



Some Figures and Facts:

Students attended the schoolhouse:
February: 388
March: 243

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

Co-Editors: Daryl Cook
dlcook@rogers.com
Dennis Taylor
dwtaylor914@sympatico.ca

Our website is
www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org

From the Chair: Joan Reid

Arbour Day originated in Nebraska, which, at one time was almost a treeless state. Sterling Morton, the agricultural commissioner, persuaded the government to set aside a tree-planting day. A million trees were planted in one year, 1872, as a result of his efforts. April 22nd, Morton's birthday, became the legal State Arbour Day. The idea spread quickly. By the 1880's, when the maples were planted in the schoolyard of the Britannia Schoolhouse, many rural schools in Ontario had adopted this annual tree-planting custom.

Climate differences made the establishment of a fixed date impossible but the first Friday in May became the traditional time in Ontario. It is fitting that the 25th anniversary celebration of the restoration of The Old Britannia Schoolhouse take the form of an Arbour Day on May 2nd, 2008 at 12:30 pm.

The *Brampton Conservator* urged all schools to become involved in planting trees in 1950 by pointing out what a pleasure it would be, years later, to visit the school of your children and be able to say, "I planted that tree!"

Dear little tree that we plant today,
What will you be when you are old and gray?
The savings bank of the squirrel and mouse,
For robin and wren an apartment house.
The dressing-room of the butterfly ball,
The locusts' and katydids' concert hall,
The schoolboy's ladder in pleasant June,
The schoolgirl's tent in the July noon,
And my leaves shall whisper them merrily
A tale of the children who planted me.

The Brampton Conservator, May 14, 1953.

From the Schoolmaster: Dennis Patterson

"Egg-shell gardens are easy to make. Ask pupils to collect and save empty egg-shells. Have these filled almost full of good soil mixed with a little sand. Make a hole in the bottom of each shell, with a nail. This is for drainage. The growing plant will send rootlets through the bottom of the shell and as they grow the shell will burst apart. Leave the egg-shell around the plant when transplanting."

Amos R. Wells the Primary Plan Book 1912

Armed with this new knowledge window boxes were constructed and placed in the south facing schoolhouse windows. They were filled with egg-shells and a variety of seeds: tomatoes, green peppers to start with vines to follow. As the last newsletter mentioned, with Evergreen on board to help with funding, there is a focus on more historic varieties of fruits and vegetables that would have been present in the schoolhouse gardens of the past.

Grade 3 has an extensive science unit centred around plants, so yesterday, April 9th the pupils attending and myself took a tour of the grounds to see what was starting to grow and what was yet to come. The bulbs are starting to peek out, the lilacs are budding and the day lilies are up 3 inches. Aconites, small yellow flowers that sprout early and last several weeks, are the first flowers of the spring. So begins the gardening season here in Britannia. I for one could not be happier.

A tiny shoot peeped out of the ground
And opened wide as it gazed around;
Stretching its dainty leaflets bright
Up-up-up to the sweet sunlight.

The Primary Plan Book 1912

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 artefact collection of the Old Britannia Schoolhouse, please phone Joan Reid at (905) 277-3396.

Thank You

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

Come out and enjoy an old-fashioned
Strawberry Social
 Wednesday, June 25th, 2008



11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

in the atrium of H.J.A. Brown Education Centre



<p>BILL OF FARE</p> <p>A generous helping of luscious Ontario strawberries on a delicious short cake biscuit.... topped with genuine whipped cream!</p> <p>Tea • Coffee • Fruit Cordial Mints</p>
--

Come as you are... or "dressed up" for an old-fashioned afternoon tea

\$8.00 tickets available until June 23rd from



Friends of the Schoolhouse

A fundraising project for The Old Britannia Schoolhouse

Send orders for tickets to FRIENDS OF THE SCHOOLHOUSE, % THE OLD BRITANNIA SCHOOLHOUSE

By Courier or Mail: 5576 HURONTARIO ST., MISSISSAUGA, ON. L5R 1B3

Please order your tickets in advance as only a limited number will be available at the door. FOR INFORMATION: Phone: EVA 905-459-9158

 Please send me _____ tickets for the Strawberry Social @ \$8.00 each.

Enclosed is my cheque for \$ _____ payable to FRIENDS OF THE SCHOOLHOUSE

NAME: _____

PEEL BOARD COURIER LOCATION: _____

OR MAILING ADDRESS: _____

POSTAL CODE _____

Tickets will be sent out after June 1st.

Evergreen /Toyota Grant Presented

On April 16 Brian Cummings, Vice-President Operations, and Jennifer Armour, Human Resources Co-ordinator from Dixie Toyota and Aiko Tani from Toyota Canada visited the schoolhouse to present a cheque for \$2000 to support our historic gardens. Karen Guyatt, Principal of Alternative Programs, Dennis Patterson, Schoolmaster, and Karen Simmons, garden committee member received the cheque on behalf of the Friends of the Schoolhouse. This money will be used to expand the heritage vegetable gardens.

Schoolmaster Patterson and garden convener Joan Reid have been searching for heritage seeds and plants. Students who visit the schoolhouse for a day will help tend the garden and learn how the vegetables and fruits they eat are produced. Surprisingly, it is a bit of a mystery to many city raised children. Right now seeds have been planted in window boxes in the schoolhouse and students are watching the tiny plants sprout.

Dennis took our visitors on a tour of the gardens – though in mid April there was little to see except lots of mud. We tried to imagine how it would look in July when the roses, clematis, and all the perennials are in bloom.

The Friends hope that our new friends from Dixie Toyota and Evergreen will visit often throughout the gardening season to see the results of the generous grant they have given us. Our sincere thanks for their support.



Above

L-R: Karen Simmons, Karen Guyatt,
Brian Cummings, Dennis Patterson



L-R: Jennifer Armour, Aiko Tani, Karen
Guyatt, Brian Cummings, Karen Simmons,
Dennis Patterson, Daryl Cook

Britannia Farm Update

Daryl Cook

In previous issues of the newsletter we featured articles about the Britannia Farm and the proposals for its future. We promised we would continue to update you on the progress of the discussions.

At a public meeting on April 10, 2008, Janet McDougald, Chair of the Peel District School Board and Chair of the Britannia Farm Task Force presented the plan the board has approved for developing a small portion of the property. In her presentation Ms. McDougald began by assuring those present that the Peel board is committed to making sure that the future of the farm is secure. She stated the Board takes its responsibility as stewards of the land very seriously and has defended the farm and remained steadfast under pressure to sell.

Ms. McDougald talked about the history of the Britannia farm property from 1819 when crown land was set aside for a school to the present. She mentioned the historic significance of the property and the buildings as well as the unique natural features such as the Cooksville Creek and the maple sugar bush.

The results of the community consultation meetings were presented. In asking for suggestions for possible uses for the farm there were clear preferences. Education and research was the first preference, agriculture and ecology was number 2. Three principles received equal top ranking when respondents were asked which principles should guide the board's decisions about the farm. They were:

- Maintain the majority of the site in green and open state

- Retain and enhance significant natural and heritage assets to connect students with nature and history.

- Establish a long-term legacy for youth and education.

Ranked as least important were:

- Attract appropriate partnerships to invest in the site.

- Establish a program of uses that is financially self-sustaining.

Ms. McDougald explained that "for most of the last 20 years there has not been a funding source that would enable us to offer programming to more than a tiny fraction of Peel students. There is no money in the provincial funding formula for the Britannia Farm." Without funding the farm cannot be used to its full potential. To resolve this dilemma and to find a way to generate funds to achieve the dreams for the farm expressed during the community consultations, the board invited submissions in August 2006 from parties interested in developing a small portion of the property. There were nine expressions of interest and the board invited eight to submit proposals.

A final selection was made. The Board has approved a plan to lease about 15 per cent

Continued on page 7

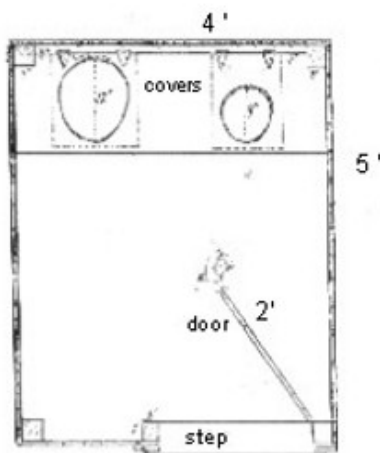
Restoring the 'Closets'

Restoring a heritage building is no easy task. It requires painstaking research. The Britannia Restoration Committee was formed in the early 1970's by staff and students at Streetsville Secondary School in order to begin the process of restoring the 1852 schoolhouse known as S.S. #12 Toronto Township. The school had been closed in 1959 and stood derelict at the mercy of vandals. Among the materials the Committee collected is the *Minute Book for S.S. #5 Ching*. It contains meticulous drawings and specifications for the 'closets' to be built on the school grounds of S.S. #5 in 1900. The Streetsville Committee used these as a model when planning the restoration of S.S. #12 Toronto Township now known as The Old Britannia Schoolhouse.

The specifications for each closet were as follows:

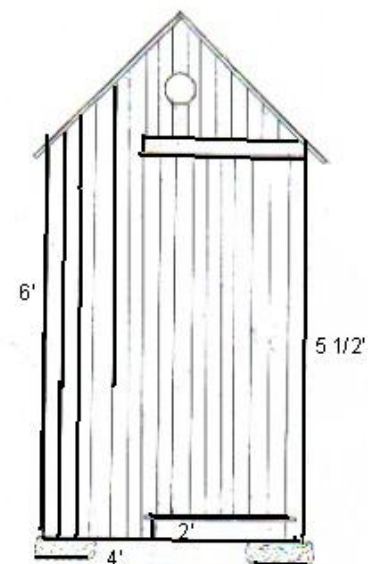
- To be 4 feet by 5 feet and 6 feet to plates –
- Door to be in gable end –
- Round hole above door for window –
- The whole to be built of tongue and grooved lumber –
- The roof to be the same and battened –
- The whole to be painted –
- Each closet to be set on four stones – one at each corner –
- Sills to be (9" X 4") scantling.

There is one big difference between the 'closets' at The Old Britannia Schoolhouse and those built for S.S. #5 Chinguacousy Township. The ones at Britannia have never been built in working order. The little round ventilation hole does not exist at Britannia.



Closet Floor Plan 1900

Some of the plans drawn up for building the 'closets' at S.S. #5 Chinguacousy.



End View of Closet 1900

Britannia Farm Update continued from page 5

of the Britannia Farm site to a developer. Negotiations are ongoing which will provide the developer, Osmington Inc., with a 99 year lease for 31.67 acres of the southeast corner of the farm. The remaining 85 per cent of the farm will be protected as green space. The board retains ownership of the farm. The heritage buildings and natural features of the farm will be preserved.

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse and the schoolyard will remain as they are. The daily visits of children to experience a day in a long ago school will continue.

Ms. McDougald concluded her remarks by saying:

“I believe what we are doing is completely consistent with the spirit of the original land grant from the Crown. The crown patent was not 200 acres for education use. From 1833 to 1990, all but 1 acre of the land has been used for commercial purposes – farming. In the early 19th century, using the land as farm was a good way to raise revenue to cover the cost of the Britannia Schoolhouse.

But we’re no longer in the 19th century. So our commercial use of the land has to change to keep up with the changing times. The good news is that now, with this new plan, instead of half of one per cent of the land being used for educational purposes and the other 99.5 per cent commercial, we will be able to devote 85 per cent of the land to educational use and use just 15 per cent for commercial purpose to raise the needed funding. I would say that’s progress in the right direction.”

As plans continue to unfold we will keep you informed.

Are You Smarter Than A Grade 5 Pupil?

Answer the following geography questions posed by M. Mitchell for his Book III class at S.S. # 2 Toronto Township – Cooksville Public School - in 1926. Senior III was equivalent to grade 6 and Junior III to grade 5.

- 1) Name five rivers in Ontario and tell where they are situated.
- 2) What is meant by island, cape, lake, and isthmus, eclipse of moon, river basin, delta, and volcano?
- 3) Name the counties with their county towns on Lake Ontario.

An Invitation from the Editors

Many organizations these days are distributing their newsletters online. This has many advantages as outlined in the Winter 2008 Newsletter.

The Friends of the Schoolhouse are offering to send members their newsletters by email. If you would like it this way just send an email to Daryl Cook at dlcook@rogers.com. Put "email newsletter" in the subject box and include your e-mail address and your name in the body of the email.

The choice is yours. We will still send newsletters by Canada Post to those who prefer to receive them that way.

For Your Calendar:

May 2008

02 Arbour Day at the schoolhouse 12:30 pm

11 The Old Britannia Schoolhouse is open to the public from 1:00 to 4:00 pm

June 2008

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

25 Strawberry Social 11:30 am to 2:00 pm in atrium of H.J.A. Brown Education Centre—Tickets \$8.00 from Friends of the Schoolhouse

July 2008

01 Canada Day at Mississauga Square One

13 The Old Britannia Schoolhouse is open to the public from 1:00 to 4:00 pm

August 2008

10 The Old Britannia Schoolhouse is open to the public from 1:00 to 4:00 pm

September 2008

14 The Old Britannia Schoolhouse is open to the public from 1:00 to 4:00 pm

Heritage Mississauga

can be accessed on the internet at:

www.heritagemississauga.com

Or by phoning 905 615 4415

We are on the web at

www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org

Need to contact the school?

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse can be contacted directly, by dialing
905 890 1010, ext. 2911