



# Collingwood Museum 2024 Annual Report

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## Executive Summary

In 2024, the Collingwood Museum followed the Collingwood Museum Master Plan: 2020 - 2025, focusing on community relevance, deeper engagement, and sustainable operations. The Museum also supports the Town of Collingwood's Arts, Culture and Heritage Program, which works to "recognize and strengthen arts, culture, and built heritage within the community" through Service 5.1: Conservation and Promotion of Heritage and Culture. Additional guiding documents included the Town of Collingwood Community Based Strategic Plan 2024 - 2028, especially Pillar 2: Connected, which seeks to "foster well-being, belonging, and understanding through spaces, places and activities," and the 2020 - 2024 Strategic Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. Throughout the year, the Collingwood Museum Advisory Committee played a key role in supporting staff and helping achieve the milestones noted in this report.

Several factors contributed to the museum's success in 2024. A major highlight was securing the free Our Climate Quest travelling exhibit, resulting in an exciting opportunity that drew 1,047 visitors, including 420 local students, to Central Park Arena.

The Museum presented nine additional temporary exhibitions that brought fresh energy to the gallery and fostered meaningful collaborations with the Craighleith Heritage Depot, the Blue Mountain Pottery Collectors Club, the Royal Canadian Legion Collingwood Branch 63, and dedicated local collectors. Travelling exhibits were also secured from Science North and the Juno Beach Centre, enriching the museum's offerings throughout the year.

In 2024, total attendance across onsite services and offsite special events reached 10,609 a 14% increase over 2023. This included 4,598 gallery visitors and 2,788 community members engaged by staff and volunteers at offsite events. An additional 1,084 visitors accessed the museum for its public washroom facilities.

The Museum Gift Shop recorded its second-highest annual sales, generating \$19,787 and representing a 24% decrease from 2023's record-breaking total. In contrast, admission donations saw a 2% increase, reaching a new high of \$15,615.

The museum's unique children's programs continued to be in high demand, achieving a 93% registration rate. In total, 38 three-hour programs were delivered to 567 children aged 6 to 12. These programs remained accessible through the Town of Collingwood's Affordable Recreation Program. Overall program revenue reached \$9,056, just a 1% decrease from 2023's record-setting total.

Two student programmers and one collections support staff member joined the team for the summer to deliver community programs and enhance the museum's online collections database. The Collingwood Terminals Collection was selected for digitization in honour of the structure's 95th anniversary.

In 2024, our efforts were marked by sustained community engagement and meaningful collaboration across all service platforms. The achievements highlighted throughout this report reflect the strengths and impacts of these connections.

## **Collingwood Museum Master Plan Status Report 2024**

### **Mission**

To be a relevant and engaging resource of Collingwood's heritage and collective memory.

### **Vision**

The Collingwood Museum will be an inviting and accessible resource for learning and information sharing. It will be the keeper of the community's stories and collective memory and the hub of the heritage sector in Collingwood. The Collingwood Museum will be relevant and engaging to our community, creating positive and meaningful interactions through its collections, programs, and exhibits.

### **Goals**

- 1) Become more relevant to our community
- 2) Become more engaging to our community
- 3) Improve sustainability measures of the museum's operation and collections

### **Review of Master Plan Goals, Objectives, and Indicators**

Data was collected in key performance areas to evaluate how we are meeting the goals and objectives set out in the Master Plan.

#### **Goal A: Become more relevant to our community**

##### **Objective 1: Improve awareness of the museum and its offerings**

- a) \$19,787 gift shop sales (24% reduction from 2023, but our second highest sales year)
- b) \$15,615 gallery donations (2% increase from 2023)
- c) 19,711 website visits (206% increase from 2023)
- d) 258,293 Facebook reaches on museum page; 2,947 followers; 313 new followers. (Reaches are up 10%, followers 12%)
- e) 1,318 podcast listens; 12 new episodes researched, written, and released totaling 265 minutes of content; 127 Spotify followers
- f) 595 newsletter subscribers (8% increase)
- g) 54 memberships - 30 individual, 16 family, 1 corporate, 7 lifetime (13% decrease)
- h) 131 photograph reproductions (35 personal/business; 21 corporate; 75 community partnerships)

## **Objective 2: Clarify our role within the heritage sector**

- a) The museum coordinator served as a staff resource for the Heritage Advisory Committee
- b) The museum supervisor attended Unity Collective meetings as a staff resource
- c) Staff attended bi-monthly meetings with representatives from local museums
- d) Continued collaboration with heritage-minded community groups and organizations, including Gaslight Theatre Productions, the Collingwood Public Library, and Royal Canadian Legion Collingwood Branch 63

## **Objective 3: Clarify our role as a resource**

- a) 108 complimentary research requests completed by staff; 43 on-site researchers
- b) 589 students engaged in on-site and off-site education programs, including 420 students at the Our Climate Quest exhibit, 40 students at the Simcoe County Historical Fair, 77 during the GNE's Education Day, and the remainder on-site.
- c) 2,788 community interactions at offsite events (Town Job Fair, Terminals Presentation, Earth Day Fair, Our Climate Quest Opening and Meet and Greet Event, School Fair, Jazz at the Station event booth, Great Northern Exhibition booth, Richard Thomas Author Talk, Offsite Community Collectors Night, Downtown Christmas Market)
- d) 80 Haunted Walking Tour participants
- e) 12 "Then and Now" articles in Collingwood Today featuring collections from the museum, reaching 11,640 page views, and \$850 in revenue
- f) Continued partnership with Escarpment Magazine, featuring four scripts from the Stories from Another Day podcast, as well as photographs and additional information from the museum's collection. Approximately 50,000 readers per issue, totaling 200,000 readers for four editions.
- g) Gaslight Theatre's 2024 "Night at the Museum" theme selection drew attention to the museum and its important role within the community, past and present.

## **Goal B: Become more engaging to our community**

### **Objective 1: Create a welcoming and usable space for the community**

- a) Four unique ground rental requests, resulting in nine events, three return bookings, and one new booking
- b) Funding approved for resource room renovation to increase community access to collections
- c) Staff participation in Customer Service Training, Education Programming through the OMA, Care of Collections through the OMA, High Five Training, and First Aid Training. Senior staff attended the Canadian Museum Association Conference in Niagara Falls.

## **Objectives 2 & 3: Improve inclusivity efforts at the museum and create more opportunities for community interaction**

- a) 10,609 in-person visits at museum and offsite special events, including 4,598 gallery visitors. Respective increases of 14% and 3% over 2023.
- b) 567 attendees in 38 children's programs with 93% registration rate; Approx. 275 activity kits distributed at GNE, and 18 kits for April PA Day. Children's program participants decreased by 2%.
- c) 403 in-person attendees at museum special events (Collectors Night: 22, Live at the Station Booth: 197, Shipyard Social: 104, Haunted Tours: 80
- d) Staff engaged a free travelling exhibit, Our Climate Quest, for installation at Central Park Arena, resulting in free programming for the community with 14 school groups, 420 students, and 1,047 overall visitors taking advantage
- e) One school group participated in a private three-hour museum program based on our PA Day activities. 26 students from K - 8 and five adults participated.
- f) 26 students from a local high school visited the museum for a self-guided tour

## **Objective 4: Create more opportunities to receive and respond to community feedback**

- a) Hardhats on Hurontario March returned for the annual Shipyard Social event despite the poor weather. The Shipyard Social attracted 104 community participants.
- b) Surveys were distributed to the Children's Program Subscriber List
- c) SFAD episode "The Day the Karma Didn't Come Around" was created in response to a community request

## **Goal C: Sustainability**

### **Objective 1: Ensure policies meet industry standards**

- a) Community Museum Operating Grant (CMOG) received
- b) Collingwood Museum Emergency and Disaster Plan created and submitted to province to meet grant CMOG requirements
- c) Young Canada Works Grant funded 50% of one programming position.

### **Objective 2: Bring collections management processes up to date**

- a) 29 gift forms issued, and 30 gift forms received for donations from 2020 - 2023
- b) 287 condition reports and 325 catalogue records created; 1,119 records updated
- c) 249 photograph records were added to Past Perfect Online in addition to 21 object records, resulting in an increase of 53%. These were added by the Collections Support seasonal staff member and featured the Collingwood Terminals Limited Collection.

### **Objective 3: Address facility capital needs**

- a) The Resource Room Renovation Project re-imagines the existing washrooms into three individual non-gendered washrooms, including one accessible

washroom. The addition of a resource room will increase access to collections and research for community members and allow resources to be consolidated for public access.

**Objective 4: Ensure museum is sufficiently resourced to deliver its services**

- a) Two staff members attended the Canadian Museum Association Conference in Niagara Falls in the absence of an Ontario Museum Association Conference.
- b) Received \$21,996 in provincial funding through the Community Museum Operating Grant (CMOG)
- c) Requested funding in the 2025 budget to increase part-time programmer role to full-time status

# Collingwood Museum 2024 Activity Report

## 1. Temporary Exhibitions

### **Community Collectors Series: Craigleith Heritage Depot, February 17 - April 27**

The first installation in the 2024 Community Collectors series featured photographs and artifacts on loan from the Craigleith Heritage Depot. Items included fossil-laden shale, a pair of wooden skis, a railway stamp, a fine dining menu, and a library pass. These artifacts, accompanying photographs and text, shared the history of the Depot and the historic settlements that comprise The Blue Mountains.

### **Feature Art Wall Series: Women in Local History Exhibit, March 1 - 30**

The Women in Local History storyboard installation was featured in the gallery for the month of March for International Women's Day. Twelve storyboards showcased the stories of courage, determination, and dedication of local pioneering women who helped shape our town. The installation was displayed on the new moving art walls and art hanging system.

A companion podcast episode about local artist Mary McKay was researched and written by Stories from Another Day podcast host Ken Maher.

### **Travelling Exhibit: Our Climate Quest, Small Steps to Big Change, May 8 - 29**

Science North's travelling exhibition, Our Climate Quest: Small Steps to Big Change, was featured at Central Park Arena for three weeks. Admission to the public and local school groups was free, and programming was delivered by two bilingual Science North staff members who stayed in Collingwood for the exhibit's duration. In total, 1,047 visitors explored the exhibit, including 14 school groups and 420 students. In addition, museum staff interacted with 315 visitors during museum-led "Meet and Greet" events offering extended exhibit hours.

### **Community Collectors Series: Blue Mountain Pottery Collectors Club (BMPCC), May 7 - June 28**

The second installation in the Community Collectors exhibit series featured Blue Mountain Pottery. The exhibit, produced in partnership with the Blue Mountain Pottery Collectors Club, presented the iconic glazes and styles that gained Blue Mountain Pottery worldwide attention.

### **Feature Art Wall Series: Staff Picks, May 9 - June 29**

Visitors were invited to discover the surprising stories and insights that museum collections can share about a museum's changing values and objectives in "Staff Picks", a temporary exhibition curated by Collingwood Museum staff. Visitors also gained insight into what goes on behind the scenes in the world of community museums (conservation, loans, collecting mandates, etc.).

### **Community Collectors Series: Teddy Bears, July 8 - September 8**

The third installation in the Community Collectors series explored the fascinating history of the Teddy Bear from 1902 to the present. The exhibit highlighted the personal collection of Krista King and included historic stuffed bears from Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Krista is an award-winning soft-sculpture artist, and her well-known handmade creations were also on display.

On August 28, the museum hosted a “Teddy Bears Take the Museum” Collectors Night. 22 visitors, young and young-at-heart, enjoyed chatting with Krista King, sharing the stories of their cherished bears, posing for photo ops, and participating in bear-themed scavenger hunts throughout the museum. CTV Barrie filmed the event for their evening news.

### **Feature Art Wall Series: Collingwood Shipyards - Flashback Down Memory Lane, September 2 - 30**

A special photograph exhibit by local author-photographer George Czerny-Holownia was installed to coincide with the Sidelaunch Days festival and the annual Shipyard Social. Featuring photographs from Collingwood’s past, this installation was a crowd favourite.

### **Travelling Exhibit: From Vimy to Juno, October 5 - December 31**

From Vimy to Juno, a travelling exhibit from the Juno Beach Centre, was on display for over 12 weeks. The bilingual exhibit honoured Canada’s role in the First and Second World Wars while exploring the nation-defining moments at the Battle of Vimy Ridge and the D-Day landings on Juno Beach.

### **Community Collectors Series: Royal Canadian Legion, Collingwood Branch 63, October 5 - December 31**

The fourth feature in the Community Collectors series featured Collingwood’s military history through artifacts on loan from the Royal Canadian Legion, Collingwood Branch 63. Items included First and Second World War uniforms, medals, equipment and ammunition.

Museum staff and Collingwood Legion members greeted 19 visitors in the Legion’s Atlantic Room for a special off-site Community Collectors Night. Participants were invited to bring items related to Canada’s participation in past wars for a show-and-tell. Legion members and resource materials were available to help with identification as needed. Everyone involved expressed their wish that this becomes an annual event.

### **Feature Art Wall Series: Funding Victory: The Power of Posters in the Second World War, Oct 5 - December 31**

A companion exhibit featuring impactful Victory Bond posters preserved by Collingwood citizens was the fourth art wall installation. The posters and accompanying descriptions provided insights into life on the home front during the Second World War.

## **2. Permanent Exhibitions**

Five hardboard interpretive panels were reprinted in a new, flexible format for installation in the Museum's permanent gallery. Two panels highlight Collingwood's contributions to the First World War, while the remaining three explore Collingwood's development from 1867 to 2017.

Museum staff also contributed historical content and images to support the Terminals Point interpretive banner project.

## **2. Volunteerism**

The Collingwood Museum Advisory Committee met on nine occasions. Committee members included: Jennifer Belanger, Allison Hunwicks, Stuart Beeston, Tim Garland, Tom Carter, Ken Maher, Joanne Edwards, and Bob MacNair. Councillor Baines joined the committee as an ex-officio member. Committee members and one community volunteer committed 96 hours to special projects and events.

## **3. Community Programming**

### **Children's Programs**

The museum's popular roster of programs for children ages 6 - 12 returned in 2024 with 38, three-hour programs. Five P.A. Day programs, three March Break programs, and 30 summer programs were offered over the course of the year with a registration rate of 93%. The museum's part-time programmer led all offerings in 2024.

50 complimentary ice suncatcher kits were distributed to Family Day visitors as part of the museum's extended hours and free admission promotion, attracting 193 gallery visitors.

The April 26 PA Day program was changed by both the SCDSB and SMCDsb to April 8 to coincide with the total solar eclipse. As a result, we were unable to run our usual in-person PA Day program. Instead, 18 free take-home activity kits were made available for caregivers to reserve on a first come, first served basis.

Staff attended one elementary school fair to promote summer programs, interacting with 97 community members. A dedicated email list for program updates and information boasted 192 subscribers at the end of the year.

567 participants joined staff for active and heritage-inspired mornings at the museum throughout July and August. Two seasonal staff joined the team between May and August to assist in the planning and delivery of these offerings. The summer's weekly themes included: History Detectives, Exploring Ecosystems, Art About Town, Sliding Through the Seasons, Museum Olympics, Blast Off, Where the Wild Things Are, and Tree Week.

### **School Groups (On-site)**

#### **Our Lady of the Bay, Self-guided visit, June 11**

26 secondary students participated in a self-guided tour focusing on Collingwood's population growth and industry in the region. Staff provided a general introduction while the teacher had prepared a scavenger hunt for the students.

#### **True North Academy Program, October 31**

True North Academy requested a three-hour program based on the Harvest Time P.A. Day program. 26 students from Kindergarten to Grade 8 participated. Five adults were in attendance.

### **School Groups (Off-site)**

2024 provided many off-site opportunities for engagement with local school groups. The Our Climate Quest exhibit attracted 14 school groups and 420 students. The Great Northern Exhibition's Education Day attracted five classes and 77 students, and 40 students in two classes participated in the Simcoe County Historical Fair presentation.

### **Presentations**

Community groups requested presentations by staff, resulting in outreach to 140 community members. Topics included the Collingwood Shipyards, Smart Bros Ltd., and the Heritage Conservation District. Coordinator Cook participated in a community information session in conjunction with the Heritage Committee that addressed opportunities and responsibilities of owning a designated heritage building.

Programmer Wilson travelled to the Simcoe County Heritage Fair to deliver two unique presentations on the history of photography in Collingwood to 40 elementary students and four teachers. Participating in this fair had been a goal for many years.

### **Walking Tours**

Staff-led walking tours were delivered to the members of two Probus Clubs who enjoyed the Downtown First World War Walking Tours in the summer months. Also, Programmer Wilson led a First World War Walking Tour in the evening for a group of eight girl guides that coincided with Remembrance Day.

The Haunted Tours with Dean Hollin on October 26 and 30 attracted 40 participants. Both tours sold out within days of promotion.

## **4. Special Projects and Events**

### **Gift Shop**

The Gift Shop continued to attract visitors to the building and provided takeaways that extended the museum experience at home. In total, 1,694 items were purchased resulting in \$19,787 in sales. Popular sellers included branded clothing (175), magnets with local scenes (138), and driving and hiking guidebooks (54). The "Getting Loaded and Unloaded in Collingwood" t-shirt was launched in November to much success with

51 T-shirts sold by the end of December. In 2024, 209 people entered the museum to specifically visit the gift shop.

### **Stories from Another Day (SFAD) Podcast**

Researched and written by volunteer Ken Maher, this exciting podcast continued to entice listeners to travel through Collingwood's past to learn about the people, events, and stories that have informed Collingwood's development. In total, 265 minutes of content was created over 12 new episodes. The podcast catalogue was accessed 1,318 times by listeners across the country and around the world. The podcast attracted 127 Spotify followers.

### **"Past. Present. Potential." Terminals Point Presentation, March 19**

Museum staff welcomed 58 community members to a free informative presentation at the Simcoe Street Theatre that focused on the history of the Terminals (past), the current state (present), and the possible future (potential) by Adam Gallant, project manager with the Town of Collingwood.

### **Chi-Cheemaun Tour, April 30**

The museum partnered with the Owen Sound Transportation Company to offer an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour of the Chi-Cheemaun for former shipyard workers and their families in celebration of the ship's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In total, 45 participants registered, with 37 in attendance, including museum staff and volunteers. The tour included the carport, engine room, bridge, and viewing deck. The afternoon ended with coffee and cheesecake, compliments of the Owen Sound Transportation Company.

### **International Museum Day, May 18**

Free admission was offered for International Museum Day. Visitors were encouraged to explore the new exhibits, make a button, complete a scavenger hunt, and more. In total, 87 visitors were welcomed.

### **8th Annual Shipyard Social, September 7**

Former shipyard workers, family members, and friends joined staff for the annual Shipyard Social. The celebration commenced at Town Hall with the Hardhats on Hurontario March, drawing approximately 27 parade participants despite the poor weather. Approximately 47 former workers participated in the on-site group portrait. The remainder of the afternoon was spent inside the museum with participants enjoying social connections, delicious snacks, and a special shipyard-themed photograph installation by George Czerny. In total, 155 individuals attended the community event.

### **Great Northern Exhibition (GNE), September 20 - 22**

Staff returned to the GNE with a booth featuring gift shop items, a slideshow showcasing historic photographs, and our ever-popular button maker. The museum participated in Friday's Education Day and welcomed school groups to the booth for a short presentation about the GNE's history. In total, 77 students visited the booth from five different schools and home school groups.

Approximately 275 free Shipbuilder Activity Kits were distributed throughout the event. The kits highlighted Collingwood's shipbuilding history and included a wooden boat craft and a history passport with stickers. Staff engaged with 1,422 community members and processed over \$1,000 in merchandise sales over three days. The museum was closed to the public on Saturday to accommodate participation in the fair.

### **Author Talk with Richard Thomas, October 22**

Staff hosted an Author Talk at Side Launch Brewing Co. with featured speaker Richard Thomas who shared the stories behind his latest book, *The Jewel of Georgian Bay: 50 Years of the Chi-Cheemaun*. Everyone was captivated by Richard's engaging presentation that included audio recordings of interviews with former shipbuilders, photographs, and video footage. Signed copies of the book were available for purchase.

### **Giving Tuesday, December 3**

In our first ever Giving Tuesday campaign, the Collingwood Museum raised \$500 in donations for the Conservation Fund that supports the preservation and care of artifacts in the permanent collection.

## **5. Collections**

21 offers of artifact donations were received by staff and presented to the Museum Advisory Committee for approval. In total, 57 offers were researched by staff prior to recommendation for acceptance or return to avoid duplication and ensure relevance to the collecting mandate. 37% of offered donations met the collecting mandate.

## **6. Research and Publication**

Museum staff continued to communicate research and collections knowledge to the public, membership, and email subscribers through exhibitions, programs, newsletters, and social media posts. The monthly partnership with Collingwood Today's "Then and Now" series shared research, photographs, and object collections. In total, 12 articles were published. Additionally, four issues of Escarpment Magazine featured Stories from Another Day podcast scripts and photographs from the permanent collection. Topics included the history of the railway, shipbuilding, Nottawasaga Lighthouse, and the Gayety Theatre.

## **7. In the News**

Staff participated in numerous interviews on CTV Barrie, including promotional coverage for Our Climate Quest, Teddy Bears Collectors Night, and the Shipyard Social. Staff were also interviewed on Bay Watch during the Shipyard Social, and on 97.7 FM for May is Museum Month. Coordinator Cook appeared on CBC's Ontario Morning radio show, providing information about the offsite collectors' event at the Collingwood Legion.

## **8. Building Maintenance**

- a) Property bollards replaced

- b) 15 new security cameras installed on museum interior and exterior, including new monitoring equipment
- c) Quarterly maintenance of HVAC and repairs as needed
- d) Annual electrical inspection completed by Electrical Safety Authority
- e) Monthly health and safety inspections
- f) Facility cleaning by contracted service provider
- g) Annual fire inspection and monitoring of alarm systems. Mac-Tech continued to provide year-round security services.
- h) Monthly pest inspections by contractor
- i) Annual roof inspection completed with minor repairs