



Wooden Boat News

From the “Winterton Boat Building and Community Museum” to the “Wooden Boat Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador, Inc.”

This museum started over 10 years ago, under the direction of the Winterton Heritage Advisory Board, which is an advisory arm of the Town of Winterton. Soon after startup, the Board realized that to survive it had to focus on a theme that was unique as well as appealing to significant numbers of potential visitors. Having David Taylor’s publication, *Boat Building in Winterton*, available to us, the board decided to focus on the Winterton boat building story as its main theme, with an emphasis on preserving the associated skills involved.

It became clear that the history and skills associated with traditional wooden boat building province wide are too, in great danger of being lost forever. These skills are what enabled our forefathers to survive in a harsh marine environment and started the establishment of the cultural landscape we have today. With this in mind, the Museum Board has initiated efforts to take on provincially the responsibility of what we have done locally for Winterton.

We have had much support and encouragement along the way both morally and financially; especially from the Federal Government through their funding arms ACOA and Service Canada and from the Provincial Government through the Dept. of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development. Prior to now, we received funding for an exhibit and building upgrade in 2001, a Long Term Growth Framework completed in the summer of 2004, and a full Business Plan completed in the summer of 2007.

The latest funding will help us begin organization provincially. Specifically it will enable:

1. Start up the new entity known as the Wooden Boat Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador inc., from which all other initiatives will get direction.
2. Organization of boat building enthusiast province wide through a Museum membership

drive, the establishment of an associated boat building association, and the planning of a boat builder’s conference.

3. Research into present wooden boat building activity as well as collection of historical data on boat building and their builders.
4. Completion of some infrastructural improvements to the present museum.
5. Museum branding, website development and trade show attendance.
6. The development of a sustainability plan for the future.

To help us move forward we have been fortunate in obtaining the consulting services of Mr. Hal Barrett who brings to the table a variety of expertise, from firsthand experience in government to a recent assignment in the province’s commercial boat building community. With his help we are confident that we will be able to fulfill all expectations outlined above.

To date the Board has been more than pleased with the encouraging responses received from contacts made, and excited about the potential outcomes that this project has to offer. We are well aware that this is a mammoth undertaking and will be a continuous work in progress. The degree of success will depend on our ability to engage dedicated people province wide, in order to transform our vision into sustainable action.

Frank French
Chairman, Project Steering Committee

Wooden Boat Museum Project Update

By: *Hal Barrett*

In becoming the Wooden Boat Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador, approval was received from Revenue Canada, and the Museum is now a **Registered Charity**.

Negotiations during the preceding six months were successful in receiving financial support from **ACOA's Innovative Communities Fund** and from the **Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development's Regional/Sectoral Diversification Fund**.

This support provided funding for the transition of the Community Museum into a Museum with a province wide focus.

- One that would engage in activities intended to determine the identities and locations of wooden boat builders, wooden boat model builders and wooden boat enthusiasts.
- Encourage their support in preserving the wooden boat building traditions of the culture and skills of this significant part of our heritage.
- Assist in supporting their construction of traditional wooden boats in regions of the province where wooden boats are still the preferred option for use in their fishing exploits.
- Provide a center where builders can build replicas or models of the traditional wooden boats from their particular region or community of the province and provide space for display.

A major component of the project will focus on encouraging these boat and model builders and enthusiasts to attend a **Wooden Boat Conference in Winterton**, set for **October 31st, November 1st and 2nd, 2008**. This event will encourage the formation of a Museum Member Association; provide an agenda to discuss issues of importance to boat builders relating to the preservation and growth of traditional wooden boat building. Convene the 1st Annual General Meeting of the Museum, and conduct an election of Directors and Officers that would include representatives from various regions of the Province.

Activities to Date

- Presented a request to the Town of Winterton to declare a part of the harbor-front as a Heritage Area.
- Engaged a building inspector to provide a report on the Museum building.
- Two Directors of the Heritage Committee and the Consultant attended a Wooden Boat Museum and Wooden Boat Show at Mystic Seaport, Conn.
- Engaged display space to show a traditional wooden boat at the North Atlantic Fish and Workboat Show at Mile One Center in St. John's, November 21st and 22nd. We maybe selling tickets on this boat.
- Develop plans for an interpretive walking trail as an extension to the Museum to display stores, stages and accompanying story boards.
- Traveled to Twillingate and Fogo Island to meet with wooden boat builders in that region.
- Engaged Communications Consultants to prepare communications and public relations strategies, website upgrades, develop a historic map showing places of interest, heritage and historic buildings, business locations, and walking trails.
- Engaged in identifying and making contact with wooden boat builders, wooden boat model builders and wooden boat enthusiasts throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. At press time, we have identified and made contact with 138 active wooden boat and model builders and 111 inactive boat builders from 87 communities in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Engaged in organizing the Wooden Boat Conference planned for October 31st, November 1st and 2nd in Winterton
- Preparing documentation and a strategy to commence the Wooden Boat Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador membership program.

Museum Curator's Update

By: Nancy Reid

This is a busy time at the Wooden Boat Museum. This season we are reassessing our collections inventory and our presence on the World Wide Web. We are currently open seven days a week with 13 employees on site to provide guided tours to visitors.

It is exciting to be involved with regions throughout Newfoundland and Labrador and boat building enthusiasts everywhere. We are working with the Steering Committee of the Wooden Boat Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador to begin implementation of this new enterprise.

The Wooden Boat Museum has grown considerably over the past 10 years. The permanent exhibit contains three full size Winterton boats and the tools and moulds used to build them. We also have eight make and break engines of varying models and sizes. However, the museum is more than just a static exhibit. Currently there is a punt under construction which is being built

by volunteer members of the Winterton Heritage Advisory Board. Also, four boats have been built on site to date, two of these boats were built by youth participants in 2003 and 2005. At the end of these building projects the youth took with them an appreciation for traditional boat building and the satisfaction of having been a part of a once in a lifetime experience. In 2006, the Winterton Boat Building Museum took part in the Celebrating Our Living Heritage Conference at Memorial University of Newfoundland. During the conference, two members of the Winterton Heritage Advisory Board demonstrated some traditional boat building skills through the partial completion of a Rodney. In 2007, we were a part of Atlantic Canada's first Heritage Corridor pilot project. This experience broadened our outlook in many aspects including marketing, networking and the interest in experiential tourism.

Research News

By: Howard Cooper

Since May 12, 2008 more than 420 contacts have been made in 250 communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. Of these contacts, 249 wooden boat and model builders have been identified - 111 inactive builders and 138 active builders.

The more common reasons why builders are not building are:

- No demand for wooden boats
- Materials are hard to find
- Health problems
- Wooden boats require too much maintenance

And why builders remain active are:

- To pass the time
- To sell
- To use in the fishery
- Heritage
- Their love of building

Many interesting facts have been documented and many a story told. Several communities are still very active in wooden boat building - Benoit's Cove has 5 builders; Lark Harbour and Cartwright have 6. Families of boat builders have been identified - The Williams Family in Labrador, The Pye Family of Lodge Bay and the Poole's of St. Lewis.

One contact summed up our efforts nicely - "***You are doing a very noble thing by researching and promoting the preservation of the old style of boat building***".

If you are a builder, or know of one that has not been contacted, please let us know.

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Readers Comments are Important

*We would like to hear from you. Drop us a line, send an email or give us a call. Unless you advise us to the contrary, we may share your comments with other readers in upcoming editions of **Wooden Boat News**. Have you got a story about wooden boats or wooden boat building in your community? Or maybe you have a story about going to the Labrador fishery, or about dory fishing on the Grand Banks. How about the trap fishery? Was there anything different about the way you built your last boat? Was it any different from the way you built your earlier ones? What and why were the changes made? What do you think is the reason why building wooden boats are not as popular today in the inshore fishery? How do you think the skills for building traditional wooden boats can be preserved? **LET'S HEAR FROM YOU!***

Conference Update

October 31, November 1, 2, 2008

Preliminary Conference Announcements have been sent out to over 300 people. Date for conference has been changed to October 31st, November 1st and 2nd. We need your responses ASAP in order to finalize our plans. Do you plan on attending? If so, please contact Beverley ASAP - phone (709) 583-2055 or email bkingeritage@gmail.com. Conference registration forms will be going out in the mail early August.

Incorporating Directors Wooden Boat Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador

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Steering Committee

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Wallace Pinhorn - Winterton Heritage Advisory Board
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Paul Antle - ACOA
Bruce Whitelaw - MUN - Marine Institute
Dale Jarvis - MUN - Heritage Foundation of NL
Gerald Pocius - MUN Center for Material Culture Studies
Glen Keough - Dept. Tourism & Culture
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