

# Dildo Interpretation centre attracts thousands

By DENISE PIKE  
The Compass

They've been arriving by bus, by car, by bicycle - there's no doubt about it, this has been a very busy summer for the Dildo and Area Interpretation Centre.

Since the beginning of June nearly 2,000 people from all over the world have toured the facility taking in the many interesting artifacts left behind by the Maritime Archaic, Dorset and Beothuk Indians who once inhabited the region.

The Centre also houses a touch tank containing various types of sea life as well as an aquarium. More of its eye-catching features include a replica of the giant squid which was caught in Dildo in 1933 and several community lifestyles exhibits on fishing, lumbering, carpentry and agriculture. A mural painted on the back wall of the Interpretation Centre depicting the historic cod hatchery which operated on Dildo

island in 1889 also provides a realistic view on how this form of traditional employment was once a thriving means of making a living.

The Dildo and Area Interpretation Centre was established in 1996 through a partnership between the Society of United Fishermen and the Dildo and Area Economic Development Association. Over the past few years there have been numerous improvements to the exterior and interior of the building with the majority of funding coming from federal and provincial initiatives. This past winter the main focus has been on developing the upper level of the building into a large multi purpose room with a stage for performances. The first production presented on the new stage "Where Your Heart Has Ever Been" was performed by the Baccalieu Players during the recent Dildo Days celebrations. Other new additions to the building include an old fashion fishermen's kitchen - with all



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**REACH OUT AND TOUCH** - Trevor and Doug Raymond of Georgetown, Ontario get a feel for some of the interesting sea life displayed in the Touch Tank at the Dildo and Area interpretation Centre. The facility also contains a variety of other interesting exhibits which describe the rich history of the region. The displays are interpreted and explained to the traveling tourists by Rowena Smith - curator at the centre. Over the past few months Ms. Smith along with assistant curator Gladys Jackson and five student workers have given guided tours to nearly 2,000 visitors.

the traditional furnishings and a craft store containing many home made items.

"This has definitely been the busiest summer we've had" said Rowena Smith, curator at the centre. "Every day's been continual and non-stop, the number of people touring the building area has been unbelievable."

Fortunately there was plenty of assistance. Funding provided by HRDC has allowed for the employment of five students and their enthusiasm for their work hasn't gone unnoticed.

"They were absolutely great

in manner," said Ms. Smith

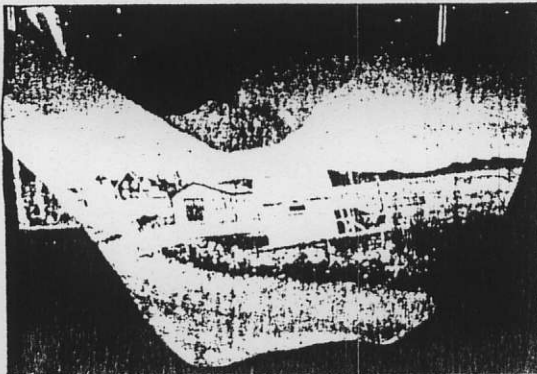
Along with giving the public guided tours, the students maintained the day to day running of the building and organized a children's activity day which included a puppet show and a mock archeological dig.

Heather Williams, one of the five students employed during the summer, says that working at the Interpretation Centre was beneficial in a number of ways.

"It was a great work experience - our communication and organizational skills were used daily. We also learned a lot

the world."

Although the end of the tourist season is approaching, the Dildo and Area Development Association is looking at ways of expanding the use of the upper level of the building. Tentative plans include open storage exhibits, plays, a dinner theater, a mat hooking demonstration and a traveling exhibit of Newfoundland old fashion furniture. The group has also contacted the art class at Crescent Collegiate in Blaketown on painting a mural of the landscape of the area (Dildo, Broad Cove, South Dildo and Old Shop). The mural will be dis-



**HAND PAINTED DEPICTION** - This hand painted rock on display