



# THE SHINING SCROLL

newsletter for the  
*L. M. Montgomery Literary Society*  
Summer 1997

founded in 1991 by  
*Carolyn Collins and Christina Eriksson*



## LMM'S HOME IN LEASKDALE, ONTARIO IS DECLARED A CANADIAN HISTORICAL SITE AND OPENED AS A MUSEUM

Wilda Clark, long-time LMM enthusiast in Uxbridge, Ontario, has worked tirelessly for years to preserve the Leaskdale Manse where L. M. Montgomery and her family (the Macdonalds) lived during the years 1911-1926. The efforts of Wilda and many other Montgomery fans were rewarded in February 1997 when the home was designated as an historical site by the National Historic and Monuments Board of Canada.



The Lucy Maud Montgomery Manse Committee celebrated this good news on August 5, 1997 when they opened the Manse for visitors. The township of Uxbridge would like to see the Manse museum operated as a bed and breakfast. Restoration of the home, which was first built around 1886, is underway and funds are being solicited for it. LMM took many photographs of her "first" family home and these are being used to recreate the Manse as accurately as possible. In addition to the photographic record, the Macdonald's maid in 1925, Elsie Bushby Davidson, who now lives in Uxbridge, provides first-hand information about the home.



photos from Cavert collection  
Elsie Davidson and Wilda Clark, summer 1997



## FIRE AT GREEN GABLES

In late May, 1997, an early morning fire destroyed a portion of the little farmhouse on Prince Edward Island that LMM made famous in her first and most beloved novel, *Anne of Green Gables*.

Fortunately, an alert passerby notified the fire department and the blaze was brought under control, saving most of the house. Rooms most affected were Matthew's bedroom and the sewing room upstairs. Both rooms are on the rear of the house. However, there was a great deal of smoke and water damage to the other rooms and their contents, including many valuable antiques from the late Victorian period. The furniture and other materials had to be sent to Halifax for cleaning and restoration. They were returned to the house at the end of June. Repairs to the house were begun immediately after the fire with the goal of reopening it to visitors by July 1, Canada Day, and the "official" start of the tourist season on PEI. The house did reopen on schedule but we understand much work still needs to be done to bring it back to its original condition.

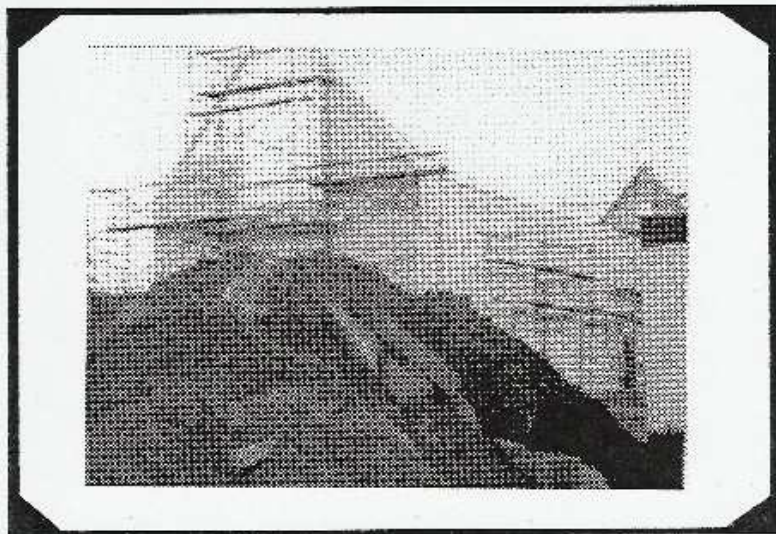
Many people were concerned that LMM's typewriter, on display at Green Gables, might have been destroyed by the fire. It probably would have been if it had been in its usual place in the front hall, near Matthew's bedroom. However, it had been sent out for cleaning and repairs and was not in the house at the time of the fire. It is the only relic directly connected to LMM at Green Gables and is the one on which she typed the manuscript of *Anne of Green Gables* and other works.

There were a couple of theories on the Island as to the cause of the fire. Some think Matthew was smoking his pipe in bed and dozed off; others report that Emily of New Moon (who never quite attained the fame and popularity that Anne did) was seen skulking around the back of Green Gables with a kerosene can and a box of matches. . . .

## NEW CONSTRUCTION AT GREEN GABLES

A visitors' center, barns, and a high fence surrounding the front yard of Green Gables are new additions to the grounds, under construction in late June.

The new buildings have been in Parks Canada's plans for the site for years and are now a reality. They make quite a difference to the look of our dear little Green Gables Farm!



New barn at Green Gables  
photo from Carolyn Collins



## NEWS FROM PEI FRIENDS

Carolyn Collins visited Prince Edward Island in June and touched base with many friends who are keeping the LMM flame burning.

George and Maureen Campbell of Park Corner were busy with visitors to the Anne of Green Gables Museum at Silver Bush early in the season. Their son Nicholas graduated from high school in June, valedictorian of his class. He will attend UPEI this fall.

Robert Montgomery of the L. M. Montgomery Heritage Museum at Park Corner (across the Lake of Shining Waters from Silver Bush) was busy with visitors, as well. Edith Smith, LMM scholar of Toronto, arrived in July to help lead visitors through the house as she has done for several years. Carolyn helped plant Virginia Creeper (for a "curtain of vines") by the porch and clumps of mint by the steps to evoke some of the atmosphere of Anne's Ingleside there.

Father Francis Bolger is working on a history of Stanley Bridge ("Carmody" in the Anne books and "the hub of the universe," according to LMM's journals) and continues to supervise the on-going work at the L. M. Montgomery Birthplace. The Birthplace has lovely new wallpaper in the dining room and looks as fresh and dainty as ever.

Jeannette Arsenault and Don Maxfield of Cavendish Figurines are thriving in Summerside. They were entertaining many groups of visitors who were eager to see how their exquisite figurines are made and hand-painted.

Hank and Clara Williams of Beds of Lavender B&B at Park Corner hosted a film crew making a television documentary on LMM's cats (!). Hank and Clara are always on the lookout for reminders of Miss Lavender Lewis' stone cottage, "Echo Lodge." They have found an antique tin horn, a pink china cup (cracked, of course) for gathering wild strawberries, and other such items for their collection. If anyone makes better muffins than Hank, we haven't found them.

Terri Kamikawa of the Blue Winds Tea Room in New London has a new book out with a Japanese publisher called *The Good Old Days*. It is full of information on what daily life was like on PEI in Anne's day -- all in Japanese, of course!

Anna MacDonald of the LMM Institute at UPEI says hello and invites everyone to attend the LMM International Symposium next summer.

### L. M. MONTGOMERY INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM - 1998

The third L. M. Montgomery International Symposium is scheduled to be held in June 1998 at the University of Prince Edward Island.

Anna MacDonald, director of the LMM Institute at UPEI, states that the topic for the symposium will be broadened this time to include "Island literature" and will focus on other authors along with LMM. The Institute originally received funding for three symposia, so unless more funds are forthcoming, this may be the last LMM symposium, at least for a while.



BALA, ONTARIO, CELEBRATION OF MACDONALD FAMILY  
FEATURES MOLLIE GILLEN

Jack and Linda Hutton, proprietors of the Bala Museum With Memories of L. M. Montgomery, organized their annual salute to the Macdonald family's 1922 arrival in Bala for a vacation. Jack wrote about the July 24th celebration:

" ..... We awoke at 6:30 a.m. and almost pulled the covers back over our heads when we saw an angry, glowering sky outside. However, it turned into a perfect summer day by 1 p.m. as the first Kindred Spirits started arriving from all points of the compass (Indiana, Michigan, New York State, northeastern Ontario, the Golden Horseshoe around Toronto and Niagara Falls, Hamilton ... 300 all in showed up).

The most touching moment came when Mollie Gillen (author of *The Wheel of Things*, 1975 LMM biography) received a standing ovation. She could not see it - she sees everything as a blur now - but she could somehow feel the tremendous affection flowing from the people on the lawn up onto our porch. I was standing with her and I could see her fighting back tears. It was the first time that she has ever been recognized for her tremendous research into Maud more than 20 years ago. Without her, George MacMillan's letters would have been burned and lost to us. Incredibly, it was the first time that Mary Rubio and Mollie Gillen have met. They have corresponded for years, but never come face to face. They sat side by side on the porch, and later talked excitedly together at dinner. Mollie took my hand as she departed after dinner and held it for quite some time. "Thanks for making the fuss over me," she said.

Kevin McCabe did a beautiful job of paying tribute to Mollie. As he pointed out so eloquently, Mollie was the first author to delve into the private life of L. M. Montgomery, providing insights that had never before appeared in print. Mollie led the way for others who followed her.

... Mary Rubio was also superb. She based her remarks upon "what ifs", and talked about how she and Elizabeth Waterston decided to contact Barbara Wachowicz in Poland, which led to Barbara coming to Canada on a "Blue Castle" pilgrimage. Together with Jean Little, they took a cruise aboard the Segwun looking for Barney's island. Two weeks later, Mary wrote a letter to Bala's librarian asking whether anyone knew where Maud had stayed in Bala in 1922. That letter found its way to a couple who had just honeymooned in P.E.I. -- Linda and me. The rest, as they say, is history.

Linda and I did a day's detective work, bought the former tourist home on an insane whim, spent a year restoring it, and opened it July 24th, 1992, with Mary Rubio as the guest speaker. We've had 20,000 people through the doors since that historic day. And, as Mary said, what if all those "what ifs" hadn't happened?

[After the program], we had a private catered dinner overlooking the Moon River at the Roselawn Dining Lodge. It was a precious time spent in the delicious company of other Kindred Spirits, looking out at the scenery that inspired Maud to write "The Blue Castle". I brought the speaker system over from the Museum, and some time around dessert (strawberry pie, freshly made in late afternoon!) we started trading the microphone back and forth, sharing memories of when we first read AOGG, what Maud meant by "beef-ham", the teachers who read us AOGG, and on and on. ...

*It was a great day "*



Editor's note: Jack was awarded the 1997 Pauline McGibbon Life Achievement in the Arts Award this August. He is an well-known and highly regarded ragtime musician and performed in Toronto's Roy Thomson Hall Jubilee Concerts. Congratulations, Jack!

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Beth Cavert traveled to Guelph, Ontario to complete research on L. M. Montgomery's book dedications. She stopped in nearby Norval, Ontario, Montgomery's home from 1926-1935. Kindred spirits, Kathy Gastle and Joanne Wood, met her there at the beautiful LMM Garden where a handsome sundial commemorating armed forces veterans has been placed. Kathy's family organized this addition to the peaceful spot not far from the Manse where LMM and her family lived. Mary Rubio described the June ceremony:

"At the Norval dedication ceremony of the sundial in the LMM Garden -- for which Kathy Gastle's mom had been the instigating force -- the weather was blistering hot, and the air was stifling to breathe. The sun came down remorselessly on the people engaged in the ceremony. Kathy's mom was dressed in her navy woolen uniform, along with other veterans of respectable age. There was a cadre of young buglers, drummers and flag-bearers too. Those of us sitting in chairs under big shade trees felt very sorry for them. I wondered how Kathy's mom was managing to stand in a hot dark uniform in the sun. Just as I was puzzling over this, the young man holding the flag closest to me collapsed, apparently from the heat! He was helped up off the ground and off the field. But the tough old-timers in their hot uniforms all managed fine!

Aside from this little mishap, it was a lovely ceremony. Kathy was emcee and did a splendid job. I got to meet the rest of her family -- such nice people! LMM would have been so touched if she could have been there to see the ceremony."

Beth, Kathy and Joanne spent a day together at the LMM archives at the University of Guelph with Mary Rubio and Kevin McCabe (*The Poetry of L.M. Montgomery*). Kevin is completing work on a new book, *The L.M. Montgomery Album*. At the end of the day, they accepted an invitation for chocolate cake and iced tea and conversation with Elizabeth Waterston at the Rubio home.



Kevin McCabe, Elizabeth Waterston, Mary Rubio, Beth Cavert, Kathy Gastle, Joanne Wood  
photo by Gerald Rubio



## "EMILY OF NEW MOON" BEING FILMED ON PEI

At Cabot Park, near Malpeque, filming of L. M. Montgomery's Emily books has been proceeding for many months. The series is scheduled to air on Canadian television this fall.

Cabot Park is just up the road from Fox Point, the home of LMM's aunt Emily and the inspiration for "New Moon" in the Emily books. The house is still standing, overlooking Malpeque Bay.

Carolyn walked over to the set but had to view it from afar as no visitors were being allowed in at the time. Let's hope US television picks up the Emily series so we can see it here.



"New Moon," Fox Point, Malpeque, PEI

### 1996-97 LMMLS MEETINGS

The L. M. Montgomery Literary Society met only three times this year due to scheduling conflicts of the arrangements committee (Carolyn and Christina).

Our first meeting last fall featured a presentation by Mary Beth Cavert, "To the Friends of Anne -- L. M. Montgomery's Book Dedications." She had given the paper at the 1996 LMM Symposium. Carolyn Collins gave her 1996 Symposium paper, "To Remember and to Be Remembered -- A Brief Overview of LMM's Scrapbooks," at our second meeting. Both Beth and Carolyn were invited to write articles based on their papers for Kevin McCabe's forthcoming book, *The L. M. Montgomery Album*.

A group of LMMLS members went together to the Guthrie Theater to see "A Doll's House," starring Megan Follows who played Anne in the Kevin Sullivan films. It was a wonderful production and Megan was gracious enough to visit with our group afterwards and pose for a few pictures.

### 1997-1998 MEETINGS

\* Friday, October 10, 3:30 p.m. - St. Anthony Park Library on Como Ave. and Carter  
"Back To School With LMM - Her School Days in Halifax"

\* Friday, November 21, 3:30 p.m. - at the home of Carolyn Collins,  
1603 Northrop St., St. Paul,

Anne of Green Gables Christmas Tea Party

RSVP 644-0058