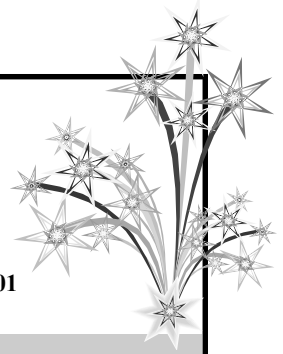




The Rucksack

Newsletter of the Friends of McNabs Island Society
 The society is a registered charity: CCRA number 88847 4194 RR 0001



Volume Eighteen, Issue 1-3

Celebrating 20 Years

Spring - Fall 2010

McNabs Trail Project keeps Building

By Catherine McCarthy

Last year the Friends of McNabs were successful in raising \$272,000 toward improving Garrison Road on McNabs Island. Brycon Construction did an excellent job rebuilding sections of the road in the worst area near Findlay Cove, and ditching and installing culverts along sections of the road near Back Cove and Fort McNab.

This year the Friends have been able to raise \$125,000 toward the trail project, but all the funds won't be used for trail improvements. HRM's Community Grants is providing \$25,000 earmarked for composting toilets. The current six outhouses that the Friends installed over 15 years ago have served their purpose well, but it is time to take sewage disposal to a new more sustainable level. The new composting toilet to be installed near Garrison Pier will be accessible and barrier-free.

In addition, Nova Scotia Tourism Culture and Heritage is providing \$25,000 toward developing an interpretive plan, directional signs and building a trailhead kiosk near Garrison Pier. The remainder of the funds from Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection (\$45,000), Councillor Jackie Barkhouse (\$2,500), Councillor Bill Karsten (\$2,000) and Councillor Darren Fisher (\$2,000), Southeastern Community Health Board (\$750) and Dartmouth Community Health Board (\$500) will be used for trail improvements along the Colin Stewart and Brow Hill Trails that lead to Fort McNab.

We also want to improve the trails leading to the Hugonin-Perrin Estate and the Victorian Gardens, but must wait for approval from Nova Scotia Natural Resources. The Department wants us to do a landscape plan for the area. Peter Bigelow, Manager of Real Property Planning for HRM has committed HRM staff to do an assessment of the trees and plants in this 130-year-old Victorian Garden, which will help us greatly with the landscape planning. Once that is complete, surveying will be done and we can put together a landscape plan for the area.

Neglected for over 80 years, the remnants of the terraced gardens planted by Frederick Perrin in the 1880s still thrive with Japanese Maples, Weigelia, Black Locusts, a dying Copper Beech near the Teahouse, and a row of Buckeye trees towering over the whole gardens. The Friends would like to restore these gardens to their former glory, but that project will have to wait for another year.



Fiddlers Kate Dunlay and David Greenberg welcome island visitors with a lively tune at the picnic 17 July 2010.

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Friends of McNabs Island Society Rucksack

Web address: <http://www.mcnabsisland.ca>

Published 4 times each year: Spring, Summer, Fall & Winter

MEMBERSHIPS: Individual Membership or Newsletter Only is \$15 per year, Family Membership is \$20 per year, Supporting Membership is \$50 per year and Sustaining Membership is \$100 per year. We are a registered charity and accept donations.

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We welcome contributions, ideas and feedback.

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Deacon Tom Smith blesses the commemorative bench overlooking Hugonin Point, on July 17. The Point is the final resting place for SS England cholera victims buried there in 1866.



Commemorative bronze plaque. Sadly, this plaque has since been stolen.

McNabs Island 20th Anniversary Picnic a Success!

By Robert Ruggiero

Around 500 guests of all ages celebrated the Friends of McNabs 20th Anniversary on Canada's Parks Day, Saturday July 17th 2010. The sold out event was a definite success.

The event planning started months ago, with the Friends' Picnic Planning Committee perfecting every detail. In June, Heather Grant and I, summer students hired by the Friends, joined the team. By the end, dozens of individuals and organizations had donated their time, resources and expertise.

A series of planned activities were orchestrated throughout the day. Husband and wife fiddle team David Greenberg and Kate Dunlay greeted the arriving ferries, while SNAP Halifax documented.

In the morning, Wendy and Bob McDonald offered a guided birding tour, and Claire Latremouille and friends set up a variety of children's activities. The lower Teahouse Field was transformed into a fair-like ground. Tents and seating provided a place to relax. George & Lito's barbeque was firing away, while a rotating cast of Friends manned information booths. Security staff from the Corp of Commissionaires and medical volunteers from St. John Ambulance watched over the festivities to ensure our wellbeing.

By noon all three ferries had arrived, combined with dozens of private boats and charters from Eastern Passage, and the island was pulsating. The Friends purposely organized three marquee events to take place while most people were visiting. The first of these events was the ribbon cutting of the newly rebuilt trails.

Becky Kent, MLA for Cole Harbour-Eastern Passage officially opened the trails. She was assisted by Megan Leslie, MP for Halifax, and Jackie Barkhouse, Councillor for Woodside-Eastern Passage. Jackie presented the Friends of McNabs with a grant from HRM to purchase and install a composting toilet as well as a grant to help with the trails project. Immediately following the trail opening was the Sisters of Charity's commemoration. About 50 Sisters and their friends and family commemorated their order's work helping Cholera victims who were quarantined on the island over 150 years ago. The event was centred on a newly installed commemorative bench that overlooks Findlays Cove. Violinist, David Greenberg finished the ceremony with a beautiful lament. Finally, it was time to celebrate with an anniversary cake. The Friends of McNabs Executive surprised Cathy McCarthy with a specially designed vase made by potter Sally Ravindra as a thank you for hours of work and dedication.

The afternoon heat and humidity brought a calming sensation to the otherwise hectic day. Royce Walker offered his popular history tour, Mike MacDonald a nature tour and Carolyn Mont led the Thomas Raddall Hangman's Beach literary tour. Games were played along the beach and by the teahouse. Quoits, a historical ring toss game played on the island since 1762, was also revived. The symbolic end of the day arrived early, as the first returning ferry departed at 2:30. The festivities continued for a few more hours, but the sheer size of the island meant it was a very peaceful afternoon. Plentiful water and cake fuelled the crew of volunteers who eagerly packed away dozens of chairs, tents and other picnic paraphernalia.

The Friends of McNabs Island Society's 20th Anniversary was a perfect storm of people, ideas, and timing. The event restored the Island's revered recreational image and earned a well-deserved spot in the hearts and minds of its attendees.

Time to start planning the 25th...



Robert & Heather relax after a long day at the Anniversary Picnic.

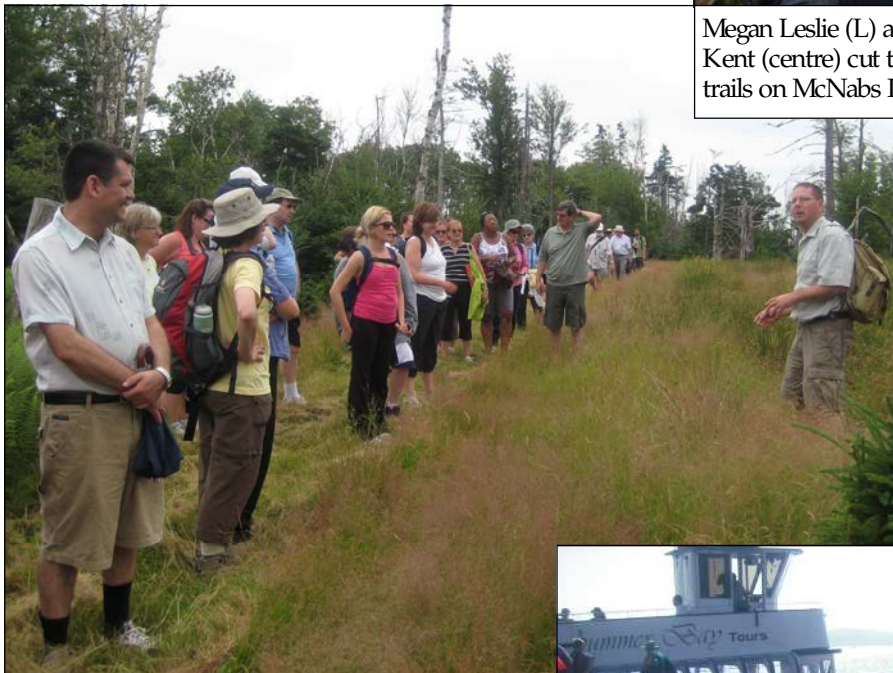
McNabs Island Picnic July 2010

By Catherine McCarthy

Our 20th anniversary Picnic couldn't have happened without the dedication of our volunteers. We thank all of you who took part, by either selling tickets (Denyse Contrasty, John McCallum, Greg & Cathy Haverstock), helping out at the McNabs info tent (Sally Ravindra, John Andrews, Radha Mohandas, Faye Power, Greg and Ellen Noddin, Peggy Richardson), helping with logistics and transportation (Heather Whitehead, Karen Saulnier, Lisa Shepard, Greg Stevens, Brent King, Catherine Ross), helping ferry volunteers to the island (Krista Olmstead, Steve Taylor, A&M Charters, Harvey Adams) greeting



Megan Leslie (L) and Jackie Barkhouse (R) help Becky Kent (centre) cut the ribbon to officially open the trails on McNabs Island at the picnic on July 17.



Royce Walker
recounts the
history of the
island to
visitors.

visitors (Katalin Ohlsson, Patricia Manuel, Jill Smith, Jessica Corbin, Mike Templin), organizing children's activities (Claire Latremouille, Sarah & Lesley d'Apollonia, Kim Wallace, Ashley Chapman, Keegan McGrath, Stephanie Craft, Sam Clement, Laura Johnstone, Kele Tedeneke). And thanks to long-time member Judy Gorham for calling all the members to remind them of the picnic.

A thanks goes out to people and organizations that donated supplies, equipment and support to make our picnic such a grand success.

Thanks to the Spryfield Residents' Association
(Continued on page 5)



St John Ambulance volunteers relax after a long day on the island.

(Continued from page 4)

for the loan of tables and tents; Sobeys Lacewood for the anniversary cake; James Campbell of Halifax Water for drinking water; William Rogers of Atlantic Premium Water Store for water and water coolers; Dianne Kristoff, Costume Studies, Dalhousie University for the beautiful ribbon used for the trail opening ceremony; David Greenberg and Kate Dunlay for their wonderful music; Wendy and Bob McDonald, Mike MacDonald, Carolyn Mont and Royce Walker for their informative tours; Ambassatours for microphones; Ian Gibb for his photography; George & Lito's for the BBQ; Murphys Cable Wharf for the transportation; Ticket Atlantic for selling tickets;



Cathy McCarthy receives a special thank you gift while Carolyn Mont looks on.



Children have fun with a parachute at picnic.

the Chronicle Herald for their ad; Megan Leslie, Peter Stoffer, Becky Kent, Purcells Cove Pottery, for advertising in our program; and long-time member Doris Schrader and the Sisters of Charity for their generous donations.

A special thanks goes out to **Robert Ruggiero** and **Heather Grant**, our summer students who took on the enormous responsibility coordinating picnic planning and logistics. The Friends of McNabs Island can't thank you enough for your enthusiasm and support.



Stamos serves BBQ kabobs at the picnic.

MEMORIES OF MCNABS ISLAND, 1945-1950
Story & photos by Janet Charest (nee Taylor)

Recently, I submitted old photos of McNabs Island to Carolyn Mont and she in turn requested that I put pen to paper and recall some of my childhood memories spent on the island. From 1945 to 1950 is the time frame for these memories; therefore, perception through a child's eyes, aged 5 to 10 years of age can range from vivid to foggy.

Lizzie Garrett, my grandmother, owned the camp and along with my parents and brothers, we all spent happy summers together there. We were accompanied by many friends and relatives and hospitality was always extended to all those who came to visit.

The photos from McNabs Island spanned 3 decades, from the twenties to the forties. One of the pictures chosen was of my grandfather, Norman Garrett on his boat, with just about every family member and some extended family on board. My mother, Mabel Taylor saved the photos in a box and when she passed away, I found them and started an album along with the family tree. I am glad I saved the photos, as curiosity got the better of me and I searched high and low trying to find out who some of the people were in the photos. I, of course, recognized all of the women but the men are a mystery and they still remain so; hopefully, in time, someone will be able to clarify this mystery.



Circa 1922 Front Row: Mabel Taylor, Carrie Poirier, Mary Squires nee Poirier, baby Norman Taylor & unknown man. Back row: Lizzie Garrett, Albert "Bucky" Taylor & George Squires.

I do recall a few camps in our area, and that particular childhood memory is that all the other camps were painted with white wash. Was this my imagination or were they really whitewashed? I was born in 1939 so my impressions, circa 1945, were starting to develop when I was about five or maybe six years of age. I believe I must have been around this age as I attended St. Mary's School, grade one, as there was no primary class that year. The duty boat would take us from Queen's wharf on Lower Water Street, not far from my house situated at #157 and ferry us across to the Island and dock us at a wharf, that I believe it was the Hurshman Wharf. On further investigation on the location of the camp, I discovered that it was between Ives Cove and Indian Point.

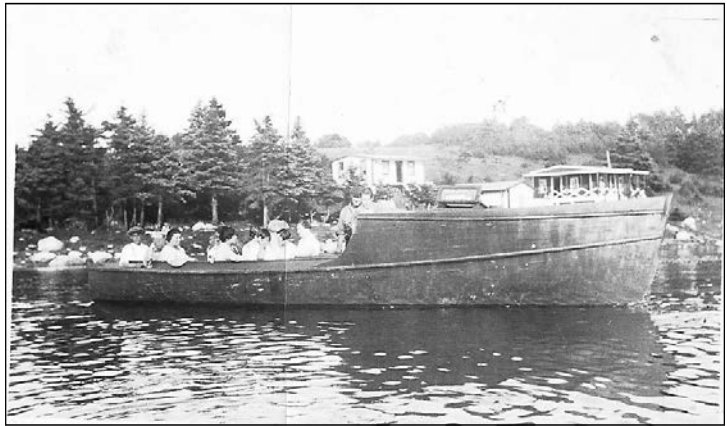


1941 ~ Mabel & Bucky Taylor with children Janet & James near Indian Point.

(Continued on page 7)

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The camp was not in a cove, but close to that parcel of land jutting out in the harbour, so that the Halifax waterfront was clearly visible. The camp was situated a few feet from the actual water, this I recall, the water splashing against the rocky shoreline. I was told to look for the Hens and Chickens on the Halifax side, even though this is a run off, I got a giggle out of that, as a child's imagination has no boundaries. There were lots of blueberry bushes behind the camp and enough for my grandmother to make her mouth-watering blueberry grunt.



1926 Family aboard Norman Garrett's boat



Circa 1929/30
Evelyn Poirier & unknown man

One very vivid memory is, all the kids played in the bone chilling, icy waters of Halifax Harbour. The shoreline near our camp usually had an oil slick and it left a ring around our ankles but it did not deter us from playing in the water anyway. Another relative told me that if you went into Ives Cove, the water was as warm as bath water; this is definitely not one of my memories. There must have been an endless source of green paint, as it seems everything in the camp was painted green.

The camp had a large main room with a prominent, black, wood stove and there was a huge pot on the stove, all the time. Even on the hottest day, they would be baking bread or stewing something, the smell of onions and root vegetables would permeate the air. Relatives tell me there were three small bedrooms and many army cots and grey blankets stack on the cots, I suspect, ready to accommodate visiting relatives. I cannot remember there being any toilet facilities, except that little pot that was used after dark.

In 1949 my grandmother passed away and that ended our summers on the island. After 1950 our visits to the island ceased. Previous to her passing, Lizzie Garrett, turned the property over to her niece Evelyn Wills, and her husband Harry and their family

lived there for several years, as Harry was caretaker of the DND fort. The Wills family moved away from the island eventually and after researching for information as to what happened to the property, I might have found an answer.

Gordon Fader, retired from the Bedford Institute of Oceanography, is very knowledgeable about the island, and at one point his family had a camp on the island. He believes that erosion took place. The property was very close to the water's edge and neglected for many years, therefore, erosion took its toll and the salty water finally claimed it. Apparently, there were a few cottages nearby that had the same fate.

When I look back on my summers on the island, even after all these years, it still opens up a window of happy, pleasant memories.

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The Friends of McNabs Island Society runs on volunteer power, please consider giving a few hours of your time.

Not all jobs take a lot of time, some can be one-time-only help with an event, doing call backs or mailing out the newsletter. Please contact the executive through our email address.



If not otherwise credited, photos for this issue are courtesy Ian Gibb, Faye Power and Cathy McCarthy.



The historic but neglected Conrad-Davis home on McNabs Island

Annual membership to the Friends of McNabs Island Society runs on the calendar year and includes a year's subscription to the society's quarterly newsletter, *The Rucksack*.

We thank you for your continued support and welcome your interest!

Send cheque, payable to:

The Friends of McNabs Island Society

PO Box 31240, Gladstone RPO
Halifax, NS B3K 5Y1

Phone Lyn Underhill at 444-7482 for membership inquiries.

**The society is a registered charity:
CCRA number 88847 4194 RR 0001**

The Rucksack is published by the **Friends of McNabs Island Society**.

Contributions, ideas and feedback are welcome.

Visit our website at: www.mcnabsisland.ca

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This issue went to print November 2010

For email updates about McNabs Island, send your contact information to:
mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca or visit our Facebook group.

All memberships are renewable by the end of each year. Please fill out the renewal form enclosed with this issue. Your support for McNabs Island and our society is invaluable.

For any membership inquiries contact Lyn Underhill
at mcnabs@chebucto.ns.ca or by calling 902-444-7482.