



### **Some Figures and Facts:**

Students attended the schoolhouse:  
September 189

**T**his newsletter is published by the *Friends of the Schoolhouse* every Fall, Winter and Spring, in an effort to inform its membership, and the teachers of the Peel District School Board of its activities and events.

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## **From the Chair: Frances Kay**

The Brampton Fall Fair, on September 17 - 19 was the beginning of our activities for the New Year. Doors Open was a success as visitors enjoyed the displays on the gardens, and another display with a focus on the school's architecture.

Nadina Mackey-Jackson, bassoonist, will perform a selection of classical pieces in an hour long free concert, on Sunday, November 13th, 4- 6 pm.

A new glossy brochure has been planned for The Schoolhouse, including pictures and text which would reflect visits to the school and highlight the gardens.

A new Website is being prepared highlighting our history with a link to the board, and other sites. Both endeavours are being prepared by Pentura Solutions. Thanks to Daryl and Jean, for all their hard work.

Please keep November 17th open at 10 am - 6 pm as The Friends will be selling Old Fashioned Toys, Christmas stocking stuffers and many more new items in The Atrium.

We hope to see you at our Christmas Open House at the Schoolhouse, for hot cider and cookies on December 4th from 1 - 4 pm.

## **The First Schools**

The first schools were small log buildings. There were no money grants then. Teachers did not require certificates. They taught the alphabet, spelling, reading, writing and the simpler forms of arithmetic. The settlers paid twelve and sixpence per quarter and boarded the teacher around the settlement, each one in proportion to the number of children attending school.

Written by Frederick Grafton in 1889 when he was a student at Brampton High School. Originally published in Montreal Weekly Witness. Reprinted in The Brampton Conservator, March 2, 1946.

## Greetings from the Schoolmistress: Melissa Jacobs

Things are settling into a nice little routine here at the schoolhouse. Almost every-day the schoolhouse is full of costumed students, voices, wide eyes, bulging baskets of dinner and excitement. The mornings are always filled with anticipation of what the day is going to hold. A class filled with well mannered attentive students or one whose students need a little bit of encouragement in performing their manners. Will they have fun, be scared, indifferent, excited, will they come away with a greater understanding of school long ago? Most days you find that the kids have a great time and yes have learned something along the way. There are also some days that you wonder if any of kids really got anything out of it or if teachers are still finding the programs useful. These doubts are quickly put out of your mind when you receive letters from the students, teachers and parents that come to visit. It is quickly realised what a valuable resource we have here and just how much it is appreciated.

I thought I would share some of the comments I have received over the years from the students.

"But I wonder how pioneers made clothes, they sold eggs for materials, then where did they get animals? They had no money, but how did they get animals?" - Master Jian-

"Well it was good. Sometimes I thought I won't like it but I do. I hope you had a good time just like me. It could have been bad but it was good." -Daniel-

"I enjoyed everything at the Britannia Schoolhouse but my back still hurts. If there were no chores and punishments, pioneer time would be perfect." -Rachel-

"I learned a lot, it is too much to tell you, it would take 100 pages to write it all down!" -Margaret-

"The desks are different. I like them better because it is easier to put stuff in." - Blair-

"The clock was cool but annoying with how many times it rang." -Dalecia-

"If I was in pioneer time I would rather be a schoolmaster than have any other job in pioneer time." -Tyler-

"If I become a grade 3 teacher I'll bring my class for a trip" -Harveen-"All these comments are always welcome and make help one feel good about the programs offered and the job being done. There are, however, always the comments that keep you humble and aware of your "importance at the schoolhouse".

"My favourite event is playing because you get to swing, climb up sticks, pull a rope, stand on wood and that's why I like that." -Joshua-

"My favourite things were punishments and recess!" -Cody-

## Doors Open September 17-18

It was a successful weekend as there were 50 visitors on Saturday and 35 or 36 visitors on Sunday. All were very interested in the schoolhouse.

The schoolhouse was spic and span and the windows sparkled thanks to the efforts of Schoolmistress Jacobs. She was there on Sunday in costume to talk to visitors. As well, many of the Friends of the Schoolhouse were there on one or both days to greet visitors.

Earl Bonner provided tractor rides on the farm property both days.

The gardens looked great thanks to the efforts of Joan Reid and her helpers. Joan also provided two beautiful displays-one on the gardens and one on the schoolhouse with a focus on its architecture. Books of interest were displayed and a map showing the early schools in Toronto township. For the children there were Union Jacks to colour and drinking cups to make.

Visitors were treated to cookies and apple cider.

Information supplied by Eva Ardiel



Scenes from Doors Open



## CHRISTMAS AT THE OLD BRITANNIA SCHOOLHOUSE

Christmas is always a special time for the Friends of The Schoolhouse and this year the festivities start early in November.

We are hosting a Candlelight Concert on Sunday, Nov.13, 2005 from 4:00 to 6:00 pm at The Schoolhouse. Nadina Mackey-Jackson, a bassoonist, will perform a selection of classical pieces in the candlelit Schoolhouse. At intermission, tea, coffee and home-made goodies will be served. This will be a popular event, and even though there is no charge for admission, please call Eva (905 459 9158) to reserve a space.

On Thursday, November 17, 2005, the Sales Committee of The Friends of The Schoolhouse will hold their annual Christmas Sale in the Atrium of the H.J.A. Brown Education Centre from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm. Last year we were asked if we could extend the hours of the Sale to give people other than those who work at the Board Office the opportunity to browse and purchase the unique gift items we have in stock... You will have a chance to attend the Sale "after working hours". We hope that you will take advantage of the longer hours.

In preparation for our annual Christmas Open House and Sale at The Schoolhouse, a group of "Friends" will meet on Friday, Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> to decorate The Schoolhouse for the season. This is always a fun time as we string wooden cranberries and real popcorn, prepared by Marjorie Madill, to festoon the fragrant smelling live fir tree and we hope that the Schoolhouse mice do not decide to devour the popcorn before the children get a chance to see the tree and its decorations.

Ken and Jean Robinson haul, usually from Springridge Farm in Milton, and set up in the front corner of The Schoolhouse the huge fir tree. Red and green paper chains are de rigueur and Ben Madill makes sure that we make them to his exacting standards. Cedar swags with cheery red ribbons decorate the blackboards and Daryl Cook designs and decorates a wreath for the door. After the Victorian decorations are hung on the tree to Eva's artistic eye, and everything smells of Christmas we are ready for supper. Joan Moon, Jean Robinson and Linda Kenny make sure that we are well fed.

We sit down to a chili supper with lots of home made Christmas goodies and toast the successes of the year 2005. Many Friends help with this event. If you would like to help call Jean (905 826 3475) before Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>. Bring along your energy and your appetite as we always do a winter cleaning and dusting before we decorate.

The culmination of the Christmas season for "Friends" at The Schoolhouse comes on Sunday, Dec.4<sup>th</sup> when we open the doors at 1:00pm and welcome lots of new friends and neighbours for the Christmas Sale at OBS. There are wooden toys, antique tin icicles, puzzles, optical toys, beeswax candles, some new tin ware toys and many, many small stocking stuffers and other items for sale. We always feed our guests at The Schoolhouse and Christmas is no exception. There will be hot mulled cider and Christmas cookies to



keep up the strength of our intrepid shoppers. It is a wonderful opportunity to visit The Schoolhouse and shop for unique items for gift giving or to keep as mementos. The smells of pungent fir, cedar and mulled cider mingle to remind us of Christmases past- or what we imagine Christmas to be.

For all these events you must enter the H.J.A. Brown parking lot off Matheson Blvd. W and park near The Schoolhouse. On Sundays, it is easier to get quite near The Schoolhouse, but on Thursday during the Sale at the Board Office it is necessary to park in the lot to the west of the building as most of the rest of the area is assigned parking.

Friends hope that you will visit The Schoolhouse during this special time and enjoy our wares and our hospitality.

Jean Robinson

## Walking the Farm

October 20<sup>th</sup> was a brisk but clear autumn day when twelve intrepid RTO members set out to walk the Wayne Hulley Walking Trail through the Britannia School Farm. For most of the hikers it was their first opportunity to see the varied features of this unique property. Highlights of the walk were the Sugar Bush, Dunton House, and Conover Barn. The leaves were most colourful and RTO members came away with a new appreciation for the splendid opportunities for nature study and bird watching which this site offers.



Some of the sights seen on the October 20th walk through the Britannia School Farm.





To the left: Part of the Christmas Celebrations 2004

To the Right: Check out the article: An Old Friend Lost, page 8



*For Your Calendar:*

*November 2005*

- 13 Open Sunday 1:00 to 4:00 pm, Bassoonist concert 4:00 to 6:00 pm*
- 17 Christmas Sales Atrium of Board Offices 10:00 am to 6:00 pm*

*December 2005*

- 02 Christmas Tree Trimming after classes*
- 04 Christmas Open House 1:00 to 4:00 pm*
- 11 The old Britannia Schoolhouse is open to the public from 1:00 to 4:00 pm*

*January 2006*

- 08 The Old Britannia Schoolhouse is open to the public from 1:00 to 4:00 pm*

*February 2006*

- 10-12 Heritage Week - Square One*
- 19 Heritage Day - Peel Heritage Complex Brampton*
- 12 The Old Britannia Schoolhouse is open to the public from 1:00 to 4:00 pm*

Need to speak to the school?

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse can be contacted directly, by dialing

**905 890 1010, ext. 2911**

**Heritage Mississauga**

can be accessed on the internet at:

*<http://www.city.mississauga.on.ca/heritage/>*

Or by phoning 905 615 4415

*We are on the web at  
[www.britanniaschoolhouse.org](http://www.britanniaschoolhouse.org)*



## The Brampton Fair 2005

Friends of the Schoolhouse set up their popular display of toys, games and artifacts at the Brampton Fair in the animal barn building from Friday, September 16 through Sunday, September 18<sup>th</sup>. Although Friends found the pace slow on Friday due to heavy rain, business became brisk on Saturday and Sunday as young and old succumbed to the pleasure which playing with our pioneer toys gives.

I would like to thank the following volunteers for their help in making this annual event a great success: Eva Ardiel. Joan Moon, Ruth Taylor, Dennis Taylor, Karen Simmons, Muriel Walden, Frances Kay, Jean Robinson, Kay Robbins, Marg Carson, Dorothea Phair, Marjorie Madill, Cathy Harper, Anne Brownjohn, Jennifer Roberts, Marilyn Newall and Debbie Madill.



The display at the Brampton Fall Fair and Eva demonstrating how to use some of the toys

## 1937: Coronation Medals

In 1937 every school age child in the Dominion of Canada received a medal to commemorate the Coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.

If anyone has such a medal and would like to donate it to the artifact collection of the Old Britannia Schoolhouse, please phone Joan Reid at (905) 277-3396.

## Britannia Fall Festival

Although the festival was on two weekends, the schoolhouse was only open for the Thanksgiving weekend. Poor weather conditions made visits to the Schoolhouse less than we all hoped for, this year. There were a total of 130 visitors, less than in other years. Visitors from Germany and Pakistan were among some of the guests. The younger children enjoyed the marble games and writing on the slates.



Joan Reid with young interested student at Britannia Fall Festival

## WEBSITE NEWS

If you have recently visited the Old Britannia Schoolhouse website ([www.britanniaschoolhouse.org](http://www.britanniaschoolhouse.org)) you will have noticed that it is not up to date. The Communications Committee has spent the past two years investigating the possibility of creating our own "Friends" website. Recently we have chosen Pentura Solutions to design and host one. A number of volunteers are beginning the work of writing the content and we hope to have the task completed and given to Pentura Solutions by the beginning of December. The design and content of the new "Friends" website is not yet established but our intent is to retain much of the information from the current website including all the archived newsletters and expand it with more frequent updates and information about current happenings at the schoolhouse. A possible future project we would like to include is a "virtual visit" online so that people who are not able to visit the schoolhouse in person can take a tour of the building and the school grounds. It will also be possible at some future date to provide our newsletters online for those who would prefer to receive them this way - saving us the cost of paper and postage and at the same time being environmentally friendly by saving a few trees.

Currently our newsletter is paid for out of Membership and Sales funds. All other monies received from donations are reserved for preserving the schoolhouse and running the program. If you would like your donation to be used to support the website please write "Website" on your cheque. Donation cheques should be made out to The Peel District School Board. All donations over \$50.00 receive a tax receipt.

We will keep you informed as our project moves ahead. Watch for the launch of the new website early in 2006.

## AN OLD FRIEND LOST

Many years ago in the late 1800s school children planted trees on their school grounds each Arbour Day. If you have visited the Old Britannia Schoolhouse you will have noticed several large old maple trees which stand majestically along the back of the schoolyard. They have provided welcome shade for generations of children at play and more recently for staff from the Peel District School Board office next door who bring their lunch to eat under the maples. Sadly, this summer, one of these trees succumbed to stress and rot and had to be re-

moved. Thankfully most of the others seem to be surviving well. When the rings on the stump were counted we discovered the maple had been planted sometime in the mid 1880s. Cathy Harper has volunteered to put a preservative on the top of the stump to prevent further decay, providing visiting schoolchildren the opportunity to count the rings and connect with children of the past. When you visit the schoolhouse and the gardens stop and admire what remains of a treasured old friend. You will find the stump west of the Teachers' Arbour near the parking lot.