

The Old Britannia Schoolhouse

1852-1959
restored 1982

Spring 2026



2025-2026 Schedule of Events

Please check the web site.

This newsletter

is published by *The Friends of the Schoolhouse* every Fall, Winter, and Spring to inform members and the teachers of the Peel District School Board of activities and events organized by The Friends.

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More information?

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Website
www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org

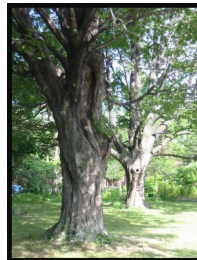
Welcome Spring and Summer

After a long, cold snowy winter, let's think about the joys of the coming season in the garden. Our gardening volunteers have started the spring clean-up and are planning for new additions. New gardeners are always welcome.

Here are some memories of our past historic gardens. We have had many successes and a few major disappointments.

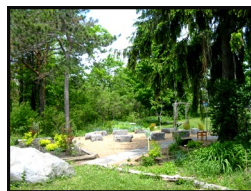


The heritage gardens around the schoolhouse and in the schoolyard bloom all season. One major disappointment was the loss of the huge



trees that shaded the schoolyard. They were considered dangerous.

We were saddened when employees of the Board decided to tear up the beautiful tribute we created to remember Ben Madill. Ben's Corner, an area for teaching and quiet contemplation is no more.



From the Chair

Ruth Taylor

Although there is no Schoolhouse program, we continue to hold monthly meetings. We feel it is important to be a presence in the Schoolhouse and have a hand in the upkeep. We can notify maintenance of issues that may need addressing.

On a sad note, Eva Ardiel, founder of Friends of the Schoolhouse, passed away in January 2025. In May, Eva's family held a reception at Vesuvio's, Eva's favourite restaurant, to celebrate her life. Many friends attended. In June we held a reception at the Schoolhouse for those who could not attend the earlier reception.

Marg Carson and a few other volunteers have been working at restoring the gardens, which unfortunately were clearcut in December 2023. The Eco Source group planted some flowers and milkweed near the vegetable gardens.

We hosted Open Sundays on the second Sunday of April, May and June. We resumed them in September, October and November. It gave visitors a chance to soak in the atmosphere, view the artifacts and ask questions.

In September we invited RTO (Retired Teachers of Ontario) for a visit. They were fascinated by the artifacts. They learned about the history of the Schoolhouse, were challenged with some math questions, and got a chance to play with the toys. We were pleased that we gained three new members.

In November a long-time member, Joan Moon, passed away. Joan was always the person who organized the refreshments for events when we had visitors.

In keeping with our concern for children's wellbeing, we made a cash donation to the Salvation Army's Toy Mountain collection. We thought this would help provide toys to needy families in Peel.

In December we combined Open Sunday with our Christmas Sale. Along with items related to the Schoolhouse and items crafted by members, we sold honey, jams and relishes we had purchased from vendors. We were pleased to have two new members (for a total of five) as our only outside vendors. One brought her knitted and crocheted crafts, including some Christmas items. The other person, a Peel teacher, showed off his skill with unique woodworking items.

Thanks to Daryl Cook, we continue to send out newsletters to inform and entertain our members.

Potato Candy

Ruth Taylor

2 medium baked potatoes. Mash potatoes while hot. Then add to them

1/4 pound butter 2/3 cup cocoa

2 tbsp vanilla 3 lb. icing sugar

Spread out onto a long pan to cool and harden. Nuts may be added.

This is a recipe my mother used to make. It is very sweet. According to my notes, I cut the amounts of cocoa, vanilla and sugar as follows: 1/2 cup cocoa, 1 1/2 tbsp vanilla, 2 lb. icing sugar. Maybe amounts depend on the size of the potatoes used.

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Schoolhouse Musings
Christmas Open House



Christmas Donation

Margaret Storey

At our December meeting, the Friends of the Schoolhouse decided to donate to the Salvation Army's Toy Mountain fundraiser. Since there aren't schoolchildren coming to the schoolhouse at the moment we thought we could at least help the Salvation Army meet their objective of providing toys to the needy families of Peel this Christmas. We were honoured to take a cheque for \$200.00 to the Salvation Army office in Meadowvale.

Celebrating Canadian Foods

Ruth Taylor

As Canada Day approaches, and our feelings of patriotism grow, it is interesting to learn about regional foods. Some will be familiar and some will be surprising.

BRITISH COLUMBIA is famous for its Nanaimo Bars. The classic chocolate and peanut butter bar is celebrated with stops on the Nanaimo Bar Trail.

ALBERTA's Caesar Clamato – vodka cocktail was first crafted in Calgary. There is a National Caesar Day to recognize it.

SASKATCHEWAN's Saskatoon berries were prized by First Nations for their nutritional and medicinal properties. Its sweet nutty flavour enhances the taste of pies and preserves.

MANITOBA's fur traders and explorers relied on Bannock flatbread for nourishment. It is available plain or with raisins.

ONTARIO is famous for its butter tarts which may be plain or made with raisins or pecans. There are various butter tart trails throughout Ontario.

QUEBEC's early immigrants from France brought "tarte au sucre" (sugar pie). It has a filling of brown sugar, cream, egg, butter and flour. Quebec is also a major producer of maple syrup.

NEW BRUNSWICK's East Coast oysters from Beausoleil have a black crescent on their shells. They are famous for their briny bite and sweet taste.

NOVA SCOTIA is known for its mayonnaise – tossed lobster on a buttered bun. Shelburne County is home to an annual festival.

NEWFOUNDLAND and LABRADOR – Newfoundland is home to Iceberg Alley. The Quidi Vidi brewing company uses ice from the icebergs to brew their beer.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND is famous for its potatoes. 60% of its potatoes end up in chips, French fries and other processed foods. You can use potatoes to make potato fudge.

YUKON – Its official flower is the pink fireweed which is one of the first things to grow after a fire.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES – Preserving whale is a time-honoured custom among the Inuit. They use whale skin and blubber in various forms.

NUNAVUT – Arctic char is one of the main forms of sustenance. It may be used raw, cooked or smoked.

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The Magic of The Sugar Maple

Daryl Cook

Winter in Britannia had been unusually frigid and snowy. It seemed to be lasting forever. Young Will was anxiously waiting for the crisp days of March when the days would be longer and the temperature milder. He also knew it would not be long before he had delicious maple syrup on his pancakes. Will had some idea of how maple syrup was made. He lived on a farm but there were not many trees and not the right kind. He really wasn't sure what kind of tree was needed. With thoughts of spring and sweet syrup on his mind, he trudged down the lane to the little one room schoolhouse.

The schoolmistress met the children at the door as usual, but instead of taking them inside she took them over to the large tree in front of the school. She asked if anyone knew what kind of tree it was. They all knew it was a maple. What kind of maple? Will looked confused. Wasn't a maple just a maple? The children learned that there were many kinds of maple trees. Only the sugar maple was tapped to make the syrup. Will knew what a tap was. There was one in the kitchen sink that he turned on to get water, but there was no tap on this tree.

The children soon learned the process of tapping the tree and collecting the sap. A drill and a spout were needed. The spout had to fit tightly into the hole the drill made. It was tapped to make it secure and then a pail was hung on the spout. Will was one of the older boys so he was asked to tap the tree. It didn't take long for the sap to flow. Other students were assigned the job of checking on the pail and emptying it into a very large container that was kept in the schoolroom.

After a few days there was enough sap to boil down into syrup. A large kettle was put on the old wood stove and the sap boiled for several days. It took longer than usual since the fire had to be put out at night. It was hard to wait for the watery sap to become sticky syrup. Finally the magic happened and their large quantity of sap became a few jars of syrup. The next day the children brought pancakes for lunch and enjoyed their sweet treat. Will hoped he could convince his father to plant a sugar maple tree on their farm so that some day he could tap the tree and make maple syrup.



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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.

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

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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)

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 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

Past Spring Activities

For many years the Friends of the Schoolhouse held a Queen Victoria Day event. Spring Sunday Open Houses were special too. Here are a few memories of good times.



Children milked a cow created by Eva.

Learning to walk on stilts was a challenge.



Making huge bubbles was always fun.

Kite flying was great sport



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 "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.