



# HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES ON CAPE BRETON ISLAND  
LIEUX HISTORIQUES NATIONAUX DU CAP-BRETON

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## *Flight of the Silver Dart - 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations*

What a marvellous 4-day winter celebration we just had in the merry month of February!

Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Site of Canada welcomed 2978 visitors from February 20<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> and the biggest attendance day was the stormy day with 921 visitors.

Thanks to tremendous teamwork by staff at AGB supplemented by much appreciated support from Fortress of Louisbourg and Cape Breton Highlands, we had a very successful 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of Canada's entry into the age of aviation. Great to cultivate Field Unit teamwork. And this weekend was just the beginning of year-long events commemorating "The First Airplane Flight in Canada" locally and nationally.

Hundreds and hundreds of spectators watched in awe on Sunday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> as ***Silver Dart* airplane (a full-scale replica built a group of dedicated volunteers in Ontario) soared through the skies on five successful flights.** The AEA 2005 was thrilled that their full-scale replica took flight off the icy Baddeck Bay site that Bell and his AEA used on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1909.

While *Silver Dart's* success was the highlight of the 4-day weekend celebration of the Canada's entry into the age of aviation, the weekend was a weekend of many highlights for AGBNHSC.



*Silver Dart soars through the air!*



*Silver Dart near the Baddeck Bay runway site.*



. This On Friday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, the public opening of the national art aviation exhibit, **Centennial Collection**, by the Canadian Aviation Artists Association was held in our main theatre. The artwork will be on exhibit here until the end of April when it begins its journey across Canada was its inaugural show.



*Some of the 40 paintings in the Centennial Collection art exhibit created by the Canadian Aviation Artists Association.*

Also on Friday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, **our new lesson plan “Flights of Fancy”** was launched on the Teacher’s Resource Centre of the Parks Canada website. This is a great tool for educators and students across Canada. Almost 3 years in the making we are so pleased it is now out there as one more Parks Canada outreach education opportunity.

Saturday brought the signing of a **Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)** between Parks Canada and the Silver Dart Centennial Association (SDCA). The SDCA has created a Legacy Committee to oversee a fundraising project in close partnership with Parks Canada. Their goal is to raise funds for an expansion of this museum to house a full-scale replica of Silver Dart and tell the story of the AEA with the impact it deserves. The proposed expansion will include an innovation centre to serve the needs of Parks Canada and the community. Parks Canada welcomes this opportunity for a truly lasting legacy of the centennial of flight and by the MOA agrees to maintain

and operate the expansion once it is completed.



*Pictured at the signing of the MOA are Brendan McDonald, Director-General, Eastern Canada, Parks Canada, Dr. Roberta Bondar, Honorary Chair, SDCA, Shane MacFarlane, Chair, SDCA and Chip Bird, Field Unit Superintendent, Cape Breton.*

In his speech during the MOA event, Brendan McDonald shared the news about a centennial event we are supporting called **“The Sky’s the Limit”** which will bring together 20 junior and senior high students from 5 Cape Breton Schools. Under the mentorship of Nova Scotia composer/musician Scott Macmillan, the students will begin a creative exploration of AGB, the AEA and the history making flight of the silver Dart. They will be challenged to be creative during a ‘Creation Day’ workshop here in April.

Macmillan will arrange and orchestrate the resulting musical inventions for the youth to perform as part of the Celtic Colors International Festival 2009 concert celebrating Alexander Graham Bell, the AEA and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Silver Dart’s* 1909 flight.

Chip Bird spoke in our main theatre on Sunday at the SDCA Legacy Committee’s private reception for potential sponsors of their project. He talked about the Parks Canada’s enthusiasm for this project and how it represents a great opportunity to work with the community.

Monday brought stormy weather but that didn't dampen the festive atmosphere in our WATER exhibit area as a triple ceremony that included the unveiling of an **HSMBC plaque commemorating 'The First Airplane Flight in Canada'** took place with crowd of 300 spectators. The Royal Canadian Mint launched a commemorative coin and Canada Post celebrated with a first day commemorative stamp issue.



*Pictured with "The First Flight in Canada" HSMBC plaque are Brendan McDonald, the Honorable Michael L. MacDonald, Senator and Chip Bird.*



*Pictured with the unveiled HSMBC plaque are the top 4 Air Cadets in Canada with the Honorable Michael L. MacDonald, Chip Bird and Brendan McDonald.*

And last but not least, Monday's ceremonies also brought a **funding announcement** by the Honorable Michael L. MacDonald, Senator, on behalf of the Honorable Jim Prentice, Canada's Environment Minister and minister responsible for Parks Canada.

The Government of Canada intends to **invest \$3 million at AGBNHSC** to celebrate the legacy of the *Silver Dart*. This investment is part of Canada's \$75 million Economic Action Plan in Budget 2009 and will improve visitor experiences in the aviation exhibit giving the story of the *Silver Dart* and the Aerial Experiment Association the impact they deserve.

"We knew that we had to make a significant investment to renew resources here," said FUS Chip Bird in an interview with CBC. "What's nice about this one is that we're able to spend one pot of money working with the Silver Dart Centennial Association to build the legacy piece and protect the envelope that's here at the same time." He went on to say that having the *Silver Dart* permanently in Baddeck should attract more visitors to this site, Baddeck and Cape Breton Island.

This weekend was just the beginning of the year-long centennial celebration locally and nationally. June will bring the Silver Dart Centennial Air Show & Youth in Aviation Week from June 14<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> in Baddeck. Watch for upcoming events on the SDCA website [www.flightofthesilverdart.ca](http://www.flightofthesilverdart.ca)

Below are some other great pictures of this memorable weekend.



*Silver Dart in flight over Baddeck Bay*





*Angie and Marieve from Cape Breton Highlands helped out during the weekend.*



*James Dunn, Sydney proudly displays his "Connects" Silver Dart model. Hugh Bell Muller, Bell's great grandson, is pictured with James.*



*Anne MacRae ready for take-off in the CF-18 cockpit at Bell Bay Golf Club.*



*Eddie Kennedy with Georgina Leslie*



*The Sky Hawks performing on Sunday.*



*AGB staff pictured with neurologist and astronaut Dr. Roberta Bondar.*