

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse

1852-1957
restored 1982

Winter 2005



Facts and Figures

Number of students who have attended the schoolhouse for a day in:

November	509
December	273
January	394
February	378

Number of events sponsored by the Friends of the Schoolhouse

November	2
December	1
January	
February	2

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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Need more information?

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Celebrating Eva

Schoolmistress Ardiel rings the little bell on her desk and the children instantly sit up straight and fold their hands on their desks. To do otherwise would earn a stern look from their teacher. Another ring of the bell begins the seat drill and students soon stand at attention by their desks ready to sing "God Save the Queen", say the Lord's Prayer and submit to "health inspection". A final ding of the bell and the children return to their seats to begin their daily lessons. For the rest of the day Schoolmistress Ardiel transports them back to the 1890's to experience learning the 3 R's at the Britannia Schoolhouse, SS#12.

Eva Ardiel became schoolmistress at the restored Old Britannia Schoolhouse 1985. During schoolmistress retirement in worked tirelessly the living history for children and the schoolhouse in good condition generations to time is long acknowledge her contributions.



in January her tenure as and since her 1991 she has to improve experience to ensure that is maintained for future enjoy. The overdue to many contributions.

Eva is determined to make the schoolhouse experience as authentic as possible. The role play techniques she developed she now teaches to each new schoolmistress and schoolmaster. When old 1890's school texts were unavailable in sufficient numbers for children to use—and too fragile when they could be found—Eva gathered together a committee of teachers to look through the old primers and select pages from each to reproduce. The committee created sets of condensed primers that students now use each day. She continues to seek out historical artifacts to enhance the program. Thanks

to her efforts an abacus and an old globe have recently been added to the schoolhouse collection. Children who visit the schoolhouse can learn about and play with the old-fashioned toys that are stored in the toy box by the teacher's desk. Realizing that not every school would be able to send classes to the Old Britannia Schoolhouse, Eva created several boxes containing information and artifacts which could be borrowed by teachers.

When budget constraints forced the closing of the school in 1993 Eva spearheaded the formation of The Friends of the Schoolhouse organization. Driven by her passion and commitment this group lobbied the Board of Education and were successful in re-establishing the schoolhouse program the following year. Since its founding Eva has been the inspiration and driving force for The Friends. Always concerned about the need to reach out to the community for support Eva has created many informative and attractive displays for booths at the Brampton Fair, the Britannia Fall Fair and the Heritage Showcase. Her calligraphy skills were used in creating the early newsletters of The Friends of the Schoolhouse. Community events such as the Queen Victoria Fete, Strawberry Social and the Christmas Open House were her ideas for connecting with the community. Ever conscious that funding for historic schoolhouses is scarce, Eva has found ways to raise money for the program. Her home is overflowing with boxes of old-fashioned toys, sweatshirts, tea towels, note cards and countless other items sold at events throughout the year. She created a sales catalogue which is now on-line and has generated orders from beyond Peel.

Eva's influence had extended beyond The Old Britannia Schoolhouse. She was a founding member of SLATE, an organization for staff and volunteers at historic schoolhouses which offer programs for children. The annual conference attracts participants from across Ontario and northern New York state. Eva has been honoured by SLATE with an award for her contribution. She has also been recognized with awards from the Peel District School Board and Heritage Mississauga.

The Friends of the Schoolhouse will be recognizing her on-going commitment to The Old Britannia Schoolhouse and the Friends organization on Sunday May 15 from 1 to 4 pm. We invite everyone to join us in thanking Eva and celebrating her many accomplishments.

*A Celebration to Honour
Eva Ardiel*

*Sunday May 15
1 to 4 pm*

*At The Old Britannia Schoolhouse
Presentation at 2:30 pm*

Please join us in thanking Eva for her continuing dedication to preserving the schoolhouse and for her support of living history experiences for children.

RSVP by May 1 to Cathy Harper 905-279-5761 or email tartary@idirect.com

A message from the Chair
Frances Kay

It has been a busy few months since our last newsletter. Christmas has come and gone with successful sales at the Board Office and the Christmas Open House and Sale at the schoolhouse. In February Heritage Showcase was held at Square One on the 19th and 20th of the month. The theme this year was "Over 200 years of History". Also the Peel Heritage Complex celebrated Heritage Week on Sunday February 20th. The Friends participated in both these events.

Joan Moon and "friends" hosted a tea in the schoolhouse for Cathy Tracy from Human Resources. Cathy was holding a workshop at the Board Office and delegates enjoyed their tea break at the schoolhouse. Jean Robinson gave a short talk on the history of the school.

Thanks to Rob Ridley for filling in for school mistress Melissa Jacobs as she recovers from her car accident.

Mississauga's "Doors Open" will be in September, the 17th and 18th. We will take part on Sunday the 18th.

Finally—congratulations to Eva Ardiel on the birth of her second grandson in February.

Schoolhouse News

We are happy to report that Schoolmistress Melissa Jacobs is back in the classroom and once again traveling back in time to those days long ago with students from across Peel. Melissa was in a car accident on Christmas Eve and is slowly recovering from severe whiplash. In her absence Rob Ridley took on the role of schoolmaster and did a terrific job. Thank you Rob. It was a relief to all of us, including Melissa, that students would not miss out on their day at The Old Britannia Schoolhouse in her absence.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP? IT WAS DUE IN JANUARY. A REMINDER IS ENCLOSED WITH THIS NEWSLETTER. YOUR MEMBERSHIP FEE SUPPORTS THE FRIENDS OF THE SCHOOLHOUSE AND ENRICHES THE PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS.



Schoolmaster Ridley keeps his eye on the class.

Schoolhouse Restoration

Eva Ardiel

Last Spring Friends of the Schoolhouse consulted an architect who specializes in historic buildings to assess the condition of the masonry at the schoolhouse. He informed us that the chimneys were in very poor condition and should be rebuilt. He said the walls were in quite good shape but needed some pointing. Also, he said that the cement mortar which had been used for repairs (probably when the building was restored in the 1980's) should be removed and replaced with soft lime mortar.

In May, when the trustees and senior administrators came to the schoolhouse for a finger-food supper before their board meeting, we expressed to them our concerns about the work that needed to be done, as well as how that work would be done. Shortly after this we were asked to submit a list of what was needed.

Barry Hum and David Nicholas from the Peel Board Maintenance Department worked cooperatively with Friends of the Schoolhouse to ensure that the repair work would be properly done. They made sure a highly reputable firm with historical restoration expertise was engaged. The Friends were consulted and kept informed throughout the process.



The schoolhouse was a construction site throughout most of the Fall.



The new chimneys are almost completed and waiting to be capped.

The chimneys have been completely rebuilt using reclaimed brick. Any good bricks from the old chimneys were used to replace damaged ones in the walls. As the stove can no longer be used, the chimneys were capped with copper to extend their life. The necessary pointing was done and all cement mortar removed and replaced with soft lime mortar. The front step by the front door was discovered to be a broken stone covered with cement. This cement was pulling away and damaging the bricks. The old stone step was removed and replaced with a new one. Stained bricks on the walls were poulticed to remove stains. The exterior woodwork was scraped, primed and painted as was the flagpole. A lot of caulking also had to be done.

A number of other jobs were completed such as putting the mailbox on a cedar post, fixing the swings to make them safer, laying a flag stone path on the south side of the building, screening the outhouses with wire mesh inside to keep out squirrels and raccoons, fixing the outhouse privacy fences and a number of other small jobs.



The stone front step needed to be replaced.



Replacing the fence around the outhouses

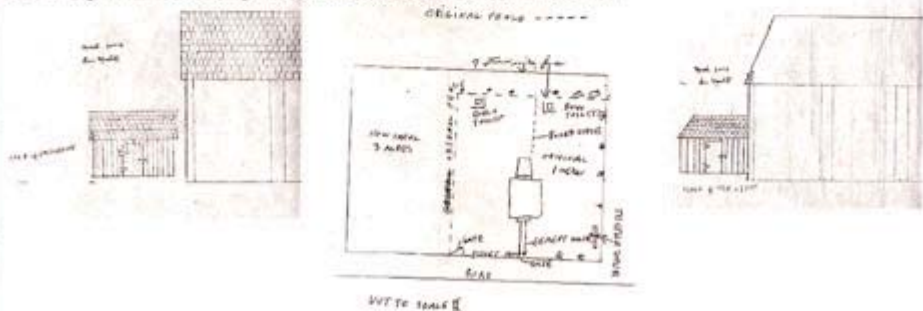


A new path is laid on a cold rainy day.

We are certainly very pleased to see so many things looked after. We can also reassure you, however, that the brick with Ben Madill's initials carved into it was not touched and remains as a reminder of his time at the school. The life of the schoolhouse has been extended by many years. This little treasure from the past certainly looks great now!

More of Ben's Memories

Watching the process of restoring the schoolhouse caused us to think of what it must have been like years ago before highways, subdivisions and industry surrounded it as they do today. Last year Ben Madill drew a plan of the school and school yard and sketches of the woodshed which was once behind the schoolhouse. On the plan you can see the fence that ran from the back of the school to the farm fence at the back of the schoolyard. This fence separated the boys' area from the girls'. Outdoor privies were on either side of the fence.



Thanks to Ben we have an idea of what The Old Britannia Schoolhouse was like in the 1920's.

Recent Schoolhouse Events

Sales at the Board Office *Eva Ardiel*

The Sales Committee offered all of our merchandise for sale in the atrium of the H.J.A. Brown Education Centre on November 18th. We thank all of our volunteers who helped, as well as everyone who made purchases.

The atrium seemed quieter than usual that day. We were, therefore, surprised to find that our total sales were about the same as other years.

We would especially like to thank Gary Walsh for purchasing sweat shirts and other items to use for prizes at the Board's December dinner and dance. His support of the Friends is much appreciated.



Greeting cards, pencil sharpeners and music boxes are popular items.

Christmas at *The Old Britannia Schoolhouse* *Jean Robinson*



Dennis Taylor and Ken Robinson set up the tree



Ruth Taylor, Shirley Hoad and Joan Reid make Victorian style decorations.

Christmas at The Schoolhouse is always such a wonderful start to the seasonal festivities. As in past years, The Schoolhouse was decked out in Christmas greenery with a fragrant fir tree trimmed with Victorian style decorations and a welcoming wreath on the door. On Sunday, November 28 the Sales Committee held their annual Christmas Open House and Sale. Many friends, new and old, arrived to select unique items for Christmas giving or to enjoy for themselves. John Emerson and Ray Hosty delighted the crowd with musical selections on the piano and violin. Our loyal volunteers demonstrated the toys, kept the cider and Christmas goodies flowing and sold the wares. Melissa Jacobs, the Schoolmistress, was on hand to give information about the program and The Schoolhouse. We had a visit from a Mississauga News reporter Megan Richardson and a film team From Rogers Cable that interviewed Eva and Ben. This aired in early December on Cable 10. Thanks to all the volunteers. Money raised supports the schoolhouse program and purchases artifacts for use and display.

Recent Schoolhouse Events

Heritage Weekend

Mississauga Showcase *George Christian*

This annual event took place on February 19 and 20 at Square One. This year's theme was "Over 200 Years of History", celebrating the bi-centennial of the 1805 Mississauga Treaty Number 13A. There were exhibits and demonstrations by over 30 local Heritage Groups.

Friends of the Schoolhouse were actively involved. Joan Reid created a display showing the history of The Britannia Schoolhouse, S.S. #12 and another with beautiful photographs of flowers in the schoolhouse gardens. Eva Ardiel organized and supervised the sales tables. Adult and student volunteers staffed the booth both days. Many thanks to the following for their loyal support: Marg Draper, Cathy Harper, Marilyn Newell, Earl Bonner, Marg Carson, Linda Kenny, Mary Corrigan, Joan Moon, May Robbins, Marjorie and Ben Madill, Jenny Roberts, Jean Robinson, Frances Kay, Joan Reid and Daryl Cook. Thanks also to student volunteers Manny Fung and Opani Mudalidge.



Opani Mudalidge
Demonstrates a music box.

Peel Heritage Complex *Joan Reid*

The Friends of the Schoolhouse booth was set up on the main floor of the Court House. A slow but steady stream of visitors enjoyed the pioneer toys and the display called "Families of Britannia". The "Pecking Chickens" and the marble game were hits with children and the stereoscope attracted the interest of many adults. Our grade ten student from Brathwaite Secondary School, Manali Patel, was most adept at demonstrating these items.

Thanks to Eva Ardiel, Lis Braun, Joan Moon, and Marg Storey for their help in making this afternoon a pleasant and worthwhile endeavour.



Manali Patel waits to demonstrate
the old toys.

Another Coming Event
The Madill Family invites you to join
with them in celebrating Ben's
90th birthday
Open House
May 29th, 2005
1:30 PM - 4:00 PM
In the Atrium of The Peel District
School Board Office
Best wishes only

The Schoolhouse Garden

Joan Reid

Friends of the Schoolhouse are delighted that our heritage garden is now under the Community Planting program of the Streetsville Horticultural Society. The Society has a long history of community beautification and we look forward to their help and support in planting a Victorian garden in the school yard in the Spring of 2005.

Other plans for 2005 include the enlargement of not only the shade and sun gardens for native perennials but also the gardens surrounding the school building. We are looking forward to the blooming of colourful bulbs planted last fall.



Garden display at Heritage Showcase in February

Schoolhouse Artifacts

Here is another treasure for students to learn about. Do you know what it is? (Answer below)



Donations

Many thanks to the following who have donated to the Schoolhouse since November 2004

G.F. Appleton	Karin Henderson
Eva Ardiel	Brian Holstein
Earl Bonner	Mary Izawa
Anne Brownjohn	Nancy Jones
Doris Bryce	Myrtle Laishley
Kirby Burns	Janet MacDougald
Catherine Cameron	Marilyn Newell
Marg Carson	Linda Newman
George Christian	Marie Owens
Grace and Russell	Judy Paget
Church	Doris Paton
Diane Claridge	William Quance
Joan Command	Jennifer Roberts
Helen Debenham	Hazel Salmon
Margaret Dickson	Robert Sandusky
Kevin Doran	Helen Savage
Jessie Edmiston	Jan Scott
Alba Falconi	Stuart and Bertha Scott
Pamela Gibson	Clara Scott
Win Giguere	Karen Simmons
Ann Gilpin	Errol Smith
Doug Graham	Doris Stewart
Judy Grant	Muriel Walden
Cathy Harper	Amy Wilson

Don't forget these coming events!

May 15	Celebrating Eva
May 29	Ben's 90th Birthday Open House
June 28	Strawberry Social

Price: \$25.00 (from an early 20th century school supply catalogue)

A handbook, with full directions for use, is furnished with the instrument.

protects it when not in use.

horizontal axis is 15 1/2 inches. It is shipped in a box wooden case which

up and cannot get out of order except by violent usage. It may be held in

tion by chart and diagram.

right. The moon's phases, the tides, eclipses, etc., than in course of instruc-

once become definite. The understandings and memories.

The Tropæusæ Planetarium is such an instrument. By its use a pupil can

cannot show the actual motions which produce those positions.

If a child can see a working model that simulates the interest and pre-

tion from the sun, earth and moon in their relative positions at certain times, but

the elementary facts of mathematical geography. Charts and diagrams may

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