

# The Old Britannia Schoolhouse

1852-1959  
restored 1982

Winter Issue 2011



## *Our recent activities*

Christmas sales at the Board Office

Christmas Open House at the schoolhouse

February – Heritage Brampton

Open Sundays

Students visiting for a day

In November—505

In December - 278

In January - 245

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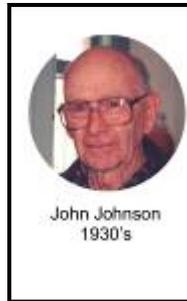
[www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org](http://www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org)

## *The Johnson Children at Britannia School*

Eva Ardiel

The Johnson children attended Britannia School from 1930 to 1944.

**John and Allen** Johnson worked together as caretakers of the Britannia School, for when a hired man a 10 hour day). It was children attending the takers. Their job in-schoolroom daily, the floor in the summer, dows, and starting the enough in the morning,



John Johnson  
1930's

\$50/yr. ( at a time would work for \$1 for not unusual to have school to act as care-cluded sweeping the washing and oiling cleaning the win-fire in winter early to have it warm for 9

o'clock. When John and Allen graduated they passed the position on to their brothers and sisters. The Johnson children worked together as a family, and held the position of caretaker, from 1930 to 1944. When **Bill and Florence** took over, the salary for the year went up to \$75/yr. The year after Bill graduated, Florence was caretaker on her own. She bought her 1<sup>st</sup> horse with the \$75. she had earned that year.

**Merrill Clifton Johnson** was a School Trustee at Britannia School from 1934 to 1941.

**Luella Edith Paisley (b.9.9.1914)** taught at Britannia School from 1939-1941 until she married Allen Johnson.

Luella taught in Bloomington for 5 years, then took a teaching position at Britannia School in 1939 earning \$800/yr (\$300/yr more than Bloomington). That included room and board at the school farm, with the Ellis family.

The following year, in 1940, she received another raise, earning \$900/yr in 10 payments of \$90 a month.

Luella Paisley married Allen Johnson on April 12, 1941, at her parent's home in Bloomington. Allen and Luella met while she was teaching his brothers and sister at Britannia School. Luella stopped teaching, after they were married and found a teacher friend of hers to finish teaching the year at Britannia School.

## *From the Chair*

Shirley Hoad

As the past year drew to a close, I thought the Friends of the Schoolhouse can be pleased with the successes we have enjoyed. All of our large events from the Strawberry Social in June to our Hallowe'en Night and Christmas Sales were well attended by our members and the general public. The awareness of the existence of the Schoolhouse and its value for our present and future students is enhanced when you support our activities and we are able to finance the program. Thank you to all who continue to support us, and we look forward to seeing you again this year.



Winter has settled in and the garden is sleeping

The winter has settled over Britannia Schoolhouse, and our flower and vegetable gardens are “sleeping” under a blanket of snow, gathering energy for the coming spring. Our school master and Joan Reid have been pouring over seed catalogues and nursery booklets choosing new strains of vegetables to grow, and heritage flowers to establish in our Victorian garden.

Events planned for this year include our ongoing Open Sunday programs, participation in the Heritage Week activities during February, the Strawberry Social, probably some hosting of retirements and other programs related directly to the schoolhouse program, (i.e. History Fair, and Ecofest).

Our organization is a success because of the many volunteers who give of their time and talents to make each of our events and efforts work. As the new year begins, and you have resolved to be of assistance to others, we are always able to do more with more helpful hands. A couple of hours given occasionally allows you an opportunity to see first hand the building and the lands that surround the schoolhouse. If you wish to be a part of this, and work with a group of energetic and welcoming people, please contact me at [shoad@bell.net](mailto:shoad@bell.net).



Volunteers like Joan Moon are greatly appreciated.

## *Britannia Farm Proposal Update*

In early February the city of Mississauga approved the relocation of the three heritage buildings at the south east corner of the Britannia Farm. The Gardner-Dunton House, the farmhouse and the Conover barn will be moved closer to the schoolhouse. This will facilitate the development of 32 acres at the corner of Hurontario Street and Bristol Road. Income from the lease of the land will help the Peel District School Board to expand the use of the farm property for the benefit of children.

## *From the Visiting Schoolmistress*

Christine Chapel

As I step into the role of Schoolmistress while Schoolmaster Patterson is away, I have had the opportunity to reflect on life in a one room Schoolhouse. Following are some observations from a visiting Schoolmistress.

- One of the prettiest sights is the Schoolhouse on a cold winter morning, sun streaming in through the windows.
- A child's concept of time and reality is different than an adult's. I have been asked numerous times now if I was Schoolmistress when the Schoolhouse opened (although that may be saying something about my appearance!).
- Our education system has changed greatly. Corporal punishment has been abolished (hooray) as has rote learning, but at the Schoolhouse children still enjoy chorale recitation, spelling bees and cursive writing (which also seems to be on its way out).
- Simple pleasures are still popular. Give children a big, open field and freedom and they can make their own fun. They can keep themselves entertained at great length with simple wooden toys and old-fashioned board and word games. Who needs video games?
- Although easy to romanticize, being a teacher in the 1800's and turn of the century would have been, as dictated by the times, a very challenging, at times tedious and isolating profession, particularly for women. Not to say modern day teachers don't experience the same at times, but they have colleagues and professional support and things certainly have changed for the better for women.

Living history is a powerful educational tool. How better to learn about the life of a student more than 100 years ago than by living it for a day in a real, old, one room Schoolhouse? It is invaluable!

I continue to learn and have fun in my interim role.



### *Membership Drive*

**If you haven't already renewed your membership in the Friends of the Schoolhouse for 2011 it's time to do so. We welcome new members. Membership forms can be downloaded and printed from our website, [www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org](http://www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org).**

**Members play a vital part in preserving the schoolhouse and maintaining and expanding the programs for children who spend a day experiencing school life of long ago. Members receive four newsletters a year, additional notices of events, and are invited to an appreciation "Lemonade on the Lawn" event in July. In addition there are opportunities to volunteer on committees and at events.**

## *A St. Patrick's Day Rainbow*



Irish folklore would have us believe that there is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. So far no one has ever found one but I can't help thinking of that pot of gold whenever I see a beautiful rainbow. We can't give you the pot of gold but you can create your own rainbow of colours. Here's how.

### *You need:*

Red, blue and yellow food colour  
1 cup milk  
Liquid dish soap  
Shallow bowl

### *Directions:*

Pour the cup of milk into the shallow bowl.  
Think of the numbers on the face of a clock.  
Add 3 drops of red food colour to the milk at one edge of the bowl where the number 10 would be on a clock.  
Add 3 drops of blue food colour to the milk at one edge of the bowl where the number 6 would be on a clock.  
Add 3 drops of yellow food colour to the milk at one edge of the bowl where the number 2 would be on the clock.  
Be careful not to jiggle the bowl or mix the colours.  
Squeeze a drop of liquid detergent in the center of the bowl.  
Watch what happens.

### *What happened?*

The dish soap does not mix with the milk. Instead it floats on top and spreads over the surface. As it spreads, it grabs the food colour. Where the colours meet they combine to form new colours – the colours of the rainbow.

Red + Yellow = orange

Red + Blue = violet

Blue + Yellow = green

*From: dltk kids website*

### *Send Someone a Card*

You don't need to be Irish to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. The Victorians loved sending greeting cards. Christmas, Easter, Valentines Day, birthdays, weddings, just about any festive occasion was an excuse to send a card. St. Patrick's Day was one of these times and there are still old cards to be found tucked in boxes and drawers. Here's a sample. Why not make your own and send it to someone special!





*From the Sales Committee*

Eva Ardiel

November 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> were busy days for the Friends as we presented our huge array of items for sale in the atrium at H.J.A.Brown Education Centre.

We had lots of new “\$5.00 and under” stocking stuffers as well as several new slightly more expensive items including hand carved Bogorodsk action toys, Russian Santa and Christmas tree dolls, hand painted pecking chickens, custom lasered (The Old Britannia Schoolhouse) wooden Chinese Checker, Checkers and Snakes and Ladder games, - and more. The lovely ribbon angels, made by Karen Simmons and the “make-it-yourself” decoration kits put together by Joan Reid were also very popular.

These two “most-successful-so-far” days at the Board Office would not have been possible without the co-operation and support of the Peel Board staff. We can’t thank the custodial staff enough for their cheerful assistance setting up tables, etc. for us and for moving all of our boxes from our cars to the atrium and back to our cars again.

Our annual Christmas Open House is always special and this year was no exception. Of course the schoolhouse looked and smelled lovely all decked out with its tree and evergreens. The delicious goodies made by the Friends’ committee members and the apple cider were enjoyed by all who attended, as was the beautiful Christmas music Shirley McFarlane provided on the piano. (Thank you Shirley!) I’m sure many items from our sales tables ended up under various Christmas trees.

The day was also made special by the presence of Marjorie and Ben Madill. We miss seeing them as often now since their move to Fergus. It made it all seem “right” to have them there for Open House. Also it was special to have little Nanami Patterson there in her cute red velvet Santa outfit. She charmed everyone!

We thank everyone who supported the schoolhouse by attending these events and by purchasing our merchandise. We also appreciate the enthusiasm expressed about the selection of items we offer for sale.

Thanks go to everyone who helped make these events successful – Linda Bowman, Lis Braun, Marg Carson, George Christian, Daryl Cook, Mary Corrigan, Gail Cumberland, Sandra Emerson, Cathy Harper, Shirley Hoad, Val and Ray Hosty, Frances Kay, Linda Kenny, Mary Light, Ben and Marjorie Madill, Mary McDonald, Sandy McGowan, Yukiko Minami, Joan Moon, Bronwyn Moon-Craney, Katharine Moon-Craney, Judy Paget, Dennis Patterson, Ashlyn Proeller, Corina Proeller, Joan Reid, Jean and Ken Robinson, Olga Stevenson, Ruth and Dennis Taylor and Eva Ardiel.

TEACH CHILDREN TO LIVE HAPPILY

Speaking on modern education to members of Queen Elizabeth Home and School Association, E. R. Underhill, public school inspector for Peel County, said that the aims of elementary education are to teach the child to live a full and abundant life and to be publicly useful and privately happy.

Mr. Underhill said that modern teaching aims to develop love of knowledge, an interest in study and good study habits. Physical and mental health are stressed, also the development of desirable character traits and ability to get along with others.

*Cooksville Review - March 18, 1948*

## *Christmas At The Old Britannia Schoolhouse*

Jean Robinson

The Christmas season at The Schoolhouse begins when a group of "Friends" meet to decorate the classroom with a real Christmas tree. On November 27<sup>th</sup>, Ken and Jean Robinson hauled in the Fraser Fir Christmas tree which was set up in the front corner of The Schoolhouse. The tree looked very festive decorated with antique ornaments, tinsel icicles, cranberry and popcorn strings and small white candles. Above all the blackboards we put cedar and pine boughs with red and green paper chains which are de rigueur and were made to Ben Madill's exacting standards even though Ben and Marjorie could not join us this year. Daryl Cook designed and decorated a wreath for the door. Shirley Hoad and Marg Carson decorated the urns, which hold a profusion of plants in the warmer weather, with dried grasses, osier branches and evergreen boughs. After the Victorian decorations were hung on the tree and all the other decorations completed, we were ready for supper. Joan Moon and Jean Robinson made sure that we were well fed.

We sat down to a chili supper with lots of home made Christmas goodies and toasted the successes of the year 2010. Many Friends helped with this event and our gratitude goes out to all. If you would like to be included as a helper in any or all of these events in 2011, please contact Eva (905 459 9158) or Jean (905 826 3475)

The culmination of the Christmas season for "Friends" at The Schoolhouse came on Sunday, November 28<sup>th</sup>. Our many dedicated volunteers opened the doors at 1:00pm and welcomed friends and neighbours for the Christmas Sale. There were wooden toys, antique puzzles, optical toys, beeswax candles, some new toys and many, many small stocking stuffers and other items for sale including lavender sachets and teasel creatures made from plants in the schoolhouse garden. We had fewer guests than usual, perhaps owing to the Mississauga Santa Claus Parade held in Streetsville on the same day, but in spite of that our shoppers enjoyed the hot mulled cider and Christmas cookies to keep up their strength and ward off the cold outside. For many people who came, it was their first visit to The Schoolhouse but I am sure that it will not be their last.

Happy New Year! See you in 2011!

### *Celebrate Spring with a Day in the Maple Bush*

Wednesday March 16 to Saturday March 19

10 am to 3 pm

Jack Smythe Field Centre

One of the best parts of the spring season is walking through the woods on a bright crisp day and watching the sap drip into pails. Further along the trail is the cosy sugar shack with its aroma of boiling sap and a taste of maple syrup. All this is available during Spring Break at the Jack Smythe Field Centre.

There will be maple syrup making demonstrations throughout the day. The sugar shack will be showing the "modern" method. At a pioneer site people can try their hand at tapping a tree, sawing wood and carrying sap the "old fashioned" way. Visitors can sit in the teepee and hear native maple syrup legends and see the aboriginal maple syrup making technique. Families can feed chickadees along the trail and buy hot dogs to roast over our open fire.

**Admission is \$5 for adults, \$4 for children or \$20 per car, whichever works out to be less.**

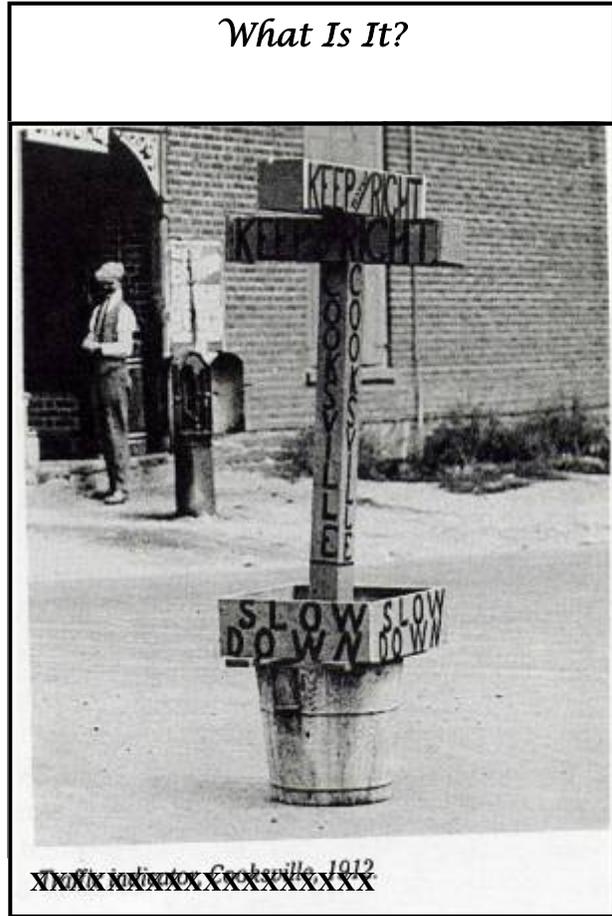
*Recipe Corner*  
Joan Reid

**Muffin Recipe for 1947 School Fair**

2 cups flour  
 ½ teaspoon salt  
 1 tablespoon sugar  
 4 teaspoons baking powder  
 1 cup milk  
 1 egg  
 2 tablespoons shortening (melted)

\*Mix and sift flour, salt, sugar and baking powder  
 \*Add milk gradually then well-beaten egg and melted shortening  
 \*Pour into well-greased muffin tins filling them two-thirds full  
 \*Bake in 425 degrees oven about 20 minutes

*The Port Credit Weekly – September 11, 1947*



***Don't Forget***

While the New Year is still young, please consider renewing your membership with Friends of the Schoolhouse. Many thanks to those who have already renewed. Your continued support is greatly appreciated.

*Be sure to visit the schoolhouse on Open Sundays the second Sunday of every month from 1 to 4 pm*

***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.

*Answer*

***Slow Down!***

This is a 1912 traffic indicator. In 1912 the village of Cooksville south of Britannia was getting to be a busy—and dangerous—place it seems. Cooksville is located on the old Dundas Highway (now highway 5) and was therefore one of the main routes between Toronto, Hamilton and London. Apparently even in 1912 when the automobile was relatively new, drivers had to be reminded to drive carefully.

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