

Wolfville Historical Society

Newsletter

Volume 07.3

259 Main Street, Wolfville, NS, B4P 1C6

August, 2007

<http://wolfvillehs.ednet.ns.ca>

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President's Message

The big story at Randall House this summer has surely been the stunning changes in the way our museum presents itself to the visitor. These changes are the most recent manifestations of the process of improvement in the Society which have been in process since we received the disappointing results of our evaluation by the Nova Scotia Museum in 2000. Certainly the Board and membership have risen well to the challenge, and the result is most clearly seen at Randall House. The museum will be open until mid September, so there is plenty of time to pay another visit.

The wisdom of the decision to hire a full time curator is plain to see when one enters Randall House, and more so when one looks more closely at the displays and the programs which are being offered. With Bonnie Elliott we have, in effect, a CEO to organize and co-ordinate and to bring her professional experience to bear. I must thank her, Annie-Brae Dixon, and the many volunteers, all of whom have together made the season a great success.

The decision to have a curator has meant a great deal more fund raising than we have been used to, but I am happy to say that our target for this year has been met, thanks to our members and friends and other supporters in the business community. Our chief supporter, financially and in many other ways, continues to be the Town of Wolfville, without the co-operation of which Randall House could not flourish as it does. In an age in which governments find it convenient to ignore heritage and pass by on the other side, we are grateful to be in a municipality in which this definitely is not so.

In conclusion, I urge you to satisfy your curiosity, assuage your hunger and support the Society by attending our fund-raising dinner on September 8th. Jonathan Fowler will bring us up to date on his archaeological research at Grand Pré, the chef at the Old Orchard Inn will provide traditional Acadian touches to the meal, and our treasurer will send to you a tax receipt for \$15.00 per ticket! Come and enjoy the evening.

H. John Whidden

Fall Events, 2007

Saturday, 8 September, 2007, 6:30 for 7:00 p.m.

Fall Fund-Raising Banquet

(See back page for details.)

Wednesday, 17 October, 2:00 p.m. at Wolfville Fire Hall

Wednesday, 21 November, 2:00 p.m. at Wolfville Fire Hall

On one of the above dates, one or other of the speakers below will be our guest:

Bonnie Elliott, Randall House Curator

A Local Fashion in the Golden Age

Ms. Elliott is an Art Historian with a specialization in the History of Dress and is currently working on a book dealing with the history of dress in Nova Scotia.

Murray Brown, Local Businessman

Hell's Gate and the Electrification of Wolfville

Mr. Brown worked for Nova Scotia Light and Power and has an extensive knowledge of the system of power generating plants, dams, artificial lakes and canals on the South Mountain back of Wolfville.

COLLECTIONS: THE BACKBONE OF THE MUSEUM

Visitors coming in to the Randall House admire the gardens, the friendly staff, the informative house tours and the beautifully arranged rooms. What they don't see is really the backbone of our museum – the extensive collection, much of which is in storage. Items are rotated in the displays on a regular basis, but the sheer size of the collection and the amount of maintenance and work it requires are invisible! Much of this work takes place during the months when the museum is closed and involves both staff and volunteers' working under Bonnie's leadership. Cleaning, mending, cataloguing, sorting and storing: it's all part of good museum management.

WHAT THE VOLUNTEERS ARE UP TO

With September approaching the museum volunteers are looking forward to getting back to work. The garden group has, of course, worked all summer, which is their busy season. Soon the photograph volunteers (Sue Bissix, Rose Corbett, Jim Tillotson and Heather Watts) will be back at the sorting and cataloguing, the archival collection will be receiving some more attention, and Christine Lynch, Phyllis Westbury and Caroline Power will be moving forward with the meticulous and complicated job of entering our artifacts and photographs in the Passage program database. They have also provided photographs and descriptions of "Made-in-Nova Scotia" artifacts from our collection to the online Canadian Heritage Information Network, a federal initiative. Now that Annie-Brae's time with us is over, Bonnie will have great need for people to help her in greeting the fall visitors. When the house is running there needs to be a staff member or volunteer on each floor to chat with the visitors and help answer their questions. If you have some hours available, give Bonnie a call at 542-9775.

Wolfville Historical Society Fall Fund Raising Dinner

Old Orchard Inn

Saturday, September 8th, 2007

6.30 for 7.00pm.

Traditional Acadian Cuisine

Jonathan Fowler

Seven Years of Digging:
New Perspectives
on the Archaeology of Grand Pré
National Historic Park

Jonathan Fowler, who is presently completing his PhD in Archaeology at Oxford University, has spent the past seven summers conducting research at Grand Pré National Park.

Ticket Price \$50.

(Tax receipt for \$15 will be given)

Tickets available from:

John Vallancourt	542-9766
John Whidden	542-5061
Derek & Heather Watts	542-0307
Elizabeth Browne	542-2279
Randall House Museum (259 Main Street, Wolfville)	542-9775



Exit 11, Highway 101,
153 Greenwich Road South
Wolfville, Nova Scotia

RANDALL HOUSE GARDEN

Many of our visitors have commented this summer on the cheerful flowers along the front paths, particularly the blue flax. But have you seen the new herb garden in the back yard? Designed and planted by Margie Tuttle, the garden was refurbished and laid out with new raised beds by Diana Shelley, Sue Bissix and Derek Watts. Recently the herbs, all of which would have been used by a thrifty housewife in cookery and household medicine, were identified with small slate plaques. Margie has volunteered to give a workshop (perhaps next year) on the making of herbal salves. The garden group numbers ten volunteers now, led by Sue Bissix.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Special Fundraising This Year

John Whidden, in his President's report to you, has confirmed that the Society has achieved the fund raising target. As a result, the Town of Wolfville has now honoured its significant commitment. Sincere thanks to all our members and individual supporters, as well as to the Town Council for its indispensable and ongoing support and encouragement. Special thanks and recognition are due, in particular to the local businesses who acknowledge the valuable place that the Museum occupies in the Town's heritage and who have generously contributed to the effort. They depend on a faithful patronage for their own success. Members of the Society are therefore urged, when needing the several kinds of services offered by these firms, to keep in mind the support of the Society's enterprise they have already given. Here are the names of those firms:

MacKay Real Estate (John MacKay)

VisionCare Optometry Centre (Dr. Sheldon Pothier and his partners)

Founders Group – Insurance and Financial (Don Abbey)

Herbin's – Family Jewellers Since 1885

Davies & O'Leary Ltd. – Plumbing, Heating and Electrical Service

Bishop & Company Chartered Accountants Inc. (Raymond Bishop and his partners)

Main Street Dental Centre (Dr. Wayne Hills)

BMO Nesbitt Burns Investment and Financial Services (Jim Noonan)

Kings Physiotherapy Clinic Ltd. – Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Massage,

Nutrition and Fitness Training (Shelley Fleckenstein)

Royal LePage, Merrill and Hennessey Realty Ltd. (Wayne Merrill)

Orpheus Lodge (Paul Nowlan)

Curator's Nook

by Bonnie Elliott

As the summer is begins to wane, it is almost time to reflect on what kind of a season we have had at the museum. Members and non-members alike have been extremely encouraging and highly positive about what's taking place at Randall House, which has spurred us on to think: what's next? As curious visitors have arrived in a comforting stream, new acquisitions to consider for donation have also arrived on our doorstep. Thanks to all who have, loaned, donated, or volunteered to lend a hand in all the activities, thus ensuring the museum looks its best and that our programs are successful.

Members still have a few weeks left to drop into the museum before it's time to pack up the exhibits, return the loans and put dust covers over the furniture. At the same time, please come in for a chat and find out what new initiatives we have been scheming. But you don't need a reason; we'd love to see you and hear your stories about the past! It's been a busy, exciting and educational summer. Please be reassured in knowing that after we prepare the house and artifacts for a long sleepy fall and winter ahead, the work continues.

Have you seen our latest project?

The Society and the Town have produced heritage information posters which can be seen in the Town's info kiosks.

Look for posters on the historic harbour, the University, Main Street and Wolfville's schools with photographs from our collection.

Coming soon: watch for interpretive panels in front of Willow Park and the Old Burying Ground.