



July 2011

Club to Launch Building Restoration Campaign

The executive committee of the Crow's Nest has approved a fundraising campaign to meet the costs of much-needed restoration and upgrades to the building. Details will be rolled out in the fall, in advance of work on the building beginning in the spring of 2012.

The need for renovation work was made clear in a report commissioned by the Crow's Nest Military Artefacts Association (CNMAA) in 2009. A preservation assessment carried out in cooperation with the Museum Association of NL highlighted major problems in the building with regard to UV exposure, temperature and relative humidity.

The assessment, conducted by conservator Miki Lee, covered all relevant areas of the building, including bar and dining room levels, stairwell, lobby and office. Among other things, the report concluded that "failure to take appropriate measures to protect the historic collection is a failure to act as a careful steward. Such failure has costs beyond purely monetary considerations, although these in themselves can be significant."

The Club's Board of Directors moved to address the list of deficiencies, beginning with an air exchange system.

However, as initial work was carried out, it was discovered that the interior walls themselves were deteriorated and were contaminated with lead-based paint. This drove estimates of cost to levels that were unsupportable by the normal budget for repairs.

While the Club is financially secure, using its cash reserves for the restoration would deplete the vault and leave little for unexpected expenditures. The executive committee has therefore decided that, in cooperation with CNMAA, the Crow's Nest will recruit a fundraising chairperson from within the Club who will explore all options and coordinate the effort. The funding target has yet to be set, but personal and corporate donations, government grants, bequests, and other strategies will be considered.

Persons or companies wishing to contribute to the fund will receive a receipt for tax deduction purposes from the CNMAA. More details on the Crow's Nest Building Restoration Fund can be expected in the fall.

The executive committee wishes to stress that while a campaign chair will spearhead the effort, every member of the Club can help preserve the building and its contents.

New Club Executive for 2011-2012



Pictured following the AGM are (L-R): Vice-President Gary Walsh, Treasurer Margaret Morris, Past President Gary Green, and President Tony Dearness. Missing from photo is Derek Yetman, Club Secretary.

Report from the President by Tony Dearness

I am privileged to have been elected President of the Crow's Nest. The Club is at a time in its history when we have a solid core of active members and supporters, a strong reputation within the province as a historic monument, a place of nostalgia for veterans and their families from around the world, and a touchstone for serving naval officers as a memorable part of naval history. This reflects well on the leadership of the Club over the years, most recently, from Gary Green.

In May, I had the honour of representing the Crow's Nest at a commemoration of the Battle of the Atlantic, at Londonderry in Northern Ireland. There were 30 other Canadians, including four veterans, from *HMCS Sackville* in Halifax and the NOAC branches in Nova Scotia and Alberta. At the Church of Ireland, Fahan, near Lough Swilly, we remembered the 21 Newfoundland seamen of the 344 who died in the sinking of the *HMS Laurentic* in January 1917. We also attended a church parade at the Londonderry Garrison Church of the Royal Navy, All Saints Clooney's, where wreaths were also laid; Club member James Flynn carried the Newfoundland and Labrador flag. Otherwise, we were well hosted by the Royal Naval Association Londonderry Branch, both at the Tower Museum where the Newfie-Derry Bell is located and for a commemorative dinner. In 2013 in Londonderry, there is to be an international commemoration of the Battle of the Atlantic, an event that some of our members are already anticipating.

In the past month, the Chief of Maritime Staff, Vice Admiral Dean McFadden, presented to the Club a framed display of the flag of the Centenary of the Royal Canadian Navy in 2010. Admiral McFadden emphasized the long connection between the Navy and the Club; this

is a significant message the Navy relays to new officers.

This will be a busy year for the Club. Since the annual meeting was held, the executive has decided to undertake fund-raising to ensure that extensive planned renovations are done so that the Club's funds remain healthy. In conjunction with the Crow's Nest Military Artefacts Association, we will

explore opportunities for public funding and individual donations over the coming months.

Let's keep the Club a vibrant organization. I encourage members - in and out of town - to bring your friends and visitors throughout the week and for regular Friday lunches. Stay tuned for the roster of special dinner events for the fall.

Welcome Aboard to New Members

In Town :

Lorna Miles-Baum, Richard Alexander, Sean Coady, Lt(N) John Chapman, Brian Warren, Dr. Chris Patey, Dr. Frank O'Dea, John Collins, Dale Jarvis, Jane Rutherford, Kathleen Hodgkinson, John Savage, Marty Gaulin, Marilyn Mullins, Dr. Ronald F. Whelan, Glenn Mifflin, Jeremy Charles, David Gilbert, Garry Best, Paul Adams, Wardroom of *HMCS CABOT*

Out of Town :

Thomas Paddon, HV-GB, NL
Shawn Banfield, Gloucester, ON
Andrew Banfield, Ottawa, ON
Douglas Meredith, Ottawa, ON
Robert Chan, Mississauga, ON
Ian Cavanagh, Hammonds Plains, NS
Calvin Gosse, Hammonds Plains, NS
George Dalton, Harbour Main, NL
Ian Richards, Toronto, ON
Joan Dewling, Vancouver, BC
Diane Levings, Vancouver, BC
Robert Stobart, Australia
John C. Oland, Dartmouth, NS
Carl Doty, Yarmouth, NS
Shawn Philpott, Toronto, ON
Daniel Sooley, Aurora, ON
James Stanton, Labrador City, NL
Prashant Pathak, Toronto, ON
Michael Simonetta, Toronto, ON
Paul Atkinson, Toronto, ON
Yousry Bissada, Toronto, ON
W. Edward Gettings, Toronto, ON

Paul Damp, Toronto, ON
John O'Brien, Ottawa, ON
LCdr (Ret'd) Alan Williams, NS
Alf Webb, Mill Bay, BC
Thomas Brown, Victoria, BC

Life :

Cdr Richard Oland, Halifax, NS



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Club Secretary

**Please support the
Crow's Nest
Building Restoration
Fund**

Greetings from an Australian Veteran

Dear Secretary and Members,

Please find enclosed a photo of me and one of the veterans village personnel. This was taken on April 24, which is known here as Anzac Day, which speaks for itself. This day is used to commemorate Gallipoli, a big day for Australians and New Zealanders.

Every Anzac Day is a public holiday, but today all nations join the big marches that take place in all communities. In Sydney the march starts at 9 a.m. with the Navy in the lead, followed by the Army, the Air Force, and then all miscellaneous others, even foreigners. It takes close on to 2 p.m. and rain does not do anything to deter them.

My rig that you see includes *HMS Malaya* tie. Left side: top, Royal Australian Legion badge, followed by the Crow's Nest badge, medals with RAL crest on jacket pocket. Right side: name plate with Royal Navy and Royal Australian Navy miniatures.



I hope the information is useful to you. It may or may not but there it is. I am sorry to say that I don't think I will be over at anytime but regards to all and best wishes.

From Bob Stobart to all.

Editor's note: Mr. Stobart served on *HMS Tweed* on convoy duty, and was recently made an honorary member of the Crow's Nest.

Treasurer's Report

by LCdr Margaret Morris

As I reported at the AGM, the club's net income for 2010-11 was on a par with previous years. Membership was up yet again, with an increase of in-town members. Out-of-town membership has remained the same. The club now has over 430 dues-paying members.

This year's membership invoices are out and I am confident we have another good year coming up. As in the past, if there are any problems with your invoice, please let me know via a letter, an email or a phone call. All contact information is on the reverse of your membership card.

I have recently discovered that early membership payments are not always recorded properly. I use a QuickBooks software program. Early payments are recorded as a credit but then I have to actually apply it to a member's account. Who knew? I'm a naval officer and not a trained accountant so this caught me by surprise. I think I have now corrected most of these errors. If there is any doubt, please contact me. Thanks to several members for bringing this to my attention.

Enjoy your summer. See you at the Nest!



This Month in Naval History - 1941

President F. D. Roosevelt declared that Iceland was under the protection of the USA, and that American shipping would be protected by its warships. The move effectively brought the United States into the Battle of the Atlantic.

CMS Presents Naval 100th Anniversary Gift to Club



The Chief of Maritime Staff, VAdm Dean McFadden (R) recently presented the Crow's Nest with a commemorative flag to mark the Canadian Navy's 100th anniversary. Pictured as well are Cdr Larry Jones (L), CO of CFS St. John's, and CPO Herman Harris.

Battle of the Atlantic Veteran Recalls His Experience

by John Moyes

In September of last year the Crow's Nest had a memory lane visit from two British sailors who served in convoy escorts and chose to make a last trip to St. John's. The week-long visits were part of a British government scheme to allow veterans of WWII to return to a favourite place overseas where they had served. Canadian government, please note!

For the next Scuttlebutt, I will tell you about Robbie Robinson, who had an eventful story to tell of the early Atlantic Battle. For now, however, I will introduce you to John and Margaret Laundon of Northampton, England. They arrived early in September, and were guests of the City for a day, accompanied by Kevin Gushue, Director of Tourism for St. John's. After they met with Mayor Dennis O'Keefe, the Nest hosted a lunch for them.

Later Magda and I took them around the downtown looking for landmarks John might recognize, particularly the home of a Miss Steele, who entertained John and a fellow officer to musical evenings playing the piano while they accompanied on flute and vocal parts. Unfortunately, we did not find the house, which John said was a long walk from *HMS Icarus*. Perhaps our readers will remember a Miss Steele who was a music teacher.

I quote, as follows, from John's own written war record:

"During the first week of September 2010, Margaret and I enjoyed an eagerly awaited visit to St. John's. No one who had sailed on the Atlantic convoy escorts could fail having affectionate remembrances of the place. Hearts lifted as you sailed through the Narrows into that beautiful natural harbour. Here was welcome and relief especially after a poor crossing. Here too was the kindness and hospitality of the St. John's folk.

The sight of the Narrows still gave a thrill and although there were changes

round the fringes of the harbour the kind and gracious spirit of the people hadn't changed. We were overwhelmed by the welcome we were given. And so a special word of thanks for our invitation and honorary membership of the Crow's Nest Club. We regard this as a privilege. An extra special thank you to John and Margaret (Magda). They were so attentive doing everything they could to make our visit memorable. We enjoyed their hospitality and we enjoyed being chauffeured around St. Johns and its environs. We have become so much aware of what St. Johns is and the history that has made it such a great place. I am so glad we came back. My experience of the war in the Atlantic was of relative short time but the ship I was on had its moments.

This is my story: In 1942, aged nineteen, I joined the Royal Navy having indicated a wish to serve in the medical branch. After hospital training I was deployed in the Sick Bay, a Royal Marine Training Camp. This I found

very undemanding; very soon to become most unsatisfying, something to be endured. Eventually relief came by my being drafted to Portsmouth Barrack there to await a ship. So it was a happy day that saw me on my way to join *HMS Icarus* for a life at sea. Formerly a Fleet Destroyer, *Icarus* was refitting and recommissioning as an A/S Destroyer eventually joining the 2nd Canadian Escort Group.

This is year 1942/3. The experience of those years already passed, together with more efficient HF/DR Radar and Asdics, more ships and thus more escort vessels, long range aircraft and the closing of the gap in mid Atlantic had helped in reducing the U-boat menace.

The early months of 1943 were fairly quiet. On 16th September the Group left the UK on ON202 bound for New York. Three days later it merged with convoy ONS18 on its way to Halifax. The following day saw the start of several days of attacks.

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Margaret and John Laundon at Cape Spear in September of last year.

New Reciprocal Club Agreements

by LCdr Margaret Morris

The Crow's Nest is pleased to announce that we have entered into three new reciprocal arrangements with other private clubs. The guidelines for use of reciprocal clubs are as follows:

- a. Each Club will provide its members with a current membership card and or letter of introduction for each visit;
- b. All visiting members are expected to comply with House Rules and By Laws of the Club visited;
- c. The visited Club reserves the right to deny or revoke a visitor's privileges on such grounds it deems fit; and
- d. All expenses incurred by the visiting members must be settled in cash or via accepted credit card.

The contact information for these new Clubs are:

The National Club
303 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M5H 2R1
Telephone: (416) 364-3247
Fax: (416) 364-5666
Website: www.thenationalclub.com

Royal Canadian Horse Artillery
Brigade Association
193 Ontario Street
Kingston, ON K7L 2Y7
Telephone: (613) 542-8152
Fax: (613) 542-3797
Website: www.rcha@kos.net

The Union Club
125 Germain Street
PO Box 7030, Station A
Saint John, NB E2L 4S4
Telephone: (506) 634-6184
Website: www.unionclub.ca

The Crow's Nest has many other reciprocal agreements with clubs and military institutes in Canada. A complete list is available on our website. As well, the following two clubs are open to members when travelling to the UK:

Naval and Military (In and Out) Club
4 St. James Square
London, UK SW1 Y4J4

The Naval Club
38 Hill Street, Mayfair
London, UK W1X 8DP



Veteran Recalls Battle of the Atlantic cont'd from p. 4

The U-boats were equipped with new acoustic homing torpedoes for use against the naval escorts. They proved successful, the destroyer *HMCS St. Croix*, frigate *HMS Itchen*, the corvette *HMS Polyanthus* were sunk, the frigate *HMS Lagon* was badly damaged. *Icarus* was fortunate in having had a torpedo that actually passed beneath it. Six merchant ships were sunk.

This engagement came to a close by the convoy becoming enveloped in a thick fog. But this did cause the *Drumheller* to wander off station and so to be in collision with *Icarus*. Fortunately no injuries, no serious damage.

In the midst of the action on 20/21 September, we heard on the BBC Radio News that Churchill, speaking in the House of Commons on that day, had said that even as he spoke a convoy was being attacked in the North Atlantic.

Serious medical emergencies needing the skill and knowledge of a qualified doctor always came to *Icarus*. During the period of twelve months two

cases of appendicitis resulted in successful operations being performed on the table in the P.O.'s mess. Both the patients had to be transferred from other ships.

One of the appendix victims, desperately in need of hospital nursing, was prevented from being taken back to Londonderry because the convoy became under attack, and as a result the sailor died.

In March 1944 as the Group was on its way to join convoy HX287, *Fennel* made an underwater contact, later discovered to be U744. After being pursued and depth charged for thirty hours, U744 surfaced on 6th March. The crew scrambled out and was met by small arms fire from the escorts. This ceased when the crew simply took to the water: It was a surrender. Some of the wounds caused by the earlier firing were quite serious. The depth of shock caused by spending time in such cold water meant that it took several hours for the injured to

recover sufficiently for our being able to start treating their wounds.

Unsuccessful attempts were made to take the U744 in tow. The weather was bad and the water becoming rough, she had to be destroyed; this by a torpedo from *Icarus*. A German U-boat sunk by a British torpedo! The wreck of U744, sunken on 6th March 1944, is in map reference 52.01N, 22.37 W.

Shortly after this, *Icarus* transferred to an escort group in Plymouth deployed in A/S sweeps in the English Channel in preparation for the Normandy landings and to provide defence of the coastal convoys. Final success for *Icarus* came on the 21st January 1945 in the sinking of U1199 during the escorting of a coastal convoy.

Icarus was paid off in July, thus bringing to an end nearly ten years of honourable service. Its motto was *Ben Eat Tentare* - "It is as well to try".

Recently Crossed the Bar ...

Robert C. A. Croucher-Wiles

Former President and staunch champion of the Crow's Nest, Bob passed away on March 2 at the age of 63. Also a member of the Newfoundland Naval Officers' Association, he is survived by wife Andrea Pinhey.

Ruby Dewling

Passed away on January 24, the first female full member of the Crow's Nest. Ruby was a veteran of WWII and went on to a distinguished career in nursing education. The Club has made a donation to her memorial scholarship in nursing at MUN.

Jean E. C. Lewis

Jean passed away on February 13 at the age of 91, leaving to mourn many relatives and friends in Britain and Canada. Jean was active in the St. John Ambulance and the Janeway Children's Hospital Foundation.

Patricia Mary Kathleen Allston

Veteran of WWII, charter member of the Catholic Women's League at St. Pius X, and wife of long-time member Jack Allston, Patricia passed away on June 18 at the age of 86. She leaves to mourn children David, Mark and Peter.

Albert Edgar Hickman

Passed away on June 13 at the age of 70, leaving to mourn wife Karen and children Kim, Bert and Jonathan. Albert was a Club member, a prominent St. John's citizen and president of Hickman Motors, among other business interests.

Dr. David Gordon Landells

Passed away on February 28 at the age of 87, David served as a surgeon in the Royal Navy and was a long-time member of the Club. He served as Chief of Orthopaedics at the Janeway Hospital for nearly half a century.

Medal Donation to the Club



Mrs. Amelia Green, widow of veteran John Green, has presented her husband's Battle of the Atlantic medals to the Crow's Nest. The presentation was made at the recent 70th anniversary dinner of the Newfoundland Escort Force.

Thanks from the Past President by Gary Green

It has been an incredible two years! I consider it a great honour and privilege to have been allowed to serve as your president. As I said when I came into the position, I owe a big thanks to my children for my membership. It has truly been a life changing gift. A big thanks goes to my wife, Ruth, for her support and co-hosting of many functions. I could not have done it without her. I also owe a big thank you to the executive and board for their support and effort. The board has worked hard to provide services to members and to maintain the property. I hope that the growth in membership and increased attendance at various functions is an indication that we did and continue to do some things right.

As I have said many times, the unsung heroes of the club are Margaret Morris and Gary Walsh. They do incredible work day to day that keeps the Club functioning smoothly. Thanks to Red Oak for their

cooperation on the many functions and for a great staff who do an outstanding job of welcoming and serving members and guests.

Last but not least, thanks to everyone for your support. It is your patronage and input that allows the Club to function. I am always inspired by Admiral Sir Percy Noble who, during WWII, said that the Crow's Nest is more than a social club. It is the repository of the legend and lore of the brave men who saved not only Britain but perhaps freedom itself. The Club has to preserve that heritage not only to honour those who served in the Battle of the Atlantic but those who are currently serving to bring peace to the world. There is no doubt that from the comments of serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces and those of other countries, you are making that happen. Let us hope that it continues for future generations.

See you at the Club!

AGM Produces New Slate of Officers

It is with regret that I must report that Robert Croucher-Wiles, a past president of both CNMAA and CNOC, has crossed the bar. Robert was always a very strong supporter of the association and was committed to preserving the artefacts and the Club's history.

The annual meeting of the CNMAA was held in April. The executive members for the coming year are Gary Green, president; Margaret Morris, vice president; Norm Macfie, treasurer and Debra Murray, secretary. The association has a busy year ahead. Among the items on the agenda are revisions to some of the policies, artefact preservation, renovations to the Crow's Nest and establishment of a committee to coordinate the writing of a new book.

The proposed renovations to the Crow's Nest are needed to help protect and preserve the artefacts. A review by a professional conservator identified several areas of concern and the renovations are being done to address them. Funding is critical for the project. Those wishing to contribute to the project may make cheques payable to the CNMAA. Tax receipts will be issued.

Every few years a book is produced to record the history of the Crow's Nest, its artefacts and people. Volunteers are needed to assist with all aspects of book production - research, writing, layout, editing, etc. If you are interested in helping out, please e-mail me at cnmaassoc@ymail.com.

We have received a number of new artefacts and books. Thank you to all our donors.

Vice Admiral Dean McFadden was in town recently to speak at the annual oil and gas conference. He took time out of his busy schedule to present a Navy Centennial Flag which will be displayed in the dining room. We were delighted to receive artefacts

from veterans and their families. Edgar Pennefather, ex *HMCS St. Croix*, was in town to visit his family. He presented us with a copy of his wartime diary which details some of his adventures at sea and ashore while stationed in Newfyjohn, the wartime RCN term for St. John's. Because he stayed behind to write his examinations for promotion, Mr. Pennefather missed the fateful voyage in which *St. Croix* was lost with all except one hand.

Amelia Green, widow of long-time member John Green, presented his war medals at the Battle of the Atlantic Dinner. This is the first set of Battle of

the Atlantic medals to be presented to the association.

CNMAA is always looking for new members. You can join one of our working groups or just support our efforts with your membership dues. Membership fees are tax deductible. Membership is \$15.00 for regular member, \$30.00 for sustaining member, and \$100.00 for patron. Patrons receive a complimentary print reproduced by kind permission from the Canadian War Museum. Cheques may be forwarded to the Crow's Nest Military Artefacts Association, PO Box 32161, St. John's, NL, A1B 4J9.



Veterans and members Bob Innes and John Trafford swap stories at the Crow's Nest. Bob served in the Canadian Army during the war, while John was a member of the Newfoundland Escort Force.



Here's Bob again as he cuts the cake marking the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the Newfoundland Escort Force in 1941. John was unable to attend.

New Barber Pole Plaque Acquired by Gary Green

Earlier this spring we received an e-mail offering the CNMAA a Barber Pole (BP) plaque from *HMCS Wetaskiwin* which was previously unknown to us. Prior to the e-mail, our belief was that the original six ships in the Barber Pole Brigade (officially on the books as Group C-3), *HMC Ships Agassiz, Galt, Skeena, Sackville, Saguenay, Wetaskiwin*, each had a barber pole plaque displayed in the ship. Over the years, we acquired four of the six plaques and placed them on display in the Nest. In our search for the remaining two, we did not expect to find a possible whole new series.

The new plaque raised a number of questions. As can be seen in the accompanying photo, this brigade is referred to as the Griffon (sic) Barber Pole Brigade comprised of *HMS Dianthus, HMC Ships Arvida, Kitchener, Kootenay, Ottawa* and *Wetaskiwin*. Why was it called the Griffon Barber Pole Brigade? The plaque lists C-5 rather than C-3 as the Barber Pole Brigade's group. Why the change?

Answers to our questions came from LCdr. (Ret'd) David Freeman, our go-to-guy for information on HMCS nomenclature and insignia, and Cdr. Larry Jones, the Commanding Officer of CFS St. John's.

According to David, *HMS Griffin* was turned over the RCN in March, 1943. The new CO, Cdr. H.F. Pullen, felt strongly that in recognition of the war record of the present *Griffin* and her 10 predecessors since 1588, she should be renamed *HMCS Griffin*. Naval Services HQ did not agree. On March 20th, Pullen went ahead and commissioned the ship *HMCS Griffin* anyway. However, NSHQ stood firm and on April 10th her name was changed to *HMCS Ottawa*. Pullen felt strongly that *Griffin* should not be forgotten and had numerous red griffins painted all over the ship including the funnel. As was often the case, ships and personnel were moved from one escort group to another and

when *Wetaskiwin* and several officers of ships in the old C-3 group were moved to ships in C-5 the CO of the senior ship, *Ottawa*, decided to adopt the BP insignia and thus the red and white BP band appears over the red griffin forming the insignia for the "new" BP brigade.

According to Cdr. Jones, a former Executive Officer in the modern day *HMCS Ottawa*, the red griffin still appears all over the vessel and like

other ships in the Atlantic fleet, she sports the BP band. The new *Wetaskiwin* plaque is interesting for two other features. It has a different gunshield cartoon than the one commonly seen and this is the only artefact in our collection which we can connect to *HMCS Kitchener*, the ship in which Lt Surgeon Anthony Paddon (later Lt. Gov. of NL) served when he wrote the famous BP song.

The plaque is a great addition to the collection and the hunt is now on for the remaining BP plaques in the two sets. Help with locating any additional plaques is greatly appreciated.

Club Remains Open Over the Summer

While there are no dinners or special events planned over the summer months, the Club remains open and Super Weepers continues on the last Friday evening of each month.

Hours of operation are: Monday-Thursday 1600-1930, Friday 1200-2000, Saturday 1400-2000. The Club is closed on Sun-days and Mondays.

Themed dinners resume in September. Look for a full slate of dinners in the September issue of Scuttlebutt.

