
CHURCH OF WOTTON



ISSUE: Focus on culture and heritage

ITINERARY 7B

Date: Wednesday, September 11, 2013

Location: Church of Wotton

PROMOTERS

Nicole Gagnon and Pierrette Poirier, Wotton History and Heritage Society

Presentation of the issue:

The church was founded in 1902 and, despite its capacity of 1,000 people, only about a hundred people actually use it. And yet, the heating and maintenance costs are very high. In addition, the church contains a very expensive organ. Therefore, the building must be heated, as much to preserve its exceptional architecture as its acoustics. So, how can we ensure the survival of this building?

During the 2009 Municipal Forum, the church was presented as the jewel of our built heritage (listed category B Heritage: exceptional), but how to ensure the survival of this building?

Project description:

In 2010-2011, a citizens' committee had the idea to create an interpretive center. The objectives of this project were to provide the municipality with a tourist attraction based on the interpretation of the influence of the Catholic religion in the development of a rural community, and to demonstrate how a French Catholic community lives, particularly in terms of education, commercial activities and civic life.

Since the Wotton History and Heritage Society had expertise in group traveling, it offered the citizens of Wotton the creation of a tourist circuit that would include the church and the municipality. A committee was formed for this project; they first completed an inventory of the liturgical vestments and religious objects that could be exhibited, and then proceeded to identify the church elements to be showcased: the pulpit, the Casavant Opus 219 organ, the bells, the recovered bell, and the church's original construction materials.

After applying for grants to develop the church, an exhibit of the religious objects and pictures was held. At the same time, they researched the history of Wotton to find true stories to be recounted: the parish's 100th and 150th anniversary books, the archives from the Soeurs de l'Assomption, and a collection of old photos from the parishioners.

The project was officially launched on May 8, 2012. The Interpretive Centre hosted six groups during the first year, for a total of 170 visitors. The biggest problem is to attract people to our community. We advertise with the means available to us, but we have very little leeway in this area.

The key elements to remember according to the promoters:

- take a look at what is being done elsewhere;
- work with partners (Wotton History and Heritage Society, Marie-Victorin Park);
- raise awareness with the elected officials;
- obtain the solidarity tourism designation.

QUESTION PERIOD

Q.: What are your means of funding?

A.: Income from the thrift store, the sponsors (Country Festival, Caisse Desjardins), and the Rural Pact.

RESEARCHER

NOTE: All linked documents (PowerPoint, Prezi, etc.) are only available in their original French version.

The summary of the presentation by Luc Noppen, UQAM, is presented in a separate document. [Click here to view.](#)