



# The Old Train Station News

Newsletter #63

May 2014



(Photo of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, St. Joseph's, circa 1923)

An amusing blooper in an old edition of New Glasgow's *Eastern Chronicle* is a stark reminder of the scarcity and the gradual disappearance of particular remnants of the old Scottish culture in this area. At one time it was common to see the Gaelic inscription 'Tigh Dhe' above the entrance of a church; today that is rare. Sometimes the lettering was found inside, high above the altar, a gentle reminder that this was the House of God.

The article, published in June of 1919, details an "auto run" from New Glasgow through some scenic sections of Pictou, Antigonish and Guysborough Counties. This was the early days of the automobile and drivers shared the roads with the horse and carriage. Highways were dirt roads, often rough and impassible (especially during the winter season and the muddy seasons), but this was summertime and the roads were relatively "pleasing" according to the *Chronicle* reporter.

The day was fine, the vehicle was a "modern and excellent touring car," and the chauffeur was "a master of the wheel." The host was an unnamed "legal gentleman". Invited on this so-called "holiday" were a minister, an elder and the aforementioned reporter. The company was varied and the conversation was engaging.

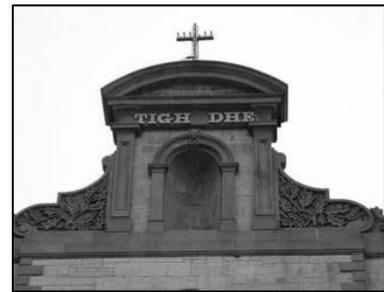
The reporter, relegated to the back seat of that fine automobile, was most observant. He took notice of some road repairs on the outskirts of New Glasgow, the idyllic countryside, the "happy, comfy" homes that dotted the roadsides, and the comfortable farmsteads with their vast green acreages.

Everything was pronounced to be “pleasing.” On and on they went, past Barney’s River, Kenzieville, Marshy Hope, James River, Beaver Meadow and on towards St. Joseph’s – where the self-professed “scribe” made his blunder.

“The fine Roman Catholic church at St. Joseph’s occupies a commanding position and is surrounded by well-kept hedges,” wrote the reporter. “The Gaelic word over the door is ‘Tighdhu.’” Three weeks later, a correction appeared in the paper. Apparently, a reader in Halifax had contacted the paper advising that the inscription must have been misspelled for, in Gaelic, ‘tigh’ is house and ‘dhu’ is black. An enquiry was quickly dispatched to a Mr. Ronald MacDonald, a merchant at Ohio, who wrote back informing the well-meaning folks at the *Eastern Chronicle* that “the words on the church are ‘Tigh Dhe’ meaning God’s House.”

By the late nineteenth century, Gaelic was still the language of use in many homes and parishes in Northeastern Nova Scotia but English was rapidly making inroads. At the time of this story, Gaelic was still commonly spoken, especially in the rural areas. “It first began to disappear in Pictou County,” wrote Ray MacLean in *Beyond The Atlantic Roar*. Because of its close proximity to Halifax, Pictou County was more easily influenced by the English language. This may explain the blunder of the New Glasgow reporter.

It’s interesting to note that ‘taigh’ (not ‘tigh’) is the correct modern spelling for ‘house.’ When we look up the word ‘tigh’ in Edward Dwelly’s *Illustrated Gaelic-English Dictionary*, we are promptly directed to the word ‘taigh.’ Retired St. F. X. University Celtic Studies professor Catriona Parsons (who now works with the province’s Office of Gaelic Affairs) explains that ‘tigh’ is an older written form still in use in Dwelly’s day (the beginning of the twentieth century). “Most likely, ‘tigh’ began to be spelled ‘taigh’ because of pronunciation issues,” she clarifies. Thus, when we see the word spelled ‘tigh,’ we know that the inscription itself is dated. High above the main entrance of St. Ninian’s Cathedral, between the two towers, we find that very inscription – a reminder of the sincere devotion of the early Scottish builders.



To conclude our story, the lawyer and his lively entourage continued on through Lochaber, Goshen, and then back through the valley of South River, past Loch Katrine, onwards to St. Andrews and right into Antigonish. After supper in town, they headed back out to Barney’s River, where they crossed over to the shore road, past Merigomish harbour and, finally, back home to New Glasgow. All the while, a running commentary was kept on the well-tilled farms, the splendid homes and the obvious prosperity found in these rural communities. The tour had proven to be, as their host had promised at the onset, “the prettiest run to be found anywhere” and a day to be remembered.

With regards to the reporter’s obvious mistake, the *Eastern Chronicle* was most grateful for the correction and noted that the reporter would probably have “caught the spelling aright” if the vehicle had been travelling at a moderate speed.

Catherine MacGillivray



## Recent Acquisitions

- Thank you to **Ron McConnell** for a lovely framed Ron Hazell watercolor of the train station at Antigonish.
- **Bart Sears of Antigonish** donated a copy of his newly released book, **Sporting Memories**, to the museum.

## Upcoming Public Lecture

On June 13, Deborah Trask will be at the People's Place Library to speak on the significance of gravestones in a talk entitled "Remember Me as You Pass By: The Lure and Lore of Gravestones." This event is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. and is free. All are invited.

1-888-258-5595  
pfraser@fraserhoyt.com

Peter Fraser  
"We work closely with our clients to develop insurance solutions."

*Hon. Peter MacKay*  
*MP for Central Nova*

in support and appreciation of the  
Antigonish Heritage Museum

863-7005 peter.mackay.c2@parl.gc.ca  
www.petermackay.ca

**RON MacGILLIVRAY**  
CHEV BUICK GMC

75 St Andrews Street, Antigonish 863-2803  
www.ronmacgillivraychev.com

*Thank you*

**Central**  
An outstanding selection of Building Materials,  
Home Improvement, Garden & Landscape  
Products at the Lowest Prices Everyday.

**STELLARTON**  
60 Lawrence Blvd. (beside the Holiday Inn)  
**755-2555**

**ANTIGONISH**  
35 Market Street (across from SuperStore)  
**863-6882**

ALSO IN SYDNEY, WINDSOR, INVERNESS,  
GUYSBOROUGH & PORT HAWKESBURY.  
[www.centralns.ca](http://www.centralns.ca)

*We deliver to your home or job site six days  
a week from sun-up to sun-down!!!*

**Real Estate Purchases & Sales**  
James C. MacIntosh • Meghan E. MacGillivray Case  
jim@macandmac.ca meg@macandmac.ca

**MacIntosh & MacGillivray**  
Barristers, Solicitors & Notaries Public

*Real Estate ~ Incorporations ~ Wills  
Estates ~ Family Law*

33 Greening Dr., Antigonish  
**863-4805** Fax: 863-8086

## Heritage Association of Antigonish

### Learning Events

For June, we're planning an outing to the **Fraser's Mills Fish Hatchery**. Stephen Thibodeau will provide a history and a tour of the fish hatchery. This will be a car pooling event. Details to follow.

On October 6, **Bruce MacDonald** will give a talk on **The Nova Scotian Units in The Great War**.

Look forward to our **Summer Ceilidh with Karen Beaton** (and guest performers) each Thursday evening during July and August. Admission \$8.00. Limited seating. Details to follow.

## Message from the Chair – Heritage Association of Antigonish

(Working today to preserve yesterday for tomorrow.)

As I compose my message for this month, the weather here at Williams Point is still rather cool, to say the least. The positive is that when I am working on one of my many volunteer activities, I know I am not missing a nice day.

With the assistance of funding from the province's Student Career Skills Development Program, we are pleased to announce that our work will continue on the Memories Project. The Association hired Mathew Howard who is now in the process of updating our list of interviewees. If any of our readers know the name of a candidate that should be interviewed, please contact the Museum at 863-6160 and speak to Matthew.

I would like to thank Michel Samson, Cape Breton-Richmond MLA and Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Minister, for recognizing the importance of this program and making scarce financial resources available to support this important program.

I would also like to thank our local MLA Randy Delorey and his office for their assistance in securing funding from this program for our Associations.

Last month, I attended the annual Culloden Ceremony and was speaking to Bill MacVivar, one of the active leaders of the Culloden Cairn Committee. We spoke briefly about the repairs to the cairn. It was learned that they were a little short on funds needed to repair the foundation that supports the cairn. The Heritage Association of Antigonish Board of Directors subsequently passed a motion to provide funds for the repairs and a check was sent to Bill. Recently, the Association was in receipt of a letter thanking us for our financial support and informing us that the much needed repairs would be completed this summer.

Your financial support provides the resources we need to finance our share of the costs of the summer student and allows us to take actions as outlined above. We are appreciative of this support and thank you.

Until next, Take Care and God Bless.

Angus MacGillivray, BBA FCGA    [angus.macgillivray@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:angus.macgillivray@ns.sympatico.ca)