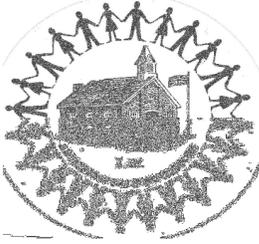


The Old Britannia Schoolhouse

1852-1959
restored 1982

Summer/Early Fall 2014



2014—2015 Schedule of Events

Sept. 12,13,14: Brampton Fair
Sept. 27: Doors Open
Dec. 14: Christmas Open House
Feb.14: Heritage Brampton
June 24: Strawberry Social
July 14: Lemonade on the Lawn
Sept. to June 2nd Sunday:
Open Sundays

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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Website

www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org

The Royal Oak

Julie Dippelhofer, Daryl Cook



I recently read was finishing it, I noticed a letter Eva wrote to know this story and I loved it!!!! After reading the end of Ben's book, I realized that it has been 75 years since the King and Queen visited Canada. It has been 25 years since Eva wrote to Queen Elizabeth II. So.....on this silver anniversary I will be writing to her Majesty. I will include some photos of the Royal Oak and the plaque. Since the journey of the bare-rooted Oak was a tough one, perhaps we could ask for some seeds from the Royal garden.

Ben Madill's book. As I ticed in the appendix, the Queen. I did not know this story and I loved it!!!! After reading the end of Ben's book, I realized that it has been 75 years since the King and Queen visited Canada. It has been 25 years since Eva wrote to Queen Elizabeth II. So.....on this silver anniversary I will be writing to her Majesty. I will include some photos of the Royal Oak and the plaque. Since the journey of the bare-rooted Oak was a tough one, perhaps we could ask for some seeds from the Royal garden.

The story Julie refers to began in 1939. Eva's letter tells about it.

Your Royal Highness

To commemorate the year of our majesties' visit to Canada and to encourage the beautification of rural school grounds, a young oak from Windsor Castle was awarded to the school with the most improved grounds. Our school was chosen. The oak was planted in 1939.

In the 1960's when the road in front of the schoolhouse was widened the oak was wantonly destroyed. 1989 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the royal visit and the young oak tree from Windsor Castle. On May 5, 1989 we shall re-enact the traditional arbour day activities of the past. We would like to plant another small oak tree from Windsor Castle.

We would be very grateful if you would graciously consider sending us another oak tree which we would ceremoniously plant to replace the one planted fifty years ago.

Queen Elizabeth II did send an oak tree which has grown and flourished on the north side of the schoolhouse. Perhaps to mark the 75th anniversary of the royal visit of her parents and the planting of the original Windsor oak, and the 25th anniversary of planting the replacement, she will send us some seeds from her gardens.

Summer/Early Fall 2014

From the Chair

Marg Storey

"Back to school!" I am sure those three words evoke all sorts of memories for us—old and new friendships, new activities, events and challenges! Whether as children heading back to school or for many of us, as teachers, eager to get our classrooms ready for our new students, there was always that anticipation of a new school year. For me this year, a new challenge—Chair of the Friends of The Schoolhouse!! Working with such an amazing group, though, will make that challenge much easier. It is a pleasure to work with these dedicated members who strive to ensure the Old Britannia Schoolhouse is known far and wide. We appreciate the continued support we receive from the School Board for our endeavours as well as our schoolmistress and schoolmaster who provide the students of Peel with a wonderful day of living history.

Another year means activities for us beginning with the Brampton Fall Fair, September 12-14th. The Friends will have a demonstration table of our old fashioned wooden toys as well as some photographic displays. Schoolmistress Chapel and Schoolmaster Campbell will be entering some of the vegetables they have grown in the Schoolhouse Teaching Garden with the help of the visiting students. I wonder how many ribbons they will receive this year. Later in September we will be hosting Doors Open Mississauga, Saturday, September 27th. This is another opportunity for anyone to visit and learn more about the schoolhouse.

Our Open Sundays take place the second Sunday of the month from 1-4pm. These were started in 1997 to answer a need to have the schoolhouse open for the public. There is always a specific theme and a craft or activity for the children. Two of our volunteers are always on hand to answer any questions. More often than not we hear comments like "I have passed by this building for years and am so happy to be able to see inside. Or another common one is "This is just like my school in my home country" or "My grandmother taught in a one room school like this". Come and see for yourself.

For further events and information be sure to check out our website:

www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org. Also on the website you will find a membership form for the Friends of the Schoolhouse. Perhaps you might like to join to help support the work of the Friends or even come to a meeting. We look forward to seeing you at any or all of our events.

The Core Executive

Chair:	Marg Storey
Past Chair:	Ruth Taylor
Vice Chair:	Karen Simmons
Schoolmaster:	Gary Campbell
Schoolmistress:	Christine Chapel
Secretary:	Linda Kenny
Treasurer:	Liz Braun
Executive Director:	Shirley Hoad

Ben's Corner



Young folks like to talk about the future
Because they don't have much of a past.
Old folks like to talk about the past
Because they don't have much of a future.

CHECK THE SIDEBAR ON PAGE 1 FOR THIS YEAR'S EXCITING EVENTS

Summer/Early Fall 2014

From the Schoolmistress

Christine Chapel

Let's call this the year of renewal. We had a busy school year and always look forward to summer as a time to catch up and spruce up. We seem to be in a period of transition and growth at the Schoolhouse with new curriculum that we are incorporating into our programs, a new learning space in the perennial garden and a vegetable garden that is offering its share of challenges.

Our vegetable garden has become an important teaching tool but we have faced some trials this summer. Our cool spring delayed our planting time. This was fine since a later planting allows for a later harvest so we can be in the garden picking with students into October and early November even. Our great challenge last year was the weeds and keeping the garden watered. Schoolmaster Campbell has had great success in using straw as a natural weed suppressant and in retaining moisture. This explains why, in answer to many curious inquiries, the vegetable garden looks like a hay field. It has worked like a charm but...we've discovered that slugs find the straw and moist environment a natural shelter - perfect for hiding in during the day after a night of chewing entire leaves off of tender young vegetables! We lost two entire zucchini plants and apparently they love newly sprouted beans and carrots too. Not to be outdone, the chipmunks and rabbits have feasted on corn and beans, even squeezing through the small holes in the chicken wire cages we made.

We've also had challenges with our soil. It is a heavy clay soil and every year we add compost, triple mix and other organics in order to amend it. It's clear to us that a great deal more must be added to it. Trying to dig into the heavy soil and break up clods before planting is time consuming and labour intensive...and impossible. Healthy soil, I've read, should look like chocolate cake crumbs in your hand. Ours looks more like chocolate pudding! We attempted to use a small rototiller to create furrows, fill the furrows with triple mix and plant in that. We had good success with the beets and chard. The second batch of carrots, though, continue to struggle. This fall we will work on the soil and perhaps leave areas to lie fallow next year in order to give it time to renew. We're also considering planting winter wheat.

Even the fruit crop is going through a period of transition. Last fall we aggressively cut back and fertilized the raspberry plants in order to gain some control and promote new growth and berry production. The plan was quite successful – the plants have responded with vigorous growth and a modest crop. We anticipate greater production next year. Similarly, the apples and pears have had a season of regrowth after a hard pruning in the spring. Schoolmaster Campbell, having spent his teenage years on an apple farm, assures me that although our fruit production this year is small, we will see great improvement next year.

Despite our struggles, we will once again be entering our vegetables in the Brampton Fair. More than winning ribbons, it is really about being part of a community.

The garden continues to be an important part of our Schoolhouse program and acts as a constant metaphor for life and learning. There will be successes and failures in life. The joy of learning is in the trying and freedom to explore and experiment.

We look forward to another new school year and welcome the challenges that we will be confronted with this year that we know will act as a source of renewal and growth.

Summer/Early Fall 2014

Alton Public School

We are continuing our efforts to organize Joan Reid's vast amount of research and make it available to the public. Since this is a much bigger job than we anticipated, we will print interesting excerpts in the newsletter.



S.S. No. 15 Caledon, Alton Public School 1935

S.S. No. 15 Caledon, Alton Public School
1935



Alton Public School 2014



A deserted classroom

When it closed in 2013 the public school in Alton, built in 1875, was the oldest continuously operating school in the Region of Peel. But this school was not the first one in the village. There are records of temporary school buildings as early as 1837. One, a log school, was built on the site of Mr. Coulter's store on the east side of Main Street. The other was a rough cast building on a stone foundation built in 1837.

In 1875 a brick school was built on Lot 22 Concession 3 (19657 Main Street). High enrolment soon required constructing a second building adjacent to this school. In 1877 the two buildings were joined by a flat roof and the space between the buildings was used as another classroom. In 1908 two more rooms were added at the rear of the school. The school in 2014 looks much as it did after the 1908 addition. Unlike many early schools, Alton has a basement which served as a sort of "gymnasium" for physical education classes despite its low ceiling.

In 1927 Alton Public School became a Continuation School with grades 1 to 12. Students traveled to Orangeville by train for grade 13.

Student enrolment fluctuated between the 1960's and 1980's. In 1960 S.S. #7 Beechgrove was destroyed by fire and those students permanently transferred to Alton. By the 1980's population declined and in 1986 the Peel Board of Education changed the school boundaries and planned to close the school. Community pressure prevented the closure. The school celebrated its 125th anniversary in 1999.

The old school was clearly not adequate for the needs of 21st century education. A new school—the first in Alton in 139 years—opened in January 2014 on the lot next to the 1875 school.

On one of our road trips to find the sites of the early Peel schools we were lucky to find the custodian working at the old Alton school. He let us wander through the building. Remnants of the last classes were still there—student art on the bulletin board, desks and chairs, lessons on the blackboards and, to Shirley Hoad's delight, gym mats, basketballs and skis still in the basement.

The fate of the old school is undecided. The Peel Board has leased it to the Town of Caledon until the village has a sewer system. The ownership will then transfer to the town.

Summer/Early Fall 2014

Events To Remember in 2014 Confederation

One hundred and fifty years ago a series of events led eventually to confederation. The maritime provinces, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, floated the idea of uniting. A conference was planned for September in Charlottetown PEI to pursue formally this union. The province of Canada – today Ontario and Quebec – asked to join and the concept of a much wider union was considered. The Charlottetown Conference held in September, 1864 was the first step in creating a new country – Canada. By all accounts it was a chaotic week of discussions. More locals were interested in the arrival of the first circus in more than 20 years than in political affairs. The conference itself was a bit of a circus with delegates spending time drinking and eating at numerous balls and banquets until the early hours of the morning. Nevertheless decisions were made to pursue the concept of a wider confederation at another meeting in Quebec City.

So this September we can celebrate those “fathers of confederation”, John A. Macdonald, Thomas D’Arcy McGee, Charles Tupper and George-Etienne Cartier who met in Charlottetown and laid the groundwork for a new country.

WWI Britannia and the First World War

One hundred years ago this month war was declared in Europe. Although the Britannia community was small, a number of men enlisted and joined the war in Belgium and France. Some never returned. Their names are listed on a memorial document that hangs in the schoolhouse. Every November on our Open Sunday we remember and honour those who lost their lives in battle. This year we will honour especially those from Britannia who died in the First World War.

Heritage Gardens

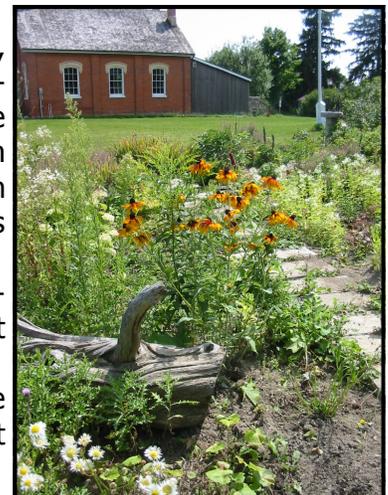
Karen Simmons

It has been a wonderful summer for garden growth. The bachelors’ buttons and lupines were very colourful in June, and the foxgloves are making a comeback after being rather scarce for a couple of years. We added some new seedlings to help that process, but they won’t bloom until next year. Hopefully self seeding after that will keep the foxgloves plentiful.

The three main members of the garden committee, Jean Robinson, Marg Carson and I, have been battling the usual prolific weeds all summer. We are adding mulch as we clear each area, but sometimes we wonder whether we or nature is winning the war! One unusual patch was discovered – poison ivy! Fortunately, it is not in the garden, but on the north side of the fence. It has been taped off until someone comes to dispose of it.

The garden committee is also coordinating the plans for a new outdoor classroom/conversation area. We’ll have more information about that later.

We plan to have some volunteer sessions in October to help get the gardens ready for winter. Anyone willing to help could contact me at karsim@rogers.com, and I will put you on my list



Summer/Early Fall 2014

Past Events

Lemonade on the Lawn



The annual Lemonade on the Lawn event in July 2012 was another success. The weather was perfect and about 40 board staff and Friends of the Schoolhouse members came to enjoy the refreshments. Some brought a picnic lunch to eat under the trees in the garden. The Friends of the Schoolhouse appreciate the support of all our members and of the helpful staff at the H.J.A. Brown Education Centre. A treat of lemonade and cookies every summer is our way of saying thank you.

Annual Planning Meeting



In July each year the Friends executive and committees meet to review the activities of the past year and plan for the next twelve months. The convenor of each event (Brampton Fair, Doors Open, Christmas Open House, Heritage Brampton, Strawberry Social, Lemonade on the Lawn) presents a review of the event. We consider what went well, what changes need to be made and decide on actions to be taken. Chairs review the work of their committees and make recommendations. New initiatives are discussed and plans set for the coming year.

We will continue to find ways to preserve our collection of old text books. We have already had an old dictionary rebound. The Communications chair will seek information on how the new anti-SPAM legislation will effect our emailing information to members. Our Community Outreach is proving successful with the increasing number of people booking wedding photos at the schoolhouse. It was decided that money for the permit must be received by the Peel Board prior to the date of the photographs. Our gardens are flourishing but we need more volunteers. The committee working on Joan Reid's research is making good progress and hopes to have the project completed in 2015. Open Sundays continue to be a valuable way of promoting the schoolhouse program even if there are only a few visitors. The Sales Committee has had a successful year. Eva is turning over the job of Sales to Julie Dipplehofer and Amy Smith. Volunteers will continue to do an annual clean up of the schoolhouse. Board maintenance staff do daily sweeping and washroom cleaning but do not dust the valuable artifacts in the classroom or clean the stove and refrigerator.

At the end of the meeting we treat ourselves to a pot luck lunch. It is always rewarding to look back on a successful year and exciting to look forward to another year of providing support for the Old Britannia Schoolhouse programs.



Summer/Early Fall 2014

Coming Events

Brampton Fall Fair
September 12, 13 and 14
The Theme for this year's fair is "Horses"

Friends of the schoolhouse will be at Brampton Fall Fair on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, September 12th to 14th. The buildings open at 10:00 a.m. We will be located again in the Livestock Building which is the farthest west building. It is an interesting location backing onto the ring where the cattle are paraded and in the midst of the poultry, rabbit, and other critter exhibits. As well as livestock, the garden produce is located at this site, as are the 4-H projects. We hope the Schoolhouse garden and orchard can win some ribbons again this year, thanks to the efforts of Schoolmistress Chapel, Schoolmaster Campbell and the visiting classes who helped with planting, weeding and harvesting.

We will have displays, information pamphlets and our huge assortment of old fashioned toys and games for exploring, as well as a few items for sale.

We can only do the fair because so many of our volunteers are willing to come out and interact with the fair goers, demonstrate the toys, etc. at our always popular and very busy booth.

We appreciate the welcome and assistance we receive each year from the Region of Peel Agricultural Society and the Brampton Fair Board.

The fair offers something for everyone. So come on out. We hope to see you there!
The Fairgrounds is just north of Brampton at 12,942 Heart Lake Road, at Old School Road, in Caledon.

Doors Open Mississauga
Cathy Harper

Please join us at the Old Britannia Schoolhouse on **Saturday, September 27, 2014** for Doors Open between 10 am and 4 pm. Bring your friends to experience what it was like to be a child of the early 1900's in a one room schoolhouse. The architecture is typical of schools once found throughout Ontario. Only a few still exist. After your visit to the schoolhouse, take time to wander about the school grounds and enjoy the gardens.

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.

Check our website often for the latest information.
www.britanniaschoolhousefriends.org

Summer/Early Fall 2014

Our Open Sundays

Here is our schedule for the coming year. Please note there are no Open Sundays in July and August.

DATE	WHAT'S HAPPENING
Sept 14	Then and Now Come for a visit to our one room schoolhouse. Then see if you can find things that are the same and things that are different from a modern schoolroom.
Oct 12	Scavenger Hunt Come and visit the schoolhouse and the gardens. Get a Scavenger sheet and see how many of the items you can find.
Nov 9	Remembrance Day. First World War Centenary 1914-2014 We remember and honour our many brave soldiers. Read about their stories and see our displays of photos, medals and newspaper articles. Make a poppy, a peace dove or a bookmark.
Dec 14	Christmas Open house and sale Visit our schoolhouse all decorated in Victorian splendour. Make a decoration for your own home. Complete your Christmas shopping by checking out our unique items for sale.
Jan 11	Sir John A. MacDonald's 200th Birthday Celebrate this special birthday of Canada's first Prime Minister on the actual day. Learn about his life. Make a Sir John A. bookmark.
Feb 8	Celebrating Canada's Flag Our famous red and white flag, known throughout the world, will be 50 years old this month. Learn about its history as well as that of the Union Jack which flew at the schoolhouse. Take home a Canadian flag of your own.
Mar 8	Keeping Warm Quilts were very important for the early settlers. Come and see our display of quilts, some old and some newer ones. Design your own using wooden blocks or colour one using various templates.
April 12	Victorian Games Learn about the games Victorian families liked to play. Try your hand at checkers, croki-nole or skittles.
May 10	Mother's Day We appreciate all that our mothers have done for us. Make your mom a pretty posy to show her how much you love her.
June 14	Father's Day Bring your dad to the schoolhouse for some fun. Play horseshoes in the garden horseshoe pit or see if he can walk on stilts.