



The Rucksack

Newsletter of the Friends of McNabs Island Society

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Friends of McNabs Island Society's 33rd Annual General Meeting

Wednesday, May 10th at 7:00 pm

Auditorium of the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History

1747 Summer Street in Halifax

Guest speakers Brian Phelan and Iain Crowell will give a colourful presentation on the island's rich natural history and historic English Gardens. Brian will explore the history of the Victorian Gardens, while Iain will discuss the native flora and fauna of the Island, and the varied habitats where they are found.

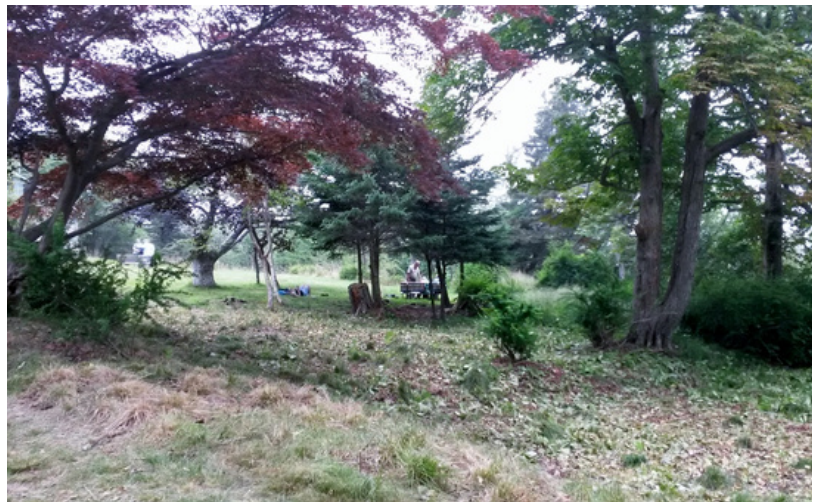
Brian Phelan is an arborist and horticulturist with 35 years of experience, including his position as Superintendent of Parks and Open Spaces with HRM. As Superintendent, Brian was responsible for many of the municipality's parks including the Halifax Public Gardens, Point Pleasant Park, the Dingle Park and Shubie Park. Since retirement, Brian has been leading the restoration of the Hugonin-Perrin Estate's English Gardens on McNabs Island.

Iain Crowell is a Botanist and former McNabs Island summer staff member. He has led many Nature Tours on the island and developed the QR Code information system to document the 130 different trees and shrubs in the English Gardens. Iain is currently working in Sackville, New Brunswick as a botanist

and lichenologist with the Atlantic Canada Conservation Data Centre. He is also an avid contributor to iNaturalist.org with thousands of observations and identifications.

Doors open at 6:30 with the Annual General Meeting starting at 7:00 pm. Entrance is from the side parking lot of the museum. For those who can't attend in person, the meeting will be broadcast via Zoom. A link will be provided later.

Hope to see you there!



English Gardens with Japanese Maple
Photo Credit: Cathy McCarthy

Friends of McNabs Island Society

The Rucksack

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**We welcome contributions,
ideas and feedback.**

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• Denyse Contrasty	• Tricia Stewart
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• Cathy Phelan	• Paul Collins
	• Tineke Weld
	• Iain Crowell



Hot off the press!

Check out the new brochure online:
<https://mcnabsisland.ca/images/McNabs-Island-Map-Brochure-2023.pdf>

The French (en français) version will be available soon.

Boating Mooring Fields Around McNabs Island

Over the years, there have been many mooring balls for boaters placed around McNabs Island, particularly in Wreck Cove where it is quite sheltered. Some mooring balls were placed by local yacht clubs and others by individual boaters. Last year, Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources and Renewables posted signs on mooring balls in Timmins and Wreck Cove saying that the mooring balls would be removed.

We asked the Department for an update and were told that the Department is in discussions with the local yacht clubs. We checked with one of the yacht clubs and were told that each club would be allowed two mooring balls in Wreck Cove. If we learn more, we'll post an update in the Rucksack.

Remembering Alan

By Catherine McCarthy & Royce Walker

The Friends and the province lost a champion of citizen engagement and activism when Alan Ruffman died on December 28, 2022. He, along with his wife Linda, founding members of the Friends of McNabs Island Society, attended its initial meeting on March 20, 1990. Alan led a coalition of community groups that included the Friends of McNabs Island in opposing the idea that the sewage treatment plant should be built in a designated provincial park.

“I first met Alan in person at the Society’s initial stages of being formed, said Royce Walker. “Early in our activity, I reached out to Alan to ask if he was able to join our effort to protect the island. I knew him only from his often pointed and sharply worded letters to the newspaper’s editor, as he provided advice to policy makers. I was intimidated as I called him the first time but how pleased I was at his immediate interest in our concerns and efforts, and his willingness to join the fray and advocate for a better solution for the harbour clean up.”

“I was already writing letters to politicians about the outrageous idea that McNabs Island would become the home to a massive sewage treatment plant and attended the inaugural meeting” says Cathy McCarthy, President. “I knew Alan from my previous involvement with the Ecology Action Centre. Right away he encouraged me to get more involved, join the society and continue to write letters, but now on behalf of the Friends.”

When the Halifax Harbour Clean Up Project proposal faded away, Alan remained a tremendous source of information for the Friends. He was knowledgeable about many things: the 19th century granite survey markers scattered about the island, the history of the Halifax Harbour defence system, the submarine nets placed across the harbour during the war years, and a mysterious Firefighting School set up by the military during the Cold War.

“Alan seemed to never tire in the pursuit of doing the right thing, a person who has shaped my



Alan Ruffman on the Burin Peninsula in Newfoundland
Photo credit: Martitia Tuttle

outlook on civic engagement, creating a social conscience and encouraging critical thinking in the pursuit of doing the right thing, a person who earned respect, even from those who may have disagreed with him. In his passing, I personally have lost a mentor, a collaborator, an inspiration, a friend,” said Royce.

Still a friend of the Friends, Alan was last spotted two summers ago during one of our heritage tours. He will be missed by many.

Our deepest condolences go out to Linda and the Ruffman family for your loss.

McNabs Island Connections Go Far and Wide

by Dachia Joudrey

You never know when you'll encounter a connection to McNabs Island. In a casual phone conversation recently, my mother mentioned my involvement with Friends of McNabs Island Society. This led to new discoveries for us all. It turns out mom's long-standing friend, Gail Fudge, had been a teacher in the one-room schoolhouse on McNabs Island from February to June, 1954.

McNabs Island wasn't Gail's first teaching assignment. At that time, she was thinking of giving up teaching as she was newly married and working as a substitute teacher. One disadvantage of substitute teaching is that you never knew what school you were going to get assigned to, and you could get called to a school on very short notice. She says sometimes even at noon you could get called to a school for the afternoon. Prior to accepting the position on McNabs, Gail had taught at Boutilliers Point, Lakeside and Spryfield.



Gail Fudge, teacher, McNabs Island School
1954

Photo credit: Dachia Joudrey



Students at McNabs Island School 1954

Back row: Faye Cleveland, Judy Henneberry,
Gerald Henneberry, Albert Henneberry

Middle row: Geraldine Hurshman, Harold Wills, unknown,
unknown, Sally Henneberry

Front row: Lois Eddy, Barry Eddy, Anna Paul, Billy Brown,
Shirley Eddy

Photo credit: Gail Fudge (taken with a box camera, 1954)

In fall 1953, she was working at Simpsons in Halifax until Christmas time when she was laid off, after which she applied for her assignment on McNabs Island. Gail recalls getting the trolley downtown and then taking the government duty boat from Halifax to Garrison Pier daily, and walking up a hill to the school. Lighting the morning fire was not part of her daily duties and lucky for her the fire was made when she started her day. However, one morning she was greeted by smoke billowing out from the schoolhouse wood stove. As she refers to herself as a "country girl" being raised in New Ross, Lunenburg County, she knew she had to open the damper to let out the smoke!

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After teaching on McNabs Island, Gail moved to Ontario where she taught for many years before moving back to Nova Scotia. She taught in Chester Basin for 20 years. At that time, schools were rarely closed due to weather conditions. However, she does recall that in the seventies, schools in New Ross would be cancelled due to snow but not Chester Basin as it is closer to the ocean. She says she never missed a day teaching on McNabs Island!

Gail was very surprised that someone in 2023 would be interested in her time on little McNabs Island. The photo on the previous page is of her class all those years ago!

For me, it was lovely to meet Gail and to take a walk down memory lane, particularly as she's a dear friend of my mom's. They traveled many miles together, all over Europe, but never knew the McNabs Island connection until now.



Teahouse Outdoor Education Center Update

by Royce Walker

In 2022, the Friends hired Sperry Design to help better define our ideas for fitting out the Teahouse for the delivery of Outdoor Education. It was expected to be implemented over time as funding allowed. In preparation for that possibility a working committee of eight began working together over the winter by consulting with others who have outdoor education experience and then reaching out to other organizations which may be interested in some modest programming we hope to offer.



McNabs Island Teahouse Outdoor Education
Centre

Photo Credit: Cathy McCarthy

However, Cathy McCarthy was alerted to a potential grant from the Atlantic Opportunities Agency (ACOA). The team now got busy with Sperry again working on further details. The application for upgrades and furnishings as well as purchasing some educational materials for our tour guides, was successful. The grant money had to be spent prior to fiscal year end so we quickly went to work purchasing furniture, educational materials and creating as much as possible. We were also able to produce a brand new brochure which will be available in print and online. We managed to efficiently spend the grant which has been a great boost to advancing the plan and being ready for our 2023 season

We know that developing the Teahouse Outdoor Education Centre and programs will be a multiyear process; there is still much more to do to complete our vision. With our determined volunteers, we expect to continue this work and build on our success to date.

Hope for the Timmins Cove Trail

by Catherine McCarthy

The Friends of McNabs Island has been trying to raise enough money to rebuild the Timmins Cove Trail for years! Hopefully this is the year that the trail finally gets the attention that it deserves.

Last year, we applied for trail funding from the federal Active Transportation Fund. To our surprise, our application was accepted! Raising money for any project requires matching funding from somewhere else. Most trail groups around the Province receive funding from the provincial Recreational Trails Program and then matching funding from their municipality. This makes sense because municipalities are responsible for delivering recreational programming. A good trail system means better recreational opportunities.

After years of pushing Halifax Regional Municipality to bring in a Recreational Trail Program, we thought that we'd finally be able to find the matching funding needed to get the Timmins Cove Trail rebuilt. Sadly, the HRM Trail program rejected our application again saying that because McNabs was an "island," the island trails aren't easily accessible and don't connect to other trails owned by HRM. This rationale doesn't consider the long history of Halifax as a port city with water transportation access to the island.

Thankfully, our municipal councilor, Becky Kent, does support our island projects and has contributed to the trail through her District Capital Funds. We've also applied once again to the provincial Recreational Trails Program and hope that since we have matching federal funding, we'll finally be able to get the Timmins Cove Trail project underway.

The Timmins Cove Trail begins at the Findlay/Farrant Farm and A. J. Davis Pop Bottling Plant site. It's adjacent to the English Gardens of the Hugonin Perrin Estate and the Teahouse Outdoor Education Centre not far from Garrison Road and Mangers Beach.

The Trail is an old cart road that travels east from the Bottling Plant nearly a kilometre to Timmins (Timmonds) Cove across from Shearwater. Traveling through many different terrains, it passes through one of the last remaining stands of Acadian Forest on the island. The trail is a connector trail and intersects with other historic trails like the Fraser Farm Trail to the north, and the Detention Barracks in the south which eventually leads back to Garrison Road.

The Timmins Cove Trail has severe drainage problems. After Hurricane Juan hit the island and toppled 40% of the trees twenty years ago, the Province contracted a forestry company to clear the trails. This company used heavy equipment which left deep ruts on many island trails. Over the years, the ruts have become ditches and new paths have been created to get over these wet areas.

Restoring the Timmins Cove Trail will mean that our island tour guides can take visitors to other features of interest on the island. As a connector trail, it will also allow visitors to follow a loop trail system and discover more of what the island has to offer.



Timmins Cove Trail crosses the Detention Barracks Trail
Credit: Catherine McCarthy

**Discover McNabs Island on a
Guided Heritage, Nature or NEW Hangman's Beach Tour
this summer!**

Tours will be held on Sundays throughout July and August. Tickets will go on sale via Eventbrite soon!

Hike through Canadian history on a **Heritage Tour**! Learn why the Island was important to the Mi'kmaw First Nations, the early French settlers, and the British, who built several forts on the island to protect the Port of Halifax. Admire the panoramic view from Fort McNab National Historic Site. Discover where Midway King Bill Lynch got his start in the fairground business. Learn the tragic story of the SS England, quarantined off McNabs Island in 1866. Visit the forgotten English Gardens and ruins of the A. J. Davis Bottling Plant.

Heritage Tours are scheduled for July 9, 16, 23 30, and August 13, 20 and 27.

Join the new **Hangman's Beach Tour** based on the setting of Thomas Raddall's novel Hangman's Beach. Set on McNabs Island during the 1800s, this historical fiction is a story about fictional characters intertwined with Peter McNab and his family. It's not necessary to read the novel before the tour, but we do have copies to lend for those interested. The Hangman's Beach Tour is scheduled for July 16th

On a **Nature Tour**, you'll watch the osprey dive for fish in the island's coves; see where the endangered barn swallows live at Fort McNab; observe the ebb and flow of the tide in McNabs Pond, and stroll along sandy Mangers Beach. You will discover how climate change is impacting the island's shoreline. Dates for our Nature Tours will be announced later this spring.

Departure for our Summer Tours is with A&M Sea Charters, 87 Government Wharf Rd in Fisherman's Cove, Eastern Passage.

Space is limited to 26 people per trip.

Times: 9:30-3:30. A second trip from 10:30-4:30 will be added later if there is a demand.

Cost of Tickets:
\$40 per adult (non-members),

\$35 per adult for Friends of McNabs Island Society members.

\$20 for children/youth 16 and under,

Babies and toddlers 3 years and younger are Free courtesy of the Friends of McNabs Island.



Hikers pause along the Cliff Trail at Fort McNab National Historic Site.

Photo credit: Catherine McCarthy

For Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/friends-of-mcnabs-island-society-10724104906>

For more information: <https://mcnabsisland.ca/events> or info@mcnabsisland.ca

McNabs Island Beach Cleanup
SUNDAY JUNE 4th
Rain date June 11th

Time: 9:30-4:00

Two departure Locations:

- 1) Ambassadors Cable Wharf on the
Halifax Waterfront
or
- 2) A&M Sea Charters,
87 Government Wharf Rd,
Fisherman's Cove in Eastern Passage.

This is a very popular event and registration fills up quickly. The event is free for volunteers willing to pick up garbage!

Registration for the Annual Beach Cleanup will take place via Eventbrite soon. See the link on the previous page.

Annual membership to the Friends of McNabs Island Society runs on the calendar year, includes a year's subscription to the Society's Rucksack newsletter and offers discounts for our events.

Members support the ongoing care and development of this jewel in Halifax Harbour.

The Friends advocate for funding to maintain the environment on the Island and participate in planning for the present and future well-being of the Island.



Genealogy Corner

Frederick Perrin, who was born in 1835 in Temple Cloud, Somersetshire, England emigrated to McNabs Island, and remained there with many of his family members until his death in 1930 at 94 years of age. Throughout his residence on McNabs, he developed beautiful gardens.

To learn about Frederick Perrin's genealogical history, as well as his children and stepchildren, use this link to the McNabs Island genealogy website:

<https://mcnabsislandgenealogy.ca/>

If this is your first visit to the genealogy website, take some time to become familiar with its many options including search.



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Thank you for your much needed continued support.

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e-transfer: info@mcnabsisland.ca
directly via our website:

<http://mcnabsisland.ca/join-friends-mcnabs-island-society>

send a cheque payable to:

The Friends of McNabs Island Society
PO Box 31240, Gladstone RPO
Halifax, NS B3K 5Y1

The Society is a registered charity:
CCRA Number 88 474 194 RR0001

Email: info@mcnabsisland.ca or mcnabsisland.ca/contact
Phone contact: Cathy (902) 434-2254

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Already a member?

Invite your friends & coworkers to join.

As more people become aware of and support these gems,
the better we will be able to take care of them.

This issue went to print in April 2023.