

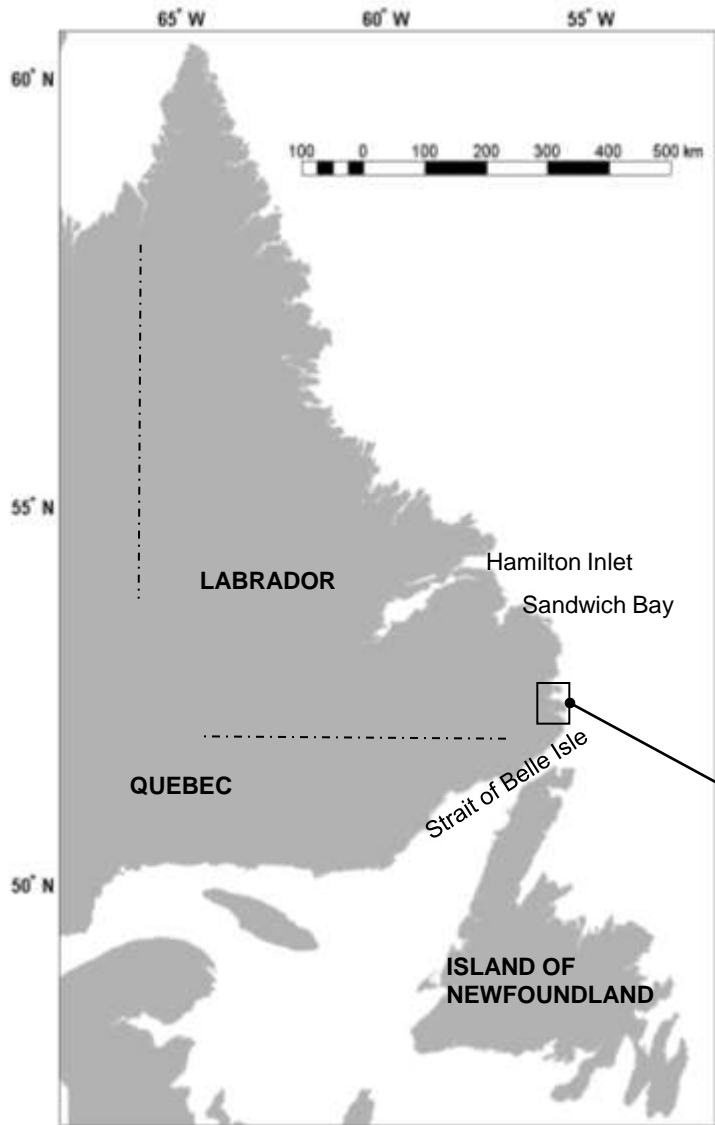
GEORGE CARTWRIGHT'S "RANGER LODGE"

THE 2003 ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT AT THE SITE OF LODGE-1,
LODGE BAY, LABRADOR

by
M. Stopp
2007

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Area of Cartwright's Ranger Lodge

Lodge in 1770

After breakfast, Mr. Lucas and I got into the wherry, and rowed up the river to the place where Captain Darby had lived; which is as high as a boat can go. There we found his old house in such good condition, that it might easily be made proof against the weather, by chinsing between the studs with moss, and giving it an additional covering. There were also the ruins of a servant's house; a work-shop; and fishing stage; all these we took possession of.

This is what Captain George Cartwright (1739-1819) entered into his journal on Monday, July 30, 1770, shortly after arriving in Labrador for the first time. He was about to begin his career as a merchant in one of Britain's earliest colonies. The buildings that Cartwright took over had once belonged to Nicholas Darby, a merchant who set up shop on the St. Charles River shortly after England gained control of Labrador from France in 1763. Throughout his years in Labrador, Cartwright kept a daily account of his activities. This he published in 1792 as *A Journal of Transactions and Events During a Residence of Nearly Sixteen Years on the Coast of Labrador*.

Knowing that the summer was short, Cartwright immediately set his crews to the tasks of cutting timber, renovating each building, preparing a bake oven and gardens, and building kennels for dogs, poultry and sheep that he had brought from England. The buildings consisted of Darby's former dwelling house, which Cartwright turned into a storehouse, a house for the work crews, a workshop that Cartwright converted into a dwelling house for himself and Mrs. Selby, his housekeeper and companion, and there was also a cabin for the maid, who was the wife of O'Brien, the blacksmith.



“as high as a boat can go”



The rapids in the distance mark the first shallow water upstream from the mouth of the St. Charles River, at Lodge Bay, Labrador, seen here at high tide. The wharf in this photograph is probably very close to the spot where Cartwright built his own wharf two hundred and thirty years ago.

Three months after arriving, the work of settling in nearly finished, Cartwright wrote:

My house not having yet been distinguished by any name, we called it Ranger Lodge, in honor of his Majesty's schooner, which was moored before the door.
(diary entry of October 22, 1770)

Today's community of Lodge Bay takes its name from Cartwright's "Ranger Lodge." Lodge Bay has a long history of European settlement. Before Nicholas Darby, there were crews from Quebec in the area as early as 1735, mainly for the seal fishery. Before that, in the late 1500s, Basque whalers processed whale blubber at Cape Charles, where they would have met the Inuit who lived along the coast for much of the year, living in tents in summer and sod houses and snow houses in winter. The ancestors of today's Innu, the Amerindian peoples of Labrador, also lived throughout this region from ancient times, coming to the coast from their interior camps to catch sea birds and seals and to the mouths of rivers to catch salmon. Even after European arrival, Innu and Inuit families had a presence along the coast, adding trade with Europeans to daily tasks of fishing and hunting.

George Cartwright had many contacts with Inuit and Innu throughout his years in Labrador. He traded for furs, caribou skins, seal fat, whale bone, whale baleen, and seal meat. His journal contains several observations on the lives of Labrador's Aboriginal peoples.



George Cartwright lived at Ranger Lodge for only two years. We learn many details about eighteenth century building design from his journal. For instance, the main dwelling house measured thirty-seven feet by fourteen, and was divided into three equal parts: the south apartment was the kitchen, the central section was a dining room, and the north end was divided lengthwise into two bedrooms. A loft over the whole was used to store goods. One of the bedrooms (probably Cartwright's) had a chimney made of bricks and lime. The dining room was installed with a "Buzaglo" stove, which was a cast-iron heating unit named after its eighteenth century manufacturer, Abraham Buzaglo. The kitchen chimney was made of logs, wickerwork, boards and a thin casing of clay, and the fireplace itself was backed by a four-foot high stone wall. A "copper" or all-purpose wash basin was fitted to the kitchen fireplace for warm water.

We learn something about early construction as well. Turning Darby's former dwelling house into a storehouse involved chinking between the original studs with moss and covering the roof of boards with sheathing paper, pitch and tar, and battening the paper with lathes or boards. The outer walls of the main dwelling house consisted of the original upright "longers" or studs erected by Darby (chinked with moss) to which Cartwright added an outer wall of squared, horizontal logs, filling the space between the two walls with clay.

Other buildings such as the maid's cabin and the servants' house were similarly repaired, while an old dog kennel received a tarpaulin cover and became a shelter for goats and sheep. The bake oven was built "a little ways from the house" with an arched design, but no mention is made of construction material (dressed stone, beach rocks, bricks?).



On September 12, 1772, Ranger Lodge burned to the ground! Cartwright wrote:

My house took fire and having nobody at home to assist me but the boy, it was burnt to the ground in a short time, together with the servants' house and salmon-house. We saved but twenty-nine tierces of salmon, and a few other things, most of which were damaged. Sixteen tierces were burnt, as were all the goods for Indian trade; all our slops, and my private baggage. With much labour we saved the store-house, and prevented the woods from taking fire.

The culprit was the wooden chimney, which had caused at least eight smaller fires before the 1772 event. Wooden chimneys were by no means unusual throughout this period because of the high cost of shipping bricks and mortar. Lambert de Boileau, who served as a superintendent at Battle Harbour sometime between 1850 and 1860, also recorded wooden chimneys in Settlers' homes in St. Lewis Inlet that regularly caught fire.

Following the fire of 1772, Cartwright had his crews begin construction on another dwelling house. He himself left for England before its completion and nine days after the fire. Upon his return to Labrador in August 1773, the salmon house had been rebuilt at a location known as "Indian Cove" situated downriver from Ranger Lodge. Cartwright stayed there only three months before returning once again to Britain for the winter of 1773/74. When he came back the following summer (1774) construction began on a new dwelling house at Stage Cove, which had been Cartwright's cod fishing station in St. Lewis Inlet. Ranger Lodge continued to operate as one of Cartwright's salmon fishing operations until 1778, when it was ransacked by privateers.





Captain Cartwright Visiting His Fox-traps

This is the only known portrait of Captain George Cartwright. It is a lithograph copy (by T. Medland) of an original oil painting (by W. Hilton) in possession of the Cartwright family estate.

The lithograph appears at the front of Cartwright's journal with the following caption:

"The Frontispiece represents a Winter Scene on the sea coast of Labrador, with the Author taking his usual walk round his fox-traps. His is supposed to have got sight of some deer, and has put his dog's hood on, to keep him quiet. His hat (which is white,) northwester, wrappers, cuffs, breeches, and buskins, are English; his jacket (which is made of Indian-dressed deer-skin, and painted,) sash, and rackets are Mountaineer; and his shoes Esquimau. The pinovers of his northwester are loose, and hang down on the right side of it. On his back is a trap, fixed by a pair of slings, in the manner of a soldier's knapsack. A bandoleer hangs across his breast, from his right shoulder; to which are fastened a black-fox, and his hatchet. A German rifle is on his left shoulder. In the back ground is a yellow fox in a trap; beyond him, there is a white-bear crossing the ice of a narrow harbour...."

The Archaeology at Lodge-1

Lodge-1, the name archaeologists have given this site, was first recorded in 2002, when Eva Luther and M. Stopp visited the location to follow up on local accounts of “old things” found in the area. M. Stopp had first looked for this site in 1991 during an archaeological survey of the area, but found nothing but a flurry of construction activity for a temporary causeway across the St. Charles River in preparation for a new bridge. The causeway probably damaged part of the site.



The partially constructed causeway in July, 1991, and a backhoe that managed to go astray.



Archaeologists looking for *Ranger Lodge* in 1991 but without success – possibly because of the tormenting black flies. **See the next slide to find out how close they were to the 2003 excavation.**

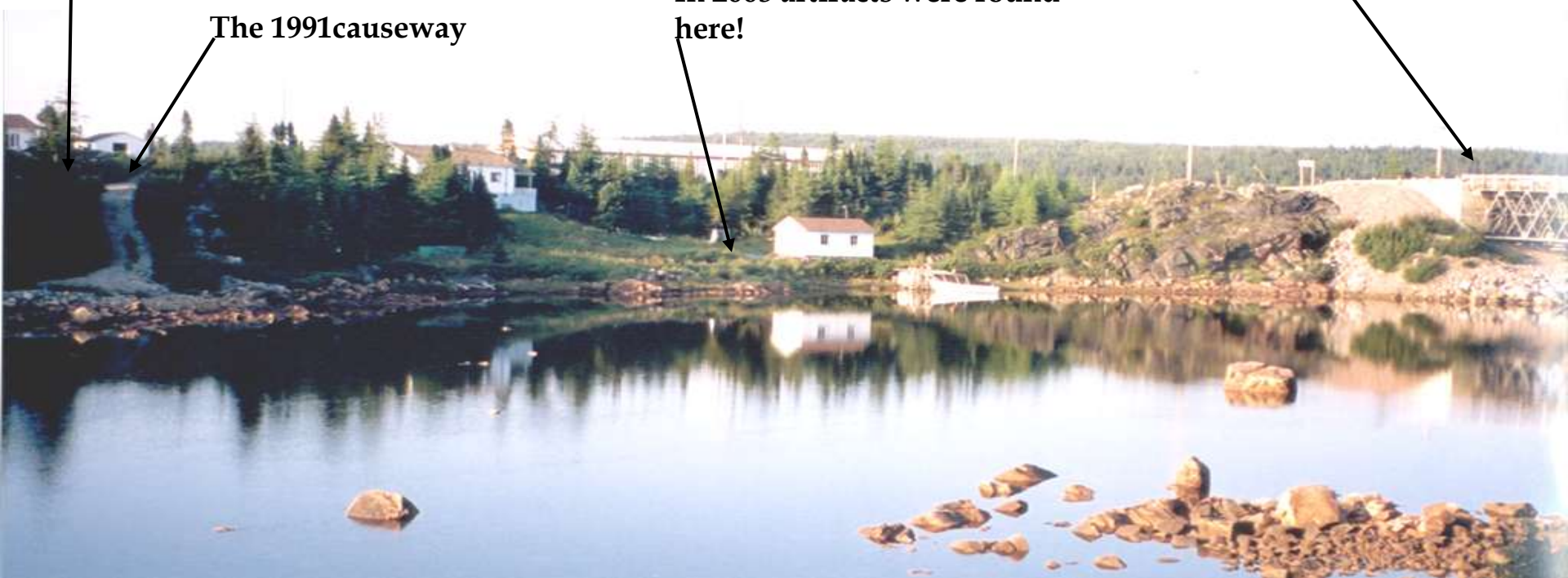
Here we see the general area of George Cartwright's "Ranger Lodge" in 2003 with the former causeway route still visible, coming down the bank on the left of the photo. Although the causeway probably damaged some of the site, the building of the bridge itself, to the right, did not. Testing in 1991 narrowly missed "Ranger Lodge".

**Archaeological testing
in 1991 was in this area.**

The 1991 causeway

**In 2003 artifacts were found
here!**

**The bridge over the
St. Charles River**





The 2003 excavation began by laying a small grid system over the area where artifacts were found. This created excavation squares, or units, which each had a special identification number. The surface sod and underlying soil of each unit were slowly and carefully removed, and all finds were given a record number that linked them with the unit in which they were found.

On the left we see Emily Ward (l) and Eva Luther (r) beginning the gradual process of excavation.

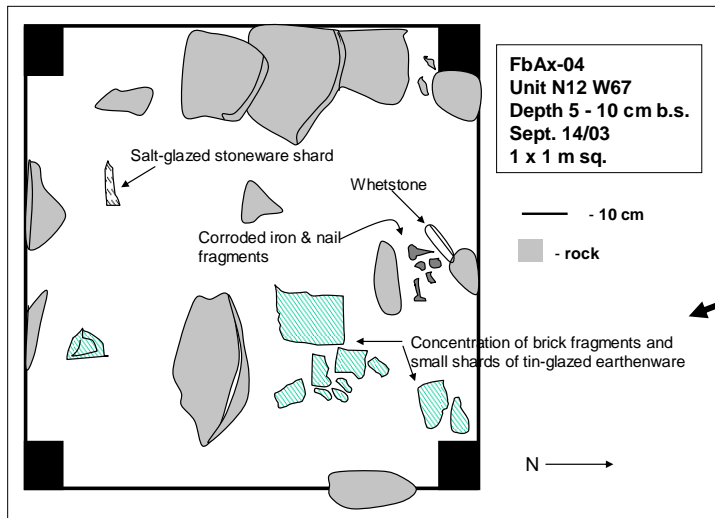
Days later, and the units are much deeper. All the soil was carefully examined for bits of pottery, glass, nails, and especially beads. We noticed that bead fragments often fell through the wire-mesh soil sifters. As a result, all soil was sifted onto a tarpaulin and then carefully examined a second time for beads, as Emily (r) is doing.



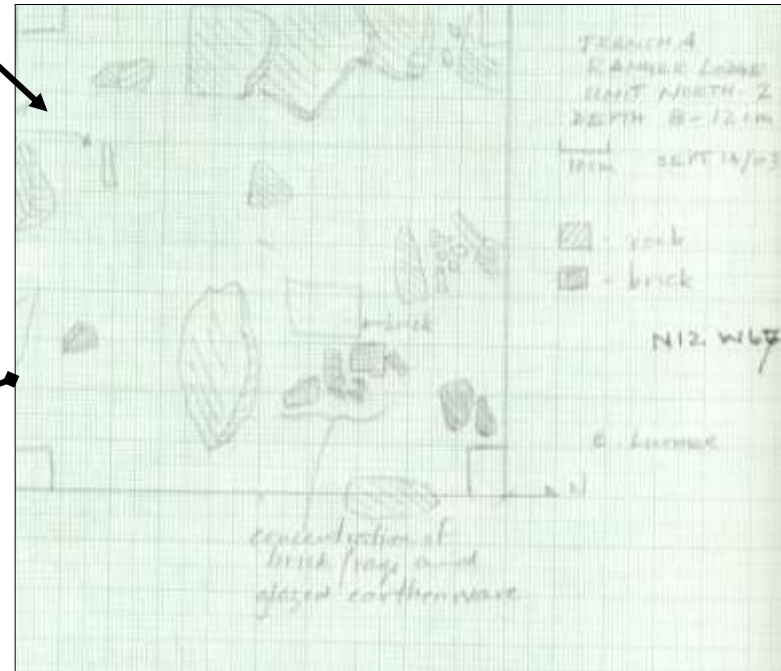


Maps were drawn every 10 cm of depth for each excavation unit. Each unit is linked to a main datum point for which we have a latitude and longitude reading using a GPS (geographical positioning system).

Here Emily is creating a field map of her excavation unit. The maps help archaeologists interpret and recreate the site once the fieldwork is over. Maps are redrawn in the laboratory and become part of the final report.



An example of the finished map that forms an important part of the archaeologist's report.



An example of an excavation unit map drawn during the excavation.

What should you do if you find an archaeological site or artifact?

It is illegal to collect, dig up, or move an archaeological artifact in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador without an archaeological research permit. Federal law also prohibits the sale and trade of Canada's heritage. If you find an artifact, take careful note of its location, move nothing, and contact the:

Provincial Archaeology Office at (709)729-2462 or pao@gov.nl.ca

Disturbing archaeological remains or doing your own digging results in the loss of the history of this province and of Canadian history. Only an archaeologist is trained to collect and decipher the information from an archaeological find.

If you have a collection of artifacts, consider donating them to the Provincial Museum of Newfoundland and Labrador. They will then be carefully stored, and available to the public as well as to students and scholars researching our Province's past.



Most of the excavation units contained an unusually large numbers of artifacts, all of which showed signs of burning. This may have been where George Cartwright dumped his burned and damaged goods.



**Can you spot the artifacts in these two photos?
What do you think they are?**

What Happens to Artifacts?



Once artifacts were found and carefully mapped, they were then washed. Each artifact was given a number that was entered in a database linking it with information on where it was found and its description.

In the picture to the left, Eva Luther washes artifacts and lays them out to dry. Mona and Garland Pye generously gave us space in their store, known as *Mona's Place*, as a laboratory. We enjoyed having people visit us there and view the artifacts.

After the field season, Marianne Stopp spent six weeks analysing the artifacts, redrawing maps, interpreting the site, and writing the reports that are required by the Historic Resources Act of NL. Once this work was completed, the artifacts were handed over to the Provincial Museum where they are stored in safe and climate-controlled conditions.



On the right, Emily Ward has begun the lengthy process of identifying and numbering artifacts.

What Did the Archaeologists Find at Lodge-1?

Many different types of artifacts were recovered. We found 1 gunflint, 3 brass buttons, 7 bone buttons, 5 whetstones, 47 balls of lead shot, 111 clay pipe fragments, 501 shards (pieces) of old dishes, 1,558 glass beads, 1,896 pieces of glass, and more!

What do the artifacts tell us? They tell us something about the way of life led by George Cartwright and his crew in 1771. For instance, the bone buttons appear to be from ladies' underwear – there must have been a properly dressed woman at Ranger Lodge and we think this may have been Mrs. Selby. The lead shot and gunflint tell us that there were flintlock rifles in use. The many clay pipe fragments tell us that at least one person enjoyed a pipe. Many of the dish shards were from high-quality porcelain wares and suggest that Cartwright dined in the manner of an English gentleman. The many glass beads were all trade beads, and we know from his journal that he planned to trade these with the Inuit.



The handle of an intricately decorated redware vessel, probably a teapot. It shows fire damage.



Porcelain shards from fine wares known as Chinese export porcelain – all fire damaged.

Nearly all of the artifacts show signs of being exposed to high heat. Glass shards and many trade beads show melting and discolouration, and nearly all ceramics bear evidence of burning. This fits well with what we know about the 1770-1772 period at Ranger Lodge, which ended with the great fire.



All of these glass shards are discoloured and melted due to high heat.



The blackened surface of this bowl is due to fire.



High heat fused and discoloured the beads at bottom.



Many of these beads were melted by fire.

Along with burned and melted artifacts, we also found a layer of blackened soil that tied in well with Cartwright's account of the fire.



Most of the excavation units were filled with beach boulders, as seen on the left. Boulders form much of the site area and appear to be quite randomly distributed. The boulders were puzzling, because we hoped and expected to find remains of wooden or stone house foundations, or postholes. One explanation for why we did not find building remains may be found in the following slide.

**We found no evidence of buildings at
Lodge-1! Why?**



Because of the rocky terrain in the meadow, Cartwright probably had his buildings on “shores”, like these modern-day structures at Cape Charles Cove, and like many other buildings along the coast. Although he does not mention it for the Ranger Lodge buildings, we know that Cartwright used this method while he lived in Isthmus Bay in 1777. He wrote about using “stouters”, “posts”, and “shores” for the fishing room on Great Island (journal entry for July 14, 1777).

Final Notes



We took a few hours off work on September 14, 2003, to attend the official opening of the Trans Labrador Highway on the St. Charles River bridge and to meet celebrities such as Lawrence O'Brien (Member of Parliament), Yvonne Jones (Member of the House of Assembly), and Premier Grimes.

l-r: Eva Luther, Emily Ward, Lawrence O'Brien, and Marianne Stopp

Lodge Bay Archaeological Dig George Cartwright's Ranger Lodge



We quite enjoyed a visit from Jane Pye's class at the Lodge school (this slide courtesy of Jane Pye, 2003, Lodge, Labrador).

Many people made this project possible, especially since we had very little funding. A Note of Thanks was published in both *The Labradorian* and *The Northern Pen* in the autumn of 2003:

NOTE OF THANKS

The September 2003 excavation at Lodge Bay owes its success to the time, donations, and hospitality offered by many people. The Labrador Métis Nation, in particular Todd Russell, Shirley Pye, and Cynthia Pye, deserves thanks for covering some of the transportation costs, but especially for providing the project with an excellent fieldworker, Emily Ward of Goose Bay. Eva Luther of St. Lewis is warmly thanked for volunteering two entire weeks of her time in the interest of uncovering some of Labrador's past - she was sorely missed by her husband Art but we were so glad to have her. Norah and Guy Pye will always be remembered for their hospitality and excellent lunches, and Dean Pye for his assistance. Verna Pye's daily evening visits, her stories, and kindness, made us feel so at home and will not be forgotten. Mona and Garland Pye welcomed us with open arms and helped wherever possible - from picking up equipment in Mary's Harbour, providing cataloguing and public viewing space in their store, to driving Emily and me to Blanc Sablon airport. The Smallwood Foundation, St. John's, generously provided a grant that covered a portion of travel costs as well as food and lodgings for our crew of three. Judy Logan of the Canadian Conservation Institute, Ottawa, donated conservation services to the project, without which it could not have gone ahead. Mike Earle provided a home away from home that fit our budget, while community interest and especially Jane Pye's school visit made the whole endeavour seem absolutely worthwhile. I hope that we have the opportunity of a future excavation season together.

Dr. Marianne Stopp, Archaeologist, Wakefield, Quebec

Brain Teasers:

- 1) Which country had control of Labrador before 1763?
- 2) How did Lodge get its name?
- 3) What would you do if you found what you thought was an archaeological artifact or site?
- 4) What do the glass beads tell us?
- 5) Why does an archaeologist create maps of everything that is found?
- 6) Why are so many of the artifacts from Lodge-1 discoloured?
- 7) Why should old living places only be examined by archaeologists?
- 8) What do you know about Captain George Cartwright?

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