The setting was the Cole Harbour Place Public Library on 30 March 2011 when acclaimed author Budge Wilson gave a reading from her book Before Green Gables, which tells the story of L.M. Montgomery’s heroine before her arrival in PEI. Darcy Johns, Youth Librarian, who arranged the visit, invited a local grade five class as well as members of the Doll Clubs and the general public.

A wonderful display titled Green Gables and Red Braids, set up by Gail Tims, greeted guests at the entrance to the library. Inside was an impromptu display of more Anne dolls, a cause of much interest and delight among the younger participants. Budge Wilson took the audience deep inside the character of both her Anne and the heroine of the classic books, and graciously answered many questions about her experiences as a writer. To conclude the event she was presented with a gift basket on behalf of the Doll Clubs.

A tea party followed and all, still basking in the glow of Budge’s masterful presentation, savoured the yummy taste of Darcy’s Almond “Anne” Braid; raspberry jam-filled “Anne” cookies with a cut-out heart and cupcakes iced in pink with a yellow “A” on the tops. These delicacies were accompanied by egg sandwiches, which did not have much to do with Anne, but maybe Lucy enjoyed such.

A very memorable morning!

On display at the Musquodoboit Public Library by the Eastern Passage members of the Doll Study Group of Nova Scotia in February 2011.
Dolls, Christmas and a Mother’s Love

A friend recently sent me a very special parcel from Toronto. The parcel - a beautiful, early-1960s Christmas card box - contained sewing notions and a treasured, well-used hand sewing kit - a souvenir of Niagara Falls bought in the late-1940s. The carefully packed box contained multicoloured bindings, lace, rickrack trim, snap fasteners, hooks and eyes, small buttons, two sizes of ribbon and appliqués. My friend’s mother had used the sewing kit and notions to sew doll dresses for The Reliable Doll Company from the 1940s until the mid-1950s.

Each week from September until late-November, a man would deliver basic cut-out doll dresses to my friend’s mother and pick up completed doll dresses. My friend’s mother sewed on lace, rickrack, appliqués, fasteners and bindings, then sewed up the dresses. She was paid the going rate of 1½ cents for each finished dress. She sewed at home after supper until midnight after she had worked a full day away from home. This was a labour of love as her additional income helped make a happy Christmas for her family.

Reflecting on Canada’s 100th Anniversary of doll making, one can see that dolls have made Christmas special for children in many ways.

Canadian Dolls at the Juan de Fuca Library in Victoria

Submitted by Lois Allen, Victoria Doll Club

The Victoria Doll Club, Victoria BC, celebrates 100 years of doll manufacturing with a display of the members’ Canadian dolls at the Juan de Fuca Library for April 2011. Members Judy Boyd and Rosemary Carter set up the display and were interviewed by the daily newspaper about doll collecting, which resulted in a published article.

The Victoria Doll Club began in 1968, and we are in our forty-third year. We presently have 26 members and meet once a month from September to June. For many years we hosted a June get-together every other year, alternating with the Vancouver Doll Club - lots of fond memories and lots of great friendships were created! Happy doll collecting to all!