

June, 2017



# *British Home Child Group International*

## **British Home Children in Quebec** by Sandra Joyce

Design and Layout by Karen Mahoney

After being asked to do a presentation by the Stanstead Historical Society in Quebec, BHCGI President Karen Mahoney and I decided to make the most of our trip to the Eastern Townships by also visiting some of the Receiving Homes and monuments there.

Despite rain pouring down the length of highway 401 from Toronto, the crossing into La Belle Province went quickly. The first stop was Knowlton to visit the Receiving Home there. Located at 182 Lakeside, it can be found at the corner of Lakeside and Hillside. The mansions along the waterfront to it grew increasingly larger and more beautiful. The Knowlton Home, however, was a disappointing, neglected apartment building.



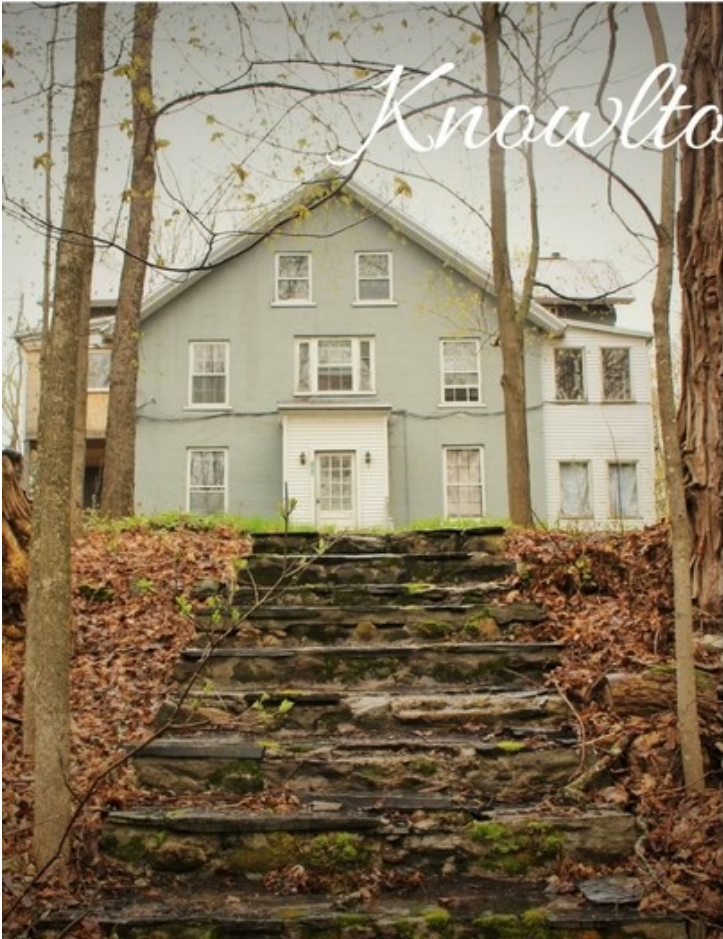
While Karen took pictures of the exterior, a tenant came out and asked us if we were from the 'FBI'. After we reassured him we were not, he allowed us to come inside the building. It was a unique feeling to wander through the building the children from which the children were placed. Original fireplaces are still there but have been closed off. It looks like the original knob and tube electric system is still being used.

The building looks different from photographs when in use by Annie MacPherson and her sister Louisa Birt and the Liverpool Sheltering Homes. Part of it was destroyed by fire. The old stone steps leading up to the building from the street, that many children would have walked up on their way into and out of Knowlton, are disconnected from the building but hint of the bygone grandeur. There is no marker on or near the building to show its significance.

The history of the Knowlton Homes can be found [here](#). Continued on page 3.....







## British Home Children in Quebec *continued*



The next stop was the former Gibbs' Home in Sherbrooke, which was much harder to find, as the former address at 117 Rue Bowen is incorrect. A quick call to Pauline Bampton clarified the issue. Pauline and Sarge Bampton held the records of the Gibbs Home for many years. The Gibbs Home is now listed at 465 Rue Lawford. The Anglican Church of the Advent that the Boys in residence would have attended is at 473 Rue Bowen. To gain access to the Gibbs Home, one can stop on Bowen and walk down a small lane beside the church, which is more than 125 years old.

Open from 1886 to 1939, the Gibbs' Home has two Home Children indicators on its exterior walls including a tribute to the Gibbs' Boys who perished in the First World War. It is now being used privately by Actions Interculturelles de Developpement et D'Education and access is limited. It looks well cared for.

After viewing the Gibbs Home, we drove to Richmond to meet Pauline Bampton, again misled by our GPS. It was dark and at one point four deer bounded across the street in front of the car.

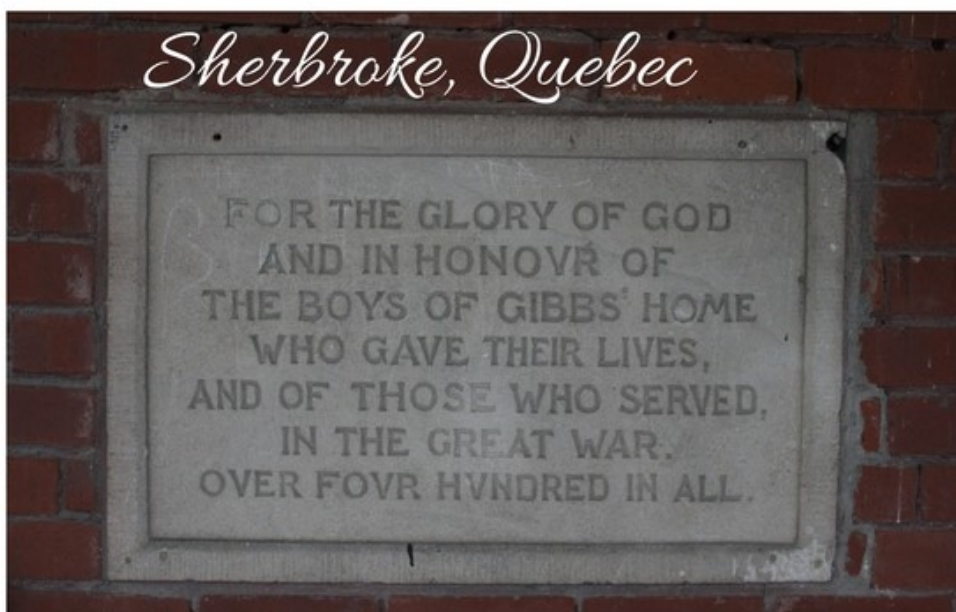
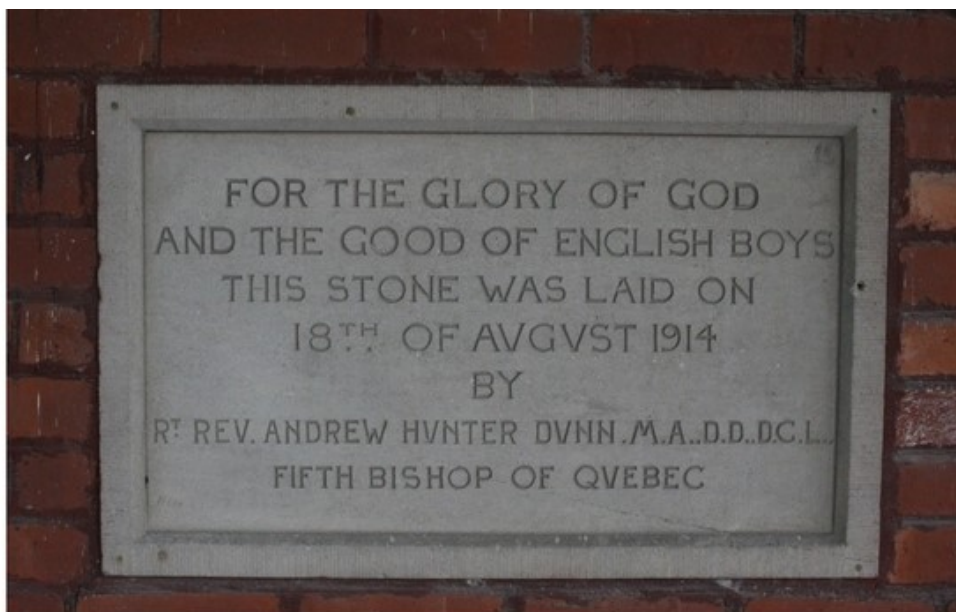
Pauline and her late husband, Sarge, were part of the original Home Child movement in Canada, started by Dave Lorente and his wife, Kay. Sarge's two parents were Home Children, both going through the Receiving Home in Knowlton at separate times. His father was placed at Wilson's Mills in Waterville while his mother was placed with a doctor. In return for her domestic work, she was educated at Stanstead College.

Pauline and Sarge came into holding the Gibbs' Home files by chance. When the Gibbs' Home closed, the Homes' accountant took the records with him and then after a time, passed them on to his son. When Pauline and Sarge did their income tax one year, they spoke about the Home Children. The accountant recognized their names from a newspaper article on Home Children and decided to give them the records for safekeeping. Pauline and Sarge did pain-staking and tireless work searching files and finding information for former Gibbs' Homes Boys as well as their descendants. It is to be remembered that most of this was done before information was available on the internet.



These files are an invaluable source of information and are now housed at Bishop's University in Lennoxville, Quebec which is a predominantly undergraduate university and one of three universities in the province of Quebec that teach primarily in English. Contact: [etrc@ubishops.ca](mailto:etrc@ubishops.ca). *Continued on page 5.....*







## British Home Children in Quebec *continued*



On we drove to Stanstead – to the Lee Farm B & B. Full of antiques, it was previously owned by Lady Banting, wife of Sir Frederick Banting, co-discoverer of insulin. Lady Banting, a research assistant to Banting, married him in 1938. Sir Banting was killed while on active duty with the Canadian Military in 1941. Previously Lee Farm was owned by United Empire Loyalists.

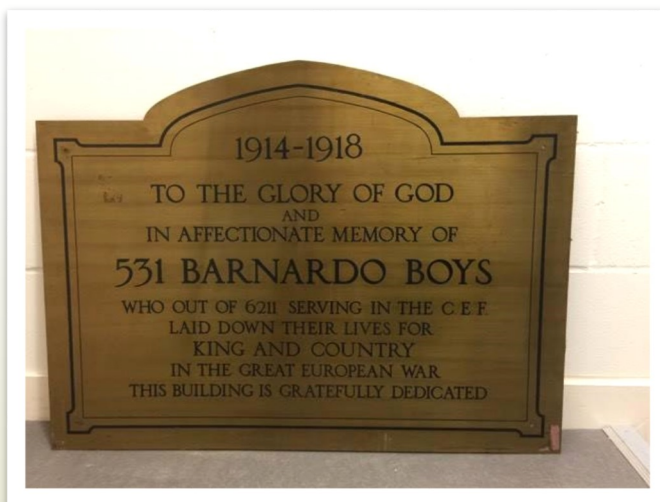
The presentation at the Colby Curtis Museum in Stanstead went extremely well with many descendants and lots of interest in the story of Home Children. First they viewed our video, 'Lost and Found' – which can be viewed [here](#). People lingered after the talk, to share their own stories and view the artifacts brought by us.

After packing up, we then drove back to Sherbrooke to view a marker that Pauline and Sarge Bampton had erected to commemorate the Gibbs' Home Children in Saint Peter Anglican Cemetery located at 1045 Rue Prospect. We also viewed another marker that an individual person had placed whose father was a Gibbs' Boy.

In conclusion, a very interesting and gratifying trip. The Eastern Townships in Quebec are populated by many descendants of the Knowlton Homes, the Gibbs Homes as well as the Catholic Emigration Association. Many are unaware of this part of their own family history as well as the history of the area and Quebec as a province.

As the story of the British Home Children unfolds across Canada, it is one that unites us as a nation.





On May 11<sup>th</sup>, Martine King of Barnardo's discovered the Barnardo memorial plaque that had been erected on the Jarvis Street Headquarters of Barnardo's. This plaque is currently being held by Barnardo's, having been shipped back to the UK when the headquarters closed.

Martine found the plaque after having been asked in an April 5<sup>th</sup> Facebook post in our group by VP Sandra Joyce about its whereabouts and a follow up post by Ken Holden. We are currently in talks with Barnardo's to hopefully bring this brass plaque back to Canada!

## Databases

Our British Home Child Database has been online and available to the public since March 2015. If you add your British Home Child yourself, you will be the contact person for this person and anyone searching for this person can contact you directly. You are in control of your own records and can edit them as you wish. Rest assured, they are secure and cannot be accessed by scammers! Add your British Home Child by clicking on this link: <http://britishhomechild.com/british-home-child-database/>

Rootschat.com, the UK's largest free family history forum, was delighted to collaborate with the British Home Child Group International for free – so there are never any costs for members!! If you need help to add your records – we can help with that. Just contact us by email : [connect@britishhomechild.com](mailto:connect@britishhomechild.com).

DNA database: We have already had several DNA connections made! This has resulted in membership to our British Home Child Database on FamilyTree DNA group doubling. If you had your DNA done on Family Tree DNA, you can transfer the results at no cost. If you had your DNA tested at Ancestry or 23andMe – the files can be uploaded to the database for a minimal cost of \$59. Your DNA will also be matched up to ALL members on Family Tree. Just think of all those connections!! Connect to our DNA database here: <http://britishhomechild.com/family-tree-dna-bhc-database/>



## The SS MINNEDOSA by Sandra Joyce



Originally intended for the Hamburg-America Line, the emigrant ship SS *Minnedosa* was built on the banks of the River Clyde by Barclay, Curle & Co. The keel was laid in 1913. There was accommodation for 550-cabin and 1,200-3rd class passengers.

Her engines were to be fitted by Harland and Wolff in Belfast. However, it wasn't until October 1917 that she was towed to Belfast for their installation. Purchased by Canadian Pacific during this time, she was also refitted as a troop carrier and officially entered service on December 5, 1918.

Her maiden voyage from Liverpool to St. John, New Brunswick, carried Canadian troops returning home.

After her trooping duties were completed, she travelled Canadian Pacific's regular route till June, 1922 except for a single, round-trip voyage from the UK to Bombay in December 1919 for the British government.

From 1920 to her laying off in 1931, about 2,000 British Home Children from various organizations including the Catholic Emigration Association, Middlemore Homes, the Fegan Homes and Barnardo's came to Canada aboard the SS *Minnedosa*.

After 1922, the ship moved over to the line's Antwerp-Southampton-Canada route until her refitting in 1925 at Hawthorne, Leslie & Co. in Newcastle. She now had accommodation for 206 cabin, 545 tourist and 590 3rd class passengers. After the refitting, she returned to the Antwerp – Canada route until 1927, but then went back to serving the Liverpool – Canada route until 1931.

The *Minnedosa* was sold for scrapping in Genoa in 1935, but was bought from the breakers by Mussolini's Italian government, renamed the *Piemonte* and refitted to be used as a troop transport during Italy's Abyssinian campaign.

Badly damaged by a torpedo attack near Messina in November 1942, the *Piemonte* was withdrawn from service. An airborne Allied bombing attack in 1943 caused her to capsize and sink, and she lay, half submerged in shallow water. Raised in 1949, she was then towed to Spezia for scrapping.



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