

(DP)

PRESENT  
PAST  FUTURE

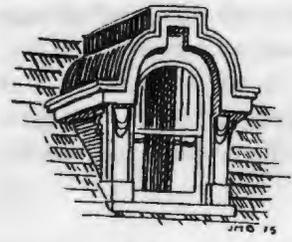
# the trident



The Newsletter of the Newfoundland Historic Trust

Southcott Edition 2000

## Introduction to the Southcott Awards George Courage, President



On 23 June 2000, the Newfoundland Historic Trust hosted the seventeenth presentation of the Southcott Awards. This program was developed by the Trust in 1984 to recognize excellence in the preservation of the architectural heritage of

Newfoundland and Labrador. The goal of the program is to commend the good work of individuals and organizations, corporations and governments.

But it goes beyond that - we want also to show both what can be achieved and how it can be done. We want to show the real pleasure that can be created for the client and the community by first-rate preservation work. If the quality of our architectural heritage has come to be one of the defining aspects of Newfoundland, then the Newfoundland Historic Trust has been very much responsible for that definition, but it is people like our award winners who give the definition reality.

The Southcott Awards are named for one of the most important nineteenth century Newfoundland building firms: J. and J.T. Southcott. We know them today principally for the Second Empire designs of J.T.'s architect son, John. The characteristics of this style are concave curved mansard roofs, with hooded dormers in the mansard. While the style started with the development of the Southcott properties at Park Place on Rennie's Mill Road, they spread throughout the whole colony.

The committee this year was chaired by Shane O'Dea and consisted of Chris Butt, Bill Frost, Donna Jeffrey, Robert Mellin and John O'Dea. And we were very pleased to have Greg Locke back with us to run the presentation. Newtel

has been our major corporate sponsor since the beginning and this year has been even more helpful, allowing us to develop our presentation and our coverage. Newtel has been a very active and effective promoter of all the arts in Newfoundland and we are glad to continue to work with them to promote the province and its people.

Parks Canada is one of our major partners in the development of heritage preservation and the Department of Canadian Heritage has consistently supported the work of the Trust - as we have supported their work. And without the considerable help given by George Chalker, Madonna Sullivan and Dale Jarvis of the Heritage Foundation we would not have a list to draw from, the research to write up or the backup to do half of what we do.

## Our Sponsors



CITY OF ST. JOHN'S



## Western Union Cable Station, Bay Roberts

Built in 1913 to serve as a relay station for a cable between Cornwall and New York, the building was almost completely fireproof. Of brick-clad, reinforced concrete it has a concrete roof. It saw the introduction of various new communications developments in the 1920s. During World War II it was a very-heavily protected site because it was an essential transatlantic link and because it housed a private cable connecting Churchill and Roosevelt.

When the Bay Roberts Heritage Society started work on



Cable Station, Bay Roberts

trying to fund a reuse for this building it had been unoccupied for over a decade and out of Western Union hands since 1960. It was also

going into its final decline: the brick veneer was breaking down, there were some serious structural problems because of the freeze-thaw cycle, the interior had been gutted, a gutting which included the removal of all recyclable electrical and heating fixtures.

The Society proposed a multi-use for the building - as museum, archives, art gallery and council offices. Now they have one of the few completely modern exhibition spaces in Newfoundland - space with proper climate control. This was all done while preserving as much of the building as possible. One instance of this was the stone doorcase which they removed, retooled and replaced. If a stone was too damaged for retooling it was reversed and reshaped to match the original. The Society is now working on an exhibit presenting the mercantile history of the town and they share this heritage building with their municipal council. It is one of the Heritage Foundation's designated heritage structures.

## Blundon House, Bay de Verde

Bay de Verde has been an important fishing station since the late seventeenth century and, until this century, was filled with flakes from the road to the church. It may originally have been settled by Isaac Dethick who was driven out of Placentia by the French in 1662. D'Iberville's

forces occupied the community in 1697 but, unlike what they did elsewhere on the Avalon, they did not burn the place, though they may have done so in 1705.



Blundon House, Bay de Verde

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Bay de Verde grew because of its place in and proximity to the fishery.

In 1896 John Blundon, a local merchant built this house to accommodate his own family and their servants. There had been Blundons at Bay de Verde since 1778 and perhaps earlier. By the time this house was built there were some five or six Blundon families in the community. A community proud of its past and one of the few that grew during the Moratorium, Bay de Verde began to look for ways to diversify its economy.

The Bay de Verde Heritage Committee with the backing of the local council undertook to find funding and restore the house. This meant a program of securing the building in 1996. Restoration work began the following summer and involved NOT restoring the 1929 wiring, a period-style redecorating of the interior, putting in new chimneys; new sills and posts; repair and replacement of clapboard; a complete rebuilding of the front bridge. Designated by the Heritage Foundation, it now houses an interpretive exhibit for Baccalieu Island and presents the lifestyle of an outpost merchant and his servants - both fishery and domestic.

## Randell House, Port Rexton

The Randell family has been at Ship Cove, Port Rexton since at least 1798 when John and Patience Randell moved over from Trinity and the birth of their son was recorded. It is not clear when this house was built - there is some possibility, as yet unconfirmed, that it may be the first Randell house. The difficulty for dating arises because the house, if early, was very considerably modified in the 19th century: the settle fireplace was removed and the staircase moved.

It is constructed using heavy two inch planks nailed into the rising and the sill - a mode of construction that appears to be unusual to the Trinity area. The house, when Bunty Severs acquired it from the Randell family in 1995, had not been permanently occupied since 1943.



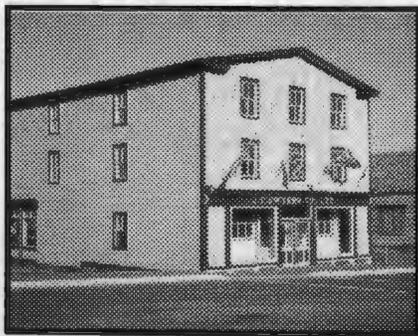
Randell House, Port Rexton

So, while the house hadn't markedly deteriorated, a tribute to the mode & quality of construction, it was not in good condition. The roof had to be

completely rebuilt and reshingled. The linhay required extensive work and all sills had to be replaced and a new foundation built. Assisted by funding from the Heritage Foundation, this work was done by Colin Hayter and Lester Cooper of Trinity who have proven to be both expert and sensitive in their other restoration projects. The porch required complete reconstruction but as elsewhere in the house, all the surviving old elements, among them windows, stairs and mantels were saved, cleaned and reused. One interesting feature of the grounds is a pair of graves- for May Randell's two dogs.

### Swyers and Co., Bonavista

This structure was built about 1910 for Philip Templeman who had been a major fish merchant operating from this site since about 1887. Templeman was appointed to the Legislative Council in 1913. He died in 1926 and the firm failed in 1938. During the Second World War these premises were taken over by J.T. Swyers who rose from owning a small store in Bayley's Cove to running one of the largest saltfish operations in Newfoundland. A branch of Swyers' main operation in Bayley's Cove, this building served as a retail store until closed in 1973-74.



Swyers & Co., Bonavista

Lying along the waterfront in Bonavista, its proximity to the earlier Ryan Premises, on one side, and the FPI plant as well as the Court House, Orange Lodge and Alexander House, on the other, made the Swyers

buildings important contributors to the cultural landscape of Bonavista. Their preservation gives some sense of the density of activity that was the pattern for any Newfoundland waterfront in the 19th century.

In the general store, which Jim Swyers has restored, he was obliged to redo much of the floor and foundation as well as replace clapboard on the rear and sides of the building. The main facade he restored using old photographs, a restoration which, among other things, involved reconstructing the elaborate brackets which terminated the sign.

### Dwyer's Stage, Tilting

The next Southcott award was presented to the Tilting Recreation and Cultural Society, locally known as TRACS, for the restoration of traditional outbuildings used for the inshore fishery. TRACS has sponsored projects that enhance the cultural landscape of Tilting and are committed to the preservation of all aspects of Tilting's material culture: houses, outbuildings, fences, gardens, boats, tools, and furniture. Tilting is one of our last communities where you can still find a full range of outbuildings associated with the traditional inshore fishery and also with traditional agricultural practices.



Dwyer's Stage, Tilting

This stage was constructed by Vincent Bryan around 1884 or earlier. Purchased by Albert Dwyer around 1923, in 1964 he sold it to another resident of Tilting who moved or "floated" it to another location in the harbour.

Deteriorating to the point that it was endangered, the owner agreed to donate it to TRACS so that it could be restored in its original location. The actual "floating" of the stage became quite an attraction because it was a reminder of a custom once common for both houses and outbuildings.

The wharves for the fishing stage were reconstructed using materials and details identical to the original. The next part of the restoration project was to float over and restore an old fish store donated by the Burke family. Built by their ancestors in the late 19th century, it was raised to two storeys many years ago.

## Public Building, Corner Brook



Public Building, Corner Brook

Our final award for 2000 goes to the Corner Brook Museum and Archives Society, for their restoration of the former Public Building at Corner Brook. This building, designed by J. Melville Miller of Montreal and constructed by William I. Bishop Ltd., opened in 1926. It included a post office on the main floor, the customs office on the lower floor, and the court house on the top floor.

The building is a concrete structure with poured in place concrete exterior walls, floors, and columns. The exterior finish is painted concrete, and the interior finish is plaster with ornamental mouldings and pilasters. There is a marble stairway, and originally there were to be other marble features, such as black Missisquoi marble door thresholds. The award for this project calls attention to the existence of a great variety of historic poured-in-place concrete buildings in Newfoundland, many of which are still in good condition and worthy of preservation or adaptive re-use.

Over the years, the Public Building at Corner Brook had many other uses. It was subsequently owned by Bowaters, the government, the railway and Newtel Communications. Newtel conveyed the property to the City of Corner Brook. The building was also used for the jail scene in Gordon Pinsent's film, *The Rowdyman*.

In 1997 the City signed a stewardship agreement with the Corner Brook Museum to house the city's first museum. The Society received funding from HRDC for restoration work, and also support from Newtel, the City of Corner Brook, ACOA, and the Downtown Business Association. Vacant for several years, the building was starting to deteriorate.

The work included exterior and interior restoration and upgrading of services and amenities to meet present day building code requirements. Original plaster mouldings were restored, as well as the marble staircase and the coat of arms over the front entrance.

THE TRIDENT. AUGUST 2000  
EDITOR: DALE GILBERT JARVIS

*The Trident* is the newsletter of the Newfoundland Historic Trust, an organization dedicated to the preservation of the built heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador through research, advocacy and education. *The Trident* and its contents are copyrighted by the Trust and may not be copied or reproduced without permission. The opinions contained in articles in *The Trident* are those of their authors and are not necessarily those of the Newfoundland Historic Trust. Correspondence and submissions may be addressed to:

**Dale G. Jarvis, Editor, *The Trident*, 70 Fleming Street, St. John's, NF A1C 3A5**

### Membership Form

Fees are \$10 per person, \$20 per family and \$35 for groups, institutions and organizations. Please clip and complete the following form and mail with cheque for membership payable to "The Newfoundland Historic Trust" to The Newfoundland Historic Trust, PO Box 2403, St. John's, NF A1C 6E7

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Town/City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_