

## GALLERY PROFILE



All the Clubs from Holyrood to Brigus #18, Harbour Main, Conception Bay (2005)



All the Clubs from Holyrood to Brigus #8, Holyrood, Conception Bay (2006)



All the Clubs from Holyrood to Brigus #39, Conception Harbour, Conception Bay (2006)



All the Clubs from Holyrood to Brigus #4, Colliers, Conception Bay (2006)



All the Clubs from Holyrood to Brigus #40, Colliers, Conception Bay (2007)



All the Clubs from Holyrood to Brigus #42, Conception Harbour, Conception Bay (2006)

For years, Scott Walden has driven Route 60 — the twisting stretch of highway between Holyrood and Brigus — entranced by the scenery, people and sense the area had experienced vast change in the past half-century.

"It seems just about every major event of the post-Confederation era affected, in particular, the Holyrood-Brigus region," Walden says. "The closure of the mines on Bell Island, the Valdmanis industries (Alfred Valdmanis was hired by Joey Smallwood to oversee the largely failed industrialization efforts), building the Trans-Canada, closing the railways, the cod moratorium — they all seem to intersect there."

Something else caught his eye: the many cavernous clubs and legion halls along the road, once bustling centres of social activity, now quieter gathering places for locals and seasonal visitors.

"You can't help but notice these clubs," Walden says. "They're not franchise clubs, many are family-run ... each one has a hand-made sign with a sort of idiosyncratic character to it. I was fascinated to look at them."

"One day we decided to stop at one,



SCOTT WALDEN  
Photographer

went in, had a beer and really just enjoyed the atmosphere within the bar."

With that drink, Walden decided he'd found the idea for his next project.

Toronto-born, New York-based Walden has made a name for himself as an academic and photographer, garnering particular notice for an ever-growing body of Newfoundland-based work. In 2001, he first exhibited *Unsettled*, a portfolio of abandoned communities, left behind during Smallwood's resettlement programs. Two years later, he published *Places Lost: In Search of Newfoundland's Resettled Communities*, a photo-text book based on the well-received exhibition.

His follow-up, *Informers* (2004), featured portraits of three Newfoundlanders who made models of resettled communities from memory. *New Industries* (2005) included photographs taken at the sites of

16 industries started during the post-Confederation industrialization program, including the Eckart Knitting Mills in Brigus, Newfoundland Tanneries in Carbonear, and Alder Chocolates in Carbonear.

Walden's connection to this province came about by "happenstance," starting 20 years ago, not long after graduating from Dalhousie with a master's degree in philosophy.

He landed his first university job as a summer fill-in at Memorial in 1988. He arrived knowing little about the province; within an hour of breathing his first lungful of the local ocean air, he was hooked. He's been back and forth ever since.

*All the Clubs from Holyrood to Brigus* is the result of a couple of years of visiting pubs and clubs, getting to know the people and the places.

During the summer of 2005, Walden made his first official visits. He would arrive at a chosen bar in the afternoon with his large-format camera and tripod, go in, explain who he was, and that he was photographing all the clubs along Route 60.

He'd ask to photograph the outside

and, "people being friendly that they are," was inevitably given permission — and a few curious looks.

"Then I'd put the gear away, go in and have a beer, and make myself less of a stranger ... then I'd go away," he says. "And come back a few days later with my handheld camera, and take pictures of details around the bar."

That kept up throughout the summer. The next year, "once I was more of a known quantity, in July and August I'd pop back out into the region. People over time became much more comfortable with me and would take me out and have me take their picture."

The result is an unpretentious and raw series of photos, capturing characters and moments in businesses that, Walden points out, may not be around much longer.

Walden says there's "sort of a twilight feel" about the bars these days — back when they were first open, in the post-war, post-Confederation years, the businesses were booming.

"A lot of folks were earning money over on Bell Island, or were working in the States and would come back and

spend money, and the fishery was going. The railway traveled through several communities and that brought people and money in ...

"And one by one, the industries went away. Then the Trans-Canada was built and that drew traffic away from the railway, then the railway closed and of course the fishery in the early '90s, and one by one, the reasons for the clubs to be there went away."

"Now they just kind of hover." Thematically, Walden says *All the Clubs* "flows very naturally" from his previous projects in this province, all based around his desire to tell stories of post-Confederation Newfoundland history photographically.

"I like to focus on issues still close enough to be fresh in people's memory — but there is some distance, so people can examine them without opening up all the old wounds."

*All the Clubs from Holyrood to Brigus* is on display at Christina Parker Gallery, St. John's, until Aug. 18.

— Stephanie Porter