



ANNUAL REPORT

2023



MUSÉE
LAC-BROME
MUSEUM



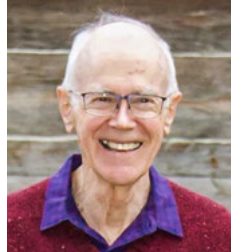
The Lac-Brome Museum recognizes with respect that it is located on the ancestral territory of the W8banaki (Abenaki) Nation.



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A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



2023 has been an excellent year in every way for the Brome County Historical Society, and the best on record!

We finish the year with our finances in excellent shape, a far cry from a few years ago when we were living from hand to mouth, always worrying whether we would be able to pay our staff the following month.

In the fall of 2022, we recruited Denis Piquette as our new Executive Director. We were fortunate in our choice, as he has brought a solid business focus to the Museum. His responsibilities include managing our staff, fundraising, developing our expansion plans, developing our marketing strategy, expanding our visitor traffic and membership, and developing our digital capabilities.

He has proven himself to be an excellent spokesperson and advocate for the Museum and has developed strong relationships with local organizations including the Pettes Memorial Library and the Théâtre Lac-Brome as well as the Town of Brome Lake council and administration.

The Museum staff reporting to Denis are the Executive Assistant, Lisa Belanger; Managing Director, Arlene Royea; Curator, Rachel Lambie; and our students Elizabeth Osborne O'Donnell, Megan Roman, and high school graduates Dannica Davies and Justin Angel Morin. Denis has also hired an Assistant Curator, Hannah Osborne O'Donnell, who will start in early 2024. Also reporting to Denis from our archives centre includes Anne-Marie Charuest, our archivist and Marc-André Lussier, an archives technician who joined in early 2023.

As an accredited museum, we have been able to offer solid, significant, and important exhibitions, exhibits and services. These activities support our aim to research, exhibit and interpret items of historical interest to Brome County.

For the first part of the year, we had on display the temporary exhibition, "Present and Past: the W8banaki Presence in Brome County". This was the Museum's first Indigenous exhibition and was developed by our curator, Rachel Lambie, in collaboration with the Musée des Abénakis. The exhibit merged artefacts from the collections of both museums with work by renowned Abénaki artist Christine Sioui-Wawanoloath. The mix of historic artifacts and contemporary work served to remind everyone that the exhibition was not just history, but part of a living community of today.

Our second temporary exhibition proved to be another outstanding success. “Through the Eyes of Children: Finding Home in Brome County”, produced by the Lac-Brome Museum, presents the history of the British Home Children and the lasting impact of the program in our area. It was opened on May 20th, 2023, by Chloe Adams, the British Consul General in Canada.

The history of the British Home Children was one of mass immigration, with support from different organizations, including Barnardo’s and some church charities. It ran from 1869-1936, sending over 100,000 children from the United Kingdom to Canada as hired labourers, as well as to Australia and Rhodesia (today Zimbabwe). The Museum had tremendous local support including that of Richard and Susan Burcombe, our town’s mayor, and his wife. Both of them are the descendants of Home Children. Only a few hundred metres from the Museum is one of the distributing homes for the children sent from the United Kingdom. The exhibition represents an important part of local history which has touched nearly every person in the area in one way or another.

As a result of this exhibition the Museum is now actively exploring the creation of a register of home children who settled in Quebec in collaboration with Home Child Canada. There are similar registers in existence in other parts of Canada, but none in Quebec.

The Museum is finally recovering from the devastating impact of the pandemic which saw continued expenses with no off-setting revenue. Visitor volume now surpasses pre-pandemic levels. Additional income comes from the archives research fees, gift shop and the sale of books on the history of the area.

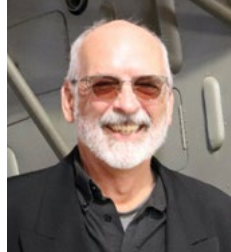
We have re-launched the always popular Jimmy Manson lectures which were stopped during the pandemic. Prof. Manson is a local historian who has given lectures on local history for several years. 2023 saw him present a series entitled “Heartbreak and Hope: An Intimate Examination of the Lives of Selected Townshippers During the Last Half of the 19th Century”. In the new year, he will give a new set of lectures on the history of Brome County.

Our members, of course, are vital to the Museum. They provide vital voluntary support and are the key source of donations. Through 2023, we have, with their support, been able to offer more in-person events, which had been sorely missed by all during the pandemic, including: the Summer Gala, the Bring and Bid, the Bake Sale, and the Christmas Cinq à Sept. These events each have attracted 50 to 100 attendees and help bring in a significant source of revenue. The Bake Sale supports the two annual scholarships that we award to local students in their year of graduation from high school.

Now we look forward to an exciting 2024.

ALAN EASTLEY
President

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



INTRODUCTION

Wow, as I look at the snow covering the museum's beautiful lawn this morning, I cannot believe that it has already been 13 months since I accepted this position. There's nothing like learning and doing something totally different to keep oneself young at heart. But that is not the only reason why I feel great!

I am surrounded by a great team. Whether we are planning for a new event, preparing for meetings, or compiling reports, our staff, the Board and volunteers are passionate about what they do. They are experts in their fields. They encourage their families and friends to get involved and to help our cause. Who wouldn't want to come to work every day with a team like this!

There are also many great people in our community. Since my arrival last fall, I have met over 150 new faces: from BCHS members and Board Directors to municipal officials and staff, summer students, museum visitors and dozens of suppliers. I am overwhelmed by their collective appreciation of our museum and its role in Lac-Brome, and for their recognition and unwavering support.

The future for BCHS looks great, and we have great ambitions to 'take the museum to the next level'. So, stay tuned for campaign and project announcements early in the New Year.

WHAT WERE WE TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH IN 2023?

Our primary objective in 2023 was to rebuild museum attendance, following 2 years of closures and restricted access during the pandemic. To achieve this, we increased all communication and media activities, including aggressive social media, paid-media campaigns and more media contact by the Archivist, Curator and Executive Director, leading to editorial content and frequent interviews. To build greater museum interest, we planned to launch a new temporary exhibit (British Home Children) that would 'touch the hearts' of visitors.

Our second objective was to initiate a number of key projects that were funded by PAFIM and other grants received in 2022/2023, including the hiring of an Executive Director, rebooting our collections management initiatives and securing climate-controlled offsite space for artefact treatment, processing and storage.

Our third key objective was to prepare for our next phase in museum development, based on a developmental framework outlined in a feasibility study that we had commissioned in 2021; including strategic analysis, determining what recommendations from the study that we would move forward with, budgeting and planning for required resources. The intent was to be ready to launch a capital funding campaign for museum expansion/renovations in 2024.

In the next few pages, you will discover the Lac-Brome Museum's key accomplishments and achievements in 2023. These accomplishments are in line with the overall vision and strategic goals we set out for 2020-2024.

ENTERING 2024 IN A STRONG FINANCIAL POSITION

The financial aid from our funding partners has been nothing short of spectacular! In January 2023, we had announced that BCHS had just received a multi-year 'PAFIM' grant, totaling \$512,320, from Quebec Ministry of Culture and Communications. Shortly after that we received archival grants from both BAnQ and Heritage Canada, followed by the town of Lac-Brome's annual contribution of \$50,000.

In addition, we received several grants for equipment purchases. Meanwhile 'in-house', our earned revenues from museum operations have increased by 25% this year, plus many BCHS members have made significant donations through fundraising events like Adopt an Artefact and private donations.

A SOLID, EXPERIENCED TEAM THAT CONTINUES TO GROW

In addition to my appointment, we were fortunate to have 4 students working with us this summer. Elizabeth Osborne O'Donnell and Megan Roman were hired through Young Canada Works to work with our collections. Elizabeth worked as our exhibition researcher for the 2024-2025 temporary exhibition on Brome County's street names. Megan catalogued over 300 artefacts located in the Museum's General Store, as part of our collections management initiative. Her work and the work of previous summer students working on collections projects, have guaranteed that we have the most up-to-date information on our collection. Museum visitors were also greeted by Dannica Davies and Justin Angel Morin, two recent high school graduates who were working at the Museum's reception during the weekends. Their enthusiasm, hard work and bright smiles were a welcome addition to our team this year!

We were equally fortunate to recruit several new volunteers, including 2 former museum curators who will assist with our collections management, a translator and several new faces to help with our events. And lastly, we plan to hire a new assistant curator early in 2024, with interviewing of candidates having already begun.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2024/2025

The key objectives that we focused on for 2023 will continue to drive our activities in 2024 and 2025. Although Museum traffic grew dramatically in 2023, the number of visitors represent a small percentage of the population in the Eastern Townships and Brome County. There remains tremendous potential, so we will create programs to further build our visitor base. We also want to upgrade visitor experiences at the Museum, so that they will

be motivated to come back, as well as inviting their friends and families. The upgrades may include signage and navigation tools, more interactive displays, new exhibits and a reduction in the number of artefacts displayed in certain exhibits.

Achieving our Museum mission also means having to accelerate our preservation and collections management projects. It is important that we continue to increase the percentage of the collection that is treated, catalogued and inventoried. We have recently secured climate/temperature-controlled offsite storage space that is located within 200m of the museum, which we have also equipped with a workstation and Internet access. Plus, the addition of an assistant curator to our team of qualified volunteers will enable BCHS to treat/catalog more objects than in previous years.

Upon review of these priorities, we realized that the Museum expansion/renovation project is a 'must do' – to be initiated in 2024. From the need to improve visitor experiences, to storage and gallery requirements, we require additional space to accommodate these needs. And, museum industry standards for heating/air conditioning and humidity cannot be met until our historic buildings have been updated and renovated. Our goal for 2024 is therefore to finalize our requirements, develop approvable building/architectural concepts and launch a capital fundraising campaign to finance the projects.

DENIS PIQUETTE
Executive Director





A YEAR IN NUMBERS

\$222,347

raised from private
donations and
earned revenues



575

members



567

student visitors



300

museum artefacts photographed and catalogued



341

free admissions to special events



2

scholarships awarded
to high school students



Photo right

Photograph of the
bottle basket taken
during the cata-
loguing project of
Megan Roman this
summer.



74-79a

HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR 2023 STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION

The Lac-Brome Museum's aim is to acquire, preserve, research, exhibit, interpret, and publish items of historical interest encompassing all of the historic Brome County and its sites. With this intent, the Lac-Brome Museum provides the infrastructure and programmes to deliver the learning experiences needed to educate present and future generations about the life and culture of prior generations.

VISION 2020-2024

The Brome County Historical Society will be recognized throughout Quebec as a pre-eminent leader among museums and archives in the Eastern Townships, by offering an engaging gallery experience and the best available digital content, in order to make it a cultural anchor for its local community and an attractive destination for visitors and researchers.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS (KSFS)

Financial Stability

- Increase of the boutique's annual revenue
- Increase in private donations
- Increase in annual ticket sales
- Publication of an exhibit catalogue
- Put into practice financial programs for our staff, representing full or partial financial support of staff positions for a period of 3 years

Gallery & Campus Experience

- Produce 1 new temporary exhibition per year
- Implement landscaping improvements throughout the Museum campus
- Implement short-term improvements to enhance the visitor experience, during our pre-capital campaign period (2-3 years)
- Implement improvements to existing galleries
- Planning and preparatory work for the development and implementation of a major fundraising campaign for the renovation and expansion of the Museum

Visitor Growth & Community Engagement

- Increase visitor programming and engagement
- Increase children's programming and engagement
- Increase programming for and engagement of elementary and high school students
- Increase presence and engagement of francophone audiences (young families and couples in the MTL-Sherbrooke corridor)
- Develop partnerships with local/regional museums, community historical associations, tourism groups, theaters and QAHN/RPAQ

Digital Accessibility

- Content development and creation of an ephemeral studio space (pop-up)
- Create virtual tours/spaces for all existing exhibition areas, as well as a virtual tour for each temporary exhibition
- Increase our presence on social media by 20% annually
- Update the Lac-Brome Museum's website
- Increase the presence of collections digitally with Skinsoft software

Increase conservation, collections management and cataloguing

- Increase storage capacity for the Museum's collections, both on-site and in temporary off-site storage spaces
- Purchase and use of museum-quality conservation materials
- Humidity and temperature control
- Conservation laboratory/specialized workspace
- Collections cataloguing and preservation

GALLERY AND CAMPUS EXPERIENCE

ONGOING COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

This year, summer student Megan Roman worked on cataloguing the collection in the General Store. The General Store collection has a wide variety of artefacts on display, ranging from turn of the century baby bottles to fine bone china and enamel kitchen ware. Megan took Museum-quality photographs of each of the 300 artefacts she was entering into our online database and cross-referenced the catalogue numbers with the entries in our accession logs. Her work, and the work of previous summer students working on collections projects, have guaranteed that we have the most up-to-date information on our collection.

In addition to the cataloguing work done by Megan, we have now identified which artefacts from the 2nd floor in the Martin Annex will be placed in storage.

Photo top

2023.4.1 WWI nurse's cape pictured on display at the Massey-Vanier High School Remembrance Day event.



ACCESSIONS

In 2023, we welcomed 8 new artefacts into our collections.

2023.1.1

Wigwam print

Gift of Wendy Conn

2023.2.1

Talbot family doll

Gift of Linda McNeil

2023.2.2

School bell

Gift of Linda McNeil

2023.3.1

Military medals

Gift of Linda Ingalls

2023.4.1

World War I nurse's cape

Gift of Jack Walker

2023.5.1

Airplane viewfinder

Gift of Bruce Mackenzie

2023.6.1

Pagé family baptismal trousseau

Gift of Louise Pagé

2023.6.2

Singer sewing machine

Gift of Louise Pagé

DEACCESSIONS

This year, we deaccessioned 5 museum artefacts as they presented either a danger to visitors or to other parts of the collection.

93.3 Linseed Oil

69-05 (2) Asbestos Kindlers

0000.2986 Rod Varnish

0000.2985 Rod Varnish

1572 Tar acid



BUILDING UPGRADES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Notable building improvements this year included the installation of energy-efficient LED lighting (no UV emissions) in the Martin Annex and Academy buildings, masonry work for the Tibbits Hill Schoolhouse, chimney repairs in the Courthouse, new window blinds and an electric furnace in the Old Courthouse, plus upgrades to our IT and Internet systems. Early 2024 projects will include conversion of the Courthouse furnace to an electrical system and exterior repainting for all buildings.

In addition, this August, we secured offsite storage space in a recently renovated building less than 200m from the museum. This is a major step taken towards ensuring our collections are safely stored in the long-term!

SMALL COST, BIG IMPACT FOR HUMIDITY CONTROL

This year, we purchased silica gel beads which will be installed discretely in each of the museum showcases. This small investment will go a long way to ensuring our invaluable collections on display remain at proper humidity levels throughout the seasons.

KÉROUL CERTIFICATION RENEWED

In 2023, the museum was once again certified by Kéroul. This recertification is an important step towards inclusion as it remains a strategic priority for our museum to become more accessible to people with disabilities and reduced mobility.



MUSEUM
BOUTIQUE



Our museum boutique was booming this year! We started the year with plans for a hefty increase for the boutique (including sale of books and our own publications) from roughly \$11,000 to \$15,000. While this was a 'stretch' objective, the Boutique Committee members rose to the task, surpassing the optimistic objective by the end of November!

In total, we had \$6,861.82 in sales from our publications and books and the boutique items brought in \$9,609.26.

To keep up this momentum, we already have lots of new boutique items planned to arrive in for the Spring, including lots of mugs, placemats, bowls and decorative

items. We have also received new books which have just been published, including Cowansville Au Fil du Temps, in which 5 copies were donated, and a book on the village of Warden on consignment. Stay tuned for their arrival next spring!



TEMPORARY EXHIBIT

ABÉNAKIS
BRIDGED THE GAP BETWEEN PAST AND PRESENT

May 2022 to April 2023

Present and Past: The W8banaki Presence in Brome County was produced in-house in collaboration with the Musée des Abénakis. It merged pieces from the collections of both Museums with art pieces by Christine Sioui-Wawanoloath, a renowned Abénaki artist. By placing historic artifacts alongside vibrant contemporary installations, visitors were reminded that this is not solely a piece of history long-gone but a living community of today.

As the Lac-Brome Museum is located on the traditional territory of the W8banaki Nation, we wanted to highlight the influence of these Indigenous communities as they were and are. Some of the artefacts on display from the Lac-Brome Museum's collection date are some of the first pieces donated to the Museum, while others are not distinctly local but are representative of the types of objects that would have been used, such as the canoe.

The installation of this exhibition would not have been possible without the incredible generosity of our donors and sponsors, including: Quebec's Ministry of Culture and Communications, the Town of Brome Lake, and BMO Bank of Montreal.

As part of our digital accessibility goal, the Present and Past temporary exhibition is available for viewing virtually:
<https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=jHWQgyHAHjp>





Informational text on the left wall, likely describing the exhibit.

Informational card on the table.

Informational card on the table.

Informational card on the table.

TEMPORARY EXHIBIT

BRITISH HOME CHILDREN 'CONNECTED' WITH VISITORS AND STAKEHOLDERS

April 2023 to March 2024

Through the eyes of Children: finding Home in Brome County details the story of the British Home Children and the Knowlton Distributing Home, through personal testimonies from their descendants. The Knowlton Distributing Home welcomed almost 5000 children to Canada until it closed in 1915, with many (though not all) being settled in Brome County. This important part of our local history has touched nearly every person in the area in one way or another, either as a descendant of a Home Child or as a host family.

We also leveraged the exhibition with an outreach campaign to collect more stories, staging a Home Child play, featuring movies, documentaries and a conference led by a documentary producer. The British Consulate opened our museum exhibit and we were even invited to participate at an awareness-building open house in Ottawa with Members of Parliament.

The installation of this exhibition would not have been possible without the incredible generosity of our donors and sponsors including: Quebec's Ministry of Culture and Communications, the Town of Brome Lake, alongside private donors.



Photo top left

The exhibition *Through the eyes of Children: Finding Home in Brome County*, which was open in 2023-2024.

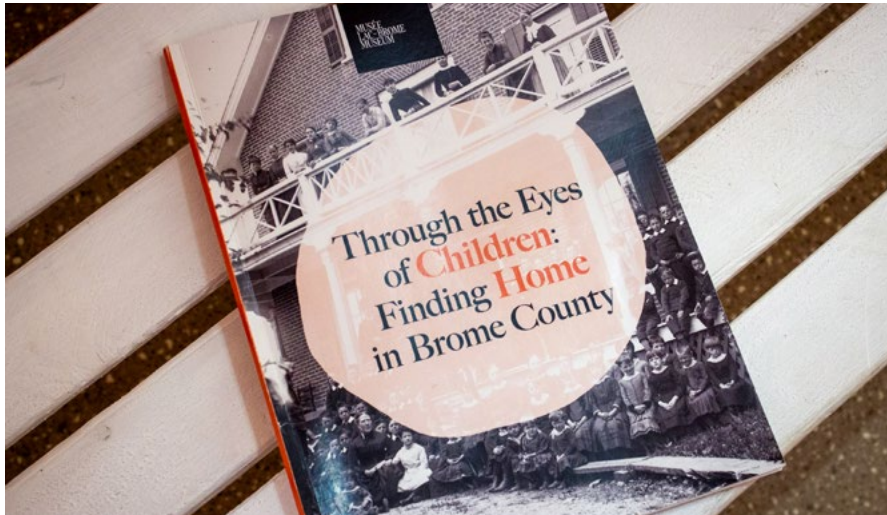
Photo bottom left

The site of the Knowlton Distributing Home with some Home Children nearby. BCBS203-S4-D2-P11

Photo right

Group of Home Children in front of the Knowlton Distributing Home, taken by Malcolm Robb around 1890. BCBS203-S4-D2-P13





Exhibition catalogue

We also published a catalogue to go along with the temporary exhibition, *Through the eyes of Children: finding Home in Brome County*, detailing the history of the Distributing Houses in the Eastern Townships.

The catalogue was graciously funded by the **Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network** and the **S cretariat aux relations avec les Qu b cois d'expression anglaise** through QAHN's Belonging and Identity project.

We were fortunate to have some excellent collaborators for this project. The article on the Gibbs Distributing Home, in Sherbrooke, was written by Jody Robinson of the Eastern Townships Resource Centre, and the article on the Knowlton Distributing Home was written by Nikolas Lamarre, an Archives Technician who worked for the Lac-Brome Museum at the time of publication.



EXHIBITION RESEARCH

This year, summer student Elizabeth Osborne O'Donnell worked as our exhibition researcher for the Street Names exhibit. Elizabeth ensured that we have enough information to present captivating displays on the street names in Brome County. She worked in the archives and with our collection, and put together an extensive document to help with the planning of this forthcoming exhibition.

ARCHIVES ANNUAL REPORT

AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2023

The Archives department experienced many positive changes during the year 2023. Our archivist, Anne-Marie Charuest, has succeeded in advancing important projects to enhance our impressive archives, mainly thanks to the contribution of three new collaborators.

In total, we devoted 1,584 hours, producing 605 archival descriptions in English and French, 1,059 digitizations and 1,000 entries on the Archives Portal.

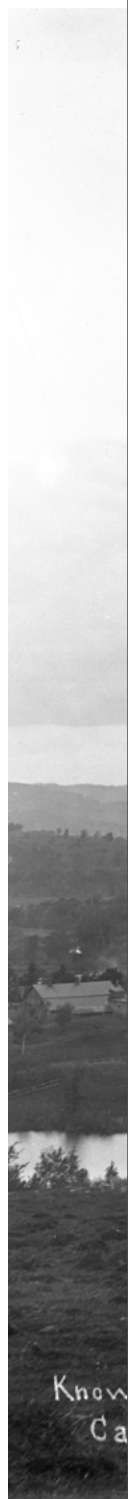
THE ARCHIVES TEAM IS GROWING

From the beginning of January, we benefited from the voluntary contribution of Lyla Wilson, who helped us find our way around the genealogy section, which contains a wealth of family research carried out by researchers and volunteers since the 1960s. The work was completed in early Spring. For his part, Tristan Caron helped us two days a week for four months, working on digitizing and indexing the archival donations registers from 1977 to 2003.

Tristan then moved on to another role, officially becoming a trainee on the archivist's certificate program at Université Laval from May to July. His project focused specifically on the public archives we have kept since the 1960s. His main task was to draw up a detailed inventory of all these archives, in order to regularize the deposit contracts with the various municipal and school authorities.

Photo right

View of Knowlton
in 1896, taken by
John Austin Wheeler.
BCHS203_S5_D3_P03





Charlottetown P.Q.
Canada. A.D. 1896.

A COLLECTION OF BOOKS IS FINALLY ACCESSIBLE

Thanks to the Graduate Internship of the Young Canada Works program, Nikolas Lamarre was able to paint a general picture of our rich book collection, which is now housed on the 2nd floor of the Old Courthouse. The titanic task of inventorying all the books individually was impossible, but Nikolas managed to arrange all the books on the shelves according to subject, and the result tells us that our collection contains around 6,500 titles, mostly covering the period from 1860 to 1960. Nikolas left us at the end of March, and we thank him warmly for his collaboration.

A MAJOR FINANCIAL GRANT FOR THE ARCHIVES

Thanks to a major grant of \$97,515 from Library and Archives Canada, through its Documentary Heritage Communities Program (DHCP), the next two years will be devoted to describing and digitizing the archival fonds of the Knowlton and Foster families, as well as those of the judges and registrars who worked at the Brome County Courthouse. On April 3, 2023, Marc-André Lussier was officially hired as assistant archivist to carry out this important mandate. As soon as he arrived, he devoted himself to the Paul Holland Knowlton fonds, working full time to redo the classification, description, digitization, and entry of this data into the Eastern Townships Archives Portal, which is accessible on the Internet.

AN ACCREDITATION THAT PAYS OFF

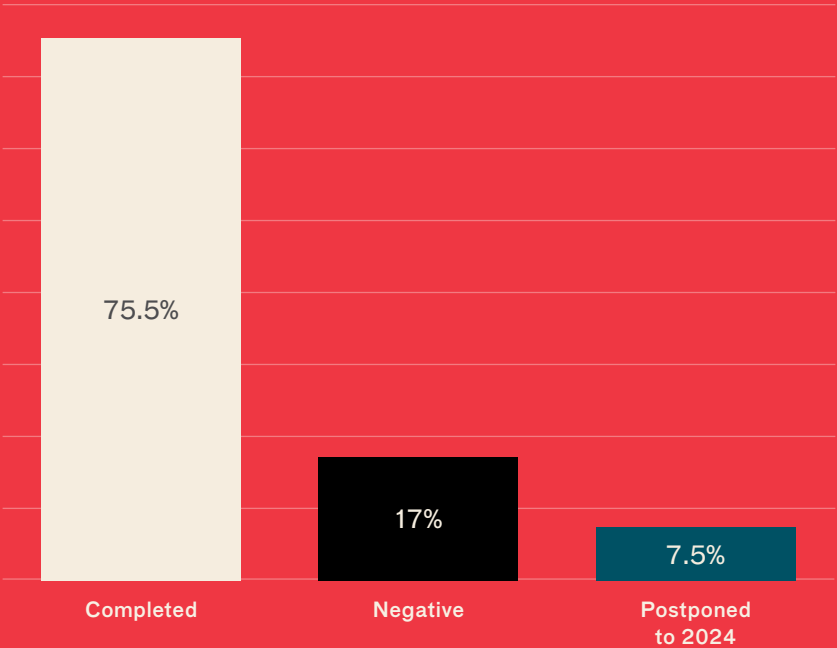
Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ) awarded us two grants this year. A contribution in support of archives work amounted to \$51,996.52, and we were surprised to receive an additional \$10,250 as part of a program focusing on the digital shift. This finally enabled us to modernise our IT equipment, including two new computers, a stand-mounted scanner for non-standard documents, and we took advantage of the opportunity to define our specific needs in terms of storing large volumes of documents in the cloud. This part of the project will be completed in early 2024.

RESEARCHERS ARE BACK WITH MORE QUESTIONS

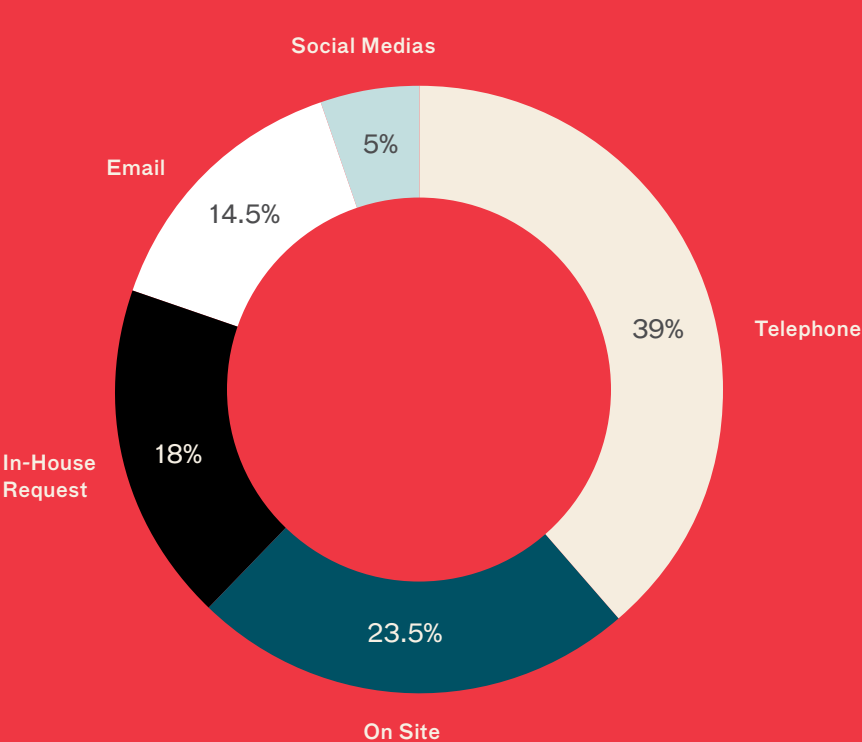
Support for researchers was also much higher than usual, a sign that the pandemic is behind us. From the beginning of January, we received several requests from the United States, as many people wished to prove that they were direct descendants of the soldiers involved in the War of Independence, in preparation for the celebrations marking the 250th anniversary of this major event, which will be held in 2026.

In total, we processed 122 different requests, bringing to light more than 400 archival documents. The two graphs on the next page show that we were able to respond positively to 75% of requests, many of which were received by telephone.

FINAL STATUS OF REQUESTS ACCESS TO ARCHIVES



REQUESTS FOR ACCESS TO ARCHIVES



THE NORTH BRANCH CREEK AT HIS BEST

Another major project to enhance our archives has kept us very busy. In the Spring, Anne-Marie Charuest worked once again with Étienne Benoît of the Comité de sauvegarde du bassin versant du lac Davignon, to produce the fourth and final part of the documentaries on the streams that feed the lake. The vast amount of information we were able to unearth about North Branch Creek added a special historical flavour to the documentary, which premiered at the Old Courthouse on August 20, 2023, as part of the Knowlton Film Festival.

AN IMMERSIVE NEW ACTIVITY

During the Summer of 2023, we introduced a new activity at the archives. Guided tours were integrated into the experience of visitors who bought their tickets at the museum. We were very surprised to welcome a total of 176 visitors who learned about the archivist's job, as well as getting to know the notary Ernest Fleury and our portrait collection in the Courtroom.

ACQUISITIONS OF MAJOR HISTORICAL VALUE

It was with great pride that we received a major new donation from Barbara Northrup, consisting of 147 new glass plate negatives from her grandfather, professional photographer John Austin Wheeler. This has enabled us to realize that his work did not stop in 1897, but rather in 1912. Most of the images are portraits of members of Wheeler's extended family, including the Collins, Brimmer, Duboyce, and some previously unpublished photographs of John Austin Wheeler with his wife and children.

Furthermore, Reverend Tim Wiebe presented us with a collection of 30 books kept by his predecessors at St Paul's Anglican Church in Knowlton. We ended the year with the donation of a voluminous photo album relating to the family of Louis Gustave Pagé and his descendants, including the printer Ernest Pagé. Nicole Pagé also donated a genealogical study of the family done for her parents Jean-Paul Pagé and Madeleine Vézina.

ANNE-MARIE CHARUEST
Archivist

Photo top

Edith Elizabeth Collins
around 1900, taken by
John Austin Wheeler.
BCHS203_S5_D1_P03

Photo bottom

Children of Louis-Gustave
Pagé and Elise Gingras
around 1898.
BCHS1068_S2_D2_P02



Randall & Co. Boston

VISITOR GROWTH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN MUSEUM ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION IN 2023

Museum attendance rebounded from the pandemic, with over 6,000 visitors from May to late October; an increase of 28%. We are thrilled with such a high increase in attendance, far exceeding our initial objective of an increase of 20% in ticket sales! Solid communications and business plans ensured our overarching success in attendance and participation.

In addition, another 2,300 guests visited museum events; including our Brome Fair booth, antique markets (4), the British Home Children exhibit gala and play, films shown during the Knowlton Film Festival, plus many others. By the end of November 2023, over 8,000 visitors were 'touched' by the Lac-Brome Museum.

- Included in this overall number were 341 visitors who attended free cultural events and activities at the museum: the annual Marion L. Phelps Memorial Lecture Series, the Opening Gala, the Home Children Play and the Remembrance Day event.
- Our events equally brought in more than double the number of paying guests as the previous year, with 351 visitors in total. These events were: the Night at the Museum Gala, the Film Festival, Bring & Bid and the Christmas cocktail.
- Brome Fair and the Antique & Crafts Markets were equally sought after this year, with 922 visitors at our booth at Brome Fair and 40 vendors and 800 visitors to the markets on the museum grounds.

Finally, school visits, both on and off-site, were a main focus this year, bolstering our total number of student interactions by 400% as compared to 2022, with a total of 567. Of these interactions, 197 were from on-site school group visits to the museum, 150 were from the awards ceremony and bursary presentations at Massey-Vanier High School and 20 were from a visit to Sutton Elementary School. In addition, we continued our annual tradition of participating in the Remembrance Day event held at Massey-Vanier High School. This year, curator Rachel Lambie focused her presentation on the women of Brome County who served in World War I, with 350 students participating.

Photos top to bottom

Gathering for the laying of the Home Child wreath on September 28, 2023.

The launch of Etienne Benoit's documentary.

Night at the Museum Gala, summer 2023



“

LAC-BROME MUSEUM
'COMMUNITY' IS
STRONGER THAN EVER

Over the past year, our list of members, volunteers and other interested historical societies has grown to over 575 individuals.

We are fortunate to have such heartfelt support and interest from our members and community. Thanks to their unwavering support and enthusiasm, we are able to host a number of cultural events, activities and fundraisers throughout the year.



MARION L. PHELPS MEMORIAL LECTURE SERIES

January-February

We hosted our ever-popular Marion L. Phelps Memorial Lecture Series in the Court House in January and February 2023. The series of 6 lectures is given by Prof Jimmy Manson, which addresses different topics in local history each year. These conferences are free to the public thanks to our sponsors.

EARLY TOWNSHIPS GARDEN FOR KIDS

Seeding in May, harvest September

This project was conceived by our Executive Director and Shelly Mizener, a local business woman and key volunteer. She was able to recruit assistance from the local Lion's Club and several other volunteer groups, as well as obtaining donations of garden supplies from our local Home Hardware. The garden was created, dirt and manure were spread out, a fence was installed and trays of plants were delivered in late spring. Unfortunately, the summer of 2023 was fraught with frequent storms and heavy rain, so the garden did not advance any further. It will reopen in 2024 (weather permitting)!

2023 OPENING DAY

May 20

Approximately 100 BCHS members, dignitaries, volunteers, local media representatives and special guests attended the season's grand opening gala on the museum grounds. Between refreshments and a catered dinner, attendees were invited to visit our new temporary exhibit about British Home Children, as well as the other museum buildings. Featured presentations about the plight of these young immigrants were delivered by Ms. Chloe Adams, British Consulate General (Montreal), Rachel Lambie (Curator) and Richard Burcombe, mayor of Lac-Brome; a home child descendant). We thank all volunteers and event donors (most of whom have been mentioned in other sections of this report) for a successful kick-off!



ANTIQUES & CRAFTS MARKETS

May, June, July, August

The 2023 season of the Antiques & Crafts Market was a huge success thanks to 40 vendors of antiques, curiosities and marvellous artisanal treasures, and over 800 visitors with a passion for finds. The atmosphere was festive as usual, with our summer students selling doughnuts and coffee, hot dogs and cold drinks, while talented local musicians created a wonderful atmosphere for over two hours.

The Lac-Brome Museum is very proud to have once again allowed the public to take advantage of its facilities, to offer a unique event in the region. A special thank you to all those who contributed to the success of this year's markets, and we look forward to seeing everyone again next year!

ADOPT AN ARTEFACT AND NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM GALA

August

The Lac-Brome Museum's annual fundraising event, the Night at the Museum Gala, was a great success thanks to over 85 donors participating in Adopt an Artefact. Guests enjoyed a delicious buffet prepared by the team at BUZZ Traiteur in Knowlton, alongside drinks, in an intimate and unifying evening. The ambiance was perfect, thanks to live jazz music by Laura & John Barr and floral arrangements by Fleurissima. Even the incredible weather show (a huge thunderstorm) couldn't dampen the mood! Many thanks to our incredible team of volunteers: Lynda White, Margo Pfeiff, Rachel Lambie, Gabe Paglia, Anne-Marie Charuest and Gilles Fournier, Rhain Piquette, Tany Moreland, Cameron Mackenzie, Hannah and Elizabeth Osborne-O'Donnell, Morgan Niles and Lisa Bélanger.



KNOWLTON FILM FESTIVAL

August

This year, the Lac-Brome Museum partnered with Knowlton Film Festival, to bring the movies to the Museum grounds, with 9 movies projected at the museum between August 18 to 26, 2023. We showed a number of movies set in the late 1800s (e.g. Emily - the story of Emily Bronte) plus a documentary about British Home Children. We also premiered another documentary by

Étienne Benoit, which featured our archivist Anne-Marie Charuest in the film.

Social media and other media vehicles were used to promote the movies that were featured at the museum. A total of approximately 200 guests attended movies at the museum, with the majority visiting our museum before or after viewing a movie!

EXPO BROME FAIR

September

Our team was busy welcoming visitors at our Expo Brome Fair booth. This year's theme was the history of St. Paul's Church in Knowlton (the building next door to the Lac-Brome Museum), on the occasion of its 180th anniversary. The photos and images in this original exhibition were carefully selected by our archives department, while the artifacts came from the Lac-Brome Museum's collection.

MUSICAL FUNDRAISER AT THE UNITED CHURCH

September

The Lac-Brome Museum was fortunate to be beneficiary of the proceeds of a wonderful benefit concert attended by nearly 150 people on Saturday, September 16, at Knowlton United Church. Under the direction of Laura and John Barr, the Community Singers, a choral group of 15 singers from the Brome Missisquoi region, sang songs from movies and Broadway musicals.

Immediately after the concert, guests enjoyed a jazz performance by the Barr Boys, sipping coffee and wine and nibbling cheese and cookies at the reception. A special thank you to Gib Rotherham, Lisa Belanger and all those who made this event possible!

REMEMBRANCE DAY EVENT AT THE COURTHOUSE

November

On November 10, G. Scott MacLeod and his band, *A Brief Canadian History*, presented "Seven Songs of War for Peace". This moving performance took place in front of an intimate audience at the Lac-Brome Museum's Old Courthouse.



BRING & BID

November

This year's annual Bring & Bid did not disappoint, with 142 items received for auction! Catered by Dana Cooper of Fraiche in Sutton, guests enjoyed food and drinks while bidding away throughout the evening. A special thank you to Cameron Brown for once again bringing life to the event in his position of auctioneer and to our dedicated volunteers: Jessica Brown, Lynda White, Yves Pelletier, Danielle Viau, Nathalie Raymond, Lyla Wilson, Anne-Marie Charuest and Gilles Fournier, Yves Fournier, Cameron Mackenzie, Denis Piquette, Mike Moreland, Lisa Bélanger the Team at the Centre Communautaire Lac Brome.

BAKE SALE FUNDRAISER

December

The recipe for our annual Bake Sale is quite simple: a pinch of sugar and flour, lots of volunteers to bake delicious desserts and, above all... a great community! Aside from being lots of fun, this annual fundraiser is important as it enable us to raise funds for two scholarships offered by the Musée Lac-Brome: the Marion L. Phelps award to a student that excelled in history and the Fessenden Scholarship to a student interested in science.

WINTER 5 A 7 COCKTAIL

December

Our winter 5 à 7 brought a jolly end to a note-worthy year at the Lac-Brome Museum. Catered by Pierre Johnston of le Canard sauté, Cowansville, guests enjoyed the delicious food in the company of the Museum's directors and staff. A special thank you to all of our volunteers: Liz Wirth, Pat Corrigan and Marc Poloquin, Cameron Mackenzie, Anne-Marie Charuest and Gilles Fournier, Lisa Bélanger and Rachel Lambie as well as a small army of guests who stayed behind to clear up and the Team at the Centre Communautaire Lac Brome.



TOWN OF LAC-BROME TOURIST AMBASSADORS

A total of 25 local businesses and tourist attractions (including the Museum) were invited by the Town of Lac-Brome to volunteer as 'tourist ambassadors' for the 2023 tourist season. Our Executive Director accepted this role for the Lac-Brome Museum. Participating ambassadors were each provided with outdoor signage, brochures and leave-behinds, as well as a prominent feature article on the TLB website. In addition to media and merchandising, we were asked to be present at local community events, interact with tourists and participate in radio and journal interviews. We all deemed this program to be a success, and it certainly contributed to our strong increase in museum traffic during 2023.



DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY

ONLINE COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND PORTAL

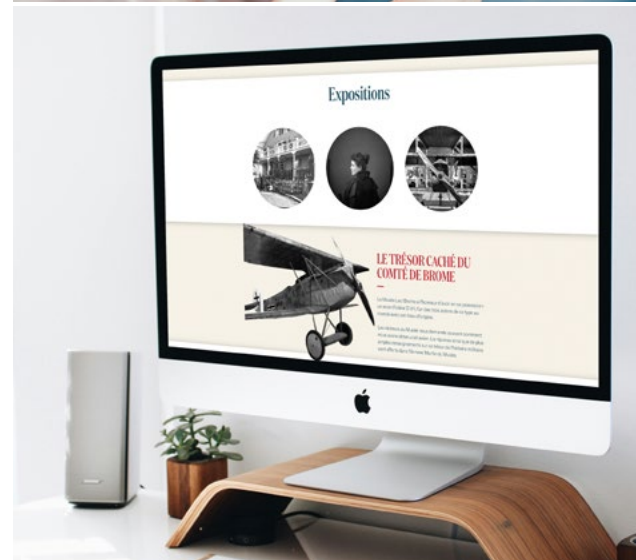
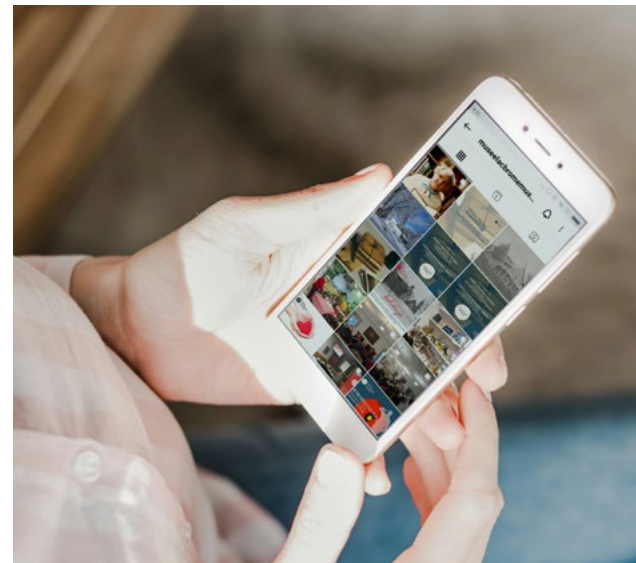
Our team is continually adding new artefacts to the SKINsoft collections management system (CMS) and online portal acquired a few years ago. Currently, 748 items are available on the portal, with over 350 objects being added to the CMS this year. While the online portal is not yet available for public viewing, we are working towards a goal to launch the portal to the public in 2024. Stay tuned!

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

This year, our team focused on increasing engagement on the Museum's social media accounts, notably Facebook and Instagram. With engaging content being posted regularly, we are thrilled to have a gain of 300 Facebook followers in the last year (now 1,760) and a gain of 200 Instagram followers (now 550).

VIRTUAL TOURS OF THE MUSEUM

In 2023, we acquired the equipment and software needed to create our very own virtual tours of the Museum exhibitions. These tours will allow visitors to notably experience the Museum from the comfort of their home to school classrooms. To date, we have 3 virtual tours created, namely: our previous temporary exhibitions (*Wood/Wheeler* and *Present and Past*, as well as our Martin Annex Military Wing). In 2024 we are going to include *Through the eyes of Children: finding Home in Brome County* and the Paul Holland Knowlton Cabin. Our goal is to continually add to this collection of online tours, including all future temporary exhibitions presented at the Museum.



DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

7 726

people visited the Museum's website

3

online virtual tours available

30 348

page views

2

newsletters to members

1 760

Facebook followers

150

posts on Facebook

550

Instagram followers

145

posts on Instagram

DIRECTORS, COMMITTEES AND OUR TEAM

2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Alan Eastley, president
Adèle Hébert, vice-president
Samantha Ciurlej, treasurer
Abbey Lacroix, secretary
John Bennett
Lyne Bessette
Christopher Cooper
Annie Jolicoeur Duffar
Allan Mass
Gail Mullins
Helgi Soutar
Elizabeth Wirth
Sid Yousri

BOARD COMMITTEES

Human Resources Committee
Adèle Hébert
Abbey Lacroix
Gail Mullins

Major Projects Committee
John Bennett
Alan Eastley
Abbey Lacroix
Allan Mass
Sid Yousri

Finance Committee
Allan Mass
Samantha Ciurlej

Fundraising Committee
John Bennett
Helgi Soutar
Elizabeth Wirth

Museum Committee
Gail Mullins
Sid Yousri
Gib Rotherham (volunteer)

Building Committee
Sid Yousri
Denis Piquette

Events Committee
Helgi Soutar

Communications Committee
Annie Jolicoeur Duffar
Denis Piquette

OUR TEAM

Denis Piquette, Executive Director
Arlene Royea, Managing Director
Lisa Belanger, Executive Assistant

Lac-Brome Museum
Rachel Lambie, Curator
Hannah Osborne-O'Donnell,
Assistant Curator

Archives Centre
Anne-Marie Charuest, Archivist
Marc-André Lussier, Assistant
Archivist

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

PAUL HOLLAND KNOWLTON CIRCLE

\$25,000+

John W. Bennett
Town of Lac-Brome

MARION L. PHELPS CIRCLE

\$10,000+

Ratuos ULC
Young Canada Works

ERNEST FLEURY CIRCLE

\$5,000+

Helgi Soutar
Summer Canada Jobs
(Government of Canada)

CATHERINE M. DAY CIRCLE

\$1,000+

Sir John Johnson Centennial Branch
(UELAC)
Knowlton Lion's Club
Carol Dunn
The Chawkers Foundation
Comptoir Familial de Knowlton
Lois Hardacker
Dean Jobb
Erin and George O'Brien
Louise Penny
Leonard Sanders
David Seaman
Elizabeth Wirth

FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM

Up to \$1,000

Bill Abbott and George King
Fulford Community Club
Glenn Cranker
B. Eldridge-Benoit
Gordon Falle
Sadie Foster
Margaret Fordham
Narcissa Farrand Trust Fund
C. Ross Gledhill
John and Karma Hallward
Robert Harvey
Gail Mullins
Duncan M. Phelps
Gib Rotherham
Tony Rotherham
Jean Thompson
Cheryl Turner
M. Seif Yousri

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

Elizabeth Frazer and Jane Howe
Elizabeth Ballantyne
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Stairs
Misook Lee
Mrs. Arlene Royea
Marion Harrington
Carla Loewen
Melanie Gallop

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Lac-Brome Museum's financial statements will be provided at the Annual General Meeting in April 2024.





2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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Denis Piquette

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Brome County Historical Society

Taís da Costa

Officially incorporated on March 9, 1898, the Brome County Historical Society works diligently to acquire, preserve, research, exhibit, interpret, and publish items of historical interest encompassing all of the historic Brome County and its sites. As a registered non-profit organization, the Brome County Historical Society has and runs an accredited museum and an accredited archives centre which welcomes visitors, researchers, families, and group visits.

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MUSÉE
LAC-BROME
MUSEUM

www.lacbromemuseum.ca