

# THE TRIDENT



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NEWFOUNDLAND HISTORIC TRUST

## 2010 Southcott Awards

The Newfoundland Historic Trust celebrated the rich built heritage of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador in presenting the 2010 Southcott Awards to five outstanding restoration projects at their 26th Annual Southcott Awards Ceremony, held at the Newman Wine Vaults Provincial Historic Site on the evening of Tuesday, June 29, 2010.

The Southcott Awards are named for one of Newfoundland's most important nineteenth century building firms, J. & J.T. Southcott. J.T.'s architect son, John (1853-1939), made his mark with the Second Empire design style of the Southcott properties at Park Place on Rennie's Mill Road, St. John's. This "Southcott style" was prominent in the rebuilding that followed the Great Fire of 1892, and spread throughout the colony.

The Newfoundland Historic Trust established the Southcott Awards program in 1984 to recognize excellence in the preservation and adaptive reuse of the architectural heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador. The awards commend the work of passionate individuals, families, organizations, corporations and governments who work to preserve our province's built heritage.

The Trust would like to extend its thanks to the 2010 Southcott committee: Robyn Pike (Chair), Bonnie Andrews, Karen Follett, Ben Jesseau, Sherri Kelly, Greg Locke, Jennifer Newbury, Deborah O'Rielly, and Leslie Pierce. Thanks also to our emcee Sheilagh O'Leary and congratulations to Shawn Kavanagh, recipient of this year's Leida Finlayson Memorial Scholarship. Finally, a thank you to our sponsors for all their support:



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The Newfoundland Historic Trust is a membership-driven organization dedicated to the preservation of the built heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador through research, advocacy, and education. For further information, please phone (709) 739-9605, email [coordinator@historictrust.ca](mailto:coordinator@historictrust.ca) or visit our website at [www.historictrust.ca](http://www.historictrust.ca)

# STELLA BURRY COMMUNITY SERVICES

## Phases I & II

**84 Prescott Street and 142 Military Road, St. John's**  
**Recipient: Stella Burry Community Services**

Stella Burry Community Services in St. John's works to provide affordable housing and skill development programs in the community. Their development at Rawlins Cross reconstructed a



St. John's landmark, WJ Murphy, at 142 Military Road and a 1950s-era commercial building on the opposite corner at 84 Prescott Street, with a design more closely reflecting the traditional design of the original buildings on these sites.



Both buildings required new construction due to structural issues, but architect Ron Fougere & Associates reconstructed them to reflect the style original buildings on the sites including round top dormers, windows and doors. Prince Charles dedicated a plaque to the building during his 2009 visit to Newfoundland.

## SLADE HOUSE

**Trinity**

**Recipients: John & Janet O'Dea**

Originally the residence of the manager of the Lester-Garland business, Slade House in Trinity was built sometime in the 1840s and is a third-generation Trinity house of balloon construction. When John and Janet O'Dea purchased the property, it had been abandoned for twenty years.



The restoration work, including all windows, storms and doors that were made by hand, was carried out by Colin Hayter and Lester Cooper in the traditional style of the original construction. The house and the grounds were completely restored over an eleven-year period.

# ALL SAINTS ANGLICAN CHURCH/ENGLISH HARBOUR ARTS CENTRE

**English Harbour, Trinity Bay**

**Recipient: English Harbour Arts Association**

All Saints Anglican Church was constructed in 1888/89 to seat two hundred parishioners and has been a landmark in the community ever since, from its position on a slope overlooking the community and the ocean. Prior to the restoration, the church was in need of a new roof and clapboard and the tower was badly rotted and needed to be rebuilt. Water was leaking into the building. The stone foundation was stabilized and inside an acoustic tile ceiling was removed revealing the full beauty of the beams and arches.

English Harbour Arts Association took on the restoration project and the English Harbour landmark is now used as an arts centre with studios, delivering arts programming to the community.



## GARRICK THEATRE

**Bonavista**

**Recipient: Bonavista Historic Townscape Foundation**



The Garrick Theatre on Church Street in Bonavista was built in 1945 by John and F. Gordon Bradley as a movie theater and attached to the Bonavista Mutual Traders Building, also owned by Bradley. It is part of a proposed Registered Heritage District. The project was undertaken by the Bonavista Historic Townscape Foundation and architect Beaton Sheppard with the objective to restore the building as a theater and live performance space for the community.

The building was in very bad condition and the interior had to be completely gutted and rebuilt. An extension was added to the rear of the building with a domed tower. New green heating, wiring, plumbing, roof, flooring and clapboard were installed and the seating was designed to reflect the original design and configuration.



# BONAVISTA MUTUAL TRADERS BUILDING

## Bonavista

**Recipient: David Bradley & Paula Downey**

The Bonavista Mutual Traders Building was built in 1938 by Heber Way for F. Gordon Bradley to serve as a retail outlet for his fishery and general supplies business. It was operated as a furniture and hardware store by Gordon Jr. between 1959 and 1973, and as a pub until 1980, when it was sold. The business closed in 2005 and David Bradley and Paula Downey purchased the building for the purposes of restoration.



Exterior restoration was completed entirely with private funds in 2006-2007. The building was in poor condition as a result of years of neglect. Original details and features were lost to renovations. The Bonavista Historical Society acquired the building in 2010 with the view to develop it as an intermission and reception space for the Garrick Theatre and the Bonavista Historic Townscape Foundation. Interior restoration is ongoing in 2010.

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## Greetings from the Editor

It is with great pleasure that I introduce myself as the new coordinator for the Newfoundland Historic Trust and editor of the *Trident*. I started full-time with the Trust on September 27th and am looking forward to the year ahead as we chart a course for the future of the Trust.

First I would like to acknowledge the accomplishments of our former coordinator, Leslie Pierce. Leslie undertook a massive amount of organization for the Trust, initiated some new events, developed a new website, and was very active with the Trust's advocacy work. The Board and I would like to thank Leslie for all her creative and hard work.

This year the Trust initiated a Slate Plate Speaker Series. Our first talk featured award-winning architect and author Robert Mellin who spoke about his about his forthcoming book, *Newfoundland Modern: Architecture in the Smallwood Era*. The second talk featured geographers Chris Sharpe and Jo Shawyer on the topic of occupied St. John's and the wartime landscape.

Trust board members were also actively involved in the coordination of the Heritage Canada Foundation's 37th annual conference, "Revitalize! Economic Renewal, Quality of Life. Heritage Buildings." The 4-day conference took place in St. John's and saw over 250 delegates from across Canada and beyond.

This year the Newman Wine Vaults played host to its annual Napoleon Surrenders! event as well as Shakespeare by the Sea's "Classics by Candlelight," Tom Beckett's ever-popular port tastings, our Wine and Words series of book readings, and the Neighbourhood Strays Belly Dancing troupe. The Vaults also participated in three open house events: Windows on the West, Doors Open Days, and Culture Days. I'm pleased to announce that the Trust will be coordinating next year's Doors Open event.

I look forward to meeting members of NHT in the year to come and trust that the organization will have another successful year.

Regards,  
Ryan Davis

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### The Trident Fall 2010

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# Heritage News

## **Heritage Canada Foundation Appoints New Chair**

Our province's own David Bradley was recently elected chair of the Heritage Canada Foundation (HCF). The appointment came at the start of his second term with HCF, a registered charity dedicated to the preservation of Canada's historic places. David is an archivist at Memorial University's Maritime History Archive and a former president of the Newfoundland Historical Society. He is the founding and current chair of the Association of Heritage Industries and sits on the board of the Newfoundland Quarterly Foundation.

## **St. John's Ecclesiastical District recognized by Canadian Government**

On behalf of the Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of the Environment and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, Senator Fabian Manning unveiled a plaque from the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada commemorating the national historic significance of the St. John's Ecclesiastical District.

"The cultural landscape of the St. John's Ecclesiastical District with its incredible architecture and the unusual proximity of the ecclesiastical buildings and their associated spaces clearly depicts the role religious denominations played in shaping the educational system and of a way of life and ideas in St. John's and Newfoundland during the 19th and 20th century," said Senator Manning.

The area is representative of cultural traditions, a way of life and ideas important in Newfoundland, particularly the development of the denominational system of education. The district is composed of separate nodes containing buildings and spaces associated with the Roman Catholic, Anglican, United, and Presbyterian denominations. Portions of the district are associated with Bishop Feild and Bishop Fleming, two persons of national historic significance.

## **Plans for \$6 million upgrade to Bannerman Park**

St. John's city council has been asked to help initiate a campaign that will invest in the restoration of Bannerman Park, considered one of the oldest park in Newfoundland and Labrador. The council has endorsed the incorporation of the Bannerman Park Foundation Inc. and its quest for charitable status. At a council meeting on November 22, Deputy Mayor Shannie Duff explained that the cost for the launch event and associated promotion of the Foundation will be \$15,000. The council agreed to cover these costs. Further, the city will match funding on a 50/50, project by project basis in accordance with Council's policy. The plan to invest in the restoration is estimated to cost about \$6 million and will include refurbishments of the swimming facilities, park amenities and replacement of the bandstand. According to CBC news, Duff said a new bandstand would be preferable because it would offer better acoustics for musical performances and a more suitable venue for different types of performances. However this has sparked debate and an online petition has been mounted to save the pre-Confederation bandstand.

## **Heritage Project Launched on Great Northern Peninsula**

The Department of Tourism, Culture and Recreation has launched a pilot project on the Great Northern Peninsula to help community-based heritage organizations build their capacity, improve operations and services to residents and visitors, and better promote the region's heritage attractions as a collective experience. The Provincial Government, through the heritage component of the Cultural Economic Development Program (CEDP) has committed \$205,000 for this three-year pilot project, dubbed the Heritage Cluster Pilot Project.

## Submissions

Whether we like it or not, we are all directly affected by municipal decisions. Most will agree that it's important for citizens to be engaged, but this engagement often comes in reaction to decisions instead of influencing those decisions. The key question is how to build proactive citizen engagement – where people can come together to discuss important issues and work together toward finding reasonable solutions. It's clear that there's an appetite for this type of engagement here in St. John's.

# YOUR CITY YOUR IDEAS

Submitted by Dave Lane

This past Saturday, October 30th, between 50 and 60 people came together at City Hall to discuss municipal issues in a free-form dialogue session called "Your City, Your Ideas." Hosted by Happy City, and Bui Petersen of the Centre for Negotiation and Dialogue (<http://www.cnad.ca/>), the forum began with a brainstorming session where participants were encouraged to propose topics for discussion. Anyone could announce a topic they wanted to discuss, and then post it to a bulletin board called the "Market Place." Afterward, participants were free to organize the topics into an agenda and break off into groups of their choosing. The topics discussed were diverse, ranging from "Planning and Development" and "Transportation Within and Into the City," to "Local Currency" and "Energy Independence."



While this organic approach to dialogue surprised some in attendance, most participants were pleased with the productive and wide-ranging discussions. Many groups had "subject matter experts," which helped make sessions lively and informative. There were several decision-makers and opinion leaders in attendance, including a few City councilors and representatives from the Board of Trade. All groups

were encouraged to take notes and propose follow-up actions to help guide further discussions. This dialogue session represents the first public gathering of what Happy City intends to be a long-running series of discussions for citizens of St. John's. The aim is to help citizens' voices to be heard at City Hall and potentially the direction of municipal issues.

*To find out more visit [www.happycity.ca](http://www.happycity.ca)*

## **BUILDINGS AT RISK**

Places matter to people. We all know of buildings and homes that have importance for one reason or another. Buildings remind us of outstanding people, events, and times in the history of our communities. Buildings are also valued as places for the day to day activities of a community. Many of these buildings continue to matter but are in need of repair.

Buildings at Risk is a visual collection of some of Newfoundland and Labrador's endangered structures, released on Heritage Day. Since the list was compiled in 2009, a number of the properties have been restored.

If you would like to nominate a building at risk, please send us the location of the property, a brief description of its value to the community, and a few details about its current condition. If possible send along a photo. Buildings at Risk will be announced on Heritage Day, February 15, 2011.

*Send nominations to [coordinator@historictrust.ca](mailto:coordinator@historictrust.ca), to NHT's mailing address, or phone (709) 739-7870*

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

*The Trident* is the quarterly publication of the Newfoundland Historic Trust and is distributed to our members and subscribers. We accept short articles pertaining to the built, architectural, cultural and natural heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador, historic sites and monuments, preservation reports, book reviews, and other matters of interest to those in heritage-related fields. Specific studies or reports on buildings and their use in the province are encouraged. We also accept event notices from other heritage, nonprofit, and community organizations.

Articles should be 500-1000 words with the exception of event and program notices. Please e-mail all submissions to [coordinator@historictrust.ca](mailto:coordinator@historictrust.ca) with the article attached as a text (.txt), Microsoft Word (.doc), or Word Perfect (.wpd) file. Also attach any photographs you may wish to accompany the article in .jpg format (300 dpi). Articles are also accepted by mail. Please send a hard copy and The Trident, P.O. Box 2403, St. John's, NL, Canada, A1C 6E7.

Signal Hill is a national icon. The prospect of its timeless rock formations, its ponds, woods and meadows laid waste for expensive housing developments would likely raise the hackles of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians everywhere. Surprisingly, this wasn't the case for a majority of St. John's City Councillors who voted in September to approve an eight-unit housing sub-division right beside Deadman's Pond. It appeared that the Save Our Signal Hill (SOS) citizens' group who organized after the fact to halt the development were facing a serious challenge — the horse, as it were, had already left the stable.

Nevertheless, the group forged ahead. To raise awareness, a press conference was called to outline the group's objectives and announce a public rally at the proposed development site on Sunday, October 17th. The rally attracted a couple of hundred concerned citizens. Councillors Sheilagh O'Leary and Deputy Mayor Shannie Duff, who voted against the development, addressed the crowd, as did Signal Hill-Quidi Vidi MHA Lorraine Michael.

However, it was the diligence and historic memory of citizens Art Murphy and Lloyd Kelly which prevailed in the end. These two gentlemen did some digging in the city archives and the provincial registry of deeds and uncovered documentation that ultimately convinced the city solicitor that the proposed development area was likely Crown Land. To date, there has been no attempt by the purported landowner or the developers to repudiate that finding. This resulted in Council voting unanimously to rescind its approval at the November 8th meeting.



# Save Our Signal Hill

Submitted by the Save Our Signal Hill citizen's group

SOS has since declared its intention of working with municipal and provincial governments to have the area surrounding Signal Hill National Historic Park declared open space in perpetuity. As Lorraine Michael stated at the SOS rally: "Signal Hill isn't an important spot because there's a national park here; on the contrary, a national park is here because this is an important spot."

# *Below the Bridge:* an audio book experience of St. John's lost South Side

## Review by Susan Rendell

In the war years of the last century, a young girl growing up across the harbour from St. John's said to her mother, "Wouldn't it be nice if someone wrote about the South Side?" The girl was Helen Fogwill Porter, voracious reader and aspiring author. She would become the person who "wrote about the South Side," in the Newfoundland classic *Below the Bridge*, a memoir of her childhood and adolescence in the dirty '30s and booming '40s.

First published by Breakwater in 1979, *Below the Bridge* has recently been released as an unabridged audio book by local audio producer Rattling Books. Porter's memoir is highly suited to the oral treatment; her style and the nature of the material both have their roots in a culture noted for its strong oral tradition.

The South Side of St. John's, or "below the bridge," was a tightly knit community of families which had its own identity apart from that of the capital city across the harbour. In the late 1950s and early '60s, the physical structure of that community—houses, piers, merchants' premises, shops, church, etc.—was razed to the ground so the capital city's harbour could be extended. It was post-Confederation Newfoundland and progress was king. A blind king.

The South Siders were among the earliest victims of resettlement: families were suddenly deprived of the roofs over their heads, and, worse, of the cat's cradle of community which had supported them for generations. The blind king swept all before him, including the community's church, its rectory and parish hall. Built in the mid eighteenth hundreds, St. Mary the Virgin was situated well away from the area marked for harbour construction.

In the process of destroying St. Mary's, the grave of Shawnadithit, the last of Newfoundland's indigenous Beothuk, was lost. As Porter notes in her memoir, "History was wiped out by a few hours' demolition work." The South Side became a grave itself, of the homes and the culture of the people who had lived there.

But unlike Shawnadithit, the longshoremen, midwives, fortune tellers, merchants, shopkeepers, "fallen women," sailors and housewives of the 1930s and '40s who lived on the South Side have a living memorial. In *Below the Bridge*, you can smell the "tarry ropes," the sweat of the black horses who drew funeral processions, the Jeyes Fluid and the inevitable Sunday roast. Taste, sound and texture are also well represented. Porter has rebuilt the demolished living and working spaces of the South Side, and she takes the reader into them and into the rich and sometimes fantastical lives of their inhabitants.

I recently spoke with Porter about the genesis of her book over several cups of tea at her downtown St. John's home. Porter told me she started writing as a child. "But I'd never write about the South Side. I wrote about English boarding schools, or I'd write mysteries set in the States." Real life—"real writing"—happened elsewhere, she said. But Porter was destined to be among those authors who helped change that perception. She would become one of the pioneers who began the process of hacking out a place for their own culture and its people in the literary landscape.

Initially, Porter intended *Below the Bridge* to be her first novel, but Harold Horwood convinced her to make it a memoir. Horwood had been a longshoreman, Porter told me, and was "intimately familiar" with the other side of the harbour. She and Horwood would get together and talk about her writing. "'It's the South Side, don't change it,' he said. 'I know the South Siders—you've got to get the smell of the tarry ropes in there.'"

Porter's desire to write a novel and Horwood's advice to make it a memoir instead resulted in something that's not quite either. Her gift for writing fiction is evident in her re-creation of a place and time that actually existed: in *Below the Bridge*, Porter uses her abilities as a writer of fiction to make the common weave of everyday life into the stuff of romance. Not Harlequin, either. In his oration praising Porter's work on the occasion of her receiving an honorary doctorate from Memorial University of Newfoundland in 1997, Dr. William Pryse-Phillips made the following observation: "When Helen Porter writes of resettlement and the harbour, of war and the Dardanelles, of dream figures and death, of the Salvation Army and yeast cakes, of rowing to Fort Amherst and glowing at Fort Pepperell, her characters do not resemble those in *Chatelaine* or in *People* magazine; they are not over-painted models, pigments of the imagination; they are us. And even if their experiences are not the stuff of epics, by dissecting them free from a worldly background she portrays the fabric of a congregation, a community, a culture; the which, to define operatively, is near-genius."

