



Some Figures and Facts:

Students attended the schoolhouse:
September 225
October 495

This newsletter is published by the *Friends of the Schoolhouse* every Fall, Winter and Spring, in an effort to inform its membership, and the teachers of the Peel District School Board of its activities and events.

Co-Editors: Daryl Cook
dcook@echo-on.net
Dennis Taylor
dwtaylor@aztec-net.com



From the Chair

From the chair: Frances Kay

September started off with a successful three days at the Brampton Fall Fair. Joan Reid's Display of 'Schools of Peel' drew great interest among the adults, particularly the new Crossword Puzzle of 1925. The Historical Cooksville Fair sponsored by Heritage House Retirement Home was held September 25th. The fish pond and Eva's milking cow were great crowd pleasers. The Britannia Fall Fair held October 9 to 11 kept the schoolhouse busy for the full three days.

Slowly but surely the schoolhouse is going through some renovations. A new ramp was purchased which will accommodate all wheelchairs and scooters. Schoolhouse repairs including rebuilding two chimneys, pointing bricks as well as other work were contracted out by Peel District School Board and is being undertaken by Clifford Masonry. In addition

we hope during the coming year to design a maze and a sun dial and put them on the north grounds.

The sales committee is preparing for their annual sale at the Board Office on Thursday November 18th. Our Christmas Open House will be held on Sunday November 28th. The Christmas tree will be up and decorated for the Open House. Many new items will be for sale at both of these events, just in time for Christmas shopping.

It is that time of the year to once again renew your membership. As soon as the form arrives, please fill it out and return it with your cheque so that you will continue to be informed of the events at the Schoolhouse. Remember to check off the section on the back indicating that you are available to help. Should you have any questions, please call 905-279-5761 or anyone on the core executive.

News from the Sales Committee

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse will soon be decked out in festive greens and a fragrant old-fashioned Christmas tree, - just in time for our annual Christmas Open House and to delight the classes that visit during December. The end of November Decorating Party is a yearly highlight for the Executive and Sales Committee.

Members of the Sales committee are busy ordering, assembling, sawing, cutting, sewing, gluing, rolling beeswax, packaging, etc., in preparation for our holiday season selling. Our selection of unusual gift items is continually expanding. Several new items have been added this year including the game of Chinese Checkers.

We thank Jan Hewer from Miller's Grove Public School for making and donating a number of cute bookmark mice (most appropriate for the schoolhouse, we think!!) and some delightful little snowman decorations for us to sell.

We are excited about finding a new source for reproduction toys in Chatham, Ontario. We have ordered quite a large number of samples and expect to soon be able to include some new "old" toys in our inventory. Also we plan to up-grade the schoolhouse toy box and believe this will provide excellent new examples of children's pleasures from the past.

All of our merchandise will be offered for sale in the atrium of H.J.A. Brown Educational Centre on Thursday November 18th, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and at our Open House at the Schoolhouse on Sunday November 28th, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Most of our items can be ordered through our 2004-2005 illustrated catalogue. For a copy of the catalogue or to place an order, please phone Eva 905-459-9158 or write to the schoolhouse.

We hope to be able to help you solve some of your seasonal shopping challenges while supporting the Old Britannia Schoolhouse at the same time.

Mulled cider, delicious goodies and Christmas music are to be enjoyed at the Open House! We hope to see you there.

Eva Ardiel, Executive Director



The booth at the Cooksville Fall Fair and Eva and the milking cow



From the Schoolmistress

The 2003-2004 school year was a busy one. 3834 students from 53 schools had their studies enriched by spending a day travelling back in time at the Old Britannia Schoolhouse. The coming year looks just as busy. We are fully booked again with over 168 days scheduled. I look forward to each and every one of them.

The new school year is bringing some exciting new changes. The schoolhouse is in the process of getting a facelift. Crews are busy working on the brickwork, stonework and painting. It seems every morning I am greeted by new workers and a new addition to the project. At

times it can be a bit loud or chaotic but seeing the final stage of the restoration will be well worth it. The construction has also provided an opportunity to discuss the differences between building schools now and long ago with the visiting students. All of the students seem to be quite interested in all of the changes being made. Many ask if they can return when all of the work is complete.

The enthusiasm we are feeling towards the restoration can not compare to the enthusiasm of the children everyday towards the schoolhouse. One of my favourite points in the day is hearing the children discuss the day and all the

differences between school now and long ago. Many seem unable to comprehend the use of so much wood, no electricity or what all these foreign objects were used for. Many often think the lightning rod is a queen/king's staff or a smaller version of the CN tower. With such unique and wonderful ideas about what the new objects are and what people must have been like, it becomes apparent quite quickly how important a program like this is in providing a real tangible experience of life in the 1800s. I must say it is my extreme pleasure to be able to provide the visiting classes with such an experience.

Melissa Jacobs



The schoolmistress works with some young pupils at the Britannia Fall Fair

The Blackboard Bench

The Schoolhouse has acquired an additional artifact. It was found in pieces somewhere in the Barrie area, and restored and donated by Mr. Hondo Varep, of Barrie. It has the appearance of a long, low bench, and has a double purpose. Firstly, it may be used for shorter people to reach higher on the blackboard. Its sturdy construction makes it very safe for a step-up. Secondly, it is a storage box. The top of the bench lifts open to reveal a spacious interior. We have been told that the teacher used it to store blackboard erasers, chalk, etc. Hopefully, our Schoolmistress and the children will find this item useful. We hope to obtain additional information about the bench's origin at a future date.

Karen Simmons



Marjorie Madill at the
Brampton Fall Fair

For Your Calendar:

November

28 Christmas at the Old Britannia Schoolhouse from 1:00 to 4:00 pm

December

12 The Old Britannia Schoolhouse is open to the public from 1:00 to 4:00 pm

January

09 The Old Britannia Schoolhouse is open to the public from 1:00 to 4:00 pm

February

13 The Old Britannia Schoolhouse is open to the public from 1:00 to 4:00 pm

From a Historical View:

Many of the people connected to the schoolhouse lend their talents willingly in a variety of ways and we are always intrigued by the different skills they share with us. An example would be that of our vice-chair, Joan Reid. In addition to serving ably on the executive, she also shares her time and spends many hours planning, developing, and supervising our gardens. If that were not enough, Joan also searches out the historical material associated with time frame of the schoolhouse and compiles from local newspaper archives, articles and information. She has shared a number of those articles with us and we are going to share some of these with you in this newsletter.

Many of the people on the core executive also have a variety of interests and roles and it is through these that all of the information, planning, and work get done. If you have information you would like to share with us regarding the schoolhouse or the period which it represents we would encourage you to contact us.

Are Children Given Too Much Liberty?

“Brampton is face to face with a problem which is agitating the people of every town and city in the province, namely how to keep the children off the streets at night. The fact that they are allowed to run a round at a later hour, unprotected and unheeded is a serious menace to their future... Are birchrods no longer to be purchased? But these parents are the very ones who would cry out in horror and anger at the barbarity of beating a child, and who summon the teacher if he or she ventures to administer the mildest and best-deserved physical correction... Unlimited indulgence is not the way to make young lives happy”.

Charles W. Norton, *The Brampton Conservator*, March 6, 1913.



Display area from the Brampton Fall Fair



The 24th of May – 1868

The citizens of Brampton celebrated the birthday of their beloved Queen in true and royal fashion. Bunting and flags decorated the streets, businesses were closed, and a great concourse of people dressed in their finest clothing congregated on the main street. The "sun rose in all splendour". It was clear and beautiful with a light breeze. The dried roads were now passable.

The members of two militia groups mustered at the Agricultural Grounds and then marched to the

Need to speak to the School?



The Old Britannia Schoolhouse can be contacted directly, by dialing

905 890 1010, ext. 2911

centre of town. The Brampton Mechanics Band accompanied them. At noon they gave the *feu de joie*. The band then went on to play in most parts of town. Two teams of men from the Brampton Baseball Club played a gentlemanly game for a silver ball prize. Trotting races and foot races were popular with the large crowd. Doctor Sangrada, Somach-Pumpus, stood by while the bun-eating contest took place.

At 3:00 pm "the ancient and popular order of Calithumpians founded by King Theodorus the first, to commemorate the day on which his mother, Queen Sheba, returned to Abyssinia from the visit to Solo-

mon the magnificent at Jerusalem," marched "in grand procession, under the command of their distinguished General, through the streets of Brampton, playing the mournful dirge (in order to moderate the mirth of the on-lookers) 'Magdala the Fallen'". Their ridiculous dress and extravagantly decorated conveyance created merriment wherever they went although their numbers were rather weak compared to previous years.

The *Times* described the fireworks at the Agricultural Grounds in the evening as "the best arranged" and "most brilliant" ever seen.

Joan Reid: from *The Brampton Times* May 29, 1868

We are on the web at
www.britanniaschoolhouse.org

Heritage Mississauga

can be accessed on the internet at:

<http://www.city.mississauga.on.ca/heritage/>

The Friends of the Schoolhouse wish to thank the following for their support:

Rosanna Moody
Streetsville Horticultural Society

Jim Grieve

Victorian Names for Girls

The Victorians Liked to shorten the name of friends. The following diminutives or short forms were found written in an 1880's school register from Streetsville. Can you determine what the long form of each name was?

Aggie	Flossie	Mamie
Annie	Gussie	Millie
Bella	Hattie	Mima
Bessie	Lettie	Minnie
Carrie	Lillie	Nellie
Effie	Lizzie	Tessie
Fannie	Lottie	Cassie

Some other popular Victorian names were:

Lulu	Maude	Bertha	Eulalia
Mabel	Ada	Eva	
Jemima	Ethel	Ida	
Myrtle	Lucinda	Pearl	

Some Victorian girls were named after flowers:

Daisy	Orchid	Iris	Rose
Pansy	Violet	Lily	



Pictures from Britannia Fall Fair

Recycled Humour

Joan Reid found the following anecdotes as she reviewed *The Brampton Conservator* over a number of years that it was published. In today's world they might seem almost simple or perplexing, but try to imagine yourself back a hundred years ago. Whether or not they were intended as modern humour then, they may still bring a smile and perhaps ring a bit of truth.

Teacher: What is your mother's name?

Six-Year Old: Mrs. Rogers.

Teacher: But what is her Christian name?

Six-Year Old: (in a piping voice) Different things.

Teacher: Johnny?

Johnny: Yes'm.

Teacher: Complete this adage for me: People who live in glasshouses---

Johnny: Should pull down the blinds.

Little Percy: Papa, why doesn't mamma travel with the circus?

Mr. Henpeck: Why? What could she do in a circus?

Little Percy: She might be a strong woman. I heard her telling grandma the other day that she could wind you around her little finger as easy as nothing.

Teacher: Here is a piece of meat. If I cut it in half what do I have?

Pupils: Halves.

Teacher: And if I cut each piece again?

Pupils: Quarters.

Teacher: And if I cut each piece again?

Pupils: Eighths.

Teacher: And if I cut each piece again? (Dead silence)

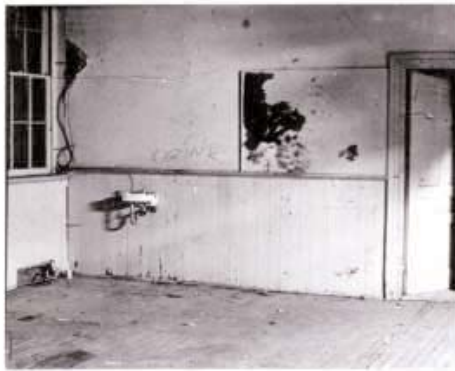
Well, Johnny?

Johnny: Please Ma'am, mincemeat.

Little Willie: The teacher asked a question in school today and I was the only boy that could answer.

Mother: I'm very proud of you, Willie. What was the question?

Little Willie: Who broke the glass in the porch window?



Perhaps this is a good time to reflect on the changes and restoration that have been made to The Old Britannia Schoolhouse. The picture on the left was taken of the northeast corner of the schoolroom in the 1970's. A lot of time and energy have gone into preserving this old treasure. If you haven't had a chance to see it lately, go and see it on one of the special events or at Open Sundays listed.