

Spring 2013



The Newfoundland Historical Society 1905 - 2013 Newsletter

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**Questions, comments,
letters to the Editor, and
membership inquiries may
be addressed to:**

NHS Office
P.O. Box 23154
Churchill Square
St. John's, NL
A1B 4J9

(709) 722-3191 (phone)
(709) 739-6458 (fax)

e-mail:
nhs@nf.aibn.com/

Internet:
<http://www.nlhistory.ca/>

Upcoming Lectures

A number of interesting lectures are being planned as part of the Newfoundland Historical Society's lecture series between September 2013 and April 2014.

Once the fall/winter lecture series is finalized, it will be published in our fall newsletter and on our web site.

Lectures will be held at 8:00 p.m. in Hampton Hall at the Marine Institute on Ridge Road. Cancellations due to poor weather will be posted on the CBC Storm Centre web site at cbc.ca/nl

President's Report 2012 - 2013

The primary goal of the Newfoundland Historical Society is to promote knowledge and public discussion of the history and heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador, and we accomplish this through lectures, symposia and publications, as well as partnering and advocacy initiatives.

In September 2012, the Society organized a symposium to celebrate the 250th anniversary of Cook's first arrival in Newfoundland. The James Cook Society, based in Great Britain, sent greetings, noting that our event was the first in a series of gatherings to be held internationally over the coming decade.

Six speakers contributed to the monthly lecture series in the past year:

Jim Connor: *Trinity's John Clinch (1748 - 1819) Missionary, Medical Man, Magistrate and Much More (Gilbert Higgins Lecture).*

Tony Dickinson: *The Rise and Fall of the 20th Century Whaling Industry in Newfoundland and Labrador.*

Max Humphries: *A Calamity From Which No Relief Can Be Expected: Civilian Responses to the French Occupation of Newfoundland, June - September 1762.*

Patricia Grattan: *City Seen: Artists' Views of St. John's, 1785 - 2010.*

Heidi Coombs - Thorne: *Patchwork Patient: Among the Deep Sea Fishers - Promoting the Grenfell Mission, 1903 - 1981.*

Tom Gordon: *Nathanael Illiniartitsijok - Inuk Composer (George Story Lecture).*

The provincial government is planning four years of activities (2014 - 2018) commemorating the 100th anniversary of World War I and has invited the Society

to organize a symposium in the first year. Commemorative lectures over the four-year period and a closing symposium in 2018 has also been proposed.

His Honour, John Crosbie completed a five-year term as Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador in March 2013. During his time in office he served as Society Patron, sponsored Heritage Award presentations, and supported NHS activities in several different ways. His successor, the Honourable Frank Fagan, has expressed an interest in maintaining that relationship in the coming years.

Two members of our executive, Dr. Jim Hiller (MUN History, retired) and Doug Wells (Harbour Breton) were awarded Diamond Jubilee Medals in February in recognition of significant contributions and achievements. The Diamond Jubilee commemorative medal was created to mark the 60th anniversary of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's II accession to the Throne.

Nancy Snedden, our Financial Officer, is stepping down at the end of the current term. Nancy is an accountant with Deloitte in St. John's and has provided monthly and year-end financial statements, handled taxation and other requirements on a voluntary basis for many years. Her contributions have been invaluable.

Several members of our Executive Board have taken on additional tasks in the past year and warrant special mention:

- Joan Ritcey and Linda White for co-editing ASPECTS, the Society's contribution to the Newfoundland Quarterly.
- Fred Smith for chairing the committee organizing the James Cook symposium.
- Joan Ritcey (again) for managing the Society's website.
- Allan Byrne (Chair, Office Committee) for leading a review of office security functions and setting up an NHS 'twitter' account.
- Jim Hiller for assuming the role of Chair, Publications Committee and taking responsibility for an update of our popular "Short History" publication.
- Heidi Coombs-Thorne (Chair, Program Committee) for arranging monthly lectures and (with Terry Bishop Stirling) commencing planning for WWI symposium and funding submission.
- John Cheeseman for filling in as office manager for several months and coordinating newsletter content and printing.

The support we receive from the Marine Institute is greatly appreciated. The Institute provides Hampton Hall and Audio Visual support (Keith Butler) throughout the year.

This is my last report as President and I'd like to thank members and executive for their support, interest and helping out in so many ways over the past three years.

Larry Coady - President
Newfoundland Historical Society

Newfoundland Historical Society Is On Twitter!



You don't have to actually tweet to enjoy the Newfoundland Historical Society twitter account. You can contribute or just listen in and retrieve information on current events, monthly lectures, annual symposia, and much more. It is easy to create an account. Just type "nfhistsoc twitter" into your search engine and follow the link to join up. It's that easy!

Remember To Join The NHS!

Fill out the form on page 7 and visit nf.history.ca to find out how you can benefit!

2014 Rockwell Kent Centennial



By Mildred Brown, Program Director, The Landfall Trust

Almost one hundred years ago the American artist Rockwell Kent came to live in Brigus, Newfoundland. He chose an enchanting dwelling to rent as a home for his family, and he produced a number of spectacular pieces of art in his time there. The cottage he rented is now known as Kent Cottage at Landfall and belongs to The Landfall Trust. The Trust is organizing a cluster of events to occur in the summer of 2014 to commemorate the centennial of Rockwell Kent's sojourn at Landfall.

Since its construction by the Pomeroy family some two hundred years ago, Kent Cottage has been hauntingly visible at the edge of Brigus. It was described as an "oasis in a desert of cliffs" by CBC journalist Azzo Rezori (1990). It is now the last remaining structure in the area known as "Freshwater," where ships used to take on fresh water from the stream flowing from the hills behind, past the house, over the cliffs, and into the ocean. One of the oldest structures of this type remaining in the province, the cottage was designated a registered heritage structure by the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador in 1988 because of its historical, environmental and aesthetic values.

While the structure dates back to the early 19th Century, it is its 20th Century occupants that have brought it fame. It has long been a retreat for artists and writers. Its most notorious occupant was Rockwell Kent, an acclaimed American artist who stayed at the cottage in 1914-1915. Albert Edward Harris, an English artist, came to Newfoundland to manage a paper mill, and retired to Landfall in 1929. Bradley J. (Jake) Folensbee, Jr. acquired Kent Cottage at Landfall in 1953, and made an annual pilgrimage from Seattle to Brigus almost every summer for over 50 years. When Jake passed away, thanks to his legacy the Landfall Trust was established as a Canadian registered charity in 2005. The Trust is committed to preserving the land and historic buildings at Landfall by protecting the natural environment and conserving the cultural heritage of the property. It comprises a group of dedicated volunteers on its Board of Directors and Advisory Committee. Each year, they host a series of events and activities, including artist and writer residencies, workshops, and special community events. The Trust was the 2012 winner of the Manning Award for Excellence in the Public Presentation of Historic Places, created to recognize individuals, communities, and organizations for their work in preserving and presenting this province's history and heritage.



Kent Cottage at Landfall
Photo Courtesy of Dennis Flynn

Rockwell Kent (1882-1971)—artist, author, and political activist—had a long and varied career. During his lifetime, he worked as an architectural draftsman, illustrator, printmaker, painter, lobsterman, carpenter, and dairy farmer. Born in Tarrytown Heights, New York, he lived in Maine, Newfoundland, Alaska, Greenland, and the Adirondacks and explored the waters around Tierra del Fuego in a small boat. His time in Brigus (1914-15) began with the joyous discovery and renovation of the old Pomeroy house, but his provocative behaviour led eventually to his sad departure.

Kent's paintings, lithographs, and woodcuts often portrayed the bleak and rugged aspects of nature, a reflection of his attraction to harsh climates. His work is most frequently identified with that of the American Social Realists and the great muralists of the 1920s and 1930s. His prodigious talent in book illustration is said to have made *Moby Dick* the classic it is today. His brief sojourn in Newfoundland marked a distinctive period in Kent's art, as evidenced by his well-known oil painting *House of Dread*. Exhibitions of his work continue to be broadly

enjoyed today, in art museums from St. Petersburg to Plattsburgh, New York.

When Rockwell Kent died, the New York Times described him as "... a thoughtful, troublesome, profoundly independent, odd and kind man who made an imperishable contribution to the art of bookmaking in the United States." An internationally acclaimed artist, writer, and adventurer, Kent brought much notoriety to Landfall and continues to do so today even though he left there under a cloud of suspicion in 1915. His stay at Landfall was controversial and legendary—was he really the German spy he was rumoured to have been? Or was he a free spirit misunderstood? The mystery of the man will be the focus of the exciting slate of events being organized to commemorate Kent's centennial in 2014 by the Landfall Trust, in partnership with The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery.

The anchor event for the 2014 Kent Centennial will be the exhibit, *Rockwell Kent and Newfoundland*, organized by The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery in St. John's and curated by Caroline Stone. The exhibition will have two sections. The first will be made up of prints, drawings and ten to fifteen paintings, all with a connection to Kent's time in Newfoundland. Examples of these are *The House of Dread* from the Plattsburgh State Art Museum and *Man on a Mast (Young Sailor)* from a private collection. The second section of the exhibition will be made up of anything to do with Rockwell Kent that has a Newfoundland and Labrador provenance. Drawings, prints, ceramics, books, and advertisements will provide evidence of the interest in this artist, in this province. Readers who know of locally-held Rockwell Kent works or memorabilia are encouraged to contact: Caroline Stone, Curator of Historical Art, The Rooms, Provincial Art Gallery Division, PO Box 1800, Stn. C, St. John's, NL, A1C 5P9, (709) 757-8049, carolinestone@therooms.ca.

The schedule of events for the summer of 2014 includes:

Exhibition of Kent's Artwork: At The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery in St. John's

- Opening reception on the evening of Friday, May 30, 2014.
- Closing reception on Wednesday, August 27, 2014.
- Rockwell Kent documentary screening on Sunday, June 8, 2014 with the producer/director Frederick Lewis in attendance.
- *House of Dread* lecture by Dennis Costanzo, Wednesday, June 4, 2014.

Symposium: Various local, Canadian and American speakers will present on Kent's art, the history of the period in Newfoundland and Kent's time here.

- Day 1, Saturday, May 31, 2014: Themed "Through the Artist's Eyes" will include two speakers discussing the influence of Newfoundland/Brigus/Landfall on Kent's art, a workshop at Kent cottage for invited artists, and a tour of Brigus.
- Day 2, Sunday, June 1, 2014: Themed "Rockwell Kent—Larger than Life" will include presentations in St. John's at The Rooms auditorium, with a series of speakers giving talks on Kent's art and his time in Newfoundland.

Literary Panel: On Wednesday, July 23, 2014 at The Rooms auditorium, three authors will discuss the appearance of Rockwell Kent as a character in their works of fiction. Readings by the same authors will be held in Brigus on Saturday, July 26, 2014.

"I Want it All" Theatre Production: The play, written by local authors Mack Furlong and the late Fran Locke about Rockwell Kent, will be performed in Brigus and St. John's by the Baccalieu Players at the end of July-beginning of August.

Print-Making Workshops: St. Michael's Printshop will partner with the Landfall Trust to host two

workshops, one for adults and one for young people, 10 participants in each, at the end of July or early August 2014, in Brigus.

Figurehead Replica: The Landfall Trust will commission an artist to carve a replica of the figurehead that Kent installed at the cottage in 1914, and is shown in his sketch Newfoundland Home.

For more information on the Landfall Trust, and progress updates on the 2014 Kent Centennial, visit: www.landfalltrust.org or e-mail admin@landfalltrust.org.

For more information on the Rooms Provincial Art Gallery and its exhibits, visit: <http://www.therooms.ca/artgallery/>

Welcome To Our New Office Manager



Christina Robarts MA

If you've visited or contacted the Newfoundland Historical Society Office on Hallett Crescent recently, you might have noticed a new, capable, and friendly face gracing the office. We are thrilled to welcome Christina Robarts to the Newfoundland Historical Society team as Office Manager.

Christina is a native of Nova Scotia, has an Masters in Folklore and brings many skills to the position.

In addition to interacting closely with the membership of the Newfoundland Historical Society, Christina will be our point for contact with the general public and perform many other duties as Office Manager. Please join with all of us in welcoming Christina to the Society, and give her your full cooperation as she pursues the Society's important objectives.

Heritage Fair

In April, executive member Terry Bishop Stirling was happy to help judge a Heritage Fair at Roncalli School in Airport Heights, her old elementary school. She enjoyed talking to the students and listening to their enthusiastic presentations on topics such as the fishery, schooling in the old days, and the 1929 tidal wave. Other students shared their own family heritage, including Scottish kilts and Mi'Kmaq Pow-Wows. The Heritage Fairs encourage students all over Newfoundland and Labrador to research and present (visually and orally) some aspect of their own and/or the province's heritage. This great educational initiative has been threatened in the last few years, as national funding has declined, but in Newfoundland the Historic Sites Association (HSA) has taken the lead in organizing the fairs and seeking out new funding sources, and things are looking brighter for the Provincial Heritage Fairs. The HSA funds their efforts through not-for-profit shops in St. John's and at various provincial Heritage sites throughout the province. Did you know that when you purchase items at one of the Historic Sites Association Heritage shops you are helping to support Heritage Fairs, as well as National and Provincial Historic Sites and other great heritage projects? Look for more news this fall on an exciting fund raising event between the NHS and the HSA!

First World War Events Planned

By Heidi Coombs Thorne, Newfoundland Historical Society

The Newfoundland Historical Society (NHS) is organizing a number of events to commemorate Newfoundland and Labrador's involvement in the First World War. First, we are planning a three-day symposium for October 2014, tentatively called "The British Empire is at War: Newfoundland and Labrador Mobilizes for the First World War." The symposium will focus on Newfoundland and Labrador at the start of the war, its mobilization, and its integration into the imperial war effort. The symposium will include experts in Newfoundland and Labrador history as well as a prominent British military historian as a keynote speaker.

Second, the NHS will include two free public lectures on various aspects of the war in its regular programme each year between 2015 and 2018. The lectures will highlight Newfoundland and Labrador's experience on the home front and overseas for each year of the war.

The First World War has been described as a watershed in Newfoundland and Labrador's history, and it is still reverently remembered and commemorated. It was the first time Newfoundland asserted itself on the international stage, contributing to the empire's war effort as a colony with responsible government.

There was great enthusiasm at the start of the war, and Newfoundlanders and Labradorians were eager to participate. But the financial and human cost was significant, and the battlefield experiences tragic. The war changed the colony forever and left a substantial and lasting legacy.

A century later, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians remain fascinated by the war, and their country's/colony's involvement. Our symposium and public lectures will satisfy the need for knowledge about Newfoundland's war experience by bringing war experts and the most recent academic research on the war to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Ferryland Historical Society And Museum

By Maxine Dunne, Ferryland Historical Society & Historic Ferryland Museum



Ferryland Museum

Ferryland Historical Society

The Ferryland Historical Society was formed in the early 1960s with the mandate to preserve and promote the history of Ferryland and surrounding area.

During the late 1960s, the Society was active in the preservation and presentation of various historic landmarks. Monuments to Lord Baltimore and Sir David Kirke were erected, and Isle Aux Bois Island (fortified and garrisoned in 1743) was made accessible, and the cannon preserved.

History of Historic Ferryland Museum

Built in 1916, originally to serve as the "Bank of Montreal", the building was soon converted to a courthouse, serving this area from 1919, until its closure shortly after Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949.

The building was manned by the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary. Downstairs held the courtroom, jail cell, magistrate's office, and telegraph office. Upstairs was a residence for the officer and his family.

After the closure of the courthouse, the building became a doctor's residence and clinic until the late 1960s, and then a private residence for a short time until its permanent closure.

In 1973, the Provincial Government conveyed the building to the Ferryland Historical Society to be used as a

museum. The museum opened in 1974, making it the oldest operating tourist attraction on the Irish Loop.

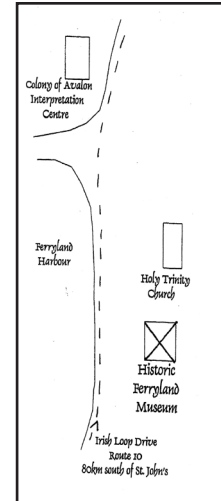
The building houses the original jail cell, re-created courtroom, a period kitchen and bedroom, a fisherman's room, as well as a variety of exhibits depicting community life.

Dedicated to ongoing research and the addition of new exhibits, along with various displays, the museum is an important center where historical and genealogical information can be accessed.

Hours of Operation: June 24th - August 31st, 2013

Monday - Saturday: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Sunday: 1 p.m. - 4 p.m., Admission: \$2.00 (cash)

Maxine Dunne President / Ferryland Historical Society Curator / Historic Ferryland Museum



MEMBERSHIP FORM

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 TELEPHONE _____
 E-MAIL _____

Membership Fees: Regular or Institutional \$40.00 / Life \$400.00. Membership entitles you to 30% off Heritage Canada Membership.

Note: Membership includes a subscription to the Newfoundland Quarterly and three Newsletters per year, and is valid for 12 months from the date of payment of the fee. Your expiry date will appear on the bottom left of your mailing label, the figures on the bottom right are a mailing code.

Donations are always welcome! And remember that memberships make a great gift. Gift cards are available from the NHS office.

Would you like to save paper and receive our newsletter electronically (in colour)? Y N

Would you like to be added to our list to be notified of upcoming events? Y N

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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 below. USA subscribers please pay in US funds to cover postage. International subscribers please pay 19 pounds sterling or Canadian equivalent.

**Newfoundland Historical Society
 P. O. Box 23154
 Churchill Square
 St. John's NL
 A1B 4J9**