



Scuttlebutt

Crow's Nest Officers' Club

January 2010

HMS Newfoundland Association Stands Down

In 1942, Newfoundlanders were encouraged to contribute money for the construction of its own colony class cruiser, *HMS Newfoundland*. From 1942 to 1959, *HMS Newfoundland* was engaged in action around the world, seeing battle numerous times and sinking at least one enemy ship. Her battle honours were Mediterranean, Sicily, Pacific, Malaysia and Suez.

With more than 500 members, the ship's association was one of the largest and most active in Britain. However, in the past few years it began to wind down and has finally closed shop. This fall association treasurer Alan Waite came to St. John's to present the association's kisbee ring to the Club and the ship's battle honours to *HMCS Cabot*. We hope that former members of the ship's company will continue to visit the Crow's Nest where the heart of the ship, its bell, is proudly on display.



Club President Gary Green accepts the kisbee ring from Treasurer Alan Waite of the HMS Newfoundland Association. An advertisement (above) urging Newfoundlanders to help the war effort.



The Bartlett Dinner



Marion Bartlett displays Captain Bob Bartlett's medals and a flag believed to have accompanied Perry on his 1909 expedition to the Pole.

Fall Presentations



Pat Mercer donated a copy of her father's WWII flight log, while Bill Graham presented the Club with a bottle of sand from Juno Beach.

“I hope to see my Pilot face to face, when I have crossed the bar.”

David Kenneth (Beetle) Bailey

A club member and active volunteer with the Crow's Nest Military Archives Association, Beetle passed away on October 4 after a brief illness. He was Treasurer of the CNMAA for a number of years and was Vice-President of the association at the time of his death.

Beetle was an industrial engineer and an employee of the National Research Council, where he worked for 20 years. He was a graduate of Nova Scotia Tech and a member of the Association of Professional Engineers of Newfoundland. He is predeceased by daughter Leah, who died earlier in 2009, and is survived by wife Patti and daughter Eva.

Robert Stephen Butler

Former Club President Robert Butler crossed the bar on July 27 at the age of 74. He was President of the Crow's Nest from 1975-77 and was living in BC at the time of his death.

Robert was a former officer of the Royal Canadian Engineers and spent his professional life in the engineering business. At one time he was also Commodore of the Royal Newfoundland Yacht Club. As an engineer he was involved in such major projects as the Old Man River Dam, the Confederation Bridge and the Calgary Light Rail Transit system.

He is survived by his wife Christine, five children and six grandchildren.

Commodore (Ret'd) Bruce S.C. Oland

Cmdre. Oland, RCNR, was a long-time supporter of the Crow's Nest as an out-of-town member. His military career spanned both war and peace. He served in the Army from 1933 to 1951 before enrolling in the RCN Reserve, where he qualified as a bridge watch-keeper in a number of ships before taking command of *HMCS Scotian*.

He was the first to be appointed Commodore in the Naval Reserve and was later appointed Naval Reserve Advisor to the Commander Maritime Command. Cmdre. Oland served in the CF until 1971 and was also well known for his community service. He died on August 6 in Halifax.

Herb Roberts

Herb was a radio operator in the Newfoundland Escort Force, serving in *HMCS Matapedia*, *HMCS Whitby* and *HMCS Burlington*.

He was present in *Matapedia* for the famous trip which resulted in the development of the pill to treat sea sickness. He was also in *Burlington* in company with *Equimalt* on her last voyage when she was torpedoed by U-190.

Herb was very generous with his memories and pictures and contributed greatly to our archives. Many of his wartime pictures can be viewed on line as part of our virtual museum site.

The address is:
www.virtualmuseum.ca

Report from the President by Gary Green

Happy New Year! I hope you and your family had a joyous holiday season and I wish you all the best for the coming year. What a fall season! Things got back in the swing with Doors Open which saw over 300 tour the Nest. Thanks to those members who volunteered as hosts and tour guides.

The Club received visits from two generals. Former CDS, retired General Rick Hillier, spent time in the Nest with Mark Critch recording an interview which was aired on the television program This Hour has 22 Minutes. The Chaplain General, Brigadier General David Kettle, and other military chaplains from across the country were in town for a series of meetings. They took time to have lunch in the Nest at which time General Kettle presented the Club with a plaque. We were pleased to be a part of their conference.

As you can see from the Membership Report, membership continues to rise. Furthermore, members are making greater use of the Club for their own private functions. All in all, it makes the Nest a very busy place indeed. Weepers and dinners were well attended. In fact, many of the dinners were sold out weeks in advance. The first dinner, our traditional Oktoberfest German buffet, marked the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of WWII and the capture of the first German ship in North American waters, the *SS Christoph van Doornum*. The ship's registration papers were on display and the after dinner talk relayed the events surrounding the capture of the ship and crew. Music was supplied by the Art Stoyles Band.

The Bartlett dinner commemorated Capt. Bob Bartlett's 1909 voyage to the Arctic with Perry. The dinner followed the program and menu of the original dinner held in New York in 1909 to honour Bartlett. Special attendees included members of the Bartlett family, and club members the

Honourable Edward Roberts, Chairperson of the Bartlett Celebrations, and Catherine Dempsey, Executive Director of the Historic Sites Association, organizers of the year-long celebrations. Club and family member Marion Bartlett very graciously brought along Captain Bartlett's medals and a flag from the expedition. Thanks to the Club members who entered into the spirit of the event and offered their versions of the 1909 toasts.

The *SS Caribou* dinner, based on the ship's menu, commemorated the ship's sinking by U-69 on October 14, 1942. Special guests included Percy and Beatrice Moores and Kevin Major. Percy is a survivor of the sinking and Kevin the author of *Lead Me Home*, a play about the sinking. It was the first time the two had met. After dinner they kept the members spellbound as they jointly told of the events surrounding that fateful trip.

Remembrance week was full of activity. At the veteran's lunch, RCMP Sergeant Barry Pitcher gave a fascinating presentation on his activities as a peace officer in Afghanistan. The work our national police force is doing in that country is amazing. Margaret Morris and I laid a wreath at the Merchant Marine and Navy War Memorial. At the Remembrance dinner Honorary Russian Consul, Dr. Stuart Durrant, spoke of the importance of the convoys to the defence of Russia. He thanked the club for its role in hosting cadets from the tall ship *Kruzenshtern* and said the reception was the best of any port visit anywhere in the world. Pat Mercer presented a copy of her father's WWII flight log and Bill Graham, recently returned from a battlefield tour of France, presented sand from Juno Beach. As usual, the Remembrance Day reception saw the Nest filled to capacity. In what is now a club tradition, music was supplied by veteran Bob Innes.

The Christmas Dinner was a great success with seasonal music

supplied by Eric West, Kevin McCann and Bob Innes. Dave Paddon performed his recitation of "The Christmas Turr" and had the audience in stitches. Mummers, including a hobby horse, even made an appearance. Thanks to the staff for the great decorating effort. The Nest has never looked better for the holidays.

The New Year was brought in with a New Year's Eve gala. Gayle Tapper provided wonderful music on her harp throughout dinner. The stroke of midnight was marked with bag pipes and bell ringing. What an awakening for the new decade! Thanks to Dr. David Allison for his fine piping.

We hope you find something in the winter schedule to your liking and come out to participate. 2010 is the Naval Centennial year with a variety of events planned throughout the year. Club members are eligible to attend some Navy functions as well as those open to the general public. We will keep you up to date via e-mail. I look forward to seeing you at the Nest and at Centennial events.

Scuttlebutt

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The Man Behind the *Wetaskiwin* Gun Shield

by Gary Green

As with the proverbial question of which came first, the chicken or the egg, there has been some debate about which came first, the gun shield art in the Nest or aboard ship. We now have the answer!

During the summer Cathy Chapman visited the Club and subsequently put us in touch with her father, Burnie Forbes, the artist who painted the *Wet Ass Queen* on *HMCS Wetaskiwin's* gun shield. I talked with him on the phone and got the story behind the painting.

Burnie joined *Wetaskiwin* in St. John's in 1942. The CO heard that he was an artist and asked him to paint a reproduction of the *Wet Ass Queen* painting then hanging in the Crow's Nest, on the ship's forward gun shield. It seems that the officers had removed the painting from the wardroom bulkhead to supply a suitable souvenir to the Nest as per Captain D's directive and now the ship was missing its favourite girl. At first, he was somewhat hesitant about "defacing" the ship but the CO persevered.

As a rating, he was not permitted in the Nest to see the painting so he asked the ship's officers and wardroom steward about it. Based on their descriptions, he did a preliminary drawing on paper, then painted the gun shield. Giving the Queen his own interpretation, he depicted her as a Queen of Hearts playing card.

Newfoundland weather and frequent trips to sea meant that it took some time before both sides of the gun shield were painted. Probably because of his painting skills, Burnie served in the ship for the remainder of hostilities, touching up the Queen as she needed it. He was generous with his talents, helping *Orillia* keep her gorilla in fine form as well.

Burnie says he has many fond memories of his time here and

that he is very honoured to have been made an honorary member of the Crow's Nest. We are very honoured to

have the man who painted the first gun shield as a member of the club!



Burnie Forbes, gun shield artist of *HMCS Wetaskiwin*, then and now.



The *Wet Ass Queen* as she appears on the Club's gun shield art.

by Cdr. Gary Reddy (reprinted from Scuttlebutt Jan. 2006)

Gun Shield Art - warships have a tradition when it comes to its gunners. They immortalize their ship by painting art onto the main armament gun shield. One of those was *HMCS Wetaskiwin*.

The Flower class corvette *HMCS Wetaskiwin* was commissioned at Esquimalt on December 17, 1940. She was the first west coast built corvette to enter service. She patrolled out of Esquimalt until March 17, 1941, when she left for the Atlantic. She arrived at Halifax on April 13th and left on May 23th for St. John's where she became one of the founding members of the Newfoundland Expeditionary Force. In June she escorted her first convoy, HX.130 to Iceland.

During the next eight months she completed eight round trips with East bound convoys. She returned to Halifax on January 24, 1942 and in February commenced a major refit at Liverpool, NS. After working up in May she joined EG C-3, arriving in Londonderry on June 5th for the first time while escorting convoy HX.191.

During this period *Wetaskiwin* participated in two major convoy actions, SC.42 (Sept 1941) and SC.48 (Oct 1941). On July 31, 1942, while escorting ON.115, she shared with *Skeena* the sinking of U-588. In mid-January, 1943 she arrived at Liverpool, NS for refit, followed by further repairs in Halifax on March 9th. In May 1943, she joined EG C-5, and that December went to Galveston, Texas for an extended refit, including the extension of her foc'sle. On March 6, 1944 she returned briefly to Halifax before proceeding to Bermuda for work-ups in April.

Returning northward she joined C-5. *Wetaskiwin* left Londonderry on Sept 23 for the last time to join EG W-7, WLEF, for the remainder of the war. She paid off at Sorel, Quebec on June 19, 1945 and was sold to the Venezuelan Navy, who renamed her *Victoria*. *HMCS Wetaskiwin* was discarded in 1962.



Burnie Forbes and his artwork on board *HMCS Wetaskiwin* circa 1942.



Calling Old Shipmates to Corvette Duty

During 2010, the Marine Institute will create a series of realistic and immersive simulation scenarios that will allow people to experience the actions of a World War II-era corvette escorting a convoy across the North Atlantic.

The simulations will be open to the general public, commencing

with the Battle of the Atlantic and running during the Centenary celebrations of Canada's Navy.

Old shipmates are sought to act as watchkeepers, captains, communicators, helmsmen and lookouts to add to the realism of the scenario (especially if they can still fit into

their blues and know how to use a voice pipe).

This is a good opportunity for the old farts to show the youngsters how it's done. Contact LCdr Barry Walsh at 570-4722 or Lt(N) Shannon Lewis-Simpson at 570-4546 for further details.

New Year's Blowout



Dr. David Allison pipes in the New Year at the Crow's Nest gala.

1st Annual Naval Lecture Series

On Wednesday, 24 February at 7:30 pm, Dr. Mark Hunter will discuss the Royal Naval Reserve Newfoundland Division at Hampton Hall, Marine Institute.

Questions and coffee to follow. Dr. Hunter is the author of *To Employ and Uplift Them: The Newfoundland Naval Reserve, 1899-1926* (2009).



Welcome Aboard to New Members

In Town

Dr. Christopher Youe, David Newman, Rev. Bruce Kearley, Dave Rudofsky, Haakon Helmersmo, Dr. Rob Shea, Eleanor Dawson, Don Hiscock, Karl Kenny, Ruby Beaumont, Dorian Rowe, Robert Benson, J.W. (Jack) Lavers, Jon Garvin, Wayne Ludlow

Out of Town

Andrew Street, Northampton, UK
Michael Fabricant, MP, Lichfield, UK
Brady McDonald, Barrie, ON
Lt(N) Paul Roquet, Kanata, ON
Mark Curtis, Fort Lauderdale, FL
Kenneth Robinson, Daytona Beach, FL
Dr. Chris Peddle, Carbonear, NL
Constance Urban, Corner Brook, NL
Cdr Baxter Park, Lakeside, NS
BGen David Kettle, Ottawa, ON
Cdr Robert Humble, Winnipeg, MB
Brian LeBlanc, Bright's Grove, ON
Paul Pitcher, Comox, BC

Bob Hemeon, Point Leamington, NL
David Patrick, Norfolk, UK
Barry Hexton, Katy, TX
Geoffery Kimbrough, Katy, TX
John Shubert, Covington, LA
Frank Roberts, Calgary, AB
Charles Bernstein, Portland, CT
Jack Burke, Medford, NJ
Capt(N) (Ret'd) Frank Hope, Halifax, NS

Lt(N) Stephen Kaufman, Halifax, NS
Jedinger Singh, Grand Bank, NL
Andy Booth, North Yorks, UK
Geoffery Kimbrough, Katy, TX
Luke Eaton, Katy, TX
Steven Butler, Houston, TX
Dr. Les Cook, Winnipeg, MB
Dr. Allan Neilsen, Halifax, NS
Peter Bartolo, Occidental, CA
Burnie Forbes, Smith Falls, ON

Life

Col. John Fletcher, Ottawa, ON

Crow's Nest Military Artefacts Association

Busy Season for Acquisitions & Inquiries

by Gary Green

First, it is with great regret that I must report that our long-time treasurer and most recently vice-president, David "Beetle" Bailey, crossed the bar in September. Beetle did hours of behind the scenes work to ensure that the various grants and projects were administered well. His presence, enthusiasm and dedication are sadly missed.

The fall has been busy. Artefacts received in the summer and fall are being catalogued and placed either on display or in storage, as space allows. Among the items received since the last report are unit and ships' badges, log books, art work, the kisbee ring from the HMS Newfoundland Association and sand from Juno Beach. Thank you to all of our generous donors.

The association continued to conduct research on the Nest and the Battle of the Atlantic in general. We were particularly pleased to have made contact with Burnie Forbes who painted the famous Wet Ass Queen on *HMCS Wetaskiwin's* gunshield. More information appears in a separate article. We participated in a two-part CBC radio program on the outbreak of World War Two and the capture of the *SS Christoph van Dornum*. Several cadet corps visited the Nest for presentations and tours. We answered inquiries from people seeking information on their family's involvement with wartime St. John's and the Nest. We also contributed material to three new books related to our naval and military history. The books should be out in the next year. It is great to see

the archives being used in this manner.

We have started work on a new acquisitions policy to ensure that we are properly managing the collection. In addition, we have started a review of the collection report prepared for us by Museum Association of Newfoundland and Labrador. The report outlines a number of measures to be taken to help preserve the artifacts. Funds from membership fees and donations are being used to address some of the issues raised. With our small group of busy volunteers, I expect it will take some time to complete the work. If you would like to become actively involved in some of the projects, please let us know. Our regular monthly meetings take place at 10:00 am on the last Saturday of the month in the Crow's Nest.

Christmas 2009 at the Crow's Nest



Guitarist Eric West accompanies vocalist Kevin McCann and Club member Bob Innes on piano.



Mummers board the Club, along with the fearsome Hobby Horse. Watch out for those teeth!

Club Dinner Schedule Jan. - April 2010

Saturday January 23rd, 2010

68th Anniversary Dinner
Potato and Corn Chowder
Choice of
Salmon with a Peppered Strawberry
Sauce
Shaved Striploin
Calvados Apple Chicken
New York Cheesecake with a
Blueberry Sauce
\$ 22.95

Friday January 29th, 2010

Weepers
Music and Complimentary Hor's
D'oeuvres
6-8 p.m.

Saturday February 6th, 2010

Corvette's Wake
Spinach Salad
Pork Loin in a Mustard Cream Sauce
Apple Dumpling with a Bailey's
Custard
\$ 22.95

Saturday February 20th, 2010

Tiger Shrimp Cocktail
Choice of
Pan Fried Cod
Chicken in a Champagne Cream Sauce
Traditional Turkey Dinner
Two Tone Orange and Chocolate
Parfait
\$ 22.95

Friday February 26th, 2010

Weepers
Music and Complimentary Hor's
D'oeuvres
6-8 p.m.

Saturday March 13th, 2010

St. Patrick's Day Irish Buffett
An Assortment of Irish Traditional
Recipes served Buffet Style
\$ 26.95

Friday March 26th, 2010

Weepers
Music and Complimentary Hor's
D'oeuvres
6-8 p.m.

Saturday March 27th, 2010

Smoked Salmon Mousse
Spring Lamb Dinner
(slowly roasted in rosemary and served
with homemade mint sauce)
Pear Strudel with Homemade Ice
Cream
\$ 22.95

Saturday April 10th, 2010

Newfoundland History Dinner
An Array of Traditional Newfoundland
Themed Menu Items served Buffet
Style
\$ 26.95

Friday April 30th, 2010

Weepers
Music and Complimentary Hor's
D'oeuvres
6-8 p.m.

Themed Dinners for Winter 2010

There are a number of themed dinners planned for the winter season. January 23 will be the 68th Anniversary Dinner. February 6 will be our annual tribute to the corvettes. This year we have some new items which will bring special significance to the event.

Get your dancin' boots out for the Paddy's Party on March 13. On April 10 we will have our annual historic costumed event. This year it is pirates and privateers. Come as a character from our history - Bart Roberts, Gilbert Pike, Peter Easton, Francis Farrington Spriggs, Ned Lowe, Princess Sheila or Lady Kelligrew. Food will be a buffet selection from the "Golden Age of Piracy".

Please see the dinner schedule for menu selections. Remember to

book early. Many of our fall themed dinners were sold out long before the event dates.

Dress Code/Start Times for 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.

Please note that dinners begin at 1900 for 1930 hours.

Members in the News

Club member and owner of Running The Goat Press, **Dr. Marnie Parsons**, has teamed up with fellow Crow and author **David Paddon** to produce a limited edition of his famous work, *The Christmas Turr*. Printed on hand-made paper, it is available at bookstores or from the publisher.

Club member **Robert Stack** has been appointed a Justice of the Supreme Court in Labrador. He was sworn in on Jan. 11, but with effect from Nov. 2009. Congratulations Mr. Justice Stack!