

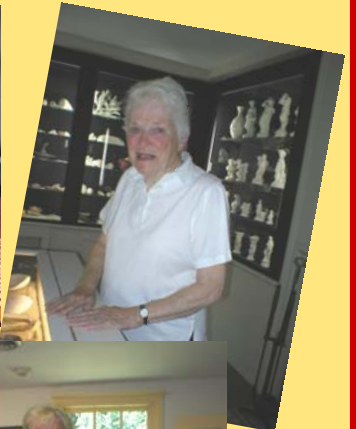
Summer 2007

The Atwood Log

The Quarterly Newsletter of The Chatham Historical Society



*The many faces of
the Chatham Historical
Society's volunteers!*



Volunteers—Annual Meeting—A.E. Crowell



From the President

A Volunteer's Year . . .

Serving as President has been a rewarding experience for two key reasons — working with the wonderful volunteers who make up the society and administering our remarkable museum facility. Our volunteers' expertise and enthusiasm is breath-taking. See the cover of the newsletter for photos of some in action. A list of their efforts follow:

The Nickerson North Beach Camp was refreshed. New photos of the break and the new wash-over are on display. A pamphlet is being published as well on the Nickerson Camp compiled by Rose Pears.

The Mishoon Display and interpretive sign is the result of a Chatham Cultural Council grant and a donation from Mary Ann Gray.

Picnic tables, a bike rack and wastebasket provide our visitors some new amenities to enjoy **our grounds**, which are cared for by the Willing Weeders, plus **the herb garden**, which is a Chatham Garden Club project. Our grounds are the site of Monday Children's Programs.

Mary Ann Fritsch has reworked artifacts in the **Maritime Gallery** with the aid of Dwight Myer and Bill Hughan. Florine Myer provided new signing for that gallery as well as the **Joseph Lincoln Room**, where Mary Ann and crew have completely rearranged the items to provide emphasis for two new items — the Plume Pen weathervane from Lincoln's CrossTrees home, plus an exhibit on *Chatham*, the movie. **The transfer china** in its impressive cabinet is visible to all.

The Durand Room was a monumental task, not only for the repainting and signing of Parian ware, Sandwich glass and Crowell birds, but the comprehensive cataloguing by Cynthia McCue and Dot Gross of the shell collection.

All this in addition to the creation of the **Special Exhibit** by Reggie Nickerson and his committee and Garry Gates Design.

The museum collection is also more visible in the community. Examples of this outreach include:

A Champlain display housed in **Town Hall** over the winter. In June, the Champlain ship model was moved downstairs and the Costumes and Textiles Committee created an exhibit featuring the Bicentennial Quilt made by Chatham women in 1976.

Reed Hertford and his committee are preparing for the upcoming **Antiques Show and Sale** to be held at the Depot Road School September 15 and 16, with 30 wonderful, antiques vendors, plus an exhibit designed by Mary Ann Fritsch to grace the entrance area near the Museum booth.

So as I turn over the baton of President, I salute the wonderful men and women I have worked with at the best museum ever, and know I will miss them very much!

— Janet Morgan Daly



The quilt display, with Donna Jordan, Eleanor Oakley and Janet Marjollet at Town Hall.



Executive Board

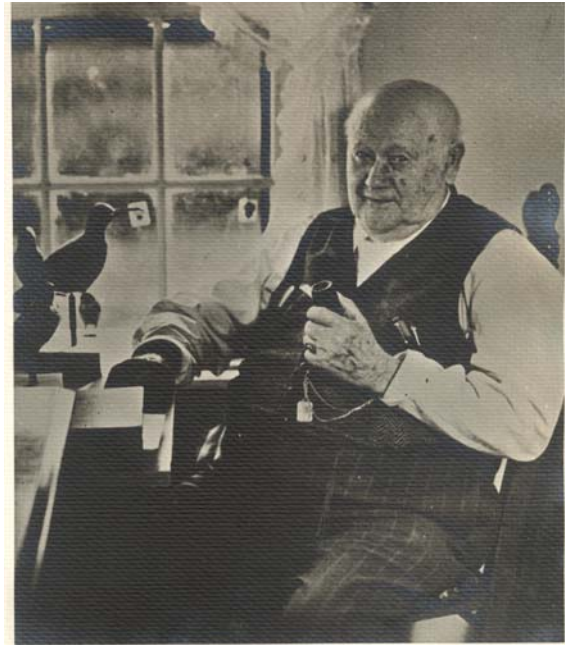
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Vice Chairman
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Janet Morgan Daly
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Nancy B. Yeaw
Andrew Young

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Costumes & Textiles
Janet Marjollet, Eleanor Oakley & Donna Jordan
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Mary Ann Fritsch
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Museum Shop
Barbara Newberry
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Dwight Myer
Special Exhibits
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Volunteers
Betsy Stevens

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Margaret L. Martin
Computer Technician
Jim Fallon
Historian
Joseph A. Nickerson, Jr.
Museum Consultant
Laurie Noble

A.E. Crowell Decoy Maker Extraordinaire



Elmer Crowell has long been hailed as a master decoy maker," says Brian Cullity in his book, *The Songless Aviary: The World of A.E. Crowell & Son*. [The Society is fortunate to have many miniature decoys donated by the Durand family, Florence Hardy Fitzhugh and Nancy Hardy Hayes.]

Anthony Elmer Crowell was born in the village of East Harwich MA on December 5, 1862. He was named Anthony for his father but was called by his middle name Elmer. The land around his home was rich in game and waterfowl thanks to the ponds and Pleasant Bay nearby, a haven for hunters and market gunners, who provided fowl for shops and restaurants.

Crowell was given his first gun when he was 12 and took to hunting like a duck to water. [Pun is intended.] His father owned property on Pleasant Lake and Elmer built a gunning stand there in 1876. Cape Cod was a key area for market gunning. Between 1865 and 1927, there were at least 44 ponds on the Cape with professional gunning stands. "The toll of wildfowl taken on these locations was staggering. Elmer Crowell reported that he thought more than 1,000 ducks had been shot on the Upper Mill Pond in Brewster in 1927 alone."

Decoys were used to bait "the fowl to establish flight patterns to a particular spot chosen by the hunters." Live birds were used primarily, but a good number of wooden decoys were also employed. As *The Songless Aviary* explains: "Gunners would often carve decoys in the evening and other times of the year just as whale men made scrimshaw

in their spare time." The book notes that Crowell preferred live decoys with a smattering of carved ones thrown in.

The wholesale slaughter of ducks and shorebirds came under scrutiny from concerned groups in the late 19th century. It was obvious to far-sighted individuals that this unchecked culling would result in the extinction of many species. Various groups eventually came together to form what we know today as The National Audubon Society.

"The Crowell touch is seen both in the design of his work and in its execution, in the carving and in the paint."
Gladys Hopkins

Massachusetts outlawed the sale of game in 1912 after a bitter struggle between the conservationists and the hunters, especially the market gunners of Cape Cod. Nationwide, the struggle continued and in 1918, the Federal Migratory Bird Act effectively ended the wholesale hunting of game birds. Shorebird hunting was completely banned except for yellowlegs, black-bellies and golden plovers. Hunting these birds was outlawed by 1928.

Dr. John Charles Phillips of Beverly and Boston, hunted in Chatham in 1898 and 1899 where he first met Crowell. Phillips bought and developed a hunting camp on Wenham Lake in Beverly and brought Cro-

well to the camp to work seasonally as a gunner for the next 10 years.

In *A Sportsman's Scrapbook*, Dr. Phillips wrote: "Elmer used to decorate the camp with mythical-looking birds, whittled out and suspended from the ceiling so that they revolved solemnly around if you blew a puff of smoke their way, and we kept a sketch-book where he contributed drawings depicting important events."

Dr. Phillips, when visiting the Cape, liked some "hastily made decoys" he saw there. "Crowell made a few better ones for the doctor's personal use. He also whittled out a small miniature bird which attracted Dr. Phillips favorable notice to the extent that he had a dozen made for his den," the scrapbook notes.

Crowell had a flair for painting as well as carving. His style was in the folk art tradition, although in later life his paintings were more naive in appearance. Most of the paintings were of hunting scenes and birds, representing actual events and were often humorous.

His carving began early in his life because he tells of making and painting miniature birds when he was 20 years old. Crowell gave up cranberry farming and started carving for a living in (*see next page*)

A.E. Crowell . . . *continued*

1912. Charles Ashley Hardy may have financed this transition to full time decoy and ornamental carver. This was also the year Crowell changed his signature from “maker” to “manu-facturer” indicating his entry into the business world.

The Crowell touch is unmistakable, says Gladys Hopkins. “It is seen both in the design of his work and in its execution, in the carving and in the paint. It is a far stronger signature than any brand, stamp or label.” Crowell touches Hopkins describes are:

1. The ability to see the natural world and have it *come* through the eyes.

2. Then there is design. The translation of the image into a pattern. It captures the bird in motion as if in a freeze-frame.

3. The carry-through. “Freeing the bird from its block of wood.”

4. Color. Crowell paints the wood in such a way to read as soft feathering.

“Examination of dated miniatures reveals the rapid transition and sophistication the carvings underwent in a few short years. Early decoys and miniatures quickly evolve from rather heavy bodied fowl to the sleek, realistically sculpted and painted birds we associate with the Crowell workshop,” notes Cullity.

Crowell’s fame as a carver spread throughout the country, noted a *Cape Cod Standard Times* article in April 1933. Henry Ford visited the East Harwich shop in 1926, as did the Rockefellers and the DuPonts.

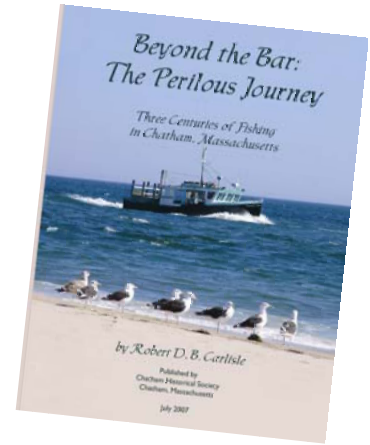
Joseph C. Lincoln, the author, was a close friend and used Elmer as the central character in a 1933 novel titled *Queer Judson* which brought Crowell additional publicity. Crowell gave a kingfisher carving to Joe Lincoln. After Lincoln’s death, it was given to Virginia Durand by Lincoln’s granddaughter,

‘Beyond the Bar: The Perilous Journey’ Special Pre-Publication Price . . . \$25!

Reaching back across three centuries, *Beyond the Bar: The Perilous Journey*, traces the growth, change, and the ever-larger challenge confronting the commercial fishing industry in Chatham on Cape Cod.

Dozens of men and women — all veteran fishermen — are trying to adjust to the new reality. Their experiences and outlooks are described on these pages.

Paperback price: \$29.95. Special pre-publication price \$25 if ordered before August 15, 2007!



MAIL ORDER FORM—CHS FISHING BOOK, P.O. BOX 381, CHATHAM MA 02633

Enclosed is my check in the amount of _____ for _____ books at special \$25 pre-publication price each, plus \$5 for postage and handling.

NAME _____ PHONE _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

and is now in the Durand Room.

Crowell’s son Cleon Stanley Crowell (1891 – 1961) joined his father in the family business. An only child, he learned about carving and painting as a young boy. A newspaper article from 1969 says he “started working at his father’s side when he was only 14 or so.” After working as a chauffeur and serving in World War I, Cleon joined Elmer full time at the workshop in 1920. His part in the business is greater than many thought.

By the late 1930s, the senior Crowell had stopped carving and his son took over as the master carver. Cleon’s late work is quite easy to identify by a pronounced bulge to the bird’s head. Despite a debilitating stroke in the late 1950s from which he finally recovered, Cleon continued carving until his death on December 30, 1961.

Recognized as one of the finest 20th century folk artists, Elmer Crowell’s decoys and miniatures are featured in Robert Bishop’s *Ameri-*

can Folk Sculpture. “Few decoy carvers have enjoyed the reputation that A. Elmer Crowell developed through the years, both as a carver of decoys and as a witty man,” Bishop notes.

Crowell noted that the ornaments as he sometimes called the miniatures were a significant aspect of the business by 1926. “I don’t get much time to make decoys nowadays, though,” he explained. “The ladies keep me too busy making the small birds for them; there is better money in them, too.”

“It can truly be said that decorative bird carving was invented in the humble workshop in East Harwich and has been the predominant influence on that art throughout the 20th century,” Cullity emphasizes.

This article is based on “The Songless Aviary: The World of A.E. Crowell & Son” by Brian Cullity, a catalog published for a loan exhibition that ran from May through December 1992 at what is now the Heritage Plantation and Museum.

Chatham Historical Society

Antiques Show and Sale
September 15 and 16, 2007
Saturday 10-5 and Sunday 12-4

30 Quality Dealers Antiques Only



\$6.00 admission

**Admission also is entrance to the Atwood House Museum
on Saturday or Sunday, September 15-16.**

Chatham Elementary School
Depot Road Chatham - Follow the signs in town

Ballou's Portraits Old House Treasures

While the Atwood House, circa 1752, is the core of the museum and a Chatham treasure, it also houses a collection of Giddings H. Ballou (1820—1886) paintings — treasures as well.



Ballou was “an itinerant painter with a difference.” Unlike many others, he was a well-educated man, self-trained and academic rather than folk or primitive in style. His father was Hosea Ballou 2nd, a Universalist clergyman, who taught his son and others at his private school for boys.

Born in Stafford CT, Ballou moved to Boston with his family, where his father was a member of Harvard’s Board of Overseers. Citing ill health, the son left Boston for Provincetown about 1841. It is possible he then traveled to Europe because in 1845 he wrote a 16-page essay, “Historical Sketch of Painting” which describes and critiques European works of art.

By 1847, Ballou was back on the Cape, living in Brewster, where he painted the Copeland family and others. In 1850, Ballou advertised his services in two Cape Cod weeklies, to paint from daguerreotypes rather than live sitters.

In 1856, he painted Chatham dentist, Joseph Atwood (1823—1897), whose portrait is in the south parlor. Other portraits in the Atwood House include one of Alzina, Joseph’s wife, plus two children — Edwina Clarence Smith and Nina Modesta Atwood.

In 1867, Ballou married Azubah Atwood Taylor, the dentist’s sister. They lived on Cross Street. Ballou died at 65. He is buried in the Atwood family plot in Chatham’s Union Cemetery.

Gift Shop Talk . . .

It’s hard to believe that the Museum Gift Shop has opened for its third season! We started the season by welcoming back many returning volunteers in addition to welcoming and training several new shop volunteers. Cynthia McCue and I have diligently and thoroughly stocked the shop shelves with many new items and books.

In honor of the season’s exhibit - “A Flight into History”- our featured balancing toy is the “Red Baron”. Several archival photos have been copied to be sold as note cards. The World War I plane models have been very popular.



The Red Baron

With the refurbishing of the Durand Room, you will find many ways in which shells are present in the shop. We have laminated cards listing names and information on shells, birds and fish of the New England coast - great to take on an adventure by yourself, or with an interested grandchild! There are shell motifs on tapestry totes, museum polos, jewelry, pewter cast paperweights and soap.

A new men’s line adds several wonderful desktop compasses, key chains and moderately priced tide clocks.

As always, our books, jewelry, shawls and beaded purses are attracting a great deal of interest.

We look forward to sharing the shop with you!!!

Barbara Newberry



Seashells Galore!

Atwood Museum WANT ADS Personnel

Wanted: Individuals who would like to assist in scanning some of the original documents in the archival collection on Tuesdays or Thursdays. Minimal computer experience is helpful, but we will be happy to train willing workers. Please contact Mary Ann Gray, our archivist, at 945-2493, Tuesday or Thursday, from 9 am to 3 pm.

Writers Wanted: Individuals who find research and writing brochures for our visitors something they would like to try. Some writing experience helpful, but coaching will be gladly given. Design your own hours. Computer access is necessary and internet capabilities greatly assist delivery of material if working at home. If interested, please contact Betsey Stevens at 508-945-2493.

Handy Person Wanted: Do you like to work around the house, are familiar with "honey do lists," then you may be able to help around the museum. Some jobs include moving shelves for a display, touching up some chipped woodwork, even weeding. Please leave your name with Margaret Martin, 508-945-2493, and a number where you can be reached during the day.

Objects Wanted

Cat Boat Model Wanted: The Fishing Gallery still needs a quality wooden ship model of a Cat Boat. Scale desired is 1-inch equals 1-foot. If you have such an object and would like to donate it to the museum, please E-mail Reggie Nickerson at the society <chathamhistoricalsociety@verizon.net> for consideration.

Antique or Vintage or Just Plain Old Items needed for sale at the Museum Booth at the society's upcoming Antiques Show and Sale to be held September 15 and 16. You may drop them off at the Museum Tuesday through Saturday 10 am to 4 pm in July and August or Monday through Friday, 9 to 1 pm in September. Please mark them for Sale at the Museum Booth. If you have any questions, please call Margaret Martin at 508-945-2493!

The Chatham Historical Society will be the preeminent repository of the archives and artifacts that relate to the historic origins of the Town of Chatham, to its cultural transformation over time, and to the lives of the people of Chatham from the Town's earliest days to the present.

Bus Trip to History October 24: Plymouth, Pilgrim Hall, Winslow House, Spooner House

Pilgrim Hall Museum in Plymouth houses an unequaled collection of Pilgrim possessions, including William Bradford's Bible, Myles Standish's sword, the great chair of William Brewster, and the earliest sampler made in America, as well as 17th century letters and documents that belonged to these early settlers.

There will be a lecture and guided tour by Peggy Baker, the director of the museum, that will include an opportunity to learn intimate details about the Pilgrims and to see some of their actual possessions.

Second on the tour is the Edward Winslow House, built by the great-grandson of the third Governor of Plymouth in 1754. Today it is the home of The Mayflower Society and is a beautiful residence furnished with a treasure trove of 18th century antiques. Our final stop is the Spooner House, built in 1749. The house remained in that family until it was bequeathed to the Plymouth Antiquities Society by James Spooner in 1954. Family furnishings were acquired and preserved during the 200 years of their residence.

Cost is \$50 per person and reservations with check are due by Friday, October 19. Lunch is not included. There are several choices of restaurants nearby. Mail reservations to CHS Trip, P.O. Box 381, Chatham, MA 02633.



Pilgrim Hall Museum

Society Benefits from Honor and Memorial Gifts Thanks to Members' Generosity

The Society's Honor and Memorial Gifts Program, initiated in 2006, is a lasting and meaningful way to mark important occasions for family members, friends and other Society members. This summer, members Nancy and Bill Koerner, who summer in Chatham each year, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Since they met when Nancy was a waitress at the Howes House here in Chatham and Bill was a guest, they had special feelings for Chatham. In lieu of presents, they suggested that friends and family donate to the Chatham Historical Society and another of their favorite charities.

Similarly, memorial gifts offer relatives and friends a dignified, thoughtful way to honor the memory of a loved one while furthering the important work of the Society and its Atwood House Museum. Recent memorial gifts were donated in the names of Fred Byrne and Walter Love.

Small booklets containing forms are available at the museum. Just call 508-945-2493 for a booklet. If you don't have a form, a note to the Chatham Historical Society, P.O. Box 381, Chatham MA 02633, with your donation, noting if it honors or remembers a friend or relative, can be sent with your check.

On receipt, the Society's gift coordinator will mail a suitable card following the instructions you provided on the form. The Society will acknowledge your gift for tax purposes and send you a new booklet of forms when needed. All gifts will be applied to the ongoing operations of the Society and its Atwood House Museum, aimed at informing and educating present and future generations about the history and culture of Chatham and its vicinity.



A Golden Wedding Anniversary

The Koerners



From the Chairman

Annual Meeting and Financial Report

Our Annual Meeting of Members will be held at 2:00 pm, Sunday, August 19, 2007, in the Forgeron Room at the Eldredge Public Library.

After a brief business meeting, principally to elect officers of the Executive Board, we will have a talk by Chatham resident and world-renowned author Bernard Cornwell, whose topic is “Sharpe Practice: Tales from 27 Years of Writing Historical Novels”.

Although he has published more than 40 novels, mostly with historical themes but also a number of suspenseful mysteries, Mr. Cornwell is best known for his Sharpe series that depict military exploits during the Napoleonic Wars. Many of his Sharpe novels have been made into films starring Sean Bean as the title character.

Refreshments will be served at the end of the meeting.

This Annual Meeting will be something of a landmark because it is the occasion for the retirement of some of our key officers, principally our Treasurer, Karl Fehrle and our President, Janet Daly. Because the meeting is open to the public, you may wish to invite friends who are not members of the Society to introduce them to it and encourage them to join.

As is customary, we present here an abbreviated balance sheet for the Society so as to keep members abreast of our income and expenses.

I hope you will be able to attend the Annual Meeting, both to hear what promises to be a most interesting talk and to meet some of the volunteers who keep your society an essential, active and vital part of Chatham. —*Spencer Grey*

The Chatham Historical Society, Inc. Financial Highlights for the Year Ended December 31, 2006

(To the nearest \$100 - Audited)

Balance Sheet

Assets	
Cash & Prepaid Expenses	\$153,300
Investments	\$1,240,300
Publications Inventory	\$29,800
Land, Bldgs. & Equipment	\$1,324,400
Total:	\$2,747,800
Liabilities and Net Assets	
Liabilities	\$6,600
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$1,717,500
Restricted Net Assets	\$1,023,700
Total:	\$2,747,800

Operating Income Statement

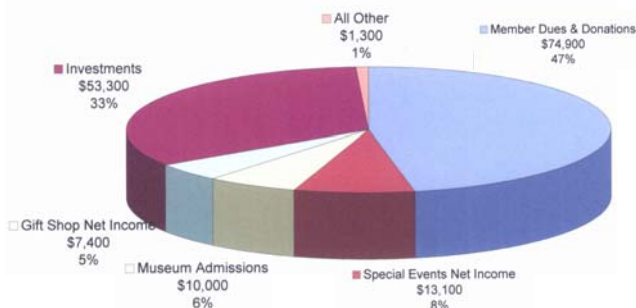
(Excludes \$887,800 in Capital Campaign & Other Restricted Gifts)

Public Support & Other Revenue	
Member Dues & Donations	\$74,900
Special Events Net Income	\$13,100
Museum Admissions	\$10,000
Gift Shop Net Income	\$7,400
Investments	\$53,300
All Other	\$1,300
Total Operating Income:	\$160,000
Expense	
Museum Operations	\$134,400
Administrative Costs	\$30,100
Fund Raising Expense	\$6,100
Total Expense:	\$170,600
Gain (Loss) on Operations:	(\$10,600)

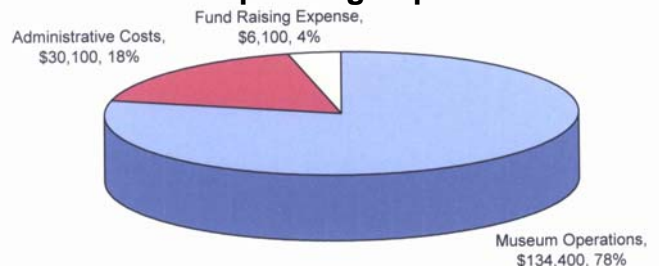
Other Key Indicators

	2005	2006
Paid Memberships	678	759
Voting Members (Family Memberships have two votes)	Not Avail.	1,459
Museum Visitors	2,045	2,615

Operating Income



Operating Expense





NON-PROFIT
US POSTAGE PAID
CHATHAM MA
PERMIT NO.11

347 Stage Harbor Road
PO Box 381
Chatham, MA 02633



NATIONAL TRUST
for HISTORIC PRESERVATION
DOZEN DISTINCTIVE
DESTINATIONS 2007

On the Web: www.chathamhistoricalsociety.org

Mark Your Calendars

Coming to The Chatham Historical Society & Atwood House Museum

Thursdays Evenings thru August 30
Open House, free tours 6 to 8 pm

Sunday, August 19, 2 pm
Annual Meeting held in the Forgeron Room of the Eldredge Public Library.
Speaker: Bernard Cornwell, author, "Sharpe Practice: Tales from 27 Years of Writing Historical Novels."
Admission free



Monday Children's Programs through August 27
9: 30 to 11 am and 1 to 2:30 pm. Call Margaret Martin for reservations. Fee \$5 per child, \$4 for siblings.

Saturday & Sunday, September 15—16
Antiques Show and Sale at the Depot Road School.
Saturday from 10 to 5 pm; Sunday from noon to 4 pm
Admission \$6, includes free admission to museum, too!



2007 SPECIAL EXHIBIT
features

Chatham and the Naval Air Station 1917-1922
Plus the Submarine Attack on Nauset Beach and the NC-4's First Trans-Atlantic Flight!
RUNS THROUGH OCT. 14

For more information, visit our website: www.chathamhistoricalsociety.org. Or call: 508.945.2493