



Fall 2025



### 2025-2026 Schedule of Events

Sunday December 14  
Christmas Open House  
And  
Craft Sale

*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)



## Christmas at the Schoolhouse Sunday December 14

1 to 4 pm

*Come and celebrate the season with friends and find some little stocking stuffers.*

### *For sale.*

- some slate kits, assorted books, some old-fashioned toys; Christmas cards and postcards. Many of our offerings are handmade.
- some cloth bags, wall hangings, Christmas decorations, and gift boxes.
- assorted jams and jellies from Mrs. V's, as well as some honey products.
- knitted and crocheted items, including some Christmas ones.

*Payment* must be by cash or cheque.

*Limited parking* is available in front of the Schoolhouse accessed from Hurontario heading south just past Matheson.

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## From the Chair

Ruth Taylor

On September 11, Friends invited the local district of the Retired Teachers of Ontario to have their A.M. Special at the Schoolhouse. When people arrived, they were intrigued by the artifacts. They learned about the history of the Schoolhouse, and how Friends of the Schoolhouse supported the program in the past and now are watching out for the Schoolhouse.



Dennis Taylor explained how many of the maps and charts had been preserved, not restored. He challenged the visitors with some math questions, which gave them a chance to use the slates. Only one person used her phone to figure out the answer!

Shirley Hoad spoke about how some members had researched one-room schoolhouses in Peel, some of which still exist. This led to publishing the book "Echoes of the Past."

One of our visitors shared her experience of bringing her class when Jim Potter was the Schoolmaster. She had a picture of the event. Another visitor recalled how her son had been in the first class to visit the Schoolhouse when it reopened. She showed us the hand forged nail each student was given as a memento.

Since "the class" had worked hard at the math, they were given a chance to play with the toys. Thanks to Joanne Jennings for sharing her pictures.

Three visitors took out memberships. We also sold four of "Ben's books" and one "Echoes of the Past." Our visitors enjoyed the experience and Friends benefited from their presence.



## Remembrance Day in Canada

Ruth Taylor

In April 1919 after the end of the First World War, a motion was introduced in Parliament to hold an annual November Armistice Day on the second Monday of November. King George V of England urged that the armistice be marked by two minutes of silence at exactly 11:00 a.m. on November 11 – the same day and time the armistice had been signed in 1918. Our Canadian Parliament adopted a resolution to change the name to Remembrance Day in 1931. This placed the emphasis upon the soldiers whose deaths were being remembered.

Remembrance Day is held across Canada. We honour those who served in wartime and remember those who died in military service. In Newfoundland and Labrador, Memorial Day is observed on July 1. Both Memorial Day and Remembrance Day are celebrated. Wreaths are laid at war memorials and assemblies are held in schools.

Millions of Canadians wear poppies leading up to Remembrance Day. Poppies are a symbol of remembrance thanks to the famous poem "In Flanders Fields" by Canadian poet John McCrea. The red poppy grows in the battlefields in Flanders (Belgium) and Northern France.

Canada's most prominent war memorial is the National War Memorial in Ottawa. It is traditionally attended by the Governor General, Prime Minister, Legion officials and a parade of veterans. Canada also has a Silver Cross Mother who represents the mothers of sons or daughters killed in service. The tomb of the Unknown Soldier is located in front of the National War Memorial. His remains were exhumed from a cemetery in Vimy and repatriated in 2000. After Remembrance Day in 2006, a woman placed a poppy on a makeshift memorial to recognize Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan. The tradition continues to this day.

### We Remember



We have a plaque listing members of Britannia and the surrounding area who participated in the world wars. We honour them and all the others who fought for freedom at our November Open House.

Most of us are familiar with the poem, *In Flanders Fields* by John McCrae. One day on the battlefield he looked out upon hundreds of poppies and was inspired by their beauty in the midst of the war's devastation to write the poem. Poppies no longer naturally bloom there though some areas are planted near cemeteries. Those poppy seeds had long been buried deep in the earth. The tumult of war tearing up the ground brought them to the surface and they eventually bloomed. Today the land is mainly agricultural and is not dug deep enough to bring any poppy seeds to the surface. The poppies of Flanders were a once in a lifetime display of beauty amid the horrors of war.



## Toys - Old and New!

Margaret Storey

With Christmas fast approaching many will be thinking of buying toys for their children or grandchildren. I am sure everyone will remember the excitement of the Christmas Wish Book arriving years ago in the mail, perhaps as early as September. It was such a glossy catalogue showing all the latest toys. So enticing for kiddies! Many would thumb through the pages and pages of toys trying to decide what they would ask Santa to bring them on Christmas morning. Circling the toy with a pen or pencil would work as a hint for their parents. Sometimes cutting out the picture of the toy, taping it on the fridge would also help Mum, Dad and Santa know exactly what was wanted.

I remember asking for a metal doll house one year when I was about seven or eight. I loved playing with all the little family figures and the furniture making up stories as I played. Another year I asked for one more baby doll. My father also made a beautiful wooden cradle for her while my mother knitted a lovely blanket for it too. I had quite a few baby dolls but my favourite was Dolly! She was given to me by my Great Auntie Audrey for my first birthday. Apparently I said Dolly straight away so that became her name. She is now 78 years old and showing her age a wee bit. Her arms don't work quite as well as they did - much like her owner! Just general senescence, I suppose. She did travel with me on the Queen Mary when my family and I emigrated to Canada. Now she sits in a wee wicker pram wearing a pretty yellow dress and bonnet knitted again by my mother.

One Christmas I received two dolls that were about two feet tall. I named them David and Lynette after the two friends who lived next to us when we lived in Bristol, England. I would go to the Church rummage sale and buy baby clothes for them. It was a lot of fun!



## Toys - Old and New! Continued

Some Christmases we would get new skates. We would be outside skating whenever we could! There were several ponds near us and we eagerly awaited for the water to be frozen and safe. The boys would take their shovels and clear any snow. One end was for their hockey games and the other end was for the girls. We tried to do some figure skating like we saw on television - twirls, spins, figure eights or "shooting the duck"! Not always successful, I might add, but we had fun trying. We were lucky to have an outdoor rink at our school often looked after by the Grade Eight boys. Each grade had their times for recesses and lunchtime during the week. That was fun too!

A new toboggan at Christmas provided lots of fun. Why does it seem we always had more snow when we were children? Perhaps we did.

Are board games still popular? I do hope so! Games like Scrabble, Monopoly, Clue, Chess, Boggle, Yahtzee, Snakes and Ladders have been popular for years. We have a close family friend's Monopoly game from the 30's which has wooden houses and hotels as well as metal tokens used by the players. We also have his Snakes and Ladders game from when he was a young boy. Our family loved Scrabble and always play a few games after Christmas dinner. A tradition started really by my mother who loved playing Scrabble until she was 93. She often beat the rest of us. Think her love of crossword puzzles helped her come up with many words.

Lego is still a perennial favourite with many children and adults, for that matter. The company keeps making new sets according to popular movies, sports, space travel and other interests. My grandson played for hours with the basket of Lego his dad and uncle played with when they were kids. They were always creating scenes and using their imagination.

Are the "old fashioned" toys like dolls, teddy bears, Dinkey cars, building blocks, hockey games still popular or does everything have to be electronic these days requiring the ongoing use of batteries? I do hope the old toys are still enjoyed by young and old alike.

No matter if you are buying toys for someone or not it is always fun to think back to our own childhood and the toys and games we played with over and over and over again! Take sometime to play a game during the holidays and reminisce of times gone by.



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## **Membership Renewal – 2026**

Shirley Hoad

### **Why renewing your membership is important**

As the end of the year approaches, it is time to renew your membership with The Friends of the Schoolhouse. Although The Old Britannia Schoolhouse programme is not available to the students of the Peel District School Board at this time, the Friends continue to function, keeping the gardens looking good, publishing our newsletter and holding Open Sundays during spring, summer and fall. We continue to monitor any actions by the School Board that affect the schoolhouse and our activities. Your continued membership is an indication of your support for our actions and we appreciate it. As you will note on the application form and cheque is to be sent to Shirley Hoad.

On Page 7 you will find a membership application and renewal form.

### **Membership Drive**

Shirley Hoad

It is important at this time to ensure that our membership is strong and our records are up-to-date.

Renewal forms for our present membership will be mailed soon. Please return them to me as soon as possible.

Ms. Shirley Hoad  
6586 Treviso Terrace  
Mississauga ON  
L5N 4K3

If you have not received this letter by Canada Post, please contact me at [shoad@bell.net](mailto:shoad@bell.net).

Be sure to check our website regularly. The Current News page is updated every month and has information about what is happening with The Friends, historical information, activities for the family, recipes and more. Although we have not had our usual events for several years, we hope to have Open Sundays again sometime in the New Year. [www.friendsoftheschoolhouse.org](http://www.friendsoftheschoolhouse.org)

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Friends of the Schoolhouse

Membership Renewal - 2026

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

I want my correspondence and newsletters sent by:

\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ OR

\_\_\_ Canada Post Mailing Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ I am interested in joining the Organizing Committee of The Friends to continue our support of The Old Britannia Schoolhouse.

\_\_\_ I am interested in volunteering at Friends' events.

For further information please contact Shirley Hoad ([905-821-9262](tel:905-821-9262)/ [shoad@bell.net](mailto:shoad@bell.net))

### MEMBERSHIP FEE ENCLOSED

Annual Membership Fee: \$10.00 \_\_\_\_\_  
(January 1 to December 31)

Please make cheque for membership payable to Friends of the Schoolhouse.

### DONATIONS

1. Cheques: The Peel District School Board provides registered charity receipts for income tax purposes for donations of \$100.00 or more. Your cheque must be payable to Peel District School Board and designated in the lower left corner: For "Friends of the Schoolhouse"

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

2. Electronic Donation: The Peel District School Board provides registered charity receipts for income tax purposes for any amount made through their website.

Website: [www.peelschools.org](http://www.peelschools.org) 1. Select "our board".

2. Select: Make a donation.

3. Complete Donation Form (You will need a valid credit card)

4. Message to School Board Box: for "Friends of the Schoolhouse".

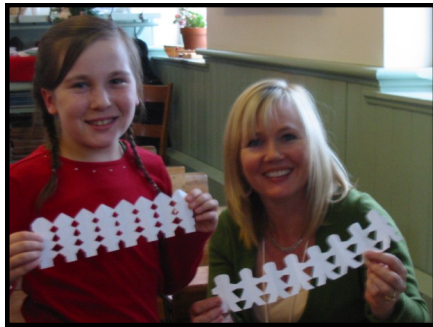
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please send your application and all cheques by Canada Post to:  
Friends of the Schoolhouse, 6586 Treviso Terrace, Mississauga, Ontario, L5N 4K3



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## Memories of Christmases Past



### 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](mailto: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.**