

# Newfoundland Historical Society

## 1905 - 2014

The oldest non-profit, independent heritage organization in the province.

# Newsletter



Fall 2014

## WWI Symposium A Success

From October 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, 2014, the Newfoundland Historical Society held a public symposium titled *The British Empire Is At War! Mobilizing Newfoundland, 1914*.

The symposium brought together a number of local, national, and international experts, whose presentations provided a snapshot of the start of the First World War, the British Empire and its allies in 1914, and Newfoundland's response and mobilization for the war.

Presentations, which were held at a number of venues throughout St. John's including the Pleasantville Royal Canadian Legion, The Rooms and the Marine Institute Memorial University of Newfoundland, were well attended by the Newfoundland Historical Society's members and the general public. The presentation at the Rooms on the evening of October 3<sup>rd</sup> was attended by His Honour, The Honourable Frank Fagan, Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador and Her Honour, Patricia Fagan. The symposium was greatly facilitated by the generosity of our sponsors, including The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, The City of St. John's and The Rooms. The Newfoundland Historical Society would like to extend a thank you to all our sponsors and the Society Program committee for all their support and efforts towards making the symposium a success. (more inside)



### What's Inside

WWI Symposium	2
Decks Awash	3
NL Studies Blog	3
New Office Manager	3
Lectures and Abstracts	4
Capt. Michael Gill	5
Annual Executive BBQ	6
New Software	6
Nfld's Last Prime Minister	6
Tely 10	7
Prince of Wales Prize	7



## Newfoundland Historical Society is on Twitter

You don't have to actually tweet to enjoy the Newfoundland Historical Society's twitter account. You can contribute, or just listen in to retrieve information on current events, monthly lectures, annual symposia and much more. It's easy to create an account, just type "nfhistoc twitter" into your search engine and follow the link to join up!

# WWI Symposium Presenters, Presentations and Workshop

Mike O'Brien	<i>The Newfoundland Regiment, the British Army and Preparations for Battle 1914.</i>
Edward Roberts	<i>The Blue Puttees. September 1914 to August 1915: Stories You May Have Heard.</i>
Bert Riggs	<i>Workshop: Researching Newfoundland's First World War History at Memorial University.</i>
Joan Ritcey	
Terry Bishop Stirling	
John Keiger	<i>Understanding the Causes of the First World War.</i>
Dean Oliver	<i>Canada's Guns of August: A Centennial Echo.</i>
Shannon Lewis-Simpson	<i>Call Out Royal Naval Reserve.</i>
Sean Cadigan	<i>Sealers, War and Post-War Crisis in Newfoundland, 1914-34.</i>
Bert Riggs	<i>Lasting Remembrance: Newfoundland, Labrador and War: A Digital Humanities Project.</i>
David Mercer	
Robin McGrath	<i>Frontiersmen to the Front.</i>
Terry Bishop Stirling	<i>They Also Serve Who Knit and Wait: Mobilizing Newfoundland Women for Total War.</i>
Andrew Robertshaw	<i>The Easterns: Breaking the Stalemate on the Western Front.</i>
Glenn Keough	<i>Parks Canada WWI Commemorative Programs.</i>
NHS Executive & Others	<i>Readings from First World War Letters of the Era.</i>
Allan Byrne	<i>Musical Entertainment.</i>







## Decks Awash Now Online

Did you know that all issues of *Decks Awash* from 1968 - 1993 are available online?

*Decks Awash* is a popular interest magazine with a sociological outlook, which was published by Memorial University's Extension Service from 1968 to 1993. It developed out of an earlier Extension Services, Educational Television (ETV) program of the same name. Articles in *Decks Awash* were authored by university employees and freelance writers, who travelled all around the province. The *Decks Awash* file can function as a history of Newfoundland and Labrador society from the late 1960s to the early 1990s. The multifarious work of Extension Services, including its Fogo Island Process Project and *Decks Awash*, is considered a high point in Memorial University's contributions to the community.

To access the digital version use the following URL  
["http://collections.mun.ca/cdm4/description.php?phpReturn=browse.php&ciso root=cns\\_decks"](http://collections.mun.ca/cdm4/description.php?phpReturn=browse.php&ciso root=cns_decks)

Paper copies are also available at the Centre For Newfoundland Studies (CNS), Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN).

## Remember To Join The NHS!

Fill out the form on page 8 and visit [nf.history.ca](http://nf.history.ca) to find out how you can benefit!

## Newfoundland and Labrador Studies Blog

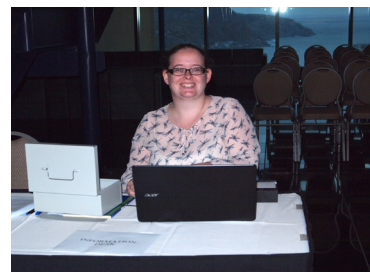
Resources held by the Centre for Newfoundland Studies (CNS) are showcased in a new blog called Explore the Holdings of the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, and can be found at

<https://lib-ldap.library.mun.ca/users/cfield/>

Journal articles, books, newspapers, maps and music will be highlighted on a weekly basis, with emphasis on items that have been digitized for the Digital Archives Initiative.

CNS welcomes comments, questions and suggestions for content either through the blog or by contacting librarian Colleen Field directly at [cfield@mun.ca](mailto:cfield@mun.ca).

## Welcome To Our New Office Manager



The Newfoundland Historical Society extends a hearty welcome to our new office manager Dominique Kane. Dominique is currently completing her masters dissertation from the University of Aberdeen and took over the office manager duties from Christina Robarts at the end of August. Christina has returned to her home province of Nova Scotia to pursue other career opportunities. Thank you Christina for all your hard work.

## FALL 2014 LECTURE SERIES

Date	Presenter	Title
Oct. 30	Calvin Hollett	<i>"These ignorant and excited fishmongers": Popular Resistance to Bishop Field in Transatlantic Newfoundland and Labrador.</i>
Nov. 27	Patrick Mannion	<i>An Irish-Nationalist Resurgence in St. John's? The Self-Determination for the Ireland League of Newfoundland, 1919-1922.</i>

Lectures are scheduled for 8:00 p.m. Thursday evenings on the last week of the month at Hampton Hall, Marine Institute, Ridge Road. Cancellations due to poor weather will be posted on the CBC Storm Centre web site at [cbc.ca/nl](http://cbc.ca/nl).

### Abstracts

*"These ignorant and excited fishmongers":*

*Popular Resistance to Bishop Field in Transatlantic Newfoundland and Labrador.*

Calvin Hollett

This lecture reassesses the impact of Bishop Field in Newfoundland and Labrador from a popular history perspective. It contests conclusions of the success of his Tractarian program taken largely from his institutional accomplishments. From the many examples of prolonged Evangelical resistance, it focuses particularly on two instances of popular opposition - transatlantic St. John's during his first two summers in Newfoundland, and Bay de Verde and Grates Cove with that "mad Welshman" in the following two. It gives an overview of his losses on two coasts - the northeast and the Labrador. It ruminates on his Gothic footprint and its relationship to his mission to imprint "order and uniformity" on the religious landscape. It concludes that people continued to exercise agency as they negotiated elements to include in their spiritual universe, aided by their migratory pursuits.

*An Irish-Nationalist Resurgence in St. John's?*

*The Self-Determination for the Ireland League of Newfoundland, 1919-1922.*

Patrick Mannion

After sustained public engagement with the Irish Home Rule movement in the 1880s and early 1890s, most Newfoundlanders of Irish descent lost interest in the politics of their ancestral homeland in the 1900s and 1910s. Identities as Newfoundlanders and as citizens of the British Empire frequently overrode the ethnic affiliation to Ireland. In the years immediately following the First World War, when Ireland's struggle for self-determination emerged as a transnational movement that spanned the diaspora, nationalist networks again thrived in St. John's. A small branch of the American-oriented Friends of Irish Freedom existed from late 1919, but public engagement with the Irish Question was led primarily by the Montreal-based Self-Determination for Ireland League. Thousands of Irish Newfoundlanders participated in the League's meetings and rallies, while its presence in St. John's motivated a strong anti-nationalist movement organized by the Orange Order in the fall of 1920. The debates became so intense that Catholic Archbishop Edward Roche urged moderation to avoid "the throes of a sectarian war." The rapid rise and fall of the League suggests that ethnic identities in Newfoundland did not evolve in isolation. In this case, an external, British North American Irish nationalist association was responsible for a sudden surge in Catholic Newfoundlanders' "Irishness," the effects of which continued well into the 1920s.

# Captain Michael Gill's Defence of Bonavista



**Plaque celebrating Captain  
Michael Gill's defense of  
Bonavista**

On August 18<sup>th</sup> 1704, a naval force of French and Indians under the command of Jean Léger De La Grange attacked Bonavista and would have destroyed the town had it not been for the courage and resourcefulness of, Michael Gill, a New England fishing trader, who spent the summer of 1704 in Bonavista.

Though severely battered, Gill managed to contain the superior French force and his success gave heart to the townspeople who soon rallied to his support. The strength of their combined efforts was such that the French were soon forced to retire from the scene.

On the Newfoundland Grand Banks web site, <http://ngb.chebucto.org/Bonavista/Songs/mikegill.shtml>, the following lyrics by J. A. O'Rielly can be found, describing De La Grange's attack on Bonavista.

## **Captain Michael by J. A. O'Rielly**

O'er lovely Bonavista the August night came down,  
And stars like gems were gleaming within her azure crown;  
The dusky wings of midnight were brooding o'er the scene,  
O'er Bonavista's waters and circling hills of green.

Borne by the landward zephyrs, bright wavelets swept the bay,  
And moved in dancing ripples near where the "Pembroke" lay;  
Enwapt the good ship "William" with her rich freight of train,\*  
And greeted the "Society" with kisses of the main.

Peace, with her sister Beauty, held all the shores in fee,  
And Silence held them close embraced in tranquil sympathy;  
On such a night might lovers vow love's promise ever dear.  
On such a night but craven heart could hold one thought of fear.

Ere midnight hour had ended, grey mists swept up the bay,  
And hung a filmy curtain round where the good ship lay;  
As with a fell enchantment the shore and houses spread,  
And Bonavista silent lay a harbour of the dead.

Beware, O Bonavista! Is this a night to sleep?  
Unless some guard be watchful, tomorrow babes may weep.  
Unless some gallant here be now prepared to fight,  
Tomorrow widows well may weep their husbands slain tonight.

D'Ibberville's\*\* apt pupil, LaGrange, is on the sea,  
His hundred Abenakis\*\*\* are armed cap-a-pie.

With scalping knife and tomahawk. May God their purpose foil,  
Ere these red demons stain with blood fair Bonavista's soil.

Swift swept canoes and shallops to where the "Pembroke" lay,  
As silent as the fog sweeps up on Bonavista Bay;  
Then tomahawk and scalping-knife grew dripping red with gore,  
And in a few short moments that bloody fight was o'er.

The "William" and "Society" with little fight were won,  
LaGrange's troop triumphant, the new day just begun;  
The cloak of mist had vanished and on the tranquil tide,  
The captured ships flung boldly forth the French flag in it's pride.

Some\*\*\*\*sound of oar or paddle reached Skipper Michael Gill,  
Some startled shriek, some drowning groan, then all again was still.  
Then to a youngster of his crew he cried, "Swim swift to land,  
And warn Bonavista that danger is at hand".

"Now boldly wrap our mizzen the good old flag we'll drape,  
And, boys, bring up your round shot, your canister and grape;  
We'll give LaGrange, the valiant, of bitter fight his fill;  
But never shall the French flag wave o'er Skipper Michael Gill".

"They have the good ship "Pembroke" with great guns twenty-four;  
And on the ship "Society" there's ten or maybe more;  
And we are but fourteen guns, their metal good and rare,  
We'll fire three volleys to their one and that will make us square."

For hours the great guns thundered and Skipper Michael Gill,  
Saw that each gun was pointed with marksmanship and skill.  
Then said LaGrange "This cochon\*\*\*\*\* to conquer doth aspire,  
So what our cannon cannot do we shall achieve by fire".

So down on Skipper Michael the bark "Society",  
Came blazing in a flame of fire, a fearsome sight to see;  
And with the tide the "William", her oily freight ablaze,  
A spectacle to strike the heart with horror and amaze.

Then Skipper Gill, the dauntless, gave proof of whence he came,  
As he and his heroic crew strove mid the smoke and flame;  
And scarce the danger ended, when, hark ! a mighty cheer,  
And Bonavista's armed bands upon the hills appear.

Then as the fox takes cover when baying hounds draw near,  
And as the shadows vanish when day breaks bright and clear;  
So fled LaGrange's soldiers and Abenakis band,  
To scalp and tomahawk and burn elsewhere than Newfoundland.

Now, lasses, give a gay, glad hand, and, lads, your glasses fill,  
And give acclaim and drink a toast to Skipper Michael Gill.  
And if again such dangers e're threaten Newfoundland,  
May we have skippers just as brave the foeman to with stand.

\* freight - whale oil

\*\*D'Ibberville - the officer commanding the raid of 1696

\*\*\*Abenakis - A tribe of Canadian Indians

\*\*\*\*Some--on the fourth ship, unnamed

\*\*\*\*\*cochon - pig

Captain Michael Gill came from Charlestown, Massachusetts.

His sons settled in Newfoundland.



## Annual Executive Barbeque

The Executive Committee of the Newfoundland Historical Society held its annual summer potluck barbeque on Friday evening, August 15, 2014. This year the barbeque was hosted by the Stirlings. The weather cooperated and an enjoyable time was had by all.



## Management Application Software Implemented

The Newfoundland Historical Society's office recently implemented new membership management application software, running on Microsoft Access.

The application is being used to maintain an accurate database of the Society's membership and has the capability to quickly generate email lists. These lists are used to inform membership of the Society's various events, for distribution of newsletters and the Newfoundland Quarterly. Major advantages of the application are an enhanced ability to track existing members, ease in updating the database for new members and ensuring an improved membership renewal process. The application's search functions significantly reduce the amount of time and frustration required to search for a particular member. The implementation of this application will result in better service for all members of the Society.

A big "thank you" goes to Klaus Hye Knudsen for writing the application. Klaus worked closely with the Society's Office Manager to customize the application, ensuring that it is suitable for the Society's requirements.

### Articles

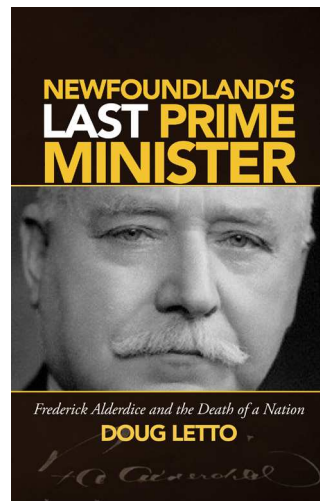
Do you have a short but interesting historical article, or an announcement of a historical related event that you would like to see included in the Newfoundland Historical Society's Newsletter?

If so, please send it by email to [nhs@nf.aibn.com](mailto:nhs@nf.aibn.com)

Articles should be in Word format with graphics included as separate files. Due to limited space please restrict articles to between 500 - 1000 words.

All articles published will be at the discretion of the Executive of the Newfoundland Historical Society.

## Nfld's. Last Prime Minister



In October 1932, the newly elected Prime Minister of Newfoundland made a dramatic plan known to the British government. Fred Alderdice told the Secretary of State for the Dominions that the government had little choice but partially default on more than \$5 million a year in debt payments. Britain reacted angrily. Its subsequent offer of a lifeline to pay a share of the year end interest on the debt, and the appointment of a royal commission to

examine the future of Newfoundland and its financial situation and prospects, put the Dominion on a path that would see its constitutional status irreversibly changed.

Could Alderdice have played his cards differently? Could he have preserved Newfoundland's constitutional independence? Did Newfoundlanders let down the dream and promise of a nation?

Author Doug Letto poses those questions and challenges a common view of how Newfoundland went from Dominion status to province of Canada.

## VP Newfoundland Historical Society Runs In Tely 10



**Vice-President of NHS running the Tely 10**

Newfoundland Historical Society vice-president Allan Byrne (white tee shirt) participated in the annual Telegram Ten Mile road race, known as the Tely 10. The Tely 10 began in 1922 and is one of the oldest road races in Canada. The race was held on July 4th and despite the high heat and humidity, Allan ran the ten (10) miles in 1 hr. 33 min. and 18 sec. and placed 1246th out of 4181 entrants. Congratulations Allan, job well done!

---

## Bonavista Awarded the 2014 Prince of Wales Prize

The town of Bonavista was recently awarded the 2014 Prince of Wales Prize for Municipal Heritage Leadership from the Heritage Canada National Trust. Bonavista received the award for its efforts to sustain its future through its heritage assets. Through a partnership with the Bonavista Historic Townscape Foundation (BHTF), the Town of Bonavista began an ambitious heritage preservation and community revitalization plan to help develop new economic opportunities and improve the quality of life of its residents.

Using federal and provincial programs aimed at economic and employment adjustments in the post-Moratorium period, Bonavista launched several important heritage conservation and development initiatives. The most successful include:

*Historic Properties Investment Program:* A cost-share grant program for exterior restoration work that benefitted 40 heritage properties.

*Historic Properties Salvage and Development Initiative:* Supported a range of rehabilitation projects including the United Church Central School, James Ryan Tenement House, Keough Shop and Garrick Theatre.

*Streetscape Development:* Saw two ambitious improvement projects to the town center and harbour front area.

*Restoration Team:* Using employment and skills development programs, local workers impacted by the closure of the inshore cod fishery were trained in traditional wood carpentry allowing them to remain in the community and enhance their skills. The team worked on the restoration of the United Fishermen Hall, Mockbeggar Plantation Provincial Historic Site and Bonavista's Loyal Orange Lodge (believed to be the largest fraternal hall of wooden construction in North America).

The Town of Bonavista provided a high level of support in the form of an annual \$40,000 operating grant to the BHTF; salaries of museum staff and a half-time archivist; enactment of a heritage bylaw allowing municipal heritage designation of all restored properties under the *Historic Properties Investment Program*; and support for Heritage Districts to be created in the new town plan currently under development.

As one business owner stated in a letter supporting the nomination, "Bonavista has successfully steered clear of lifeless, cloying gentrification. Buildings have been repaired, renovated, restored and put to work housing families, businesses, and culture and heritage interpretation. ... This is living sustainable heritage."

For more on this check out <https://www.heritagecanada.org/en/get-involved/awards/2014-awards-recipients>

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

### EXECUTIVE (2014-2015)

**President:**

Fred Smith

**Vice President:**

Allan Byrne

**Past President:**

Larry Coady

**Accountant:**

Corey Button

**Councillors:**

Terry Bishop Stirling

John Cheeseman

Larry Dohey

Heidi Coombs-Thorne

Melanie Martin

Joan Ritcey

Colleen Shea

Charles Stirling

Jeff Webb

Patrick Mannion

**Regional Representatives:**

Betty Jerrett (Bay Roberts)

Jim Miller (Trinity)

Robert Parsons (Grand Bank)

Doug Wells (Harbour Breton)

Sandra Wheeler (Corner Brook)

**Office Administrator:**

Dominique Kane

**Questions, comments,  
letters to the Editor, and  
membership inquiries may be  
addressed to:**

NHS Office

P.O. Box 23154

Churchill Square

St. John's, NL

A1B 4J9

(709) 722-3191 (phone)

(709) 739-6458 (fax)

e-mail:

nhs@nf.aibn.com/

Internet:

<http://www.nlhistory.ca/>

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Fees:** Regular or Institutional \$40.00 / Life \$400.00. membership entitles you to 30% off Heritage Canada Membership.

*Note: Membership includes a subscription to the Newfoundland Quarterly and three (3) newsletters per year, and is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of payment of the fee. Your expiry date will appear on the bottom left of your mailing label (the figures on the bottom right are a mailing code).*

**Donations are always welcome! And remember that membership makes a great gift. Gift cards are available from the Newfoundland Historical Society's office.**

**Membership fees are the NHS's only steady source of revenue and are used in support of our lectures and symposium. When starting or renewing your membership please consider encouraging a friend or spouse to join as well.**

Would you like to save paper and receive our newsletter electronically (in colour)?

☐

Y

☐

N

Would you like to be added to our list to be notified of upcoming events?

☐

Y

☐

N

Would you like to be removed from the list of those receiving notification of upcoming events?

☐

Y

☐

N

**Fee** \_\_\_\_\_ **Donation** \_\_\_\_\_ **Total** \_\_\_\_\_

**Visa Card Number** \_\_\_\_\_ **Expiry Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Payment may be made by VISA, cheque or money order to the Newfoundland Historical Society. Please complete and send this form with your payment to the address below. USA subscribers please pay in US funds to cover postage. International subscribers please pay nineteen (19) pounds Sterling or the Canadian equivalent.**

**Newfoundland Historical Society**

**P.O. Box 23154**

**Churchill Square**

**St. John's, NL**

**A1B 4J9**