



Balancing Rock

Standing on the rugged coastline of Long Island, Digby Co., overlooking the waters of St. Mary's Bay, is a natural wonder with 200-million-year-old origins. Balancing Rock is a 20-foot tall piece of columnar basalt that is perched precariously on a basalt pedestal, seemingly in defiance of gravity and the elements. Dating from the Triassic-Jurassic periods, the multi-sided columnar basalt rocks that dominate the Fundy coastline at this end of the North Mountain were formed from lava that was forced to the surface during massive shifting of the continents. Over a long time, pieces of basalt that surrounded Balancing Rock fell away (and now lie scattered around it), revealing the Rock as we see it today. It is actually attached to the ledge beneath it; apparently, boats have tried to pull the rock over with ropes (not sure why), but failed to do it (thankfully).



The best show NOT on television.



Weeknights, on Brier Island.

1-800-662-8355 www.brierisland.com

Where To Find It

From Digby, take Route 217 (Digby Neck and Islands Scenic Drive) west to East Ferry, then take the ferry across Petit Passage to Tiverton, Long Island. Make sure you have cash on you; it costs \$5.00 to take the ferry across to the island, nothing to return. From the ferry dock, it's a five minute drive to the parking lot for the Balancing Rock Trail (on your left leaving Tiverton). The trail itself is a pleasant walk through boggy woodlands, along a combination of natural, root-strewn path and boardwalk. Soon, after a slight uphill climb, you'll come to the stairs leading down to the well-constructed viewing platform; exercise caution, and try not to think about having to climb these same stairs on the way back out. I counted 237 steps (including the landings between flights of stairs), but my count was likely thrown off by one or two, by the sudden movement of a white-tailed deer mere feet away in the underbrush. Respect the signs posted on the stairs and viewing platform. To photograph Balancing Rock, get there before noon to record details in the rock, mid-afternoon and later for silhouette. The adjacent shoreline provides ample photographic opportunities, as well.



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Courthouse Hill

On a hilltop in Gore, Hants County, stand two granite markers, enclosed within a fence of white posts and rose bushes. One of the markers indicates this as the site of the East Hants Courthouse, which stood on this spot - hence the name Courthouse Hill - until it was destroyed by fire in 1954. The other marker identifies this place as a "topographically significant site", where you can view 5 counties - Pictou, Colchester, Cumberland, Kings and Hants - by stepping into each set of footprints circling the marker. If you know what you're looking for, you can see Cape Blomidon on the horizon when looking towards Kings County. To get here: go to Lower Sackville and take Beaverbank Road (Highway 354) north from Highway 1; continue past Beaverbank and Upper Rawdon. Closer to Gore, watch for the road sign indicating Courthouse Hill.





Homegrown Trivia

1. Who purchased the Novascotian, a Halifax newspaper, in 1828 and turned it into the most influential paper in NS?
2. What rising country music star hails from Pictou County?
3. German, Swiss and Monbeliard French settlers founded what town in 1753?
4. Who became leader of the Nova Scotia NDP in 1980, also becoming the first female leader of a major political party in Canada?
5. Where is the highest elevation point in Nova Scotia?

(Answers at bottom of page)

@scotianhiker.com

- Congratulations to Pamela Murray of Bridgetown, Trina Poole of Greenwood, and Andrea Drake of Halifax - 1st, 2nd and 3rd prize winners of the Scotian Hiker Photo Contest! See their photos at: www.scotianhiker.com/photocontest.htm
- Upper Gaspereau River hike happening this Saturday, June 13. Visit www.scotianhiker.com/events.htm for more information on this and other upcoming hikes available through Scotian Hiker.
- As great an event as it was, the Apple Blossom parade video currently showing on scotianhiker.com is getting a bit tired. I've been busy collecting new footage in my travels, and expect to have new video posted to the website very soon. Brier Island, Noel Shore, Mt Shubel, Balancing Rock, and more! :)

Wave goodbye to stress.



Outdoorosophy

"Thunder is good, thunder is impressive, but it is the lightning that does the work." - Mark Twain

"Rocks do not recommend the land to the tiller of the soil, but they recommend it to those who reap a harvest of another sort - the artist, the poet, the walker, the student, and lover of all primitive open-air things." - John Burroughs

Hemlocks and Hardwoods Trail, Kejimikujik National Park

This 6 km loop winds along through a mixture of young tree growth and large white pines, eventually leading to a tall stand of 300-year-old hemlock trees. Wander through them along the winding boardwalk and absorb the quiet serenity of the place. Take a few moments to consider how Nova Scotia was still being fought over between Britain and France, and Halifax hadn't even been founded when these towering trees were just saplings. *Editor's note: if you go in late Spring, the blackflies will eat you alive. Don't let them ruin it. Be sure to take insect repellent with you.*



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