

# Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

National Historic Sites of Cape Breton Island - Lieux Historiques Nationaux du Cap-Breton  
Vol. 8, No.2 February - Février 2006

## *2006 Winter Storms*

On February 1<sup>st</sup> Louisbourg was hit with a mid-winter “Nor’easter”. The East coast of Canada has a history of these storms causing havoc and damage, typically the result of a depression coming up the Eastern Seaboard of the US combined with an Arctic low pressure system. We may remember February of 2004, with what was called “White Juan” and the famous “Perfect Storm” on Halloween of 1991.

It seems that the Fortress gets hit with a strong Nor’easter in February every couple of years. On this same date (February 1<sup>st</sup>.) of 1992, one of these storms breached the barrier beach, resulting in flooding of the site as well as the destruction of a large portion of the Fauxbourg Cribwork.

This past storm didn’t let Louisbourg get off easily. Along with the strong winds, the storm occurred during the spring tides, these were combined with a significant storm surge resulting in extreme seawater heights.



The wind combined with the high water and waves caused significant damage to the marine components of the reconstructed site.

There was again significant erosion of the crest of the Barrier Beach with several breach points. The water overtopping this structure flooded the Ile du Quay area, including the guardhouse (Sewage Treatment Plant). Material will be added to the barrier beach in order to re-establish the crest. This crest was built to a 30’ width in 1992; our objective in this rebuilding will be an 18’ crest.



The outer surface of the Quay wall is now basically stripped of the wood sheathing over most of it’s length. There was also loss and displacement of planking along the top and sides of the structure. These areas that are exposed to the public and those which are now subject to additional damage from future storms will have to be repaired. There will be no attempt to repair or replace the sheathing on the outer surface of this wall.

The two Guerites which were built into the Quay wall were totally destroyed, (the roof of one found in the Fauxbourg area). The voids that remain in the Quay wall as a result of the Guerites being gone will be

appropriately blocked in order to address the potential safety hazard.

There was significant damage to the wharfs; we had been planning to effect repairs to the Frederick Wharf and the Intendant's Wharf. There is no longer a basis to make repairs on, these wharfs will have to be rebuilt at some time in the future when there is money available. There will be work around all of the entrances, both to remove the safety hazards and to provide access for emergency drafting of seawater for fire fighting.

The Fauxbourg area also took a major hit with this storm. Along with a culvert removal there was



erosion and loss of material the length of the cribwork. Heavy stone protection had been added to a portion of this area due to damage done by a previous Nor'easter. If it wasn't for that stone, I fear that we may have had serious damage to the Desroches House. The remaining period cribwork has now been damaged to a point that it can no longer serve its purpose of protecting the roadway and associated area. Heavy stone protection will be put in place throughout the remainder of the cribwork area as well as a portion near the house on the causeway end.

The site was a mess, lumber, stone, sand and lots of other debris scattered throughout the area. We were fortunate with the mild spell following the storm, it permitted us to bring in extra crews and get most of the mess cleaned-up.

There was virtually no damage to any of the reconstructed buildings, which is a blessing, it was the impact of the wind driven seas that did us harm.



It is unfortunate that we are losing the marine aspects of our reconstruction; it will make it difficult to provide a quality interpretation of this important aspect of Louisbourg.

### ***Archaeological Resources Uncovered by Feb. 1 Storm Surge***

The storm on February 1 had an impact on the Level 1 cultural resources of the Fortress. The surge uncovered several sections of wall from the Princess around what used to be called Church Cove to Rochefort Point.

These cultural resources included some which we were already familiar and a few surprises. Rebecca Duggan, after reviewing the impact, assembled a team to survey, record and cover the newly-exposed sites. This work has now been completed. There was a great deal of media interest in the storm and its effect on the cultural resources.



Becki was contacted by CBC Radio, CBC French and English television and ATV. The CBC spot by Jenna MacNeil was carried nationally and got us a call from "As It Happens" and radio stations in Toronto and Edmonton. Many, if not all, radio stations in the Maritimes ran the story as did the Cape

Breton Post. The CBC website has the story at <http://www.cbc.ca/story/canada/national/2006/02/22/fortress-wall060222.html>

If there is any one picture that highlights the effect of the February 1 storm, it is this one taken on the Louisbourg waterfront looking west towards the Frederic Gate. Photographer - Ian Harte.



### ***Public Archaeology Programme***

The great success of the Public Archaeology programme last summer has encouraged us to try it again this year working in co-operation with the Fortress Louisbourg Association. The programme gave visitors a chance to take part in a real excavation; the chance to talk to Parks Canada staff about a new programme; it drew attention to our Level 1 cultural resources and addressed Cultural Resource Management goals of discovering the nature and content of unexcavated yards in the reconstruction. It also provided a novel storyline for the media and in that regard drew coverage locally and nationally.

There are two Public Archaeology sessions of 5 days planned for 2006: the first is between August 7 and 11 and the second from August 14 to 18. The excavation will be in the back yard of the de la Valliere property, a continuation of last year's project. For more information log onto the Fortress Louisbourg Association website.

### ***Fun on the Fortress Barachois.***

The fortress barachois has always been a place for fun and recreation from hockey games between the Marconi Wireless Station staff and West Louisbourg of many years ago to individual skating and small scale hockey games today. A new twist on what to do on the barachois is the ice sculpture which began to appear the week of February 20<sup>th</sup>. They certainly attract attention.



### ***Condolences***

Our condolences to Judith Romard and her family on the death of her mother-in-law, Vivian Romard Sampson on February 4<sup>th</sup>.

Our condolences to Margaret Perry and Donna Perry on the death of their father and grandfather Cliff Peck on February 6<sup>th</sup>.

Our condolences also to Wayne and Philip Boudreau on the death of their father, Louis Emile Boudreau, 90, who died February 7, 2006 in St. Martha's Hospital, Antigonish. Also father-in-law to Erna MacLeod.

Our condolences to Raymond Lillington and family on the death of his mother Susan on February 23, 2006.

*Anyone wishing to submit an article to the Hear Ye! Hear Ye!, please forward to Donna MacNeil by e-mail.*