

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse

1852-1957
restored 1982

Summer/Early Fall Issue 2004



2004-2005

Schedule of Events

- September 9 Board Office staff
corn roast at noon.
Schoolhouse open for
visitors
- September 17-19 Brampton Fair
- October 9-11 Britannia Fall Fair
- November 18 Christmas Sale at the
Board Office
- November 28 Christmas Open
House
- February 11-13 Heritage Showcase
- June 28 Strawberry Social
- July 1 Canada Day at City
Hall



*Ben tills the new schoolhouse gardens.
In the 1920's he had a schoolyard garden
plot almost in this same location.*

Ben Madill's Memories

It is sad to see the farms, the fences, the driveways, the barns, the houses, the bush and the trees that once dotted the landscape all giving way to construction of a new city. The old landmarks are gone.

The farmers, neighbours and friends I grew up with have gradually moved away. Some to start a new life on another farm. Some took it as a chance to retire. In all cases the roads such as side roads and lines have been given new names. Some old roads have been closed off and many new roads have wound their ways through the farm properties. The change has been so great that old timers cannot even see or find the spot where their house and barn once stood or locations of the driveway (or lane as it was called). This great change has come to the land north of the C.P.R. tracks north of Cooksville in about 30 years. About 20 years for the land north of Base Line (Eglinton Avenue) There would be less of the good farm land lost to development if farmers could compete in price against developers.

It is sad to see many of my life long neighbours, friends, school chums and others being stricken with heart attacks, cancer, arthritis and many other health conditions. Many of my friends and neighbours much younger than I, have departed from this world. It is a short journey down this winding road of life. You cannot choose your time on earth but you can choose to live each day like you will be here forever.

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:
Dennis Taylor
dwtaylor@aztec-net.com
Daryl Cook
dlcook@echo-on.net

Need more information?

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

One of the happiest times of my life would have been when I bought a farm and got married. It was a challenge. The challenge ahead was to build a house and pay off the mortgage. I did not plan on replacing the barn 5 years later because of fire.

When I started school in 1921, Hurontario Street (Centre Road, as we called it) was a gravel road. All other roads in Toronto Township, now Mississauga) were dirt roads. During the 1930's the snowplows started to make their way along the roads in the winter months.

During my lifetime I have witness 3 generations rise from infants to adulthood and the beginning of the fourth generation. First we begin to creep and then to walk. Then to school to prepare ourselves to enter into the workforce and society.

My theory is that you can progress more financially by using your body from your ears up than from your ears down.

Life is as you make it. You create your own happiness. Give thought to what you say and do so you will never regret. Give help to others as you go, plan for the future and hope for a long retirement. Looking back, life feels like a short journey.

For many years we looked forward to the year 2000 and wondered if we would ever see it. Well, it has come and gone and we now are working on the year 2004, a new millennium.

As of February 2, 2001 the passing of my brother Earl left me the last surviving member of my family of four.

Editor's note: Ben Madill attended the Old Britannia School in the 1920's. He and his wife Marjorie have given many hours of their time to support the Friends of the Schoolhouse. Recently he wrote these impressions and memories of his life in the Britannia community.

The Friends Honour the Madills

On a perfect Spring Sunday in May friends and family gathered at The Old Britannia Schoolhouse to recognize and celebrate the many contributions Ben and Marjorie have made as members of The Friends of the Schoolhouse. A painting of the schoolhouse by Scott Taylor was presented on behalf of the Madills to the Peel District School Board to be hung in the new Centre for Education and Training building when it is built. In accepting the gift Ben regaled us with hilarious memories of his time at S.S.#12.



The 1950's Rolls Royce limo arrives at the Madill farm to take Ben and Marjorie to the schoolhouse.



Ben recalls his schooldays.



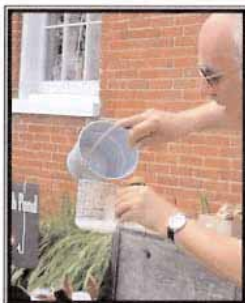
The Madills cut their cake.

Family Fun Day Picnic

The Queen Victoria celebration held in May for many years was changed this year to a family picnic in June. The weather co-operated with bright sunshine and a light breeze, perfect for kite flying. The midway was popular as usual with children trying to knock down the skittles, catch a fish in the fishpond and get a pail full of milk from the cow. Young and old participated in races including the sack race and kick the shoe. Schoolmistress Melissa Jacobs had full classes of participants each time she did a role play. The children especially liked playing the marble game. The highlight of the afternoon was a performance of *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* by students from Sherwood Mills Public School under the direction of Karen Sexton. Although there were not as many visitors as we hoped would attend, those who came enjoyed the afternoon and learned a little more about the history of the Old Britannia Schoolhouse.



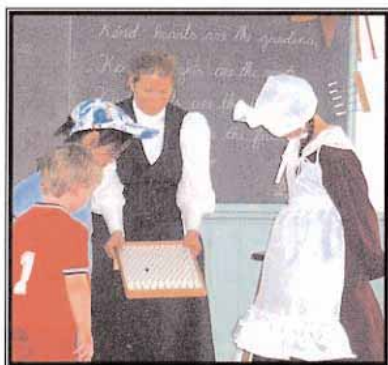
Kite Flying



George Christian measures the "milk"



Start of the sack race



Schoolmistress Melissa demonstrates the marble game



The Pied Piper of Hamelin

Reception for Trustees and Senior Administration

Trustees and Senior Administration of the Peel District School Board attended an Open House at the Old Britannia Schoolhouse in May. A light supper was served by the Catering Committee. Guests explored the classroom, looking at the many historic artifacts and asking questions of the members of the Friends who hosted the event. Eva Ardiel gave a short presentation outlining the activities of the Friends and highlighting the need to maintain the schoolhouse in order to preserve it for future generations of students. High on the list of repairs needing to be done is the rebuilding of the two chimneys and repointing the brickwork. Janet McDougald, Board Chair, spoke of the Board's appreciation of the work of the Friends and of the importance of the school/farm property. The friends appreciate the donation made by the Trustees and Senior Administration following the reception.



Ben Madill talks with Janet McDougald

Come for a visit

In addition to the scheduled events throughout the year (see page 1), the schoolhouse is open to visitors on the second Sunday afternoon of every month. The schoolhouse is also available for a fee for small gatherings such as meetings, retirement receptions and weddings of fewer than 35 people.

Strawberry Social

Perhaps the most successful event the Friends hold each year is the Strawberry Social in June. This year was no exception. Almost 300 people enjoyed strawberry shortcake and tea. Some lucky visitors won prizes in the draws held several times during the lunch hour. Those not lucky enough to win a prize were able to shop at the sales table for old-fashioned toys, greeting cards, Friends T-shirts and other interesting items. All proceeds from the Strawberry Social support the program at the schoolhouse. Don't miss this "delicious" event next year!



Eva Ardiel and Mary Corrigan check the sales table

From the Brampton Conservator September 27, 1928

A pupil was having trouble with punctuation and was being called down by the teacher.

"Never mind, Sonny," said the visiting school board president, consolingly, "It's foolish to bother about commas. They don't amount to much anyway."

"Don't they?" replied the teacher. Turning to one of the pupils she ordered the boy to write on the board this sentence: "The president of the board says the teacher is a fool."

"Now," she continued "put a comma after 'board' and another after 'teacher'."

Canada Day

The Friends of the Schoolhouse celebrated Canada Day with a booth at the City Hall.

Frances Kay organized the display with help from George Christian, Joan Reid and Marg Carson. As you can see from the photos it was a successful day with many visitors but the biggest challenge was holding onto the sun shelter in the



stiff breeze. Marg is doing her best in the middle photo to keep it from flying away. In the top photo Frances is demonstrating one of the toys. The bottom photo shows the booth with



it's display of old-fashioned toys. Children and adults alike are fascinated by these simple toys—no batteries or electronic gizmos in sight! The sales committee sold many items. It was a happy and successful Canada Day event.

Annual Meeting

At the annual meeting of the Friends of the Schoolhouse in early July we reviewed the year's events, assessing the success of each. Shirley Hoad the treasurer reported that we are in good financial shape. After a pot luck lunch we spent the afternoon planning for 2004-2005. The new executive was elected and the meeting adjourned at 3:30. A long day but a productive one. New members are always welcome to join the committee. We work hard but have fun too. Call either Frances Kay (905-567-3573) or Eva Ardiel (905-459-9158) if you are interested in helping.



The New Executive for 2004-2005
 Standing L-R: Shirley Hoad, Treasurer
 Joan Reid, Vice Chair
 Eva Ardiel, Executive Director
 Cathy Harper, Past Chair
 Seated L-R: Ruth Taylor, Secretary
 Frances Kay, Chair

We thank those who have donated since April 2004

Meadowvale Village School Parent Council	
Mississauga South Historical Society	
Streetsville United Church Women's Group	
Valerie Arnold-Judge	Brad MacDonald
Beryl Ford	Don Stevens
Daljit Gill	Ruth Thompson
Steven Kavanaugh	Rick Williams
Warren Kennedy	Barbara S. Johnston

The Schoolhouse Gardens



Purple coneflower and hollyhock are two of many native plants blooming in the meadow garden. We're waiting for the blue Fall asters to make an appearance in September.



"Gerty", our resident garter snake is shy but visits occasionally



A perfect gardening summer of gentle rains and warm but not hot temperatures has made the gardens grow beautifully. The hollyhocks are almost twice Daryl's 5 foot 3 inch height.

From the Chair



As in-coming chair of Friends of The Old Britannia Schoolhouse this year, I would like to say hello to everyone. I have enjoyed being on the Committee and being a "Friend" for seven years. We have a great time preparing our events, and will be busy again this year from September until July 1st. All of the committee members work together which makes the preparations enjoyable. Everyone, aside from the time given to The Schoolhouse, has a career, likes to travel and has family and grandchildren to enjoy, but somehow we all make time for The Old Britannia Schoolhouse.

See you in September,
Frances Kay, Chair

Glimpses of a Lost Community

Joan Reid has created a scrapbook of interesting tales about the Britannia community. Here are two pages for you to preview. Order information is provided in the box below if you would like to obtain your own copy.

The Brampton Conservator - December 25, 1890

BRITANNIA

A large gathering of people assembled at the residence of Mr. Matthews, 1st line west, on Wednesday ev'g and spent a pleasant time playing parlor games and other amusement.

The annual entertainment of the public school was held on Tuesday afternoon, 23rd inst. The program was an interesting one, consisting of songs, choruses, recitations, etc., by the little folks; violin and organ duets by Messrs. Snider and Wilcox; solos by Mrs. Coleman, Bonham and Messrs. Wilcox and L. Dunton. Short speeches were made by several gentlemen of the neighborhood and Mr. Jas. Jackson of Meadowvale. The feature of the day was an address and presentation to Miss Lawson, who is giving up the school. The address was read by Miss Clara Johnson. The presents were a plush writing desk and a gold friendship ring set with diamonds. Miss Lawson's reply was very feeling. After the literary efforts tea was served. Trustee John McCauley occupied the chair, and succeeded in keeping the large audience in order.



This picture appeared in an advertisement in *The Brampton Conservator* on June 6, 1891.

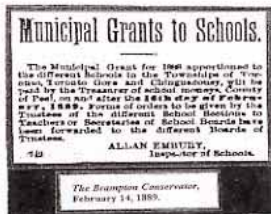
The Streetsville Review - December 14, 1890

Britannia Public School

HONOR ROLL FOR NOVEMBER

Senior IV. - Fred Wright, Lucy Bonham, Eddie Culnan.
 Junior IV. - Alice Wright, Mary Johnson, Edna Chester.
 Senior III. - Willie Stephenson, Maggie Brown, Willie Culnan.
 Junior III. - Ethel Night, Alice Bonham, Cecilia Carberry.
 Senior II. - Maud Carberry.
 Junior II. - Olive Wright, Donald Johnston, James Culnan.
 I. - Nellie O'Neill, Mammie Giffen, Wilmer Greenhalgh.

E. LAWSON, Teacher.



The following are now available from

*The Friends
of
The Old Britannia Schoolhouse*

1. *Glimpses of a Lost Community, A Britannia Scrapbook, Part I (1827-1890)*. 408 pages. \$20.00 without binder.
2. *Historic Puzzles, Games, Funny Fold-Ups*. 213 pages. \$3.00.
3. *More Historic Puzzles, Games, Funny Fold-Ups*. 213 pages. \$3.00.
4. *500 More Historic Puzzles, Games, Funny Fold-Ups*. 213 pages. \$3.00.

Contact: Eva Artzell - (905) 459-9158.

Perfect for your classroom
or for a gift



Friends of the Schoolhouse offer for sale an unusual selection of souvenirs, reproduction toys, slates, quill pens and gift items reminiscent of past times. To receive an illustrated catalogue phone Eva at 905-459-9158.

Glimpses of a Lost Community

Joan Reid has created a scrapbook of interesting tales about the Britannia community. Here are two pages for you to preview. Order information is provided in the box below if you would like to obtain your own copy.

The Brampton Conservator - December 25, 1890

BRITANNIA

A large gathering of people assembled at the residence of Mr. Matthews, 1st line west, on Wednesday ev'g and spent a pleasant time playing parlor games and other amusement.

The annual entertainment of the public school was held on Tuesday afternoon, 23rd inst. The program was an interesting one, consisting of songs, choruses, recitations, etc., by the little folks; violin and organ duets by Messrs. Snider and Wilcox; solos by Mrs. Coleman, Bonham and Messrs. Wilcox and L. Dunton. Short speeches were made by several gentlemen of the neighborhood and Mr. Jas. Jackson of Meadowvale. The feature of the day was an address and presentation to Miss Lawson, who is giving up the school. The address was read by Miss Clara Johnson. The presents were a plush writing desk and a gold friendship ring set with diamonds. Miss Lawson's reply was very feeling. After the literary efforts tea was served. Trustee John McCauley occupied the chair, and succeeded in keeping the large audience in order.



This picture appeared in an advertisement in *The Brampton Conservator* on June 6, 1891.

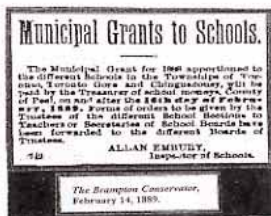
The Streetsville Review - December 14, 1890

Britannia Public School

HONOR ROLL FOR NOVEMBER

Senior IV. - Fred Wright, Lucy Bonham, Eddie Culnan.
 Junior IV. - Alice Wright, Mary Johnson, Edna Chester.
 Senior III. - Willie Stephenson, Maggie Brown, Willie Culnan.
 Junior III. - Ethel Night, Alice Bonham, Cecilia Carberry.
 Senior II. - Maud Carberry.
 Junior II. - Olive Wright, Donald Johnston, James Culnan.
 I. - Nellie O'Neill, Mammie Giffen, Wilmer Greenhalgh.

E. LAWSON, Teacher.



The following are now available from

The Friends of The Old Britannia Schoolhouse

1. *Glimpses of a Lost Community, A Britannia Scrapbook, Part I (1827-1890)*. 408 pages. \$20.00 without binder.
2. *Historic Puzzles, Games, Funny Fold-Ups*. 213 pages. \$3.00.
3. *More Historic Puzzles, Games, Funny Fold-Ups*. 213 pages. \$3.00.
4. *500 More Historic Puzzles, Games, Funny Fold-Ups*. 213 pages. \$3.00.

Contact: Eva Artiel - (905) 459-9158.

Perfect for your classroom
or for a gift



Friends of the Schoolhouse offer for sale an unusual selection of souvenirs, reproduction toys, slates, quill pens and gift items reminiscent of past times. To receive an illustrated catalogue phone Eva at 905-459-9158.