

Townships Life & Culture: Past, Present, and Future



Melbourne area photo by Yves Boisclair

Fair-stravaganza! Everything you need to know about the Richmond Fair

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Remembering music legend Johnny O. Toole p.13

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The Townships Sun

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Canada 

Fire

By Mead Baldwin

Summer in Baldwin's Mills was a great place in the sixties. There were lots of teenagers like me around, to play softball, Capture the Flag, water ski, or just go swimming. There were five of us in our immediate family, and I had 12 first cousins just on my Dad's side. With four Patterson children, and two May cousins we were quite a crew.

An annual event was my Uncle Keith's corn boil, usually on Labour Day weekend, and it marked the end of the season. My cousins returned to the city, and we headed back to school. It was the final fling before the return of everyday routine. At the corn boil we told stories, played horseshoes, hid in the bushes for kick the can, and roasted marshmallows. One year we even had a competition to see who could hold a headstand for the longest time (I was the winner as I recall). The adults drank wine and talked politics.

That particular afternoon while we were finishing a softball game, and preparing for a swim to cool off, Uncle Keith drove up. Someone had seen smoke at Mud Pond. Fire had always been a community problem for us, and we were used to helping put out grass fires and the like. Gary Patterson and I volunteered to check it out so he drove us up Haskell Road, and left us there while he went for reinforcements. We got out to hike through the woods to Mud Pond, a small body of water with no roads nearby, which had come by it's name honestly.

As I recall we had an old pail and a shovel between us. Gary knew the way better than me, so I followed his lead. Soon we could smell smoke. We started to run and quickly reached the shore. We saw the marks of a campfire that some fool had made, and fire burning in a number of places. Imagine building a campfire on a bunch of pine needles, surrounding it with stones, and thinking it was safe.

Filling the pail was a difficult task because of the thick mud in the pond. It felt a bit like I imagine quicksand would feel, and our shoes kept coming off till we just went barefoot. Just when we thought we had put out one blaze, another would erupt nearby, having travelling through the pine needles to a new place. The shovel helped, but it was too much for two teenage boys to manage.

We were both glad when reinforcements showed up. Eventually someone from the Fish Hatchery arrived with a pump and a hose. Even so, we were there for hours. Finally it was time to go home. A neighbour drove Gary and I and my cousin Nancy home, but we were covered in mud and soot.

Uncle Keith still has his annual corn boil. Horseshoes are a tradition. Last year we played frisbee football and bocce as well. A new generation of children are playing hide and seek. No one does headstands though. Still, I remember the year I never made it to the feast. Instead of roasting marshmallows at a campfire we were fighting one for real.

A strange footnote to the story... the neighbour who drove us home called my mom the next day. He said we had made a dirty mess of his back seat and wanted us to come by to clean his car. Even my mom was disgusted and we never went.

A community is not just games, parties and fun. It is also being there for each other, even fighting fires together. Gary and I were proud of the part we played, but it was no big deal really. Everyone did their bit. Instead of a campfire, we put out a real fire and helped make a new bond for those of us from Baldwin's Mills. What could have been a disaster ended up being just a fun memory, like the time we had to form a bucket brigade up the Pinnacle. That's a story for another day.



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Farmer Brown's Garden

By Kathleen Lynch

As a small child, my family and I lived on one side of my grandparents' big old farmhouse.

My grandfather was a market gardener. Many years ago he worked as head gardener at the Wales Home farm in Cleveland. He was provided with housing for his family and a salary. My grandmother helped in the kitchen at the Home, when help was needed.

In 1934, they bought the old Dresser home from George Dresser, located on Healy road in Cleveland.

Both my father and grandfather worked at Ewings' Chair Factory in Melbourne. My grandfather kept a big garden and sold fresh produce to local grocery stores.

My siblings and I helped in his garden to earn money for the Richmond Fair. He paid us a nickel a row. He was a hard task master, if we missed a weed, we had to go back over the row and check that we got them all. I was six years old when I started working in the garden.

One day when I was about nine years old, I had been working in the hot sun for a couple of hours and I was very tired. I came to a decision. I went to my grandfather and told him, "next year, I want a quarter a row. I work hard and I do a good job." "Well, we'll see what next year brings," said he.

We children waited anxiously for the day of the Fair to arrive. Finally, the big day was upon us. You must keep in mind, back in the forties and fifties the Fair was a big event for children in rural districts.

My mother packed a huge lunch consisting of plenty of delicious sandwiches, a huge homemade cake and best of all, big bottles of root beer and cream soda. We would help pack up everything, including a couple of blankets that we could spread out on the grass and have our picnic on. We'd pile everything on the double wagon and we were off.

Homer Webster was usually at the gate in those days. He was the janitor at our school so he knew we were a big family and often let us in free.

I remember having my little store of nickels rolled in a knot in my handkerchief.

I still fancy I can smell the aromas that came from the midway.

The big decision of the day was what to spend my fifty-five cents on. In the past week, I had to buy a pencil and some scribblers for school or I would have had over a dollar.

I met a couple of girls who were licking a candied apple on a stick. "I think I'll get one of those," I thought. Then I saw a child with cotton candy and that looked good. I ended up buying both and did not have enough left to go on a ride.

One of my sisters and I walked around until we were very tired. We went to find my mother, who was sitting in the shade with my two oldest sisters.

We finished up the food that was left from our picnic at noon time. We could hardly keep our eyes open.

Finally, my grandfather came and told us he was ready to go home, so we dragged the box we'd packed the lunch in and the blankets and made our way to the stables. I fell asleep on the way home. We were a tired, but happy group as we got ready for bed.

It was years after that I realised my mother would have been quite content to have had a quiet Saturday at home, but she went to all that trouble so that we could have an outing.

When next year rolled around, I said to my mother, "I asked for a quarter a row to work in the garden this year."

"I don't think you'll get it," she said.

One day, I saw my grandfather bringing the horse back from the field where he planted the garden. I went down to see how it was coming along and couldn't believe my eyes. He had made the rows the whole length of the garden, instead of the width.

I stomped back home and complained to my mother. "Well," she said, "maybe you'll learn to leave well enough alone." That was the end of me working in the garden.

Nature in Focus

By Susan C. Mastine

The inspiration for my ever-expanding series of photographs called “Nature in Focus” came from the David Suzuki Foundation’s annual 30x30 Nature Challenge. It encouraged Canadians to spend 30 minutes in nature every day for 30 days, with an invitation that read: “Want to get healthier, happier and smarter? Try adding a daily dose of nature to your routine.”

Access to nature is easy where I live in rural Kingsey Falls. I was, and continue to be, hooked.

A survey conducted before and after the Challenge revealed that the participants, “reported significant improvements in their moods, feeling more vitality and

energy, with large increases in nature-specific emotions like awe, curiosity, and fascination.”

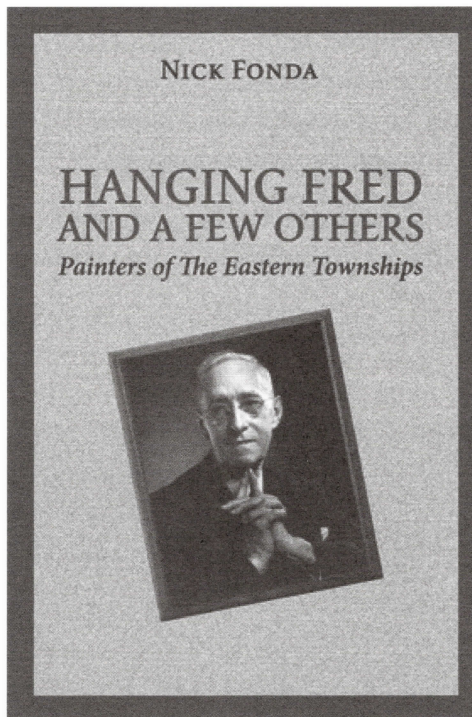
As a result of this exercise, I have become more aware of the sometimes astonishing beauty, the subtle changes, the amazing textures and patterns, and the mesmerizing play of light in nature—a delight to observe and a challenge to capture through the camera lens.

Spending time outside, camera at hand, every day, rain or shine, has become second nature to me. I see stunning sights like these in fields, pastures, forests, meadows, gardens, even in the barnyard...



Hanging Fred and a Few Others, in Richmond

By Richmond County Historical Society



a small art gallery and rents studio space to musicians and visual artists, as well as to community groups.

“The event we’re co-hosting this year,” said RCHS president Beverly Taber Smith, “is an Art Gala which will be held in Richmond on Sunday, September 28. It’s a unique event because it brings together both literature and art. We’ll be holding a reception, from 5:00 to 7:00 at which we’ll have a book signing and an art auction.”

If the event is unique, its origins are similarly unusual and can be traced back to the RCHS production of *Café & Coburn*. Nick Fonda did much of the research for the presentation and all of the writing. The new material he discovered on the Eastern Townships’ most famous painter eventually led him to write his third book, a work of non-fiction entitled *Hanging Fred and a Few Others*, published by Baraka Books of Montreal. The book’s subtitle, *Painters of the Eastern Townships*, reveals that the shock of the first word in the title is really a double-entendre. The hanging

Over the last few years, the Richmond County Historical Society has initiated a number of fundraising events which have also served to contribute to both cultural awareness and cultural expression. The society, in the past three years, mounted a memorable multi-media presentation on the life and art of Frederick Simpson Coburn, preserved local history in a time vault, and commissioned a sculpture evocative of the area’s history, and involved the community in a visual arts project that culminated in the sale of over 100 small works of art, most of which were created locally.

Perhaps no one should be surprised that the Society’s fundraiser this year is a celebration and a promotion of the arts. It is a joint project with the Centre d’Art de Richmond, like the RCHS, a local non-profit organization although one which operates a music school and annually presents as many as three dozen shows in its concert hall. It also houses



Coburn picnic photo

All photos courtesy of Richmond County Historical Society

is of paintings—those of Fred Coburn for the lucky (and wealthy) few— but also those of other artists, and in this information-rich book, Fonda introduces the reader to 13 other painters who call (or called) the Townships home. Of the 13, two were approximate contemporaries of Coburn and 10 are still active.

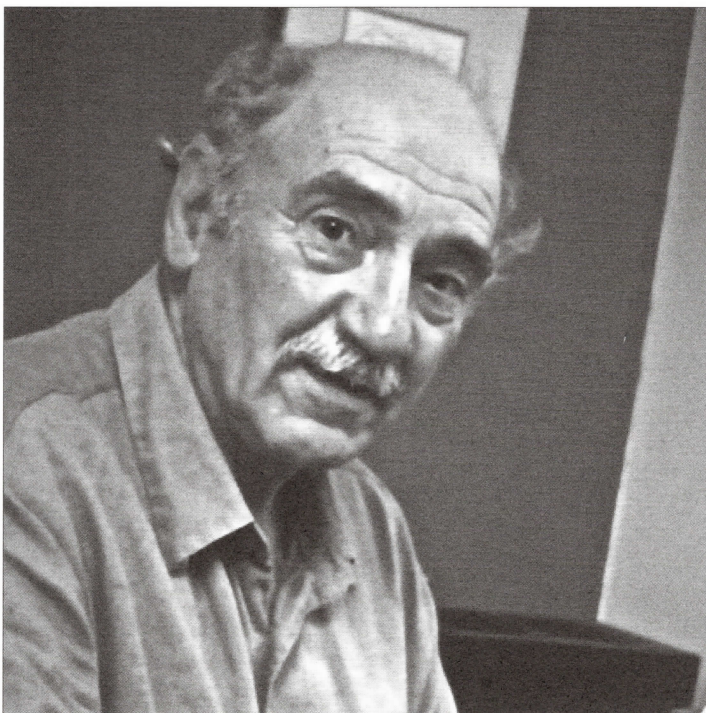
Hanging Fred and a Few Others is a curious but very successful juxtaposition of the past and the present, the old and the new, the famous and less famous, the representational and the abstract. At one moment Fonda has the reader exploring the relationship between painting and religion (who even knew the two are linked!), and on the next chapter he is passing on gossip which is almost as juicy now as it was 80 years ago. The book's 26 chapters alternate back and forth between its main subject and the other 13 painters, all woven together not only by the most unexpected of comparisons and contrasts but also by Fonda's seamless prose.

Fonda's treatment of Coburn is at once respectful (he frequently quotes from or refers to Evelyn Lloyd Coburn's self-published *Beyond the Landscape*) and revelatory. His biography of Coburn focuses largely on the sixth decade of the artist's life, the years following his wife's death. Fonda dispels the myth that Coburn was romantically involved with his favourite model, the dramatic dancer Carlotta,

and then reveals that the artist was emotionally involved with a completely other attractive young woman. As if to dispel any possibility that this story might be fiction, the book contains 16 pages of photographs, either of Coburn or taken by Coburn, which substantiate the narrative that Fonda unfurls. The special hardcover edition, of which a limited run of only 150 copies are being printed, is being pre-sold and will include an additional colour supplement of 16 colour plates of paintings by "Fred and a few others," the artists featured in the book.

Frederick Coburn (1871-1960) was once Canada's best-known painter. The "few others" referred to in the title are: Madeleine Audette, Pauline Boudreau, Aaron Edson, Minnie Gill, France Jodoin, Madeleine Lemire, Stuart Main, Mary Martin, David Nortcliffe, Denis Palmer, Kevin Sonmor, Stephan Starenkyj, and the late Gordon Pearson. All, to a greater or lesser extent, have created works of art that have drawn critical and popular acclaim. Many were, or are, elected members of different art societies. Thanks to the generosity of the contemporary artists featured in the book, the paintings which appear in the special edition of "Hanging Fred and a Few Others" will be put up for sale by auction to raise funds for the Richmond County Historical Society and the Centre d'Art de Richmond. As many as eleven lucky benefactors and art lovers will leave the Gala, the proud owners of both a quality painting by a recognized Eastern Townships painter and a very interesting book about artists of the Eastern Townships.

The launch will be part of the Art Gala at the Centre Ste-Famille, 155 Craig St in Richmond, Sunday, Sept 28, 2014 from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. A wine and hors d'oeuvres reception will feature music by Francine Beaubien. There are two ways that patrons, friends and supporters of the two not-for-profit organizations can take part. One is by pre-ordering a limited-edition, hardcover copy of "Hanging Fred and a Few Others" before Sept. 21 (or while copies last) at a cost of \$60 and receive free admission for two to the Art Gala and Auction. The other is to attend the Gala, at a cost of \$30 per person. To order *Hanging Fred and a Few Others*, or to attend the Gala, contact Le Centre d'Art de Richmond, either by phone at 819-826-2488 or by email at centredartderichmond.ca or by contacting Simon Langeveld at 819-826-1923. This is an exceptional opportunity to celebrate Townships artists and support local organizations.



The author, Nick Fonda

Fair Traditions Old and New

By Rose Fowler

In my grandparents' house, talk about Richmond Fair began as early as closing day of the previous year – those famous 'next year' remarks uttered by almost everyone who has ever exhibited anything at a fair. The fair I knew and loved was very different than the fair my grandfather knew and loved, and is very different than the fair that my kids know and love. That's the beauty of this wonderful annual tradition, the diversity and adaptability that continues to draw so many people to spend an evening, a day or even a whole three- or four-day weekend.

My grandfather told me many of his stories about the fair, as a youth, as a young man, as a fair board member, etc. but truth be told those stories have faded into a vague image of that era in general. My memories of the fair that he shared with me are clouded with dust and watered down with love. They begin as a few seeds sown with passion, patience and pride. They include many long hours of weeding, hoeing, hilling and watering. And finally after all the tending, a good selection of fair worthy vegetables were ready for that special second weekend of September. He was keen to be a part of something that was so much more than rides and music, he was a part of the tradition itself. His peers, friends and neighbors – all of them a part of the tradition, each of them is a link between eras. Each of them encouraging their loved ones to join them. It has been two decades since the last time I watched my grandfather dust the dirt off a huge potato, but those memories are close at heart. Every summer season's end I dig up my own harvest and often think this would be considered a winner.

Memories of the kind of fair my grandmother shared with me are entirely different and equally cherished. They remind me of the ability to create something out of next to nothing. The art and skill of needle work, the pieces of fabric that turned into a quilt, a doll, a picture. The yards of yarn transformed into a sweater, a set of mittens with matching hat and scarf, a pair of slippers, a blanket and so much more! Precious pieces, family heirlooms – a hand crafted Anne of Green Gables doll that will one day be given to my daughter. I do not remember how it placed at the fair, but I do remember my grandmother

making it and I remember how special I felt when it was given to me. And then there is the food! The crazy amount of work that went into all the food! The same passion, patience and pride lives in those memories, the same dedication to create something prize worthy.

Each year, the day my siblings and I got to visit the fair was spent between the arena, the barns and the ladies' auxiliary building. Visitors had to pay for the rides then, and our grandparents were kind enough to take and watch three kids at the fair, so it was our responsibility to stay near them. Freedom to roam a little, just stay out of the midway...

The midway: all the stories at school on Monday morning were about the midway!

So many of my school friends got to be a part of something I knew nothing about. Only a select few friends spent their days at the fair between the arena, the barns and the ladies' auxiliary building. They were a part of something completely different. They understood the hard work getting the family animals ready for showing. They were a part of the 4-H, they were a part of a tradition. Some of them are still a part of this tradition, some of them have kids who are becoming a part of this tradition.

Although I grew up in the Richmond area, I have mostly been a visitor of the Richmond Fair. I remember a time or two entering a piece through the school, and I remember one summer drying, pressing and framing flowers for an exhibition in each of those years spent at the fair I was a part of my grandparent's tradition.

Today, a new tradition is emerging. Now, when I visit Richmond Fair, I can barely get out of the midway! With three kids and a husband who love all things fast and loud, the fair is spent between the midway, the Friday night truck pulls and standing in the doorway of the beer tent listening to the band Slightly Haggard. Having an uncle in the band makes the kids feel pretty special! Early in the evening, I make a point of taking the kids through the buildings to look at all the exhibits.

It's a feeble attempt to teach them to value the hard work of others. However that lesson is better learned from working alongside someone and from watching the process than it is learned from looking at the end result. Every year we visit all the barns and at least one of my kids will ask to watch the horse classes in the arena. I happily take them, showing them a part of the fair that my grandfather loved, only to be once again drawn away by the loud roar of an engine. Every year I stop at the Scouts popcorn booth, the stop for a salty bag of yum for one has turned into stopping for five bags, a family pack! Cotton candy, doughnuts and sugar filled drinks; lights, sounds, music and noise of the midway; Mum and sometimes Dad stopping and talking to people that are strangers – that's the Richmond Fair my kids know. I asked my sons to tell me what they think of when they hear the words Richmond Fair and the answer was simple... pull trucks, animals and rides!

So you see, it is a fair full of tradition for all of its visitors, but a very individual experience for each of them. An experience that almost always contains the departing words of 'next year.'

2014 Richmond Fair Schedule



THURSDAY, SEPT. 4

- 5 pm** Registration for lawn tractor races
- 6 pm** Registration for amateur dog competition
- 7 pm** Amateur Dog Competition, costume & race classes
- Obstacle course demonstrations by canine clubs
- Lawn tractor races

FRIDAY, SEPT. 5

- 9 am** Opening of the Petting Zoo
Draft horse Judging
- 9:30 am** Youth Fair Judging
Zoo Granby Mobile
- 10:30 am** Horticulture & Ladies Building Judging
Beef Judging
- 1 pm** Sheep Judging
- 5 pm** Midway opens
- 7 pm** Street Truck Pull
Horse Show
- 9 pm** Country Band: 'Slightly Haggard'

SATURDAY, SEPT. 6

- 9 am** Pony Show
Opening of the Petting Zoo
- 9:30 am** Holstein, Ayrshire & Jersey Judging
- 10 am** Rabbit & Poultry Judging
- 11 am** Karaoke
- 12 pm** Midway opens
- 1 pm** Zoo Granby Mobile - until 4 pm
- 1 pm** Country Les Perdus Line Dancing
- 2 pm** A.S.T.T.Q. Truck Pulls
- 3:30 pm** Strong man demonstration
- 4 pm** Band: 'Lucky Boy (Luc)'
- 5:30 pm** Shepherd & Shepherdess Lead Class
- 6 pm** A.S.T.T.Q. Truck & Tractor Pull
Horse Show
- 6:20 pm** Irish Dancers
- 9:30 pm** Country Band: 'Bad Boys'

SUNDAY, SEPT. 7

- 9 am** Pony & light horse Judging
Opening of the Petting Zoo
4-H & Young Farmers Interclub
Competition
- 11:30 am** Farm Tractor Pull
- 12 pm** Midway opens
Mad Science
- 2 pm** Band: 'Richard Perron'
Horse Show
- 3 pm** Mad Science
- 6 pm** End of Richmond Fair

The County Fair

By Cheryl Atkinson

The county fair is a something everyone in a small town looks forward to with excitement from toddlers to the elderly. The sights and sounds, the midway rides, cotton candy, and clowns making animals out of balloons are awesome to the little ones. Teenagers love the adult rides, hanging out with friends, and checking out the guys or girls. There is something for everyone, dancing in the beer tent, tractor pulls, and the horse show. There are barns full of cows, sheep, and other animals to be checked out, handicraft exhibits or just visiting with friends.

Jenny pushed Meredith's wheelchair through the gate onto the fairgrounds. It was a warm, muggy evening, and they were bringing out their exhibits. Judging would begin the next day. As they headed toward the exposition building, the scent of popcorn, and hamburgers and hotdogs cooking, filled the air. It's a common aroma found at all county fairs and it made their mouths water.

Jenny could feel sweat forming on her brow as she struggled to push Meredith's chair over the thick cables on the ground that seemed to go in every direction like a giant spider web. Suddenly the wheels hit one of the larger cables causing the chair to tilt forward.

"Hey, are you trying to kill your poor old mum?" Meredith asked.

"Sorry Mum, it's hard to maneuver here." She giggled at Meredith whose hair had frizzed up into curls as it always did when there was a lot of humidity in the air. "And you're not that old!" Jenny's warm, brown eyes danced with humour.

"Easy for you to say, you're still in your forties. Yikes, watch out for that hole."

They finally made their way into the building. Jenny left Meredith just inside the door while she returned to the car to get the rest of the exhibits that hadn't fit on Meredith's lap.

After registering their items, they went to an air-conditioned restaurant for supper. Meredith felt dubious about her entries. She hadn't got around to finishing a lot of items, and wondered if she would win any first place ribbons this year.

"I always wait too long before I begin my crochet projects," she said to Jenny across the table.

"I know, eh, I thought I'd never finish knitting that second sock, and I was afraid my garden wasn't going to grow anything worthy of entering."

"Did you see some of the entries in the handicraft section? Where do these women find the time to do all this beautiful fancywork? I think I'm going to start on next year's entries tonight!" Meredith sighed.

"Mum, you say that every year," Jenny chuckled.

"Time to go home and get some rest, tomorrow will be a long day!"

"Ok, I'll pick you up around 9:00 am."

The next morning when they arrived at the fair, the midway was in full swing, and screams and nervous laughter rang out from most of the rides. Today will be a record day for attendance, Meredith thought, and the sun was shining, but the humidity had dropped after a huge thunder storm during the night. Parents were lined up at the ticket booth, with their children who were eager to go on the rides. Carnival music played as the Merry-go-round horses moved up and down with smiling children upon their backs.

"What do you want to do first, Mum?"

"That's an easy question, and I think we need to get some of those hot greasy donuts rolled in powdered sugar." Meredith smiled. "We'll need coffee to wash them down!"

We toured the cattle barns first. Herefords, Shorthorns, Angus, and Charolais, all beef cattle, stood swishing their

tail to keep the flies away. The bulls were enormous, and Meredith kept pleading with Jenny to stay in the center of the aisle, away from their powerful back legs, all the while moaning quietly to herself. Local farmers and their families sat upon hay bales to rest after doing their morning chores. In the dairy cattle barns they admired Holsteins, Ayrshire, and Jersey cattle. Jerseys had always been Meredith's favourite.

The sheep barn was busy and noisy. Suffolk, Leicester, Cheviots, and Dorsets, were bleating loudly, competing with the sound of eclectic shears, and excited 4H youth trying to be heard above the din, as they combed the lambs they would be showing in the afternoon.

We moved on to the horse barn. The horses were being groomed for the big horse show in the arena that night. They stood proudly while their owner carefully braided their tails, weaving colourful ribbons into the braids.

The petting zoo, not just for children, was one of our favourite stops. Miniature pigs, goats, lambs, and other small animals came up to the wire fence pushing their noses through the holes in the wire for some friendly petting. "Look at this bird," Meredith laughed, "I think he's having a bad hair day."

Jenny's feet were killing her by then, so they decided to have lunch. There is nothing quite like fair food! They ate at a picnic table in the shade. Succulent hamburgers, onion rings and fries with a cold drink.

"Well, I suppose the judging must be over now," Jenny ventured. "We may as well go see the outcome of our labour."

Jenny struggled to get the wheelchair inside the building, where throngs of people were crowding the aisles admiring the handicrafts, baking, flowers, and vegetable displays.

As they approached the crochet section, Jenny thumped Meredith on the shoulder. "Mum, you're a winner!" she said pointing at the ribbons that decorated Meredith's items. Two red ribbons, one blue, and three white. Meredith smiled happily. It had been difficult and time-consuming to crochet with her arthritic hands, but the sense of accomplishment was a wonderful feeling.

They moved on to the baking and jams and jellies. Meredith squealed in excitement for ribbons hung above

many of Jenny's entries and further on she could see more ribbons adorning the flowers and vegetables Jenny had entered. "You're a winner, too," Meredith smiled proudly up at her daughter who seemed to be in shock.

They left the building and sat in the shade outside with cold drinks. "It was worth all the time and effort we put into it," Jenny sighed. "It's not about winning, although that is fun, but participating helps support the fair and encourage the 4H group. "

Meredith nodded in agreement. "I think next year..." she began.

Jenny cut in laughing, "You'll start crocheting earlier?"

"No, I think next year I'll sponsor a category or two."

Jenny nodded, "That's something to think about, might be fun!"



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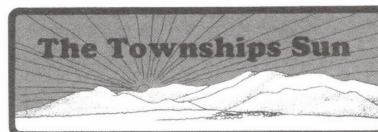


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Remembering Johnny O. Toole

By Nick Fonda



No doubt there are precedents for the unusual gravestone in St. Andrew's Cemetery in Melbourne. It's easy to imagine, for example, that Samuel Langhorne Clemens has the name Mark Twain engraved on his tombstone. Still, it's not a frequent occurrence and that's what makes the final resting place of Johnny O. Toole rather

exceptional; the granite marker that indicates his grave carries two names.

"When he passed away," says Bill Trippear of his father, "I wanted to have the name Johnny O. Toole on the gravestone because that's the name by which so many knew him. Hardly anybody knew Basil Trippear, but everyone knew Johnny O. Toole."

If you're 50 or older, and if you grew up in the Richmond area, and if you were at all interested in country music, chances are you've heard the name, Johnny O. Toole. If so, you might also be aware of his legacy—a love of music that he passed on, not only to his own children, but to several others of his children's generation who learned to play the guitar from a man who is remembered as never being without a guitar in his hands.

"I don't know if anyone knows the origins of the name Johnny O. Toole," says Sydney Mills, who is married to Donna Trippear, the oldest of Johnny O. Toole's four musical children. "Was it a name that he adopted for some reason, or did someone else name him that, I don't know. But everybody knew him by that name. I had been dating Donna for two years before I realized that Johnny O. Toole was a nickname and that the man who became my father-in-law was really named Basil Trippear."

(The name is even more enigmatic: on the gravestone it's written as Johnny O. Toole—an echo perhaps of Johnny

B. Goode—but when spoken aloud the name sounds like Johnny O'Toole—like the actor, Peter O'Toole.)

"The phrase I remember is, 'Johnny O. Toole, the musical fool,' which seems a little unkind now but that moniker reflected the fact that he wasn't always an easy man," continues Sydney, a musician in his own right. "He didn't have an easy childhood and that marked him for life."

Eddy Campbelton, who was Basil Trippear's brother-in-law, recalls going to the Trippear house to see his sister and niece and nephews, and frequently seeing Johnny O. Toole sitting on the steps playing guitar. He echoes Sydney's words. "He was an odd fellow in some ways, as if there was a bit of an edge to him," Eddy Campbelton says. "He was a quiet man, not a talker. Sometimes he'd say hi, and other times he'd just keep picking his guitar and not say a word."

Basil Trippear was born in England on March 6, 1914, just a few months before the outbreak of the First World War. He was one of a number of siblings and even though the exact details are murky, the Trippear family circumstances must have been difficult because at an early age, Basil was put into a foster home. In the summer of 1929, when he was 15, he was put on a ship with hundreds of other children and adolescents and sent to Canada. The luck of the draw had him end up in Melbourne, which was one of the centres which housed Home Children until they could be placed with particular families.

The lot of Home Children wasn't necessarily the easiest. Often, they were placed with farm families who were less interested in helping a homeless child than they were in acquiring an extra farmhand.

In Basil Trippear's case, he ended up being sent to the Robinson farm in Melbourne, at the time one of the largest and most prosperous farms in the area. (The farm originally belonged to Melbourne's first notary, Daniel Thomas.)

"My father worked on the Robinson farm," says Sydney, "and my father remembered Basil Trippear for a very good reason. Basil was one of two Home Boys taken on by the

farm. One winter day the two of them were sent out to shovel the manure from the pile into the spreader. The manure pile was frozen and the two boys realized that manure forks weren't a match for the frozen pile. At the time, dynamite was still relatively unregulated and farmers might have a few sticks around to deal with difficult tree stumps or inconvenient boulders. The boys found a stick of dynamite, worked it into the manure pile and lit the fuse."

Remarkably, despite the messy result, they remained employees at the farm.

It's not clear how long Basil Trippear worked on the Robinson farm but he also worked on the John Stott farm on what is now the Grainger Road. Mickey Blemings, who has fond childhood memories of Johnny O. Toole, recalls hearing that when he asked John Stott for a job on his farm, young Basil Trippear was willing to work for tobacco money and the washing of his clothes. It was the 1930s and the Depression was taking its toll and he wasn't the only one who was working for little more than room and board.

Still, Basil Trippear kept body and soul together, and ten years after arriving in Melbourne as a Home Boy, he returned to England as a soldier with the Canadian Heavy Artillery. It was 1939, World War II had broken out and, like many other young men, Basil had been quick to enlist. He survived war, returned to Melbourne, and, in June of 1947 married Beverley Campbelton, who for her part had served during the war with the Women's Army Corps. The couple would soon have four children: Donna, Bill, Kent, and Raymond.

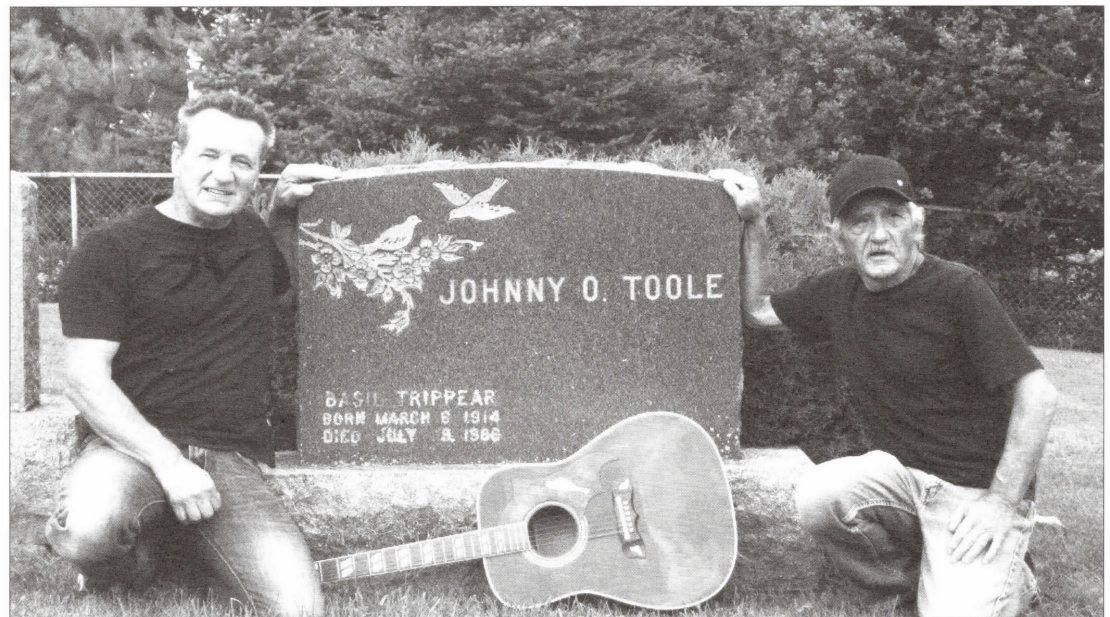
As a war veteran, Basil Trippear's job prospects improved. He and his new wife had settled into a small house on the corner of what is now Route 243 and Cemetery Road, just below the Robinson farm. His neighbour across the street, George Lovett, who had a senior position with the Canadian National Railway, offered him a job as a call boy. (At a time when not everyone had a

telephone, call boys had the task of running around to the houses of engineers, firemen and conductors when they were urgently needed.) He continued to work for the CN until his retirement.

Donna remembers her father as something of a stay-at-home dad. "He was always there for us," she says. "In the winter he used to make a rink for us in the back yard. It must have been quite small but we loved it and he enjoyed it just as much as we did. He was very athletic; he liked to swim in the summer, and in the winter he'd bring us skiing on the big hill behind our house. He was very good with his hands and he often made toys for us, sometimes recuperating parts and pieces from toys someone else had thrown out. But mostly, it was music. Our mother played the piano, by ear, and our father played the guitar, although he also played the harmonica, a bit of banjo and sometimes he played the spoons."

Unlike most spoon players who will bounce the spoons off their knee, Johnny O. Toole kept the spoons in a raised hand and used a quick snap of the wrist to tap out a percussive beat.

"When I was nine," Donna continues, "he started teaching me guitar. He had a dobro guitar and that was what I learnt on, just by imitating him. He taught my three brothers much the same way as they grew older and big enough to hold a guitar. All four of us took to music although each in our own way. Kent, for example, when he was very young, would take out my mother's pots and pans and



bang on those. Not surprisingly, he became a drummer. Billy gravitated towards the base, and Raymond towards the banjo. All six of us, counting my mother at the piano, would gather in the living room and play for hours.”

On weekends, Johnny O. Toole was much in demand. Often this would be for a house party at which neighbours would gather on a Saturday night for several hours of socializing. Mickey Blemings, like Basil Trippear an army veteran (although 25 years younger), vividly remembers Johnny O. Toole.

“I was the youngest in my family,” says Mickey Blemings, “and the only one who wasn’t musical. My older brother was a good guitarist and my mother and sisters played the piano. On Saturday evenings, Johnny O. Toole would come over to our house which was on the corner of what is now Bridge Street and Melbourne Avenue. There would be a house full of people and lots of music and Johnny O. Toole right in the middle of it with his guitar and his harmonica around his neck. He had a good voice too. I remember him singing songs like My Wild Irish Rose and old time Western songs by Gene Autry or Roy Rogers.”

“My parents thought the world of Johnny O. Toole,” he continues. “He didn’t drink, certainly not more than an occasional beer. He didn’t swear. He was very polite, and he was very kind. He was very kind to me. I remember him taking me in his old Model A Ford to go swimming at Salmon Creek, or fishing higher up near the old dam on Salmon Creek. Maybe because he had had a difficult childhood himself, he was particularly attentive and kind towards children, and towards me.”

“I was something of a street kid,” Mickey recalls, “and sometimes we’d get into mischief. One of the games we liked to play was Hubcap, and we often played it on Cemetery Road just behind the Trippear house. Hubcaps had some value in the 1950s. We’d get a hubcap somewhere, and put it near the edge of the road, so it was easily visible to a driver. We’d have a long string, tied to the hubcap and covered with a bit of gravel, and we’d have the other end of the string in our hands. We’d be hiding just off the road. When someone stopped to pick up the hubcap, we’d tug on the string and watch the motorist jump. I remember Beverly Trippear coming out her back door and watching us and laughing along with us. One night, a carload of older teenage boys managed to almost sneak up on us. If

it hadn’t been for the glow of their cigarettes and a bit of noise they made we might have been caught. As it was, we jumped up and ran like the dickens almost to the river to get away.”

“The last time I saw him,” Mickey continues, “was several years before he passed away. I was in Melbourne, with my son who was perhaps six or seven at the time. We’d been to see someone else in the neighbourhood and on a whim I thought I’d drop in on Johnny O. Toole. He was home and when I mentioned my name his face lit up. A few minutes later, one of his own sons came in and the two of them took out guitar and banjo and set to playing.”

While it didn’t necessarily happen often, Johnny O. Toole sometimes played for a dance organized at one of the local halls and he would earn a few dollars for his evening’s work.

“The first time I played for money,” Donna recalls, “was at Gallup Hill. I was 12 years old, and I played with my dad and earned six dollars. I remember that the guitar I had wasn’t much of an instrument with the strings too far from the fret board. My fingers were aching but I wasn’t about to give up.”

Later on, in the early 1970s, Donna, Bill, and Kent formed The Moonshiners and played locally for several years, carrying on their father’s legacy. Similarly Dennis Keenan, Bob Dunn, and Elwin Willey were taught to play by Johnny O. Toole and went on to perform locally.

“They would come to the house and sit in the front room and play,” Kent Trippear recalls. “My father played entirely by ear and that’s the way he taught others to play. He was patient and had a way of explaining things so they made sense; he had a way of boosting you along. He played country music; he liked Merle Haggard and Buck Owens. If he heard a song on the radio, he’d pick up the tune right away.”

The lyrics were sometimes a different matter. Kent continues, “I remember one song in particular, Truck Driving Man it was called. Dad heard it on the radio and liked it and wanted to learn it. We had a reel-to-reel tape recorder and a hand held microphone. Dad finally managed to tape it off the radio and then he sat down, starting and stopping the tape recorder, to write down the words three or four at a time. But the next weekend, he was playing and singing the song as if he’d known it all his life.”

Kent recalls having had a relatively strict upbringing. “Dad kept us on the straight and narrow,” he says. “There was

no alcohol in the house. We were taught to be polite and respectful. We really weren't allowed to go out until we were into our late teens. We were given lots of room to run and play but our parents always kept a close watch over us."

Bill points out that just as Johnny O. Toole shared his joy of music with a younger generation, he also shared his enthusiasm for athletic activity. "He taught us all how to swim," says Bill, "and a number of others as well. I remember a man by the name of Lawrence Henderson who went through the war. He often told me that he owed his life to Dad because it was Dad who had taught him to swim."

"He also loved to shoot," Bill says. "He wasn't a hunter so much as a target shooter. There was an old shed and I remember him shooting the door right off the shed. He was very upset when the gun laws changed in the 1960s and guns had to be licensed and restrictions were imposed on gun use."

"Maybe it was his experience with heavy artillery," says Kent, "but he liked explosions. I remember being quite small and we were in the yard setting off firecrackers. He saw us playing and thought we might want a little more excitement. He came back with dynamite caps, which you could still easily buy in those days. We set those off and we made a lot more noise than we had with the firecrackers."

Basil Trippear's final years were more difficult. He was frequently in and out of the hospital. He died of emphysema on June 9, 1986 at the age of 72. His remains are buried in St. Andrew's Cemetery, at the top of the hill, a half mile from the house, at the bottom of the same hill, where he lived most of his life.

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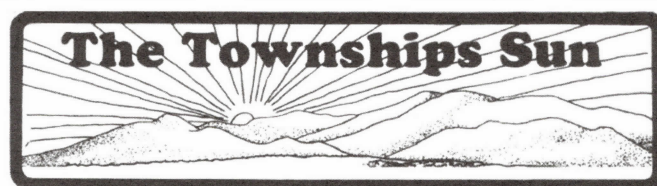
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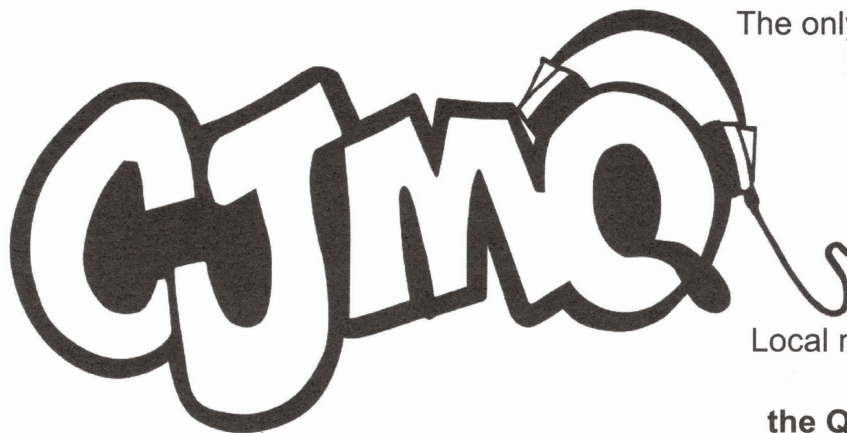
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Get to know the 4-H Club

By Maria Enright

If you live in the Townships, you are likely familiar with a local 4-H club! You have probably witnessed local township youth showing their cattle at the local fairs, selling ice-cream at 4-H booths, or square dancing at Townshippers' Day. Have you wondered just what 4-H stands for and just why so many of our youth are involved?

4-H is one of Canada's longest-running youth organizations for young people between the ages of 6 and 25. Beginning in 1913 in Roland, Manitoba, as a boys and girls club, 4-H has given youth opportunities to learn new things through a dedicated group of volunteer leaders. Though traditionally agricultural based, members now have a wide variety of projects to choose from, whether it be learning how to take great photographs, care for animals, grow an impressive garden, or square dance. 4-H Clubs in Quebec were known as Calf Clubs until the 1990s, when Quebec officially joined 4-H Canada.

In recent years, the AJRQ, Association des Jeunes Ruraux de Quebec, also joined 4-H Canada. So you're probably wondering what the four "H"s in 4-H stand for? Well, in 4-H, we pledge our Head, Heart, Hands and Health to our club, community and our country. Members are taught to give back to their community and to become tomorrow's leaders all by "Learning to do by Doing." According to the Canada 4-H website, "Locally, 4-H gives back to the community and creates community leaders. Provincially, there are opportunities for conferences, camps and scholarships. And nationally, 4-H members have the opportunity to see different parts of Canada and the world, apply for scholarships and participate in some of the country's longest-running youth conferences." The Townships is home to four active 4-H clubs: Brome, Hatley, Richmond, and Sawyerville. To give you an idea of a typical event in a 4-H club, I have included a clip from the Quebec 4-H Newsreader written by Devin Keenan, press reporter for the Richmond 4-H club.

"The Richmond 4-H held its achievement day on Sunday, June 1. It was a successful day with members showing

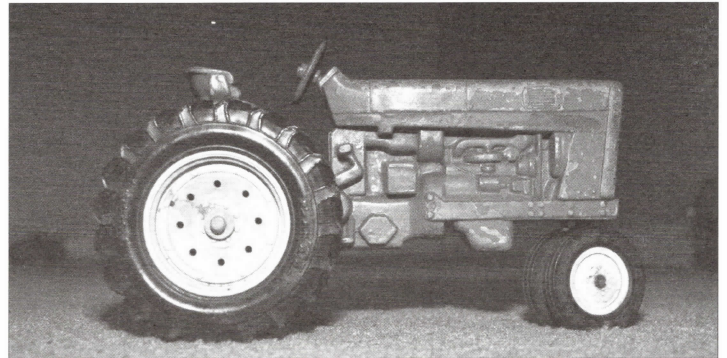


Photo by Paul O'Rear. Licensed under Creative Commons BY-SA 2.0

everything from silky chickens, rabbits, beef, dairy, boer goats, suffolk sheep and a record number of horses this year! The garden members showed off their tomato plants, and the poultry members competed with their posters advertizing their upcoming auction. To include all our 2013-2014 projects, a display of photography, square dancing, and scrapbooking was presented. We were happy to have Chelsea Daniels from Quebec 4-H come down and help us out for the day. Parents prepared a delicious BBQ and to top off the day, the weather was perfect. Now we're looking forward to presenting our projects at Rally and the Richmond Fair."

If you are interested in seeing the Townships 4-H clubs in action, the Richmond 4-H club hosts its annual Inter-Club competition on Sunday, Sept. 7 beginning at 9 a.m. during the Richmond Fair.



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A Visit to the West Coast of Newfoundland

By Gladys Mackey Beattie

The travel bug bit me one snow filled January day. Mountains of white stuff were everywhere outdoors waiting to be moved and more was falling. I turned my back to the window and started looking at travel ads, especially those with nice photos of sandy beaches, blue sky and no winter clothing. Cuba looked tempting; sand, blue skies and not a flake of snow in sight. Disney Land looked tempting too: happy children swishing down water slides and popping into blue pools of water with Minnie Mouse standing around smiling. But I am not into Mickey Mouse. Anyway, Disneyland was too expensive and who would shovel the snow in my absence? So I skipped dreaming of winter escapes and watched TV. The ads from Newfoundland with the smiling blond haired kids playing hide and seek around those Viking sod houses showed blue skies, green grass, and no snow, caught my attention. And Newfoundland was a part of Canada I had never seen... One phone call, and a week later the table was covered with travel literature. Newfoundland reeks with history and is the newest Canadian province. I would not escape winter there but.....

It did not take long to find a couple more adventurers who wanted to visit the youngest province in Canada. It was a done deal.

Our tour was organized directly with a company in St. Johns. We explained what we wanted to see and on which dates. They provided a car and we would drive ourselves where we wanted to go. They suggested an itinerary for us along the west coast of Newfoundland and a bit of Labrador, called the Voyage of the Vikings. They would arrange the air transport, car rental, hotels, ferry tickets, admission to the sites we wanted to visit, etc. We booked a July trip and crossed out fingers that no one would get sick or otherwise be unable to go.

Air Canada delivered us to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and



The Tablelands are part of an ancient seabed soils so toxic that little will grown on them. Nancy Beattie, Gladys Mackey and Marion Greenlay.

All photos courtesy of Gladys Mackey Beattie

transferred us on to Deer Lake, Newfoundland. where we picked up the rental car which had been reserved for us. With a folder packed with maps, vouchers for the hotels, an itinerary showing driving times and distances, we set off for our first B&B at Norris Point in Grosse Morne National Park.

Newfoundland is BIG! To go to all the places we wanted to visit, we needed to drive a good distance each day. No lying around in bed in the mornings! The tour company had provided a very useful listing of the mileage and the time it would take to get there. Each day we planned to drive some, take in some of the various historic sites and walk some of the many trails and walking paths we had read about.

The scenery in Newfoundland is different. Steep rugged cliffs and hillsides sparsely covered with wind-twisted stunted spruce trees, they call Tuckamore. Where trees

cannot grow, mosses and lichens abound. Each little seaside cove has a smattering or more of houses huddled near the shore, and at least one wharf with many kinds of boats nearby. The roads climb steeply out of the valleys to the height of land then wind and twist steeply down into the next village beside the sea. Each village has a dock, maybe a gas station a restaurant, a liquor outlet (well supplied) and a General Store. One store may be all of these things. Of course they all offer lots of woolly hand knit mittens and socks and all kinds of touristy souvenirs, but they may also sell paint, rain slickers, fishing supplies, toilets, hunting licences, fresh baked goods, potatoes, fruit and veggies. You may also get down to earth information about the best spots to eat, the weather and which fish the government is currently allowing to be fished. And you had best listen closely. We are used to hearing French accents, but the Newfoundland lingo reflects a lot of different cultures and is a friendly blend of everything and nothing. I overheard one tourist (ignorant adult tourist) tell our really good tour guide that he had a, "funny accent." The soft retort was that it was he, (the tourist) who had the funny accent. The guide later mentioned that his two daughters were now working in Ontario and would probably someday think that he had a funny accent too, but he was sure they would never mention it.

Each and every little town has a walking path or hiking trail to somewhere. It may lead over to the next village, or it may climb up a hill to a lookout or wander along the shore to somewhere special. Our first walk was up Burnt Mountain to a lookout point over the ocean. To help viewers up and



The Vikings lived in sod and wood houses like this reconstruction.

down the steepness, there were stairs and steps between the semi level places. We counted 264 steps on stairs on that hill but the view was worth the effort. One of the things we wanted to do was to put out feet on the ground and do some walking everyday. Also, we wanted to find and hike the northern end of the International Appalachian Trail. This is officially the end of the famous Appalachian Trail which begins thousands of miles south in the state of Georgia in the United States. We located the trail head at Cape Raven not far from St. Anthony's. It was well marked and well maintained with a gravelled pathway and even stairs in some places and a nice look out platform on top with a view to forever. (Maybe this is where we saw the distant iceberg flashing in the sun.) Stairs are a luxury on a hiking trail. In the White Mountains, you scramble up and slide down as best you can... On this hike up, we walked partway though stunted spruces, but on top of the windblown Cape, only mosses and lichens covered the rocks. Mosses and lichens and berries abounded. Berries and more berries seem to grow everywhere and are important to the local economies. Almost every store and eating place sold jams and jellies and syrups. The plants grow low to the ground protected from the weather by their mossy companions. Partridge berries, (lingonberry), Bakeapple (Cloudberry), Squash Berries, Crowberries and Blueberries are picked in season and are made into jams and jellies and are baked into everything imaginable. I liked the Partridge Berries the best. Their red color and tangy flavour in pie, or on breakfast toast was delicious.

We visited many historical settlements, ecological reserves and archaeological sites. Newfoundland is OLD. Quebec seems like the new kid on the block in comparison. Basque Whalers, and the Vikings were preceded by Beothuk and Maritime Archaic Indians, as well as people from the Dorset and Groswater Paleoeskios and other prehistoric groups. Near L'Anse Amour, we saw a burial mound of an Aboriginal girl which dates back 7,500 years. (With our french language influences, we would guess that amour meant love, but the word is a anglicization of the De Mort- death).

Digs in various areas have turned up endless artifacts and many of the sites are preserved in national or provincial parks or preserves.

In Gros Morne National Park, we hiked into the Tablelands. Created by continental drift ages ago and sculpted by more

recent glacial erosion, the soil grows nothing because of the toxic chemicals in it. Red, barren, and peppered with stones, it looks like a moonscape. Snow was still visible in the high areas. We also visited Western Brook Pond, a fresh water Fiord capped by towering cliffs.

Just north of Gros Morne Park is a not-to-be-missed provincial park called, The Arches. These huge stone arches are the result of years of surf pounding away at ancient limestone. The surviving rock forms giant arches in and beside the sea.

From here, we headed north to the ferry which took us across the Strait of Belle Isle to Blanc Sablon, Quebec and on to Labrador. At a viewing lookout on the highway near here we met a friendly road work crew. They probably should have been patching pot holes, but we chatted about the weather, the roads and deplored the fact that so many young men had gone away to western Canada to work in the mines, and that there were very few musicians left to play in the bars and pubs. They missed their music.

You have never seen hills until you see the ones headed to Red Bay. Up and up for miles, then down hairpin curves and up some more. Trees are few in this area and moss is plentiful. Red Bay is the location of the newest UNESCO site. It was into this area that whaling ships from Europe came in the 16th century to kill whales and turn their blubber into oil for Europe. The remains of 16 stations for processing whale fat have been identified and at least five sunken whaling ships have been found under the ocean water. The interpretation centre is excellent. Do not skip the boat ride to Saddle Island where the whales were hauled ashore and butchered. There you will also see the remains of melting sheds and red roofing tiles brought over by the Basques to roof their seasonal work stations. Hence, the name later given by the British – Red Bay.

Back across the busy ferry to Newfoundland, we headed to L'Anse aux Meadows Historic Site. This is where the Vikings made a settlement and models of their sod houses have been recreated. Actors help to bring life to the scene. There were no little kids that day, just "Vikings" knitting socks with a needle, playing music and telling stories in a gloomy Viking home. The interpretation centre is excellent but the guided walk down to the actual dig site is a must. The ruins of the centuries old settlement are impressive. The outline of walls from various sod houses are still easily visible.

A stop at Flowers Cover is a must. Here is another short walking trail to see the Thrombolites. These rocks were the only known forms of life from 3.5 billion to 630 million years ago. The big stones dotting the intertidal zone looked like petrified flowers to the local people. To me, they looked like huge lumps of bread dough waiting to be baked. They are extremely rare and the only other known ones are in Australia.

We also visited the Grenfell Museum... This is a whole story in itself. This Dr. brought health care to about 30 impoverished costal villages where tuberculosis was rampant and people were at the mercy of the stores who gave out fishing supplies on credit then claimed back most of their catch leaving them constantly in debt. Among other things, he got a hospital established, helped eliminate TB and showed the fishermen how they could set up co-ops and control their lives. He was knighted to become Sir Wilfred Grenfell and the record of his and others work is well known.

We were amazed at the little roadside gardens planted right beside the highways without a house for miles. They all looked well tended and seemed to grow mostly potatoes. The local people make use of any arable soil however far from their home. No one seems to bother them. Only an occasional scarecrow guards them from marauding moose. Another thing which amazed us is their method of getting firewood. There is very little hardwood. The forests are mostly spruce, small and stunted and windblown. Wood is needed to heat in the winter. Since much of the land is crown owned, people can buy a \$25 permit and cut their wood on government land. Piles of spruce stove wood can



Huge stone arches line the coast at Arches provincial park.

be seen here and there all along the roads, sometimes almost on the road itself. Each pile displays a board or sign with the permit number plainly displayed.

There are lighthouses, ship wrecks, museums, and new foods to try. Lots of fish dishes are offered. Special "Newfoundland Dinners" are advertised by charity groups here and there. There is so much to see and to learn about and to do. Our days were full and we saw a lot, but only touched a small part of the province. Three UNESCO sites in 6 days is a pretty good record. Distances are big. There is so much to see, Newfoundland will have to remain on my To Visit list.



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Parc Nautique de Richmond

A Great Summer

By Myriam Beaulieu



Guide team for Saint-Francis River

All photos courtesy of Myriam Beaulieu

Over a decade ago, a few Richmond residents got together and came up with the idea of giving locals easy access to the Saint-Francis River between Windsor and Ulverton. It might have seemed a little surprising for many residents who thought that it could never be a successful enterprise.

“When Richmond received a grant that could only be invested in recreational infrastructure more than 10 years ago, and decided to invest it in the construction of a reception chalet from which kayak excursions could be offered, it didn’t get that much attention from the population. I guess people thought the river was way too polluted to be an interesting natural environment worth exploring,” says Roxane Beaulieu, director of the Parc Nautique. “For many people native to this area, the Saint-Francis River mostly brought unpleasant memories to mind, and the idea that someone would

actually pay to spend a few hours discovering it seemed a bit far fetched.”

Indeed, although the first settlers came to Richmond by canoe and chose to establish themselves in the area precisely because of the proximity to the river, the industrialisation which eventually followed led to major consequences on the water quality and the wild life it sheltered. If seniors remember swimming and fishing in it when they were young, they never allowed their own children to play near the river because of how obviously very polluted the water had become.

Furthermore, flooding had always been a challenge for Richmond, the main street being built on a plain beside a wide and shallow section of the river followed by a deep and narrow passage through bedrock, a beautiful scene when viewed from a kayak, but which created



A guided excursion down the Saint-Francis River

ice-jams in the spring. Moreover, the Saint-Francis is fed by a huge watershed that covers more than 10 000 square kilometres. As a result, the water level can rise and fall significantly in a short period of time.

In the late 70's, the construction of highway 55 accelerated drainage to the river and brought major flooding each year which almost caused the main street to be abandoned. In response, the community got together and called on provincial and federal governments to help build a dyke and a pumping station which has prevented further flooding since 1984.

As a result, the town was largely cut off from the river which was now almost completely out of sight. Fortunately, a lot of work has been done since, allowing citizens easy access to enjoy the Saint-Francis river again. Environmental legislation has greatly improved the water quality, more than 120 tires and other items have been removed from the banks and the river bottom by volunteer projects. Students from Richmond Regional High School have taken part in these activities. There is

now a beautiful path along the bank from the MacKenzie Bridge to the Parc Nautique chalet.

“This summer has been the best season ever for the Parc Nautique de Richmond. Near 500 people have taken part in the guided excursions,” Beaulieu says. “We also see more and more residents spending time in the park along the river, bringing their own kayaks, fishing and having picnics. It's great to see how things can change for the better.”



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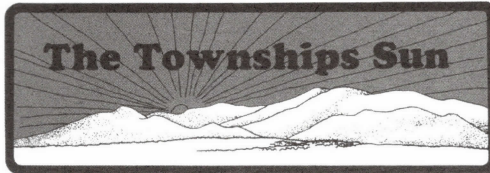
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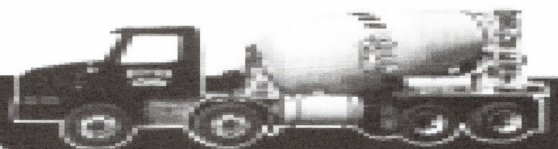
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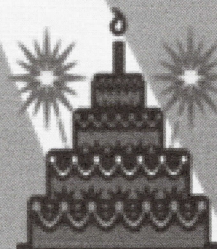
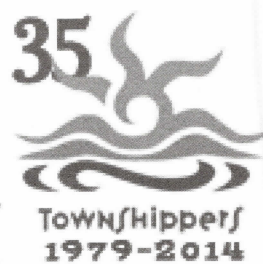
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