

# Wolfville Historical Society

Summer 2017

NEWSLETTER

Volume 17 Issue

2



## Randall House Museum

259 Main Street

Wolfville

Nova Scotia B4P 1C4

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

## President's Message

It's been a busy season; here we are in September wondering where the summer went.

Led by our Curator, Krystal Tanner, Randall House has been a busy place this summer. The museum has seen a notable increase in visitors this year, which we hope will continue into the Fall (we will be open until the middle of October).

On June 29<sup>th</sup>, Krystal and I represented the WHS at Horton High School's Graduation Ceremony, where we were pleased to award the 2017 Kirkconnell History Prize to Mollie Symons, who will be continuing her studies in International Development at Queen's University this Fall.

Some time ago, the Society was contacted from San Antonio, Texas by Craig Morrison, a descendant of one Obed Benjamin, whose grave is in Wolfville's Old Burying Ground. His plan was to arrange a gathering of family-members and together explore Obed's life and times here in the Valley. We were able to provide advice and information during the planning process -- and then welcome the extended family to tea and a tour of Randall House during their visit!

You will be seeing some scaffolding outside Randall House at some point during the fall; we need to repair the attic window-sills on the eastern wall. We have applied for a grant from the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage to assist us in footing the bill.

For some time now, we have been working with the Town on a walking-tour brochure that will give visitors to Wolfville a better idea of what they are looking at as they stroll along Main Street, from Randall House at one end to Acadia University at the other.

Finally, if you are interested in supporting the effort to preserve and develop our communal heritage, you may want to consider joining our Board of Directors; we currently have two seats that we would like to fill. For more information, contact me at [kaiserhallett@yahoo.ca](mailto:kaiserhallett@yahoo.ca)

*Martin Hallett*

## Curator's Comments

We kicked off the 2017 season at Randall House Museum by welcoming two new students from Acadia University to the team. Although we interviewed a very good number of candidates this year it was Lauryn Wadden, a fourth year Music Education student, who was hired as the museum's Heritage Interpreter/Guide and Kelsey MacGowan, a third year American History student, who was hired for the position of Collections Management. I do not have the words to express what it meant to have these girls working alongside me this season and how much we were able to accomplish as the Randall Squad (as we call ourselves). Together we designed and installed our current temporary exhibit *From Victorian to Generation Alpha: Celebrating 150 Years of Wolfville's History*. We carefully selected 15 objects from the collection as well as 150 photographs that reflected on the past 150 years of Wolfville's history. We also installed a number of interactive elements that offered visitors a more engaging visit to the museum including a typewriting station, a voting system where visitors could choose their favorite artifact, and an area where they could share their 'Wolfville Experience.' The exhibit has been met with many positive reviews and has even made a little appearance in the Advertiser/Register!

We also tackled a number of other events this past summer including: a paranormal investigation, a book reading, a talk on Maud Lewis, our weekly afternoon teas, hosting several events for a genealogical reunion, two visits from recreational summer camps, two public barbecues, an offsite event at Prescott House, a sold-out rug hooking workshop, and a film shoot for a #doitinWolfville promo video. We are not done with the events just yet! We still have several events in the works including a flower arrangement workshop, a bookbinding workshop, our regular monthly meetings, and a chicken dinner. Stay tuned to our website and social media pages for more information as it becomes available.

Before I sign off on this edition of the newsletter I want to take a moment to mention the many volunteers that have helped make this 2017 season a success. Whether it was helping to diagnose a plumbing problem, or to keeping the museum grounds looking radiant I cannot thank you enough for the countless number of hours that each and everyone of you has put in. Some of you I have met for the very first time this year (yay!) and some I have known so long that they have become like family. I think that we make a pretty great team and I only grow more excited thinking about what is yet to come.



For my two 'museum kids', Museum Mommy is signing off for now. Remember #randallfamous forever and always.

*Krystal Tanner*



## **Kings-Hants Heritage Connection's "Heritage and Cultures Family Day"**

The biggest highlight of the summer for the KHHC was the Heritage and Cultures Family Day held on 29 July on the extensive and beautiful grounds of Prescott House.

With this event, the keystone event for KHHC's "Celebrating Our Home – Sharing Our Stories" project, we honoured some of the diverse traditions and cultures that make the Annapolis Valley a continually surprising place, one where different histories spring up at every corner.

The day began on the lawn in front of Prescott House with a Smudging Ceremony led by Carolyn Landry of Annapolis Valley First Nations. There were welcomes by Heather Hennigar (President of the Rotary Club), Gordon Haliburton (chair of KHHC), and our stalwart MC, Anne Curry from Les Amis de Grand Pré.

Display tables in the Heritage Village tent included a "genealogy table" (staffed by members of the Kings Historical Society); a display on the newly-opened North Mountain United Tapestry Museum (with weaving and yarn-making demonstrations); displays on the history of the Acadians provided by Les Amis de Grand Pré; and displays from West Hants, Hantsport, Kings, and Wolfville Historical Societies.

For the younger or braver among us, there were traditional pastimes: bowling hoops, walking on stilts, horse-wagon rides, and croquet on the lawn. And a Timeline gave everyone an opportunity to add personal stories to the history of Canada and our province.

Insights into Nova Scotia's political history were given by Maynard Stevens (in top hat and tails), re-enacting a barn-burner of a speech by William Henry Chipman; and by our own Michael Bawtree (as himself, on this occasion), with a nuanced account of the career of Joseph Howe, passionate defender of Nova Scotia against Ottawa's centralizing tendencies.

Musical entertainment ranged from old-time fiddling courtesy of the Forever Young Fiddlers, and jazz standards with Ken Bezanson and The Rand Boys, to the African Drumming Circle (with participation by yours truly) that brought the day to a truly resounding conclusion.

The event was arranged in partnership with the Rotary Club of New Minas Sunrise, and KHHC is grateful to Rotary and the many Rotary Club volunteers who devoted time to planning and/or turned up on the day to welcome the visitors. Funding was provided by the 150 Forward Fund (Province of Nova Scotia), and the Canada 150 Fund, Canadian Heritage-Patrimoine Canada.

*Anthony Harding*



## The Ghosts of Randall House

Everyone who has ever visited Randall House has experienced it in their own special way. Since I first started at the museum I have seen everything, from a visitor who cried over the memory that an object brought back to them, to a visitor who became enraged over the demolition of a historic structure here in town. Then there are those visitors who have experienced the house in a more...shall we say ghostly way. When it comes to the realm of ghosts, I am a skeptic. Despite every single visitor who has claimed to have felt a strange energy in the house, I feel absolutely nothing but a comforting old home that welcomes me in every time I walk through the front door.

If you were to ask me whether I have heard sounds like footsteps on the stairs or have seen something out of the corner of my eye, I could not exactly deny it. What I usually tell myself is that the house is over 200 years old, so of course it is going to creak and groan as it settles its weary old bones. There are, however, some things that even I have no explanation for. I cannot tell you why staff have heard three very loud knocks on the mantle, why the bathroom door opened by itself, or why visitors have reported seeing a woman at the top of the stairs. These incidents were reason enough that when I received a message from Bruce and Charlene Simpson of Caretakers Paranormal Investigations, asking whether we were interested in hosting a paranormal investigation, I jumped at the opportunity.

Although I will not go into all of the investigative details, I will share that we were contacted by several spirits, including a little boy named Eden. We are not sure who Eden is, except that he seems to have an accent and that he loves to play games, as he would often disappear only to reappear a while later by making a “psst” noise. There were several other spirits that came through, including a man named Michael and an unnamed woman who seems to have followed us through the house. The night had enough spooky moments that I was not sure how I would feel going to the museum the next morning – but sure enough, when I walked through the front door I got that same overflowing feeling of warmth without the spook. It is rather nice, and admittedly a little strange, to know that even when I think I am all alone in that big yellow house, I am not really alone. Whether these spirits are attached to the artifacts, to the land, or are just passing through, we do not know. What we do know is that it is now part of our new routine at the museum to make sure that we say good morning and goodnight to our new friends. If you’re interested, head over to the Caretakers Paranormal Investigations YouTube page to hear some of the evidence for yourself!

*Krystal Tanner*



### Wolfville Walks

(MEET AT CLOCK TOWER PARK)

Thursday, June 1, 7:30pm  
Thursday, June 15, 7:30pm  
Thursday, July 6, 7:30pm  
Thursday, July 13, 7:30pm  
Thursday, July 27, 7:30pm  
Thursday, August 3, 7:30pm  
Thursday, August 24, 7:30pm  
Thursday, September 7, 7:30pm  
Thursday, September 21, 7:30pm  
Thursday, October 5, 7:30pm  
Thursday, October 19, 7:30pm  
Monday, October 30, 7:30pm\*  
(Special 10th Anniversary Show)  
Tuesday, October 31, 7:30pm

### Grapely Ghost Walks

(MEET AT THE TASTING BAR OF THE GRAND PRE WINERY)

\$25 with wine, \$20 without.

Compilation shows, limited space.

Saturday, July 22, 7pm  
Saturday, August 19, 7pm  
Saturday, September 16, 6:30pm

**Pre-purchasing  
via Ticketpro.ca  
recommended!**

### Kentville Walks

(MEET AT THE CORNWALLIS INN)

Thursday, May 25, 7:30pm  
Thursday, June 22, 7:30pm  
Thursday, July 20, 7:30pm  
Thursday, August 17, 7:30pm  
Thursday, September 14, 7:30pm  
Thursday, October 12, 7:30pm  
Friday, October 27, 7:30pm

### Halls Harbour Walks

(MEET AT THE FUNDY VIEW  
COMMUNITY HALL)

Friday, June 2, 7:30pm  
Friday, June 16, 7:30pm  
Friday, July 28, 7:30pm  
Friday, August 11, 7:30pm  
Friday, August 25, 7:30pm  
Friday, September 8, 7:30pm

### Windsor Walks

(MEET AT THE BLOCKHOUSE)

Thursday, June 8, 7:30pm  
Thursday, June 29, 7:30pm  
Thursday, August 10, 7:30pm  
Thursday, August 31, 7:30pm  
Thursday, September 28, 7:30pm  
Thursday, October 26, 7:30pm

**Private shows available. For all inquiries:**

(902) 692-8546 / [jerome@valleyghostwalks.com](mailto:jerome@valleyghostwalks.com) / [valleyghostwalks.com](http://valleyghostwalks.com)

