

What is this?



During 1995 and 1996, a travelling tour made its way through the province of Nova Scotia, Canada. The theme of the tour, entitled, “*What’s It?*” was of unique or unidentifiable objects. Following the tour, in 1997, one artifact was donated to the Yarmouth County Museum by a Yarmouth County man. However, the purpose of this artifact remained a mystery until 1999. The mystery artifact consists of a lantern-shaped body that is attached to an oval base. At the top of the body is a contoured plate that rotates with the turning of two levers. The position of the plate can be adjusted according to an individual’s height.

Despite the fact that the artifact was positively identified in 1999 by a man from Pennsylvania, it remains to this day the Yarmouth County Museum’s most interactive “mystery artifact”, and visitors often enjoy providing suggestions regarding its identity and function. It is thought by some to be a meat grinder, a massaging tool, a seat for a small animal and even a primitive mammogram machine. During its time on display at the museum, this curious artifact has only been positively identified twice.

We know what it is. Do you?

This device is called the Kolon Motor and was patented and used during the 1930s and 1940s. The base of the device would have been mounted on a bathroom wall with the base in a vertical position. The contoured plate was then placed against an individual’s abdomen, and upon turning the side levers, the plate would rotate, massaging the area. The plate of the Kolon Motor is similar to the shape of one’s colon, and its sole purpose is to relieve or prevent constipation by placing pressure on one’s colon. The pressure initiates relief.

This mechanical laxative, although it was found at a yard sale, has become a prominent point of interest for all who see it. This device is a fine example of the advances in modern technology and demonstrates the creativity of the individuals who invented it.