



# NEWSLETTER

## EXPOSING THE DARTMOUTH INCLINE

One of the ongoing frustrations when doing research on the Shubenacadie Canal is the lack of visual information about the actual operation of the system. It is difficult to comprehend but we do not have a single sketch, painting or photograph of any part of the canal in operation or any illustrations of the vessels which towed the barges or of the barges themselves.

For this reason archaeological investigations on the Canal are particularly important and this was certainly the case with respect to the Dartmouth Incline, also now known as the Starr Property. Most people passing by this site in the heart of downtown Dartmouth, unless they were familiar with the history of the Canal, had no inkling of anything more than an open rather



rough sloping field. Yet just a few feet beneath the surface of the field lay the remains of five locks which were built, but never used, during the first canal construction period, 1826-1831. Even closer to the surface were two parallel rows of stones running from the bottom of the field to the top which were the base of the iron tracks of a marine railway. There

were also the arches of the turbine chamber (see Keith Manchester's photo above) used during the period 1861 to 1870. This mechanism was an alternative to the previously constructed locks, and designed to transport vessels from the Harbour to Sullivans Pond; and on top of and amidst all of this are the remains of the Starr Manufacturing Plant built following the cessation of the Canal but powered by a turbine located in the same Chamber as that used for the Marine Railway. The Starr Plant is best known for the manufacture of the Starr Skate which was renowned in all countries where winter sports were in vogue. It is estimated that over 11 million pairs of skates were produced. However, a wide range of other items were manufactured at Starr, from rail cars to bridges as well as ornamental gates. This company operated until the property was purchased by the City in 1996.

The purpose of the most recent investigation which took place in late July and early August was to establish the precise locations of the two tracks of the marine railway, uncover the upper features of the Turbine Chamber, along with the remains of the Lock, within which it was constructed and finally, the dig would uncover the stone-lined Tail Race which carried the water from the stone Chamber returning it to the stream and subsequently the harbour. Thanks to Bruce Stewart, lead Archaeologist from Cultural Resource Management Group and his team of staff, all of this was accomplished.

### *From The Chairman...*

Since our last newsletter, our Annual General Meeting was held, with the reports and financial statements tabled at that time. Both are available on request.

While we should be proud of our accomplishments, our "to do" list seems overwhelming. The most interesting item on this list is the "Greenway Project" involving the archaeological dig on the site of the "incline plane" at the old Star Manufacturing site. This site, in the center of Dartmouth is a great opportunity to emphasize the great engineering, industrial success, and immigration heritage of the Shubenacadie Canal.

As we move forward with our Business Plan, the HRM has encouraged us to give some priority to this project in preparation for the World Canoe Championships, and the world attention the event will attract. To do this, it will become more urgent to interest the community in this site as well as the financing of our Business Plan over the long-term.

The Canal builders of the 1800's, which included the likes of Samuel Cunard and Enos Collins of shipping and banking fame, were famous for their ability to capitalize on economic opportunity. Our goals, now, are Heritage, Education, Tourism, and Health Promotion including promotion of paddling and use of our trail network, always taking into account sustainable management of these natural resources.

In any future financial campaign then, we also must promote our canal as the great economic opportunity it presents to HRM and all of Nova Scotia.

*Jake O'Connor*



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### *The Dartmouth Incline (cont.)*

As the dig progressed it soon became obvious that the overriding story of this site is one of adaptation and reuse. For instance two walls and the floor of one of the 1830 Locks were reused for the Turbine Chamber used to power the Incline Plane constructed in 1856. In the 1870s, following the cessation of the Canal, the Starr Plant retrofitted the Turbine Chamber with a new turbine which powered its equipment – an ancillary use for this same turbine was the generation of electricity for the lights on nearby Portland St. This story is there for all to see – the plan is to protect the site but to disturb it as little as possible so that visitors will have the opportunity observe what was found and translate this story for themselves.

### *Tom Forrestall Visits the Community of Maitland*

Following the overwhelming success of the opening and run of the Forrestall exhibit at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, twenty-two of the forty original watercolour images of the Canal and Waterway were moved to *Gallery 215* in Maitland. The Commission wishes to thank local resident, June Duckenfield and her corps of volunteers who made this possible.



In his comments to those gathered at the opening of the Maitland show, Bernie Hart, the volunteer Executive Director the Commission, drew a comparison between this event and the official opening of the Shubenacadie Canal almost 150 years previously. He noted that on Nov 7th, 1861 the paddle-wheeler, Avery, arrived in Maitland, having departed Halifax the previous day. On board the vessel was the President of the Inland Navigation Company, Dr. Avery, and a number of the company directors. While this voyage was mostly ceremonial, it provided clear evidence the Canal was complete. In the minds of those present, this arrival represented the official opening of the Waterway. There to greet Avery on its arrival were a number of Maitland dignitaries, including the famous ship builder, William D Lawrence. It was 'WD', who read the official greeting.

Bernie pointed out that the Forrestall opening represented another significant event in which Dartmouth and Maitland played "Canal Bookends" roles.

The Commission will be represented at this years Launch Day in Maitland to be held on Saturday, September 29<sup>th</sup>. In keeping with this upcoming event, the Commission will be exhibiting a model of the Avery and other Canal related materials.



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### *The Shubenacadie Canal and our Connections Around the World*

Did you know that the granite Locks constructed during the first phase (1826-1831) were based on the design of the Forth and Clyde Canal in Britain?

Were you aware that present locks 2,3,6,7,8 and 9, those of the 1854 to 1861 construction period, are patterned after those used on the Morris Canal in New Jersey. You may also be surprised to learn that in Poland there is an Incline Plane which is a twin of the Dartmouth and Portobello Inclines which were once again patterned after those used on the Morris Canal.

Finally, you may be surprised to learn that east wall of Lock 2 is constructed of granite along the lines of the British approach while the west wall uses the post and plank (composite) approach of the Morris Canal. This may be the only example in the world of this dual approach to lock construction.



### *Nova Scotia's Finest Canoe Route*



The Shubenacadie Canal has long been a great outing for recreational canoe trippers. It seems as if it was designed especially for those who enjoy the idea of completing a wilderness route from its start to the finish. Troops of Scouts have been doing just that for over 75 years as well as many, many individual adventurers. By 1989, Canoe Nova Scotia recognized the need for more information on the route and produced the first of their "Canoe Routes of Nova Scotia" series. These 1:25,000 scale maps have become very popular and are locally available. Lake Banook serves as the logical beginning for such an excursion, with its calm waters and easy boat launch area. The lake is only 1.5 km. long and is quite busy with competitive canoe/kayak races, as well as rowing for almost the whole year. Lake MicMac is home to water skiers and jet-boats meaning more care must be taken to ensure safe canoeing. The many coves, abundant wildlife and the existence of the remnant canal excavations make up for the extra care required.

Lakes William, Thomas and Fletcher are all surrounded by relatively rural and even woodland areas, making the trip a wilderness experience, although several cottage owners will be on the lakes, enjoying the paddling opportunities. Once at the northern end of Lake Fletcher, a few short portages are required to access Grand Lake. This lake is very large and often too windy for paddling. Another morning paddle, of 6.5 km. to the head of the Shubenacadie River, completes the lake section of the Canal. It is in Sandy Cove, just past Oakfield Picnic Park, that the route opens up into a pleasant 40 km. of paddling down a meandering Shubenacadie River. Once at the Village of Shubenacadie, though, the tidal portion of the route is reached and recreational canoeing becomes more difficult.

#### **Canoe Racing**

In 1903, the Banook Canoe Club was established at the southern end of Lake Banook. It was joined in 1922 by the Mic Mac Amateur Aquatic Club and together, they started regular racing with the Arthur Weston Championship of the Lakes. That race stretched all the way to the end of Lake Charles and back, a distance of 16 km. and is still held every year. Another annual event is the Canoe to the Sea which chooses different sections of the canal and river to race each summer, depending on the tides, water levels and weather. In 1936, when canoe racing was introduced into the Olympics, Lake Banook was already well known as a major racing venue. By 1961, the lake had an internationally recognized sprint racing course and it hosted the first North American Canoe Championship regatta. This was followed by the first Canada Games in 1969, the Junior Canoe World Championships in 1989, the Senior Sprint Canoe World Championships in 1997, and the Junior/Senior Marathon Canoe World Championships in 2000. Next on the horizon for the Canal is the 2009 World Championships for Sprint Canoe Racing.



## ***Dartmouth Crossing and a new Pedestrian Entrance to Shubie Park***

There is now a new entrance to Shubie Park and the Fairbanks Centre. As a part of their development plan, Dartmouth Crossing has included a designated parking area and a pedestrian overpass leading to the many nature trails through Shubie Park. To get to this entryway you follow the roadway passing the theatres near the Hwy #118 Interchange which ends at a convenient parking area.

The Shubenacadie Canal Commission has a plan for a covered kiosk and sheltered area which will display maps of the park. It will also include one of the many large granite boulders partially worked on and left by the early canal workers. It is exciting to realize the chisel marks and bore holes in the granite are evidence of work carried out by Irish and Scottish stone masons over 175 years ago. A number of these granite rocks were found by the Archaeologists who did a preliminary survey of the site prior to the construction of the new shopping centre. It is likely the masons began their work only to discover that these particular stones were unsuitable and thus they were discarded; left for us to uncover many years later. It is interesting to speculate how many stones in the two locks in Shubie Park were from the present Dartmouth Crossing site. Previously, it was thought all of the granite blocks had been quarried at the Kings Quarry in Purcell's Cove.

### **Shubenacadie Canal Commission**

#### **Provincial Appointees**

John O'Connor, Chairman, Dartmouth  
Kathy Mills, Dartmouth  
Maurice Lloyd, Dartmouth  
Gregory Zwicker, Dartmouth  
Gordon Warnica, Fall River  
Alden Killen, Dartmouth  
Harold Carroll, Truro (*ex officio*)

#### **HRM Appointees**

Michael Hughes, Wellington  
Keith Manchester, Fletcher's Run  
Andrew Younger, Dartmouth  
Darren Schives, Halifax

#### **Colchester Co. Appointee**

Mike Cooper, Upper Stewiacke

#### **Volunteer Staff**

Bernie Hart, Dartmouth  
Allan Billard, Dartmouth

## ***Class Visits to Shubie Park and the Fairbanks Centre***

Now that the Fairbanks Centre is open during weekdays, many school classes, youth groups as well as adult organizations are once again able to visit.

Pre-arranged tours begin with a visual introduction using slides of the waterway illustrating typical segments of the system from the Harbour to Maitland as well as examples of Locks and the two Incline Planes. Next the classes moves to the Exhibit area and, following a brief introduction, students roam the displays seeking answers to a series of questions designed for their grade level. The various quizzes have been prepared in consultation with teachers and their use provides students freedom to move at their own pace while also being motivated to explore the exhibits and their artifacts.

One of the favourite elements of the visit is the demonstration of the working modes of the two locks found in the Park. Students become "lock keepers" or "barge workers" operating the valves which allow water to fill up or flow from the chambers.

The fourth stage is a walk along the Canal's Deep Cut – stopping to examine and talk about the excavation of the Cut, the Locks, several work sites, house foundations etc.

The Commission is always looking for volunteers who would like to lead such classes. Anyone interested should contact the *Fairbanks Centre* – 462-1826.