

Solstice storm brings big changes to small island



Spectacle Island in two sections, March 2010. A hundred years ago these two pieces were attached, creating a larger, spectacle-shaped island. The pillar on the right was washed away during the recent 'Winter Solstice' storm of 2010.

by Jocelyn Bethune

A few years ago, I discovered a new view of Baddeck.

Heading down Twining Street from the top of the hill, there is a wonderful view of Greenwood Church, Kidston Island behind it and off in the distance, Spectacle Island, surrounded by the

was (allegedly) the scene of the hastily arranged marriage of William Jones and Mary Leaver in 1799. Moments after the ceremony, William escaped to a departing ship and left, never to return. Mary Leaver returned to her family home in Big Baddeck to give birth to their child. The legend says



Spectacle Island today. Waves break over a shoal where the western section of the island stood until recently.

beautiful blue of the Bras d'Or.

My eye would often be drawn to the two pieces of Spectacle, a grassy sloping field to the east and a round pillar off-shore to the west. I'm not sure when the island split in two, but I will always recall when the pillar disappeared beneath the waves of the Bras d'Or.

(Old time-y voice): "It was the Winter Solstice Storm of 2010 – high winds, heavy rain and a storm surge that saw waves breaking at the front door of the Yacht Club and had Water Street and the Kidston Island beach underwater."

A hundred years ago, Spectacle Island consisted of two attached sloping knolls, so named for their similarity to the shape of eye-glasses. In the 1970's, with scrawny defoliated trees standing at one end, the mound of rock was (and still is) known as Toothbrush Island. In the mid 1990's the provincial government declared the 13 hectares of land and the waters around it a bird sanctuary. But the island's fate had already been sealed. The bird droppings had killed off the trees, making the grassy isles more susceptible to erosion.

The western end of Spectacle Island is not the first bit of land near Baddeck to become a submerged shoal.

Stoney Island, a shoal in St. Patrick's Channel, just off Shore Road,

that following the wedding, a powerful thunder and lightning storm hit. In the morning, Stoney Island was gone, an elevated shoal just below the wave tops was all that remained.

I was skeptical that such an event could happen so quickly. Especially since further research revealed that during the Silver Dart flights in the winter of 1909, JAD McCurdy used Stoney Island as a reference point as he flew above. Obviously the small island was still visible above the waves and ice as late as 1909.

I was convinced that Stoney eroded slowly, bit by bit. Changes that were not noticed day by day, but only over time. But now I know differently; that events can cause sudden and permanent changes to our views.

History is like that. Often, if it happens in our midst, we don't recognize it as 'history' unless it is a bold and noticeable change in our perspective.

The Baddeck & Area Historical Society is a group of people interested in noting the big events and the small ones. We meet on the third Wednesday of every month in the courtroom of the Baddeck courthouse at 4 p.m.

If you like old photographs of Baddeck & area, check out the Old Baddeck Facebook page. You can enjoy the pictures, join in the discussions and download a few from your own photo albums.

St. Marks Lodge No. 35 honours two of its Brethren



Two of the Brethren of St. Mark's Lodge in Baddeck were recently honoured with Meritorious Service Awards. Lloyd Churchill (L) and Louis Ihasz (R) are pictured with St. Mark's Worshipful Master John M. MacLeod who presented them with their medals and framed words of thanks. The Lodge has benefitted greatly from their service and their understanding of the Lodge's needs and requirements. The Meritorious Service Award represents the highest level of award that a lodge can bestow on a brother.

Postcard with a twist



When Jim Bradley (L) went to Scotland in 2006 he promised David MacRae (R) he would send him a postcard. When Jim returned David never asked him why he didn't send him a card and Jim wondered why David didn't thank him for the card he sent. Time passed. Amazingly the card, showing places Jim visited in the City of Stirling, finally arrived in December 2010, four and a half years later! Promises were kept and thanks were given - better late than never.

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The Numbers You Chose were 989... GREAT things coming! The MORE you LISTEN the MORE you WIN!