



Heritage NL

***Tradition is why we're at it!***  
***The Livyers' Lot Économusée***  
with **Elizabeth Ann Murphy**

Living Heritage Economy  
CASE STUDY 003 • April 2019

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[www.heritagefoundation.ca](http://www.heritagefoundation.ca)

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## ***Tradition is why we're at it! The Livyers' Lot*** **Économusée** with **Elizabeth Ann Murphy**



**Elizabeth Ann Murphy is a community organizer, craftsperson, retired teacher, and board member of Heritage NL. She is the driving force behind the Tea Rose Eatery & Livyers' Lot Économusée, a full-service combination museum, craft store, skills workshop, and tea room.**

If you are travelling along the Burin Peninsula Highway between Goobies and Marystown, keep your eyes open as you draw close to the Boat Harbour turnoff. To your right, you'll see a colourful collection of buildings. Pull over here, as it is the perfect spot to have a cup of tea, watch craftspeople at work, and learn about the history of Placentia Bay West. You've arrived at the Tea Rose Eatery & Livyers' Lot Économusée, and by stopping, you are helping to keep traditions alive.

The Livyers' Lot Économusée was established to provide a venue for local craftspeople to demonstrate their skills and products, and to improve their options in terms of craft sales.

The name comes from a set of Newfoundland words which classified fishermen as either “livyers”—those who lived in the places where they fished, and “stationers”—those who migrated with the fishery. Elizabeth Ann explains,

*With the site that we have, we have such a full picture. You can go in the old house that is kept the way it was 80 years ago. It was moved in from Port Elizabeth, Flat Islands. It was brought from there to Red Harbour. Flat Islands people resettled as a collective and went to Red Harbour. They made a community there, they built the roads, structured the community, and they brought their houses in there. We had it moved from Red*

*Harbour to the site. People can go upstairs, see the old patchwork quilts with the scattered hole in them on the beds, and then go in the craft shop and see more modern day patchwork available for sale. They can see the old time, woolen stockings hung up over the stove, and then they can go in the Tea House and order salt fish with drawn butter. It's a full experience.*

The Placentia West region stretches out over fifty kilometres of coastline from Red Harbour to South East Bight, and between those towns lie the communities of Rushoon, Baine Harbour, Parkers Cove, Boat Harbour, Brookside, and Petite Forte. Craft producers for Livyer's Lot come from even

further afield; the Marystown area for example has a substantial number of craft producers. At any given time there are between sixty and seventy producers involved in the shop, primarily working on a consignment basis:

*We measure success by how many people we can employ, how many goods we sell that benefit producers in the area. Some of them will tell us, "Oh I love knitting. I really love knitting." But then you say, "So you do a lot of it?" "No, the yarn is too expensive these days." Then if you tell them, "Well, you can sell some of your work here." Then they are happy with that, it gives them an outlet. It is not all about economics.*



## What is an **ÉCONOMUSÉE®**?

An ÉCONOMUSÉE® is an experiential tourism destination. It is an independent business that operates in the craft or agri-food sector which utilizes some form of authentic traditional know-how in the production of its products. Each member site opens its doors to the public to showcase what they do and, in many cases, offers a hands-on component for the visitor to try. Each one has an on-site boutique. From a tourism standpoint, an ÉCONOMUSÉE® is an innovative concept that allows private enterprises to reach out to the general public, explain local culture, and contribute significantly to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.

[www.artisansatwork.ca](http://www.artisansatwork.ca) / [www.economusees.com](http://www.economusees.com)

The concept of the économusée was born in 1992 in Quebec, with a mandate to allow artisans and craft enterprises to develop and promote in situ traditionally-inspired crafts and knowledge, in order to offer the public a high-quality cultural and tourist product. The Placentia West Heritage Committee had been around in one form or another since 1983, while craft work and mat-making had been a regional development initiative dating back to the 1970s, but the site was not accredited by the international économusée network until the 2000s. Elizabeth Ann remembers,

*We already had the Tea Rose and the Museum on the site, but we weren't aware there was such a thing as économusées. So after a bit of research*

*we decided that really that is where we were going. We had already embarked on that route, but we didn't know the actual name on what we were doing. An économusée it is more than a place where you sell a product. You have to tell the history, the roots of the tradition. It has to be connected to traditional craft. You can have non-traditional items there, but if it is modern it must have a twist from the traditional. You might take something like quilts for instance: people would've done applique to repair holes years ago, but you might take that idea and start doing wall hangings. That's a more modern twist.*

To become an accredited member of the network, Livyers' Lot had to integrate six fundamental



components into its premises: a reception area where visitors are welcomed and can learn about *économusées*; a workshop where visitors can interact with artisans at work; an interpretation space on traditional know-how; an interpretation space on contemporary know-how; a document or archival centre; and a boutique or salesroom space where visitors can purchase the work of the artisans. The tea house on site is a bonus for travellers but still is all about tradition, with the primary focus on Placentia Bay foodways: fishcakes, salt fish, and delicious local specialties.

Another key component of the site is the transmission of local knowledge. Organized workshops help local people learn new skills while keeping old ones alive. These have included training sessions on hooked mats, poked mats, braided mats, woven mats, knitting, crocheting, making mummer figurines, and even building ugly sticks. Quilting workshops are often in demand, which Elizabeth Ann attributes to a growing interest amongst younger people in the art of quilting. The *économusée* also offers special workshops for children at a lower price.

**For Elizabeth Ann, it all comes back to sharing local skills and local stories. In her words, Tradition is the main reason why we are at it. We're not in the business to make money for the organization, we are in the business to make money for people who are the producers, and to give them an outlet for their craft. Our purpose is tradition.**

## Advice from Elizabeth Ann

*"The big thing is not to lose sight of the traditional aspect of it, because if that's not there then it's not following the *économusée* model. Tradition is the big thing. Do you know your local traditions? Do you have the time and the interest to go out and get the stories that go with the product? If you start off and the money is the big part of it, it is not going to fly. From a tourist perspective, people are just as likely to pay for the experience as they are to pay for the product. People want to know stories. They are more interested in me telling them about a building, than just going in a building and buying a souvenir."*

## How to find the Livyers' Lot

Route 210, Boat Harbour,  
Burin Peninsula, NL  
709-443-2619 or  
709-443-2580



/placentiawest  
Placentia West  
Heritage Committee



Prepared by Dale Gilbert Jarvis and Terra M. Barrett of Heritage NL, as part of a series of case studies examining the links between living heritage, traditionality, entrepreneurship, and community economic development in Newfoundland and Labrador.

**For more information, email [ich@heritagenl.ca](mailto:ich@heritagenl.ca) or phone 1-888-739-1892.**

*Living Heritage Economy Case Study 003. All photos courtesy Livyer's Lot except where noted.*