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The Newsletter of the Newfoundland Historic Trust

Fall 2002

Annual General Meeting Nov 21

Beginning at 7:30 pm on Thursday November 21, this year's annual meeting of the Newfoundland Historic Trust will be held at the Newfoundland Museum. The agenda will include reports from officers and committees, and the election of directors for 2002-2003.

Following the meeting, architect Robert Mellin will present an illustrated lecture on the built heritage of Tilting. Please see the enclosure for more about this meeting.

Thank you Susan Fry

In September, Trust Director Susan Fry resigned from the board to pursue other heritage activities. As a member of the board Susan took on the role of Co-editor of The Trident and worked hard to bring interesting and timely information to members. Susan's background in and enthusiasm for urban/heritage planning, combined with an abiding interest in Edinburgh's glorious New Town of 1750 - 1830, gave her particular insights to the Newfoundland experience. Susan wishes to let members of the Trust know that while she enjoyed working with the Trust and serving as a Director, she has decided to focus her energies on further research and writing. We wish her all the best.

Poster now available

The Newfoundland Historic Trust poster showing a selection of past Southcott winners and styles of architecture in the province is now available. Supported by Aliant Telecom, the poster is intended to spread the word of Trust's work around the province and to stimulate interest in the award. Both the photographs and design are the work of Greg Locke. Copies of the poster are available from the Trust for \$10.00. Please call Leida Finlayson at 739-7870 or e.mail to vaults@historictrust.com.

Urban Heritage

Hosted by Conservation Corps Newfoundland and Labrador and the Newfoundland Historic Trust, a presentation by representatives of Sumatra Heritage Trust (Indonesia) was made at the Masonic Temple in St John's Wednesday, October 23rd. The Sumatra Heritage Trust aims at preserving, enhancing, and promoting the natural, cultural, and built heritage of the island of Sumatra. This broad mandate enables the Trust to spread its potential for affecting heritage preservation throughout the areas of tangible and intangible heritage. Run mainly by young graduates of universities in Medan, the Trust engages in projects ranging from the restoration of Chinese courtyard mansions to the recording of indigenous knowledge. This presentation focused on urban heritage conservation, and a tour of St John's for the guest presenters was given by NHT members.

Southcott Awards 2002

Summer began when the annual Southcott Awards for built heritage were made by the Newfoundland Historic Trust on June 21st. Sponsored this year by Aliant Telecom, the owners of the six remarkable buildings were present to receive the Trust plaque and citation. Special guests included Hon Julie Bettney, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation; GERALYN HANSFORD of Aliant Telecom; Councillor Shannie Duff, City of St John's; George Chalker, Heritage Canada Foundation; Jewel Cunningham, Department of Canadian Heritage; and Ruth Canning, Chair, Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Organized by the Trust's Southcott Committee, the afternoon event at St John's City Hall was enjoyed by a large and interested audience. Special thanks to the Committee members Susan Haedrich (Chair), Colette Nap, John Templeton, Shane O'Dea, Peggy Stewart, and Dale Jarvis for a job well done.

Introduction to the Awards by Dale Jarvis

Minister Bettney, Councillor Duff, our sponsors, councillors, award winners and guests, the Newfoundland Historic Trust is pleased to welcome you to the nineteenth presentation of the Southcott Awards. This program was developed by the Trust in 1984 to recognize excellence in the preservation of the architectural heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador. The goal of the program is to commend the good work of individuals and organizations, corporations and governments. But it goes beyond that - we want also to show both what can be achieved and how it can be done. We want to show the real pleasure that can be created for the client and the community by first-rate preservation work. If the quality of our architectural heritage has come to be one of the defining aspects of Newfoundland, then the Newfoundland Historic Trust has been very much responsible for that definition, but it is people like our award winners who give the definition reality.

The Southcott Awards are named for one of the most important nineteenth century Newfoundland building firms: J. and J.T. Southcott. We know them today principally for the Second Empire designs of J.T.'s architect son, John. The characteristics of this style are concave curved mansard roofs, with hooded dormers in the mansard. While the style started with the development of the Southcott properties at Park Place on Rennie's Mill Road, they spread throughout the whole colony.

The committee this year was chaired by Susan Haedrich and consisted of Collette Nap, John Templeton and Shane O'Dea. And we are very pleased to have Greg Locke with us to do the photography and the visual presentation.

Aliant Telecom has been our major corporate sponsor since the beginning and this year has been even more helpful, allowing us to develop our presentation and, beginning last year Aliant has been a very active and effective promoter of all the arts in Newfoundland and we are glad to work with them to promote the province and its people. Parks Canada is one of our major partners in the development of heritage preservation and the Department of Canadian Heritage has consistently supported the work of the Trust - as we have supported their work. And without the considerable help given by George Chalker, Madonna Sullivan and Dale Jarvis of the Heritage Foundation we would not have a list to draw from, the research to write up or the backup to do half of what we do.

Harmsworth Hall, Grand Falls

Although Grand Falls is not what most people would think of as an historic town, since it was incorporated only in 1963, a group of very diligent people wished to save their built heritage. Harmsworth Hall, the Town Hall, has been the focus of the local heritage society and dept of engineering & works.

Harmsworth Hall, one of the oldest buildings in Grand Falls, was built in 1929 by the Anglo Newfoundland Development Company. This Company was largely responsible for the development of Grand Falls as a town. The hall was originally built as a theatre, playhouse & meeting hall and its name comes from one of the original owners of the pulp & paper mill. When the town of Grand Falls was incorporated, the Anglo Newfoundland Development Company gave the building to the new municipality to serve as a town hall. The council renovated the interior of the building to suit their needs and has operated from there ever since.

The building is wood frame construction, with a brick veneer face. The largest portion is 2 storey with a gable roof and a small one storey wing on each side. Large arched windows face the street. The front portion of the roof is covered in copper roofing and the underside of the overhang is elaborately detailed.

The restoration work involved many parts of the building, but probably the most visible is the reconstruction of the cupola. The original base of the cupola still existed on the ridge of the roof and it was maintained. The original detail drawing was in the council's possession so the builders were able to duplicate it exactly complete with copper top.

The most challenging portion of the work was replacement & repair of deteriorated brick. The existing brick was not a common size or texture so buying new product to match was not possible. Here the people involved in the project came up with a unique idea. The mason, Freeman Piercey, identified several private retaining walls in the older part of town, which used exactly the same brick. The town proposed to these individuals an exchange for their brick. This worked well and once advertised in the paper, several people came forward with brick for the project. Another ingenious little practice was the cutting of each brick in half to ensure there was enough brick to do the job. Since this, a full truckload of brick was salvaged from a demolished school, it will be kept for future work.

Window replacement was investigated but was not implemented, as it did not seem that the architectural integrity of the windows would be able to be maintained. Instead, windows received maintenance work including replacing broken panes and storms were fabricated and installed on the inside face of the windows.

Plaster ornamental spheres, located on the front one-storey wings of the building were rebuilt and several large sections of eaves were also replaced.

The principal people involved in this project were: Jeff Saunders, Project Manager; Dave Gardner, Project Supervisor; Freeman Piercey, Mason/Carpenter/Painter; Doug Mercer, Carpenter; Dean Nicol, Carpenter.

This building is also being recognised a second time for its historic value. It became a registered heritage structure in 1998, by the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Ruth Canning (HFNL) presented the Southcott Award to Mayor Walwyn Blackmore & Jeff Saunders of Grand Falls.

Drogheda, Clarke's Beach

Drogheda, a house in Clarke's Beach, is being recognized for its historical value, a second time now. In May of 1997, the Heritage foundation of NF & Lab designated it a registered heritage structure.

It was originally built by the Coveyduck family, believed to be of Welsh origin, who moved to the area in the early 1800's. After having lived in a wood & sod structure for a few years they built this house in 1830. The Coveyducks were a part of much development activity which occurred in the area. Their Schooner construction business utilized much of the wood that was produced at the local sawmill.

The present owner, Melvin Morgan, is a descendant of the Coveyduck family. His grandparents were the last people to live in the house and they vacated the premises approximately 20 years ago. Since that time Melvin would maintain the house, & keep it dry inside by lighting a fire in the wood stove once a week. Of course the house never had any of the modern conveniences, so there was no switch to flick to turn on the heat. The property itself consists of, not only the house, but also a barn, a root cellar which had to be completely re-built, a well house & an outhouse. The main house is a salt box built with vertical pine boards as opposed to the more modern stud framing, exposed beams and the traditional square cut nails. Weather tightness was achieved with ochre & seal oil sealing the corner castings & eaves.

Mr. Melvin Morgan and his wife Greta, have restored the property to it's original state and maintain it as a tourist attraction along side of their RV park.

When the project began for the Morgans, the original house was actually in fairly good condition, considering its age. The house was jacked up so the beams underneath could be replaced with new pressure treated wood beams. All the windows were rebuilt, using the original glass panes from the existing windows. All the clapboard and wood roof shingles were replaced. The shingles, having been the original from when the house was built.

Mr. & Mrs. Morgan worked on the house with the help of the following people, Jim Pike, Wayne Jesso, Rod Skanes and Kip Mitchell.

George Chalker (HCF) presented the Southcott Award to Melvin Morgan.

Nolasco Retreat, Brigus

Brigus is a town which we think of as representative of Newfoundland but it is not typical of Newfoundland. With its stone-lined riverways, its carefully delineated properties, its timbered grounds and its old houses it has long been a resort of artists, a required visit for travellers. In the depth of the town, not far from Harbour Pond, Nolasco Retreat, Kathy Legrow's house, sits on North Street. With its square roof and three-bay facade, it is a characteristic Brigus house and was probably built for William Hunt, a tinsmith, in about 1876. This date is also suggested by the fact that the house has no fireplaces, only stove chimneys. Can we surmise that a tinsmith would have had a professional interest in dealing only with a "modern" stove as opposed to an old-fashioned fireplace? The back of the house was added at the beginning of the last, the twentieth century. Previous to Kathy Legrow's purchase, the house had been used as a residence and crafts shop by Mrs Phyllis Percy who, through it, fostered craft development in the area. When Kathy Legrow took it over in 1997, several changes had been made to the building although its basic form had been preserved. It had vinyl siding and contemporary windows and the interior had been chopped and changed by its round of owners. She calculated that it could, at one time, have had as many as eleven bedrooms.

Apart from the necessary restoration of the facade - to the clapboard and replacement of all the windows (the work of Jim Youden) - she had to do major structural work. This was a product of the dampness of the site and had caused the failure of the floor. A drain was built about the foundation and a concrete pad laid as a subsurface for the first floor. Upstairs she opened out a number of the rooms to provide more space and, in doing so, discovered a number of extraordinarily wide boards, including one that measured two feet. In doing this project she was advised by the architect Philip Pratt and had the work undertaken by Gerry Spracklin. The interior design was done by Elizabeth Murphy and Kathy Legrow.

Jewel Cunningham (DCH) presented the Southcott Award to Kathy Legrow.

Dragland – Parsons Residence 113 Bond Street, St. John's

This entry was a particularly difficult project to judge. You see, it originally started out as a restoration but during construction was completely destroyed by fire. So we were faced with giving an award to a completely new house! It was actually one that we reviewed last year and decided to put on the shelf till now.

After the fire destroyed their first construction project, the owners, Stan Dragland & Marnie Parsons, wanted to design a new infill house which would match the understated integrity of the exterior form & detail of the original house. They commissioned Architect, Robert Mellin and builder Keith Pierce, to help them achieve their goal. As you can see from the photos, it turned out to be a rather up-scale, understated house.

The original floor plan layout was maintained, in particular the location of the staircase, exterior door & windows facing the street. Other traditional features, which were reconstructed, were the 4" exposed clapboard, original window & door trims, water table and transom window over the street entrance door. There was a coal chute in the existing house, which was reinstated. The vertical board, 'v'-groove storm door was incorporated, a feature which seems to be disappearing from many renovated houses in the downtown area and new eave brackets were made up to match those salvaged from the fire.

There were also a few technical constraints encountered, since this project became a new construction versus a renovation. Firstly, the fire occurred in winter, so documenting the original state of the house was treacherous with all the snow & ice.

The requirement by the national building code to have a minimum fire & acoustical separation from attached houses, translated into a slightly narrower house than originally existed.

The original coal burning fireplaces were completely destroyed in the fire and could not be restored.

One of the reasons why, this house is receiving an award, is very eloquently stated by the applicant, Ms Ann Hart. It reads as follows: "Every effort has been made to maintain the spirit and integrity of the original house by being true to its proportions and lines,... Rather than give in to the temptation of ornamental detail inappropriate to the aspect of the original, we strove to maintain a balance between the in-fill house and the neighbourhood. We loved the simplicity & quietness of the house that was destroyed and hoped to replace it with a house which was as simple, quiet & graceful as its predecessor."

Councillor Duff presented the Southcott Award to Marnie Parsons and Stan Dragland

Bartra, Circular Road, St. John's

Likely designed by the local architect W.F. Butler - who designed so many of the great Queen Anne Revival style houses on Circular and Rennie's Mill Roads - Bartra is an interesting play on a classical theme. It serves as the centrepiece for two adjacent houses which, because they use similar motifs and are set more forward on their lots, creates the illusion of a house with wings. However there is no property connection between the three houses - all appear to have been built independently. Bartra was built in 1906 for W.S. Monroe who owned the house until 1908 when it was sold to W.D. Reid of the Newfoundland Railway and subsequently to A.E. Hickman, founder of what is now the Hickman group of companies. The political history of the house has an interesting irony in that the first owner, Walter Monroe, succeeded the third, Albert Hickman, as Prime Minister of Newfoundland in 1924. During the 1970s, when owned by Wes and Marion Andrews, it housed the finest and most complete collection of Newfoundland prints and engravings.

Typical of the eclecticism of the Queen Anne, it uses classical motifs, which generally call for symmetry, in an asymmetrical facade. It has recently undergone a major restoration under the direction of Renee Marquis and Paul Antle who, with the assistance of their contractor Laurence Canning, have been extraordinarily attentive to merits of the house. For a period of time this house was an eyesore on Circular Road and often viewed as a threat to the neighbourhood with its steadily changing status from house to boarding house to bed and breakfast. It was also a threat to itself because of these changes. While well-supported on its stone foundation, most of the internal support had failed and the house had to be jacked 18" to level it. That was a very sensitive task because of the quality of the plasterwork in the house. But such negative discoveries were not all that was made during the restoration. In the drawing room the removal of the roof of the bay window revealed that it had been a conservatory - to which form it was returned.

The most striking feature of the house - and one which, mercifully, was not interfered with - was the main hall and staircase superbly panelled in quartered oak, detailed with corinthian columns. In redoing the kitchen Laurence Canning picked up some these motifs and made counters and cabinet out of mahogany.

Geralyn Hansford of Aliant Telecom presented the Southcott Award to Renee Marquis and Paul Antle.

Sunnyside, Circular Road, St. John's

Sunnyside is an unusual feature of this year's Southcotts. It is here not for restoration - it didn't need that - it is here to represent what we really would like to achieve with all of our architectural heritage: careful and continuous maintenance which has resulted in the preservation of one of the city's oldest and most distinguished buildings. Built about 1845 for John O'Mara, the Waterford-born chemist who founded the O'Mara's drug stores which became a St. John's institution for a century and a half, it was bought by James Murray, fish merchant and MHA, in 1872. It was he who created the house much as we see it today.

This is a remarkable property because it not only has a very fine garden but also one of the few surviving coach houses and, apart, from Government House, the only gate lodge. Jean Murray (with her sister Ramsay who died last year) has always seen herself as having an obligation to this property and an obligation to its history: the history of her family and of the city to which they contributed. But this is an obligation of love and regard, not of burden. As a

consequence the house has probably the best preserved nineteenth century interior and setting in Newfoundland. To look into the drawing room is to look into that room as it was furnished in 1872. The bathroom might not meet Martha Stewart's standards but is a remarkably intact Victorian feature - and it works.

How is this achieved? By attention to detail, by a readiness to act when needed to prevent a leak spreading or rot festering, by that care essential to all real preservationists - to preserve rather than replace. And if replacement is necessary to replace in the same material and type as the original. Jean Murray and Sunnyside are a model to us all and it should not surprise you to know that 25 years ago when the St. John's Heritage Foundation started its awards program this house was one of the first on its list - also for preservation maintenance. The award for 2027 is now being cast.

Julie Bettney, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation presented the Southcott Award to Jean Murray

The Newman Wine Vaults Smash Hit

In 2002 the Vaults attracted just over 7700 visitors. Beginning with special events in May, and including the regular open hours from June 10th to August 30th, the Vaults continue to attract and host visitors and the attendance is growing. Compared to last year's limited opening from July 3rd to August 31st when 2450 visitors attended, this can only be seen as a benchmark year.

Nineteen events at the Vaults were programmed or co-produced. This includes the Official Opening Walking Tours of Historic West End, Commemoration of Napoleon's Surrender, Family Day and Barbeque Wine in the Vaults, Under the Juniper Tree: Songs and Stories from the Brothers Grimm Collection Book Reading by Michael Crummey, and The Cask of Amontillado.

Structural work undertaken this summer include masonry and roof repairs, the installation of a fire exit, heritage windows, and display lighting, painting.

The interpretative display was augmented this summer featuring interpretative panels (words and pictures), artifacts, and liquor processing equipment. Additionally, four summer students provided visitors with detailed information about the Vaults. Feedback on their skills was positive, and one interpreter undertook the task of translating all the panels into French.

A segment done for CPAC's "Great Canadian Tour" series where the Newman Wine Vaults was the only Newfoundland stop. The episode aired eight times.

From May to September the Vaults were rented 13 times for events from corporate receptions to birthday parties, movie filming, and wedding photography. Two rentals worth noting are the Boykov sculpture exhibition which brought high praise from the media and public alike as well as approximately 2100 visitors, and the international Sound Symposium.

In 2002 the Newfoundland Liquor Corporation has allowed the Vaults to be the only liquor agency in St. John's. To compliment the Vaults the agency carries 20 brands of fortified wines, most of which are ports. Two of these wines are only available at our facility. Needless to say Newman's Celebrated Port is our best seller. The NLC has been a generous supporter of the Historic Trust's work to preserve the Wine Vaults and we are very grateful to them for this and their help with other aspects of the Vaults development.

Finally, the Newman Wine Vaults Committee has been nominated for a Manning Award by the Newfoundland Historic Sites Association.

Board of Directors 2001 - 2002 Newfoundland Historic Trust PO Box 2403, St John's NF, A1C 6E7
President - John O'Dea; Treasurer - Carol Mitchell; Secretary - Gerard Hayes; Directors - Susan Haedrich, Shane O'Dea, James Hiller, Dale Jarvis, Peter Latta -editor The Trident; Past President -Patricia O'Brien.

New Life for Heritage Store from the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador

One of Brookfield's oldest commercial premises is back open for business, but with a new owner and a new vision.

Norton's Cove Studio on Main Street in Brookfield is located in the historic Job Kean's General Store. Captain Job Kean and his wife, Virtue Hann, constructed the store circa 1890. Kean was an active businessman in the community, owning eight vessels, mastering several of his ships to the ice during the seal hunt in the spring or to the coast of Labrador to fish for cod in the summer.

Kean's General Store was a centre for commerce in the Brookfield area. Because it was located near the harbour front, Kean's ships had easy access to the store when they arrived in port with supplies and merchandise. Kean also supplied other sailing vessels in the area with dry goods, groceries, hardware and provisions and operated a telegraph and post office on the premises.

Today, Job and Virtue's general store is a studio space, featuring a non-toxic fine art print shop. Janet Davis, proprietor of the studio, plans on offering a visiting artist program, a variety of workshops and art classes and retail art supplies, as well as a range of her own artwork.

The store has a unique style with a stunning view of the surrounding area. Made of wood, with a long slanting roof, it is adjoined to a flat-roofed portion that houses the office. The building was designated as a Registered Heritage Structure by the Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador in June 1988.

Over this past summer, the store has been completely restored and repainted. To commemorate its importance, the Heritage Foundation has presented the building with a bronze plaque marking it as a Registered Heritage Structure. "This is exactly the sort of heritage work we like to see," said Dale Jarvis, Heritage Preservation Officer with the Foundation. "It is great to see an old building beautifully restored, and being brought back into the daily life of the community."

The interior of the building has been lovingly restored, and Davis has made many intriguing discoveries in the process. Work in the attic uncovered pressed tin and copper coffin decorations, some small children's toys, drawer pulls, ink bottles, buttons, crates, shop displays, door lock pieces, and lamp pieces.

Davis also uncovered a treasure trove of old clothing and leftover merchandise dating from between the 1890s and the 1970s. The find included about 100 hats, which will be donated to the collections of the Newfoundland Museum. All told, Davis salvaged ten bags of clothing and hats to donate to the museum.

Curious history buffs are invited to tour the newly restored building and to look through old shop documents, photographs, postcards and letters. Visitors are also encouraged to make an appointment for a group demonstration, to sign up for upcoming workshops and classes, or to just stop by for an old fashioned cup of coffee and chat.

The editor of The Trident is grateful to Dale Jarvis and Leida Finlayson for their assistance in preparing this newsletter.