NEWFOUNDLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

News, resources and events for Newfoundland & Labrador's history community

FEB 15 2005
MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY
NEWFOUNDLAND

NHS Newsletter
Winter 2005
A publication of the Newfoundland Historical Society
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GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES ARCHIVES FEES

At a news conference on January 14, it was announced that when The Rooms opens on June 29, 2005, everyone who uses the facility will have to pay a fee. This includes those who use the Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador. At the time of writing, the fee structure has not been announced.

The N H S, in common with other heritage groups, has always opposed any charge for access to public records. The Society opposed the imposition of a one-time registration fee, and is now campaigning against annual researcher fees. The charge may be small, but the principle is important - access to the province's public records, and to records which have been specifically donated to the province, should be free.

The Provincial Archives does not present elaborate exhibitions, like the Provincial Museum and the Provincial Art Gallery. This is primarily a working space for students, genealogists, citizens who need vital information, and researchers of every stripe. It attracts many visitors from outside the province.

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President's Remarks—Terry Bishop-Stirling

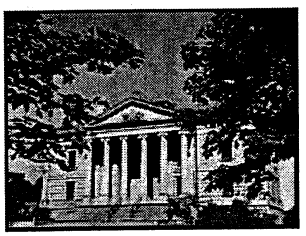
Just a few lines to wish members a happy and healthy 2005. Inside this issue you will find our program update and news on a couple of our current initiatives.

The Newfoundland Historical Society, along with other heritage groups in the province, is currently protesting the application of user fees at the new provincial archives at the Rooms. You can see more on this in the article by Jim Hiller. We are, of course, also concerned that there has been no decision announced on the future of the Colonial Building. The Executive will continue to push for an effective and appropriate use of this most important building.

We have another busy winter and spring planned. Please note the change in our regular winter schedule. The Annual General Meeting will be held on the last Thursday of March and our spring symposium will be in April. We are also cooperating with the Battle Harbour Heritage Society to promote an excursion to Labrador next summer- see details inside.

The Society's office hours have been changed to accommodate the reduced hours at the Colonial Building. Please call before you visit.

As always we welcome returning and new members. Enjoy the newsletter and feel free to contact the Executive with any questions or concerns.



Due to the reduced public hours of the Provincial Archives at the Colonial Building, the NHS office hours have been changed. Please call before you visit.

Archives Fees (continued from front page)

Researchers have free access to Canada's national archives, and to every provincial archive except our own. Free access is also the rule in the USA and Europe. The imposition of an access fee here is unique and retrograde.

The Newfoundland Historical Society urges members to lobby against archives access fees at PANL.

Please contact your MHA on this issue and, if you wish, write to the Honourable Paul Shelley, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, Box 8700, St. John's, NL, A1B 4J6 (pshelley@gov.nl.ca) as well as to the chair of The Board of Directors, Dr. Priscilla Renouf, Archaeology Unit, Queen's College, Memorial University, St John's, NF, A1C 5S7 (mapr@mun.ca).

Mr. Dean Brinton takes up his position as Chief Executive Officer of ***The Rooms*** Corporation in June. Correspondence on this issue, or any issue regarding the three cultural institutions making their homes in that spectacular building may be addressed to him at P.O. Box 1800, Station C, St. John's, NL, A1C 5P9. or therooms@gov.nl.ca.

James Hiller

Have you renewed your membership in the Newfoundland Historical Society? We need your support to carry out our activities.

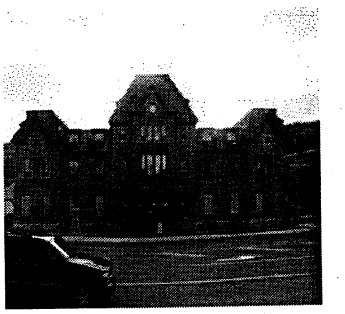
PASSAGES

The Newfoundland Historical Society and the friends of Dr. Linda Cullum, Assistant Professor of Sociology and chair of the NHS Publications Committee, extend their deepest sympathy to Linda on the recent death of her father.

Call for 2005 Southcott Awards Nominations

The Newfoundland Historic Trust invites nominations for its annual Southcott Awards for built heritage preservation in Newfoundland and Labrador. Awards are normally considered for architectural restoration projects completed within the past three years, for buildings of any type which are 50 years or older. Awards may also be considered for excellence in long-term maintenance of heritage properties; for new or infill construction which is sensitive to the historic context (architecture, streetscape, viewscape, etc.) of its environment; or for other noteworthy built heritage preservation projects.

More information and nomination forms are available online at www.historictrust.com/southcott or by calling (709) 739-7870. The deadline is April 15, 2005.



The Railway Coastal Museum on Water Street in St. John's was one of the winners in the 2004 Southcott Awards Competition

Letters from the Editor

Oral History is a Good Thing

I was delighted to read in *The Packet* out of Clarenville , January 24 issue, that a group on the Bonavista Peninsula are doing their bit to preserve our intangible heritage.

The TIP Performing Arts Association was so successful with their initial effort of recording information from the five Coves that their project has been extended to the whole Peninsula, helped on by the good offices of HRSD. Twelve people are employed in collecting and transcribing a projected 1500 interviews. Well done yourselves!

Oral history allows young people to explore their community and to construct knowledge through that exploration. It builds communication and writing skills, as well as a sense of pride and identity.

Oral history projects done with contemporary informants help to make available current opinions and explanations "straight from the horse's mouth" so that more voices are included in the historical record and oral history brings the younger generation and the older generation together, restoring a sense of community.

So why are there not more oral history projects undertaken in the Province's schools, particularly in the high schools where students are reportedly "very difficult to engage"?

Perhaps we need to show teachers how to train students to collect the history of their families, friend groups and communities. Isn't it time for an Oral History Institute in Newfoundland and Labrador?

Anita Best

In September we began with a symposium on the Entente Cordiale.

U.K. coin commemorating 100 years of Entente Cordiale

In November we launched Peter Pope's book.

Committee Reports

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

The members of the 2004/05 Program Committee include Debby Andrews, Terry Bishop Stirling, Rosemary Healy, Jim Hiller, Willeen Keough, Bert Riggs, Jeff Webb and Maudie Whelan.

Our committee has been very busy this fall. We began the lecture series in September with the Entente Cordiale Symposium. The event was well attended in both St. John's and Corner Brook. Sponsors included Air Labrador, British High Commission, City of St. John's, Government of France, Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador, Memorial University, and SSHRC.

Dr Willeen Keough, our October speaker, gave a very interesting lecture entitled " John Moxley Disinterred: Assertions of ethnic territory in 13th and 19th century Conception Bay." Willeen's lecture was sponsored by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John's and the Basilica Museum.

In November we celebrated the launch of Dr. Peter Pope's book "Fish Into Wine: the Newfoundland plantation in the seventeenth century. Peter's book launch was jointly sponsored by Scholarly Book Services and the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture.

Most of our energy, this past fall, has gone into planning a spring symposium on the subject of Responsible Government. We aim to have an out-of-town guest speaker on the first night, followed by a panel discussion the next evening. Saturday will be a day-long event, with many interesting lectures.

Over the past few years many of our sources of funding which we relied upon, are no longer available. Providing we acquire adequate funding, the April symposium on Responsible Government will go ahead. I hope to see you there.

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Well, another year has rolled around and the Publications committee remains active in many facets of the NHS.
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