

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse

1852-1959
restored 1982

Winter Issue 2009



Our recent activities

Christmas sales at the Board Office
Christmas Open House at the schoolhouse
Students visiting for a day
 In November - 385
 In December - 275
 In January - 372
Outreach: "Inspector's" visit to Britannia P.S. and McHugh P.S. -250

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.

Co-editors:
Daryl Cook
dlcook@rogers.com
Katharine Moon-Craney
kmooncraney@rogers.com

Need more information?

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

A Winter Evening in the Schoolyard



Kelly Cook Photo

Some Very Special People

Marg Storey

Our school contacts in all elementary and secondary schools as well as the Field Offices are very important to The Friends of the Schoolhouse. You are our link to the staff, students and parents in the community. By posting our events calendar and newsletters for your staff and students, and including the events page in school newsletters, the community learns about The Old Britannia Schoolhouse and its various activities. Often, on one of our Open Sundays, the visitors have included a Grade Three student, with parents in tow, wanting to learn more about a one room schoolhouse or to gather more information for their Pioneer project. Other children have already spent a day with their classmates and teacher at the Old Britannia Schoolhouse, role playing as pupils in an early Ontario schoolroom. These children want their parents to see for themselves all the interesting artifacts at the school.

This school year we decided that we would go "green" and e-mail our information to all contacts. This seems to be working out very well although we are still establishing e-mail addresses for all contacts. Several of you have e-mailed back to say that you are pleased we are sending the information this way.

We appreciate the willingness of our 'Special Friends', our school contacts, to promote 'The Schoolhouse' and its various programs and events. It does provide a truly unique experience for all visitors young and old alike.

From the Schoolmaster

Dennis Patterson

In December the 19th century was imported into a 21st century school in Mississauga. A request came in to the schoolhouse to have an in-school program at the local elementary school. Due to our waiting list the school could not book a trip to the schoolhouse, so I met with the teachers and we devised a plan. The teachers, with some resources from the schoolhouse, would operate their classes as if it were 1888 and I would come in as School Inspector and test the students' academics.

As the day drew near I worried a little that the modern room coupled with it being two days before the Christmas holiday would make this an extremely difficult day. My worries were unfounded and the day went splendidly.

"I am School Inspector Patterson. I am here to test your academics and report on your manners." Once the mood was set I inspected the students' health, tested their mental arithmetic, had a spelling bee and answered any burning questions before moving on to another class. I visited 5 classes and each class had its own personality and curiosities, making for a most enjoyable day for staff and students alike. The day was a success. We are now considering making this type of program available to schools on the schoolhouse waiting list to add to their Pioneer Studies unit.

One day in November was special for the Schoolmaster. It was his wedding day. The marriage that took place at city hall in Mississauga was a small affair with pictures following at the schoolhouse. A celebration dinner is planned in the schoolmaster's hometown in July and that will be followed by a blessing of the wedding and party in Japan, home of the bride. A whole hearted thanks is extended to the Friends of the Schoolhouse for their generous wedding gift..



The Friends of the Schoolhouse extend best wishes to Schoolmaster Patterson and Yukiko on their recent marriage. Since he is a school**master**, he will be able to continue his teaching duties at S.S. #12. Had it been a school**mistress** who married, she of course would have had to resign her position immediately! We wish Dennis and Yukiko many happy years together.

Grandma's Valentine

Author unknown

In a quaint old trunk at my Grandma's place
There's a valentine edged in net and lace.
And upon the card that looks oh so old
Is a verse that's penned in ink of gold.

Oh Valentine, Sweet Valentine

Say you love me true

And you'll be mine!

Oh, I need you dear,

And I must confess

Only you can bring me happiness!

Now at first I wondered what gramp would say
If he knew someone wrote to gran that way.
And I thought, he'll grieve if he ever hears
How my grandma kept it all these years.
Then I raised the edge of the lace and net
And I knew grandpa had no need to fret
Though the valentine sent my gran a kiss,
For the name signed there was the same as his.

Remarks from the Chair

Dennis Taylor

With this newsletter we begin a new year and once again the Friends are up and going. As 2008 ended we had two sales events connected with the Old Britannia Schoolhouse. The first was in the Atrium of the School Board on November 13 and 14 and the second was in the Schoolhouse on Sunday November 30. Both sales were well attended and successful, due in no small part to the volunteers who staff the desks. A large part of this success is owed to Eva Ardiel who, as she has for several years, took charge of the sales. The events run smoothly, but the amount of work that goes into planning, setting up, organizing and taking down is enormous. Eva is the first to arrive and the last to leave. She and a dedicated team move many boxes that contain all of the items.

The Schoolhouse has returned to its regular operation now that Christmas is over. Once again a large team, well led and organized move in and decorate the classroom for Christmas with many decorations that evoke an earlier time and many that are handmade. Some are reproductions like the tin stars and icicles that are used on the tree. I remember growing up and putting the same decoration on a tree we had. A real tree is brought in and a number of us decorate and trim it. Each year I am amazed for the tree always seems to be one of the best we have had. I am very grateful for Jean Robinson's leadership in this event, but it would not take place without the large number of executive and volunteers who arrive and pick up on the various jobs. Many of the volunteers have done the same job for several years and simply show up and set to work.

After our last executive meeting we took, Ben and Marjorie Madill out to dinner as a way of showing them our appreciation for all of the help and support they have given us over the years. Both are a wealth of knowledge about the schoolhouse and the activities of an earlier time. When we do the Christmas decorations they are always there. For years Marjorie strung popcorn and cranberries to make a traditional tree garland to substitute. Still she helps create paper garlands and chains to decorate the classroom and she still makes her famous squares for refreshment afterwards. People may have met Ben at one of the events we have attended.



He has often been there to demonstrate rope making or to just share stories, but his support is much greater than that. He fills in the gaps with how the school was.

He has often been there to demonstrate rope making or to just share stories, but his support is much greater than that. He fills in the gaps with how the school was.

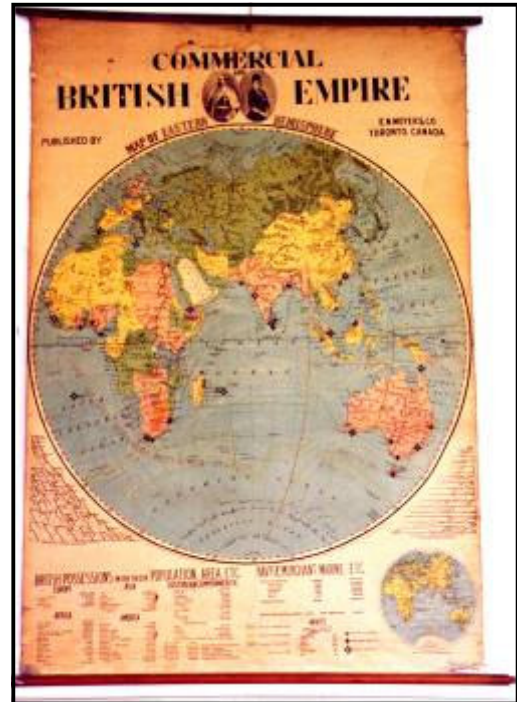
An Eco-friendly Schoolhouse

In days gone by The Old Britannia Schoolhouse was quite environmentally friendly. At first there was no electricity so light for the classroom came from the large windows. There was little waste from children's lunches which were brought to school in baskets, tins or tied in a square of cotton. Today the schoolhouse is attempting to return as much as possible to those eco-friendly days. Visiting classes are encouraged to bring lunches without plastic wraps and containers. Lights are used only when necessary. Recycling is practiced and we have a composter that provides fertilizer for the gardens. Future newsletters will provide more information about our efforts to meet the requirements of an eco-friendly school.

Maps Restoration Project

Dennis Taylor

After several years of planning we have had two of the wall maps preserved. This is a long and highly skilled job that has been done by someone who does museum preservations and restorations. The two maps preserved are for use in the classroom. At one time maps were made cheaply to be used for the classroom. These are important documents that are a time capsule of the past and in order for them to be useful, they must be preserved. The maps must be separated from their cloth back, deacidified and then attached to a new cloth back with an inner membrane to prevent further degradation. Many of the schoolhouse maps are well worn and may be missing small pieces. The whole map must be assembled upside down and then securely attached to the new backing. The maps are not restored to their original form, but preserved to prevent further deterioration and so some of the wear is noticeable. The two maps preserved, one of Ontario and one of Western Europe are now in excellent condition and back in the classroom to be used as they once would have been. In future we hope to continue the project and preserve more of the maps we have. Your donations help us to preserve our treasured artifacts and to acquire other items that would have been used in a one room schoolhouse.



This is one of the maps that has not yet been restored.

Adelaide, Emily, and Henry

Joan Reid

Adelaide, Emily, and Henry, a.k.a. Rosa Adelaide Hoodless, Rosa Emily Carr, and Rosa Henry Hudson, are the latest additions to the heritage rose garden at The Old Britannia Schoolhouse. All are from the Explorer series developed by the Department of Agriculture to be disease resistant and to be hardy enough to withstand Canada's harsh winter climate without special protection.



Adelaide Hoodless was a primary participant in the creation of the Women's Institutes in Canada, the National Council of Women, the Macdonald Institute in Ontario, and the Victorian Order of Nurses in the early years of the 20th Century. She was an active social reformer who was dedicated to improving the health of women and children. Her rose is a medium red.

Emily Carr was a significant landscape artist from British Columbia who painted the rainforest and native villages along the northern coast of the province during the early years of the 20th Century. The red rose named for her is the first in the Canadian Artist series introduced in 2007.



Henry Hudson explored the Canadian Arctic in the early 17th Century. Hudson Bay and Hudson Strait bear witness to his most famous discoveries. The rose named for him is a lush white of rugosa origin.



These roses join the ten Explorer roses, the five native roses, the Alba rose from Scotland, and the two 1930's ballerina roses already in the memorial rose garden. Plans are being made for name labels and a memorial rose garden sign to showcase this area.

Christmas Events

Eva Ardiel

Again this past year the Friends' annual pre-Christmas events were successful—both socially and financially. We sincerely thank everyone who supported The Old Britannia Schoolhouse and the Friends by purchasing our wares.



November 13th and 14th were busy days in the atrium of the board office. The sales committee worked hard selling schoolhouse wares. These were eagerly purchased by staff and visitors looking for interesting, different and inexpensive stocking stuffers. As always, we appreciated the assistance of the custodial staff who set up the tables for us and so willingly helped us move all of our boxes into the atrium and out again.



On November 28th the Friends met to decorate the classroom for our Open House and for the enjoyment of the classes that visited the schoolhouse in December. With everyone's help soon the crepe paper chains were made, the evergreen swags hung and the fir tree set up and decorated in Victorian style. To discourage mice we now have very authentic looking plastic popcorn, wooden cranberries and artificial gingerbread. Hand made decorations include cornucopia, paper fans, snowflakes, birds, paper doll chains and tiny drums. The classroom transformed, we were ready to enjoy a delicious supper of Jean Robinson's famous chili and other goodies prepared by Joan Moon and Jean. A special thank you to Jean and Ken Robinson for fetching the tree and greens and to Jean and Joan for orchestrating supper.

Christmas Events Cont'd



Our November 30th Open House provided an opportunity for us to chat about the schoolhouse with visitors and demonstrate our old-fashioned toys. As always the children were entranced. Some would even find one or two of these toys under their Christmas tree.

All our Christmas events were fun and successful. We look forward to seeing you next year.

Open Sundays

Daryl Cook

Open Sundays from 1 to 4 pm on the second Sunday of each month are a chance for the community to explore The Old Britannia Schoolhouse and to enjoy a variety of activities. This year each Open Sunday has had a different theme and this has been quite successful.



In September we enjoyed the results of the gardening season. In days past agriculture was an important part of community life. At school each child had his or her own little garden plot and in the spring planted vegetables. The gardens were carefully tended and in the fall the children gathered their harvest. Children visiting the schoolhouse last spring planted vegetables and at our September Open Sunday visitors were invited to wander through the garden. By mid September much of the produce had been picked but there were still carrots, turnips and tomatoes for visitors to share.



In October the whole classroom was infused with the smell of lavender. Our Victorian cottage garden had a huge crop of lavender this year, so on Open Sunday our guests made lavender sachets and lavender wands to take home and use in their closets to discourage moths or to tuck into drawers to give their clothes a pleasant scent. Children enjoyed making dolls from the teasels which also were abundant in the garden.



Our Open Sunday in November fell two days before Remembrance Day. We had an excellent display of memorabilia from both World War I and II including a scroll with the names of those from the Britannia community who had served in the first world war. It was an opportunity for adults and children to talk informally about the sacrifices of men and women both in the past and today.

Open Sundays Cont'd



In Victorian times the Christmas tree had become a popular part of the celebrations thanks to Queen Victoria's husband Prince Albert who brought the idea from Germany. Decorations were often handmade. In December our visitors painted pine cones and made simple paper ornaments to take home for their own trees. As always, the tree in the classroom was laden with hand made ornaments and topped with the Union Jack flag.



January was a special birthday celebration. Our first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald was born on January 11, the day of the open house, and would have been celebrating his 194th birthday. As it turned out, one of our young visitors was also celebrating a birthday with her friends so after a discussion about Sir John A. and a role playing lesson, we all enjoyed birthday cake complete with candles and the happy birthday song.



February saw a flurry of valentine making. There were samples of old valentines for visitors to look at and lots of ideas and materials for creating a card for someone special.

We are now looking forward to the next few months of interesting activities. Here are the dates and themes. We look forward to seeing you. As always light refreshments will be served.

- | | |
|----------|--|
| March 8 | A display of indoor games and toys. Play a game of skittles. |
| April 12 | Learn to recycle your china teacups by making attractive craft items. |
| May 10 | Enjoy a tour of our spring gardens. See our trilliums and Virginia bluebells |
| June 14 | Visit our summer garden with lupins, foxgloves and bachelor buttons in full bloom. A variety of plants will be for sale. |
| July 12 | Make lavender wands and raspberry tarts from produce harvested from the heritage garden |
| Aug. 9 | Taste our summer vegetables and fruits. |

POTATO PANCAKES

Circa 1910

- 4 medium potatoes (peeled)
- 1 shallot or very small onion
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- ½ cup flour
- ½ cup milk
- 4 Tbsp peanut oil
- 1 small egg
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- 1/16 cup melted butter
- 1/8 tsp nutmeg
- salt and pepper

Grate potatoes and shallot on a large-hole grater. Splash with lemon juice and squeeze out excess water.

Mix the flour, milk, egg, baking powder and nutmeg. Add this mixture to the potatoes, then add the melted butter.

Heat peanut oil in a large skillet and spoon a few spoons of the mixture into the skillet.

Fry until golden on the bottom side and then flip with a spatula, cook the same way on the other side

POTATO PANCAKES

Circa 2000

- 6 potatoes, pared
- 1 small onion, grated
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp pepper
- ¼ cup flour
- 1 tbsp oil
- 2 tsp baking powder
- Oil for frying

Grate potatoes and onion, drain well. Blend remaining ingredients and add to potato mixture

For the latest in news, interesting articles and fun and games be sure to check our website. The Current News page is updated monthly.

www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org

What Is It?



This was a very handy piece of equipment to have around. It saved a lot of time and effort on a task that we seldom do today. Can you identify it? The answer is at the bottom of this page.

Party Lines

Some of the 76 pupils who attended S.S.#12 between 1934 and 1944 had the same address—R.6 Brampton, though many still considered themselves residents of “Britannia”.

Many families shared the same party line for their phone service. The phone number for the Grahams was 48 r 31. To call them you would ring the operator and ask for number 48 ring 31. The operator plugged in to 48 and then gave three long rings and one short. The Grahams knew that three long rings followed by one short meant the call was for them. The Duntons, on the same party line, had 48 ring 21—two long rings and one short.

People who lived in small communities expected to know each others’ business. One wit commented, “I know we live a very dull life because no one bothers to listen in if we get a phone call.”

What would the operator do if your number was 48 r 12?

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.

This is a mangle. Today we think of “mangling” something as messing it up, but this mangle was used to press flat items such as sheets and table cloths. When women used flat irons heated on a wood stove for ironing, the mangle saved time. Today’s “no iron” fabrics have eliminated the need to press most bedding and table linens.