

Scuttlebutt

Crow's Nest Officers' Club

April 2009

Crow's Nest Receives Heritage Award

The Crow's Nest Officers' Club and the Crow's Nest Military Artefacts Association have received a Manning Award from the Historic Sites Association. The award, presented in the National category, recognizes "Excellence in the Public Presentation of Historic Places".

The presentation took place on March 25 at the Sheraton Hotel, and marked the 17th annual Manning Awards, named for the former superintendent of historic sites in the province.

In accepting the award, President John Moyes said he was particularly pleased that the Club was chosen for the National category, as the Crow's Nest is indeed a national institution, with original and current members being drawn from every part of Canada. As historic as the Club may be, he said, it is still very much a "living, breathing entity" which keeps alive the traditions begun in 1942.



Photo: Lisa Lloyd Piercey

Club President John Moyes accepts the Manning Award from former Lieutenant Governor Ed Roberts.

Annual General Meeting Set for May 27 by Dick Hyslop

The Crow's Nest AGM will be held at the Club on May 27, 2009, beginning at 7 p.m. This is an opportunity for members to hear the directors report on their respective activities for the year just completed.

It is also the time for members in good standing to elect the Club executive (President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary) for the year just begun. The procedure as outlined in the bylaws is as follows:

1. As Chair of the Nominating Committee I shall present nominations for each of the executive positions, which will be posted on the Club bulletin board on April 9th.
2. The Nominating Committee will accept further nominations for members in good standing who have

consented to stand, from April 10 to April 24, 2009.

3. At the AGM the Nominating Committee shall present its report and private ballot elections will be held for the contested executive positions. All nominees will be provided an opportunity to address the membership at the meeting.

4. The elected executive directors shall hold a further meeting to choose additional directors, up to a maximum of twelve. Any members wishing to serve as directors can make their interest known at any time to either any current board member or to any new executive director elected at the meeting.

See you at the AGM - May 27 at 7 p.m.

Message from the Club President

The Manning Award (National Category) for Excellence in the Public Presentation of Historic Places, was presented with charming ceremony at the Sheraton Hotel, March 25th 2009, to the Crow's Nest and our Military Artefacts Association. At the ceremony, Bruce Peckford extolled the Crow's Nest's achievements with a slide presentation. (Bruce does visit the club from time to time and we look forward to seeing him more often). The Honorable Edward Roberts very graciously presented the award, which was accepted on behalf of the club by yours truly.

Special thanks must go to the hard-working Artefacts Group; Jacquey Ryan for her professional, dedicated work documenting our artefacts; and Tony Dearness, our new Board member, for spearheading the application. We also thank Joan Ritcey, Chair of the Historic Sites Association; Catherine Dempsey, Executive Director; and all the Board of Directors. Thank you all for another proud day in our club's history. Gary Green and Greg Twining have already picked out a place for the impressive, framed certificate outside the dining room. Please make a point of reading it on your next visit to the club.

Another proud yet sad day will be the last reunion of the *HMS Newfoundland* Association at Bracklesham Bay, Sussex, UK. April 24th-27th 2009. The Board and all our members remember with warm affection the visit by members of the Ship's Association to St. John's and the Crow's Nest. *HMS Newfoundland* Ship's bell still hangs above the Crow's Nest bar. Margaret and Brian Smith's gift of the 19th century ship's masthead light seems to be resting permanently on the bar at the

periscope end and so, we remember the ship's company and look forward to your next visit - after all you do have the "freedom of our fair city".

Some of us wanted to attend the last reunion, at least for the main dinner, however, those I intended to accompany cannot make the journey for one reason or another, and my shore leave has been cancelled due to grandchildren minding. Nevertheless, we want to congratulate you all for keeping the ship's memory alive, with special thanks to Alan Waite, Terry Hull, Brian Smith, Alan Staton, Tony Toms, Ian Wigston, and congratulations to Peter Chatfield, Editor of "The Newfoundland Times". What an archive! I've read issue #57 several times and I think all issues will be reread often in the future.

Our New Year's Eve sold-out dinner was admirably catered by Red Oak, along with Andrea Wells and her team. Magda and I enjoyed the Crow's Nest Birthday Dinner, followed by our 3rd annual Corvette's Wake. A rum tot from Chris Justice's Rum Barrel toasted the officers and men of *HMCS Spikeland*, Captain Bert Shadforth and his crew, who were torpedoed on Feb. 10th 1942. After dinner, Bob Innes played the Murmansk piano with appropriate hymns and songs of the 1940s. Well done Bob!

On February 16th, Magda and I went to Vancouver for 3 weeks visiting friends and family, so we missed the Artefacts Association Dinner, but I hear Greg Twining and Gary Green made sure it was a success.

The St. Patrick's Day March Irish Buffet was terrific, particularly the herring and the lamb, though I ate far too much. We

were entertained throughout the evening by the Art Stoyles Band - Bob Rutherford, Art Stoyles, Len Penton and his wife, Debbie, and Neil Rosenberg and his wife Terry. They were all great fun! During dinner the Spanish guitar and the Irish harp were subtly and beautifully played by Len and Debbie. How lucky we all are to have such talented friends of the Crow's Nest.

Last week we squeezed into the March 28th Lamb Dinner at the last moment. It was delicious! Gareth Cook, with his resonant voice, gave us a very nice Grace before dinner, and once again Bob Innes entertained us on the piano. It was very good to see Helen Pollock, who has just made a great recovery from surgery.

The recent news of a Puma helicopter going down in the North Sea is a stark reminder of the tragedy in March, only 50 miles from St. John's, of a Sigorsky S92 going into the sea, leaving 17 dead and only one badly injured survivor, while transporting workers to the oil rigs just offshore. Many of our members, particularly those who work at the Marine Institute, knew some of the people on board very well. We are still reeling from the tragedy and our sympathy goes out to the lone survivor and the families of all those who lost their lives.

Your's aye,
John Moyes, President
April 1, 2009





Letter to the Editor

I was thrilled (to say the least) that in a search to find information about my great, great uncle I happened upon the link to your website. Not only did I find a picture of the *HMCS Spikenard* along with the related information on her demise; but a photo of this g,g, uncle.

Growing up, my mother told us an intriguing story about her grandmother (Nana to me and whom I had the pleasure of knowing until she passed away when I was 23 years old).

Nana was a nun (now isn't it interesting, a nun was my great, great grandmother! She got out of the nunnery to marry my Papa. She was a strict French Catholic who was a no-nonsense sort of person. Not the type to speak foolishly. One day, upon finishing her dishes, she stepped to the outdoors to throw her pan of dishwater away and standing before her was her brother, Conrad. He held out a bouquet of flowers to her and said, "Here Blanche, these are for you". Nana dropped her dishpan and ran into the house as she had already been notified that her brother had been lost at sea aboard the *Spikenard*. No one believed her in the house but she told this story. Mom still repeats this.

It was very important that Nana have information about this ship, as you can imagine the limited information that was available to her at the time. She had told one of my uncles that if he ever happened upon a picture of the *Spikenard*, she would like to have it as her brother had gone down on it.

This stuck with my uncle and when visiting Nova Scotia from Ontario a few summers back, he came upon a small museum in a

rural community. On the wall was a picture of the *Spikenard*. Although Nana had passed on, he remembered the importance of this picture to her and he snapped a picture of the picture.

This past Christmas Eve, my mother mentioned that he had e-mailed this to her and reiterated the story Nana had told of Conrad. I asked her to forward this to me because I felt it important that we have a story to go with the picture and I wanted to do a little research. The search seemed fruitless and was becoming frustrating as I couldn't locate a single thing. I was beginning to believe it had all been made up (I am not an internet buff, but familiar enough with search engines that I thought I would at least find something on the ship going down). Turns out the picture had been tagged with the wrong spelling showing it as "Spikinard".

I talked to my sister about what I was doing and how frustrated I was (she is much better than I am around the computer) and together we spent hours looking. I finally (and I still don't know how) linked up with your website. I was so excited. As I scrolled through the thumbnail pictures, I saw one of 3 men. My sister thought for sure there was writing below the picture (her eyes are obviously better than mine). I blew the picture up and was shocked and amazed to see that my g,g, uncle Conrad Boutin was the man standing in the middle of his Captain and another crew member.

I apologize for the length of this e-mail, but thought it important for you to know and appreciate that the history you preserve is so very important. And this is why! There are families behind these stories, and

it is sometimes generations away before a true picture of events can be painted. This would not be possible if not for the care someone took to not only preserve this picture, but the irony that the only 3 men that had a picture in this gallery from this ship, contained my g, g, uncle. I think he wanted to be found because I can honestly say that I have never, nor probably ever will again, spend that much time hunched over a computer looking for someone.

I called my great uncle Richard, who is 86 years old and living in a nearby seniors home (he has all his faculties about him) and told him what I had found. Turns out he was the last one in the family to see Conrad alive, he said he drove him to Stadacona to make his connection to St. John's to board this ship.

I myself spend a fair amount of time in St. John's. I am in the insurance industry and I was over there on business several times. I would have walked by your museum on more than one occasion and past this trove of family history.

Thanks for caring enough to do what you do. You may never realize the impact and I thought you should know that 'it matters'.

Thanks
Karen Thorne



A Busy Winter for CNMAA by Gary Green

Manning Award

Sir Percy Noble, the British commander of the Atlantic in the early stages of WWII, said that the Crow's Nest was the repository of the legend and lore of the men that saved not only Britain but perhaps freedom itself! The care of the place where these brave men once stood and their artefacts now falls to the Crow's Nest Officers' Club and the Crow's Nest Military Artefacts Association respectively. A huge responsibility indeed!

As John has mentioned in his report, the CNMAA and the CNOG have jointly been awarded the 2009 Manning Award for Excellence in the Public Presentation of Historic Places in the National Category. This award is the result, in part, of the tremendous work done by the CNMAA over the years and in particular the last few years to catalogue and display our artefacts both in the Nest and on the internet.

The projects' success is due in large part to two people - Jacquey Ryan and Greg Twinning, the immediate past president. During Greg's term as president, he had the vision, drive and skills which enabled the association to formulate its plans and acquire the funds needed to see them through. Jacquey brought her dedication, experience and skills to the execution of the various projects. She regularly went far beyond the call of duty to ensure that what was presented to the public was first class. We cannot thank her enough.

Web site

One of our projects was the creation of a web page to tell the story of the Crow's Nest and St. John's in Battle of the Atlantic. At

the Artefacts Appreciation Dinner held in February, Jacquey took those present through a demonstration of the web site. The presentation was made all the more powerful by the fact that some of the veterans and donors of items appearing on the site were present. It is a part of Canada's Community Memories series and can be viewed at <http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/>

Membership

The CNMAA is looking for new members. The CNMAA, an organisation separate from the Crow's Nest Officer's Club, was created to wholly own and care for the artefacts housed in the Nest and in storage. If you want to contribute to the upkeep of our collection or learn more about it, this is the place for you. There are several levels of membership in the CNMAA from regular member (\$15.00) to patron (\$100.00). Memberships are tax deductible. The association meets in the Nest at 10:00 am on the last Saturday of the month. Membership information will appear with the next notice of dues for the CNOG. Please consider becoming a member.

Research

Again, we find ourselves being consulted by researchers. We have been interviewed by authors, film makers and musicians, all of whom are engaged in creating works related to the Battle of the Atlantic.

Donations

We continue in our efforts to catalogue the pictures and documents in our collection. We recently received a collection of photos taken by Walcott Winter during his training in the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.

Robert Mercer, member Pat Mercer's father, was also in the BCATP and she has loaned us his RCAF pilot training flight log. The pictures and log are in the process of being digitized and will add to our knowledge about the BCATP as it relates to the people from this province. Catherine Dempsey donated a WW I plate depicting "Bill" a well known Army cartoon character of the war. The Coast Guard has donated a ship's clock, chronometer and telescope. Thanks to all our donors.



The CNMAA was incorporated in 1987 for three purposes:

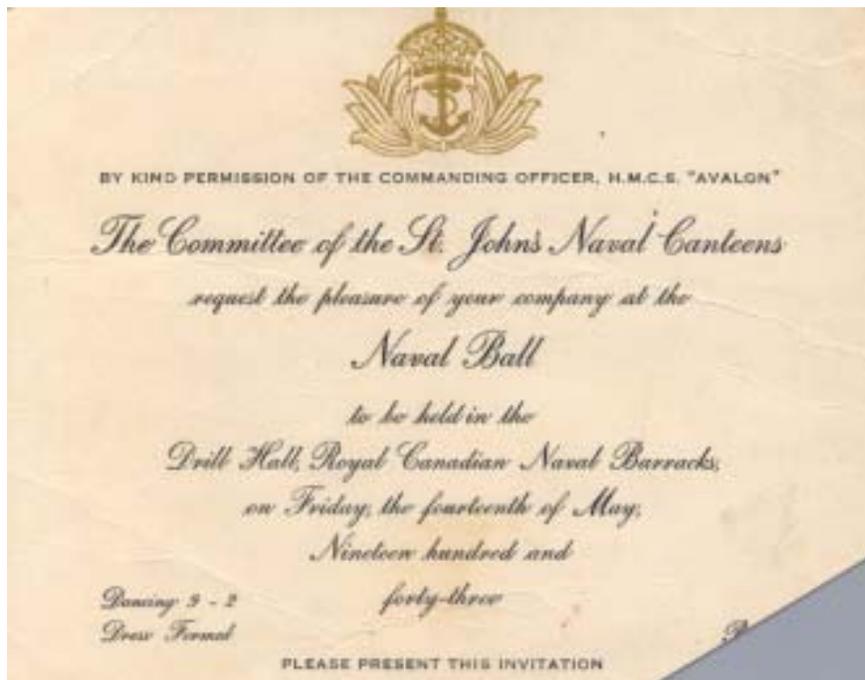
- (1) To own all the historic artefacts of the Club as distinct from other Club property.**
- (2) To maintain, protect and document the artefacts.**
- (3) To become a charitable organisation and raise funds to help in the protection and maintenance of the artefacts.**

Invitation to the Naval Ball of 1943

This invitation comes to us from Mrs. Gladys Benson of St. John's. She says the invitations were sometimes sent to the office managers at various St. John's firms, in the hope that young ladies from the firm would attend. The office manager would serve as chaperone to the young ladies.

On this particular occasion there was music by the Royal Canadian Naval Band and the USA Dance Band (Musical Commandos), offering a selection of fox-trots, waltzes, rhumbas, sambas, and one-steps.

The dance card below has a blank space to pencil in the names of those servicemen to whom the young women had promised a dance.



Programme			
R.C.N. BAND	U.S.A. BAND		
1	Waltz	Lake Louise	.....
2	Fox-Trot	Don't Get Around	.....
3	Fox-Trot	Tea for Two ♦	.....
4	Rhumba	Cuban Gondolier	.....
5	Fox-Trot	Tonight We Love ♦	.....
6	Waltz	Vagabond King ♦	.....
7	Fox-Trot	Stardust	.....
8	Fox-Trot	Swanee River (Nobely)	.....
9	One-Step	Strip Polka ♦	.....
		Royal Canadian Naval Band Ceremonial and Marches	
10	Fox-Trot	Blue Prelude ♦	.....
11	Samba	Brazil	.....
		"The Tumbling Tyros"	
		INTERVAL	
12	Waltz	Just a Little Street	.....
13	Rhumba	Mamma Inez	.....
14	Fox-Trot	Blues on Parade ♦	.....
15	One-Step	Pennsylvania Polka (Nobely)	.....
		Royal Canadian Naval Band Selections	
16	Fox-Trot	Night and Day ♦	.....
17	Rhumba	La Cumparsita	.....
18	Fox-Trot	Blue Skies	.....
19	One-Step	Anchors Away ♦	.....
20	Fox-Trot	Hungarian Dance	.....
21	Fox-Trot	One Alone ♦	.....
22	Extra		.....
23	Last Waltz	Gold and Silver	.....
		GOD SAVE THE KING	

Treasurer's Report



It has been another great year for the Club. Although our financial year end is a month away, I am forecasting a small surplus again. Like last year, the more impressive fact is that our membership continues to grow and our social program is well attended.

The 09/10 invoices will be mailed out soon and there is no change to our annual dues. When the Board gets together for the mailout, it often turns into quite a gab session and sometimes cards don't always get in the right envelope. If that happens to you, let us know and it will be corrected. All of the Club's contact information is on the reverse of your membership card. Of course, that doesn't mean much if you don't get the card. However, the same information is also in this Scuttlebutt.

A few hints to make my job

easier and, in the end, help the Club run better:

1. If you are paying at the bar, be sure to get a receipt. This reminds the bar staff that dues get tracked separately & ensures they put a name to the payment;
2. If you are paying with a company cheque, please ensure your name, or at least the invoice number, is somewhere on the cheque; and
3. Similarly, if you are paying for another member, please clearly indicate the name of the member

whose account is to be credited.

The Club is a non-profit organization while the Military Artifacts Association has charitable status. If you want to donate a few extra dollars and get a tax deduction, make a separate cheque payable to the Crow's Nest Military Artifacts Association.

I look forward to seeing you at the AGM.

Margaret Morris
Lieutenant-Commander
Treasurer

Welcome Aboard to New Members

In Town:

Lionel Clarke
Richard Ellis
Dennis Mandville
Rudy Embury
Chris Brookes
Marnie Parsons
Fabian Mulroomey
Sean Quinlan
Deidre Ayre
Donna-Lee French
Dr. Brian Veitch
Hazel Gladney

Out of Town:

Bruce Chapman, Manotick, ON
Pierre Murray, Dartmouth, NS
George Gill, Whitby, ON
Stephen Harner, Venice, Florida
Andrew Robertson, Port Williams, NS

This Month in Naval History

In April of 1943 U-boat strength was up to 425 with 240 boats operational, and over half of them on passage through or on patrol in the North Atlantic. Changes were again made in the Allies' responsibility for the North Atlantic routes.

As agreed at the March 1943 Atlantic Convoy Conference in Washington: (1) Royal Canadian Navy was to exercise full control of the northerly routes west of the 47-00'W CHOP line - approximately south of Greenland. (2) Royal Navy took over to the east of 47-00'W. (3) US Navy looked after the southerly convoys, and also the CU/UC tanker routes between the West Indies and UK.

With these organisational changes and the far more effective convoy Escort Groups, the scene was set for the decisive convoy battles of May 1943.

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A Captain's Luck Runs Out by Derek Yetman

Captain William John Yetman was a distant relation of mine. He was a merchant mariner - a schooner captain - who shipped salt fish out of Harbour Grace in the late 1800s and the years leading up to World War One. His first encounter with misfortune came in 1904 while serving as master of the *Harold*, owned by McRae and Sons of Harbour Grace. On a return voyage from Europe the vessel was lost, through no fault of the captain, and all hands saved by a passing German ship.

In 1917 Yetman had command of the *Hilda R*, also owned by McRae, when he had another, less fortunate encounter with a German vessel. On November 5 his unarmed schooner was shelled and sunk by a German submarine near Gibraltar. While the four-man crew was allowed to escape by



rowing a dory ashore, Yetman was taken up by the Germans, questioned and later landed at night on the Spanish coast.

After making his way back to Gibraltar and gaining passage to England, he was sunk yet again off the coast of Portugal, this time with loss of life. From Lisbon he finally made it to England's shore and soon after made an uneventful voyage to

Halifax, Nova Scotia.

On December 6, 1917, he was staying at the King Edward Hotel, and having finished breakfast at 9 a.m. he walked out the front door for a stroll around the city's north end.

Four minutes later, at exactly 9:04 a.m., the French munitions ship *Mont-Blanc*, coming into harbour to join a convoy, collided with the Norwegian ship *Imo*, on its way to New York to pick up relief supplies for Belgian refugees. The resulting explosion was the greatest man-made disaster before Hiroshima, levelling the city and creating thousands of casualties.

Yetman, in the only stroke of fortune he could claim, was unhurt. The King Edward Hotel, which he had left moments before, was destroyed, along with everyone in it. Five days later he was back in Newfoundland, safely home from the hardest-luck fishing voyage that ever was. He never went to sea again.



Recent Deaths

Commodore George Douglas, AVSM, DFC

Former Club member George Douglas ended his military career as Chief of Naval Aviation for the Indian Armed Forces. During WWII he was a much-decorated fighter and bomber pilot for the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force.

He transferred to the Indian Navy in 1949, where he pioneered naval aviation. In 1967 he immigrated to Canada and St. John's, where he became a dedicated member of the Crow's Nest. He retired to Victoria in 1986 and died there on Nov. 18, 2008 at the age of 93.

Michael Augustine (Austin) Davis, OC

Well known actor, businessman, volunteer and Club member Austin Davis passed away on Jan. 04, 2009. Born in Fortune Harbour in 1927, he began his working career in Grand Falls, where he became a member of the Northcliff Drama Club.

His love of acting led him to numerous roles in stage, television and film productions. In 1981 he was nominated for a Genie Award. He received the Order of Canada for his artistic endeavours, and the Canada 125 Medal and the Queen's Jubilee Medal for his volunteer activities.

Chief Petty Officer Bill Stone

While not a Crow's Nest member, Bill Stone was certainly one in spirit. He died on Jan. 10, 2009 in the UK, at the age of 108 - the last man to have served in the Royal Navy during both World Wars.

CPO Stone witnessed the scuttling of the German High Seas Fleet at Scapa Flow in 1919, survived the infamous Spanish Flu, served on *HMS Hood*, was one of the first to join *HMS Newfoundland*, and was present at the Dunkirk landings.

On several occasions his ships found their way to St. John's, including a visit by *HMS Newfoundland* in 1944.

Club Dinner Schedule May - August 2009

Friday, April 24

Monthly Weepers

with music and complimentary hor's d'oeuvres

Friday, May 1st, 2009

Special Battle of the Atlantic Weepers

with music and complimentary hor's d'oeuvres

Saturday, May 2nd, 2009

Battle of the Atlantic Dinner

Smoked Salmon Mousse
Carved Roast Beef
Belgian Chocolate Parfait
\$ 20.95

Sunday, May 10th, 2009

Mothers Day Brunch

\$24.95
Children age 6-12 - half price.
Under 6 - free.

Saturday, May 16th, 2009

Annual Flipper Dinner

Potato Bacon Chowder
Traditional Flipper Dinner
Apple Dumpling
\$ 20.95

Friday, May 29th, 2009

Monthly Weepers

with music and complimentary hor's d'oeuvres

Saturday, June 6th, 2009

Annual Lobster Dinner

Spinach Salad
Lobster Dinner
New York Style Cheese Cake
\$ 26.95

Friday, June 29th 2009

Monthly Weepers

with music and complimentary hor's d'oeuvres

Friday, July 31st, 2009

Monthly Weepers

with music and complimentary hor's d'oeuvres

Friday, August 28th 2009

Monthly Weepers

with music and complimentary hor's d'oeuvres

Dress Requirements for Club Dinners

Dress for dinner and special functions is 'dress of the day' for male serving members, or suit/sportsjacket/blazer with tie/ascot/turtleneck for civilian attire.

For ladies, 'dress of the day' for serving members, or dress/skirt/slacks/ for civilian attire.



April in Naval History

On April 10 and 13, 1940, the first and second Battles of Narvik were fought, following the German invasion of Norway. The Royal Navy attacked the German Kriegsmarine in the Narvik fjord, losing two of its destroyers and a further four to damages.

The Kriegsmarine fared much worse, losing ten destroyers, six cargo ships, one ammunition ship and one U-boat, with another four destroyers damaged.