fort York staff had an opportunity to fire the newly restored brick bake oven. We are happy to report that all went well. After the oven was fired for a couple of hours we noticed some cracking on the outside of the oven and some steam escaping but the bricks heated beautifully. After raking the coals and ash out and testing the temperature by holding our arms in the oven and counting, we baked a Queen cake and a Prussian cake (both from John Farley, *The London Art of Cookery*, 1800.) Both cakes were a little scorched, but edible. This was not a bad first try. Visitors and staff certainly enjoyed the results. Both staff and volunteers have since continued to use the oven with even greater success including the baking of bread and puddings. Please look for upcoming events and cooking classes which will include the brick bake oven in the Officers' Mess dinner kitchen.

Bridget Wranich is a full-time program officer and has been with the fort since 1989.

UPCOMING EVENTS

September, October, November, December

Fri. Sept. 26 – 7:30 p.m.

Dance & Dance-ability

English Country Dance Workshop.

\$10. Live Music, Beginners Welcome.

Registration Required. Call 416-392-6907.

Thurs. Oct. 16 – 6:30 p.m.

Fort York Volunteer Recruitment Night

Learn all about the volunteer opportunities at the fort. What does it take to be a historic cook? Help plan the new Officers' Garden. Join the dance programme and entertain the community. All ages are welcome to participate, though children must be at least 12 years of age. Call 416-392-6907.

Thurs. Oct. 23, Fri. Oct. 24, Thurs. Oct 30

Ghosts of the Garrison

Lantern tours and eerie tales from the past!

Registration Required.

Admission: \$10; Children 12 and under \$5

Call 416-392-6907

Sat. Oct. 4 – Sun. Oct. 5 – 10 am to 4 pm

Tecumseh Weekend: *A Celebration of Native Arts and Culture.*

Thrill to Native drummers, dancers, storytellers and singers. Enjoy a traditional Pow Wow and feast. View recent artwork and films by the Tecumseh Collective and invited guests. Free Admission.

Tues. Nov. 11 – 10:45 a.m.

Remembrance Day – Strachan Ave. Cemetery

Annual Remembrance Day service co-sponsored by the IODE. Service begins shortly before 11:00 a.m. Free admission to Fort York following service until 12 noon.

Closed Over the Holidays

Fort York will be closed to “regular business” from Saturday December 20th through and including Monday January 1st, 2004.

2004

Sat. Jan. 17, 2004

Queen Charlotte's Birthday Ball

Dance workshops, lectures, gin tasting, supper and elegant evening ball. This year's guest lecturer is Jessica Warner, author of *Craze. Gin and Debauchery in an Age of Reason*. Beginners Welcome. \$75 for the day, \$20 for optional LCBO gin tasting. Registration Required. Call 416-392-6907.

Historic Fort York
Volunteer Recruitment Night
Thursday, October 16th, 2003

at 6:30 p.m.

~ Cook ~ Bake ~ Dance ~ Garden ~