

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse

1852-1959
restored 1982

Spring Issue 2011



Recent activities

Students visiting for a day:

In February 438

In March 384

In April 430

Open Sundays

SLATE

Reception for Trustees and Senior Administration

Upcoming events

Ecofest: June 18

Strawberry Social: June 22

Lemonade on the Lawn: July 19

Open Sundays: 2nd Sunday every month 1pm-4pm

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?

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse

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Ecofest 2011

Christine Chapel



For the second year, Britannia will be hosting Ecofest, the Peel Board's annual environmental festival. Students from across Peel have the opportunity to come and showcase environmental initiatives their schools have been involved with throughout the year. Schools that have been certified as Ecoschools this year will receive their awards during Ecofest festivities.

All students of Peel and their families are welcome to take part in the day's events. Several eco organizations from across Peel will be present, offering information and activities for those in attendance. Our own Friends will once again be taking part. In addition to historic games and activities, the Friends will have plants from their gardens for sale and the Schoolhouse will be open for visitors to drop in for a visit. It promises to be a day of sharing, fun and learning so mark Saturday June 18 from 12 to 4 pm on your calendar. For more details please visit www.peelecofest.com.

Message from the Schoolmistress

Christine Chapel

“No school is too small to have a garden of some kind, and no garden is too small to become the joy and pride of some boy or girl.”

Ontario Teachers’ Manual – Nature Study 1915

The daffodils and forsythia are casting a yellow glow across the schoolyard, birds are visiting the feeder in their full spring plumage and the garlic has sprouted in the garden. Spring has at last sprung!

Once again this year, students will be playing an active role in the Schoolhouse gardens. Secondary students will volunteer their time in the flower gardens helping Joan Reid.

Visiting students to the Schoolhouse have already begun preparing the site for this year. To commemorate Arbour Day, students from Oscar Peterson Public School picked up litter from the school grounds, gingerly plucking a full garbage bag’s worth from the raspberry bushes alone. Children from King’s Masting Public School planted a white spruce on the north fence line of the perennial garden which will eventually offer cooling shade and act as a wind break.

Over the next several weeks students will be charged with helping to plant this year’s vegetables. Radish, carrots, potatoes, tomatoes and peppers are but a few of the staples that will be put in the ground. Visiting children will continue to tend the garden, weeding and watering and in some cases harvesting and eating until the end of the school year. This offers another interesting glimpse into the life of former students who attended the Britannia Schoolhouse as, at the turn of the century, every pupil would have had their own small garden plot to tend.

As we move into the spring season we look forward with great anticipation to how our gardens, and the students working in them, will grow.

From the Former Schoolmaster

Dennis Patterson

It is hard to believe but today I am turning in my keys and teaching the students here at The Old Britannia Schoolhouse for the last time. It is a mix of emotions. I have greatly enjoyed my time here at the Schoolhouse but the opportunity I have been given in Japan is not one I can allow to pass me by.

It is hard to believe that it was over 4 years ago that I first taught a class here in Britannia. In those four years life has changed so much, most notably beginning as a single man and now being married with a lovely little baby.

The Friends of the Schoolhouse have been there for me on this journey, supporting with advice and kind deeds. This job has been an incredible learning experience and one I would not trade for anything.

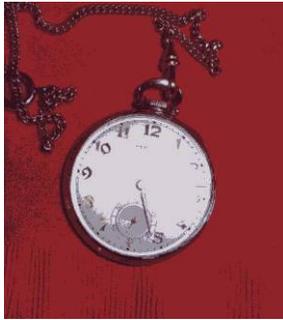
Thank you for the opportunity to take the position and make it my own. I am not disappearing, just moving, so keep in touch.



A Bittersweet Farewell

Joan Moon

“...meeting, after moments, is certain for those who are friends.”—Richard Bach



Dennis Patterson wasn't just the schoolmaster extraordinaire, but a friend to all of us.

A farewell party for Dennis and his family was held at The Schoolhouse. We enjoyed a light lunch which included sushi and cake. As a thank-you, we presented him with a gold pocket watch chosen by Eva. He is very much missed by us but I am sure his new students are enjoying his teaching just as the Peel students did. We sincerely wish him the very best as he embarks on this journey and we hope it brings him back to Peel in the future.

"Welcome to Britannia"

Joan Reid

In February 2011 Heritage House Dental received a Special Recognition Award from Heritage Mississauga for its preservation, restoration and creative re-use of the John Forster farmhouse. The farmhouse, in the Georgian style, was built on Lot 5, Concession II west of Centre Road in 1848 shortly after Forster inherited the property from his father James. Today it stands in a plaza on Britannia Road just west of Mavis Road.

John Forster described his origin as English and his occupation as farmer. His family settled in Toronto Township in 1828. According to Peel County historian Perkins Bull, John Forster had a teacher in his cabin before the frame school was built on Lot 3 in the 1830's. The Forster farm is shown not only on the Tremaine Map (1859) but also in the Atlas of Peel (1877). The property remained in the family until 1886.

The family was involved in the social life of the community. At the "Pic-Nic" in June 1877 at Garnder's bush, an early name for Britannia, Forster acted as chairman. An N. Forster and F. Forster were part of a group that entertained the merrymakers with duets, trios and quartettes. Agnes Forster was in Senior III at S.S. No.12 under teacher William P. McClure in 1882. She was on the school register until 1885. Arthur Forster attended S.S. No.12 from at least 1883 until 1886.

A part of Britannia lives on in this building. The City of Mississauga has erected a small sign on Mavis Road with S.S. No.12 pictured in the days of the horse and buggy. The sign welcomes visitors to Britannia.

Our past does have a future!



April SLATE Conference at Buxton National Historic Site and Museum

Jean Robinson

On a blustery April 18th, more reminiscent of January than April, eleven members of Friends of the Old Britannia Schoolhouse attended the annual SLATE (So Let's All Talk Education...in a one room schoolhouse) Conference held at the Buxton National Historic Site and Museum near Chatham, Ontario.

The Buxton Museum is on the site of a tract of land bought by a southern plantation owner on which to settle his freed slaves long before the Civil War in the United States. The former slaves prospered in Canada and soon after their arrival here, an excellent school was established in which both Greek and Latin were taught as well as the usual reading, writing and arithmetic. If you are ever in the Chatham area, a visit to Buxton will provide you with a very interesting experience. We



learned so much about a part of our history that is not taught in school, at least not when I went to school!

The Conference began with a short introductory session and a welcome to all the participants. Friends of The Old Britannia Schoolhouse is usually well represented, and one of only two or three entirely volunteer organizations there. Many of the other participants are museum curators.

Brian Prince, a descendent of one of the original settlers, gave us a very illuminating talk about the history of the settlement and related the achievements of children and grandchildren of those settlers. Then we gathered in the old one-room schoolhouse for a role playing session,



conducted by Shannon Prince, which gave us an insight into the school and community life in the later part of the 1800's.

During our short business meeting, as Eva is stepping down as Chair of the organization, she was honored for her contribution to the organization and continuation of SLATE over its history.

April SLATE Conference (continued)

Jean Robinson

After the meeting we walked to the Church Hall for a delicious catered lunch. All morning the snow had been falling covering the daffodils and making pathways wet and slippery, but by the time lunch was over, the snow had stopped and although it was not sunny, at least we could stay dry as we visited the old log cabin and the pioneer barn with its amazing display of farming implements.



Back at the museum meeting room we heard a panel of media experts give advice on how to make the most effective use of print and electronic media to advertise museum programs.

All too soon the Conference ended, but we will gather again on April 16, 2012 at the Quinte Educational Museum and Archives in Ameliasburgh, Prince Edward County for the 26th Annual SLATE Conference.

Trustees Reception

Ruth Taylor

On April 25, Friends of the Schoolhouse hosted a reception for the Peel Board trustees and senior administration. Light refreshments were provided. For some of our visitors, it was their first time in our schoolhouse. Friends Chair Shirley Hoad expressed our appreciation for the support of the board in maintaining the schoolhouse and the program. She explained some of the things we had done, such as preserving some of the priceless old maps, which are used as a resource for the program. Board Chair Janet McDougald thanked us for inviting the group to the reception and for working to maintain the schoolhouse and to promote the program. On behalf of the board, Ms. McDougald made a generous donation to Friends of the Schoolhouse.

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.

Reminder: Schoolhouse members can choose to have their newsletter e-mailed. Simply send an e-mail to dlcook@rogers.com or kmooncraney@rogers.com

From the Chair

Shirley Hoad

As spring finally makes an appearance around The Old Britannia Schoolhouse, I am pleased to report that signs of activity are also here. Joan Reid and her committee and student volunteers have already had a yard/garden clean-up and will have a few more to improve our schoolyard. Christine Chapel has had her classes start the tomatoes and peppers for the vegetable garden. Dennis Patterson had scoured the seed catalogues last winter, and the new seed packets are waiting for the warmer weather before being planted. As the temperature increases, the Victorian garden and vegetable garden will bloom again.

The Friends played host to the Trustees and senior administration of the Peel Board at the schoolhouse on April 26th. We always enjoy showing our place to the Board and expressing our appreciation for their continued support of our efforts and the schoolhouse programme and building. Ms. Janet McDougald, the Board Chair, presented us with a generous cheque to continue the work that we are doing to conserve the many artifacts that we have. Mr. Tony Pontes, the Director of Education, also gave us a donation to assist in these efforts. Both will be used to save items within the classroom for the future.

On May 8 we were recognized by the Retired Teachers of Ontario, District 39, for our efforts, and presented with a grant to allow us to conserve three more large wall maps. This work is being done by a professional conservator and her work can be seen in the maps already preserved, and hanging in the schoolhouse.

We have had correspondence with our former schoolmaster, Dennis Patterson, as he settles into his new home and position in Ishikawa Uruma-city, Okinawa, Japan. He is now teaching in an international school, and enjoying setting up a home for his wife and daughter. When he left us, and landed in Japan one day before the earthquake and tsunami hit the northern part of the islands, we were all on edge until we heard from him. He and his family and friends were all spared from the disaster that hit so many. He frequently e-mails his continuing interest in the schoolhouse, and we will keep him up to date on our activities.

Hopefully we will see many of you in the next few months as we prepare for Ecofest, and the Strawberry Social. Or perhaps you will come and stroll through our gardens or drop in at an Open Sunday.

Correction notice:

In the Winter 2011 Issue of the Schoolhouse newsletter, the “Johnson Children at Britannia School” article was written by *Judi Island*.

Strawberry Social

Ruth Taylor and Dennis Taylor

Friends of the Schoolhouse are once again hosting their annual Strawberry Social in the atrium of the board office on Wednesday, June 22, 2011. Treat yourself, and maybe a friend to a scrumptious helping of juicy Ontario berries mounded on top of Streetsville's finest shortcake biscuits topped with a dollop of genuine whipped cream. You will be served tea or coffee in our lovely china cups. Raspberry cordial will also be available. Your name will be entered into a draw for a great variety of prizes. Sales items from the schoolhouse stock will be available as well as plants from the schoolhouse gardens. This event is one of our major fundraisers for the year. The cost of a ticket is \$8.00. Tickets will be available from Friends on the Schoolhouse or may be held for you at the door.

Lemonade on the Lawn

Daryl Cook



You are invited to our annual mid-summer celebration which recognizes and thanks all those who have supported the Friends of the Schoolhouse throughout the year. Members and Peel Board staff are invited to bring their lunch and enjoy a picnic in the schoolyard. Bring your families too. We'll provide the lemonade and cookies. This has become one of our favourite events. Please join us on July 19 from 11:30 until 1:30.

Open Sundays

Daryl Cook

Visitors enjoyed a variety of activities at the schoolhouse in March, April and May. March Open Sunday was Family Games Day. We got out all the old board games and children challenged parents at checkers, snakes and ladders and skittles. In April children enjoyed playing with all the old-fashioned toys. A beautiful sunny Spring day in May was a time to see trilliums, daffodils and bluebells in bloom in the garden and to plant sunflower seeds in a small pot. Children took their pots home to watch the plants grow and eventually to transplant them to their gardens.

More Open Sunday events are planned for the second Sunday of each month. In June there will be outdoor games and a chance to see the gardens in bloom. In July the lavender will be blooming and we will make lavender sachets. There will also be raspberries to sample. August brings the first of the vegetables in the garden.

Come and join us on the second Sunday afternoon of each month from 1 to 4 pm.

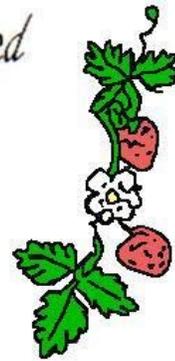


Come out and enjoy an old-fashioned
Strawberry Social

Wednesday June 22, 2011

11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

in the atrium of H.J.A. Brown Education Centre



BILL OF FARE

A generous helping of luscious Ontario strawberries on a delicious shortcake biscuit.... topped with genuine whipped cream!

Tea • Coffee • Fruit Cordial
Mints

Come as you are... or "dressed up" for an old-fashioned afternoon tea

\$8.00 tickets available until June 17th from



Friends of the Schoolhouse

A fundraising project for The Old Britannia Schoolhouse
(Some tickets available at the door.)

If you would like to have tickets held for you at the door, please contact Ruth Taylor at

905 457 8804 or

rtaylor914@sympatico.ca