

WHS

Wolfville
Historical
Society
founded 1941

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NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2014

1914: WAR COMES TO WOLFVILLE *A Special Edition*

Volume 14 Issue 3

1914: WAR COMES TO WOLFVILLE



The Wolfville Historical Society
presents



THE PITY OF WAR

A Panorama of Poets taking us through the First World War
from early optimism to sadness and disillusion

WITH

MICHAEL BAWTREE NATE CRAWFORD
CHARLES FOLLINI ANDRIA HILL-LEHR

Poems selected and arranged by Anthony Harding
Design and Lighting Consultant: Neil Peter Jampolis
Directed by Michael Bawtree

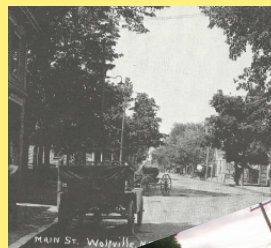
at the

FESTIVAL THEATRE

19 July 7.30 pm and 20 July 2 pm

TICKETS \$5 at the Box of Delights Bookstore, Wolfville

"Let us never forget"



THE SUMMER OF 2014: A CHRONICLE

MAY

The Historical Society's momentous summer began with the opening of Randall House Museum by MLA Keith Irving on May 31st, with its special exhibit commemorating the impact of the Great War on the Town and the Annapolis Valley. The exhibit gave the Society - and the Town - the first chance to view the work of our new Curator, Roger Marsters, and we were all delighted at the clarity and elegance of the display. It was hard to believe that Roger had joined us only at the beginning of that month! The opening, on a fair sunny day, was accompanied by flags and music, and the serving of refreshments.

May also saw the arrival of our summer students: Krystal Tanner, Alexander Porter-Muntz and Devon Thomson. They were to prove a formidable team during the summer months, and contributed enormously to the success of all our work.



JUNE

The month of June saw a steady trickle of visitors to Randall House.

28 June. On the centenary of the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary, our newsboy Elliot Cederberg distributed bulletins of the news around the market and the town, while copies were posted in storefronts at the Atlantic Lighting Studio, the Box of Delights Bookstore, and Main Street Dental Centre. This was the first of 10 bulletins, charting the inexorable (or exorable) approach of the declaration of war.

Meanwhile preparations were going feverishly ahead for the creation of our whole summer outreach programme: readings for our show *The Pity of War*, assembling of equipment, creation of promotional material, and all kinds of painting and carpentry.

1914: NEWS BULLETIN

JUNE 28TH

ARCHDUKE ASSASSINATED!

Sarajevo, Bosnia –

"Today His Royal Highness Prince Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria and heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was assassinated with his wife while driving through the streets of Sarajevo, Bosnia. They both died instantly.

This dastardly crime is believed to be the work of a Serbian anarchist seeking to overthrow Austro-Hungarian rule over Bosnia and make it part of Greater Serbia. ...

JULY

1 July - Canada Day. At 11 am Mayor Jeff Cantwell unveiled our recreation of the 1915 Recruiting Office, designed and built by William Lang of Green Army Design as a generous gift to the Society. The unveiling was followed by an unexpected visit from Their Majesties George V and Queen Mary. Meanwhile at Willow Park the Scouts once again collaborated with the Society on the sale of hot dogs at the Town's Barbecue.



3 July. Dr Paul Doerr, Chair of Acadia's History Department, gave a talk on the origins of the Great War, with rare slides of Sarajevo on the day of the assassination. This was the first of our many events taking place at the Royal Canadian Legion, by courtesy of the Legion and its President, Vera Thomson.

11 July. The NFB film *And We Knew How To Dance* was shown at the Legion, followed by a moving talk by Andria Hill-Lehr based on a book by Suzanne Evans: *Mothers of Heroes, Mothers of Martyrs: World War One and the Politics of Grief*.

19-20 July. Our flagship event, a staged reading under the title of *The Pity of War*, was performed at the Festival Theatre. The readings of poetry and prose of the Great War had been put together by our President Anthony Harding. The performers were Andria Hill-Lehr, Charles Follini, Nate Crawford and Michael Bawtree - who also directed. Sound design was created by Lisa St. Clair, and lighting was by internationally acclaimed lighting designer Neil Peter Jampolis. An appreciation of the performance appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

22 July. Signs went up outside the Post Office, the Town Office and the former Railway Station, to underline the significance of these places during World War One.



31 July. Dr. Barry Moody gave a spirited talk at the Legion on the effects of the Great War on Wolfville, Acadia University and the Annapolis Valley.

AUGUST

August 1. The film *King and Country*, starring Dirk Bogarde and Tom Courtenay, was shown at the Legion. It features the story of a young soldier who was courtmartialled and finally shot for refusing to fight in what he felt was a senseless war.

1914: NEWS BULLETIN
AUGUST 5th
AT 11 pm LAST NIGHT
BRITAIN'S ULTIMATUM
EXPIRED: GREAT
BRITAIN IS AT WAR WITH
GERMANY!

August 4-5. The final bulletins were issued around Town, announcing the declaration of war by Britain against Germany because of their invasion of Belgium. Canada was committed to war by Britain's declaration on August 4th, but made it official on August 5th.

August 7. Dr. Gwen Davies, former Chair of English at Acadia University, gave a lively and engaging talk about the Canadian writers of the Great War, including Valley poets.

August 8. The film *Joyeux Noel (Happy Christmas)* was shown at the Legion. The film centres on the famous fraternisation event of December 1914, when German, French and British soldiers came out of their trenches to exchange Christmas greetings.

August 15. A *Singalong* of songs from the period of the Great War was held at the Legion. It was hosted by Tim McFarland, and featured lead singers Donna Alan Slipp and Anne Hope, with Gus Webb at the keyboard. Songs included *Keep the Home Fires Burning*, *Oh What A Lovely War*, and many others. The audience joined in with gusto.



August 29. The film *All Quiet on the Western Front* was shown at the Legion. An early Hollywood product from 1930, it was true to the book and true to the horrors of war, which were graphic and unsentimental. A fine ending to the summer of events.

OUR CURATOR ROGER MARSTERS WRITES:

The beginning of May was, for me, like a sudden drop onto a fast-moving train. New to the curatorial profession, I was blessedly unaware of what was possible in a short span of time and what was not. Fortunately, I was gently and expertly oriented to my many new duties by the Society's uniformly generous officers and volunteers: especially by the Management Committee—Christine, Heather, Jan, and Martin—who introduced me to the day-to-day work of getting a museum up and running in an appropriately professional manner; and by the Project Committee—driven indefatigably by Michael's vision and Anthony's steady direction—whose aims and ambitions very soon became my own.

Completing the first big tasks—preparing a new exhibit while readying the museum for a busy season—was possible only because of the fine staff that Christine, Michael, Anne Hope and I had selected from a roster of solid candidates in mid-May. The museum simply would not have been ready for its re-opening without Krystal Tanner's tireless work and her enthusiastic love for the collection; all season long, she has been the life of Randall House, engaging visitors from the world over with the stories and sense of place that the collection embodies. Alex Porter-Muntz was immediately immersed in the dizzying array of tasks that comprised the seemingly innocent job title of "project assistant" (see his report below). Our collections assistant, Devon Thomson, hit the ground running, immediately putting his technical expertise and amazing focus to work in assisting Christine with cataloguing the Society's artefacts and images. Devon has worked tirelessly to transform Centreville resident Wallace Frail's Great War experience into compelling visual storytelling; he also makes a fine cucumber sandwich, as those who attended this summer's Friday afternoon teas can attest.

The greatest advantage I enjoyed this summer as I assumed my curatorial duties was to join the Society's *1914: War Comes to Wolfville* programming *in medias res*. I was fortunate to be grafted onto a sturdy and productive vine patiently cultivated over many months by the Project Committee. As Project Director, Michael made me feel immediately welcome in Wolfville, and immediately a part of something big and important. All summer long I have worked to emulate his energy and enthusiasm, qualities that mere physical injury could not alter. From MLA Keith Irving's ribbon-cutting on May 31st to the joyful commonality of the *Singalong* in August, this summer's special program has proceeded with a theatricality and aplomb that could only be the product of long and careful planning; I am so thankful to have had the opportunity to be a part of it all.

The best thing about all of this, for me, is that it has been nearly impossible to separate work from play, labour from leisure. I was immediately smitten by the town, its people, and its stories. I am smitten still. As long as Wolfville's talented and ambitious citizens continue to tell these stories, its heritage will be secure. R.M.

Roger's Report to the Board on September 3rd included some encouraging statistics about our visitation numbers and the summer's donations:

"Visitation numbers to August 31st record **1882** individual visits to the Randall House Museum and to Wolfville Historical Society events in 2014: 64 in May, 257 in June, 1038 in July, and 523 in August. Of these, **661** were museum visits and **1221** were event visits. These numbers show a significant increase in attendance, clearly linked to *1914: War Comes to Wolfville* programming. By way of comparison, total visitation in August 2013 was 264; full-season visitation in 2011 was 1143, and in 2010 was 970. Increased visitation is particularly notable given that extensive roadwork rendered Main Street intermittently impassable for much of July and August.

Gross receipts collected at the museum and at Society events as of August 31st were **\$3345.44** (\$1012.93 in Randall House donations, \$788.80 in War Comes To Wolfville event donations, \$665.25 in *Pity of War* receipts, \$466.06 proceeds from the Canada Day Picnic, \$240 from afternoon teas, and \$172.40 in gift shop revenues)."

THE PITY OF WAR

Two performances of *The Pity of War* were presented at the Festival Theatre, on July 19th and 20th, in collaboration with Theatre Arts Festival International (TAFI), and with the support of Acadia University and the Acadia Alumni Association. The presentation has been described as the 'flagship' of the Society's summer, with its selection of poetry and prose readings from the Great War selected by our President Anthony Harding, and with two of the four in the cast - Andria Hill-Lehr and Michael Bawtree - being board members both of TAFI and the Wolfville Historical Society. We were lucky to have the generous participation of Neil Jampolis, who lit the show with his usual sensitivity and brilliance, and of Lisa St. Clair who contributed a superb sound design for the show, making use of music suggested by Anthony Harding and Michael Bawtree, and including selections by Percy Grainger, Gerald Finzi, Vaughan Williams, Herbert Howells, Gustav Holst and Robert Kurka. We also thank Joanne Porter our stage manager, Leslie Wightman (light op) and Kira Awrey (sound op).



The final scene from *The Pity of War*: the reading of Siegfried Sassoon's poem *Aftermath*, with its stirring refrain: 'Have you forgotten yet?'

Left: Nate Crawford.

Centre: Andria Hill-Lehr (standing)

Michael Bawtree (in wheel-chair)

Right: Charles Follini

The performances attracted a very respectable audience for a summer weekend, and several took the time to send in their enthusiastic responses to Anthony and Michael, some of which we share with you here:

Truly a splendid evening of poetry and emotion last night. Thank you for all your efforts.

BRAVO, Anthony, Michael and the rest of the Team. "The Pity of War" is wonderful, well planned, beautifully executed and very moving. It deserves a wider audience. THANK YOU ALL!

Thank you for presenting this for the community - it is so very important to re-live the history of this war, especially as the world descends into wars over oil and the last resources on earth. And it was lovely to be back in the theatre with Neil and Jane [Jampolis] in front of us and you folks on the stage - like old times when we started the theatre.

My husband and I attended the matinee performance of The Pity of War this afternoon, and just wanted to tell you how very impressed we were by the whole presentation. The selections which Anthony made were perfect. It was both moving and inspiring and makes you wonder how we could ever have gone to war again - and again. Your actors were wonderful and I specially enjoyed Andria's faultless accents which so many actors find difficult to do.

A quick note to say that we found the performance last night utterly amazing - one of the best things on stage we've ever seen! Many thanks!

I want to congratulate you on your absolutely wonderful performance this evening. Brilliant! You brought to life what Anthony had skilfully put together. Very moving, powerful, especially in the last Siegfried Sassoon. All four of you did an excellent job -- a fine sampling of the cream of the crop of your time at Acadia. And the necessary prop of the wheelchair was most appropriate, and effective as were the staging and mounting of the selections. Seeing and experiencing you on stage made me think back to the heyday of the ATF, and the pity

- not only of war -- the pity that the ATF is no longer. What a joy it would be to have real theatre again grace the magical stage you and Colin conjured out of a barren ice rink! I hope you were able to sense how well the evening had gone, and were pleased with it. And that this sense of accomplishment will somehow speed the recovery of the wounded Achilles tendon.

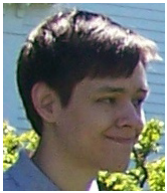
I hope you are as pleased with last night's performance of The Pity of War as I was. The precision and professionalism of the production amazed me. Everything was well integrated, from images to music to lighting to acting. But mostly those brilliant (and brilliantly chosen and arranged) texts carried the show. I was especially pleased to hear the female voices and perspectives on the Great War. Women may have been forced into noncombatant roles, but they contributed enormously to the war effort and to its still-resonant legacy. Thank you for bringing this moving and thought-provoking performance to Wolfville.

A WORD FROM ONE OF OUR SUMMER STAFF

Some of us - including the granting agencies which fund most of their salaries! - might sometimes wonder how our summer student staff spend their time. This year our Project Assistant, **Alexander Porter-Muntz**, kindly furnished us with this report when he left to return for his third year at Acadia, where he is studying history.

A Brief History of a Summer Job

Months ago, in between exam study sessions, I received an email informing me of three summer job openings at Randall House. I knew almost nothing about the museum and did not have anywhere to live in Wolfville for the summer. I had no work experience in museums, writing, researching, giving tours, or any other relevant area save tourism. So naturally I applied for all three positions. In May, having moved home to Sydney, Cape Breton, I received a request from Randall House to return to Wolfville. I rode the bus back and was rewarded for my twelve hours of transit with a position: "Project Assistant".



My introduction to the job was an appropriate one, simply because it made me abandon all expectations: it consisted of helping Roger brighten up the Exhibit Room with some "Marblehead Gold" paint. Soon, I was guiding tours of the museum (with enthusiastic help from Krystal), researching topics like the Nova Scotia Highland Brigade, and drafting interpretive panels.

I was assisting! But the "Project" half of my title seemed irrelevant. That was about to change. I participated in a slew of project-related events through June, July and August. The kickoff event was the Recruitment Office unveiling at the Wild Lily. In the days prior to it, I helped Wil Lang complete the installation while building upon my earlier painting experience. Later, while functioning as an unintimidating bodyguard, I encouraged Elliot Cederberg and later Jaden MacEachern, our 1914 newsboys, as they delivered ten news bulletins (minus one due to a tropical storm) precisely one hundred years late to the citizens of Wolfville. At the Legion, I helped put on talks, show films, and even vocally contributed from my post at the door during the *Singalong*. I also worked behind the scenes (literally) at *The Pity of War*, being unofficially titled "Assistant Stage Manager".

Later in the season the pressure of events diminished, leaving me with more time to devote to other aspects of the job, as guided by Roger. I researched and wrote the panels of the harbour gallery, which now adorn the upstairs hallway of Randall House, and the background on the Mi'kmaq crafts which have been added to the front parlour. I was proud to produce these additions to the museum's collective interpretive work, and to leave them as as permanent and personal a legacy as a summer student could ask for.

As the summer draws to a close, I look back and see a productive and prolific season of tours, blog posts, and events. I see great working relationships formed with a rare collection of invigorating and inviting personalities. I also see another legacy: the addition of an incredible breadth of experiences and wealth of knowledge to my own oeuvre, with practical and intangible value. Few summer jobs could have so enriched me. A.P.-M.

MEMBERS COMMENTS

Two of our Society members have written to us to share their response to the *1914: War Comes to Wolfville* Project, and to the Society's whole summer of 2014:

"Congratulations to all whose hard work has contributed to this benchmark year – the Board and the Project Committee, the Curator and staff and the volunteers. It was a joy all summer to see the Society's name everywhere downtown, interpreting the events of 1914 in a local context, and beginning to make us truly Wolfville's Community Museum.

Roger and his staff made the Randall House not only attractive and informative to visitors from near and far, but truly welcoming. One local visitor who spent some time examining all the exhibits and then was given a cup of tea, said afterwards 'Well, I didn't know that was what Randall House was like - I'll have to go back there more often!'"

Heather Watts

"Michael Bawtree and his committee are to be commended for their outstanding efforts in organizing the programme, 1914: War Comes to Wolfville. This excellent series of activities and programmes, spread over the summer months, provided us with a most meaningful memorial to the men and women who were engaged in that conflict. Granted there were other groups which supported the project, but it was the mammoth work of the Project Committee which brought it to fruition. We thank them for making it all possible."

Clara Jefferson

OUR PRESIDENT SUMS UP

Wolfville, which incorporated as a town in 1893, was marking its twenty-first anniversary in 1914, and at the start of the Great War could still be considered a young community. Yet, as Roger's very informative Randall House exhibit has shown, Wolfville was immediately and fully involved in responding to the challenges of the war, and the war, in turn, left an indelible mark on the town. This was an era when the "local" and the "global" flowed into each other: and one of the lessons to be learned from the events and exhibits of this year is surely that the local cannot be insulated from the global. (The display boards we put up at four key locations around the town, together with the Recruiting Office replica, were intended in part as a "reminder" of this fact.)



The Wolfville Historical Society's sign, describing the part that Acadia University's faculty students and staff played in the Great War, now graces the entrance to the Acadia Library, where we hear that it is attracting the interest and attention of today's faculty, students and staff!

I believe that all those who worked on the various aspects of the *1914: War Comes to Wolfville* project, under the inspiring and benign supervision of Michael Bawtree, found themselves reflecting not just on the Great War itself, but on what it should mean to commemorate such a cataclysm. For many of us, an awareness of history has never seemed so vital as it has this past summer!

On behalf of the Board, I would particularly like to thank the Town of Wolfville for its generous financial support, and the Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture, and Heritage for the Strategic Development Initiative grants (2013 and 2014), which enabled us to launch such a major effort to reach out to the local community.

Anthony Harding

AND IN OTHER NEWS:

- **BOARD REPORT**

At their meeting on September 3rd, the Society's Board discussed the success of the past season, and entertained an exciting proposal for the summer of 2015, which will be shared with members if approved at the Board's next meeting on October 1st. The Board also discussed the need to develop a list of new candidates for the Board ahead of the AGM in January. There are currently nine members, and our By-laws allow for as many as twelve. The Board discussed the deterioration in the east wall of Randall House: the Management Committee hopes to put a remedial plan in place for the spring of 2015.

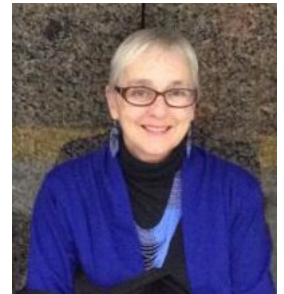
- **FALL MEETINGS**

The Society will be getting together for its usual meetings over the Fall and Winter, on the third Wednesday of each month. The following speakers have already been engaged:

- September 17th, 2 p.m. at the Legion Hall: **Chrystal Fuller**, the Town of Wolfville's Planning Director, made herself available for an interesting and useful Question and Answer session. Chrystal, who grew up on the family farm in Avonport, previously worked for the City of Iqaluit, the Municipality of Kings, Annapolis District Planning Commission and a private developer. She has degrees in political science and planning. She has a strong interest in international planning issues, agricultural land use planning and small town sustainability.

- October 15th, 2 p.m. in the new meeting room at St. John's Anglican Church, 164 Main St. (opposite Sherwood Ave): **Dr. Sharon MacDonald** will give a talk entitled "**Mary Russell Chesley– An Alternative Voice to the Pro-War Rhetoric in early 20th Century Nova Scotia**"

A 'belated and accidental academic', Sharon MacDonald holds a doctorate in history from the University of New Brunswick. She has had a long-standing interest in women's stories and has written on women's volunteer labour during wartime, textile history and transnational social activism.



Sharon MacDonald

- Details of later meetings will be announced once the speakers are finalised.



Wolfville's Main Street from Randall House to the Legion Hall was the scene of major upheaval starting in July, and there were those who saw it as a rather over-the-top part of the Society's commemoration of the Great War. Not guilty!

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