

News of the arts

Early Nova Scotian art at the National Gallery

A new installation devoted to the *Early Art of Nova Scotia* in the permanent collection, which went on view at the National Gallery of Canada in December, includes the newly-restored "Croscup Room", and a display of paintings and silver.

The painted Croscup Room comes from the Hall-Croscup House in Granville Ferry, Nova Scotia. The house was acquired by William Croscup, a shipbuilder and owner, and his wife, Hannah Amelia Shaffner, in 1845.

The room, 3.8 by 4.5 metres and 2.1 metres high, is covered with scenes painted on the plaster with diluted oil colours, charcoal and graphite. There are scenes of Trafalgar Square in London, a MicMac Indian family in Nova Scotia, a ship-launching, a Scottish-flavoured colonial wedding and a ballroom party.

Historians are not sure whether William Croscup painted the room himself or hired an itinerant artist, possibly a retired sailor, to do the work.



Croscup Room: Bride with two attendants and bagpiper (detail of east wall, to right of fireplace). Oil on plaster wall. Anonymous.

National Gallery of Canada photos



The Port of Halifax by John Poad Drake (1794-1883). Oil on canvas.

An adjacent gallery is installed with a selection of Nova Scotian art including the painting of *The Port of Halifax*, attributed to John Poad Drake (c. 1820) and portraits of *Sir Alexander Croke* and his wife, *Alice Blake* (1808) by Robert Field. Marine scenes by John O'Brien and

portraits by William Valentine are included. Prominent among the display of 20 pieces of silver are the *Intercolonial Challenge Cup* of 1862 by William Herman Newman and two recently acquired pieces, an egg cruet by Adam Ross and a cake basket by William Crawford.

CBC plans switch to FM

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) wants most of its AM radio stations broadcasting on FM by the year 2000, says a plan the corporation has filed with the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.

Ten years after that the CBC wants all its radio broadcasting to be on frequency modulation bands.

To achieve this long-term goal, some FM frequencies must be set aside for exclusive CBC use, the plan outline says.

The plan also envisages the corporation ending its affiliation with private stations, eventually providing all its radio services on stations it owns and operates.

The CBC is switching its French and English AM services to FM because of a shortage of AM channels, technical distortion — especially at night — on the crowded AM band, and to fulfil its objective of reaching every part of the country.

It notes that FM frequencies, largely immune to noise, are available and says

the clear technical superiority of FM in contrast to the declining effectiveness of AM, justifies the long-term objective of distributing all radio networks on FM.

The corporation operates four radio networks — two in English and two in French. Two already operate on stereo FM.

Author wins British award

A Canadian has won a British literary award for her first book, an epic historical novel set in mid-Victorian India.

Valery Fitzgerald of Ottawa won the \$5,700 prize, which is presented annually in memory of writer Georgette Heyer by publishers Bodley Head Limited and Corgi Books and the Heyer estate.

Mrs. Fitzgerald spent five years researching and writing the novel, which is provisionally entitled *Zemindar* and deals with a young English woman who participated in the siege of Lucknow during the Indian mutiny of 1857.