

The Old Train Station News

Newsletter #67

September 2014

Summer is now just a happy memory. In August, our daughter came home to get married. Needless to say, June, July and August (and some of the preceding months) were wrapped up with a multitude of wedding preparations, hence my three month hiatus. Helen is every bit the take-charge kind of girl but she lives in Calgary so much of her planning was via e-mail, text, phone, facetime – and, of course, Mom.

Helen's wedding wasn't your typical east-coast celebration. Her husband was born in Canada, has lived in the western world much of his life and is a graduate of St. F. X. University (yes, that's where they met in a Business Management class) but he's of Indian descent. You guessed it! All of Rana's relatives and friends from India, Singapore, Ohio, Boston and Ontario came dressed in their finest Indian attire. Colorful saris, scarves, bangles and bindis (not to mention a classical Indian dance by a professional dancer) will, undoubtedly, lend an element of the exotic to any occasion, let alone a small town Maritime wedding.

According to plan, we held our traditional celebration on Saturday and the groom's family hosted their Indian ceremony on Sunday complete with henna, more beautiful saris, bindis and bangles as well as traditional Indian wedding garb for the men (with lots of red scarves), processions, seven walks around the fire, Indian music and a banquet of fine Indian cuisine. What a wonderful, once-in-a-lifetime, experience!

Not to bore you with more wedding details but I do want to share just one telling anecdote. On Monday, at still another gathering, one of the Indian ladies revealed the curiosity and trepidation with which some of the guests had travelled (such a long distance) to be part of this wedding. They understood that they were coming to a small place and, consequently, they were a tad apprehensive as to how they would be received. Would the people of Antigonish be open to their culture and their differences? Now that the festivities were all but over, Indira couldn't help but confide how relieved and how delighted they were by the warm welcome they had received – not just from Helen's family and friends but from members of the local community. They were struck by the number of people who stopped them in the supermarkets, the shops and in the street to ask if they were here for the MacGillivray/Varma wedding – and then to welcome them to Antigonish. "Your warmth and inclusivity is very touching," she concluded. But then, what else would you expect from folks here in Antigonish?

Amid the color, ceremony and fanfare of the church wedding on Saturday, a lone piper stood on the crest of the cathedral hill, a little removed from the milling crowd, his notes a beautiful backdrop to this obvious display of cultures. A nod to her Scottish heritage, Helen had hired a piper and, needless to say, Scott Williams delivered well.

Speaking of pipers, piping, Scottish music and our local culture, the museum is thrilled to announce that it recently acquired a considerable amount of piping material from the collection of the late Capt. Iain Millington of Truro who passed away in 2010. Millington, a collector and a piper of some renown, amassed an impressive library of piping music over his lifetime (most of it carefully indexed), including some that is ancient, unpublished, forgotten or rarely heard. (His reach was world-wide with regards to his connections to the piping community.) This valuable collection of books (some quite rare), sheet music, information on artists and composers, reference material, letters of correspondence, travel souvenirs and memorabilia will be housed at the museum and made available to the piping community.



Here we see Martin MacDonald of Antigonish playing the chanter while checking out some of the tunes of this comprehensive collection. *(Photo credit: Betty Cameron)*

To celebrate the arrival of Millington's collected works, the Museum is hosting a performance on the Antigonish Heritage Museum grounds on September 28 at 1:00 p.m. featuring the old Scotia Pipe Band and the Antigonish Highland Society Pipe Band. The weatherman is predicting

“sunny and warm” for Sunday so we’re hoping for a good turn-out. Come out and join us.

Warm wishes from all of us here at the Museum.

Catherine MacGillivray

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Next month is Halloween. Do you have any local stories of ghosts, goblins or forerunners to share with us?

Recent Acquisitions

What is it?



Leo “Boots” Chisholm recently brought in an object that leaves us rather puzzled. This artefact belonged to Leo’s father who was a charter member of the Antigonish Golf Club. Was it an award? Was it something given to all charter members? We’re hoping that one of our golf enthusiasts will be able to help us.

- Thank you to **Ellen MacPherson and Garry Fidler-MacPherson** for an assortment of materials from the Judge Hugh MacPherson Collection including the Minutes for the Antigonish Liberal Association (1928 – 1954) and samples of handles and pins used to decorate burial caskets.
- **Scott Williams** brought in a collection of family papers, genealogy, published material, histories and other ephemera.
- **Paula MacDonald** donated a sick call set that came from the Buster Crispo family. It dates back to probably the 1930s or 1940s. In the olden days, when the elderly and the infirmed were cared for at home, this set would be opened when the parish priest came to anoint the sick.

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Visitors to the Museum



Raymond Bombardier and his wife, Kathy, of Milford, Massachusetts, were recent visitors to the Museum where they tried out our new seating.

Raymond is a descendant of Joseph Bonvie (b. 1875 and child of Simon Bonvie and Marie Delorey) from the Merland district.

During his visit, Raymond was able to tour local cemeteries and participate in Mass at St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church, Tracadie, where he met distant relatives.



Visitors come from all over. Here Museum Board Member, Bart Sears, welcomes **Miriam Gillis of Pleasant Valley** and her mother, **Sally Beaton of Mabou**, to the Museum. Sally is a spry 98 year old who enjoys an opportunity to visit friends and family.

Heritage Association of Antigonish

Museum Ceilidhs

Our summer ceilidhs were so popular that we're planning to continue them during the coming months. Our next gathering, scheduled for October 30 at 7:00 p.m., will have a Remembrance Day theme and will feature some great oldies to commemorate World War I. Entertainment will be by Karen Beaton, Joanne Bouchard and friends.

Seating is limited so we will be selling tickets in advance. Admission is \$8:00. Tickets are now available at the museum.

Learning Events

- On October 6, at 7:00 p.m., **Bruce MacDonald** will discuss "Nova Scotia Non-combat Units in the Great War (including the Hospital Units, the Forestry Unit and the Construction Unit)."
- On November 10, **Fraser Dunn** will present "A Tribute to the Sisters of St. Martha."

Patrons Program

Thank you to the following patron:

- Silver: **Victoria Bornheimer of Cumberland, Maine**

Thank you to the following for their monetary contributions:

- **Matt Howard**
- **Beth and Jeff Parker of Lyghtesome Gallery**
- **Richard Whitney of Duxbury, Massachusetts**

We'd like to welcome the following new members:

- **Robert MacIsaac of Malignant Cove**
- **Richard and Monica Harrison Baraboo, Wisconsin**

Message from the Chair – Heritage Association of Antigonish (Working today to preserve yesterday for tomorrow.)

Our Annual General Meeting for the Association is scheduled for September 28, 2014 at 12:15 PM.

When one reflects on the fiscal period April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014, one would have to acknowledge that it was another banner year.

- The Heritage Association of Antigonish was able to hire a summer student who worked on interviewing seniors for the “Antigonish Memory Project”.
- A major financial contribution was made to the Museum’s renovation project.
- The Heritage Association delivered numerous learning events throughout this period including a number of Ceilidhs.

It is important that members take the time to attend this meeting as it is an opportunity to provide feedback to the Board. It is hoped that you will attend.

Until next, Take Care and God Bless.

Angus MacGillivray, BBA FCGA angus.macgillivray@ns.sympatico.ca

September, 1909

A clipping from the September 16, 1909 edition of *The Casket* advertises pears, plums and peaches at C. B. Whidden & Sons. In fact, Whidden & Sons had ten half-barrels of the “choicest eating pears for sale cheap.” It was clearly the harvest season and Bonner’s claimed to have the best pickling vinegar, spice, onions and tomatoes on hand.

Thomas Somers was advertising Timothy and clover seed for fall sowing and Bonner’s was promising the highest price for good clean oats and “highest cash price” for sheep and lamb pelts.

Among the private advertisers, Dan R. MacGillivray of Maryvale had a level-tread threshing mill, in good running order, selling cheap.

Whidden & Sons were making every effort to market their fifty half-barrels of fat No. 1 July herring. Not to be outdone, Bonner’s claimed that their herring was the best – “guaranteed or return.” Bonner’s also had Newfoundland dry cod for sale.

Back then, gasoline could be purchased by the gallon or cask at Bonner’s.

In case some poor child was still without school supplies, Bonner’s had lots of scribblers, pens and ink at low prices.