ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE MERVILLE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION :

After a decade of vacancy and uncertainly, Hamilton Mack Laing’s c. 1950 historic home known as Shakesides, situated on the edge of the Comox Estuary in Mack Laing Nature Park in Comox BC, has finally been offered an opportunity to be saved and to serve a new purpose on the Merville Community Hall Grounds!

The Merville Community Association has offered to “adopt” the building on its community hall site alongside other historic buildings it has previously saved and successfully rehabilitated for relevant uses. Nickel Brothers house movers has evaluated both the existing and proposed sites, as well as the route of the relocation via water, a plan that represents the least disruptive relocation process for all communities between the two sites. Many volunteers and local companies have already put forward their names to help with the design and professional services, the donation of materials and with general labour.

WE NEED YOUR HELP! This is your chance to contribute to a happy ending for Shakesides, by donating what you can towards the site preparation at the Merville Community Association Hall. This campaign will fund the site preparation, including the excavation and pouring of a new foundation for when Shakesides arrives to its new home. We are now opening up the opportunity to the public to contribute to this community-led initiative of hope, renewal and legacy. Donate what you can here through our Go Fund Me page (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/restore-the-shakesides-house-to-merville>) , or and reach out to let us know if you are available to get involved with professional services, material donation or hands-on labour. More information will be posted on the Merville Community Association soon!

The following will be on the GoFundMe campaign:

[Fundraiser by Fiona McQuillan : Restore the Shakesides House on the Merville Hall Grounds](https://www.gofundme.com/f/restore-the-shakesides-house-to-merville)

The Shakesides Story

In 1973, just over 50 years ago, famous Comox Valley naturalist, ornithologist, artist and photographer Hamilton Mack Laing donated in trust his seaside home and property, known to the community as 'Shakesides', to the Town of Comox for the public to enjoy, as long as the land was kept in a natural state and Shakesides was turned into a natural history museum.

But the museum never happened and the house was just rented to various tenants for the next 32 years.  After the last tenant left in 2014, no upkeep occurred at Shakesides and vandalism has left it in a precarious state, with a leaking roof and boarded up windows.  Deemed an eyesore, the town council proposed to demolish Shakesides rather than convert it to a museum.

Enter the Merville Community Association which has now offered to “adopt” the building onto its community hall site, to be renovated and to sit alongside other historic buildings it has previously saved.  International house movers, Nickel Bros., has proposed relocation by barge, a plan that represents the least disruptive relocation process.

This proposed relocation and rehabilitation project is a “happy ending” story for all involved.  Saving an existing building diverts the majority of its materials from the landfill.  The new high-visibility location in Merville is very accessible and this growing collection of historic buildings stands to tell the unique history of this valley.  Shakesides would be an incredible added asset to this valuable and well-run community site and would respect the legacy of Mack Laing who envisioned his home being partially used as a museum, for environmental education and research.

Shakesides is a Canadian heritage building.  It is true that knowledge of our past helps to define us as Canadians and, in times like these, we are proud to be Canadians.

The Merville Community Association is looking for donations to help us make this exciting opportunity a reality.