

Pouch Cove Heritage Society
Annual General Meeting Mar. 2019
Chairman's Report
(Ken Pittman)

I'd like to take the first few minutes of our AGM to re-visit the past year of the Heritage Society's activities, initiatives, and on-going projects.

First of all, allow me to identify the annual events and activities in which the Heritage Society took part, together with other community groups and individuals in the past year. I won't elaborate on these here, but they do demonstrate the active role of the Society in the community life of Pouch Cove in the past year as in previous years:

- Pouch Cove Heritage Days, a three day festival of activities for the whole community highlighting the heritage of Pouch Cove through concerts, skits, workshops and exhibits.
- Formal participation in the Annual July 1st Ceremonies at the War Memorial paying tribute to the residents of Pouch Cove who lost their lives in war.
- November 11th Memorial ceremonies. Once again the Society was represented with members addressing the public attending as well as laying a wreath on behalf of our organization.
- November 29th, the Heritage Society held its annual commemorative ceremony honoring those who were involved in the historic Waterwitch shipwreck and rescue on our rugged shoreline in 1875.
- In December we once again joined the community in the celebration of Christmas with a theme float in the Santa Claus parade.
- In an out-reach to community residents, we held a "Meet & Greet" event to which the public was invited to meet and get to know our members and affiliate members and vice versa.
- To celebrate internally our initiatives and successes, this year, as in years past we held a members social, providing a non-working opportunity for members and affiliate members to enjoy each others company in a party atmosphere.

All of the Society activities noted above are made possible by the voluntary contributions of time, energy and other kinds of support and assistance of our members and affiliate members.

Besides our annual functions and participations, each year we are involved in continuing and new projects, we celebrate new developments and confront new challenges. The past year is no exception.

Here are some highlights of the year that has passed since our last AGM:

We started our year with a strengthened board executive resulting from the appointment of Edgar Williams to fill the Vice-Chairman's seat. Edgar's military, education and volunteer backgrounds, as well as his knowledge of Pouch Cove as a scholar and a former resident made for a valuable addition to our group.

April, 2018 the Society voted unanimously to complete the acquisition of the historic SUF hall from the Vaters family. Having worked for months with a lawyer to complete the necessary paper work, the SUF sub-committee was now mandated by the Board to move forward and assume ownership of the building and site. One of the conditions of the acquisition sets November of 2020 as the date when we can begin restoration work. In the meantime, the former owner occupies the building as a tenant of the Society. With the acquisition confirmed, the sub-committee and the Board will spend the next months

developing a plan and a practical approach to restoration.

Regarding special events of the past year, in May a unique ceremony took place in Pouch Cove, organized by "The Trail of the Caribou", a national group focused on preserving the knowledge of Newfoundland and Labrador soldiers lost in war. They have, among other things, carried on a wide-ranging review of grave sites and headstones throughout the former battle zones of the First world War and associated burial sites, to ensure that, whenever possible, individual fallen soldiers are memorialized in an appropriate manner. In collaboration with the Town and the Heritage Society a special event was held to replace the fallen headstone of the Baldwin family which included the names of the three Baldwin sons lost in the Great War. This was a well-attended public ceremony in the Anglican cemetery with military and civilian representation and participation.

The event was a good example of the Heritage Society's readiness to collaborate with other organizations to make important heritage events possible.

In September, our annual Pouch Cove Heritage Days event had a new feature. For the first time, a dinner theatre was offered to the public. A "packed house" enjoyed a hilarious skit on the theme of the 'old-time school' written, and directed by Gloria Haley and performed by a mix of cast-members, including members, affiliate members and community volunteers. Also, sets, props and audio operation were provided by members, with an extra effort by Roy Noseworthy and Garry Knight. The Lions Club provided the space, and Lions members assisted in many ways. The clear success of this presentation has spurred plans for a similar event to take place in the coming year.

In November, the Society launched its new book entitled "We Remember " profiling war veterans of Pouch Cove, co-authored by Vicki Pennell and Roy Noseworthy with contributions by Margo Duley. The launch event took place at the public gathering that traditionally follows the War Memorial ceremony for November 11th. The co-authors were recognized with words of appreciation and congratulations and the book went on sale during the event. The book is a distinct contribution to the heritage awareness of Pouch Cove as well as being a vital fundraising venture for the Society.

The annual Waterwitch Commemoration event, this year, featured Ruby Williams' presentation focusing on the recognition of the men of Pouch Cove involved in the rescue, and their personal experiences and impressions as they were rewarded for their bravery by the Crown. Mayor Joedy Wall sang "The Waterwitch Song" as he has done on previous occasions. Although this public event does not attract many residents, it remains an important annual ceremony marking the bravery and compassion of Pouch Cove men over a hundred years ago.

In December, we received notice that Edgar Williams, our vice-Chair was presented with the MUN Pensioners Achievement Award in recognition of his years of significant effort and positive results in his many areas of activity.

This year, our annual participation in the Christmas Parade had a special note. We featured a scale model of the SUF Hall in a decorative setting. The road-side crowds showed great enthusiasm for the float and the organizers awarded the float First Prize for an adult organization.

Like in recent previous years, our on-line presence, especially through our well-designed and managed Facebook page has been an effective means of interacting with the community. Heather Noseworthy is to be thanked for her continued contribution of time and talent as our site administrator and graphic designer.

A significant event for the Society's participation was the dismantling of the Town museum. The Town requested our help in making sure the artifacts of the museum were packed and stored in the appropriate manner, pending a new home. For the time being, the artifacts are stored in a storage space on the Town Hall premises. No doubt this action will have ramifications for both the Town and the Heritage Society as we plan for the future.

A brand new event was instigated this year, with the initiative and hard work of Vicki Pennell and Wayne Pennell. The monthly Coffee House at the All Saints Church Hall represents an effort to provide an enjoyable social opportunity for residents to gather to hear local music performed in an "open mic" setting. The event has become the "watch-for" event each month both for talented non-professionals and music lovers. The "Coffee House" is a fundraising event which has begun to add to the Society's income.

On the subject of fundraising, we are lucky to have another production by Gail Everson in the form of a quilt which she has designed and executed and has provided to us as a donation to help raise funds for the Society's projects. This is the second such contribution by Gail, the last quilt being a very productive fundraiser.

Recently, members were pleased to hear that the Lancers Video, which had been in the editing process for months, had been completed. At a screening for members the completed video was received with an enthusiastic endorsement. Plans for distributing the video are currently being worked on. Shirley Bragg and Eugene Castella are to be congratulated for instigating the original Lancers activity, which enabled the video to be made. Thanks also to Edgar Williams, Bob Brink and Joedy Wall for providing the home video footage for the production.

In the realm of challenges faced by the Society this year, we continued to struggle with a shortage of Board members and will have to keep trying to correct this situation going into the new year. Moreover, this year, our newly volunteered Secretary, Sandra Toomey, found it necessary to resign from her executive position, and her board membership due to work commitments. It should be noted that for the time she spent with us, the hours spent and the efficiency of her secretarial work made for a genuine improvement for us in that area. We were fortunate that Vicki Pennell generously agreed to continue the task of recording the minutes for our meetings.

On the positive side, we added several new Affiliate Members to our group, and their skills and commitment will be an important addition to the Society as we continue our projects and activities. We continue to encourage citizens to join us in our Heritage work as Members and Affiliate members.

Also, we continue to deal with the need for a physical space for the Society to use for an office, storage, and display facility. One effort, wherein discussions were held with the Furlong family regarding vacant property in Shoe Cove, concluded without success. Other cursory inquiries also had no positive results.

Looking at challenges ahead, besides those mentioned above, we anticipate a lot of time, energy, and know-how to be required to make progress on several fronts:

- the SUF Hall restoration project
- the revitalization of the Oral History Project
- general fundraising

Before closing I'd like to thank our Board Members, our Affiliate members, and our friends and supporters in the community for a year of genuine progress in our effort to foster Heritage Awareness in Pouch Cove.

We also have to acknowledge organizations, institutions and departments of government for their continuing support of our events and activities. Included in the list would be, The Town of Pouch Cove (Mayor, Councillors, Staff), The Lions Club, The Fifties Plus Club, The Provincial Government, Heritage NL, MUN Folklore Dept., Canadian Heritage, our local MHA, our federal MP, Local Church leaders, and last but not least, the individual residents who attend our events and lend their support in so many other ways.

Ken Pittman (Chair)

Pouch Cove Heritage Society, Mar. 21, 2019

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