



THE SHUBENACADIE CANAL JUNE 2007

NEWSLETTER

Have You Seen Lock 1 Lately?



Newly restored Lock 1 still controls the lake water levels

When people talk about the success of the Subenacadie Canal it is usually in terms of its performance during the operating period 1860 to 1871 and almost never in terms of the benefits we still derive today. However, many of the present attributes of our Lake and River system which we now value and take for granted are, in fact the results of the work of the canal builders.

One of the best known of the benefits we have inherited is the very functional water level control structure for Lakes Banook and Micmac.

During the Canal's operating period and ever since that time, Lock 1 or Lock 6 as it was first named during the 1826–1831 construction period, has been used to control the water levels of Lakes Banook and Micmac. It is important to point out that prior to the Canal the two Lakes were much smaller and were described by some as wide streams with marshy shorelines.

If you stand beside Lock 1 and look down to Sullivan's Pond you will realize the importance of this structure in maintaining the levels of the two lakes. For years Lock 1 has had a water control apparatus in its lower, or southern end and it has provided excellent service.

The Canal Commission was very pleased to be able to work with HRM staff in the recent work on Lock 1. While the purpose of the work was to repair and strengthen the water control, HRM decided to do this work in such a way as to also restore key features of the Lock. The Commission was able to supply plans for the gates, valves and swing beams so that accurate representations could be fabricated. These plans resulted from the work which the Commission had previously carried out at Lock 5 in Wellington, at the south end of Grand Lake.

From The Chairman...

The Shubenacadie Canal Commission needs help.

That could be said to summarize our new Business Plan for 2007-2016. While many things are happening regarding the canal, as this newsletter indicates, the Commission has found time to develop an overview of where the canal should be going. At a meeting with the Minister of Natural Resources, we were encouraged to develop a document that will take us into the future.

The many opportunities which the canal presents soon showed us we needed partners to achieve our potential. To locate those partners, increased publicity and awareness were paramount and we are making increasing attempts to reach the media, use this Newsletter, lobby our elected representatives and most recently, engage the public.

In partnership with Tom Forrestall an exhibit of Shubenacadie Canal paintings by Tom opened at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia last month. Increasing public awareness in this way is just part of our Business Plan.

Over the next ten years, capital projects have been outlined to make parts of the canal more accessible and to complete a 115 km. trail paralleling the Canal that will be the Nova Scotia Section of the Trans Canada Trail.

Our vision, arrived at with many participants over the last 2-3 years, is exciting and achievable with help from government, business, and individuals. It will take money, hard work, and patience as we increasingly value this canal and realize its opportunities.

Thanks for reading our Newsletter and watch for your opportunity to help.

Jake O'Connor



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Newly restored Lock 1 (cont.)

Previous to this work, the control structure was located at the lower end of the lock, so that the chamber was always filled with water and authentic gates could not be used. Thanks to the ingenuity and cooperation of HRM staff, the control mechanism is now incorporated into the upper gate with the chamber and lower gates appearing to function just as they would have originally. The Commission hopes to demonstrate this partially working lock next summer.

In just two years HRM will be hosting the World Canoe Championships let's make a point of recognizing the debt we owe the 19th Century Canal builders whose legacy has made this event on Lake Banook possible.

A New Approach to Interpreting the Waterway...

Visit Our Heritage Walk at Shubie Park

Education or interpretation programs are not new to the Canal Commission. In fact, guided tours and historic walks can be scheduled at any time during the year. Since the early 1990s there have been organized group tours and school visits and in 2005/2006 Lockview High School received a grant to integrate the Shubenacadie waterway into a number of subjects including art, music and drama.

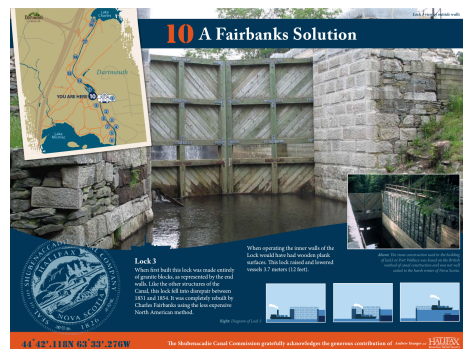
The Commission views the waterway's historic and natural resources as a rich outdoor museum for all to appreciate and enjoy. An important component of the recently completed Business Plan is an interpretation program which will involve the development and installation of attractive panels at all of the key sites along the system.

This interpretation program will begin in Shubie Park, the largest of the publicly owned sites bounding the system. This spring the first nine of 17 panels will be installed along the trails which parallel the man-made cut or canal in Shubie Park. This cut enabled navigation between Lakes Charles and Micmac. For the first time, the thousands of visitors to the Park will be assisted in interpreting the many historic features which they pass while walking. Each panel will include attractive illustrations and background information telling about the fascinating history of this area.

Even for those people who have walked the park for years there will be much to learn. For instance many will be unaware they were walking by the remains of the homes of canal workers or a blacksmith shop or the site of the sod turning where, in 1826, Lord Dalhousie, Governor General of Canada, turned the first shovel of earth to initiate the canal building project.

Each of these panels is sponsored and we believe this project presents an excellent marketing opportunity for businesses and organizations while also supporting a worthy cause. Sponsorship can also provide a wonderful opportunity to make a donation in memory of a family member or friend.

In time, our Education Committee, led by Kathy Mills, hopes to initiate similar interpretive projects in Downtown Dartmouth (Canal entrance and site of an Incline Plane), at the Portobello Incline, Fall River (Lock 4), Grand Lake (Lock 5), Horne's Settlement (Lock 6), Enfield (Lock 7), Elmsdale (Lock 8), Lantz (Lock 9) South Maitland (Natural History and the River Look-off) and Maitland (Entrance to the waterway). These programs will be developed in cooperation with the neighbouring communities and with other organizations of similar interest.





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On the Shores of Cobequid Bay, Lawrence House Overlooks the Entrance to the Waterway

Today, the impressive homes of Maitland surprise the first-time visitor. Why was there so much money in this quiet village? It's easy to forget that in the 1800s the Bay of Fundy was a gateway to the Atlantic Ocean; and to the world. The houses testify to the comfortable fortunes that were made in shipping and shipbuilding.

Lawrence House, appointed with most of its original furnishings, speaks volumes about the lives of the community elite. Large and rather formal in plan, it was clearly the home of a man whose sights were set beyond this small coastal village. The fine furniture and exotic souvenirs from around the world show that here was a man of taste, means, and experience.

"Remembering the William D Lawrence", commemorates the launching of W.D. Lawrence's "Great Ship". A major Launch Day Festival is held in Maitland each year with a parade, historical skits, and the launching of a model of the huge vessel.

... Reprinted courtesy Lawrence House Museum, part of the Nova Scotia Museum. Read more at <http://lawrence.museum.gov.ns.ca/>



PortoBello: A look through fresh eyes



While Shubie Park may be the best known and the most used of the waterway parks, others offer similarly interesting features and are well worth exploring. Not the least of these is PortoBello, at the south end of Lake William and about 12 kilometres along the Waverley Rd from the old Rotary.

Legend has it that a guest at Marshall's Inn just above this site looked out over the lake shores and declared "porto bello" and thus it was named. While the site is no doubt spectacularly beautiful, for the Canal builders it presented a serious obstacle - a 10.7 m difference in the elevation of Lake Charles to the south and Lake William to the north.

For Francis Hall, the Chief Engineer for the first construction period (1826–31) the solution was a set of two gigantic locks – each with a lift of over 4.6 M (15') – accompanied by massive stone dams. Fortunately there are still partial remains of these structures. Of particular interest are the elegant carved stone culverts through which water flowed from the head pond into the lock. The severe winter of 1831 damaged the Locks and led to the end of the first construction period.

Thirty years later, a second attempt to complete the waterway. Over these years there were many changes in the approach to canal building and the new Engineer, Charles William Fairbanks, offered a novel solution to the height challenge – an Incline Plane. The Fairbanks solution resulted from his tour of the Morris Canal in New Jersey where he had the opportunity to observe a number of Incline Planes, some much larger than that required at PortoBello.

Today, Fairbank's incline, minus the tracks, is still intact and often used by portaging canoeists. However, the location of the Wheel House and the Turbine Chamber is a mystery. While two archaeological surveys

turned up little, Canal enthusiast, Ian Bailey may have solved the puzzle. Ian spends much of his spare time touring Canal sites in search of scraps of evidence which may help to solve puzzling mysteries such as the location of the PortoBello turbine.

On one of his rambles Ian noted a slot in the Dam at PortoBello which may have been the location of the sluice box which carried water from the head pond to power the turbine. His excitement mounted when he discovered that just about 50m from the dam, in line with the slot, was a raised mound which could possibly be the location of the Chamber.

On a cold December morning, the Commission contracted archaeologist, Bruce Stewart, to supervise a preliminary excavation of the mound. Four volunteers, including Ian, spent the best part of the very cold day removing earth and rock from the mound. While they were able to remove the top meter of rubble, there was no evidence that this was the Chamber. Further digging will be required and hopefully those who participate will have the benefit of a warmer day. In the meantime Ian continues to explore



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The Growing Shubenacadie Trail

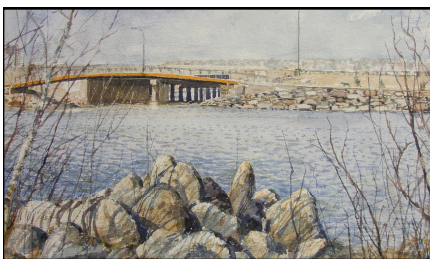
Last year was the beginning of a 4-year plan to link the Shubenacadie Trail at PortoBello, to a new section along the western shores of Lake William and Lake Thomas.

The trail will eventually continue on to Elmsdale and Lantz, and finally connect all the way to Maitland.

The project location for this year is a very significant component of the HRM's trail network, connecting Metro to the growing suburban communities of Waverley Fall River, Wellington and Grand Lake Station, using the popular Shubenacadie corridor.

This new trail will offer vastly enhanced Active Transportation alternatives for suburban commuters, as well as exposure to a variety of wilderness canoeing and hiking opportunities *en route* for visitors.

Nova Scotia's Office of Health Promotion and Protection has allocated \$60,000 to the overall cost.



Shubenacadie Canal Commission Annual General Meeting

July 9th 2007

Fairbanks Centre
54 Locks Road
Dartmouth NS

5:30 pm

You are welcome to attend the meeting and stay for a special viewing of Tom Forrestall's exhibition of original Shubenacadie Canal watercolours.

For more information call: 462-1826

The Forrestall Watercolour Exhibit

We are extremely pleased that renowned artist Tom Forrestall has made his series of original watercolours on the Shubenacadie Canal available for public exhibition at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (AGNS). The show is now open to the public on Hollis Street. Two of the illustrations in this Newsletter are actually photos of the original watercolours on the walls at the AGNS.



These works represent Tom's passion for the beauty of the waterway and the pleasures that it brings to all Nova Scotians. They also illustrate the great opportunity it holds for the promotion of healthy outdoor adventure and a rebirth of economic growth in the many communities along the route. Of course, this is very complementary with our plan for maximizing and sharing the opportunities which the Canal presents.

Shubenacadie Canal Commission

Provincial Appointees:

John O'Connor, Dartmouth, Chairman
Maurice Lloyd, Dartmouth
Gordon Warnica, Fall River
Keith Manchester, Fletcher's Run
Darren Schives, Halifax
Harold Carroll, Truro (*ex officio*)

HRM Appointees:

Kathy Mills, Dartmouth
Gregory Zwicker, Dartmouth
Michael Hughes, Wellington
Andrew Younger, Dartmouth

East Hants Appointees:

Mike Cooper, Upper Stewiacke



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