

Heritage and Archives
Newsletter
February, 2012

February has come to an end which means only a few weeks to go before spring arrives (at least on the calendar!).

It has been very busy here at the Archives throughout the month. There were a number of repeat visitors carrying out research on their individual projects.

Once again, the Heritage and Archives hosted its annual Open House to celebrate National Heritage Day. This event took place on Wednesday, 22nd February between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. in the Court House, Baddeck. The National theme this year was the generation of electric power. This was covered briefly regarding the first power generated within the village of Baddeck back in 1927. Norman Bethune, Sr., local businessman and garage owner provided electric power to homes in the village by operating a generator from his garage. At dusk, the power would be switched on and turned off at midnight each night. He carried on providing electricity to the village until it went into the Provincial domain.

As this is a very important milestone for Queen Elizabeth in that she is celebrating her Diamond Jubilee year, we decided to use this occasion for our main theme for Heritage Day. There was a display set up with publications (magazines and books), photographs and other memorabilia pertaining to her coronation and other aspects of her life. Members of the Baddeck and Area Historical Society generously brought in items for the display. Many thanks to Donnie and Margot Macaulay of Baddeck Bay for their great contribution in enhancing the display. There was a special guest speaker for the afternoon in the person of Joy “The Royal” Doyle, a regular contributor to the local CBC Information Morning programme, who is an aficionado of the British Royal families. She gave a most informative and entertaining talk to the attendees which totaled over 30 people – quite a good turn out despite the rather inclement weather that afternoon.

The Heritage Cape Breton Connection held its monthly board meeting in the Court House on Friday, 24th at 10:00 a.m. Members of the board who come from all around the island have sort of adopted Baddeck as its regular meeting place because of its central location. The second phase of “Voices of Heritage” will be underway very shortly. Two individuals have been hired to carry out phase two and we learned that our deadline for the project has been extended to the end of June which should allow ample time for completion. The board is sending a letter to the Cape Breton Victoria Regional School Board protesting their decision to cancel the annual Heritage Fair. We will await their reply in the near future. The next meeting of the board will be held on Friday, 23rd March.

The monthly article appearing in the local newspaper **The Victoria Standard** for February was a story about a vice-regal visit back in 1897 by the then Governor General of Canada. The Honourable John Campbell Hamilton-Gordon, 1st Marquess of

Aberdeen. Lord Aberdeen was the G.G for a period of five years from 1893 to 1898. During that time, he travelled extensively throughout the country. He was best known for transforming the role of Governor General from that of an aristocrat representing the monarchy to a more down to earth type of person who represented the interests of all citizens. During his visit to Baddeck with his wife, Lady Ishbel Hamilton-Gordon, and daughter, Lady Margory, he and his family were entertained by the Bell's and also the Baddeck Public Library Society. The society organized and hosted an afternoon tea which was held in the library (formerly, the Congregational Church located on the main street). Charles McCurdy, a young man at that time, was selected to escort the Lady Margory from the Court House to the tea party and to attend her as her gentleman in waiting during the visit. The Bell's two daughters were assigned to be her female companions. Mr. McCurdy had a long association with the county in that he served as clerk/treasurer for a period of thirty-three years from 1922 to 1955.

This is going to be a busy year for the Municipality as 2012 is Municipal Election year. The election will take place on Saturday, 20th October. That seems quite a long way off, however, there is a great deal of preparation before the actual voting day.

That is the news from the Heritage and Archives Department for February. Happy St. Patrick's Day (everyone is Irish on St. Pat's day). Looking forward to reporting back at the end of March.