

Wolfville Historical Society

Newsletter

Volume 04.1

259 Main Street, Wolfville, NS, B4P 1C6

February 2004

President's Report for 2003

Board of Directors

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Thomas Haliburton

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The action plan of the Board for 2003 contained three general objectives: to broaden the participation of Wolfville and area residents in Society activities; to strengthen the organization of the Society; and to improve the Randall House Museum. I am delighted to report that we have made progress in all of these.

In the first category, we have increased our membership by twenty to a total of eighty-nine. Under the editorship of Christopher Olsen the newsletter has acquired a new look and an historical slant with the introduction of the back page articles from outside contributors. A new website has been established by Ivan Smith of Canning, and the scope for enlargement is virtually limitless. We have established the practice of holding two dinners each year, with prominent speakers, for our members and for others in the community. Finally, we have moved ahead with the memorial book and commissioned a stand for it, expecting it to be exhibited at various locations in the Town.

The organization of the Society has been strengthened with the Manual of Policies and Procedures which is nearly complete and will be presented to the membership this year for adoption. In draft form it received special notice and praise from the Nova Scotia Museum consultant who reviewed it as part of our evaluation in July.

To improve Randall House a committee was struck to take action on those things on which the Museum scored badly in the previous evaluation. As a result, changes have been made in the way we present and display our collection and in our focus, and these changes will continue. In regard to the house itself, the kitchen chamber was renovated to become a more effective library and research office, the books were catalogued and a new work table/document case commissioned. Outside, a three year program of restoration and painting began.

In addition, over the past year we have had a successful season at Randall House with three well-organized exhibits, participated with the Town and the Acadia Archives in establishing a Town of Wolfville Archives, held two well attended dinners with excellent speakers as well as our social events at Randall House and regular monthly meetings.

The Society depends on the loyalty, co-operation and participation of our members and friends in the community. I want to close by expressing my gratitude to you who volunteer and serve in so many ways to make the Society a success.

Newsletter

Christopher Olsen

*(Editor and
design/production)*

Memorial Foundation Trustees

Donald MacKay

James Doig

Patricia Townsend

Curator's Report for 2003

by Heather Davidson

In 2003 our attendance declined approximately 20%, most of which was in visitors from Kings County:
2002: total 2159; Kings county 1150; rest of NS 252; outside NS 687; unknown 70.
2003: total 1592; Kings county 789; rest of NS 220; outside NS 559; unknown 24.

The daily teas continued to be popular. Randall House was evaluated in July. Dan Basquill, our assistant curator, delivered an excellent report to the Collections and Display committee on proposed permanent and temporary displays of local soccer legend Gunn Baldursson. Dan was offered the same job for the summer of 2004.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS:

1. Collections Records

The following are now on the computer: books in the library; accessions from 1994 to 2003; and assorted items entered when the items in the back porch, parlour and dining room were inventoried in summer, 2003 (total approx. 1500). The subject of which program to use was discussed at the recent meeting of the Southwest NS Curators' Meeting I attended. There is a great deal of confusion in the province among museums. In the last few years NS Museum has changed its mind about which program to recommend: CHIN or Passages. KCM was using a system with 20 fields for description for every item; in the new Passages system 75 fields are entered. Bria finds the change-over time consuming and frustrating. The Rep from Parkdale/Maplewood (a seasonal museum similar to RHM) said: "Our old system works for us." In that museum, only the curator and the manager enter items on computers. They found the students were making too many mistakes. The Ross Farm rep. advised: "Wait until a system has been established and up and running for 10 years before you change."

Recommendation: continue with our present program which is working fine.

2. Temporary Exhibit Presentation

Our displays (Beals history, Hinged on History, and Who was Randall?) did not attract the local attendance we had hoped to get. When I brought up our disappointing attendance by county visitors at the SNSC meeting, I asked for suggestions about how to attract local people. I was told that people like to loan things on a temporary basis to a museum and then bring their family and friends to see their items (e.g., teddy bears, Barbie dolls, needlework old and new, Boy Scout paraphernalia, vases, tea pots). They also suggested: fire department items, history of the cookie (with a puppet to tell the story), and a painting exhibit with a wine and cheese party.

Recommendation: continue with historical displays but also have two participation displays every summer using several display cases in the back parlour and in the dining room.

3. Permanent Collection

I met with Bonnie Elliott several times. She feels that we have a valuable costume collection which is not being displayed to advantage or stored appropriately. We sorted the hanging clothing, considered factors such as storage and conservation, and began going through the collection. Bonnie will help again next summer.

Recommendations: (i) The attic is fine for storage and display if we store and display artifacts properly.

(ii) Store clothing in transparent plastic boxes which provide good conservation at a reasonable price. Boxes could be placed on shelves under the eaves.

(iii) Place small panels of transparent mylar over windows (except kitchen chamber) to exclude damaging ultra-violet rays.

(iv) Display clothing with a context, e.g., historic photo showing person wearing it with appropriate accessories and background.

(v. from SNSC meeting) Instead of acid-free paper, use unbleached muslin paper to retard deterioration.

4. Security of Collections:

Guidelines for closing were followed and have been completed as much as possible. Room inventories of the back porch, parlour and dining room were completed. We also began following new procedures for accessions.

Further recommendations:

(1) reopen the cellar to visitors; (2) move sewing machines and display in Sarah's attic; (3) use hall chamber for youth display (e.g., Gunn Baldursson and Lawrence Schofield).

Canada Heritage Day Dinner

Guest Speaker

Dr. Gail Dinter-Gottlieb

President and Vice-Chancellor of Acadia University

"Acadia University in the Annapolis Valley"

Friday, 20 February, 2004, 6:30 for 7:00 p.m.
The Old Orchard Inn, Greenwich

Tickets: \$30.00 (all-inclusive)

**Available from Heather or Derek Watts at 542-0307
or John Whidden at 542-5061**

VISIT OUR NEWLY-REDESIGNED WEBSITE AT:

<http://wolfvillehs.ednet.ns.ca> (Note: no www.)

OUR WISH LIST AGAIN!

The office at the Randall House needs a sturdy metal four-drawer filing cabinet for our expanding accession records. Does anyone have such an item that could be donated to the Society?

Winter-Spring Events 2004

Friday, 20 February, 2004, 6:30 for 7:00 p.m.

Heritage Day Dinner at the Old Orchard Inn (See notice opposite page.)

Wednesday, 17 March, 2004, at 2:00 p.m., Manning Memorial Chapel

Don Corbett: "The Organ, an Historical Perspective"

Don had a long career with organ builder, Casavant Frères, before retiring to Wolfville.

He will talk to us in the choir loft of the Chapel.

Wednesday, 21 April, 2004, at 2:00 p.m., Wolfville Town Hall

Col. G.M.A. Morley: "History and Development of Greenwood Air Base"

Col. Morley is Wing Commander and Commanding Officer at Greenwood.

Wednesday, 19 May, 2004, at 2:00 p.m., Wolfville Town Hall

Dr. James Snowdon: "Myths and Stories of the Acadians"

Wednesday, 16 June, 2004, from 2:00 p.m., Randall House

Opening Tea at Randall House Museum

Randall House Museum Displays 2004

June 15 - July 15: "Wolfville Dykes from Acadian Times to the Present"

July 9 - July 11: Gunn Baldursson Display

July 14 - Aug. 9: "The Barbie Doll - 40 Years Young"

Children will be asked to loan a doll.

July 22 - Sept. 15 "Wolfville Orchards from Acadian Times to the Present"

Aug. 11 - Sept. 15: "Teapots"

Local residents will be asked to loan tea pots.

Throughout the summer funeral regalia be on display in the parlour.