**Archivist’s Report 2015**

**Presented by L. Dougherty Feb 6 2016**

The Archives’ mandate is to acquire, preserve and make available the historic records of the Town of Arnprior and Township of McNab/Braeside. While it is impossible to report all activities over the year, I will cover some of the highlights that demonstrate how we are striving to fulfill this mandate.

Last year, we were fortunate to acquire a large and significant collection from the family of the late Norman and Margaret Gillies. It took six months to process the thousands of photographs and letters that document the John Gillies family from the 1860’s to the 1970’s. Soon, the collection will be described on our website and available for research. This is just one of many valuable donations received last year from members of the community and we are grateful for each and every one of them.

In order to preserve the collection properly, the Archives installed a new dehumidification system that runs continuously to maintain relative humidity levels suitable for long term storage. My thanks to the Archives Administrator Diane Bresson, who cheerfully undertook this task along with many others throughout the year.

In December, we received a generous grant from Library & Archives Canada to upgrade our online database and improve our website. You will be able to see the results of this work in April when a new, more user friendly search screen will help you discover the many treasures contained in the collection. I want to acknowledge the contribution of our Vice President Irene Robillard who spear headed the grant application in the very short turnaround time that was required by Library and Archives Canada.

We hope to be able to secure multi-year funding through this grant to digitize many of the valuable documents in our collection including our newspapers, fire insurance plans, maps and other historic documents. We are actively searching for Arnprior newspapers that predate 2008 so that when funding is available to digitize the collection, we will have as many paper copies as possible.

In 2015, the Archives face book page became very active. Two photographs had almost two thousand views but more importantly they generated dialogue, comments and questions as a result of the postings. Making our holdings available through social media was not in the minds of the Board in 1993 when forming the archives’ mandate, but it is proving to be an effective way to reach out to people.

Patrick’s Family History Group started as an outreach activity in 2012. It continues to offer anyone working on their family history support and expertise from fellow members and guest speakers. We meet monthly in this room at 7 pm on the fourth Monday of the month. Please join us on February 22 when Christine Jackson will present ‘Rollin' on the River with Captain Dan: The Ottawa Valley’s Pioneering Cowley Family’.

The Archives is a Heritage Partner with the Renfrew County Museums Network which is represented here today by President Angela Siebarth and Treasurer Bob Clausen. They have kindly brought a display and information about the various museums in the network which you are invited to look at after the meeting.

Finally, and most importantly, I would thank the many volunteers who support me in my role as Archivist. Without the contribution of over 2000 volunteer hours in this year alone, your community archives would not exist. Some volunteers are new and some have been with the organization for over 20 years which is an outstanding contribution….Could the volunteers who are present today, please stand?

THANK YOU!!!!