

Heritage/Archives Newsletter September, 2009

September sped by at such a rate that it is hard to believe that October has now arrived. The weather, for the most part, was absolutely beautiful, at least here in Victoria County. It made up for the rainy July.

The Archives was once again busy in September with a large number of visitors dropping by. Most of the people were locals from around the island. Along with the people who actually came in there were several inquiries via the phone and e-mail. It would appear that the Heritage and Archives department is becoming quite well known.

The first meeting to form the Baddeck and Area Historical Society was held on Wednesday, 23rd September here at the Court House (Court Room). Twenty-five people showed up which indicated that there certainly is an interest in forming a society. Unlike a number of other communities in Victoria County, Baddeck has not had a recognized historical society. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 21st October at 4:00 p.m. in the Court Room. At that meeting, an executive will be elected from the membership. Everyone is more than welcome to attend (and bring a friend).

Plans are well underway for the 25th anniversary of the Iona Connection Co-Operative. Celebrations will take place on Saturday, 24th October as part of the regular Fall meeting to be held in Iona at the Highland Village commencing at 10:00 a.m. The Board and 25th Anniversary Committee will be hosting a catered lunch with special guest speakers. Jim St. Clair, founding member and past president, will be speaking on the history of the organization over the past twenty-five years. All members are urged to be in attendance for this special milestone. Of course, new members are always welcome. The Iona Connection, for those who aren't aware, is an umbrella organization for the heritage and cultural groups on Cape Breton Island. Victoria County has approximately ten members of which our heritage and archives is one of those members.

The article which appeared in the Victoria Standard newspaper for September featured the former Burchell House at Kelly's Cove, New Campbellton. This stately old home is no longer a part of the built heritage of Victoria County. It was torn down in the late 1990's to make way for a new structure at the Cape Breton Bible Camp. It was built for James T. Burchell, a mine owner/operator and merchant who, for many years, gave sustainable employment to local residents. He also built a church for the community. Initially, it was a Methodist church, however, following the church union vote in 1925, it became United Church of Canada. It was and still is known as Burchell United Church and is still being utilized on a seasonal basis and it is part of the Boularderie Pastoral Charge.

On Saturday, 26th September, I attended the book launch of "The Road to Englishtown" the fourth in a series of books edited by Bonnie Thornhill, which include, "The Road to Tarbot", "The Road to North River" and "The Road to St. Ann's". This event was well attended as there were at least ninety to one hundred people who came from near and far

to get a copy of the latest book. The book was dedicated to the memory of our long serving country doctor in the person of Dr. C.L. MacMillan. His son, Dr. Monty MacMillan came from Mahone Bay to acknowledge the dedication of the book. The launch for “The Road to Englishtown” was held in the Englishtown Community Hall, and as is the customary practice in Cape Breton, the hall committee people offered a lovely afternoon tea. Congratulations to Bonnie and her research assistants for saving yet another bit of history in our county.

Well, that was the news from here for September. In another week, Celtic Colours will be beginning, and it will Thanksgiving weekend. Hoping everyone has a happy Thanksgiving. I look forward to reporting again at the end of October.