

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse

1852-1959
restored 1982

Fall Issue 2008



This newsletter

is published by *The Friends of the Schoolhouse* every Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer to inform members and the teachers of the Peel District School Board of activities and events organized by The Friends.

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Facts and Figures:

Student attendance at the schoolhouse for September: 130

Co-editor introduction

Katharine has been a Friend of the Schoolhouse for several years. She enjoys gardening, cooking and spending time with her family. Her mother, Joan Moon, has been a member of the Executive Committee for the Schoolhouse for many years. Katharine has participated in many Schoolhouse events and looks forward to the opportunity provided as co-editor of the OBS Newsletter.

Need more information?

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse
phone 905-890-1010 ext.2911
www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org

Open Sundays

Daryl Cook

On the second Sunday afternoon of every month the schoolhouse is open for visitors and each month there is something different to see and do. In September, a group of enthusiastic parents and children walked to the vegetable garden and harvested carrots, tomatoes and turnips. Some of the children washed their carrots and ate them while they played the marble game. Everyone enjoyed tea and cookies.



October's Open Sunday featured the making of lavender sachets and teasel dolls. Both children and adults successfully crafted these items and took them home with them. The teasel dolls were the trickiest – and also the prickliest! It was a beautiful warm day so some of the children and adults tried out the stilts, graces and the swings. Apple juice, tea and cookies helped keep up the energy.

In November we will be remembering the students from the Old Britannia Schoolhouse, S.S. # 12, who lost their lives in the first and second World Wars. We invite you to join us. There will be a display of items related to the war years and a chance through the exchange of personal family stories to remember those who died. Once again, light refreshments will be available.



At December's Open Sunday we will highlight how Christmas would have been celebrated in Victorian times. The classroom will be decked out with a Christmas tree, streamers and boughs. You will be able to make an old-fashioned ornament for your own tree and paint pinecones gathered from the schoolyard garden.

Plan to join us on the second Sunday of the month from 1 to 4 pm.

From the Chair

Dennis Taylor

We are two months into the new school year and as executive committee, we have been part of several events already. I will leave it up to others to report in detail what has taken place at those events and who was involved. We try to be a part of such events to share information and to increase awareness of the Old Britannia Schoolhouse. I want to share some of what took place at two of those events, ones that I worked at. More importantly I want to thank all of those who planned and ran our contribution to those two and other events. Many hours go into getting things ready and planning to see that things run smoothly. Usually my role in such events is helping out at part of the booth we are at, but a number of our members put in the whole day as well as set up and take down the displays.

On Saturday, September 13, the Friends were present to help Streetsville celebrate their one hundred and fiftieth year. It was a busy day with a steady stream of visitors and that is really the way we like it. In addition to displays and sale items we also offered games and other activities to try. I wonder how many have tried to walk with stilts. Ben and Marjorie Madill were there to help some of the children make their own skipping ropes with Ben's rope making machine. It is quite the sight to see binder twine turned into six strand rope. There were many other displays at Streetsville, but it is not always possible to get away to see them. Many of the ladies in our group are also quilters and the Mississauga Quilters had a display of 150 quilts from over the years. It was one of the must see attractions at Streetsville 150.

On Saturday September 27 the Friends also took part at Meadowvale's Doors Open. Once again there were many attractions to see, but we were kept busy once again by a steady turnout of visitors. Milking the Cow seemed to be one of our more popular displays as were the giant bubble making and once again the stilts. Meadowvale is truly one of the treasures in Peel with a great variety of interesting places to see. The men and women in costume really added to the day.

By the time you receive the newsletter we will be past Halloween and heading towards Christmas. We have two events that we will be hosting. The first is our annual sale in the atrium at the H.J.A. Brown Education Centre on November 13 and 14 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm each day. We will have an Open House and Sales at the Schoolhouse on November 30 from 1:00 to 3:00 pm. By that time the Schoolhouse will be decorated as it might have been in past times. Please come and join us and perhaps find an old time or unique Christmas present for someone special.

New "Old" Lights

Daryl Cook

When the schoolroom was restored, lights were installed which were similar to ones which might have been in the original classroom when electricity was first available. Last year the Friends found a source of authentic reproduction school lights. Thanks to assistance from the Peel board staff, these fixtures are now hanging in the schoolroom and add to the historic accuracy of the restoration.



Doors Open Meadowvale

Joan Reid

Friends of the Schoolhouse participated in Doors Open Meadowvale on Saturday



Two daintily clad ladies play a refined game of crokinole at Doors Open Meadowvale.

September 27, 2008. We were fortunate to be housed in the lovely 1871 frame schoolhouse which is now the Community Hall. S.S. No. 12, Toronto Township (Britannia Public School) has a special tie to Meadowvale. When Britannia closed in 1959 five of her pupils transferred to Meadowvale Public School .

Eva Ardiel set out a superb display of toys and other items for sale including several new items such as finger puppets and teaseal beasties made by Karen Simmons. Many thanks to George Christian

for helping to transport and set up various items. George was also responsible for organizing our splendid crew of volunteers. They were: Sandra Emerson, Lis Braun, Cathy Harper, Earl Bonner, Ruth Taylor and Dennis Taylor.

Karen Simmons and two student volunteers, Bronwyn and Holly, set up the outdoor game area and manned it during the overcast morning. Fortunately it cleared in the afternoon and bubble blowing, cow milking, walking on stilts and playing skittles proceeded with an enthusiastic group of visitors. The new picture board of two rural pupils proved to be very popular with photographers both young and old.



A young gentleman contemplates a game of skittles while his companion plays "pecking chickens".

Indoors the skittle board received a constant workout as did the two marble games. The surprise hit of the day was the crokinole board which was especially popular with our costumed visitors from *Fashion History Productions*. Part of our display included reproductions of the three murals painted by Fred Haines

Richard McKenna who attended S.S. #12 (Britannia School) in the 1950's would like to contact some of his former classmates. Please contact Friends of the Schoolhouse for his postal address and email address. He is now living in California.

which used to hang in the 1871 Meadowvale schoolhouse. These were supplied by Sandra Emerson. As usual, writing one's name on a slate on one of our authentic school desks was a popular pastime.

The Madill Fence

Daryl Cook

For several years Ben Madill has wanted to have a fence installed along the east side of the schoolyard in front of the school and along the north side between the schoolyard and the Peel District School Board office property. Much discussion has taken place about the style of fence and exactly where it should go. Ditches, sewers, power, gas and water lines all had to be considered.

After much delay, Schoolmaster Patterson acquired a number of split cedar rails and experimented with building a split rail "snake" fence. Since no post hole digging was required, he was able to involve the students in the fence construction, a good learning experience for them. After seeing how well the short length of split rail fence complimented the Victorian garden it was decided to use this style of fence to define the east and north sides of the schoolyard.

The "Madill Fence" is now complete. In addition to being an attractive and authentic addition to the property, the fence will also provide a learning opportunity for students who will be able to take apart and rebuild a portion of the fence. This will be one more chance to experience the way of life of an earlier time. The Friends thank Ben for making this possible. The beautiful, sturdy fence will last for many years as a constant reminder of all that Ben and Marjorie Madill have done for the Old Britannia Schoolhouse.

Reminder: Schoolhouse members can choose to have their newsletter e-mailed. Simply send an e-mail to dlcook@rogers.com or kmooncraney@rogers.com

From the Schoolmaster

Dennis Patterson

It's fall, the leaves are
and the picnic season has fin-

turning brilliant colours
ished here in Britan-

nia. The Garden has almost been put to rest, only the green peppers remain. In addition to traditional nineteenth century lessons we have been harvesting and pulling out plants for compost. The tomato harvest was extremely heavy and the window sills in the classroom are full of tomatoes from dark green to red ... some yellows too. The visiting students planted some garlic this past week, one of the few plants that will survive over winter in the garden.

Two years have flown by at the schoolhouse. This position has been a great fit for me allowing many unique opportunities in the fields of experiential education and history. I get to learn every day along with the visitors to the schoolhouse, which is the greatest part of this position. The successful operation of the schoolhouse is a team effort; the programs offered would not be of the high quality students enjoy, without the support of The Friends of the Schoolhouse and Peel District School Board.

A few things I have learned while schoolmaster: students like seeing historic punishments given to their friends, junior high students take great offence when their chalk is taken away, a split rail can easily be carried by two grade three's, spelling is not for everyone and finally great memories are made when students are pushed a little out of their comfort zone. What we are giving students is the memory of a great school day and that is an amazing experience to be a part of.

I look forward to learning more and watching the fall colours turn to snow from within the cozy confines of The Old Britannia Schoolhouse.

Luella Johnson—Teacher at Britannia Schoolhouse from 1939-1941

Luella Edith Johnson (nee Paisley)

Sept.9,1914-Aug.17,2008

Luella Edith Paisley taught at Britannia School from 1939 to 1941 earning \$800 per year, which included room and board at the School Farm House with the Ellis Family. Prior to that she had taught at Bloomington for five years where she earned \$500 per year. After her first year teaching at Britannia School she received a raise to \$900 per year, in 10 payments of \$90 per month.

The school children noticed an unusual little dark green two-seater car with a rumble seat which held 2 people parked in the circular driveway of the School. The car was owned by Luella. This must have been quite special for a woman in those times.

It was at Britannia School that Luella met her husband, Allen Johnson, while she was teaching his younger brothers and sister there. The Johnsons lived on a farm at the corner of Britannia Road and Hurontario Street. Earlier, Allen had also attended Britannia School. With his younger brother, John, they worked together as caretakers of the Britannia School earning a total of \$50 per year. Allen's father, Merrill Johnson was a school trustee for Britannia School from 1934 to 1941.

Luella Paisley married **Allen Edward Arthur Johnson** (Nov.24,1917-March 10,2006) on April 12, 1941, at her parent's home in Bloomington. After they were married, Luella stopped teaching and found a teacher friend to finish the year at Britannia.

Allen and Luella purchased a 150 acre farm, Lot.7, Con.1 (on Hwy. #10, north of Britannia). In 1946, they sold the farm at Britannia to Ben Madill and moved to a farm near Bethany, then later they moved to a farm in Guelph Twp.

On April 14th 2001 Allen and Luella celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary at a very special celebration with family at the Britannia School House. It was at the School that Allen had asked Luella for their first date in 1939.

Luella passed away on Aug. 17th just before her 94th birthday in London, ON. Allen and Luella had 5 children, David, Myrla Jane, Paisley, Elana and Peter.



Hilltoppers Seniors Group

Schoolmaster Patterson, Frances Kay and Eva Ardiel represented Friends of the Schoolhouse at the Hilltoppers luncheon meeting at City Centre Church on September 17. They were greeted by a very enthusiastic group and treated to a delicious pot luck lunch.

Frances set up the displays about the schoolhouse as well as a collection of old fashioned toys for the group's enjoyment; Eva told the group a few details about the history of the Old Britannia Schoolhouse and best of all, Schoolmaster Patterson demonstrated some of the lessons he does with the visiting students. The group thoroughly enjoyed his presentation and (for the most part) were obedient and diligent pupils.

We thank Marlys Kosmalski, the Hilltopper who arranged our visit, for her generous "thank-you" donation to the Friends.

Streetsville's 150th Celebration

Eva Ardiel

Friends of the Schoolhouse enjoyed being one of the many participants in Streetsville's giant 150th Birthday Celebration on Saturday, June 13th. We shared the large lawn area behind the Village hall with the three ponies that gave free rides to children. It was a great location, which allowed space for lots of activities. Fortunately we had two tents which protected our displays and sales tables from the early morning drizzle and the later afternoon rain. The skies cleared for the major portion of the day, however, which made for large crowds of people in attendance.

Joan Reid set up a wonderful series of displays about The Old Britannia Schoolhouse and its programme, about Streetsville Secondary School's 1970's Britannia Restoration Club and about former schools of significance to the Streetsville area. She prepared a display about Streetsville Public and Grammar Schools; about S.S. #10 Trafalgar Twp. (White School) which was a union school attended by many children from Streetsville's rural area and about S.S #16, Toronto Twp. (Base Line School) which



Ben making rope at the celebration



Boy milking cow at the celebration

was also attended by Streetsville area children. Joan must be applauded for her hours of research and work!

Frances Kay set up and manned the very busy area with toys for "trying out," skittles game, marbles games, crokinole, etc. She was thankful to have other volunteers to help out!

Karen Simmons, along with student volunteers Holly and Bronwyn set up and supervised the lawn activities, which included bubble making, stilt walking, milk can toss, potato sack slalom, cow milking and more. Again the extra help of volunteers was appreciated, especially with the very popular cow milking and stilt walking. *(continued on page 7)*

Thank You

Friends of the Schoolhouse is a non-profit organization of concerned citizens dedicated to assisting the Peel District School Board in the support of the Old Britannia Schoolhouse and its programs. Your donations are much appreciated.

*Streetsville's 150 Celebration
...continued*

George Christian not only organized the volunteer crew and helped with transportation and setting up, but he employed his school bell to help lure the crowds to our location. Throughout the busy day, George kept us all up beat, coffeed and plied with treats. Thanks. George!

Many of the children who visited our area went away happy with a skipping rope Ben Madill help them make. Thanks to Ben for making rope with the kids all afternoon.

Eva Ardiel set out an interesting assortment of sales items, mostly toys and games. Included were some new lavender and teal items made by Karen Simmons and Joan Reid.

Our participation in these events would not be possible without the assistance and commitment of many volunteers. The committee for this event, George, Frances, Joan, Karen and Eva, appreciate the help of Anne Brownjohn, Lis Braun, Marg Carson, Karin Henderson, Mary Light, Marjorie Madill, Ben Madill, Dawn Pollard, Mary Stephenson, Ruth Taylor and Dennis Taylor.

A special thank you goes to Martha Newbigging who helped make our new "picture taking" board of two rural pupils from the past. It proved to be as popular with adults as with children. (I call the pupils pictured on the board Mary and John ... but without Peter)

We thank Bernice Cunningham, Chair of the Streetsville 150th Celebration, and her committee for including Friends of the Schoolhouse in the celebration and for providing us with the tents, tables and chairs – also for arranging for us to have such a great location.

We appreciate the support of Sandy McGowan and the Peel Board of Education in transporting the old school desks which added so much to our presentation.



A lovely quilt on display at the 150th Celebration of Streetsville

WANTED
For use in a book on one-room schools in Peel County:

- Minute Books
- Cash Books
- Class Photos
- Report Cards
- Prize Ribbons
- Medals
- Certificates
- Shields
- Contracts
- Trustee Memorabilia
- Teacher Memorabilia
- Newspaper Clippings
- Registers

Your contribution will be acknowledged. Materials supplied will either be returned to you or donated to the Peel County Archives on your behalf.

*Schoolhouse Christmas
Decorating*
Jean Robinson

You are invited to join us and help decorate the schoolroom on Friday November 28 at 3:00pm. We always enjoy a chili dinner after all our hard work. If you would like to participate in this event please RSVP by November 23 to Jean at (905) 826-3475.

Ho! Ho! Ho! ... from the Sales Committee

Ho! Ho! Ho! ... from the Sales Committee – Eva Ardiel

As I write this it still feels like summer. I'm sure that by the time you read it, however, the days will have chilled considerably and the festive season will be looming closer.

The Friends' Sales Committee is busy again gearing up for our biggest selling events of the year. We're replenishing stock, adding interesting new items and making a number of things in preparation for our two day "Sale of Our Wares" in the atrium of H.J.A. Brown Education Centre on Thursday, November 13 and Friday, November 14 from 10:00am to 3:00pm and for our annual Open House in the "decked out for Christmas" schoolhouse on Sunday, November 30th from 1:00 to

More new items

*Friends of the Schoolhouse
will also be selling their wares
in the atrium of
H.J.A. Brown Education Centre
on Thursday, November 13
and Friday, November 14, 2008
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.*

4:00pm.

Karen Simmons has been making a variety of interesting creatures – house mouse babies, mouse finger puppets, teasel dolls and teasel beasties, as well as lavender sachets using the Schoolhouse's Victorian garden lavender and meadow garden teasels. Joan Reid has made charming lavender wands to sell, again using the schoolhouse lavender. Marg Storey will be rolling beeswax candles again and the rest of us are busy with various doing and making chores in anticipation of our best year yet.

We hope to see you at one or both of these events. We offer for sale a wonderful assortment of old fashioned toys, little gifts and stocking stuffers reminiscent of times gone by but very appropriate and enjoyable for the present.

At the November 30th Open House you will be able to enjoy Christmas music, mulled cider and assorted goodies while you peruse our wares. There is lots of parking in the H.J.A. Brown Education Centre lot entered off of Matheson Blvd. West.

*Annual
Christmas Open House
at
The Old Britannia Schoolhouse
5576 Hurontario St. (at Matheson Blvd.) Mississauga
Sunday, November 30, 2008
1:00 to 4:00 p.m.*

- An opportunity to purchase a variety of unusual gifts and stocking stuffers reminiscent of times gone by, ... beeswax candles ... Victorian tinzel and tin items ... children's slates ... schoolhouse souvenirs ... old-fashioned toys and games ... etc, ... and support the schoolhouse at the same time!*
- See the schoolhouse decorated with wergreens and a Victorian Christmas tree.*
- Enjoy Christmas music, mulled cider and goodies.*

*Parking in the H.J.A. Brown Ed. Ctr. lot...enter off Matheson Blvd. W.
Organized by the Friends of the Schoolhouse Sales Committee*