

Honorary Patron
Derrick Bowring



WHITE SWAN CLUB NEWSLETTER

1997 Winter Edition



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GARY CHARLES BOURNE

A TRIBUTE TO A BEST FRIEND

By now you would have heard of the very untimely passing of Gary Charles Bourne on January 18, 1997. The following organizations that Gary was involved with have lost a hard worker, loyal supporter and a dear friend:

- President, CGA Board of Governors, 1990;
- President, Risk Insurance Managers Society, 1989;
- Chairperson, St. James United Church Band Committee 1990-1995;
- Treasurer, St James United Church, 1982-1987;

and at the time of his death, Gary was involved in the following organizations:

- Secretary/ Member, Risk Insurance Managers Society
- Secretary, Memorial University Board of Regents Investment Committee, 1983-1997
- Secretary/ Treasurer, Bowring Park Foundation.

Gary was a person who did things because they needed doing, not for the recognition it would bring him. Very few people knew the full extent to which Gary was involved in the community in which he grew up and lived, for his short lifetime.

Unknown to most as well was Gary's deep rooted love for Bowring Park. In particular Gary wished to see the undeveloped area in the west end of the Park improved for the benefit of both the young and old. When Gary and his family moved to Perlin Street he treasured his close proximity to the Park. He took full advantage of this by arranging gatherings with family and friends for such things as bonfires, duck pond visits, family days and above all, the walking trails. Gary, his wife Lois, and their daughters Andrea and Diana must have walked a thousand miles or more over the years, and we know Gary enjoyed the last mile as much as the first.

To understand how much Gary loved the Park, when he did renovations to his house, he designed the kitchen and patio area with the sole purpose of being able to enjoy the scenery of the Park. One of the things that he enjoyed the most during his short stay at home between months of hospitalization was to sit in his kitchen and look out over the Park. When Gary was in Coronary Care for the last couple of weeks, two of his friends (Lorne Warren and Bruce Templeton) one day decided to take some pictures of Bowring Park to send to his bedside. They did something that was extra special for Gary, they took a picture from his favorite spot -the "Kitchen Window". During the many times that Lois showed him the pictures over the last days, he would stop at the one taken from inside his home that overlooked the Park and for a moment think that he was at home with his loved ones.

GARY YOU WILL ALWAYS BE IN OUR HEARTS!

The trees will grow taller, the rivers will sparkle brighter, and the flowers will smell more fragrant because of you. SO LONG, BEST FRIEND, from The Trees, The Birds, The Rivers, The Flowers and the rest of your Friends at Bowring Park.



John Downton is an executive member of the Bowring Park Foundation and Chair of the White Swan Club Committee. John was born and raised in St. John's and was educated at Saint Michaels and Bishops College. He continued his education and in 1967 graduated as a Pharmacist. His career was then launched in the retail Pharmaceutical business and for the next sixteen years he worked with Elizabeth Drugs.

In 1983 John became the administrator of the provincial drug program, a position which keeps him extremely busy with travel and program reorganization. With ever increasing demands, the job is both challenging and rewarding.

Along the way John met and married his wife, Alanna (Badcock) Downton. They got acquainted after he sold her a horse, but that's another story. They have two children, Anne aged 14 and Karen aged 12, who both attend Beaconsfield Junior High school. Alanna works as a guidance counsellor with the Avalon East School Board.

The horse thing really must have worked because all the family are involved with the Rainbow Riders, who provide a

therapeutic riding service for disabled people. Anne and Karen also ride competitively with Clovelly Riding Stables. As if horses were not enough of a challenge, the family is also involved with the NFLD Kennel Club, teaching obedience training to show dogs. They have two dogs of their own, a Labrador Retriever and a Papillon. When I asked John what a Papillon was he told me it is a toy dog with big ears that look like a butterfly.

John is also the obedience representative in NFLD for the Canadian Kennel Club. In this capacity he ensures that all members adhere to the rules and regulations of the organization as they pertain to showdog events, both local and national.

As a boy, John and his family visited Bowring Park whenever possible, and he remembers the swimming, tennis, picnics and rides in the park as an integral part of his early years. His father, who passed away just before Christmas, dearly loved the park and was very pleased to see John take an active role in its affairs.

As a founding member of the Bowring Park Foundation and chair of the White Swan Club Committee, John works tirelessly to enhance and preserve the park for the citizens it serves. The organizing of events such as the Peter Pan Festival, Family Fun Day and for the first time ever, the Fabulous February Frolic, is proof of his commitment to ensure the park is maintained for people's enjoyment.

Guided walking tours, improved infrastructure and getting more people involved are priorities for the White

Swan Club. John is well- suited to this task, having organized the national pharmaceutical convention which was held in St. John's in 1991.

This convention had more than eight hundred delegates in attendance.

He is presently organizing a second convention to be held in 1998 with an expected attendance of more than a thousand delegates.

I asked John what he did in his "spare time." He said woodworking and building oak furniture were his favourite hobbies. That is, if he ever finds the time to pursue them.

Peter Pan Lawn Bowling News

NEWFOUNDLAND

After successfully making our presence felt in 1995, when we took gold in the men's triples at the Atlantic Bowls and we sent a full contingent to the Tetley Canadian Championships, we are really looking forward to improving in National performance and growing in numbers within the province.

With a lot of work going into the areas of membership and funding we are hoping to make an impact which will bring lawn bowling to the attention of many people who currently do not bowl. This profile will culminate with our hosting of the Atlantic Bowls Tournament in 1997.

Cabot Sports

The successful Peter Pan Lawn Bowling Club that operates at the Bowring Park facility in St. John's will host the 1997 Eastern Canadian lawn bowling championships.

Another of the Cabot Anniversary sporting events, the lawn bowling championships are scheduled September 4 to 7, and will be well worth viewing. In fact, they should increase interest in the sport of lawn bowling locally.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

1997 is now upon us, and plans are underway for many special events and projects for this coming year.

The White Swan Club, chaired by John Downton, held a very successful Fabulous February Frolic on February 28th weekend. You can read more about that in the article on page . They are now preparing to launch their public Guided Tour Program. Planning has begun for a major special event to celebrate St. John's Day on June 25th. This event will replace Family Fun Day this year. More details will be released in the next newsletter.

The Ways and Means Committee, chaired by Bruce Templeton is busy with a number of initiatives to improve the financial status of the Foundation. Some of the things the Committee are investigating are an In Memoriam Program, an Art Sale / Auction and a picnic fund raiser. As plans progress, members will be asked for input and support. This committee also has a campaign underway to solicit support from the corporate sector in Newfoundland, mainland Canada and abroad.

The Planning and Priorities Committee, chaired by Lorne Warren, are busy with plans for the Ornamental Pool Restoration, Playground Improvements, and Trail Development on the South Brook. As a final term project, a team of engineering students have been assigned the task of investigating the location and design of a Picnic Pavilion that will accommodate 150 to 200 people.

Arrangements will be finalized in the very near future with a new Concessionaire for Bowring Park. This will be a pleasure for the many Park patrons as well as those wishing to use the Bungalow for special functions. Once again, more details will be available in the next newsletter.

RIDING THE TRAM TO BOWRING PARK

In the 1920s to the 1940s, a visit to Bowring Park was considered an excursion. The park was outside the city limits and therefore beyond the realm of the city's cable car system, which at that time stopped at the cross roads. However, during the summer months, the city provided a battery-operated tram that would take passengers into Bowring Park.

For the price of a dime, residents of St. John's could buy a ticket and ride the rails on a tram, similar to the one pictured below, from a train station in town to a small station in Bowring Park. The station was an open structure consisting of a roof with supports and was located on the tracks near the tennis courts in an area opposite the gazebo. Passengers would disembark the tram and spend a day of leisure in the park.

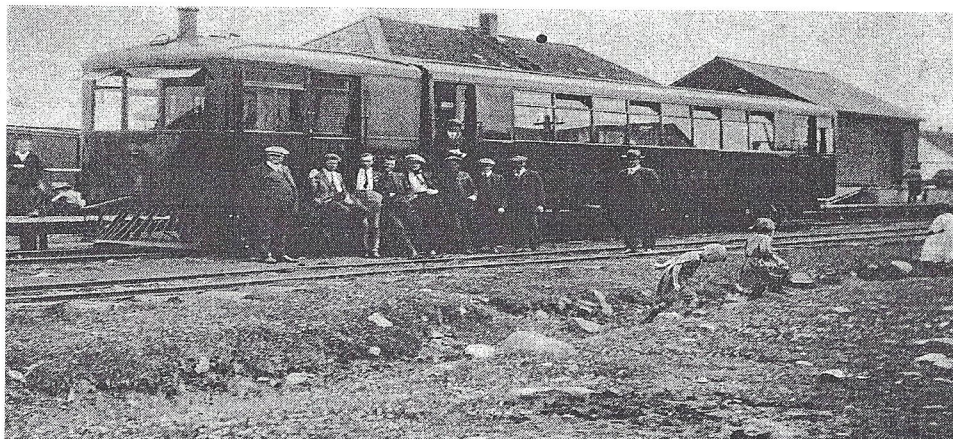
A favourite pastime was to have a picnic. At that time, the road leading from the present swimming pool to the tennis courts, and the pedestrian bridge leading from the tennis court area to the Bungalow, were not in place. Instead there were grassy fields on which families could spread their blankets. A park official, wearing a uniform similar to those worn by the conductor of a train, would man a large kettle located near the granite bridge, to boil water for park patrons. Many a person would also take a swim in the pool, which at that time was a dammed off portion of South Brook River located on the opposite side of

the granite bridge. In addition to swimming you could have a round of tennis with your old wooden racket, or play in the playground which was located adjacent to the tennis courts. If tennis was not your sport then you could walk over to the boat pond for a row. The park official would move from the kettle to the wharf to oversee the activity on the pond. Of course no trip to Bowring Park would be complete without a visit to the Bungalow where you would go to buy a well deserved ice cream.

Before long it would be time to pack up and catch the tram back to the city. The excursion to Bowring Park would be over, but only for that day since no one could resist coming back. For the most part, the residents of St. John's would walk or cycle to the park since the price of a tram ticket was considered quite expensive. However, now and then a family would treat itself and ride the tram to Bowring Park.

If you enjoyed reading Park Memories and would like to see it as a regular feature in future newsletters, then we will need your help!

Please contact the Bowring Park Foundation in care of the White Swan Club Newsletter, and tell us about YOUR memories of Bowring Park!



THE FABULOUS FEBRUARY FROLIC

The Fabulous February Frolic was originally scheduled for February 14th-16th. Due to several weekends of unsuitable weather, however, this event did not take place until February 28th and March 1st but certainly everyone who attended will agree that it was well worth the wait.

What a beautiful two days it turned out to be! Bowling Park was filled with people eagerly tying up their skates, carrying slides to the hill, lining up for horse sleigh rides and trying out the cross country skiing. Unfortunately, the Dog Sled Racing could not go ahead as scheduled but there were lots of winter activities for people to take part in.

Macbeth and Romeo and Juliet are not something one would normally think about on a sunny winter's day while skating on the fountain pond. Thanks to the Loyal Shakespearean Company theatre group, however, the patrons of the Park were treated to renditions of these plays as they have never been done before. "Shakespeare in the snow" - a very unique presentation with lots of humour and comedy.

Sunday's activities could not go ahead due to the weather but overall this was a very successful event with about 300-400 people turning out for skating on Friday and Saturday night. One participant said that the skating on Friday night with the lights, the music and cups of hot chocolate was "just like a beautiful scene from a movie."

We often complain about winter and wish that it would go away. If nothing else, this event reminded people that winter can be **LOTS OF FUN!**



PARK HISTORY (cont'd)

By Doug Crane

MONUMENTS

PETER PAN

Upon entrance through Bowring Park's main gate, he comes into sight almost immediately, nestled among the trees and other foliage on the left, just west of the duck pond. Striking an almost animated pose atop a stone-like pedestal, he beckons the young and young at heart with outstretched arms. One can almost hear a lively tune emanating from the pipe held delicately in his left hand as it charms the fairies and woodland creatures below him, all of whom clamour to hear the music.

This is the abode of Bowring Park's beloved Peter Pan, certainly one of the Park's most prominent and popular attractions. Peter, of course, is the boy who will never grow up, representing the joy, wonder and innocence of eternal youth. Not surprisingly, he is constantly play host to a steady stream of visitors, both young and old alike.

The Peter Pan monument was donated to Bowring Park by Sir Edgar R. Bowring, in memory of his little granddaughter, Betty Munn. Betty was the daughter of Sir Edgar's stepson, John Shannon Munn, who was the managing director of Bowring Brothers. She was just four year old when she and her father boarded the S.S. Florizel on February 23, 1918, bound for Halifax. There, they were to meet Mrs. Munn and go south for the rest of the winter, due to Mrs. Munn's ill health. However, the ship never did make Halifax. It was to be a short and tragic voyage for the mighty steamer and her 138 passengers and crew. Early Sunday morning, February 24, a message reached St. John's concerning a large steamer ashore near Cape Race, on the southern shore of the Avalon Peninsula. As preparations were being made to send relief to

the area, the startling news of the ship's identity reached the Admiralty wireless station in Mount Pearl: the S.S. Florizel had crashed into the rocks off Cappahayden during a terrible storm. When all was said and done, 94 people perished in the icy waters, including John and Betty Munn.

Sir Edgar commissioned the renowned sculptor, Sir George Frampton, to create the bronze memorial, which was unveiled as part of a special "Children's Day", August 29, 1925. After a brief speech by then city mayor Tasker Cook, who urged the children to "learn to know him and love him with all your hearts," Peter Pan was introduced to Bowring Park for the first time, much to the delight of the more than 3000 children on hand. There were a number of other dignitaries present, including Frampton himself, who performed the actual unveiling. The acclaimed sculptor was also quite popular with the children, explaining that:

...the animals and fairies on the statue are listening to the pipes of Pan, one of the mice is completing his toilet before going up to listen to the music, (and) the squirrel is discussing political matters with two of the fairies.

Bowring Park's Peter Pan is one of five such monuments in the world, the others found in Toronto, Brussels, Melbourne, and the original, located in London's Kensington Gardens. While all five are similar, they are not identical, and in Frampton's opinion, the Bowring Park version is superior in location to the one found at Kensington Gardens, due to "the wholly natural surroundings and flowing river being more in keeping with the spirit of Peter and particularly the animals and fairies."

Peter's likeness at Bowring Park is of course unique for the inscriptions adorning it, the first of which reads:

Presented To The Children of Newfoundland
By Sir Edgar R. Bowring In Memory Of A
Dear Little Girl Who Loved The Park.

the second inscription can be found on the
opposite side, which simply says "Betty
Munn". It is situated in such a way as to
appear as if a fairy is forever reading it.

Today, Peter is still loved and adorned by the
thousands who visit him every year. It would
be no exaggeration to say that one could visit
him any time of the day, any part of the year,
and find children frolicking around him,
regarding the animals and fairies with youthful
excitement and wonder. Some adventurous
youngsters even climb the pedestal to embrace
him. All in all, since his introduction on that
August day in 1925, Bowring Park's Peter
Pan has been a constant reminder of the
generosity of the Bowrings, as well as an
unparalleled source of wonder and enjoyment
for all his visitors.

More next time.



OUR COVER

Winners of the Snow Sculpture Contest at
the Fabulous February Frolic, right to left:
Susan Davis, Judy Collins, Paula Chumph,
Pamela Macche, Cathrine Perry and her
dog Rob!

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WANTED! TOUR GUIDES!

What are you doing this summer?

Interested in meeting some friends?

Want to make your walks in the park more
meaningful?

Then why not volunteer to be a Tour Guide.

The White Swan Club is in the process of
developing walking tours of Bowring Park.
The purpose of these tours is to educate the
general public and tourists about the history of
the park, as well as to generate an appreciation
for its beauty.

We would like to offer these 45 minute tours
from May to September, seven days a week to
groups and individuals. However, we can't do
it without your help and input!

A planned tour, training and practice sessions
will be provided.

If this sounds like something you'll be
interested in and you would like to attend an
information session, then why not call or write
us. Please leave your name and number and
we will get back to you. We are interested in
hearing from you!

Come out and get involved! Help us show
everybody why we love this park so much!

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