



## Wolfville Historical Society

Randall House Museum  
259 Main Street, Wolfville, Nova Scotia B4P 1C6

# NEWSLETTER

Vol. !! No.4

[www.wolfvillehs.ednet.ns.ca](http://www.wolfvillehs.ednet.ns.ca)

Date: Dec.21, 2011

### Board of Directors:

#### *President*

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#### Memorial Foundation

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Gordon Haliburton

Patricia Townsend

Patricia Williams

### THE WOLFVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY WINTER PROGRAM 2012

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2012, 2 P.M.**  
AT WOLFVILLE FIRE HALL

The **Annual General Meeting** – the Mayor, His Worship Robert Stead, will give us a talk on the past and present of the Town of Wolfville.

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2012, 2 P.M.**  
AT WOLFVILLE FIRE HALL

Mr. Peter Herbin will give a talk on the “History of the Herbin Family”.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 2012, 2 P.M.** AT  
WOLFVILLE FIRE HALL

Mr. Bill Zimmerman will speak on the “History of the Acadia Cinema”.

## GLEN HANCOCK: A PERSONAL REFLECTION

By

**John Vaillancourt**

I first met Glen five or six years ago when I joined the WHS Board of Directors. My first impression, gained from my life experience growing up on a variety of RCAF bases, was that he must, at one time, have been a military man. He had all the signs: neatly cropped hair, a disciplined, concise manner in all that he said and did and, additionally, he had a small model of

a Second World War Lancaster bomber quietly displayed on a side table – the only outward sign of an earlier life. I wondered if his wartime experiences reflected those of my high school math teacher, a former World War II Lancaster bombardier, who friends and relatives described as a nice young man who “was changed” by the war. I like to imagine that they knew each other.

Statistics give some insight into the stress of flying into danger. The loss rate among planes in the bomber fleet was five-percent per raid. As each bomber crew was expected to complete a regulation twenty-five bombing flights, the math involved for crew members was both clear and ... discouraging. Statistically they were going to die

Almost certainly Glen had been affected by his wartime experiences, but he never spoke of them to me or, insofar as I know, to anyone else. At heart he was a peaceful man; dignified, good humored, and kindly to all – much like Rusty, a pet he inherited some years ago. Rusty was an interesting creation: large head of a Labrador retriever, sturdy but wiener-like body of a dachshund, and stubby little legs. Rusty passed away a few months before Glen. One evening he simply walked over to where his master was seated, lay quietly at his feet, and died. They were close friends. Glen was heartbroken.

On thinking of Glen these lines from Tennyson’s poem, *Ulysses*, came to mind.

.....All times I have enjoyed  
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those  
That loved me and alone; . . .  
Much have I seen and known; cities of men  
And manners, climates, councils, governments,  
Myself not least but honored of them all,  
And drunk delight of battle with my peers; . . .  
I am a part of all that I have met.

We are remembered both for our words and for our deeds. Glen’s list of accomplishments in both areas, as outlined in his obituary, is humbling. He did not indulge in selfish self-aggrandizement. He did not compare himself to others. He was, instead, that rarity: a good and gentle man. We mourn his loss, admire his deeds, and hold his memory close. *Pace e bene*, Glen. You will be missed.

## **GLEN HANCOCK: A TRIBUTE**

**By**

**Gordon Haliburton**

With the death of Glen Hancock the Wolfville Historical Society has lost a devoted friend of long standing, and a link with the long-ago leaders of our organization. For many years he was far away from our town, where he enjoyed a distinguished career in journalism as outlined in his official obituary. When he retired to Wolfville he became engaged in our efforts to preserve a knowledge of our past, and served the Society, in turn, as Vice-President, President and Past

President. During that time and since, to the present, he has hosted Board Meetings in his own living room, a fire blazing in the fireplace, hot coffee and doughnuts waiting in the kitchen, and chocolates on the coffee table. Keeping him company was his dog Rusty, who inspected and greeted each person coming through the front door. Board members are going to miss this pleasant atmosphere for meetings.

In losing Glen we have also lost a link with Wolfville's past. Those who have read his books of autobiography, *My Real Name is Charley* and *Charley Goes to War*, will have a hint of the semi-rural Wolfville he lived in during the 1920s and 1930s, when horses were still part of the daily scene and his father supplied them from his livery stable on Main Street. Sometimes at Board Meetings he would be reminded of incidents from the past and would make a good story of it. As a result of these bits of oral history a small committee was formed of Glen, Gerry Porter and Gordon Haliburton, and after Gerry's death Enid Davison, and a record was made of some of their memories of the people who lived in the old houses on Main Street before World War II.

They remembered the pond along Maple Avenue where ice was harvested in winter and stored in an ice-house nearby, in those days when people used ice-boxes, not refrigerators. Glen remembered the old man who sat on a verandah near there, with maggots crawling over his face and eating the dead flesh surrounding a cancer there. This old man apparently didn't mind the boys stopping and staring at him. Glen remembered another man who never came out, he lived upstairs and from a window lowered a basket which the grocer's boy filled with the food he had ordered. Glen and Gerry had stories like these about people living from one end of town to the other. Considering these long memories it was appropriate that Glen served on the Town of Wolfville's Heritage Advisory Committee for many years.

Glen was a convivial, sociable, man, and enjoyed the company of a crowd of friends. And so he often was, particularly while having coffee with them at a down-town cafe as a routine beginning of his day. For many years, too, he met regularly in Wolfville, Mahone Bay or wherever with a small gang of high school buddies. Sadly he was one of the last of them. He was really in his element at the annual garden party held in his garden behind his house on Victoria Avenue. Here, on the edge of Willow Park, friends young and old gathered to appreciate the beauty he had created and to eat and drink in friendship together.

As a member of the Society he several times hosted its annual Christmas Party with an appropriate display of refreshment, including the delicious corn chowder for which he was renowned in the writing group he mentored. His generosity was legend. The Society was the grateful recipient of a batch of original cartoons given him years before by his friend Robert Chambers, political cartoonist on the Chronicle-Herald for many years.

The Board of the Wolfville Historical Society regrets Glen's passing, after a long and useful life. We shall miss him.

## **Donald MacKay (1925-2011)**

The Wolfville Historical Society lost a good friend and supporter in September with the death of Don MacKay. He became a member of the Society when he and his wife Barbara relocated to Wolfville after living abroad, latterly in Ireland. Members may not have been aware of Don's distinguished international career when he talked to us about "The Irish of Nova Scotia" at our November 2003 meeting. He seemed well qualified to speak of the Irish since he and his wife Barbara had been living in Ireland for ten years from 1990, before coming to settle on Wickwire Avenue in Wolfville. Indeed he was well qualified to talk to any group, having experienced a life of travel and adventure most of us can only dream of, and having written nearly a dozen books including *Flight from Famine*, *The coming of the Irish to Canada*, and *Scotland Farewell*, *The People of the Hector*.

What members of the Society may not have known was that after joining with us Don gave dedicated service by volunteering to be a Memorial Trustee, which involved the research and writing of biographies for our Book of Civic remembrance, arranging for them to be made into a page, and for arranging the financial implications.

Don described his career with the Canadian Press, United Press International, Radio Free Europe and a free-lance researcher and writer in his recent autobiography. A full page article in the Toronto *Globe and Mail*, (17 September, 2011) complete with pictures of a handsome young communicator, paid a well-earned tribute to a life well-lived. We are proud to have had him as a member and regret that he was with us such a short time. Our sympathy goes out to Barbara, his daughters, and the many friends in Wolfville who will miss his presence among us.

## **The Acacia Villa Cairn and the Wolfville Historical Society**



On Saturday September 17, 1966 members of the Wolfville Historical Society and former students of Acacia Ville School gathered to honour the founders of the school which operated from 1852 to 1920. A cairn, with a descriptive plaque, was erected by the Wolfville Historical Society in the summer of 1966 on the site of the founding of the school in Hortonville. The ceremony took place with Dr. Watson Kirkconnell chairing the event and retired Judge Harold Chase of Kentville, a former student at Acacia Villa unveiling the cairn. WHS Board member Pat Townsend has been doing research on the background of how the WHS and some of its members

put forward the idea of a cairn starting in the early 1960's. She hopes to present this to a meeting of the WHS next year.

The two photos relating to Acacia Villa School are from the WHS Photo Archive.



***AT THIS TIME OF YEAR WE WOULD LIKE TO WISH OUR MEMBERS  
A VERY JOYOUS CHRISTMAS AND A VERY HEALTHY AND HAPPY  
NEW YEAR.***

