



Summer/Early Fall 2009



2009-2010

Schedule of Events

Sept. 18,19,20 Brampton Fair
Oct. 30 Hallowe'en Family Fun
Nov. 19,20 Christmas Sales,
Peel Board office atrium
Nov. 29 Christmas Open House
June 23 Strawberry Social
July 1 Canada Day City Hall
July 20 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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Two Exciting Fall Events

Hi! Ho! Come to the Fair

Eva Ardiel

The Friends are looking forward to being back at Brampton Fair again this year on September 18,19 and 20. We were sorry to have to miss the fair last year as we took part in Streetsville's 150th Celebration which was on the same weekend.

The Fair seems like a very appropriate way for the Friends to start off their 2009-2010 activities. Agricultural fairs were, and still are, very special events for rural children and were considered sufficiently educational for pupils to be often given the day off school to attend. According to Ben Madill who went to Britannia School in the 1920's, the children were given a holiday to attend both the Cooksville Fair and the Brampton Fair.

We always have a great time at the fair chatting with the fairgoers, entertaining the kids (and adults) with our old-fashioned, no-battery toys and being enthralled by the livestock judging going on beside us. We especially enjoy watching the young boys and girls putting their cattle through their paces for the judges.

We will have displays, games and toys to try, old school desks to sit in and lots of our merchandise for sale. So, we hope to see you at the 156th Annual Brampton Fall Fair on September 18, 19 and 20 on Heart Lake Road at Old School Road. We are in the farthest west building with the livestock. Just follow your nose!

Hallowe'en Family Fun

Friday October 30 from 5:30 to 8:30 pm the schoolhouse and schoolyard will be alive with Hallowe'en activities like Pin the Stem on the Pumpkin, a hay bale candy hunt, ghost bowling, hay rides, bobbing for apples, a witch hunt and more. It's rumoured that the schoolhouse may be haunted. Admission is \$5.00 for children and free for accompanying adults. See the advertisement on page 7.

From the Chair

Dennis Taylor

When I wrote last the Friends were heading into the final months of the school year and a number of activities including our major fundraiser, The Strawberry Social were on the agenda. As I write at this time it is when we take a break from much of our activity for the summer.

After several very hot summers in the past, this year has come as a surprise. One of the major concerns over the summer is the gardens, but at least there has been enough rain to help sustain the gardens this year. A group of the executive, led by Joan Reid lovingly tend our gardens over the summer. We are also very grateful to the board employees who support and often lend a hand. Dennis Patterson, our schoolmaster has been instrumental in establishing a vegetable garden and has maintained it. Our schoolmaster and his new wife have travelled to Japan this summer, but he made sure that the garden was set up before he left.

Our Strawberry Social was very successful again this year and we are grateful to the number of people who take time to join and support us. A number of groups from the board also join us at that event and we are once again very appreciative of their efforts and support.

During July we also have Lemonade on the Lawn which was meant to be a simple break to show our appreciation to board employees. This event, too, has grown over the years.

In the first week in July the Friends Executive Committee had their annual planning meeting.



We meet to discuss and review events and activities we had over the past year and to plan for events for the coming year. This includes establishing working committees, committee chairs and other duties that need to be coordinated. We held our meeting in the board office and took a break for a pot luck lunch at the school. Members of the Peel board office met with us during our meeting and shared information regarding the other historical buildings on the property. Eva Ardiel also arranged for a movie about Black Schools in Ontario, part of our heritage since this was the terminus of the underground railway. It was a long day, but very full and useful. Please check as upcoming events are announced.

The second Sunday in each month, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., is our Open Sundays and this does continue for the summer months as well.

From the Schoolmaster

Dennis Patterson

We are an Ecoschool!! Our assessment took place in late May and word came toward the end of the school year that we were a silver level Ecoschool. This proves once and for all that if properly manipulated a round peg can indeed fit in a square hole. In an update from the spring newsletter, we did find pupils to dig enough holes to plant all 12 fruit trees and thanks to lots of rain and some watering they are all happy and healthy as are the rest of the veggies in the garden. At present the garden has a serious rabbit infestation; \$35 worth of fencing is protecting \$2-3 worth of beets meaning we will get our money out of the fencing in as few as 15 years. I am feeling a little like Elmer Fudd but without the advantage of being able to use firearms on board property.

Quality vs. Quantity

This year we saw heaps of students and had a record number of visits. The grand totals for the year are as follows: 3677 students visited the schoolhouse and 160 days of programming took place, the most since 2002-2003. Quantity is an easy measure but how do we ensure the quality remains? This is an issue I constantly wrestle with. Teachers are encouraged to evaluate the school day by filling out a program evaluation at the end of their visit, though few take this opportunity some do and here is a quote from one teacher describing her highlights of the day, "Watching how the children adapt to new environment. Seeing how they handle using good manners and strict orders. Listening as they recall their historical knowledge." May, 2009 A few brave teachers round out the student's schoolhouse experience by sending letters to the Schoolmaster after their visit, here are a couple of quotes from this year's letters.

"Thank you for teaching us how to write hand writing. Thank you for showing us your garden." October 2008 Gr.3

"I liked the punishments, especially the dunce cap." January 2009 Gr.3

It's qualitative data but it's all we have. If the bookings for the coming year are any indication the program is alive and well here at The Old Britannia Schoolhouse. There are 146 days booked for schoolhouse visits in 2009-2010 on July 6th, which means there are a few openings but not many. We look forward to welcoming the newest group of students from "long ago" as they learn to write on slates, face the challenges of mental arithmetic and spelling bees, master walking on stilts and experience a day without electronic gizmos.

Open Sundays 2009-10

1 to 4 pm

Something new every month with light refreshments

Sept. 13	Garden tour. Sample our fresh produce. Children can make "beasties" from teasel plants found in the garden while adults make corn husk dolls.	March 14	A display of vintage indoor games and toys. Play a game of skittles or marbles. Children may take home a sunflower seed they plant in a pot.
Oct. 11	Displays of historic children's clothing and Halloween costumes. Learn to make a simple 19 th century children's bonnet and a "clothespin" doll.	April 11	Learn to recycle chipped teacups by making attractive craft items out of them. Participate in an Easter Egg Hunt.
Nov. 8	Remembrance Day. Children's story time.	May 9	Tour our spring gardens. Treasure hunt with the children.
Dec. 13	Make Victorian Christmas decorations like "walnut wishes" and teasel reindeer.	June 13	Enjoy a display of vintage quilts. Visit our summer garden in full bloom and buy some plants for your own garden.
Jan. 10	Celebrate the birthday of Canada's first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald. Sir John will be there! View our collection of historic maps and charts.	July 11	Help make lavender wands and raspberry tarts from produce harvested from the heritage garden.
Feb. 14	See a display of Victorian valentines then make one of your own.	August 8	Savour our summer vegetables. Enjoy tasty tomatoes and fresh cucumbers. Make a lavender sachet.

Children's Clothing

Daryl Cook

Clothing closely parallels the social and economic environment in which children lived. In human history terms the concept of childhood is fairly recent. When the average age expectancy prior to the 1800's was about 30 and more than half of the children born died by the time they were 5, children went quickly from babyhood to an early adulthood. Until the early 1800's in the new industrial age, working class children as young as 9 were working on farms and in factories ten to twelve hours a day to help support the family. Clothing reflected this transition from baby to adult: babies being tightly wrapped in swaddling clothes and toddlers dressed in miniature versions of adult styles. Wealthy families whose children were not forced to work advertised their status by dressing their children in elaborate—and uncomfortable—versions of adult clothing.

The village of Britannia was a rural farming community. Here too very young children would have been put to work looking after the animals and helping in the fields and everyday clothing would have reflected the practical needs of farm work. In the Victorian era until the turn of the 20th century both girls and boys wore dresses when they were very young. When they were old enough to begin helping with farm work boys started to wear cotton shirts and sturdy overalls. Girls dresses were cotton, linen or wool and loose fitting, often covered with a pinafore, a sort of apron to keep the dress clean. Underwear was often knitted wool and likely uncomfortable and itchy. Both boys and girls would have sun hats and sturdy shoes although often they would go barefoot in good weather.



Little girl with pinafore



Little boy with overalls



Dressed up for a train trip
about 1900



Typical children's
wear, 1900



Class at a rural one room school in 1917

Prior to the 1820's schooling was haphazard. With the establishment of the Britannia School Farm Trust and the building of the first wood school, children could attend school though it was not mandatory. They would not have had special "school clothes" but would wear what they had for their farm duties.



The Victorian era was one of ostentation when anyone who could afford to do so dressed in elaborate fashion. Little girls wore crinolines and bustles. Military style suits for boys were popular. These fashions lasted until the end of the 19th century. Some of the Britannia children may have had a special fancy outfit but they would certainly not have worn it to school.

Sunday best around 1900.
Sailor suits for boys were
popular.

During the early years of the Britannia school much of the children's clothing would have been home made or purchased at the village general store. The younger children would wear "hand-me-downs" from older siblings. By the 1880's Eaton's introduced its mail order catalogue to be followed shortly by its competitor Simpson's. Catalogues were distributed twice a year and were eagerly anticipated. With the introduction of mass marketing, clothing styles for children ceased to be miniature versions of adult styles but clothing designed specifically for children. Today these catalogues provide us with a valuable glimpse into the fashions and life-styles of the late Victorian and Edwardian era.



A Child's Victorian Costume

It's easy to put together a costume for a visit to the Old Britannia Schoolhouse or for Hal-lowe'en. For boys, a cotton shirt, overalls or rolled up pants with suspenders, a straw hat or a wool cap and either leather shoes or rubber boots should do it. Long knee socks pulled over the pant legs work too. Girls can wear a long, full skirt and a long sleeved blouse. Add a straw hat and carry a basket to hold the mid-day "dinner". A pinafore can be easily made from an old white pillow case. At the top closed end of the pillowcase cut out a round or square neck opening. Cut openings in each side for armholes. Pull the pinafore over the head and tie at the waist with wide ribbon or a sash made from material from a second pillowcase. If you have time and want to get fancy you can edge the neck and armholes with lace or eyelet trim.

At the Open Sunday on October 11 we will have a display of historic children's clothing and will show you how to make a simple 19th century girl's bonnet.

Strawberry Social

Ruth Taylor and Karen Simmons



Ben and daughter
Shirley

Our annual Strawberry Social on June 25th was once again a big success. Many of our regular supporters, employees of the Board, friends and neighbours enjoyed the delicious strawberry shortcake, cordial, and tea served in our beautiful china cups. We were so pleased to have Ben and Marjorie Madill back for a visit. Thank you to their daughter Shirley, for bringing them, and for again providing the musical background on the Atrium piano.

Although the Strawberry Social is a one day event, it is the culmination of many months of planning. It takes many people to stage this event. In April we began making our arrangements for getting the berries and biscuits. Tickets were printed and supplies counted. In May advertising flyers were posted, cafeteria and maintenance staff asked for their help and ticket sales began. Supplies were purchased. We arranged for volunteers to help on the day of the event. In June the convenors conducted a ticket blitz at the board office. Usually we offer a fresh strawberry along with the ticket, but since these were not yet available this year we had to settle for strawberry candies.

The evening before, volunteers gathered to hull the strawberries. On event day maintenance staff set up the tables and chairs and hauled supplies from the Schoolhouse. The berries and biscuits arrived, the cream whipped in the cafeteria and finally by 11:30 we were ready to serve our guests. Our guests chose a teacup for their tea or coffee then selected a table and visited with friends or colleagues while partaking of their scrumptious shortcake and listening to see if their name was called in the lucky draw.

Schoolmaster Dennis and his assistant Chris kept the Schoolhouse open for visitors, and helped transport equipment back and forth. The three Marys volunteered to staff the sales tables where sales were brisk. Joan's pots of perennial seedlings from the gardens attracted much interest, and now provide another source of income. Holly's young legs helped save the energies of we older folk. The Executive Committee were out in force to set tables, serve, and clean up. Many thanks to all of you. Well done!

Oh yes, our last job is to book for next year. Hope to see you on Wednesday, June 23, 2010!



Strawberry Hulling

Lemonade on the Lawn

Daryl Cook

Another huge success! Our annual members drew over 70 people including the schoolhouse lawn. Guests brought the lemonade and home baked beautiful heritage gardens in full bloom. The swings and tried to balance on the summer of cool wet weather, were kind to us as we were leaving.



A group of teachers
enjoy a picnic

“thank you” to Peel Board staff and our visiting families with children to a picnic on their own picnic and the Friends supplied cookies. While the adults enjoyed the bloom the children played on the stumps. The weather gods, in this summer, The rain waited to start until just as

Bees and Butterflies

Joan Reid

Bees and butterflies carry pollen from flower to flower. Bees are busy everywhere in the schoolhouse garden but are particularly visible in the rose garden as they sip the fragrant nectar.

Graceful and colourful Monarchs begin to appear in the early part of August. They are very fond of our wild meadow garden where bee balm and butterfly bush bloom. Scientists believe that when they land their "feet" can "taste" that the scent-producing compounds of these flowers are beneficial to pollinators. They contain potent healing chemicals which help to protect them from bacteria and viruses.



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Monarchs are also attracted to late blooming wildflowers such as coneflowers, asters, goldenrod and Joe-Pye weed. Many of these bloom freely in our garden along with tasty "weeds" such as thistles, wild mint, and ox-eye daisies. They also like our lavender, dill, and hyssop.

Monarchs are now endangered. Habitat loss due to the building of subdivisions, the use of harmful pesticides, and the disappearance of migration corridors, where a two-year cycle can take place, are the major causes of their decline. If you want to help, consider planting your own meadow or wild garden where herbs, weeds, and wildflowers can flourish.



Halloween Family Fun

**Friday
October 30**

**5:30-8:30 pm
Admission \$5.00
(Accompanying adults free)**

at

***The Old Britannia Schoolhouse
5576 Hurontario Street***

**Ample parking in the lot of the H.J.A. Brown
Education Centre. Enter from Matheson Blvd. W.**



The Recipe Corner

Submitted by Katharine Moon-Craney

CORN BREAD (1909)

The Good Housekeeping Woman's Home Cook Book

Isabel Gordon Curtis, Associate Editor of Good Housekeeping (1909)

One cup of meal, a level teaspoon of salt, a heaping one of baking powder, a tablespoon of butter (or lard), a cup and a half of sweet milk, and two eggs (three, when they are plenty, and then somewhat less baking powder).

Mix the salt through the meal; beat the eggs until very light, without separating, add the milk and pour over the meal; mix well, sift in the baking powder and beat hard for two minutes, add finally the melted butter, pour into a baking pan and bake in a hot oven.

SWEET MUFFINS (1909)

One tablespoon butter, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar, 1 cup milk, 2 cups flour, 2 tsp baking powder, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt, 1 egg. These muffins can be made at short notice before tea time. Rub the butter and sugar together, and, after adding the egg beat well. Next add the milk and sift in the flour, with which should be mixed the baking powder and salt. Beat quickly and put in warm, buttered muffin tins. Bake for about 25 minutes in a quick oven so as to have them well browned.

Submitted by Eva Ardiel

LAVENDER COOKIES

1 cup unsalted butter at room temperature
1/4 cup granulated sugar plus more for sprinkling on top
5 Tbsp, icing sugar
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 to 2 Tbsp. finely chopped lavender flowers
1/8 tsp. salt
Method:

1. Cream butter until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in sugars, then flour, lavender and salt.

Form into a round flat cake, wrap in waxed paper and refrigerate for an hour.

2. Line cookie pan with parchment paper and preheat oven to 350° F (180° C).

3. Roll out dough on a lightly floured surface to about 1/4 inch (5 mm) thickness.

Cut with a cookie cutter and transfer to the prepared cookie pan.

Dust cookies lightly with granulated sugar.

Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until lightly coloured.

Remove from the pan, cool on a rack and store in an airtight container.

Red Leaf Visitors

Eva Ardiel

On August 14 the Friends welcomed to the schoolhouse approximately 50 teenagers from France and Spain who are in the area for four to six weeks with the Red Leaf Students' Program, Mississauga Branch and are billeted with local families. The students attend classes most mornings and in the afternoons visit a variety of attractions and activities. We thank Cindy Hicks, the Mississauga Red Leaf co-ordinator for choosing The Old Britannia Schoolhouse again as an attraction of interest.

Half the group spent an hour in the classroom doing old fashioned lessons with Schoolmistress Eva while the other half had an extended recess in the schoolyard with Frances Kay and Joan Reid who got out the stilts, marble games, softball, lacrosse sticks and provided cookies and lemonade. The groups then switched for the next hour.

Our visitors left with a souvenir pencil, schoolhouse brochure, "Recess at S.S. #12" note card and envelope, a certificate of attendance filled out themselves with straight pen and ink and lots of photos on their digital cameras.

We enjoyed the afternoon thoroughly and felt it was a very worthwhile day for the Friends as well as for the visiting young people. Another time we will have more cookies. Three or so each, we now realize, is only a taste-teaser to a teenager!

What a beautiful and polite group of young people with whom to spend the afternoon.

E-mailed Newsletters

If you are not already doing so, why not consider receiving your newsletters by email. This helps us save the cost of paper, printing and postage and also is kinder to the environment. Contact dlcook@rogers.com and put "Emailed Newsletter" in the subject box to make this arrangement.

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.

Don't forget to visit us at
www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org