

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse

1852-1959
restored 1982

Winter 2021



Coming Events

No events are being held during the COVID 19 crisis

School Visits

No students are currently able to visit the schoolhouse

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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Queen Victoria's Favourite Wine

Daryl Cook



Queen Victoria, along with many other wealthy and influential people including Ulysses S. Grant, Thomas Edison, Henrik Ibsen, Jules Verne, and Pope Leo XIII, considered Vin Mariani her favourite wine. It was promoted as a French tonic wine and contained 6 mg of cocaine per ounce of wine.

In 1859 Italian scientist Paolo Mantegazza studied the little known South American coca plant and published a paper describing the potential benefits of the plant. Angelo Mariani, a French chemist, concocted a tonic with Bordeaux wine and coca leaves. The ethanol in the wine extracted cocaine from the coca leaf and the combination of alcohol and cocaine produced a highly psychoactive euphoric reaction. This "tonic" was promoted as a digestif, aperitif, energy booster and cure-all that was even safe for children if the daily two or three glass standard "dosage" was halved. Vin Mariani quickly became popular because of aggressive advertising and enthusiastic endorsements from well known people and especially doctors. The *Medical News* in 1890 strongly endorsed the preparation.

Vin Mariani faded from popularity in the early 1900s with the growing awareness of the dangers of cocaine and the growing Prohibition Movement. A version of the wine without the cocaine was never popular but another beverage was introduced and continues to be popular today. Coca Cola, as the name suggests, originally contained coca leaves in its formula. That is no longer the case but the suggestive name carries on.

We will never know whether the Vin Mariani "tonic" contributed to Queen Victoria's longevity, but apparently she enjoyed her sips of cocaine-laced wine.

From the Chair

Margaret Storey

Hello everyone! Well, who would have thought we would still be in pandemic mode in February 2021! I am sure we had all hoped we would be done with the various protocols by the end of 2020. Then the second wave hit, the variants appeared across the country and there were delays with our vaccines. So, here we are, still trying to do our very best to stay safe and follow the rules.

Perhaps with more time on your hands, you might have decided to write a diary for 2020 to include all the Covid protocols here and around the world. Will be interesting for future generations to read such a personal account of how we handled everything. I know one friend who was recording all the daily Covid cases for our province. Well, that is exactly what I am writing in my 2021 RTO Pocket Planner. I really don't have too much else to record other than a weekly ZOOM call with my quilting group and a few other ZOOM calls with family and The Friends. Did get excited that I could write in a dentist appointment in April.

Most diaries are written for our own personal enjoyment, to record our everyday happenings, an experience, feelings and our thoughts in general. How many young girls have had one of those little diaries with a wee lock and key? Usually they were kept hidden from prying eyes. Perhaps you have written a travel diary to capture all the excitement of a special trip. Or perhaps you are an avid gardener and have kept an annual journal of what was planted and where, the weather and the success or failure of certain plants. These are handy reminders the following year of what worked and what didn't.

Many diaries have been published posthumously, often being edited prior to publication. One such case is *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank. It was found after her death and given to her father, the lone survivor of this family following the Holocaust. He did arrange for it to be published after the war and after many edits. Another example would be the daily journals of Queen Victoria whose first diary was given to her by her mother in 1832 prior to a trip to Wales. For the next 69 years she wrote daily filling 122 volumes. Parts of these were expunged by her daughter, Princess Beatrice, after the Queen's death. Many excerpts can now be found online.

Personally, I have my grandfather's five year diaries from 1918 through to 1948. The first ones were written while they lived in Alexandria, Egypt until the 1930s. He was a cotton plantation manager there. They travelled out in 1913, planning on staying for just a year as they left a three month baby daughter with her grandparents. Then World War One started and it wasn't until 1919 that they were able to return safely on furlough to England with a three year old (my mother) in tow. I have been writing out excerpts from each year telling of their daily life. I am now up to 1931 and have sent printed copies to my cousins in England as well as for my family here. Since I was just four when he passed away I am getting to know him through his daily writings.

One of his leather bound diaries was quite damaged on the spine and front cover so I took it to Felton's Bookbinding in Georgetown last year. I felt it should be restored as it really is a family heirloom! The Friends have had several books at the schoolhouse repaired by them. They do a marvellous job.

So, maybe it is time for you to think about keeping a diary. Who knows- your grandchildren might just enjoy reading all about your daily life in years to come. Oscar Wilde once said that "Memory is the diary we all carry around with us!"

Stay safe in your bubble, stay healthy and let's hope we can all meet together soon at the Schoolhouse. We all miss being there and thank our schoolmistresses for all they are doing to keep the school program going until classes are eventually back in our very special one room schoolhouse.

Here is a link to Queen Victoria's diaries

<https://www.royal.uk/sites/default/files/media/victoria.pdf>

From the Schoolmistress

An email from Chris

The Field Centres have been hopping and we've all been busy with classes. All of our programming of course has been virtual. We've been "broadcasting" using our phones from Finlayson, Smythe and various conservation areas and natural spaces throughout Peel and beyond. Marc, for example, has been talking to classes while walking the trail by the lake. Tammy, whom some of you have met, has been up in Algonquin for the last few weeks while staying at a friend's vacant cottage (they're stuck in Hong Kong). Staff have had campfires in their backyards, met classes while their children sit in the next room in their virtual classes, read stories on the trail and travelled hundreds of kilometres over hill and dale, through forests, by rivers and streams and in community parks, all while holding a selfie stick and trying to keep a nonchalant smile on our faces while trying not to slip on the ice or get stuck in knee deep snow. It's been an adventure!

We're excited because as of next week (February 16) we can go back into the buildings. Up to this point, since after Christmas, we've only been permitted on the property for a specific window of time that we've had to book but could not go into the buildings to use the wash-room or recharge our phones. It takes some planning at times to make sure we don't run out of battery power or the ability to wait until we're home to use the facilities!

Next week we get to go to the Schoolhouse although we don't know yet if Lisa and I will be able to both be in at the same time. Already though we have a couple of classes scheduled for virtual visits to the Schoolhouse. That's exciting! We're just in the planning stages now of how we're going to do a virtual Maple Syrup program.

I hope this finds you all well and healthy. There seems to be some light at the end of this very long tunnel don't you think? It's not easy but I hope you have all been able to stay connected with family and friends. I received an email from Beth Labrie from Jordan last week. They're already planning for SLATE 2022. Isn't that encouraging?



Editor's Note:

Don't know how "virtual" maple syrup would taste, but here's a photo of past events.

Maple Syrup Sweet Potato Recipe

4 sweet potatoes
1/2 cup maple syrup
1/4 cup olive oil
Salt and pepper
2 green onions, minced

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees
2. Bake sweet potatoes until they are tender and soft, about 45-60 min.
3. Toss sweet potatoes into a bowl and splash with maple syrup and oil
4. Mash well. Season with salt and pepper. Stir in green onions
5. Serve and enjoy

Heritage Schoolhouses

Daryl Cook

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse (S.S.12 Toronto Township) is one of several one room schoolhouses that have survived in Ontario. Although many are now private homes, a few are local museums and even fewer still have living history programs for children. Here are some of the schoolhouses that still survive and have programs for children.

Brocksden (Stratford Ontario)



Located in Perth East (formerly North Easthope Township), the schoolhouse is the oldest in Perth County, dating back to 1853. Groups and school classes are welcome May 15 to September 15 by appointment. A classroom teacher is prepared to teach students taking them back to 1910.

Enoch Turner (Toronto Ontario)



This historic schoolhouse, built in 1848 by local brewer Enoch Turner, is available to school groups for day-long living history visits and open to the general public. The schoolhouse can also be rented for private functions.



Wilson Macdonald Memorial School Museum (Selkirk Ontario)

Built in 1872, this one-room schoolhouse was in operation until 1966. In 1967, the building re-opened as Wilson Pugsley MacDonal Memorial School Museum, dedicated to the famous poet Wilson Pugsley MacDonal. Visit to experience a day in the life of a student in a 1920s-era one-room rural school!

Lang Pioneer Village, South Lake School (Keene Ontario)



The South Lake School House was built in 1886 in South Lake Settlement in Belmont Township, north of Havelock. By that time, there were forty children of school age in the settlement. Miss Maggie Mahood was hired as the teacher and taught all eight grades in the single room. The double desks made it possible for children to work together; the older and more advanced helped the younger. There were few resources. Slates were reusable and cheaper than paper and lent themselves to rote learning (learning by memorization through repetition). The teaching aids consisted of a few books, a blackboard, an abacus, and a map. This building served as a school until it was closed in 1958, only two years after electricity had been installed.

Jordan Historical School (Jordan Ontario)



Built in 1859 to replace an earlier school that was destroyed by fire, S.S. #4 was large and bright, with huge windows and a carefully chosen colour scheme designed specifically to encourage attention and obedience. The school was in use for 89 years, until a bigger, much more modern one was built. In 1997, the school house was painstakingly restored to look as it would have in 1908. A school field trip program has been created whereby children can come for the day and role-play a child who was actually a student there in 1908!

Raspberry Muffins

Katharine Moon-Craney

Ingredients

- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 tbsp white vinegar
- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup white sugar
- ½ cup unsalted butter, melted
- 1 egg
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 ½ cups frozen raspberries



Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 425°F. Line muffin cups with parchment muffin liners, or lightly coat with unsalted butter or cooking spray.
2. Combine milk and vinegar in a measuring cup. Stir and allow to sit for 5-10 minutes. Milk will thicken or curdle, effectively making buttermilk.
3. In a medium bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt.
4. Using an electric mixer, combine brown sugar, white sugar, butter, egg, vanilla and milk/vinegar in a large bowl and mix until combined.
5. Add the dry mix until just combined, do not overmix.
6. Fold in the frozen raspberries
7. Scoop the muffin mixture into each cup, filling it to the top of the liner.
8. Bake for 5 minutes at 425°F and then reduce temperature to 350°F and bake for 18-20 minutes until a toothpick can be inserted and removed cleanly.

Note: I have made this recipe with ½ cup of brown sugar and omitted the white sugar.

Original recipe nickandalicia.com modified by KMC

Sun Catcher Ice Ornament

Katharine Moon-Craney

1. Using a plastic 'take-out container' lid collect natural treasures outdoors such as feathers, leaves, twigs etc. Arrange the treasures on the lid.
2. Fill the lid with water.
3. Use a piece of shoelace, or twine create a loop to hang it up. You can use two pennies to weigh down the ends of the twine. (Just remember to collect the pennies when the sun catcher melts as they can be an enticing choking hazard to wildlife)
4. Freeze your sun catcher outdoors then pop it out of the lid and hang from a tree. Enjoy the beautiful sunbeams as they stream through your sun catcher!

There may be just enough cold days left to try this. (Courtesy of Anwar Knight)

Winter 2021

A Look Back



The schoolhouse pre-restoration



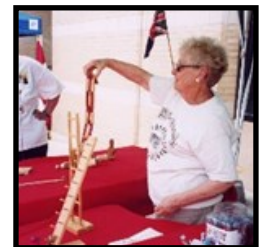
2001 Ben prepares first garden



2003 Dedication of Teachers' Arbour



2004 Annual Meeting



2004 Canada Day Square 1



2004 Ben and Margorie Party



2004 Family Fun Picnic



2004 Fall Fair



2005 Bassoon Concert



2005 Eva's Sundial



2005 Strawberry Social



2017 Book Launch *Echoes of the Past*



2017 SLATE conference

There are many other memorable moments: Christmas events, Doors Open, Brampton Fairs, Celebrations of birthdays, Garden creation and development, Open Sundays and more. It won't be long before we're creating more memories as events at the schoolhouse return.

Winter 2021

**Echoes of the Past
The Rural One Room Schools of Peel County**

This book documents the history of all the one room schools that existed in Peel. It covers the period from the early 1800's until the mid-1960's. There are old photos of most of the schools and photos of what the sites look like today. Timelines trace the history of the schools and an interesting – sometimes humorous – “historical gem” is included for each one.

This book is a great gift for a teacher or anyone interested in the history of education.

Written and published by Friends of the Schoolhouse.

Soft cover, full colour, 208 pages.

\$30 plus \$10 shipping

Available at all schoolhouse events and from any member of Friends of the Schoolhouse.

Book Talks

Illustrated talks are available to historical societies and other interested groups. We tailor each presentation to suit the audience and the one room schools that were in their local area.

If your group would be interested in having a presentation, please contact Jean (905 826 3475) jkrob@rogers.com for further information.

Your membership for 2021

**Please note that membership fees will not be collected for 2021.
The COVID 19 pandemic has meant cancelation of all schoolhouse events until further notice.**

We are continuing to publish our quarterly newsletter and maintain the monthly Current News page on our website in order to stay in touch with our members.

Donations to support the schoolhouse are always welcome.

Membership forms can be downloaded from our website:

www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org

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 “E-mailed 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**