

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse

1852-1959
restored 1982

Summer/Early Fall Issue 2007

Celebrating 25 Years



2007-2008

Schedule of Events

Sept. 14-16 Brampton Fall Fair
Brampton Fair Grounds
Sept. 22 Trafalgar Day
To be determined Tree Dedication
To be determined 25th
Anniversary Celebration
Nov. 15, 16 Christmas Sales, Peel
Board office atrium
Dec. 2 Christmas Open House
Feb. 15-17 Heritage Showcase
June 25 Strawberry Social
July 1 Canada Day City Hall
July 23 Lemonade on the Lawn

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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For one hundred and seven years, from 1852 to 1959, S.S.# 12 Toronto Township saw generations of children pass through its doors. Closed in 1959 it quietly waited for a new group of students. In the early 1980's teachers and students from Streetsville Secondary School undertook the task of restoring the building. Eventually the Peel Board of Education took over the project, hiring Summit Restoration Inc of Toronto to complete the exterior restoration. By September 1982 The Old Britannia Schoolhouse was ready to welcome visiting students for a day of lessons from the past taught by schoolmaster James Potter. An official opening was held on June 11, 1983. In 2007 we celebrate 25 busy years of living history at the schoolhouse. Watch for further news of a special event to commemorate the 25th anniversary.



About 1920 with the second classroom at the back



The schoolhouse today



Inside the schoolhouse

From the Chair

Joan Reid

Congratulations to Karen Simmons and her industrious crew for a very successful Strawberry Social on June 27. The heat did not diminish our enjoyment of delectable Ontario strawberries and whipped cream.

Frances Kay organized our very attractive booth at the Civic Centre on Canada Day. Eva Ardiel organized the sales items as she did for the Strawberry Social. A steady stream of adults and children kept us busy all afternoon.

On July 25 our second annual Lemonade on the Lawn was conducted by Shirley Hoad. The weather co-operated and participants were able to enjoy the gardens and visit the schoolhouse at their leisure. On the same day Eva Ardiel welcomed exchange students from the Red Leaf program.

Our energetic schoolmaster, Dennis Patterson, cleared a patch of land southwest of the schoolhouse. In late May he planted the seedlings he had nurtured in window boxes in the classroom during the early Spring. A good crop of cucumbers has already been harvested and a bumper crop of tomatoes and giant pumpkins is anticipated. Dennis' work reminds us of the school gardens that once flourished at S.S. #12 in the 1920's and 1930's.

The Fall promises to be very busy and productive. The Friends will spend three days at the Brampton Fair (September 14-16) and one day at Trafalgar (September 22). In mid-October they will participate in the celebrations surrounding the 25th anniversary of the re-opening of the schoolhouse as a living history classroom. The Friends will organize the dedication of the four mature maple trees planted in May. Each tree will remember an individual or group who helped to bring about the restoration of S.S. #12.

From the Schoolmaster

Dennis Patterson

Late summer is a great time to be on the farm. Fresh produce greets you upon returning from a weekend in the sun. The schoolhouse garden project is moving along quite well. The first cob of corn was picked in mid summer and tomatoes are coming on strong. The plums in the orchard on the farm were ready in early August and apples and pears are not far behind. There will be plenty to see and taste when the students return in September.



The pumpkins were already large in July

It was 25 years ago that the first groups were given the opportunity to spend a day here at The Old Britannia Schoolhouse. Doing some rough calculations, at 4000 students a year, we are approaching the 100,000 student mark. An impressive total for any school.

The schoolhouse is fully booked for 2007-2008 except for a day here and there. A few lucky classes will be taking part in our 25th anniversary events.

I am ready and excited for my first full year as Schoolmaster here at Britannia.

**Don't forget to visit us at
[Www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org](http://www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org)**

The Annual Meeting

Each year in July the Friends of the Schoolhouse committee meets for a day to review the year's events and plan for the coming year. This year Joan Reid chaired the meeting on July 5 at the H.J.A. Brown Education Centre just north of the schoolhouse. We began our meeting at 10 am with coffee, juice and muffins thanks to Sandy McGowan. During the morning we reviewed our finances and heard reports from the various event and committee chairs. As usual, 2006-2007 was a busy year. Last Fall we welcomed our new schoolmaster Dennis Patterson who quickly proved he was ideal for the job. Events such as the Britannia Fall Fair, Christmas Sale and Open House and the Strawberry Social were well attended. Off site the Friends participated in the Brampton Fair, Trafalgar 200 and Canada Day celebrations at City Hall. Monthly meetings were held from September to June. Four newsletters were distributed to members and schools. The website had a very successful first year with many visitors. The Current News page was updated monthly. The committees responsible for overseeing the preservation and maintenance of the schoolhouse and for planning, planting and maintaining the gardens have had a busy and successful year.

We adjourned for a pot luck lunch at the schoolhouse and returned to business in the afternoon to plan our activities for 2007-2008. Many of the familiar activities will take place again. There will be no Britannia Fall Fair this year. Instead we are planning special celebrations to recognize the 25th anniversary of the reopening of the schoolhouse and to dedicate the new maples. The executive and committee chairs for the coming year were selected, tasks assigned and the meeting adjourned at 4 PM.

Our two hour monthly meetings are always busy with event planning and discussion of current issues. It is good to take time once a year to look back and see what has been accomplished and look ahead to more exciting activities in the coming year.

Join us on Open Sundays

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse is open to visitors on the second Sunday afternoon of each month. This year we have planned a special theme for each of the Sundays in the Fall. Here is the schedule. Please join us and bring your family and friends.

Sunday September 8 1:00-4:00 PM	Grandparents will be the focus. Children and grandchildren are also welcome.
Sunday October 14 1:00-4:00 PM	Come celebrate the harvest season and Hallowe'en with us.
Sunday November 11 1:00-4:00 PM	Our special focus will be on veterans and remembrance.
Sunday December 9 1:00-4:00 PM	Enjoy our Victorian Christmas tree trimmed with hand-made decorations.

Time To Smell The Roses

Joan Reid

Eight native rose bushes, purchased from *Sweetgrass Gardens* on the Six Nations Reserve, were planted in May 2007 to honour the memory of Kathleen Brierley. Two are *Rosa blanda* (Smooth Wild Rose), five are *Rosa carolina* (Pasture Rose), and one is *Rosa setigera* (Prairie Rose). All are pink in colour.

In May 2006 Betty and Dave Wilson donated two cuttings from a rose bush which once grew on her grandfather's farm in southern Ontario. Family lore states that an ancestor brought the original bush from Scotland in the 1830's. The blooms are white with a touch of pink. The bush may be an antique alba rose. The blooms make fragrant companions for those of the native species mentioned above.

Nine bushes from *The Canadian Explorer Series*, endorsed by the Canadian Rose Society, were planted in June 2007. They were developed by the Department of Agriculture to be disease resistant and hardy enough to endure our cold winters. They are of historic interest as each is named for a man who was a well known explorer of Canada. They are:



<i>Rosa John Cabot</i>	deep pink	John Cabot
<i>Rosa Champlain</i>	deep red	Samuel de Champlain
<i>Rosa William Baffin</i>	deep pink.	William Baffin
<i>Rosa Henry Kelsey</i>	deep red	Henry Kelsey.
<i>Rosa Alexander Mackenzie</i>	medium red	Alexander Mackenzie
<i>Rosa David Thompson</i>	deep pink	David Thompson
<i>Rosa George Vancouver</i>	bright pink	George Vancouver
<i>Rosa Martin Frobisher</i>	soft pink	Martin Frobisher
<i>Rosa J.P. Connell</i>	butter cream	J.P. Connell

We hope you will visit our rose garden in the near future and take the time to smell our roses.

Below is a match up quiz to help you review your Canadian history. Place the letter of the item from the right hand column beside the number of the item in the left hand column which it matches. Answers below.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1 John Cabot | (a) overland to the Pacific in 1793 |
| 2 Samuel de Champlain | (b) explored Pacific Northwest coast |
| 3 William Baffin | (c) discovered 'New Found Land' 1497 |
| 4 Henry Kelsey | (d) senior civil servant |
| 5 Alexander Mackenzie | (e) founded Quebec City 1608 |
| 6 David Thompson | (f) sought northwest passage 1576 |
| 7 George Vancouver | (g) discovered Canadian prairies 1690's |
| 8 Martin Frobisher | (h) mapped northwest 1790's |
| 9 J.P. Connell | (i) Arctic island named for him |

Answers on Page 8.

Lavender Lore

Daryl Cook

I always associate lavender with Queen Victoria and grandmothers. There is some truth to that but recently I have learned much more about this amazing plant. Lavender and its oil have been used in various ways for over 2500 years and probably longer. Egyptians, Phoenicians and the peoples of Arabia used it for mummification and perfume. Tutankhamen's tomb contained jars filled with an ointment containing something similar to lavender. Lavender is mentioned in the bible but is referred to by its older name *spikenard*. In Luke's story of Mary washing the feet of Jesus, Mary is said to have used a pound of very expensive *spikenard*. The Greeks were aware of its healing qualities. Romans used lavender as an antiseptic, an insect deterrent and for washing. An early mention of the medicinal use of lavender is found in *De Materia Medica* written by the Greek physician Dioscorus in 77 AD. It states that the plant when ingested relieved indigestion, headaches and sore throats. Dioscorus also used it to clean wounds of Nero's soldiers and to treat burns and skin irritations.

Lavender was originally a Mediterranean plant. It gradually spread to Europe with the expansion of the Roman Empire although it was difficult to grow in the more northern regions. By the Middle Ages the growing and use of lavender was confined to the monastery gardens. A German nun, Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) recommended "lavender water" to relieve migraines. This was a mixture of vodka, gin or brandy mixed with lavender. Whether it actually cured the migraine or just masked it with a hangover is unknown. An edict of the Holy Roman Empire in 812 AD required the monasteries to preserve the knowledge of herbs and to grow medicinal plants in their physics gardens. Modern medicine would have lost much valuable knowledge were it not for the preservation of ancient manuscripts by the monks and nuns.

In England, Merton Abbey at Mitcham was the center of lavender growing. When Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries and transferred them to private ownership, lavender became a common garden plant. In Tudor times women began using lavender to scent linens, freshen the air, and repel insects as the Romans had done hundreds of years before. Lavender was often grown near the laundry so that the damp clothes could be laid on the bushes to dry and acquire a pleasant scent. Its close association with washing and bathing may have led to the plant's name – lavender from the Latin root *lavare*, to wash.

Lavender's disinfectant qualities were recognized in the 16th century. Glove makers in France were licensed to scent their gloves with lavender. It was observed that the glove makers seemed to escape the plagues that frequently swept the country including a cholera epidemic. By the 17th century lavender was listed in most books of medicinal herbs as a cure all. During World War I when antiseptics were unavailable, lavender oil was used to dress wounds.

The popularity and production of lavender oil fluctuated considerably over the centuries but by the late 1900's it was flourishing. Royalty set the standards in fashion and Queen Victoria loved lavender, as had Queen Elizabeth I before her. This meant that lavender was fashionable with all the women. Street sellers bought it from producers at what had been the old monastery at Mitcham. Lavender was dried and sewn into muslin bags to hang in closets to ward off insects and scent clothes. Oil was used in furniture polish, soap and medicines.

Gradually its popularity waned again. Mitcham, once a center of lavender oil production,



was by the beginning of the 20th century a suburb of London and situated on increasingly valuable land. Production dropped and nearly died out completely. Today the center of production is Provence. Lavender came to North America in the 1600's. The Shakers grew lavender commercially until their communities died out in the 20th century.

Production and use of lavender is on the upswing since 1994. The traditional uses are again popular and some new possibilities are being researched. Compounds in the plant are being tested as possible cancer cures. In mice, these have reduced the size of tumours in the breast.

So I have learned that lavender is not just a plant for queens and grandmothers. I think I will buy some of the sachets the Sales Committee will have at our events this Fall and put them under my pillow to help me drift off to sleep. I might also try one of the ideas below.

Plum-lavender Chutney

5 lbs nearly ripe red or purple plums
1 medium onion, finely chopped
Grated zest and juice of 2 lemons
1 1/2 Tbsp chopped fresh ginger
1 Tbsp whole yellow mustard seed
1 tsp hot red pepper flakes
1/4 cup sherry vinegar
3/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
1/2 tsp salt

1 1/2 Tbsp chopped fresh lavender flower heads

Cut plums in half, remove the pits, and slice the fruit into 1/2 inch wedges. Place in a heavy-bottomed sauce pan and add onion, lemon, ginger, mustard seed, red pepper flakes, vinegar, brown sugar, and salt. Bring the mixture to a boil, then turn the heat to low and simmer, stirring often, until very thick, about 45 minutes. Stir in the lavender. Pack the chutney in sterilized 1 pint or 8 ounce jars and seal according to the manufacturer's directions. The chutney will keep indefinitely. Or, if not canning, cool and store in the refrigerator up to one month.

Makes 3 pints

Recipe from Jerry Traunfeld of Herb Farm in Fall City, Washington.

Lavender Hot Pad

Whole *Lavandula dentata* flower heads or English lavender flowers can be made into a padding for a fragrant hot pad for the table. The warmth of the container sitting on the pad brings out the fragrance of the herb. Cut two 10 inch squares of quilted fabric. With right sides together, stitch around three sides. Turn right side out. Fill with another pillow made of lightweight cotton fabric and stuffed with lavender. Sew the opening closed with a hem stitch. If you are quilting your own fabric for the hot pad do not quilt after the pillow of lavender has been inserted. You will want to be able to remove the lavender once its scent had diminished and replace it with fresh flowers.

Some Websites About Lavender

www.lavenderfarm.com

www.routes-lavande.com

www.lavenderenchantment.com

Did you Know?

Our heritage gardens at last count contained 104 different plant varieties. Walk through the gardens and see how many you can find.

Using The Heritage Garden

Joan Reid

Two plants in the heritage gardens around the Schoolhouse have been put to practical use by skilful hands. Karen Simmons has sewn fragrant lavender sachets from our bountiful crop of English Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*). She has also created charming dolls from the ubiquitous teasel plant (*spp Dipsacus*).

Look for both of these items in our sales booth in the Autumn.

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse in 1913

Joan Reid

The 1913 register shows that in January Schoolmistress Nina Parks had 16 pupils from seven families: Chinnery (Willie), Dunton (Douglas, Mary), Ellis (Albert, Willie), Raine (Mary, Oliver), Sawdon (Charlie, Edith, Jim, Willie), Turner (Albert, George), and Walker (Emily, Johnny, Irene). By the end of April the two Turners had left.

When Schoolmistress Hazeline Tolman took charge in September 1913 there were only 13 pupils. Mary Raine had completed her studies.

The monarch was King George V but there is no indication in the Register of his birthday. Victoria Day fell on a Sunday that year. Thanksgiving was celebrated on Monday October 20. Pupils had two days off on October 23 and 24 while Miss Tolman attended the Teachers' Institute for Peel County teachers in Brampton.

At this time the Ministry of Education strongly urged teachers to become qualified in agriculture and horticulture. Teachers and their pupils were encouraged to plant school gardens. The school register had month-by-month instructions for what should be done and a place where the teacher could draw a plan of the school's garden. For instance, in March pupils should start seeds in window boxes and in October they should plant bulbs. Unfortunately this section is blank in the S.S. #12 Register for 1913 although we know in later years such gardens were planted.

Pupils had to buy their own text books. Here are some examples of authorized texts and their prices:

<i>Ontario School Speller</i>	12 cents
<i>Ontario Public School Arithmetic</i>	8 cents
<i>Ontario School Geography</i>	52 cents
<i>Ontario Public School Grammar</i>	8 cents
<i>Ontario Public School History of Canada</i>	20 cents
<i>Ontario Public School Hygiene</i>	16 cents
<i>Ontario Blank Drawing Book</i>	4 cents

Pupils would pass on these texts to younger brothers and sisters. At the present time The Friends of the Schoolhouse have a collection of over 1500 school texts such as those listed above. Currently these books are in storage as we have nowhere to display them.

Under "Duties of Pupils" listed in the Register is the following:

He shall be neat and clean in his person and habits, diligent in his studies, kind and courteous to his fellow pupils, obedient and respectful to his teacher; and he shall submit to such discipline as would be exercised by a kind, firm, and judicious parent.

A Note of Thanks

Each day that a class visits The Old Britannia Schoolhouse one student has the opportunity to make his or her own for the day the lovely old school desk donated by the Graham family—Susan, Bryan, Jennifer, Jeffrey and James. Their thoughtfulness and generosity are much appreciated.

Spring and Summer Events

Events this Fall

Another Oak Tree

This Spring students from Cooksville Creek Public School planted a small oak tree in the schoolyard. The students were visiting the schoolhouse for the day. We hope they return often to check on the progress of “their tree”.



Strawberry Social

Almost 200 strawberry lovers enjoyed the berries, biscuits and whipped cream.

Lemonade on the Lawn



In late July Board Office staff enjoyed cookies and lemonade at lunch in the schoolhouse gardens.

Autumn is a wonderful time to get out and explore. The air is crisp but the sun is still warm and there are no bugs. Every weekend there is a Fall Fair somewhere. The Friends of the Schoolhouse will be at the **Brampton Fall Fair** as usual September 14 to 16. Please come and visit us. We’ll have lots of old-fashioned toys for the youngsters along with many of our catalogue items for sale. Volunteers will be on hand to talk to you about the history of the schoolhouse and its current programs. We are located beside the judging ring so you will be able to see the best of Peel’s livestock—a sight many city folks don’t get to experience very often.

The schoolhouse is open for visitors on the second Sunday of every month from 1 to 4 PM. Each **Open Sunday** in the Fall we will celebrate a special group or season. A list of dates is found on page 3. We hope you will join us and find out what schooling one hundred years ago was like. You are invited to walk through the schoolyard grounds and enjoy our recreated historic gardens.

The **Twenty-fifth Anniversary and Tree Dedicating Celebrations** will take place sometime this Fall. Watch our website for further information.

www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org

Late Fall marks the first of the Christmas activities. On November 15 and 16 we hold our annual **Christmas Sale** at the H.J.A. Brown Education Centre at Hurontario Street and Matheson Boulevard. This is a great chance to do some shopping for Christmas gifts and stocking stuffers.

We’re looking forward to seeing you at these events.

Answers: 1.(c) 2.(e) 3.(i) 4.(g) 5.(a) 6.(h) 7.(b) 8.(f) 9.(d)