

## Ode To C.G.I.T. Camp Brereton, 1937-2007

Way back in the '30s this camp was begun  
By women and men, who, when they were done,  
Had built here a lodge, and a cabin or two,  
For campers and leaders like me and like you.  
To get here the campers then traveled by train,  
They walked from the tracks in the sun and the rain.  
In the 40's they bused it right up to the door –  
What an improvement; could they want more?

In the 40's and 50's the lodge was quite small,  
Can you believe, there was no dining hall!  
We ate in the lounge, and then should it rain,  
We'd collapse all the tables, then set them again!

The water, we hauled it all up from the lake,  
No showers or flushes, and make no mistake  
We extinguished our lanterns when time for "lights out",  
And we needed our flashlights to wander about!

In the mornings we hurried to be first in line  
At the biffy – no privacy – three at a time!  
A wall at the end gave the leaders their side,  
"Twas just a two-holer- they sat with pride!

Below the rock ledge you can now reach with stairs  
The cabins were arranged mostly in pairs,  
Please take the time to check out old Cabin 7,  
It's just storage now – we thought it was heaven!

Six bunks to each cabin arranged 'round the wall,  
Each cabin with one leader, her whistle and all,  
Our leaders were given affectionate names,  
And mostly they all went along with the game.

The ledge where your cabins now proudly reside  
Was called Council Rock, where our Pres. would preside  
Over meetings; and then, Bible Study was shared,  
And much more, as for campers and leaders we cared.

If we wanted to paddle our own canoe  
We had to swim to the island and back again too,  
Off to the Ridge we would hike as we sang,  
And our voices would echo, and all the woods rang!

International Camp Council was here in '85,  
With 72 of us on site, it really came alive!  
From Nigeria and Trinidad, and yes, Bermuda too –  
Our “pathways” crossed at Brereton, and friendships came and grew.

On our 50<sup>th</sup> we had a ball with campers re-uniting,  
The singing, laughter, fun and all was really quite exciting!  
And Cabin 1 has been improved, it's own bathroom and ramp  
Have helped to make our Brereton a fully accessible camp!

New roofs, and walls, and holding tank, a pump, canoes – a “Tree”  
Have all been added to this place – most, of necessity!  
But these aren't the things that matter most, there's a Magic that we see  
As girls and leaders share and grow into the persons God wants them to be.

For 65 years at Brereton we all can give a cheer  
In joy and praise and gratitude, that we still gather here.  
Our Tree of Life, and the names upon it, is a symbol of love for this place,  
God has blessed us richly 'thru the years – we say “Thank You” for this gift of grace.

So take your neighbour by the hand before the evening's end,  
We want to bow and say a prayer to our never failing Friend...

Thank you for the Past... Thank you for the Now. Be with us as we grow to become the  
persons you would have us be.

Amen.

Addie Thoroski, Pat Finlayson July 1997, June 2002