

Fall 2005

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The Newfoundland Historical Society

1905 - 2005



Newsletter

President's Message

Welcome back to all members; I hope you had a lovely summer. I want to thank members of the executive who have taken part of their summer to make plans for our upcoming year. In 2005 we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Newfoundland Historical Society and in September we will spend our meeting looking back at some highlights of past characters, issues and achievements. We promise to keep it entertaining, and we certainly hope that many of you will be able to join in and add your own memories of the Society. You'll find more details on this and the rest of the fall line-up inside.

As well as planning our lecture series, the executive has continued to follow up on two long-time concerns. We look forward to this year's launching of the Grade Eight course on the History of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Society has lobbied long and hard for an increased emphasis on the province's history in our curriculum and we are very pleased to see this advance. We will watch the evolution of the course and offer any assistance we can to teachers working to enlighten and excite their students about the rich history we share.

While this issue seems to be advancing well, we are still concerned about another equally important issue: the future of the Colonial Building. While the Society is grateful to have been allowed to maintain our office in the building pending a permanent plan for its use, our worries are not merely self-centered. We know all our members share our concern about the increased vandalism at this most historic building. With the departure of the Provincial Archives, the empty structure is vulnerable to great damage and we will continue to press Government to make long-term plans for its constructive use and preservation.

Finally, I thank you all for your continued interest in the Society and hope to see many of you in the fall. Your membership is essential if we are to continue our work. Please renew your membership by January 2006 and consider introducing a friend to the Society. Details on membership are included inside.

*Terry Bishop-Stirling,
President*

Committees 2005/06

Program

Melanie Martin, *Chair*
Terry Bishop-Stirling
Debbie Andrews
Larry Coady
Veva Moulton
Joan Ritcey

Finance & Membership

Larry Dohey, *chair*
Rosemary Healy
Debbie Andrews

History in the Schools

Jim Hiller
Fred Winsor

Publications

Linda Cullum, *Chair*
Jeff Webb, *Editor*,
Aspects
Joan Ritcey, *Web Master*
Michael Wilkshire,
Newsletter
<http://www.infonet.st.johns.nf.ca/providers/nf dhist/>

Your Newsletter

If you have an item of news, an anecdote, a picture from the past, an old saying, an event of historical interest happening in your corner of Newfoundland and Labrador, why not share it with fellow members in your NHS Newsletter?

You may have a question such as the one puzzling Larry Dohey:

What is the term used to describe a gathering of men shooting off guns at a wedding or other celebration?
E-mail your answer and anything you would like to see in your newsletter to:

nhs@thezone.net

100th Anniversary Celebrations

The Newfoundland Historical Society was founded at St. John's in 1905. Through the years many of the province's best known historians and public figures were members of the society's executive. People such as Canon Pilot, James Howley, H.F. Shortis, W.A. Munn, Arthur Johnson, Art Fox, Bobbie Robertson, J.R. Smallwood, George Story, Les Harris and Harry Cuff worked to encourage the society's objective - to promote knowledge and public discussions of the history and heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Members of the Newfoundland Historical Society are invited to an evening of celebrations on Thursday, September 29 at Hampton Hall to mark the Society's 100th birthday. Lecturers Terry Bishop-Stirling, Shane O'Dea and others will speak on the early days of the Society, the influence it had on Newfoundland history and some of the personalities that were involved. Come and enjoy the lectures, photographs and treats as we contemplate Newfoundland and Labrador's oldest heritage association and its colourful members.

The 100th Anniversary Committee

Program Committee Report

In my very brief three months as Programme Chair, I have come to understand how much hard work previous committees have put into the delivery of the Society's yearly lecture series! Our current committee – Terry Bishop-Stirling, Joan Ritcey, Larry Coady, Veva Moulton, Debbie Andrews, and Mike Wilkshire - have met in person and via email throughout the summer to put our fall lineup in place. My thanks to the committee for the great ideas they have continued to generate for our winter programme, even throughout their summer holidays. We hope you are able to take in all of our fall lineup, while we continue to work to deliver an interesting and entertaining winter series!

Melanie Martin, Programme Committee Chair

Historic Sites and Northern Lights: A Weekend in Battle Harbour

Battle Harbour, once popularly known as the "Capital of Labrador" because of its importance in the salt codfish industry, now a National Historic District, was the setting for a very successful workshop August 11-14, 2005 exploring the historic connections between the northeast coast of Newfoundland and coastal Labrador. Located on an island in the Labrador Sea, Battle Harbour was a major mercantile centre and main port of call for schooners (floater fishermen) from Newfoundland. It was also one of the main centres for "stationers" (onshore fishing families) especially from Conception Bay. Jean Guthrie and Mary Bridson were participants in this event. Here are some of their reflections...

Gordon Handcock

Gordon Slade and Dr. Gordon Handcock deftly arranged this four-day event so that 18 mostly hangashores got the best of introductions both to Battle Harbour as the hub of the Labrador fishery at its most vigorous, and to the meticulous conservation work of the Battle Harbour Historic Trust. A lively group of experts including the two Gordons and Calvin Poole, filled out historical context and background in well-planned, accessible talks on the mornings of the two full days of our stay. The afternoons were given to guided tours: Friday the wharves and stores of Battle Harbour; Saturday Cape St. Charles, half an hour of breezy boat ride away, from which the residents of Lodge Bay fished every summer until 1992. Mike Earle, now working for the Trust, told of listening in the house where we stood to John Crosbie spelling the end of the cod fishery.

We heard from Keith Hardy, last stationer of the days when the Kyle and the Cabot brought families from Conception Bay to the island for the summer fishery, and from Dr. Kevin Melvin, a story of fishing, then education. Aiden Maloney gave us salt fish and government intervention, Nina Goudie the brief life of the Labrador Circuit Court 1826-32.

And we lived sea air and home-cooked chowder, walks on the rocks, and yes, Aurora herself at 2 am. We had yesterday's houses with today's comforts, from the hilltop residence of the Grenfell Hospital doctors to the bunk-house where servants slept, but this weekend was filled with songs, yarns and everyone high on history.

Jean Guthrie



Mary Bridson
Adds...

Mike Earle also took us to his former summer fishing community of Cape St. Charles, a few miles from their winter quarters at Lodge Bay. The gear still sits on the wharf, the furniture in the houses, rhubarb patches flowering, all abandoned in 1992 after watching John Crosbie's infamous TV announcement of the cod moratorium.

Check It Out

Newfoundland Studies

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Tables of contents and searchable index available at www.mun.ca/nflds.

Order: nstudies@mun.ca
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Cupids: New Letters...

Two more letters have been added to the "Journal Entries and Letters" segment of the Baccalieu Trail Archaeology website. Henry Crout to Sir Percival Willoughby, April 10, 1613 and Thomas Willoughby to Sir Percival Willoughby, August 4, 1616. Both letters were written at Cupers Cove (Cupids). Crout describes the long hard winter of 1613 and his encounters with the pirates in Ferryland, the 1612 voyage into Trinity Bay and the meeting with the Beothuk in Bull Arm. To view letters: click on Henry Crout April 10, 1613 http://www.baccalieudigs.ca/journal_11.asp and Thomas Willoughby August 4, 1616 http://www.baccalieudigs.ca/journal_10.asp

Bishop Commemorated

Parks Canada and the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada invite you to the unveiling of a plaque commemorating Bishop Michael Anthony Fleming (1792-1850) as a person of national historic significance. The Ceremony will take place at the Basilica of St. John the Baptist, St. John's, Friday, Sept. 9, 2005 at 2:30 p.m. Reception to follow. 726-3660 www.stjohnsarchdiocese.nf.ca

Irish Symposium Sept 8-10

In connection with the 150th Anniversary of the Basilica Cathedral. For details see : www.stjohnsarchdiocese.nf.ca

The island is small enough to walk round in a couple of hours, and the views, rocks, plants, old cemeteries, a plane wreck, and site markers, make it fascinating. The history of Battle Harbour involves more than just the summer fishery. Great company, plenty of history, good food and wine, a few songs, lots of laughs, mouthfuls of bakeapples, a sombre hour of stories in the candle-lit St. James Anglican Church, (the last surviving example of Rev. William Grey's ecclesiastical architecture), and a chance to visit Red Bay and Point Amour along the way, all made this a memorable trip.

Mary Bridson



NHS Events Calendar



NHS Fall Lectures

Thursday, September 29th

"The Newfoundland Historical Society: Celebrating 100 Years of History" Terry Bishop-Stirling, Shane O'Dea and others will speak on the early days of the Society, the influence it had on Newfoundland history and some of the personalities that were involved.

Thursday, October 27th

"Twentieth Century Shore-Station Whaling in Newfoundland and Labrador" by Ches Sanger and Tony Dickinson - lecture and book launch

Thursday, November 24th

"Robert Edwards Holloway: Newfoundland Educator, Scientist, Photographer 1874-1902" by Ruby Gough - lecture and book launch

MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME _____
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Membership Fees: Regular \$28 / Life \$400 / Institutional \$24 / Student (no Quarterly) \$15

Donations are always welcome!

Fee _____ Donation _____ Total _____

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Payment may be made by VISA, cheque or money order to the Newfoundland Historical Society. Please send this form with your payment to the address on the front page. US subscribers please pay in US funds to cover postage. International subscribers please pay 18 pounds sterling or Canadian equivalent.

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