

The Way We Were

Westdale's Own Ring

ARNOLD BEALE

How many people have noticed the brass ring in the ground on Paisley Avenue North?

Many years ago, I asked my mother about the brass ring on my street. I



The very young Arnold Beale.

asked, "Who would leave a piece of brass partly buried in the grass? I nearly tripped over it beside the sidewalk!"

My mother assured me that the brass ring I asked her about played an important part in my early life. Shortly after I was born and then taken home, my uncle John McLeod, who lived in the east end of Hamilton, decided he would like to see the new arrival. So he mounted his horse and rode across town to see the newborn. When he arrived, he dismounted and tied his horse to the brass ring before walking down the street to see me. I'm told he was delighted with his new little nephew, Arnold.

Before Westdale was developed as an organized community in the early and mid-1920s, the area was farmland owned by Hattie Stinson. Most farms had trails that crossed them, and where they intersected with other trails, rid-

ers would dismount to chat and exchange information. In what is now Westdale, they used the brass ring on Paisley Avenue North to tether their horses. The trail on Hattie's farm led out and around the swamp to Dundas. Later, Hattie sold her land, piece by piece. Part of her farm, in the Paisley area, became a brickyard.

I suspect the brass ring in our neighbourhood is 100 years old and possibly even older. It could go back to the 1840s, when the farms in this area



Uncle John with Arnold and his sister, Peggy.

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The brass ring on Paisley Avenue North. were first laid out.

Unlike Frodo's ring, it may not hold the key to human survival, but it is Westdale's own ring. It serves as a connection to our historical past, and this enriches us.

Arnold Beale has been an AWWCA member and block representative for Paisley Avenue North since the first meeting of the AWWCA in September 1998.