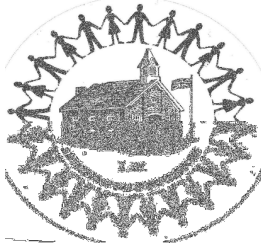




Autumn 2013



**2013-2014  
Schedule of Events**

Dec.8 Open House  
Feb. Heritage Brampton  
June 25 Strawberry Social  
July 15 Lemonade on the  
Lawn  
Sept to June 2 Open Sun-  
days

**School Visits  
2013-2014**

166 children visited the  
Schoolhouse in October

***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 ac-  
tivities and events organized  
by The Friends.

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[www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org](http://www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org)

**Remembering Benson A. (Ben) Madill  
1915 – 2013**

*In his 99<sup>th</sup> year Ben passed away peacefully, after a full and re-warding life, on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at Groves Memorial Hospi-tal, Fergus, Ontario. He leaves behind his beloved wife of 66 years, Marjorie (Tipping). He will always be remembered by his daughters and sons-in-law Bessie and Alan Simpson of Harris- ton and Shirley and Jim McFarlane of Guelph, as well as by his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Following the Celebra- tion of Ben's Life in Guelph on November 2<sup>nd</sup> family burial took place at Britannia Cemetery.*

Ben was born and grew up on the family farm on the 1<sup>st</sup> Line West, Toronto Township. He attended Britannia School in the 1920's and went on to Brampton High School. In 1946 he bought the farm on Hurontario just north of the present 401 where he and Marjorie lived and farmed for over 60 years. For many years the huge clock on their bank barn was a landmark and "time check" for those traveling down Hurontario until a heart-breaking fire destroyed their barn a few years ago. Over the years many friends have driven down the long laneway to the house Ben built in 1948; for a visit, to celebrate an occasion or to get something made or fixed. The welcome was always warm and generous. Ben always had something interesting to show or tell; one of his intriguing or funny clocks; a puzzle or game you were challenged to try; his latest project; an old pho- tograph; one of the treasures in his shed such as the old Britan- nia Post Office sign or his replica 1902 Oldsmobile; or, if you were lucky, a demonstration of his home-made wooden bicycle. What great chats were had in their big farm kitchen over coffee and Marjorie's delicious muffins, squares or butter tarts! Every- one drove back out that long driveway smiling, a little wiser and often with rhubarb, raspberries, a huge onion, blue potatoes or maybe a pumpkin from the Madill garden. Now, sadly, that lane- way and house are gone. Marjorie and Ben were the last of the former School Section #12 families to live in the area.

**Remembering Benson A. (Ben) Madill**  
**1915 – 2013**

Ben was an avid and generous supporter of the schoolhouse and the school farm. He supported the work of Streetsville Secondary School's Britannia Restoration Project in the 1970's. In 1982 when the Peel School Board took over the restoration and started a program there, Ben, with his wonderful memory and his in depth knowledge of the community, its families and it's history, was an invaluable resource. Often over the years after the bus had taken the children back to their home school, Ben would pop in with a puzzle, a marble game, a wooden toy or stilts for the classes to enjoy and to have a chat with the schoolmaster/mistress.

When the Schoolhouse program was in jeopardy Ben was one of the initiators of Friends of the Schoolhouse. He and Marjorie have been tireless supporters ever since. The Friends relied on them. It was always "ask Ben"; to fix the clock; to stop an old desk from wobbling; to make a new "old" double desk to complete the row; to rototill a patch for a garden; to make rope; to borrow his tractor or tandem bicycle; to cut up wood for Jacob's ladder kits or make puzzles to sell; to invade their kitchen for strawberry social preparations, etc. etc. etc., and to answer questions about the past, the community, farming or almost anything! Until they moved to Fergus, Ben and Marjorie were a part of everything the Friends did. A plaque in the schoolyard dedicates the historic rail fence to Ben and Marjorie to recognize in a small way their tremendous contribution to the schoolhouse and the Friends.

Marjorie and Ben were long time members and supporters of Britannia Church where Ben was on the board of stewards and served as an elder. Ben was also a member and enthusiastic supporter of a number of heritage and community associations including Heritage Mississauga, Peel Museum and Archives (PAMA), the Clock Collectors Association, Milton Steam Era, Cast Iron Seat Association and Peel Dufferin Plowman's Association. He and Marjorie traveled to many agricultural and heritage events, farm shows and fairs where he delighted young and old with his antiques, clocks from his huge collection, models, games and puzzles he had made, rope making, and of course, his stories. I'm sure Ben has made enough rope at these events to go around the world more than once and has sent thousands of kids home the proud owners of skipping ropes they made themselves.

Beside the elevator in the Peel School Board atrium is a beautiful Grandfather clock crafted by Ben and presented to the Board by his family to welcome the Board to its new location in Britannia in the 1980's.

Ben and Marjorie have been honoured twice with awards from Heritage Mississauga for their involvement in the community, and Ben received the Lieutenant Governor's Heritage Award for Lifetime Achievement in 2010.

**Remembering Benson A. (Ben) Madill**  
**1915 – 2013**

Ben's memories of growing up and raising his family in Britannia and of attending Britannia School are recounted for future generations in three books.

*Britannia School and School Farm .... and my school days*

(the proceeds from which Ben has generously donated to Friends of the School-house)

*Family History and Memoirs of Benson A Madill*

*Memoirs and Reflections of Benson A Madill, Volume 2*

In Volume 2 Ben devotes a full page to a quote from Abraham Lincoln:

***I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives.***

***I like to see a man live so that his place will be proud of him.***

That man is Benson A. Madill!



Ben loved people. He loved to talk and share his knowledge, skills and enthusiasm but he was also a good listener and always open to new information and ideas. He was creative, inventive and philosophical. He was generous and kind, a loyal friend and a well-wisher. He was honest, highly principled, had a great sense of fun and humour, and an amazing memory. He managed to live fully in the present while keeping a foot in the past. His warm smile and infectious laugh will linger in our hearts always.

**We thank you, Ben! Our lives have been made richer by having shared time and place with you.**

Autumn 2013

### **Message From The Chair**

Ruth Taylor

**T**

o everything there is a season... As the cold weather arrives, activities in the garden are winding down. The vegetables and fruit have been harvested. Some of them won awards at the Brampton Fall Fair. Schoolmistress Chapel made a batch of apple butter using the apples from the schoolhouse orchard. The flower gardens are being prepared for their winter's sleep. In the summer and fall we provided the setting for many sets of engagement and wedding photos. Once again we participated in the Brampton Fall Fair and opened the schoolhouse for Mississauga's Doors Open.

Now as the Christmas season is approaching, we are making plans to put up the Christmas tree and decorate the schoolhouse. This year Christmas sales will be combined with our Open Sunday on December 8. Come out and enjoy the festive atmosphere and some light refreshments.

### **Brampton Fair**

Karen Simmons

**T**

he Friends once again manned a display at the Brampton Fair in September. The space that we share with the cattle, poultry, and rabbits certainly reminds us of our rural roots. The old wooden toys and the skittles and marbles games never seem to lose the interest of both children and adults. Although we did not have as much stock available, sales were brisk. People like to buy our unique merchandise.



Eva had prepared a new display about the old school sections of Chinguacousy Township. This drew much attention from the older folk who had attended those schools. They were eager to talk to us about their memories, and some have offered to supply pictures.



A three day event like this requires a large team of volunteers working in shifts. For some, it is a bit of a journey to get there. Thank you so much for helping to make the event a success.

### ***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.**

**Message from the Schoolmistress**

Chris Chapel

@

Autumn traditionally is considered the season of change. Aside from the visible changes occurring in the natural world around us, change is afoot once again in the Schoolhouse itself. Marc Hogan and I have shared the role of Schoolmaster/mistress for the last two years. We have enjoyed our shared roles and the challenges of dividing our time between the Schoolhouse and the Field Centres' northern sites.

As of this September, Marc will no longer be Schoolmaster; happily, he's not completely out of the picture as he may step in occasionally to teach a day now and then. Gary Campbell, our colleague and long time employee at the Field Centres has been assigned to the role of Schoolmaster. He and I will be sharing the position as Marc and I did. Gary brings with him a wealth of knowledge and skills. A history buff with a flair for drama, Gary will fit perfectly into his new position. He has observed the program a few times with students and, true to form, is already fleshing out his Schoolmaster character and considering how he can put his own personal spin on his role. In addition to his other skills, Gary is an avid gardener. He has been instrumental in the development of a vegetable/flower garden at the Jack Smythe Field Centre and is looking forward to getting his knees dirty in the Schoolhouse garden as well. We've already been tossing around ideas for the next steps we'll take in our little vegetable patch. I'm looking forward to this next chapter in the life of the Schoolhouse.

Speaking of the garden, what would an autumn Schoolhouse newsletter be without a summary of this year's harvest? We were pleased to share our fruits and vegetables with our friends at the Board office next door through the summer. Thanks to their generous donations, we have "seed money", quite literally, for the spring and will be purchasing a new baseball bat.

The Schoolhouse orchard was a great success this year. Not only did our apples take first prize at the Brampton Fair, but we harvested enough to share with visitors at Doors Open, the Board office staff and with visiting students. We even had enough apples to try our hand at drying them and making apple butter! Once again, while working to preserve our harvest, my thoughts turned to the early inhabitants of the Britannia area. Could you imagine having to put away enough food for your family for the entire winter? And we think a weekly trip to the grocery store is a chore!

Visible evidence of our harvest can be seen when you come into the Schoolroom. Decorative "Indian" corn and garlic is hanging at the chalk boards while small sugar pie pumpkins brighten the platform and window sills. The students have been thrilled to take a little pumpkin back to school with them to decorate their classrooms. At recess, they've helped us harvest the last of the vegetables. Digging for carrots has been like hunting for treasure the last few weeks. In addition to carrots, several classes have gone home with tomatoes, swiss chard, chives and leeks, zucchini, squash and cabbage. Some had plans to make a big pot of soup to be shared amongst the students. What a great carry over and post visit lesson!

As we "fall back" and head into the winter season, our visitors may not have the opportunity to work in the garden but they can enjoy other aspects of the Schoolhouse that the change of seasons bring. It won't be long before we're decking the halls and evergreen boughs will replace the corn and pumpkins. Funny how the cycle of change is a reliable constant!

**Audrey Wilma Baird**

December 16, 1924 to May 22, 2013

The following article is a tribute to Audrey Baird. Audrey passed away peacefully at Trillium Health Centre. She was in her 89th year. Audrey was a well respected educator who had a long and distinguished career. She inspired great loyalty among her staff members and was like a magnet drawing people of all ages to her.

Audrey began her teaching career in a one room schoolhouse in Orillia. She was an early supporter of the Old Britannia Schoolhouse and demonstrated a life long support of education. Additionally she has financially supported the activities of the Friends. She earned the distinction of becoming the first woman principal in what is now the Peel District School Board. She spent 5 years as the principal at Hawthorn, one year at Ellengale and 10 years at Corliss. Audrey retired in 1979 but that did not end her commitment to education or her keen sense of duty as a volunteer. After retirement, Audrey ran the Teachers' Centre at Dunrankin Public School in Malton for nine years. She is fondly remembered not only for her contributions to education but also the wonderful baking she brought in every week. Audrey also volunteered at Queensway Hospital where she drove seniors to appointments.

Some of her many other accomplishments include six years as a Director for the Federation of Women Teachers of Ontario and five years as a Director for The Superannuated Women Teachers of Ontario (now known as The Retired Women Teachers of Ontario). The international society of educators known as Delta Kappa Gamma was an organization that was near and dear to Audrey's heart. Audrey was a founding member of Delta Chapter and remained a member for 49 years.

Audrey was an avid photographer and was rarely seen without a camera in her hand. The Delta Kappa Gamma, Delta Chapter's archives are full of many of her photographs. She chronicled all of the events and celebrations for the chapter.

Audrey was always well respected and loved in whatever place and position she found herself. In her retirement book, she had placed a letter she received from one of her pupils at her last school. It sums up the essence of Audrey Baird.

"Dear Miss Baird, I wish you can stay here for another year. We liked when you were here. I hope you come to visit us each day. When you retire please say bye to all the classes. Here is a poem. Roses are red, violets are blue, sugar is sweet but not as pretty as you. And you were kind to us. I just want to thank you for being a good principal." Audrey was a caring and loving soul and she will be greatly missed.

Submitted by Linda Kenny with thanks to Gail Marshall, Delta Kappa Gamma, who made the script of her eulogy available to me and Judy Watson, President of Delta Chapter who dug into the Delta Archives for material.

Annual  
**Christmas Open House**  
at  
**The Old Britannia Schoolhouse**  
5576 Hurontario Street (at Matheson Blvd) Mississauga  
on  
**Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013**  
**1:00 to 4:00 p.m.**

*See the schoolhouse festively decorated with evergreens and a Victorian Christmas tree*

\*

*Enjoy delicious home-made goodies and a cup of apple cider*

\*

*Pick up a stocking stuffer or two reminiscent of times gone by*



*Parking in the H.J.A. Brown Education Centre lot. Enter off Matheson Blvd, W. and continue to the back of the schoolhouse.*

## **Heritage Gardens**

Karen Simmons

**T**

he summer gardening season was certainly one for weeding, and the volunteers have done the best they could to get rid of thistles burdock and goldenrod. A new area of the old raspberry patch that we had previously cleared, and then sowed with annual seed, finally flourished. In late summer it was a colourful array of zinnias, morning glories, cornflowers, and several others. Perennial sweet pea has popped up in many places, and produces plentiful bloom. The Love Lies Bleeding that also came up from seed grew to over a metre tall. The large, trailing blossoms were quite striking.

Fall sales of perennials are a great opportunity to add to the gardens. New plantings have been added to several areas. We are grateful for donations from our friends' and neighbours' home gardens of hydrangea, sedum, daisies and hostas. The geraniums that were in the planters have been replaced with bright yellow mums. These will be transplanted into the gardens before winter, and hopefully provide lots of colour again next fall.

The fruit orchard and the vegetable garden again were excellent producers, winning several prizes at the Brampton Fair. Congratulations to Schoolmistress Chris and her helpers for the fine results of their efforts.

Many thanks to all the garden volunteers for your assistance this year. Hope to see you again next summer.



## **Decorating the Schoolhouse**

Jean Robinson

**F**

riends of The Schoolhouse will be gathering at The Schoolhouse on Nov.27,2013 at 3:00 pm to decorate the classroom for Christmas. We make paper chains, pine and cedar swags, and decorate the Christmas tree. Many hands make light work, so if you would like to join us for this event, please contact Jean at 905 826 3475 ( [jkrob@rogers.com](mailto:jkrob@rogers.com)). At Friends events we always have food. This time it is chili, salad and goodies so we need a head count. Hope to see many new faces there.

