

September, 2016



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## The Director's Desk

Bonnie Elliott

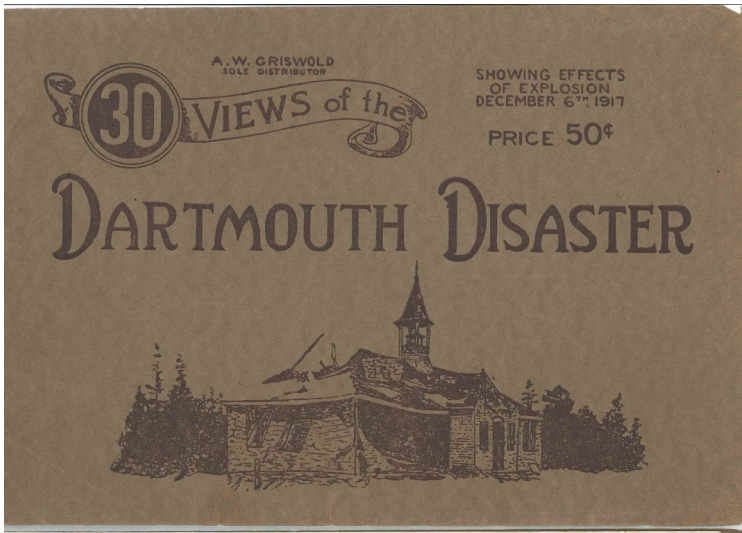
This summer we were blessed with beautiful weather and during the cold days of next winter it will be nice to reflect on. Long days of hot sunny weather are perfect for going to the beach but not necessarily coming to the museum which is perhaps why we saw a few less visitors this year. Nevertheless our heritage interpreters did an outstanding job and for those who did come, were treated to a really great tour. The museum community will miss Liam Caswell and Courtney Mrazek as this was their last summer before going onto further studies.

We have begun to meet with city staff to discuss a new Management and Operation Agreement. At this point we are waiting to see a copy of the draft and are told that the agreement is with their legal department. Continuing to be stewards of the Dartmouth Collection and the two historic houses- Evergreen and Quaker, are two of the most important functions for the Society. The continuation of which will ensure that the community memory is handed down to future generations as they become inspired by the vast array of fascinating stories that make up our history. Gloria McCluskey's last motion in Council requesting a staff report that would outline "information about the plans for the new museum in Dartmouth" marks an end to her long and fruitful career in Municipal politics.

In the meantime, the Dartmouth Heritage Museum is working with the Dartmouth Historical Association to bring about an exhibit on the 1917 Harbour Explosion beginning next summer. Under the

Young Canada Works Internship grant program, we will be hiring a Collections Assistant Intern beginning November 1st. This is an 18 week term and the work will largely take place in the warehouse completing a variety of tasks to help organize, store and record information about the collection.

I would like to welcome two new Board members to our ranks- Beth Vallis and David Newlands who bring experience, good cheers and a willingness to help.



An exhibit on the **Harbour Explosion of 1917** is being planned for next year. If you have artifacts, archival material or photographs you wish to loan, please email [elliottb@bellaliant.com](mailto:elliottb@bellaliant.com)

# Heritage Interpreters

## My Favourite Artifact

My name is Liam Caswell, I have been working as a Heritage Interpreter (and more recently Chief Heritage Interpreter) with the Dartmouth Heritage Museum for four summers (along with a part time position in the fall of 2015). This autumn I will be beginning my masters in history at Dalhousie University with the intention of graduating in summer 2017.

When attempting to choose a favourite artifact, there is a certain challenge. After four years of working at the DHM I have become familiar with so many wonderful pieces from our collection of over 40,000 artifacts that choosing one to stand above the others seems nearly impossible.

That said, I am very fond of our model of the HMS *Alderney*. Last autumn, when I was working part time with the DHM, it came to light that the model did not have an accession number. It was thus up to

Bonnie, the volunteer staff and myself to properly catalogue this beautiful piece of local Nova Scotian handiwork.

Through my research I discovered that the model was built for the fledgling DHM in 1968. Built by local hobbyist Mr. Ernest Sainsbury, and funded by the Alderney chapter of the Imperial Order Daughters of Empire, the model cost a total of \$25 to construct (Mr. Sainsbury only charged for materials) and has since been a valuable tool in teaching the public about the history surrounding the initial founding of Dartmouth in 1750. The research I put in regarding the story behind the model was such a memorable experience that I shall always have a sense of fondness and pride regarding that miniature nautical effigy.

Liam Caswell stands beside the model of HMS *Alderney*, a three-masted barque, that was built at Kingston upon Hull, England in 1742. By 1749, similar ships to the Alderney had been decommissioned from the Royal Navy in order to transport emigrants to the new world. The Alderney entered 'Checucto Harbour' around August 19th, 1750 with 353 passengers that were landed on the East side of the Harbour— Dartmouth.



My name is Courtney Mrazek and I have been a heritage interpreter at Evergreen and Quaker House for the last three summers. The time I have spent at the Dartmouth Heritage Museum has afforded me valuable skills across many arenas, including practical and hands on experience with public history, archives, management of artifacts, as well as team-building activities. I worked at the museum through two degrees; my undergraduate degree in History at Mount Saint Vincent University, and my master's degree in History at Saint Mary's University. I'm moving tomorrow, September 4<sup>th</sup>, to Fredericton to begin my PhD at the University of New Brunswick. I would like to say thank you to everyone in the community and through the museum who has helped and guided me these past few years, especially Bonnie. You've all been amazing.



It was very difficult to choose my favourite artifact to write about – there are so many wonderful gems throughout our collection. However, I chose the distinguished silk top hat that is currently featured next to Joseph Howe in the red parlour, on the sofa. This black silk hat is of the 1900 top hat style, popular in North America. The stamp on the inside linen reads “Christy’s London: Manufactured expressly for Coleman and Co. 143 Granville Street, Halifax NS.” The size is 6 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>.

I chose this top hat because it historically ties the fur trade to our story in Dartmouth. The fur trade was one economic incentive that spurred permanent European settlements here, rather than the previous mode of temporary seasonal settlements for resources. Fur, especially beaver pelts, was highly coveted material for hats. When fur became scarce (after so many years of overhunting for material gain) silk plush took center stage, although the top hats were still referred to as “beavers.” Our top hat at Evergreen is a symbol of Canadian history, both environmental history and colonization and settlements.

## Hidden in Plain Sight

### *My Favourite Artifact*

Meaghan Bartlett

Museums serve as preservers of history. Vaults of artifacts and knowledge, ready to be accessed by the public at any time. But even within the walls of such a sanctuary, stories can fade with time. In the grand double parlor of Evergreen House stands a gown. A beautiful gown of simple, Victorian style, and mystery.

The gown is a dark, olive green, made of woven silk, with a pattern of white stripes, and white and magenta flowers. It is set majestically in the room that was a Victorian lady's domain, and although perhaps mentioned in passing during a tour, it would soon be forgotten in the flood of history Evergreen House holds. In two summers of working for the museum I had never learned anything about it. Not its era, its history nor its donor. So this dress has held a fascination for me, and I went on a quest to discover its story.

When researching any artifact in the museum's collection, the best first step to take is to check the

*(Continued on page 4)*

digital archives. But the answers to my questions about the dress were found the old-fashioned way, in a physical folder from a filing cabinet! What I thought was just a casual day dress was actually worn as a wedding dress. It was hand-made, in the town of Bushmills, Antrim County in Ireland and belonged to a lady named Ann Elisa Atchison. While the style was more popular in Europe around 1867, she wore it for her marriage to John McCurdy on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1870. They went on to have a family of five girls and three boys. More than a century later, the gown was donated to the care of the Costume Society of Nova Scotia in 1984 by Annie Wallace, Ann Elisa's granddaughter. The CSNS collection was then transferred to the DHM collection in 1992 museum.

Although I have learned more of its history than I thought I would, my research has given me even more questions. How did the dress come to Canada from Ireland? Did Ann Elisa ever cross the Atlantic Ocean, or was it one of her children? Do any of her descendants live in Milford? But that is why this gown is my favourite artifact in the museum: it is a reminder that there is always more to learn, and there are always more stories to discover.



## Our Favorite Artifact: 19th Century Handheld Fire Screen

**Meaghan Elliott and Laurie Fleet**

Resting on the square piano in the double parlor of Evergreen House lays a Victorian era handheld fire screen. The history of the use of the fire screen is extensive and its popularity dates back to the 18th century. The most common variety at the time was the horse or cheval screen which stood on two feet with the screen being decorated with painted wood or embroidery (often framed with glass) and sometimes made from papier maché. Screens were used to shield the lady's face and complexion from the intense heat of the fire. At the time it was the height of fashion to be fair skinned, a look that was achieved through natural means or - in the 18th century - with heavy wax and lead based makeup. The fire screens would both prevent the lady from blushing and also keep the makeup intact.

As time passed, fire screens evolved in shape and size to a banner and pole screen that were adjustable in height and stood on a single pole. Some fire screens were fitted and put directly in the fire place to protect from embers and debris getting out. Others were used purely for decorative purposes - usually during the warmer months when a fire was not always necessary.

The particular fire screen to which we have alluded came from the Fairbanks home as one of many donations from descendant Nancy Forrest in the early 1970s. An important family to the history of Dartmouth, the Fairbanks were both supporters of the Shubenacadie Canal and their estate gave the Woodside area its name. A successful merchant, John E. Fairbanks had three well educated daughters who were talented in the arts. Most notably, his daughter Anne Blagdon Fairbanks was recognized for her success in painting, poetry, and needlework. The Dartmouth Heritage Museum is in possession of several samples of her craftsmanship, including Nova Scotia wildflowers and "tole-painted wooden fans, to protect a lady's delicate



complexion from the heat of an open fire." Although it is unclear it is possible that the handheld fire screens were either owned by her or something she had painted herself.

Our interest in the handheld fire screen stems from both the cosmetic and practical use of the furnishing as well as the beautifully hand-crafted design. We then became more excited in the artifact due to its connection with the Fairbanks family and the enjoyment that stemmed from the search for the missing link between the family and the artifact. We never pass up the opportunity to include it in our tours.

Meaghan is starting her first year in Screen Arts at the NSCC Waterfront Campus. She enjoyed her first summer at the Dartmouth Heritage Museum and since learned a lot about the local history.

## DHM Society Donors:

Each year Society Members give over and above the membership fees to help us run our programs at the Museum.

Hats off to their ongoing generosity !

Audrey Manzer	John, Valerie, Mark Osborne	Catherine Harrison
Ann Creighton Day	Suzanne & Michael Day	Inez Joyce Earle
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# From the Carriage Room Photography Studio

Dale Wilson

The Carriage Room has been transformed and what an exciting place for the photography historian or those wanting to learn more about the very beginnings of “painting with light.”

Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre was a French artist and photographer, and is widely recognized for his invention of the daguerreotype in 1839. The collection of images on display in the Carriage Room Studio includes examples of “Dags” that can be traced to the mid-1840s. Work continues to learn all we can about the collection, with a goal of identifying a William Valentine photograph. Valentine was known to operate the first perma-



Photographer Dale Wilson poses beside ‘Lord of the Manor’ AKA Brutus. *Photograph by Dale Wilson*

nent photo studio in British North America, opening his Halifax studio in 1842 and keeping it open until his death in 1849.

Not to be outdone by the French, British scientist and inventor Henry Fox Talbot was also experimenting with “light painting” and the calotype in the mid-1830s. It

was not until 1839, that Talbot learned that fixing a print in a solution of sodium thiosulfate (John Herschel) was the solution he had been looking for, and so was born the salt print. In a style unlike Talbot might have employed, the Carriage Room was transported back to 1839 this summer when we sized numerous sheets of paper in preparation to make some Salt Prints. As a young lad from Newfoundland asked when he was visiting: Why do you have paper hanging on a clothes line?

The most exciting news this summer came from a trip to Prince Edward Island when I was delighted to secure a Century Grand No 7 camera for the Museum. The camera produces an 8x10 inch negative and was made by Century Camera Company in Rochester, New York. The low serial number suggests the camera was made pre-1904, but this cannot be confirmed as the order book was not transferred to George Eastman (Kodak) when they bought the company in 1903. Records show the company changed its name in 1908 to Century Camera Division, Eastman Kodak Company and they were merged with Folmer Graflex. The name “Century” continued to exist until 1920.

Over the past month I have had new lens boards made, ground new glass to replace a cracked focusing screen, and replaced the original bellows that resembled a leaky basket. As I have worked on this behemoth of a camera I have affectionately began calling him Brutus due to his size. I suspect the name will soon change as someone else (the Executive Director) has been overheard calling him “Lord of the Manor.” Time will tell! It is anticipated that the Carriage Rooms newest working exhibit will be onsite by the time you read this issue of the Gazette.

As we move into the autumn months it will be time for me to start working on programs and workshops. I absolutely looking forward to introducing folks to the thrill of making salt prints using only the sun as the light source – no enlarger required. We will also be working toward develop a workshop that will introduce participants to the pleasure of making tintypes in the same manner and style as those made when Evergreen House was constructed. This is a time period when photography was fun, and we are going to have a lot of fun exploring these processes.

## EVENTS & EXHIBITS



*Lower Level* – **The Carriage Room Photography Studio:** Come and visit our recreation of a 19<sup>th</sup> century Photographic Studio to learn how the art of photography has developed through the years. Peer into the past through the lenses of select antique cameras, and witness the process of creating wet-plate photographs.

*Main Level* – **Toys & Games from the Past:** We are bringing the fun back to Evergreen! Our new exhibit in the 'old dining room' features a charming selection of pieces from our extensive collection, guaranteed to make you smile.

*Upper Level* – **Edgemere & Rosenberg:** Featuring paintings and photographs by the man himself, our new exhibit tells the story of American-born artist Henry M. Rosenberg. Learn about his marriage to Emily Scarfe, daughter of the influential Frederick Scarfe, mayor of Dartmouth, and the building of the Edgemere home.

\$5.00 Admission. Members and children under 12 are free.

Tuesday - Friday 10am – 5pm & Saturday – 10am -1pm & 2pm – 5pm

Evergreen House, 26 Newcastle Street, Dartmouth

Phone 902-464-2300

[www.dartmouthheritagemuseum.ns.ca](http://www.dartmouthheritagemuseum.ns.ca)

### **Evergreen Writing Group will resume meeting on Wednesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 10:15 a.m. to Noon!**

Evergreen Writers' Group welcomes newcomers to our meetings at Evergreen House, 26 Newcastle Street in Dartmouth. We get together the first Wednesday of each month for discussion, encouragement, providing feedback to each other on works in progress, guest speakers and workshops. For more information, call 463-5612 or email [evergreen\\_writers@yahoo.ca](mailto:evergreen_writers@yahoo.ca)

### *Gift Shop News*

Our Gift Shop is open every day the museum is with some great gift ideas! We have many books and locally produced handcrafted items. Check out the new aprons and t-shirts, new key rings, trays and wind chimes. We now accept debit.



These cute and cuddly bears are a new addition

Looking to downsize? **The Gift Shop** at Evergreen House is looking to sell second hand titles on Dartmouth History. If you have any to sell or give away please call the museum at **902-464-2300**.



Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society

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<http://www.dartmouthheritagemuseum.ns.ca/>

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*Protecting, Preserving  
& Promoting our  
Heritage*

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A **Quaker House Advisory Committee** has just been formed. Anyone interested in learning more about the committee is asked to [elliottb@bellaliant.com](mailto:elliottb@bellaliant.com)



***DHMS Membership Form***

**Individual Membership - \$20**

A \$10 tax receipt will be issued, you will receive our newsletter by mail, and membership will entitle you to free admission to museums (Evergreen and Quaker House) upon presentation of your card.

**Family Membership - \$30**

A \$15 tax receipt will be issued, you will receive our newsletter by mail, and membership will entitle you to free admission to museums (Evergreen and Quaker House) upon presentation of your card.

**Please also consider the following levels of giving ...**

\$50 Donor - Your name will appear in the newsletter, and a full tax receipt will be issued.

\$100 Friend - You will help sponsor one of our exhibits, your name will appear in the exhibit, the newsletter and a full tax receipt will be issued.

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Please make cheques payable to the Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society and send to:

*Dartmouth Heritage Museum Society, 26 Newcastle Street, Dartmouth N.S., B2Y 3M5*