

[Page 21 - Torquil MacLean & the Englishtown Ferry](#)

ISSUE : [Issue 2](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1973/1/1

for car and driver, fifteen cents for each additional passenger. After midnight the car fare was two-fifty. Later, the fare was reduced to seventy-five cents for car and driver, and the passenger fare discontinued. The ferry was tied up at midnight but it was always on call. The motor ferry operated until late December, or when the traffic slackened • and then it would be hauled for the winter and the Old Scow put in service to ferry teams and mail. One cold morning we saw a man with a horse and sled coming to the ferry on the beach side about 7 A.M. Uncle Allan and I rowed the Old Scow across. There was a light coating of ice in the channel. The passenger's name was Malcolm Buchanan, and as we got him aboard he told of a dream he had had the night before. He dreamed of crossing the ferry, and that his horse jumped overboard. Mr. Buchanan was dressed in a fur coat and fur cap and high leather larrigans. His horse was a spirited animal and he had to hold him when we crossed. Close to the Englishtown side, the horse leaped out of the Scow and took Mr. Buchanan with him, flat on his face into the water. That made him let the horse go, and the animal swam to shore and ran up a hill and waited for his angry master. Uncle Allan took him home and gave him a change of clothes, and I can imagine no grass grew under that horse's feet all the way to North Sydney. I left the ferry in 1928 and went to the Great Lakes, U.S.A. I spent two months on the ferry in 1931, and I remember the mail carrier we rowed in the Old Scow that winter was Angus Morrison from Englishtown. Then in late February, 1931, the Old Scow was crushed by the drift ice. She was the last of the scows rowed across the entrance. Uncle Allan had several rowboats built on the North Shore by John MacDonald and his son Johnie. Uncle Allan continued at the ferry until 1950 when ill health forced him to retire. We talked with John MacAskill of Englishtown, and as he remembers it being told, Donald MacLean was ferryman at Englishtown before his son, Torquil. And the late Jane Daisley, when she was beyond 90, told Georgie Montgomery, Torquil's granddaughter, that she remembered being ferried across by Donald MacLean. We do not know whether the MacLean's were the first to have a ferry at Englishtown, but we do know that if we begin with Donald we can account for about 150 years of MacLean's on the ferry: not including those who served only a short time, they were Donald MacLean, his son Torquil, his son Allan, his sons Alia T. and Robert, and Harry C. Morrison, whose mother was a MacLean. Capt. Morrison plans to retire in July, 1973, bringing nearly 150 years of MacLean service on the ferry to an end. The Old Country Store & Museum on the Cabot Trail N.E. Margaree Open 12 months a year Catering to our neighbors and their friends When you shop in Baddeck it's nice to plan to include a visit to The Thistledown Restaurant, The Thistledown Restaurant A quiet, relaxed atmosphere for a snack or family meal. For any time gift giving, Petheric Press books make excellent presents. This Halifax based publisher specializes in books that are relevant to the Maritime provinces. The quality of the paper and binding is a real joy in these days of the "just-made-to-be-read-once" type of paperback. Other delightful publications include THB TEA SHIPS AND SAILORS (3.95), a collection of sea stories in and



around the Maritimes; THE STORY OF THE NOVA SCOTIA TARTAN at only 1.00; THE SALADIN AFFAIR, a story of piracy and murder told in the records of the trial. This is a limited edition of 900 • so 4.95 is a modest price to pay, Petheric also produces thistle decorated wrapping paper and Maritime-inspired colouring books for children. Yours for the asking are the list of publications from Petheric and the bi-monthly book reviews. It is difficult to single out favourites but I think the NOVA SCOTIA SKETCHBOOK and VANISHING HALIFAX (at 2.95 each) are my top two. The superb sketches could be framed so easily if you could bear to dissect such a beautiful book. CHAFFINORRE - ST. JOHN'S. BIRCHMOUNT. 3 GARDEN STREET. CO-OP BOOK SHOP  
Cape Breton's Magazine/21