

# **REPORT OF THE CAPE COD 2005 NEVIL SHUTE GATHERING**

This report deals with the activities that went into the planning and execution of the Gathering by the Event Managers, Art and Joan Cornell. It includes all the main decisions and occurrences that made up the Gathering. It is intended particularly to help the next Event Manager. There is no intent to provide details of the Gathering events.

## **Pre Event Planning**

On July 3, 2004 we were informed that we had been selected by the Nevil Shute Foundation Board to be the Event Managers of CapeCod2005. We immediately started checking on hotels in the area. We soon found out that the summer months were unsatisfactory because of costs and the large number of people here on Cape Cod. We selected on July 20 three starting dates (September 4, October 2 and October 9) and asked six potential speakers for their votes. All said yes to all three dates. We picked October 2. [As it turned out the weather was beautiful but the week of October 9 it rained every day.] We decided to start on Sunday because it was much less expensive.

We selected on July 26 the Cape Codder Resort over three other hotels because it gave us rooms that were less expensive and best from all other considerations. We decided to have a welcome reception on Sunday night, an excursion on Tuesday and a dinner on Wednesday night. We decided to let people have breakfasts on their own but to have everyone together for lunches. We would have enough food at the welcome reception to cover dinner and we would let the people be on their own for dinners on Monday and Tuesday nights.

On July 30 we received the food costs from the Cape Codder and from other estimated costs, we worked out a budget. From that budget we decided on a registration fee of \$350. We negotiated a Cape Codder contract after several meetings. We came up with a good price on food and rooms (\$115 per night including taxes; the going rate was \$189). We did not include any alcoholic beverages in the agreement. The contract was signed on August 11. A letter to all Shutists was sent out on August 16 asking them to let us know if they were certain of attending, likely to attend or maybe. By August 23 we had heard from 87: certain 47, likely 24 and maybe 16.

In that letter to all Shutists we asked for Speakers. By August 24 we had twelve who were interested. We had ten slots for speakers. One on Monday morning, two on Monday afternoon, four on Wednesday and three on Thursday. We came up with the idea of having a panel discussion and then Margo Ganster suggested dramatic readings of favorite passages of Shute's novels. We then only had eight spots to fill and that was easy. After we had the eight slated, two had to withdraw but we quickly had someone to take their place. We told all the speakers that they had one and a half hours including questions. We asked them for a brief abstract so we could schedule them and later we asked for an extended abstract for publication in the Program Book

We sought out many people to be the keynote speaker on the banquet night hoping to get a famous person to do the honors for free. We were not successful. Then John Cooper suggested a partial reading of *Vinland the Good*. I was not keen on the idea and continued searching for a keynote speaker. Then in May 2005 John pushed his idea again saying he was coming to Cape Cod and could we meet on June 8? By the end of the meeting I was keen and we agreed to do the partial reading on the banquet night and John agreed to be the producer and director after checking with his wife and their plans.

Right from the very beginning we wanted to do a bus tour of Cape Cod taking in sites mentioned in *An Old Captivity* and *Vinland the Good*. We found a good bus company that gave us a good rate and reserved three busses in case we had over 100 people. We wanted to go to Provincetown, Nauset Beach, the sand spit and Prince Cove. We talked about a box lunch at Nauset Beach, starting at the sand spit and ending at Provincetown with tea at the Pilgrim Monument, etc. Then we found Michael Shay's just outside Provincetown for lunch which settled many things. It was large enough to accommodate over 100 people. We would go to Provincetown first but we needed to kill some time at the beginning so we thought of visiting a cranberry bog that was harvesting cranberries, a tourist center featuring a Cape Cod movie or a 150 year old English Weeping Beach—Art's favorite and the most magnificent tree on Cape Cod. The first two fell through at the last minute so we settled on the Tree. The two hundred yard walk to the sand spit was decided in the last few days. But the most difficult part of planning the excursion was the floatplane flying over the sand spit just as we all arrived. In May we drove the entire trip, wrote down the times to travel each segment and then set up a time line to make sure we could cover the entire excursion in the required time.

Working up the Room Reservation Form and the Registration Form was difficult because it was different for the different countries. The forms that we sent out were very complicated and, I think, there is a better way. Maybe it is best to make out four forms, one for the USA, one for the UK, one for Australia and one for all the other countries. Ask everyone to let you know if they are interested in attending the next Gathering so you can send them Reservation and Registration information. Then you can send them the form for their country. Also, post the forms on the Foundation website.

Different gift ideas were tossed around. The cups with “My Full Name is Nevil Shute Norway” and the book marks made specifically for reading Nevil Shute novels that were given out from the UK gathering were excellent. We decided on note pads, tote bags and pens. They were less expensive when done in numbers of 100. We settled on a motto for the Gathering: “We Shall Remember Them” It is the last line of An Old Captivity and refers to Haki and Hekja. We expanded the meaning to include Nevil Shute and his novels. The tote bags had a map of Cape Cod with our motto on one side. On the other side we listed all of Shute’s books including the publication date. The note pads and pens had Nevil Shute Gathering, Cape Cod 2005 and our motto.

Writing the News Release was a big effort. We must have written at least five of them. I know of only one that was published and I don’t know of one person that attended because of any News Release. If we are going to spend much time on writing another News Release, we should find out what will trigger an editor to print it. The News Release should not be dependent on a date. Then the editors wait till one week before the event. We need to get publicity about Nevil Shute, our Gatherings and why we love his books. We need to get many more people reading them. We need to figure out how to get articles published that will accomplish these goals.

We sent out notices to everyone on the newsletter list. Then we kept records of everyone that responded. This was done to help us with the budget. It is good to set up early in the planning stage a table of names (alphabetical), e-mail addresses, telephone numbers, city/state and plans to attend.

We developed a Program Book for the Gathering. It contained a Welcome Letter, an Agenda, a short history of Cape Cod, the Excursion details, the Banquet menu along with the Shute Music played on violins and the cast of the Partial reading of Vinland the Good. Also in the Program Book is a list of Shute related Exhibits, and the schedule of film showings including a synopsis of all the films. In addition, biographies of all the speakers are given along with extended abstracts of their talks. The names of all the participants including their country and email address are given. A map was drawn up showing the location of a number of restaurants in the area. We then acknowledged about eighty people who have helped us with this event. And thank them again. The last four pages in the Book tell about people who believe that the Vikings came to Cape Cod.

A large map of Cape Cod (6 feet x 6 feet) was made so that we could show the attendees where the Cape Codder Resort was located on Cape Cod and so that we could show everyone where we would be traveling on the Excursion day. An easel was built to place the map. Since the easel and map were too large to fit in a vehicle, it was taken apart at home and put back together at the Cape Codder. A world map was purchased and an easel made so that attendees could put pins in the map to locate their home town.

We also prepared for the welcome/mixer game that we played on Welcome Night. Using the favorite books that each person had declared, we went through Shute’s books and found the names of about four characters in each book. Then we matched up a character with each attendee. We wrote the character on a name tag and put it in an envelope with the attendee’s name on the outside. The envelope had instructions that they were to bring the envelope to the Welcome Reception but they were not to open the envelope. This was all a lot of work and although it was intended to get attendees to move around so they could meet everyone, we are not so sure that it was worth it.

We asked ahead of time if spouses, friends, relatives, Cape Codders, etc., would be coming to any of the scheduled activities. We needed to know ahead of time how many people would be coming to an event so we could order enough food. From those requests we had a notebook with the names of all the extra people (not fully registered) that would be coming to each event. In that way we could collect all the money for the extra people. We gave out different types of name tags for these people when they paid.

We bought ten Australian church books from the church attended by Shute. They were having a fund raiser and we thought it would be nice to help them and give people a chance to have an Australian cook book. We also bought about sixty Paper Tiger Shute books to be sold at the Gathering. We got a good buy on them and hoped we could make a little money for the Gathering.

Prior to the event, we contacted all the paid attendees and asked for photographers to produce a photo album. Six people responded and John Anderson volunteered to be the captain.

Originally we were hoping to take video of all the speakers. But then realized that would be too difficult. We therefore just planned to video the opening addresses and Lillian's talk for our own enjoyment. Then someone asked if we would video the Play—partial reading of Vinland the Good. Hence we made plans to video those events.

The Cape Codder Resort seemed to be excellent in every facet except for the registration department. We had five major problems with them that finally got resolved but there may have been more that we do not know about. In our contract with them we agreed to pay \$1000 for the use of meeting rooms if we did not occupy at least 64 over night rooms. As it turned out, we only occupied about 50 rooms. Hence, they informed us that we would have to pay the \$1000. Because of the Registration problems, I wrote a letter to the President of the Cape Codder saying that we may have had the 64 rooms occupied if we had not had the registration problems. As a result, they rescinded the \$1000 payment.

## **Day -1 (“minus one”) – Saturday, October 1, 2005**

On this day we planned only to organize the tote bags that we were giving out by attaching the name tags and placing in them the program books, the pens, note pads, a Cape Cod cookbook, a trash bag advertising Cape Cod and bag of potato chips. We also put in the envelope that contained the name of their character for the mixer on Welcome night. They were all lined up alphabetically via the name tags ready to take to the check-in desk the next day.

## **Day 1 – Sunday, October 2, 2005**

On Sunday morning our son-in-law came to our house with two power point projectors, an overhead projector, a slide projector and a karaoke system. He had borrowed them from his work so that we would not have to rent them. Our daughter came with her vehicle and also Arne Reil. Our friends from Toronto were also here and about twelve o'clock noon we packed everything up in the five cars and drove to the Cape Codder. We had all the electronic equipment, the tote bags, the exhibits that I had, the maps and easels, our television set and DVD player, and some tools that we thought we might need.

We set up a registration/check-in desk with all the tote bags. I should have had a sign that said Nevil Shute Gathering Check-In. We told everyone to bring the envelope in the tote bag to the Welcome Reception and not to open it. We had a notebook with lists of all the people not fully registered that planned to attend the different activities. In this manner, when people arrived and paid for their activity, their names could be checked as paid.

All of the other items we took down stairs and started setting everything up. We got the TV/DVD going and checked out one of the power point projectors. All the exhibits were set up.

The first movie was supposed to be shown at 1:30 but Dan Telfair, who had the film DVDs had not arrived. Steph had a DVD of the Requiem for a Wren play that was produced in England. Steph showed that and after that was finished, a video of the Viking site in Newfoundland provided by Barbara Niven was shown. Barbara had been in Newfoundland just before arriving at the Gathering. Dan arrived at the Gathering later in the afternoon. We had not told him that we were showing movies on Sunday afternoon.

We were given a key card that allowed us to lock up the Exhibit room and the Meeting room any time that we wanted. That way we did not have to depend on the Cape Codder personnel to open and lock the rooms. We did however have to make sure that the person opening the rooms in the morning had the key card.

At 6:00 p.m. the Welcome Reception began. We checked everyone entering to make sure that they had their name tags and envelopes. Some people, who were not fully registered, paid their fee at the door. All fully registered participants had an envelope. The registration people opened the envelope and put the name of the character on their back. The participant was told that they had to find out who their character was. They could ask questions with a yes or no answer only. They could ask one question only of each person. They were told that the purpose of the game was to mix up everyone. It turned out to be successful because we had to interrupt everyone to tell them that there was food and drink available. Later Gail Shoemaker and Lillian Ruiz played some Shute music. Art welcomed everyone and told them there was more champagne available but they were not to push and shove because this was not an Ernest Hemingway convention.

## **Day 2 – Monday, October 3, 2005**

The first thing we did was set up the sales table and also had someone to check for name tags. We brought the Tiger Paper books and the Australian cookbooks and had signs saying how much they cost. We also brought the small rune stones that were given out during Art's talk. We brought the extra pens, tote bags and program books that were available for sale.

Besides the opening remarks by Art and Dan, there were three speakers. The talks went smoothly; the Breaks and lunch were excellent. Movies were shown on a 27 inch TV. It seemed to be large enough and I heard no complaints.

We had the feeling there was more than enough food at the Breaks. We could have cut down and saved some money.

Because of collecting money from extra people attending events and from the sale of books, etc., Joan went to the bank at noon and made a deposit. That, of course, prevented us from having too much cash lying around.

## **Day 3 – Tuesday, October 4, 2005**

This was the Excursion day. We traveled on two busses. Everything was timed ahead of time to make sure that we could accomplish what was planned. The first stop was at a huge English weeping beach—the most magnificent tree on Cape Cod. It had nothing to do with Nevil Shute but we needed something to take up a little time so that, after our tour of Provincetown, it would be time for lunch. There were two other possibilities instead of the weeping beach but they both fell through. One was to go to a visitor's center and see a movie about Cape Cod but it turned out that the movie would not be ready until November. The other possibility was to see the harvesting of cranberries. They flood a cranberry bog and the berries rise to the surface where they gather them in. It is impressive to see but the harvest did not take place till a week later.

Everything worked out in Provincetown but when we went to lunch the waiters took more time than we expected. We were about one half hour behind schedule. I told the drivers, and after they talked to their supervisor they said we could extend the trip by one half hour but it would cost us \$100. It turned out that because the air conditioning on one of the busses failed during the afternoon, they forgot about the \$100.

We had to hurry everyone at every stop in order to stay on schedule but it was all good natured so that everyone had a good time and we stayed on schedule from then on.

At Nauset Beach some people went down to the water while some of the English people stayed on top looking to see if they could see their house. The cliff and long sandy beach that extended as far as the eye could see was as Shute described in [An Old Captivity](#).

At the sand spit where Shute wrote about the Vikings sailing in from Nantucket Sound into Cotuit Bay, a seaplane flew over as we were standing there. Joan was on her cell phone informing the tea people at our house about when we would arrive but everyone thought she was coordinating the seaplane's arrival. There was also a black dog on the beach and the Shutists thought that we had something to do with that also.

The tea with cherry cake held in our back garden was a fitting end of the day. We had wanted to do something like that ever since we heard Richard's talk in Portsmouth about three Shute books that referred to cherry cake.

The last of the movies were shown that evening.

## **Day 4 – Wednesday, October 5, 2005**

There were three speakers and the panel discussion on Wednesday and, as usual, two tea breaks. Since we were having the banquet that evening, we did not need much food at the afternoon break.

At the banquet there was plenty of food and wine. We heard no complaints about there not being any beer. After dinner we were entertained with Shute music and then the Play. One of the microphones quit working so that was a problem particularly for some of us that are hard of hearing but we knew what the Play was about so that was not a big problem.

## Day 5 – Thursday, October 6, 2005

The day started with the dramatic readings, and then we had two speakers followed by the closing remarks. There were plenty of tissues for the dramatic readers and it was a good thing because they were needed. When Shoshana spoke, she needed something to stand on and we had the establishment put together a small stand. It worked out fine provided she did not step back, which she did not.

### Overall Gathering Observations

It was a fantastic Gathering. The objectives were to get Shutists together, have fun, give speeches, have some different events, have good food, meet new Shutists, renew old acquaintances, and see a different part of the world that Shute wrote about. All the objectives were met.

My highlight (Art) was having my two daughters attend and my granddaughter, Lillian, attend, and give a talk. But I had many highlights. All the planning efforts paid off. Everything went smoothly. Although some of the people, I think, did not care for the mixer on Welcome night, it served its purpose and helped move people around. With 64 other people attending I did not spend enough time with each one. I always feel badly about that and wish I could go visit each one or have them come visit us and spend some close time together. Steph came and visited with us for four days after the conference and I cherish that time we spent together.

I engraved small rune stones for everyone that was in attendance on Monday morning at my opening address. They were engraved similar to the stone engraved in *An Old Captivity* and they seemed to be a hit. I hope everyone keeps them visible on their desk, etc., so that **We Shall Remember Them**. My address at the beginning went as I hoped with many laughs, although I would have preferred to say fewer ahs, ahs. My emotions ran away during my dramatic reading of *Chequer Board* but I am happy at this part of my life to only have a book to cry over. It reminds me of when my daughter in high school was reading a book and I came up complaining vociferously about something. She looked up and the tears were streaming down her face. She said, "I just finished *Of Mice and Men* and you spoiled the whole thing."

Having a young person speak, the panel discussion, the dramatic readings and the Play were all new events at the Gathering. Each of those events integrated more people into an active role in the affair. They added tremendously to the conference and I suggest that we dream up new ideas for events at the next Gathering that incorporate many people.

## Post Event Activities

Soon after the Gathering I wrote the following letter to Heather Mayfield:

Dear Heather,

The 2005 Gathering is over and it was a fantastic success. Everyone had a great time; we had perfect weather, great food, wonderful people and outstanding presentations.

There were 65 fully registered participants. On Welcome night we had 80 attendees. On the Excursion we had 70 people and at the dinner we had 81.

My granddaughter, Lillian Ruiz, age 16, gave a talk -- Kids Reading Shute. She told about some schools have an Accelerated Reader program. They have a library with many books. Some schools have On the Beach and A Town Like Alice. She said that the kids read the books and then take a test on how well they absorbed the information. She gave the test to one person and he got all the answers. And the questions were not easy.

Lillian said that we need to get younger people reading Shute because otherwise our organization will die out. She suggested that we get our grandchildren to read the books. From her talk I have an idea for the Nevil Shute website. I will develop it soon; look for it.

My opening address told about where the Vikings came and where the seaplane flew. I had a very large map of Cape Cod and pointed out the places. I then showed how we would visit all those places on the Excursion.

When we arrived at the sandy spit where the Vikings entered an inland bay from the ocean and where the seaplane flew over, an actual seaplane flew over the area. It was all by accident but everyone thought we had planned it.

We had our afternoon tea in our backyard garden. It is beautiful now with much color and completely surrounded by trees. Everyone thought it topped off a perfect day.

The dinner was excellent and afterwards Lillian and Gail Shoemaker, the wife of one of the participants, played a fifteen minute violin concert of music that was mentioned in your father's books. Then we had a partial reading of Vinland the Good that was superb.

Three people participated in a panel discussion of Shute and his works. It was spirited but would have been even better if Richard could have attended.

Ten of us read our favorite passage from our favorite book. When I read mine, I got so choked up that I could hardly go on. But I was determined and said so. Many were crying along with me. I read about Jackie Turner in Chequer Board where he knows he is going to die soon and talks about Buddhism and how if you have not been such a good person you may come back as a dog or horse. Then he says to his wife that if she sees a dog about six months from now and it answers to the name of Jackie, give it a nice bone. And she asks if she should also give it some beer in its bowl. After our readings, there was no doubt about why we love those stories.

It was a shame you could not attend. I know your father would have been proud and flabbergasted to see it all.

Love, Art

Before the Gathering we asked attendees to take pictures and develop a photo album. About six of them responded, pooled their photos and elected John Anderson to collect and put it all together and then have Joost Meulenbroek print it. We asked Joost to print 72 copies. He sent 12 to John Anderson and 8 to Barbara Niven. He kept one, sent one to David Weir and sent the rest to us. John sent a copy to each of the UK attendees and four to the UK Shute library. Barbara sent one to each of the Australian attendees, one to Richard and four to the Australian Shute library. I sent one to each of the USA attendees, one to Heather Mayfield and one to each of our helpers. Couples would only get one. The Photo Albums turned out beautifully and I am sure that everyone is enjoying their copy. However, I now wish that I had asked for a close-up of all the attendees. Even with my familiarity through correspondence with all the participants, I cannot picture in my mind everyone attending. I suggest that the photo album at the next gathering have portraits of all participants.

Besides the photo album, we developed a DVD from the video that we took during the Gathering. Originally I was hoping to take video of all the speakers. But then realized that would be an horrendous task. I therefore asked my daughter to just video the opening addresses and Lillian's talk for our own enjoyment. Then someone asked if I would video the Play. I did that along with Lillian and Gail Shoemaker playing the Shute music at the banquet and recitation of Art's Folly. I would have liked to edit it but that would have cost too much money. I therefore decided to put all three hours on a DVD and make 72 copies for attendees and helpers.

We have previously thanked Dan Telfair and Steph Gallagher for their constant help during the planning of the Gathering. But we must do it again. Many times I asked for their advice when getting ready to make a decision. And they were always there to help with their experience. I particularly appreciate Dan's confidence in giving us free rein. He always said, "This is my opinion but you are free to make your own decision." With that understood we worked harder to achieve a successful gathering. If anything went wrong, we had no one to blame but ourselves. Few things went wrong and we feel wonderful with the result.

## BUDGET AND FINAL ACCOUNTING

The initial budget was calculated assuming 100 participants. From that we calculated the fee (\$350) we would need from each participant. An extra amount was added in case we had extra unknown expenses and if we got many less attendees than 100.

The budgeted expenses, assuming the actual number of attendees, and the actual expenses are given in the table below. As you can see, we were very close in our budgeting except that we did not budget for the DVDs or the Play.

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<u>Item</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Cape Codder	\$13790	\$14918
Bus	1387	1400
Lunch & Tea	2117	1590
Program Books	1040	1017
Gifts	666	661
Other	910	337
	<u>\$19910</u>	<u>\$19923</u>
DVDs		505
Play		<u>374</u>
Total Expenses		\$20802

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The Cape Codder actual expenses included the cost of wine and Champaign punch. They were not in the original budget. The gifts expenses would have been more but the note pads were donated by Joe Accrocco. Other expenses were budgeted to include the rental of electronic equipment for the presentations and a TV and DVD for showing the movies. It was fortunate that our son-in-law was able to borrow two power point projectors and a slide projector from work at no cost and we brought our TV and DVD player.

The Grant Total Expenses were \$27,275.78 but they include the expenses for the Paper Tiger books that we sold, the expenses to Gary Hamilton for the books that he brought for us to sell, and the money that we returned to the Nevil Shute Foundation. The money that we returned to the Foundation was \$5301.29 but they gave us an advance of \$1000 so that \$4301.29 was our profit. Part of this profit came from the sale of books, pens, tote bags, stones and some small model planes that were donated. We are donating the entire profit to the Foundation. The Final Accounting is shown on the next page.

## ***FINAL ACCOUNTING***

### **INCOME**

Fully registered participants 65 @ \$350	\$22750.00
Income from extra people attending the Welcome Reception, Excursion, Lunches, Dinner and Literary Sessions	1617.00
Income from sale of books, pens, tote bags, stones and planes	1815.00
Donation	23.00
Foundation Advance	1000.00
Bank Interest	70.78

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**Total Income** **\$27275.78**

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### **EXPENSES**

Cape Codder Resort	\$14918.99
Tote bags	500.00
Bus including tips	1400.00
Office supplies	55.83
Garden tea expenses	232.61
Lunch at Michael Shay's	1356.71
Gary Hamilton for his books that were sold	97.50
Play expenses	373.91
Paper Tiger	1075.00
Pens	104.00
Bank fees	39.00
Program Books	1016.75
Photo albums (Joost has donated the binding, printing and mailing)	-0-
DVDs	504.80
Stones	31.97
Postage	242.70
Potato Chips	24.72
Nevil Shute Norway Foundation (\$1000 was the advance)	5301.29

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**Total Expenses** **\$27275.78**