

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse

1852-1959
restored 1982

Fall 2022

Christmas Past ...



2022-2023 Schedule of Events

Due to COVID 19 no events are planned at this time.

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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Message from the Chair
Ruth Taylor

As the Christmas season approaches, the Friends reminisce about past Christmases when we would gather at the Schoolhouse to bring in a fragrant evergreen tree and other greenery. The tree was decorated with old-fashioned ornaments, often handmade. Swags were hung above the blackboard along with paper chains. Crepe paper twists adorned the windows. Alas, with no classes coming to the Schoolhouse, it will remain undecorated for a third year. However, the Schoolhouse has many memories of past Christmases going back centuries when it was decorated and welcomed parents to the annual Christmas concert. Those memories will sustain it, as it waits patiently until it is once again decorated and comes alive.



We always had a real tree at home when I was growing up. My dad would tie a rope around the tree and anchor it to the door frames on either side as at least one cat had been known to climb up the tree. When it was discovered that my mother was allergic to evergreen trees, we got an artificial tree, which I apparently called "The Thing."

When we got married, we had a real tree for a few years. At some point, we switched to an artificial tree (Thing Two?) as we got tired of cleaning up fallen needles. We had that tree for many years until recently. One Christmas morning as we were eating breakfast, we heard a crash from the living room. Our current cat had knocked over the tree and the centre wooden pole had snapped. We gathered up the branches and ornaments, some broken. The next year we bought a pre-lit tree and used unbreakable ornaments.

Fall 2022

**From the Schoolmistress
Christine Chapel**



All programming at the Britannia Schoolhouse continues to be paused while we work on updating and revising program content so that many voices can be heard and history is presented from a variety of perspectives. There are so many stories to be shared about the history of the land in what is now Mississauga and the people who have lived here for thousands of years. With the help of the Equity and Indigenous teams at the Peel District School Board, we are hoping to revise our programs so that stories that have not really been shared before will be.

This is a necessary task. We have spoken to colleagues at other historic sites who are going through a similar transformation. There is a general awakening and realization that facilities that have traditionally addressed history through a Eurocentric lens must change their mindset and programming to include voices and stories of, in particular, Indigenous people and Black people. And the stories are compelling! We want visitors, all visitors, to feel welcome and included when they come to the Schoolhouse. We will do our best to ensure that the programs reflect the true history of the community where the schoolhouse has been situated for almost 200 years.

In the meantime, I encourage you to explore the deeper history of Peel. Heritage Mississauga is a wonderful resource. They have been putting out a series of comic books for students that help to tell the stories of Mississauga in a very graphic, appealing way, particularly for children. Please follow these links to read 4 comics that we have been sharing with teachers.

<https://heritagemississauga.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/LegendoftheCouncilFire.pdf>

<https://heritagemississauga.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/The-Grange-Volume-6-Credit-Mission-Comic-web.pdf>

<https://heritagemississauga.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/The-Grange-Volume-8-final-for-web.pdf>

<https://heritagemississauga.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/The-Grange-Vol11-Legend-of-the-NorthStar.pdf>

We will continue to keep you updated with our progress. Wishing you all a Happy New Year!

Stir Up Sunday
Margaret Storey



Stir Up Sunday is an old British baking tradition. This is the Sunday when families would gather together to stir up all the ingredients for the Christmas pudding, sometimes also called plum pudding. This special activity takes place on the last Sunday before Advent. This gives the pudding time to mature before it is reheated on Christmas Day. Yes, you might have guessed that sometimes brandy would be used in the mixture!! As the old English proverb says, "Many hands make light work"! Each family member would take a turn stirring the mixture of flour, breadcrumbs, raisins, currants, glacé cherries, citrus peel, eggs, butter, (suet in the early days), sugar, grated carrot or apple, nuts and spices!! Sometimes they would make a wish as they stirred. Ingredients vary depending on the many recipes available! Sometimes a silver coin is hidden in the pudding. Whoever gets the coin in their serving is said to have good luck for the coming year. Just before serving the pudding can be doused with brandy and set alight! What a spectacle that is when the lights are turned off!! Once the flames are out, slices would then be served with brandy butter, cream or brandy custard. So enjoy your Christmas pudding whether it is homemade or one of the many varieties now available at bakeries or supermarkets.

Our Large World, Is Quite Small
Christine Chapel

It is expected that a 170 year old schoolhouse is in need of constant maintenance. A few years back, work was being done in the foyer at the Schoolhouse. Unfortunately, the hanging light fixture there was bumped and fell crashing to the floor. Since the globe is of a design that is particular to the one room schoolhouses at the turn of the last century, the quest for a replacement has been a long one.

A few weeks ago, I received a Facebook Marketplace post from Lisa (Cafaro) advertising four identical Schoolhouse fixtures exactly like we were looking for. I live in a small town named Erin. Coincidence number 1 - the person selling the fixtures also lives in Erin.

I contacted Greg and went to his house to pay for and pick up our purchase. Of course, we got to chatting and when I told him where this fixture was headed, I could see a lightbulb go on (figuratively). Coincidence number 2 - he knew exactly where the Schoolhouse was and was certain that he had spent some time there in the 90's. He couldn't remember exactly what had brought him there but said he would put some thought into it.

The next day, I received a message from Greg who is in advertising. He went back to his files and found that he did a graphic for a company called SCHOOL HOUSE ENTERPRISES. He used the Britannia Schoolhouse as a model. He sat in front of the Schoolhouse for much of a day doing sketches that he used back in his studio to create the graphic seen below.

I am happy to report that the historically appropriate globe will soon be installed in the front foyer and that we have yet another fun Schoolhouse story to tell.



Stained Glass Dessert
Ruth Taylor

When I was growing up, our traditional dessert at Christmas was a family recipe for Christmas pudding. After a while we switched to a lighter dessert.

Graham wafer crust: 3 dozen crushed graham wafers (2 ½ cups)
½ cup melted butter ½ cup brown sugar
Combine these ingredients and turn into a 9' by 13' pan. Spread evenly.

Filling: 1 package each 3 different jelly powders.
eg. red, green, yellow
1½ cups hot water for each jelly powder
1 envelope plain gelatine
¼ cup cold water
1 cup hot pineapple juice
1½ cups whipping cream
½ cup white sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla

Method: Dissolve each jelly powder separately in hot water. Chill till firm, then cut in ½' squares. Soften plain gelatine in cold water, then add hot juice. Cool but don't let it set. Whip cream, add sugar and vanilla. Fold the pineapple mix into the cream. Add cut jelly, fold to combine. Turn onto the graham cracker crust. Chill and serve.



Tips: Metal cake pans work well for the jelly. Instead of buying pineapple juice, juice drained from a 19 oz. will give you enough. You can substitute a package of whipped topping mix for the whipped cream.

Fall 2022

A Heritage Loss



Several years ago a former Britannia Schoolhouse student attended one of the Sunday Open Houses. Mr. Freeland was excited to see the maple tree at the front of the schoolhouse that he had helped to plant years before. It was now a large tree and he was delighted to learn that each spring it was used to show the children how sap was collected to make maple syrup. Sadly, two years ago the tree was cut down by the company building the LRT on Hurontario Street. Another heritage loss for the schoolhouse and Mississauga.

Tweet Tweet!

Follow us on Twitter, @PDSBBritanniaSH. Get the latest on Open Sundays, events and other news. We also post pictures of the school, grounds and gardens. If you visit the schoolhouse be sure to tweet a picture or message so we know you were there. Tweet you later!



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.

Check our website often for the latest information.
www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org

Fall 2022

Garden News
Marg Carson



Mother Nature has been busy in the Schoolhouse gardens for the past two and a half years. A spring tour of the area revealed a bounty of weeds and sumac and buckthorn saplings. Despite the summer heat, work in the gardens has resumed.

On the north side of the schoolhouse Globe Thistles, pink Phlox, purple Speedwell and pink Daylilies were

Attention was first focused on the beds around the schoolhouse. The "Butterfly Garden" was rejuvenated with Coneflowers, Blanket flowers, Liatris, Bee Balm, Black-eyed Susans, Columbine and Obedient plants. The sunny south bed saw the addition of some native plants e.g. Ironweed, Blue Vervain and Swamp

With much help from volunteers, the area around Ben's Corner was weeded and the overgrowth of Sumac and Buckthorn trees was removed. The existing shrubs have been pruned. Flowering shrubs have been added along with Narcissus bulbs around Ben's plaque.

The rambling roses have been cut back to reveal the sundial dedicated to Eva Ardiel. Spirea shrubs, fall As-ters and Allium bulbs have been planted around it.

There is still a lot of work to do in the gardens but this will need to wait until next spring.

As the gardening season draws to an close, a big thank you to the volunteers who have given their time to water, weed, and prune the gardens. With their support a great deal has been accomplished.