



LANDFALL TRUST and KENT COTTAGE Winter 2022 Newsletter



Latest News



Landfall Residents up for Awards

A shout out to Kelly McMichael and to Josh Sandu and Andrew Laite (Rube and Rake) for being nominated for several ECMA awards.

Kelly was our Musician-in-Residence in 2018 and has been nominated for three ECMAs: Album of the Year, Rising Star Recording of the Year and Rock Recording of the Year.

Rube & Rake were our Musicians-in-Residence in 2021 and have been nominated for two ECMAs: Album of the Year and Songwriter of the Year.

Stay tuned for the East Coast Music Awards to be held in Fredericton, New Brunswick, May 4-8.

Please visit their websites: kellymcmichael.com and rubeandrake.com.

Landfall Writer Listed for Prize

Claire Wiktschire was a writing resident at Kent Cottage in 2015 and now she is long-listed for the 2022 BMO Winterset Awards. Her book, *The Love Olympics* is a collection of short stories set in St. John's and according to Joan Sullivan, "...owns the podium with wit, muscle and heart." *The Love Olympics* is published by Breakwater Books and is available from their website, breakwaterbooks.com or online from your favorite bookseller.



More News

Kent Cottage by Gerald Squires



For several years, we have been offering gicleé prints of Gerald Squires wonderful painting of Kent Cottage. Our last few copies, out of a run of 150, are all framed and available for \$350.00 taxes in.

This could be your last opportunity to own an iconic view of Landfall by one of Newfoundland's most famous artists. Prints are available from Gerald Squires Gallery, 52 Prescott St. in St. John's (<http://www.geraldsquiresgallery.com/on-line-gallery.html>), or from the Landfall Trust (landfalltrust-nl@gmail.com).

Sponsor a Bundle Campaign

On the first of last month, we launched our Sponsor a Bundle campaign and to date we have raised more than \$11,000 for the new roof. Hurrah!

People have been very generous with their donations and very thoughtful with their dedications and their response has exceeded our expectations. In fact, more bundles were sponsored than we need for Phase I of the roof replacement. The extra sponsored bundles will be put on the rear of the cottage in the fall, but all dedications will be placed this spring. Some of the money donated will also allow us to rebuild the chimney on the west end of the cottage.



The project is coming together well. We have a contractor to set up the scaffolding and remove the old shingles and the materials are almost all ordered; many of them are waiting for a good day and a cleared road to be delivered to Landfall.

We still need your help, but now it's labour. We need volunteers to put the shingles on the roof of Kent Cottage. Tradespeople are welcome, but you don't have to be a roofer or a carpenter, we will teach you all you need to know. Those volunteers uncomfortable with heights will install the lower courses from the deck of the scaffolding.

We will be giving more information about volunteers in the next few weeks. Weather permitting, we will start installing shingles on the first of May. We then have one month to get the front part of the roof completed before the first art resident arrives.

If you are considering volunteering, drop me, Rex Passion, a line at rexkomatik@gmail.com.

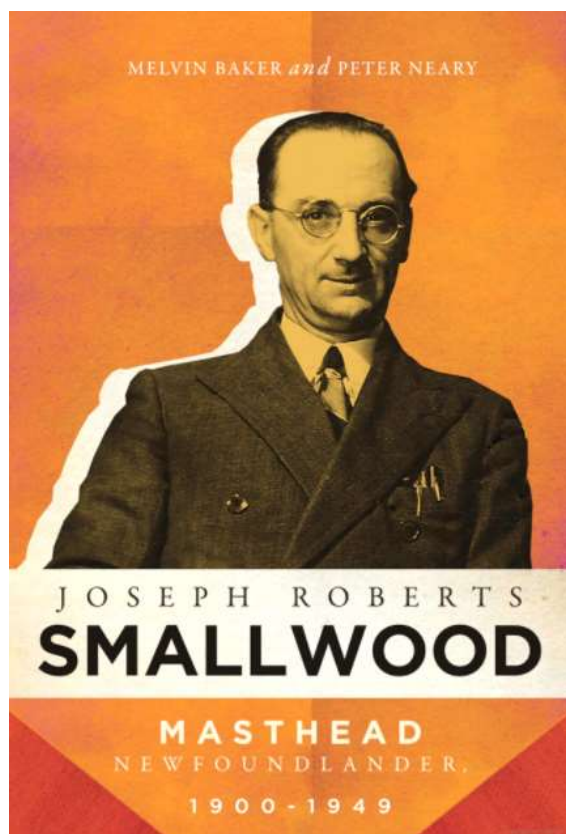
Hon. Edward Roberts,
BA, MA, LL.D (Hon), CM, ONL
1941-2022



Landfall has lost a loyal friend and supporter in the death of Edward Roberts on 14 January, 2022. Though born in St. John's his roots were in Brigus as his grandfather, Job, was born here. Even if writing might appear to have been a latter-day career for Edward, it was, in fact his beginning for he served a term as editor of *The Varsity*, the University of Toronto student newspaper. After his law degree he came home to serve as Executive Assistant to Premier Joey Smallwood and, in 1966, to run in the election and serve in cabinet where he was a major figure in the introduction of medicare and the establishment of the medical school.

Many of his colleagues regret that he never got the chance to serve as premier, having been deprived of that opportunity when Smallwood split the Liberal vote in 1975 by establishing a competing party. He returned to government in 1992 as Minister of Justice for Clyde Wells and, ten years later, was appointed Lieutenant Governor. It was in this role that he truly excelled, fostering an interest in history through the books he wrote or contributed to, obtaining an MA at Memorial University and, most significantly, through his support of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment.

Peter Neary



In their preface, the authors write that Smallwood “was both political Pied Piper and literary lion.”

Hilary and I remember with delight every minute of our 2015 stay at Kent Cottage. We had many adventures with a rented car, enjoyed mastering the intricacies of DC electricity, propane, and plumbing, picked a ton of berries, and marvelled at the soaring eagles. We left a tea cozy (made by Hilary) and still keep in touch with the resourceful Ray Kennedy.

The residency gave us a most welcome opportunity to chat to other scholars in the field of Newfoundland and Labrador history. One of our visitors was Melvin Baker, with whom I recently published *Joseph Roberts Smallwood: Masthead Newfoundlander, 1900-1949* (Montreal and Kingston: Mc-

Gill-Queen’s University Press, 2021). While in Brigus, I advanced my work on *Alan Caswell Collier; Relief Stiff: An Artist’s Letters from Depression-Era British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2018).

In my quiet time at the Cottage, I often thought of Rockwell Kent’s charming painting “Portrait of a Child (or My Daughter Clara).” This is my favourite picture from his Newfoundland oeuvre. As a result of his many trials and tribulations in the United States, the picture eventually found its way into the collection of the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if some enterprising curator could arrange to bring it back on loan for exhibit in Newfoundland (and perhaps elsewhere in Canada)? We need to build bridges to Russia, and art, music, film, and writing offer hope and possibility. A generous proposal from Newfoundland might well get a generous reception in Moscow. Here’s hoping!

Recently we have been telling a London, Ontario, acquaintance who works with stone about the inviting approach to Kent Cottage. Thanks to Landfall, stone continues to be purposefully and artistically laid upon stone.

Peter Neary

Roof Number Seven

by Rex Passion

The questions of when Kent Cottage at Freshwater was built, and who built it remain a great curiosity for me. I am frequently enticed to speculate, to make up a story which, while seeming plausible, may be far from the truth. The same is true of the detailed history of its construction and maintenance, but there are tantalizing pieces of evidence that give clues. Now that we are going to renew the roof of the cottage, I wonder how many roofs it has had since it was built. After considerable rumination, I believe the roof Jake put on the cottage in 1981 was its sixth roof, and the one we will be putting on this year will be roof number seven.



In 2022, the shingles are so brittle and eroded that they are literally breaking in two. Photo by Rex Passion.

What we do know is that Jake's roof is at the end of its life. Its thick cedar shakes have been weathered to the point that they break off in a wind-storm and are found on the ground. We know this roof was put on in 1981 because Jake wrote about the one it replaced in his journal. "Some shingles had gone so far into decay that they simply slid off, or rotted in place."

This was the roof that was on the house when Jake first saw it in 1953; it was put on by A. E. Harris after he purchased the cottage in July, 1926.

The building had apparently been abandoned since Rockwell Kent left in 1915 as there is evidence on the second floor of Kent's addition that it had been leaking for some time. One of Harris's first repairs must have been to replace the roof. He also added a bathroom at the rear of the cottage. There are still some of the original, slightly-weathered late 1920s shingles above the bath door, so I assume he did the roof first and then the bath the next year.



Jake on Harris's roof, which was by this time about thirty years old and covered with moss.
Photographer unknown



This photo by an unknown photographer shows Harris's brand new cedar shingle roof around 1927. The shingles were painted red.

When Rockwell Kent rented the cottage from 1914 to 1915, he did repairs at the same time he put on his studio addition. "...the roof I tarred (spruce shingles call for tar.)"* I believe this was the roof that A. E. Harris replaced in 1927 or 28, but when was this "Kent" roof put on? Here my information ceases and I must make a guess.

At the time Kent rented the cottage it had been owned by the Pomeroy family for more than one hundred years and early on in their ownership, the original building was enlarged and the roof raised. It has been suggested that the date of this modification was around 1824, but the profile of the window muntin bars separating the glass panes indicate 1830s so, for ease of calculation, I will assume 1825 as the date of the expansion and a new roof would have been put on at that time. Now here is where I make my guess that there were three roofs put on in the 102 years between 1825, and 1927, each lasting about 35 years.

These would have most likely been spruce shingles, the same as Kent treated with "tar" in 1914. This would mean that new roofs were put on in 1825, 1860 and 1895, the last one was twenty years old when Kent was in residence.

No one knows when the cottage at Freshwater was built. (It was not referred to as Kent Cottage until Harris named it after his home in England.) The dates range from 1786 to the early 1800s, but the date of its expansion is less uncertain. Whether the first roof dates from the eighteenth century or the nineteenth, it was probably past its prime when it was replaced by the new, higher roof in 1825.

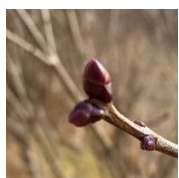
So here is my guess: Roof # 1, 1800, roof # 2, 1825, roof # 3, 1860, roof # 4, 1895, roof # 5, 1927, roof # 6, 1981 and roof # 7, 2022. I hope there are many more roofs yet to be put on Kent Cottage.

*from Kent's autobiography, *It's Me Oh Lord*, page 281

A Brief Look at Kent Cottage Flora

Part 1 Winter

by Denise Holland



As we all stay warm and toasty over a mug of hot cocoa this winter, it's easy to let the mind wander back over the last few months. The pandemic has left many of us, no doubt, in a bit of a daze. And while we "bubble" ourselves along again, for the umpteenth time, I think about the cottage environs happily slumbering through it all, only waiting to bloom again as Mother Nature eases her icy grip.

Let me first say, I am by no means a botanical expert. But the history of the gardens of Landfall have always been of interest. From the South Side of Brigus at summer's peak, the cottage sits in what seems to be its own oasis of green, surrounded by the grey shale rocks native to the area. Indeed, it appears to have its very own micro-climate. Today, of course, the grounds sit enveloped in the embrace of winter. The deciduous trees such as the lilac, quince and birch have shed their leaves in hibernation. The majestic Balsam Firs stretch their ever-green branches out, topped by an occasional patch of snow.

The British engineer and artist, A. E. Harris, resided at Kent Cottage before its final owner, Jake Folensbee. When Harris purchased the home from the Pomeroy's in the 1930s, he, along with his neighbours the Fowlers, embarked on a journey of enhancing and upgrading the surrounding grounds and, according to John Leaman's book *Brigus: Past Glory, Present Splendor*, "The property was neatly fenced: retaining walls along the garden terraces were repaired and finely bedecked with rows of flowers and ferns; fruit and shade trees in the sunken garden were carefully pruned and retrenched;" (Leaman, 48).

It is believed that Harris had a friendship with

Nana Barr, the mother of sea captain Bob Bartlett and that many of the species of plants we see at Kent Cottage today may have come from Bartlett's Brigus home, Hawthorne Cottage. Indeed, a lot of the plants and trees can be found at both locales, as well as around the town of Brigus. As a symbol of their friendship and love of plants, it is thought that Harris gifted Nana Barr with one of his paintings called "Kew Gardens." Whilst the painting does not hang at Hawthorne Cottage now, many remember that there was an inscription written by Harris on the back to Nana Barr. If anyone today knows what it reads, please share with us!

But for now, the cottage sleeps amidst the quiet landscape, interrupted perhaps only by the visit of the occasional squirrel or seagull. And as I continue this story into spring, summer, and fall, I will no doubt miss some things, but it is not intentional. We welcome any memories or musings from the past that visitors to Kent Cottage may have about its beautiful surroundings.



Her Highness, Princess Alice of Kent

by Paul Kay

Alice, red merle of coat and stub of tail, came into her owners' lives as a foundling rescued by Pet Finders, and endeared herself to them as "her cuteness." Now she lived sixteen floors above a busy urban intersection. While her people appreciated the convenience of city amenities and the view across the urban landscape, Alice was nervously uncomfortable with the sidewalks' bustle and was too short to see over the concrete base of the balcony railing. She hadn't asked for this. She knew she had a higher calling in life, tending sheep (more than half of her was Australian shepherd) or at least keeping a yard squirrel-free.

When her mistress received the Landfall Trust artist-in-residence opportunity, she promised Alice a great adventure: an opportunity to live outdoors, to run free, perhaps to chase moose. With her big auburn eyes, Alice looked accusingly at her master when he was allowed brief visits on the l-o-n-g ferry crossing. This is the adventure you promised?

Oh, but what paradise Landfall was! Quickly forgotten were the seemingly interminable days in the car and hotel rooms. Here were squirrels, small and reddish instead of big and black, but squirrels nevertheless, to protect her people from. Here were rocks to climb, paths to explore, a long driveway rolling out towards town like a red carpet beckoning, "come, come, explore." Every morning and every time the door opened to let her out, she went flying over the grating, over the rock walls, down into the garden and up into the bush.

One morning, about half-way into the residency, she didn't come when called, she had raced off even before having breakfast. Worried, her people went calling down the driveway, finding her half a kilometer away, slowly, foot-sore and dog-tired, making

her way back. For the next few days she was listless, she didn't go far, her leaps were perfunctory, she clung to her people. The nice vet in Bay Roberts examined her, found nothing wrong, and speculated she had either worn herself out or "she might-a had-a scare."

Perhaps, though, she had seen a ghost. It is well known that dogs have a sense inaccessible to humans. Perhaps she had met Jake out in his usual fashion surveying Kent Cottage domain. His eccentric but kindly mustachioed smile reassured her. He told Alice he was glad she was enjoying Landfall as much as he did, and that he appreciated her help in keeping the goats away. He dubbed her Her Highness Princess Alice of Kent, and foretold that she would be so immortalized in a hooked mat her mistress would make in honor of their stay at Jake's Place.





“Princess Alice of Kent” from the *Brin and Boots* series

by Temara Gentles

24” x 36” (61 x 91.5 cm)

Materials: brin/burlap, wool, recycled clothing, “Wellies” from the thrift shop in Bay Roberts

Techniques: hooking, knitting, crochet

Photo: Paul Kay

Temma Gentles, accompanied by husband Paul Kay and Alice, were Canada Council for the Arts residents at Kent Cottage in the summer of 2008. I came across the story of “Her Highness, Princess Alice of Kent” when reading over Jake’s guest book, which includes many hundreds of guests over a span of fifty-six years.

Temma is a fibre artist based in Toronto; her website is www.temmagentles.com. She created this hooked rug in Alice’s honor. Some of Temma’s inspirations for this piece are, Alice, of course, the Afgan on the Kent cottage sofa, the Landfall garage and Robert Indiana’s “Love” sculpture.

Alice died this last November at the age of seventeen, no doubt remembering chasing squirrels in Newfoundland...and meeting Jake’s ghost.

Kent Cottage at Landfall Secured for the Winter



Date and photographer unknown.

Donate to Landfall Trust



Landfall Trust

P.O. Box 21378

St. John's, NL

Canada

A1A 5G6

landfalltrustnl.org

landfalltrustnl@gmail.com

The Landfall Trust, Inc. was incorporated, under the Corporations Act of Newfoundland and Labrador, in March of 2005, Canadian Revenue Agency Registered Charity. No.839156544RR001 . Tax deductible receipts will be issued for all donations over \$10.00.

The Landfall Trust and Kent Cottage newsletter is published quarterly by Landfall Trust and is edited by Rex Passion. Our thanks to all the contributors.

